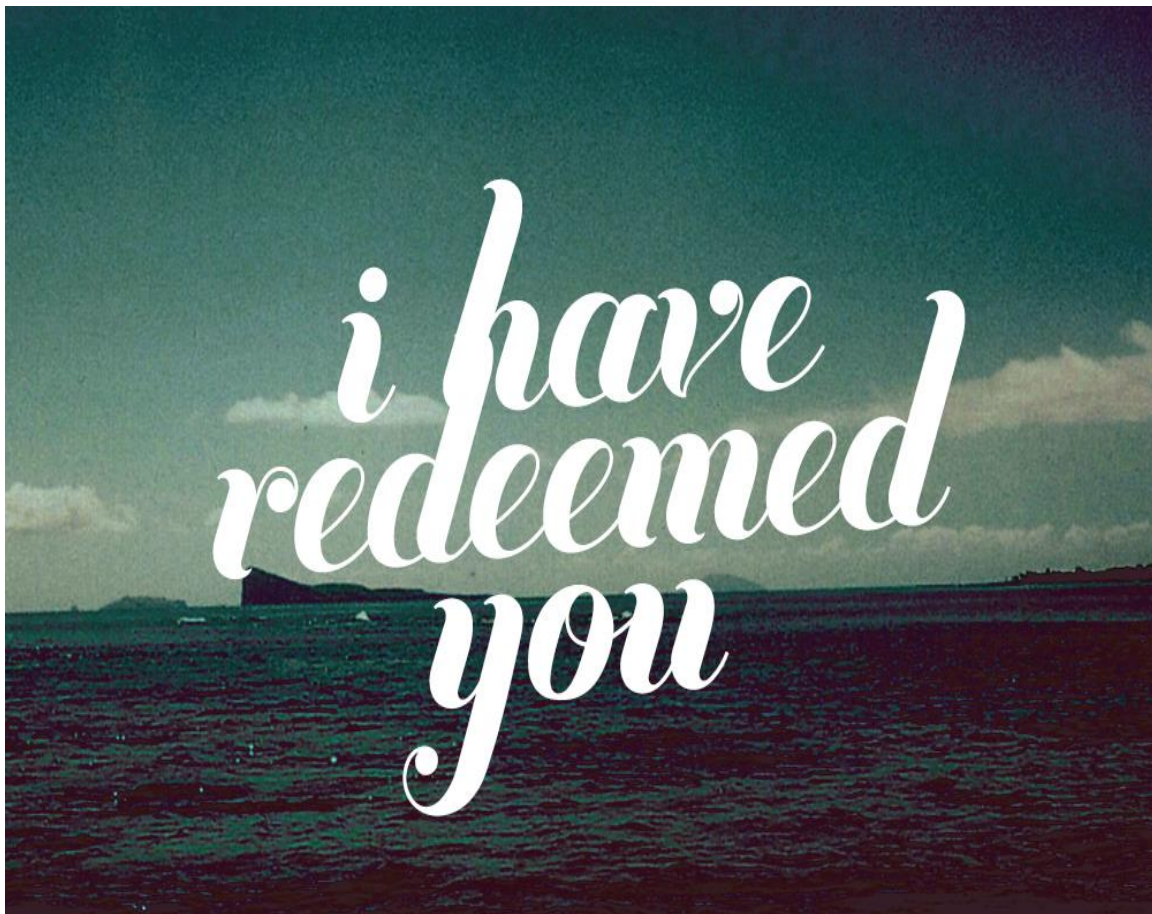


The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”



Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
July 19, 2020



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

It is an age-old question: why is there evil in the world? In the parable of the wheat and the weeds Jesus suggests that both grow together until the harvest. With Paul, we long for the day that all creation will be set free from bondage and suffering. Having both weeds and wheat within us, we humbly place our hope in the promises of God, and from the Lord's table we go forth to bear the fruit of justice and mercy.

Prelude *It Is Well With My Soul* (TURNER)

Confession & Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as we take time to recognize our shortcomings, while also remembering God's relentless grace.

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!

