

Order of Worship for July 19, 2026

Prelude:

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “*O God, Our Help in Ages Past*” - **Hymn #733**

Confession and Absolution: page 203

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;

C: listen to my plea for grace.

P: Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in Your truth;

C: unite my heart to fear Your name.

P: I give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,

C: and I will glorify Your name forever.

P: For great is Your steadfast love toward me;

C: You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

P: O God, insolent men have risen up against me; a band of ruthless men seek my life,

C: and they do not set You before them.

P: But You, O LORD, are a God merciful and gracious,

C: slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

ALL: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P: Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;

C: listen to my plea for grace.

Kyrie: (*Lord, Have Mercy*) p. 204

Hymn of Praise: (*Gloria in Excelsis*) p. 204

P: The Lord be with you, **C: and also with you.**

Prayer of the Day:

P: O God, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that, ever mindful of Your final judgment, we may be stirred up to holiness of living here and dwell with You in perfect joy hereafter; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: Amen.**

Old Testament Lesson – Isaiah 44:6–8

R: Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and His Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: “I am the first and I am the last; besides Me there is no god. Who is like Me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and set it before Me, since I appointed an ancient people. Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen. Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are My witnesses! Is there a God besides Me? There is no Rock; I know not any.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord **C: Thanks be to God**

Epistle Lesson – Romans 8:18–27

R: For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

R: This is the Word of the Lord **C: Thanks be to God**

Alleluia and Verse: pg. 205

Holy Gospel – Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the thirteenth chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus] put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’” . . .

Then Jesus left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. The Son of Man will send His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

P: This is the Word of the Lord **C: Thanks be to God**

Creed: 2nd and 3rd Petitions of the Lord's Prayer pg. 324

Children's Message:

Sermon Hymn: *"We Are Called to Stand Together"* **Hymn #828**

Sermon: *"Weeds and Wheat"* - **Matthew 13:36-43**

Now that it has gotten hotter and drier after our cool, wet spring, weeds become more prominent in our lawns. Since the bluegrass becomes dormant in the heat, the grass thins and weeds have a field day. Then there are the weeds in the garden. How do they get there? Even in cracks in the sidewalks, curbs, and parking lots, under pine trees and wrapped around shrubs, we find weeds. It is like the flood waters that seep through sandbag walls and under foundation. How does it get there?

Jesus uses the illustration of a man who has a field sown with barley wheat. After a while his servants realize that there are weeds growing among the wheat. The servants ask him, "How did the weeds get there?" The man tells them, "Our enemy did this." The weeds were there. But how do they get rid of them?

Today we have chemicals called herbicides. Spray them on our cornfields, and the weeds are zapped. We end up with fields full of nothing but the crop—corn, beans, wheat. We even have chemicals now to spray on our gardens to kill weeds and not harm the vegetables. But in Jesus' day to get rid of the weeds, you have to pull them out one by one. What complicated this even more is at the early stages a weed called darnel virtually identical in appearance to a young barley wheat sprout. If you pull up a weed, you also pull up the wheat.

Cancer is like that. There is one sure way to kill cancer—you kill the body it lives off. Treatments for cancer include surgery and chemo and radiation therapy. They involve trying to kill the cancer without harming the good cells. The problem is that the good cells so often are affected. Often the worst part for cancer patients is not the cancer, but the effects of the treatments. Many times the treatment leads to symptoms like a lowered resistance to infection, which kills the person. How do you treat the cancer without killing the patient? It is like throwing the baby out with the bathwater!

That is why the man in Jesus' parable says, "Let the wheat and weeds grow together. Then at the harvest we will separate them."

Jesus explains this parable by saying that God is the man who owns the field. The wheat are those who have faith. The weeds are those who reject God. God allows evil (the weeds) to go on existing. I can do a great job of getting rid of weeds with Roundup. It kills the weeds, the grass, everything! God could use His "Roundup" on the whole world, wiping out all the evil. That's how you get rid of disease in a herd. You destroy all of the animals. That would make it a whole lot easier for God.

But God is not about easy. He's about loving. The evil is all around the world. But it is also in us. Sin is a cancer we've put into our lives. For God to kill evil, He would have to destroy you and me. Instead, He lets the sin and evil go on so that we and others can grow as His people.

Jesus knew He would be betrayed by Judas. He knew Caiaphas and His other enemies would plot to kill Him. He could as God have stopped them. But He didn't. Why? So He could go to the cross to provide a way for all sinful people to be rescued from destruction.

We heard last week about the special difficulty of recovering from the flood. Unlike a tornado or fire, when a flood hits you have to wait for the water to subside to do anything. And a lot of the real damage is hidden. The actual cost of the damage takes more time and is less certain to evaluate. It makes it difficult to know where to start with the clean-up.

That is what Jesus is telling us about why there is still evil in this world. We might think that the answer is to go in and wipe out all evil. But where would we start?

God's way may not make sense to us. He seems too slow. But God doesn't do things our way. He does them according to love, not what we want. We see people starving to death in Africa. Why doesn't He feed them? We see people struggling to stay calm after a flood. Why did He let the floods happen? Why do we see people dying of cancer? Why doesn't He give us the master drug to eliminate cancer? But why do we want those kinds of answers? Is it because we really care about those who suffer or is it so that we don't have to feel uncomfortable seeing people in pain?

