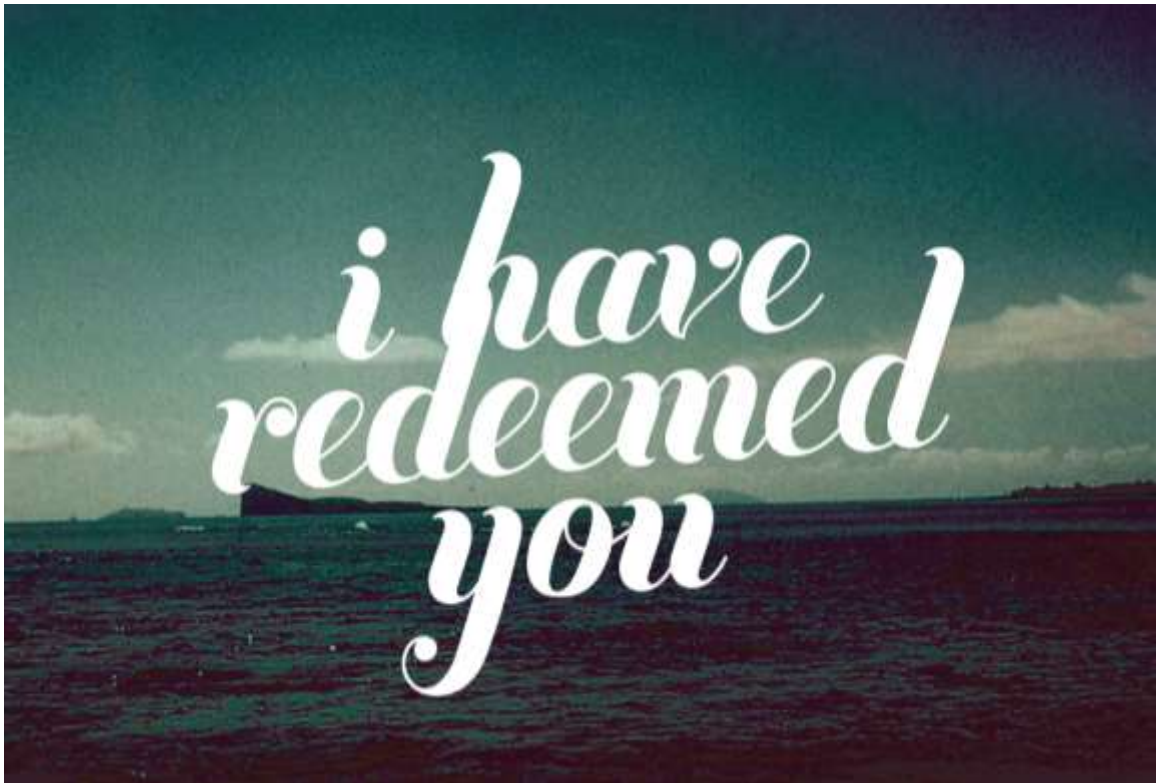


# *Triune Lutheran Church*



*Seventh Sunday after Pentecost*



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

*We thank you for joining us here  
at Triune Lutheran Church, a  
family united by our Risen Lord,  
Jesus Christ!*



In order to make you feel more at home, here are a few notes about the service. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. We hope to make your time here as meaningful as possible!

## *Worship*

- We are taking extra precautions to ensure your safety and health as we worship together, including asking you to please, **please** wear a mask the entire time you are in the building.
- Everything is printed in the bulletin (no hymnals will be used). Based on many published scientific studies, we are asking you to refrain from singing. Instead, please use the included text to the hymns in the bulletin as a prayer to God.
- There will not be a separate time for an offering to be collected during worship. If you wish to do so today, you may place your offering in the offering plate at the back.
- The Communion elements are placed by your chair in small containers with lids. We ask you leave them as is until we reach the celebration of holy Communion during worship, when you will be asked to remove the lids and consume the bread (wafer), then the wine. If you need a gluten-free wafer, please let the pastor know before worship. We believe the body and blood of Christ is meant for everyone, regardless of your church affiliation, and so feel free to participate, if you feel so moved.
- Bathrooms are available in the hallway. Please wash your hands, and use a paper towel to open the bathroom door to exit.
- The pastor will not be standing for a receiving line after worship.

