**8th sunday after pentecost, july 23, 2023**

**zion, philipsburg**

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS (ELW p. 94)**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

**God, We mean to be a good people; wanting to produce wisdom and justice. How is it we are so compromised? There is goodness and mercy in each of us, and there is selfishness and fear, privilege that serves only our fake desires. We want to march through the field of our lives and tear out all the weeds. We want to be better. Now.**

**Look how harsh we are, judging ourselves. Our hands are full not of the fruit of love but shame and a scythe. Some of us that we are disappointed in hides your blessing, wheat among the weeds. Only you know the true fruits we bear. Amen**

Holy God, may we set aside our weapons and let go of accusing ourselves. Let us accept ourselves as we are, saint and sinner, perfectly imperfect, weeds and wheat. Let us trust you to glean the grain from our fields and remove the rest— gone, cleansed, burned forever! May our peace and acceptance be the seeds we sow for the next harvest.

**GATHERING SONG:*We Plow the Fields and Scatter*  (ELW 681)**

1 We plow the fields and scatter
the good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered
by God's almighty hand,
who sends the snow in winter,
the warmth to swell the grain,
the breezes and the sunshine,
and soft refreshing rain.

Refrain
All good gifts around us
are sent from heav'n above.
We thank you, Lord,
we thank you, Lord,
for all your love.

2 You only are the maker
of all things near and far.
You paint the wayside flower,
you light the evening star.
The winds and waves obey you,
by you the birds are fed;
much more to us, your children,
you give our daily bread. Refrain

3 We thank you, our creator,
for all things bright and good,
the seedtime and the harvest,
our life, our health, our food.
No gifts have we to offer
for all your love imparts,
but what you most would treasure--
our humble, thankful hearts. Refrain

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Welcome to worship on this 8th Sunday after Pentecost, Sunday July 23, 2023.

I am back from holidays, it was a good few weeks of exploring, rest, and relaxation. My sincerest gratitude goes to our worship committee (Jane, Brenda, Chrissie, and Susan)for leading worship and planning a very successful Action Sunday.

As you all know the cemetery shed was broken into last weekend with items taken. Zion’s cemetery shed was not the only shed broken into. We are grateful to the police for their co-operation and that no one was hurt, or any vandalism done. Your council met for our regular meeting on Thursday night and has taken steps to further secure the shed. Thank you to Murray for all his work in dealing with the police, media, and securement of the building. It’s interesting….our gospel focuses on wheat and weeds, saint, and sinner this week……we have seen the bad in having a crime committed and within our midst and we have witnessed the good. Both Murray and I were overwhelmed by the community support that our church has received. I arrived on Tuesday morning to phone messages of folks offering to donate lawn equipment and Murray received phone calls as well. Never forget that there is still so much good in our world.

**GREETING (ELW p. 138)**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

**KYRIE (ELW p. 138)**

**CANTICLE OF PRAISE (ELW p. 139)**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 142)**

Let us pray.

Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit nurture us who live in your kingdom, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 44:6-8**

A reading from Isaiah.

*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 READING: Romans 8:12-25**

A reading from Romans.

*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, siblings in Christ, 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 ACCLAMATION-alleluia (ELW p. 142)**

**GOSPEL: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**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!”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON (ELW p. 143)**

**HYMN OF THE DAY*O Christ, Our Hope* (ELW 604)**

1 O Christ, our hope, our hearts' desire,
creation's mighty Lord,
redeemer of the fallen world,
by holy love outpoured,
by holy love outpoured:

2 How vast your mercy to accept
the burden of our sin,
and bow your head in cruel death
to make us clean within,
to make us clean within.

3 But now the bonds of death are burst,
the ransom has been paid;
you reign above at God's right hand,
in robes of light arrayed,
in robes of light arrayed.

4 Oh, let your mighty love prevail
to purge us of our pride,
that we may stand before your throne
by mercy purified,
by mercy purified.

5 All praise to you, ascended Lord;
all glory ever be
to Father, Son, and Spirit blest
through all eternity,
through all eternity!

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation. *A brief silence.*

O God, you call your church to announce the gospel of reconciliation and truth both near and far. Guide your church as it seeks your wisdom and shares it, trusting your Spirit bearing witness among us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You brought forth all creation and called it good. Direct policymakers to protect lands and seas impacted both by human hands and natural disasters. Bring rain to provinces still struggling with wildfires. Bring forth a fruitful and plenteous harvest from gardens and fields. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You desire peace among nations and peoples. Guard our neighborhoods from hatred, watch over police officers and firefighters, and teach us to advocate for those who live in fear. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You are gracious and merciful. Provide food, shelter, and warmth for all who are unhoused, and release any who are unjustly imprisoned. Comfort all who suffer any affliction *especially* Sarah, Chris, John, Vivian, Stuart, Edna, Marlene, Felix, Gary, Erin, Terry, Zoli, our members in long term care Robert, Rob, and Evelyn, and those we name out loud or in the silence of our hearts (good pause),. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You name each of us as your children. Guide our hospitality ministry to welcome all, our education ministry to equip us for faithful living, and our social ministry to enact the gospel in our community. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You send faithful people to proclaim freedom from bondage and to renew your church. Encourage us by the witness of the faithful departed so that we live into that same hope. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the name of the one who reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

**PEACE (ELW p. 143)**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**MEAL**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**OFFERING*To God Our Thanks We Give:* (ELW 682)**

To God our thanks we give, to God our thanks we give,
to God our thanks we give, our thanks to God we give.

**OFFERING PRAYER**

God of field and forest, sea, and sky, you are the giver of all good things.

Sustain us with these gifts of your creation, and multiply your graciousness in us,

that the world may be fed with your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**

**DIALOGUE (ELW p. 144)**

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.**

**PREFACE (ELW p. 144)**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave,

and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.

And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 144)**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,** **God of pow’r and might,** **heaven and earth are full of your glory.** **Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.** **Hosanna in the highest.**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE (ELW p. 145)**

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

 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 death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER (ELW p. 145)**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

All people are called to Christ’s table. Come, eat what is good.

**COMMUNION (ELW p. 146)**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**COMMUNION SONG- lamb of god (ELW p. 146)**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

We thank you, generous God, for the refreshment we have received at your banquet table. Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world, through the one who is our dearest treasure, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**BLESSING (ELW p. 146)**

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace. **Amen.**

**SENDING SONG*For the Fruit of All Creation (AR HYD Y NOS)* (ELW 679)**

1 For the fruit of all creation,
thanks be to God.
For these gifts to ev'ry nation,
thanks be to God.
For the plowing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safekeeping,
thanks be to God.

2 In the just reward of labor,
God's will is done.
In the help we give our neighbor,
God's will is done.
In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.

3 For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all, that love has found us,
thanks be to God.

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the harvest.

**Thanks be to God.**

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Confession and forgiveness adapted from the poem *Weeds and Wheat*, author Steve Garnaas Unfolding Light, published July 17, 2020, <https://unfoldinglight.net/2020/07/17/be8j6s4leyfpls8lzs53am23eymg4m/>.