Many herbicides are actually growth hormones. When given at such a high dosage, they cause the plant to grow too quickly and kill itself. You may notice after grass has been treated by weed killer how the weeds curl up. It is because they grow too quickly.

God is patient. He knows it takes time to grow. If we did what we often want Him to do, then it would be like putting herbicide on plants. It would be too much for us. Instead, God waits so that we have to slow down and let His Word grow in us.

God's way calls us to wait. But as we wait, He wants us to do something. CFW Walther, the first president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod said this over 150 years ago:

Another major duty of a Synod that wants to be and remains an Evangelical Lutheran Synod is that it not seek its own glory, but only the glory of God, being intent not so much on its own growth, but rather the growth of Christ's kingdom and the salvation of souls. You see, dear brothers and sisters, we are assembled here not for our own sake. We are in the faith, and by this faith we hope to be saved! But there are still many millions who have no faith! This is why we are here—so that we might bring salvation to as many people as we possibly can, so that the sad situation in Christendom and the corruption of the poor, blind heathen might be remedied. Only for this reason does our gracious God allow Christians to live on earth, that they might bring others to the saving faith. Otherwise, God would immediately take a Christian to heaven as soon as he is converted.

We aren't here just to twiddle our thumbs until judgment comes and evil is destroyed. No, we are here to share our faith with those around us. It can be teaching English to an international. It can be befriending a lonely neighborhood widow. It can be praying with our children before bedtime. It can be inviting a friend to church. It can be working on a Habitat for Humanity project

or writing a check to help Kebede or another mission project. It can be praying for others who don't know Jesus. In all these ways God uses us to let His Word come into peoples' lives so that they grow to become wheat in the harvest.

In a Bible class people were discussing, "Where Is God When It Hurts?" They were asking whether they are to bring people to God or bring God to them. They discovered that if we try to bring them to God, we are doing the impossible. Only God can do that. But we can bring God to them, because as Jesus lives in us, then when we reach out to people in love, Jesus is right there with us. That is why God waits, not to frustrate us, but to give us the time to help bring God to others.

When the barley wheat was harvested, the grain was cut, bundled and taken to a stone threshing floor. There it was trampled by work animals until the seed was separated from the stalks—and the weeds. On a windy day they threw up the trampled grain into the air. The wind blew away the "chaff", the stalks and the weeds and left the seeds on the floor, ready to be ground into flour.

On the last day all people will be threshed. Evil will be blown away like the chaff. But until then God waits so that you and me and others can sprout as His good seed. Until then we wait—and bring Him into the lives of others.

The Prayer for Mission to All People:

P: Lord, we pray that You will open our eyes to see how we can witness to the many people You have gathered here in our community from all over the world. Give us the attitude of Abraham who welcomed strangers into his tent with the words:

C: "Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed." (Genesis 18:4-5).

P: We thank You for Your mercy which extends to all people, for You reach out to all the world with Your Kingdom as Jesus told us:

C: "People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the Kingdom of God." (Luke 13:29).

P: Help us to see that the good news of Jesus is for all people and all cultures as Peter discovered when You sent him to Cornelius:

C: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts people from every nation who fear Him and do what is right." (Acts 10:34-35).

P: Help us to be a part of how You break down the barriers that divide us through the unifying message of Jesus:

C: "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all." (Romans 10:12).

P: Give us the courage of the young Hebrew slave girl who pointed her sick master Naaman, general of the Syrian army, to Your prophet with the words:

C: "If only my master would see the prophet Elisha who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." (2 Kings 5:3).

P: Grant us the patience and the understanding to try to understand the many people in our community who are from different countries and cultures, so that we have the attitude of St.

Paul who said:

C: “I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

(1 Corinthians 9:22-23).

(The pastor will continue with other petitions)

P: Make us thankful for the wonderful opportunities You give us to share our faith with people from all over the world so that we can join the hymn of praise:

C: “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Amen. (Philippians 2:10-11).

Sharing Our Ministry:

Offering and Voluntary:

Service of the Sacrament

Preface: pg. 208

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should in all times and in all places give thanks to You, almighty God, heavenly Father, for You wait for others to come into Your Kingdom and delay the harvest so that others may be saved as we are through faith in Christ Jesus. Therefore with angels and all the army of heaven we praise and make great Your holy name, evermore praising You and saying. . .

Sanctus: *(Holy, Holy, Holy)* p. 208

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: Blessed are You Lord God, for You will bring about the end of evil at the end of the world, but until that time we are called by Your Son, Christ Jesus, to come to His table and received His true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins., Send Your Holy Spirit so that we receive that blessing in true faith. All this we pray in Jesus’ name. **C: Amen.**

Lord's Prayer:

The Words of Our Lord, Pax Domini: *(Peace of the Lord)* p. 209

Agnus Dei: *(Lamb of God)* p. 210

Distribution of Holy Communion: “*To God the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray*” - **Hymn #768**

“*God Moves in a Mysterious Way*” - **Hymn #765**

Nunc Dimittis *(Song of Simeon)* p. 211

Prayer After Communion:

P: O God, so rule our hearts by Your Holy Spirit that, being ever mindful of the end of all things and your just judgment, we may be stirred up to live lives that reflect our Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **C: Amen.**

Benedicamus and Benediction: p. 212

Closing Hymn: “*The Lord, My God, Be Praised*” – **Hymn #794**

Postlude