

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH
SUNDAY, JULY 19th, 2020**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God Ministry of
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REGIONAL COUNCIL PRAYER CYCLE

Dunnville: Grace

God's seeds of love have already been sown in your midst. Come and see the love of God outpoured for you. You are God's beloved ones. Come, live in the light of God.

CALL TO WORSHIP

We look at this world, focusing on the pain and confusion, the fears and hatred and the stupidity which seem to abound.

God what can we hope for?

We wait breathlessly for the goodness of creation to be made manifest in all the world, for this is the promise of God.

Remember...God is always with us, guiding, rescuing, healing, restoring us. Therefore in this time of Worship Lord, quiet our spirits and open our hearts. Bring us hope and peace. AMEN.

OPENING HYMN: "Spirit of the Living God"

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mould me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, move among us all;

Make us one in heart and mind, make us one in love:

Humble, caring, selfless, sharing.

Spirit of the living God, fill our lives with love!

OPENING PRAYER

We are such a rag-tag group of people. Some of us are at the "top of our game" and others just struggle to get through each day. Yet you draw us here to this place of worship. For some it is your couch, your back deck, or kitchen table. But where ever you are, we will find friendship, peace, and hope not only for our lives right now but for all the times to come. We ask... Stand us up again, O God. Dust us off and put us back on the pathways of service and reconciliation. Warm our hearts with your love; lift our spirits with your power, for we ask these things in the Name of Jesus our Savior. AMEN.

CHILDREN'S STORY

CHILDREN'S SONG

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

It is said that confession is good for the soul, but there are times, O Lord, when we just don't want to confess, we don't want to own up to the many ways in which we have failed to be your faithful disciples. There have been times when we have turned our backs on those in need. We have sought after power and riches, believing that these things bring true happiness. But you know us far too well. You know what is within our hearts and our spirits. You seek the very best for us that we might grow to be fruitful plants in your garden. Be with us. Forgive us when we have failed to love and treat others with respect and compassion. Turn our hearts back toward you, who always reaches out to us offering healing and love. These things we ask in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Great news has come to us, dear friends. God, who is faithful and just, who cherishes us as we are, seeks restoration and healing for those broken places in our lives, forgives and loves us unconditionally. Receive that good news!

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

The Parable of the Weeds

²⁴ He put another parable before them, saying, ^w“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds^l among the wheat and went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷ And the servants² 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?’ ²⁸ 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?’ ²⁹ But he said, ^x“No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, ^y“Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.””

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into ⁱthe house. And his disciples came to him, saying, ^j“Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” ³⁷ He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed is ^kthe sons of the kingdom. The weeds are ^lthe sons of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. ^mThe harvest is ⁿthe end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds ^oare gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at ⁿthe end of the age. ⁴¹ ^pThe Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all ^qcauses of sin and ^rall law-breakers, ⁴² ^sand throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place ^tthere will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then ^uthe righteous will shine like the sun ^vin the kingdom of their Father. ^wHe who has ears, let him hear.

MESSAGE

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Let Both Grow Together

Here we are in Matthew hearing another parable that in this case Jesus is sharing with his disciples. Jesus tells, this one about the weeds growing among the wheat. In many situations, the farm hands would of pulled

up the weeds, and destroyed them. But that is not how the story goes. The landowner won't allow such direct action. In the face of this, maybe we need to look at the story more carefully.

The weeds and the wheat are growing up together, and the servants want to pull the weeds. The master tells the servants to wait until both are fully grown and ready for harvest, because until that time the weeds and the wheat are identical in appearance. At harvest time, the weeds are to be gathered separately, bundled together and used for fuel, while the wheat is ground into flour.

The parable has some grain of truth (no pun intended!). In Palestine, a type of weed called darnel grass grows. In its growth and form it strongly resembles wheat, but it produces either an inferior kind of grain or none at all. Because of its similarity, it is extremely difficult to separate from genuine wheat. As the plants mature, the roots of weeds and wheat intertwine. Yet separating them is necessary. Unless the weeds are removed, then flour made from the wheat will be ruined by the weeds, which are both bitter and mildly toxic. The usual solution is to harvest the plants, spread them on a flat surface, and then remove the weeds, which by this stage are a different color than the wheat. So, the weeds can be separated from the wheat only at the proper time, following the harvest.

Jesus and the disciples sowed the good seeds of the Christian faith in their time, and true Christians are to sow the same seeds today. In Jesus' time, as is the case today, the devil and his cronies sow seeds of evil among the good seeds. In both cases, good and evil produced fruit together in the same spot.

This parable outlines the course of history from Jesus' time to the Day of Judgment. It explains why evil persists all over the world. It emphasizes the proper way to think about the world and the course of human history. It also suggests how we as Christians should be investing our time, talents and energy until Jesus returns. We are to continue sowing the good seeds of God's Kingdom.