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### \*CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
whose steadfast love is everlasting,  
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.  
Amen!

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Reconciling God,  
we confess that we do not trust your abundance,  
and we deny your presence in our lives.  
We place our hope in ourselves  
and rely on our own efforts.  
We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.  
We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.  
We fear difference and do not welcome others  
as you have welcomed us.  
We sin in thought, word, and deed.  
By your grace, forgive us;  
through your love, renew us;  
and, as the Holy Spirit, lead us;  
so that we may live and serve you in newness of life.  
Amen!

Beloved of God,  
by the radical abundance of divine mercy  
we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus,  
through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.  
Our sins are forgiven.  
Let us live now in hope.  
For hope does not disappoint,  
because God's love has been poured into our hearts  
through the Holy Spirit.  
Amen!

## **GATHERING HYMN**

“My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less”

ELW 597

- 1 My hope is built on nothing less  
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
no merit of my own I claim,  
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

### *Refrain*

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;  
all other ground is sinking sand.

- 2 When darkness veils his lovely face,  
I rest on his unchanging grace;  
in ev'ry high and stormy gale  
my anchor holds within the veil. *Refrain*

3 His oath, his covenant, his blood  
sustain me in the raging flood;  
when all supports are washed away,  
he then is all my hope and stay. *Refrain*

4 When he shall come with trumpet sound,  
oh, may I then in him be found,  
clothed in his righteousness alone,  
redeemed to stand before the throne! *Refrain*

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for all your children with compassion. Nurture us throughout our lives, that we may be forever rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen!

### **FIRST READING**

Isaiah 44:6-8

<sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>Who is like me? Let them proclaim it,  
let them declare and set it forth before me.  
Who has announced from of old the things to come?  
Let them tell us what is yet to be.

<sup>8</sup>Do not fear, or be afraid;  
have I not told you from of old and declared it?  
You are my witnesses!

Is there any god besides me?  
There is no other rock; I know not one.

## PSALM

Psalm 86:11-17

- <sup>11</sup>Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth;  
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.
- <sup>12</sup>I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart,  
and glorify your name forevermore.
- <sup>13</sup>For great is your love toward me;  
you have delivered me from the pit of death.
- <sup>14</sup>The arrogant rise up against me, O God, and a band of  
violent people seeks my life;  
they have not set you before their eyes.
- <sup>15</sup>But you, O Lord, are gracious and full of compassion,  
slow to anger, and full of kindness and truth.
- <sup>16</sup>Turn to me and have mercy on me;  
give your strength to your servant, and save the child of  
your handmaid.
- <sup>17</sup>Show me a sign of your favor, so that those who hate me  
may see it and be put to shame;  
because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

## SECOND READING

Romans 8:12-25

<sup>12</sup>So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the  
flesh, to live according to the flesh—<sup>13</sup>for if you live according  
to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death  
the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup>For all who are led by  
the Spirit of God are children of God. <sup>15</sup>For you did not  
receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have  
received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba!  
Father!” <sup>16</sup>it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit  
that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, then heirs,

heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

<sup>18</sup>I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup>For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; <sup>20</sup>for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup>that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup>We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; <sup>23</sup>and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup>For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

### **\*GOSPEL**

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

<sup>24</sup>[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field;<sup>25</sup>but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. <sup>26</sup>So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. <sup>27</sup>And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ <sup>28</sup>He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather

them?’ <sup>29</sup>But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup>Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’ ”

<sup>36</sup>Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” <sup>37</sup>He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; <sup>38</sup>the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, <sup>39</sup>and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. <sup>40</sup>Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup>The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, <sup>42</sup>and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup>Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!”

## **SERMON**

### **HYMN OF THE DAY**

“We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus”

ELW 451

1 We are baptized in Christ Jesus,





we are baptized in his death;  
that as Christ is raised victorious,  
we might live a brand new life.  
And if we have been united  
in a dreadful death like his,  
we will all be reunited, for he lives.