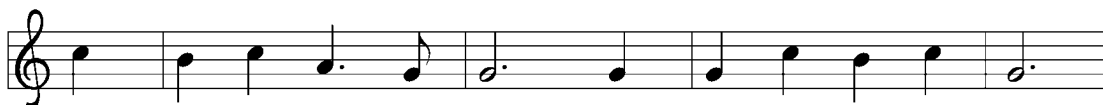
Beloved of God,
 by the radical abundance of divine mercy
 we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus,
 through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.
 Our sins are forgiven.
 Let us live now in hope.
 For hope does not disappoint,
 because God's love has been poured into our hearts
 through the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

Gathering Hymn *When Morning Gilds the Skies* (BRIDGES, BARNBY)

#853



1 When morn - ing gilds the skies, my heart a - wak - ing cries:
 2 When mirth for mu - sic longs, this is my song of songs:
 3 No love - lier an - ti - phon in all high heav'n is known
 4 Let all of hu - man - kind in this their con - cord find:
 5 Sing, sun and stars of space, sing, all who see his face,



may Je - sus Christ be praised! When eve - ning shad - ows fall,
 may Je - sus Christ be praised! God's ho - ly house of prayer
 than "Je - sus Christ be praised!" There to the e - ter - nal Word
 may Je - sus Christ be praised! Let all the earth a - round
 sing, "Je - sus Christ be praised!" God's whole cre - a - tion o'er,



this rings my cur - few call: may Je - sus Christ be praised!
 has none that can com - pare with "Je - sus Christ be praised!"
 the e - ter - nal psalm is heard: oh, Je - sus Christ be praised!
 ring joy - ous with the sound: may Je - sus Christ be praised!
 to - day and ev - er - more shall Je - sus Christ be praised!

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 Lesson

Isaiah 44:6-8

There are no other gods besides God: the word of the Lord does not fail to come to pass. We can trust in God, through whom Israel—and we—are redeemed.

⁶Thus 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.

⁷Who 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.

⁸Do 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.

The word of the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

Psalm

Psalm 86:11-17

¹¹Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth;
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.

¹²**I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart,
and glorify your name forevermore.**

¹³For great is your love toward me;
you have delivered me from the pit of death.

¹⁴**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.**

¹⁵But you, O Lord, are gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger, and full of kindness and truth.

¹⁶**Turn to me and have mercy on me;**

give your strength to your servant, and save the child of your handmaid.

¹⁷Show 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 Lesson

Romans 8:12-25

For Paul, true spirituality means that we experience the reality of the Spirit, which enables us to pray as God's children, keeps us in solidarity with creation, and gives us unseen hope that God will liberate us and creation from bondage to death and decay.

¹²So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—¹³for 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. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For 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!” ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and 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.

¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that 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. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³and 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. ²⁴For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

The word of the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

Gospel

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Jesus tells a parable about the coexistence of good and evil in this world. God's judgment will remove all evildoers and causes of sin, but not until the end of human history.

The holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 13th chapter.

Glory to you, o Lord!

²⁴[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field;²⁵but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. ²⁶So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷And 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?’ ²⁸He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let 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.’”

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

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!

Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *We Are Baptized in Christ Jesus* (YLVISAKER)

#451



1 We are bap-tized in Christ Je - sus, we are bap - tized in his death;
2 In the wa - ter and the wit-ness, in the break-ing of the bread,
3 Glo-ry be to God the Fa - ther, glo - ry be to Christ the Son,



that as Christ is raised vic - to - rious, we might live a brand new life.
in the wait - ing arms of Je - sus who is ris - en from the dead,
glo - ry to the Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er three and ev - er one;



And if we have been u - nit - ed in a dread-ful death like his,
God has made a new be - gin - ning from the ash - es of our past;
as it was in the be - gin - ning, glo - ry now re - sounds a - gain



we will all be re - u - nit - ed, for he lives.
in the los - ing and the win - ning we hold fast.
in a song that has no end - ing. . . . A - men.

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. 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, responding to the words, "Teach us your way," with the phrase "you are full of compassion."

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: **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: **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: **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. O God, teach us your way: **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: **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: **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

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them to the Lord!

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

It is right to give our thanks and praise!

Holy God,
our Maker, Redeemer, and Healer,
in the harmonious world of your creation,
the plants and animals,
the seas and stars
were whole and well in your praise.

When sin had scarred the world,
you sent your Son to heal our ills
and to form us again into one.

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.

Remembering, therefore,
his acts of healing,
his body given up,
and his victory over death,
we await that day when all the peoples of the earth
will come to the river to enjoy the tree of life.