We are like the farmer who carefully sows good seed in the field of our lives. We work hard to be as Christ calls us to be.... to raise a good family;

make good relationships; help a loved one battling with a disease; fight for better schools, healthcare, peace and the environment. If the world was fair, the good we do would always yield good results, but in many cases the good we work for looks like it is going to have the life choked out of it by the reality of our world.

We live in a world where good and evil co-exist, and there's not much we can do about it. Sure, we can resist evil and temptation, and we must resist them, but we can't get rid of them. In fact, it isn't even our job to get rid of them. That will be God's job on Judgment Day. Also, evil and good are intertwined in our society. In addition, good is often disguised as evil, and vice versa.

Let me share a story with you....

A man was stopped at a traffic light, waiting for the light to turn green. When the light changed, he was distracted or day dreaming and he didn't budge. The woman in the car behind him honked her horn. He still didn't move. She honked again, and by this time she was pounding on the steering wheel and blowing her horn non-stop. Finally, just as the light turned yellow, the man woke up and drove through the light. The woman in the second car was beside herself. Still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her car window. She looked up to see the face of a police officer. "Lady, you're under arrest," he said. "Get out of the car. Put your hands up." He took her to the police station, had her finger printed, photographed, and then put her in a holding cell.

Hours passed. The officer returned and unlocked the cell door. He escorted her back to the booking desk. "Sorry for the mistake, lady," he said. "But I pulled up behind you as you were blowing your horn and cursing out the fellow in front of you. I noticed the stickers on your bumper. One read "Follow me to Sunday School." The other, "What would Jesus do?" So, naturally, I assumed you had stolen the car."

Many people claim to be followers of God, and they often fool others into thinking they really are. They speak pretty words---or at least words that sound pretty to others---and they mislead many. Any follower of God with experience in the real world, however, knows that talk is cheap. Only

those who produce fruit that is consistent with their claims to be followers of God can be trusted.

This world in which we live is a mixed bag in which weeds and wheat grow together, side by side, and we can't always tell them apart. We will always have evil among us.

As Christians we are to practice forgiveness and patience. Because Judgment and criticism run rampant in our world.

Remember, God is a patient and tolerant 'Gardner'. God's primary care and concern is for the 'good seed', the wheat, which he sowed initially. He will not jeopardize its growth. Similarly, God is patient with each of us. God promotes our personal and spiritual growth, and delights when we bear much fruit.

Remember, Good and evil co-exist in human life and in the world. Nothing or no-one is perfect. We are all in need of forgiveness and redemption.

This is a parable about that there will always be good and evil in this world. While the forces of good and evil will be sorted out some day, there is still time for change until that day comes. It is a story about grace, patience and hope. Don't we often look back on our own mistakes and become thankful that we had time to change and make amends? Aren't we glad that God gave us the chance and the help we needed to work things out?

God loves us all very much and wants the best things for us. We have a lot to learn. Life isn't always just good things; sometimes we encounter difficult times. We can learn about courage, perseverance, hope, and forgiveness in these times. Have faith, plant your roots deep and know that the Gardner is leading, guiding and helping us grow. Amen

HYMN: Blessed Assurance

Blessed assurance Jesus is mine
O what a foretaste of glory divine
Heir of salvation, purchase of God
Born of his spirit washed in his blood

This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Savior all the day long
This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Savior all the day long

Perfect submission, perfect delight
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love

This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Savior all the day long
This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Savior all the day long
Praising my Savior all the day long

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Wow God... here we are and summer is just about halfway over. Some of us have been able to get away, to spend special time with family and friends; but for others there is a sameness about this season. It brings pressures to work to provide for our families; it reminds us of the many people who are ill and who are unable to enjoy some of the special delights that this season is supposed to bring. This morning we take a few minutes to name our dear ones and situations of pain and loss as we ask for prayers from this congregation. Some people will remain unnamed because of the anguish we feel about their difficulties. But you are with them, every step of the way, even when they don't feel like you care. You are there with them, offering them peace and hope. Let us turn our hearts to you as we silently offer these special people to your care. (name those who need to be uplifted in prayer). Lord, you have heard the cries of our hearts. You see our tears and feel our pain. Be with us all. Give us healing for our broken spirits and bodies, for we ask these things in the name of Jesus, the Master Healer. AMEN.

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN: #642 Be Thou My Vision
Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my battle Shield, Sword for the fight;
Be Thou my Dignity, Thou my Delight;
Thou my soul's Shelter, Thou my high Tower:
Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

SENDING FORTH

Get ready to go into God's world. Bring messages of hope to all. As we have been blessed, may we bring blessings to all in the name of Jesus Christ. AMEN.

CHORAL AMEN

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