2 In the water and the witness,  
in the breaking of the bread,  
in the waiting arms of Jesus  
who is risen from the dead,  
God has made a new beginning  
from the ashes of our past;  
in the losing and the winning we hold fast.

3 Glory be to God the Father,  
glory be to Christ the Son,  
glory to the Holy Spirit,  
ever three and ever one;  
as it was in the beginning,  
glory now resounds again  
in a song that has no ending. Amen

### **\*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Confident of God's care for us in the midst of the world's sufferings, we join together in the power of the Spirit to pray for the church, the earth, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of the whole church, we praise you for sowing the good seed of the gospel throughout the world, and we mourn that, at this time, many Christians cannot assemble to nurture one another for growth in the faith. Tend your people; support leaders of communities of faith; give us strength through your word. Lead seminaries to plan appropriately for the fall semester. O God, teach us your way, for you are full of compassion.

God of the earth, we praise you for a wondrous creation, and we mourn that many lands and seas are groaning for rebirth. Nurture our green spaces and national parks; send rain where there is drought; protect endangered animals from poachers. Show us how to care for your earth and its creatures. O God, teach us your way, for you are full of compassion.

God of the nations, we praise you for the good that has been given us in this country, and we mourn that many people here are poor and dispossessed, that violence breaks out in our land. Lead us to form communities in which all people are equal and where disputes are settled without violence. Bring an end to warfare around the world, and mend the torn fabric of humankind with your truth and mercy. O God, teach us your way, for you are full of compassion.

God of humankind, we praise you for wherever health and happiness prevail, and we mourn that many people suffer.

Each day thousands more contract the virus; renters are facing eviction; medical workers are exhausted; some of the sick have no access to health care; countless people are broken by sorrows. Open our hearts to your children who suffer in any way, and show us how to serve them, including Bev Deitrick, Hazel Schwab, Martha Wasson, Mardell Weiss, Dave & Clara Wilcox, Rosa Arias, Cathy Gallagher, Richard Jakubcin, John & Jean Kurtz, Matthew Loede, Mary Phillips, Cicellia Taurus, George Tomaselli, Sara Nash and all those we name in our hearts...O God, teach us your way, for you are full of compassion.

God of the seasons, we praise you for summertime, and we mourn that this year, many hopes and expectations are denied. Give relief to those who suffer from the heat. Protect travelers from infection. Guard our children. Give rest to those with no vacation time, hope to those who are unemployed, and patience to all who must endure this difficult time. O God, teach us your way, for you are full of compassion.

God of eternity, we praise you for all who have died in the faith. We mourn our own beloved dead. At the end, bring us all into the shining light of your presence. O God, teach us your way, for you are full of compassion.

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

## **\*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

## **\*LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
    hallowed be thy name,  
    thy kingdom come,  
    thy will be done,  
        on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
    as we forgive those  
        who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
    but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
    and the power, and the glory,  
    forever and ever. Amen.

## **COMMUNION**

**MUSIC INTERLUDE** (use for meditation and prayer)

### **COMMUNION PRAYER**

God of the welcome table,  
in this meal we have feasted on your goodness  
and have been united by your presence among us.  
Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts  
so that we may share your neighborly love with all,  
through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life.  
Amen!

### **BLESSING**

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,  
nor things present, nor things to come,  
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,  
nor anything else in all creation,  
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ  
Jesus.

God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ,  
and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,  
bless you and keep you in eternal love.  
Amen!

### **SENDING HYMN**

“On Our Way Rejoicing”

ELW 537

1 On our way rejoicing  
gladly let us go.  
Christ our Lord has conquered;  
vanquished is the foe.  
Christ without, our safety;  
Christ within, our joy;  
who, if we be faithful,  
can our hope destroy?

*Refrain*

On our way rejoicing;  
as we forward move,  
hearken to our praises,  
O blest God of love!