Holy Spirit, be immersed in this meal:
as grains scattered on the hillside become one bread,
so let your church be gathered from the ends of the earth,
that all may be fed with the Bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
both now and forever. **Amen!**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Communion

Music Interlude *Breathe on Me, Breath of God* (MCKIBBEN)

Please, use this time to meditate or pray for those dear to your heart.

Prayer after Communion

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 *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less* (MOTE, BRADBURY)

#596



1 My hope is built on noth-ing less than Je-sus' blood and righ-teous-ness;
2 Whendark-ness veils his love-ly face, I rest on his un - chang-ing grace;
3 His oath, his cov - e - nant, his blood sus - tain me in the rag - ing flood;
4 When he shall come with trum-pet sound, oh, may I then in him be found,



no mer-it of my own I claim, but whol - ly lean on Je - sus' name.
in ev-'ry high and storm - y gale my an - chor holds with-in the veil.
when all sup-ports are washed a-way, he then is all my hope and stay.
clothed in his righ-teous-ness a-lone, re - deemed to stand be - fore the throne!

Refrain



On Christ, the sol - id rock, I stand; all oth - er ground is



sink - ing sand, all oth - er ground is sink - ing sand.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you!

Thanks be to God!

Postlude *When Morning Gilds the Skies* (SHACKLEY)

Praying Together

... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating: Gayle Agg, Bob Buettner, Alexis Carr, Joan Clarke, Steve Dobush, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Alex Hohenstein, Judy Jones, Tom Juhasz, Ralph Kane, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Andrea Lanzalaca, Sara Mendes, Phyllis Nemeth, Bernice Novak, Don Rusher Jr., Arlene Stoltz, Tim Susaneck, Tom Susaneck, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Linda Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family

LAST WEEK

General Fund receipts for week ending 7/12/2020: \$1684

Lectionary Blog: 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 זונין (*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. He earned his doctorate in Jewish religious cultures from Emory University, Atlanta. Cory lives with his family in Indianapolis.

This, and other resources for the journey of faith, available at LivingLutheran.org, as well as our own website: covenantmaplehts.org.



Please, continue to let us know how you think worship is going from our parking lot, including how you felt about Communion today. We hope to make the experience as spiritually nourishing as possible!

Names of Jesus

S O F F X L O R D B W H R L E D U W F S T W Q Y
 T M L V J R Z H Y C O U N S E L O R H V I P N M
 B X I M D C S P R I N C E O F P E A C E E G R P
 X V O M I L I G H T O F T H E W O R L D M S E S
 G J N X I C N O L F X H U R Q E B D O Y M T Q I
 A U O O L F X A L Z K Q W F N W M P A O A J P Q
 M E F A M L S W Z Y O O O M G C B W S F N Q Y E
 B J J I B K H K P A M G I L Q L S M N U U W X V
 R W U X T Y I Q J X R G D Z P G H B O D E N B E
 E K D Q B K R D G O H E L H V E E J R Z L V Q R
 A J A H T U R T W T I Q N I B X P X O X X E G L
 D B H S K A D E Y O X C S E F B H C I Y X Q O A
 O K F U O S A G M V N Q H K Z E E S V M J T U S
 F I B Y V N O J G E Z D T C T S R G A N E I J T
 L Y V I U D O S Y A E G E V I K D D S I V D F I
 I G N S H S D F T S F D C R J I O O C O R Z P N
 F N D V G C N B M T U R E L F O U G X C Z L J G
 E B D G R W H Y H A R S O R N U V F O E C P A F
 M C J E L O Z I W X N V E T X Q L O G W U D T A
 G I D B L L I B E X C N Z J A M I N M F D G K T
 Z Q K I N G O F K I N G S Q A E J O Q X R U L H
 E T Z N R O B T S R I F T V N Z R S L X O J A E
 Z T H P X Z R D O G F O B M A L A C F G W R T R
 S A E S F O O H E H H J Q F Z Q O J N E G P U O

Life	Truth	Way	Creator
Son of Man	Son of God	Firstborn	Lamb of God
Emmanuel	Nazarene	King of Kings	Word
Bread of Life	Light of the World	Lion of Judah	Redeemer
Savior	Prince of Peace	Everlasting Father	Mighty God
Counselor	Wonderful	Shepherd	Lord
Jesus			