2 Unto God the Father  
joyful songs we sing;  
unto God the Savior  
thankful hearts we bring;  
unto God the Spirit  
bow we and adore,  
on our way rejoicing  
now and evermore. *Refrain*

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is with you! Thanks be to God!

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### ***Bearing Good...Wheat?***

One of the many reasons that I like the Gospel of Matthew so much is that it is full of clear and consistent themes. As a master teacher, Jesus finds many ways to teach essentially the same lesson in different contexts. By doing so, he purposefully created a web of meanings and a system of symbols that all point to one conclusion: Jesus' followers will be known by their fruitful love. Of course, we know that we can bear no good fruit on our own. But when we are graciously connected by God to Jesus, we are expected to produce good fruit for God and our neighbors (John 15:1-5).

In interpreting the parable of the wheat and the weeds, it's necessary to reflect on what the symbols stand for. Helpfully, Jesus explains the parable in verses 36-43. The master (Jesus) sows good seed (humans who follow God) in the field (earth). An enemy (the Satan) sows bad seed (humans who follow the evil one). Servants (angels) ask the master if he wants them to uproot the weeds. The master says no, because in uprooting the weeds they may uproot the good wheat as well. Instead, they should wait until the final harvest, when the weeds—as well as the causes of sin (41)—will be thrown into the fire.

I've heard this passage preached to say that we aren't to try to differentiate or separate Christians from non-Christians. But, of course, that isn't the role of humans in this parable. Humans aren't the servants or reapers. Instead, we are either wheat or weeds. It's not up to us to separate or not. The role of the human/plants in this parable is to grow and produce grain. But what kind of grain is produced?

Good wheat seed will produce grain that can be milled to provide that most basic of human foods: bread. The weeds that the enemy sows are specifically chosen to provide dangerous results. The Greek word we translate as "weeds" or "tares" ζιζάνια (*zizania*) is probably a loan word from Hebrew זנון (*zunin*). This word specifies that the enemy has sown the bearded tare. When young, bearded tare looks almost exactly like wheat, but

when it starts to produce its seed, it creates a black grain that hosts a toxic fungus. Instead of nourishing grain, the enemy sows seeds that grow to produce lethal fruit.

It's important to note that even the angels, depicted as the master's servants here, only realize that something is amiss when the plants start to produce their grain (Matthew 13:26-27). The wheat is recognized as good fruit; the tares' toxic fruit is recognized as well. This insistence on knowing a person by the fruit that she produces is one of Jesus' constant themes. Even before telling this parable of the wheat and weeds, Jesus has already taught twice that we will recognize the kind of tree/person by the fruits that he produces (Matthew 7:16-20, 12:33). Also in the Gospel of John, Jesus' followers producing good fruit is a key concern (15:8, 16). Being aware of the kind of fruit that we are producing—whether it is nutritious or toxic for others—is the key focus of this passage.

Amid the growth of deadly fruit, the master's patience is remarkable. I think telling his servants to wait until harvesttime to separate the wheat from the tares has two motivations. Jesus states the first motivation explicitly—prematurely removing the weeds might damage the wheat that produces good grain (Matthew 13:29). The second motivation, I think, has to do with the preaching and hearing of the parable itself. Jesus lived, preached, healed, died and was resurrected publicly in order to make God's love known and manifest. One of the hopeful implications of a delayed harvest is that God graciously gives humans time to repent and produce better fruit. Just like in the parable of the fig tree (Luke 13:6-9) and the song of the vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-7), in the parable of the wheat and weeds, Jesus is patient and does everything possible to coax good fruit of love, justice and righteousness out of God's people.

We know that God is patient, kind and loving. We also know that Jesus' followers are expected to produce good—not toxic—fruit in our world, as a natural outcome of being connected to the true vine of Jesus. The parable of the wheat and weeds reminds us that we do not and cannot do anything to save ourselves. But at the same time, Jesus, who has already saved us and called us God's children, expects us to produce good fruit through our words and deeds to help sustain our world.

*Cory Driver is a minister of word and service, and the director of the Transformational Leadership Academy in the Indiana-Kentucky Synod.*