



Collect the weeds and tie them
in bundles for burning; but
gather the wheat into my barn.
- Jesus (Matthew 13:30)

July 23, 2023
Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

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Sunday Morning Meditation

Sometimes the worst of times are designed by the enemy to get you to give up on God's clear direction because he knows of the powerful and wondrous blessings that are ahead.

- Chip Ingram
The Invisible War (2006)

Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ
Mt Hope 8:30am Greenfield 9:50am
8th Sunday after Pentecost / 'The Seed'

July 23, 2023
Grace 11:00am

Community News

Prayer List and Prayers of the People

Prelude/Lighting of the Candles

* *Call to Worship*

As we harvest our growing abundance in this time of mid-summer,
may we relish in the fruit of our labor,

**As we harvest the fruitful seeds of nature and God's Garden,
let us share in the bounty with our neighbors.**

While we channel resources – water, light, fertile ground to the
produce we desire in our gardens,

**May we also recognize that the weed, the rabbit, the
caterpillar also has needs for sustenance.**

We have enough, and an attitude of plentifulness increases through
sharing.

**For what our land grows with our tending, is only ours for a
moment in time, filling a short term and immediate need.**

**May we share the harvest by tithing back to nature, feeding
the hungry among us, storing for the future without
hoarding, and setting enough seed aside for the next season
of planting.**

* *Invocation*

God of many names, mother of all creation, father of all that is,
womb of life, and wellspring of all that we can ever know, we
invite your presence here as we seek to embody your loving spirit
and create your presence among us. We are in need, and we turn to
you to be with us as we practice creating the kingdom of heaven
here on earth. Amen.

* *Opening Hymn*

"Have Thine Own Way, Lord"

Mt Hope VH #328

Greenfield CH #591

Grace VH #328

Prayer of Transformation and New Life

God of creation and plenty, it can be easy for us to forget the abundant nature of your love. We forget that there are ample riches from this earth if we manage your resources, you and we share generously among all your beloved children. We forget that we are all created in your divine beauty, perfect specimens of your holy vision for a people who can love without bounds, share without tallying, and celebrate among the great diversity you created to thrive together. Guide us to give of that abundance, to receive with grace and gratitude, and to turn our hearts from the perception of scarcity. We confess that we fall short; and we ask that you show us the path again to your fruitful garden where all things grow and flourish.

Words of Grace

Let us know that God has always provided us with growth and abundance and will continue to guide us in the care of bounteous fields that spring forth with plant and animal, both weed and seed. We are all worthy of this enduring joy and sustenance as beloved children of God. Amen.

Psalms Reading

Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24 NIV

- ¹ You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.
- ² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- ³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
- ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.
- ⁵ You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
- ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.
- ⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
- ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast.

¹¹ If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me

and the light become night around me,”

¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you;

the night will shine like the day,

for darkness is as light to you.

²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;

test me and know my anxious thoughts.

²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting.

* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 NIV

Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.)

TH #497

The Parable of the Weeds

²⁴ Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

²⁷ “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’

²⁸ “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

²⁹ “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

³⁶ Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

³⁷ He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

⁴⁰ “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

* *Gloria Patri*

Children's Message / Congregation Conversation

* *Meditation Hymn* “Dear Lord and Father of Mankind”

Mt Hope PH #341

Greenfield CH #639

Grace TH #226

Today's Message

* *The Apostle's Creed*

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was
conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered
under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he
descended into hades; the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the
Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic/Christian church; the
communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of
the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

The 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Sung Response

“Hear Our Prayer, O Lord”

TH # 501

The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Statement

Offertory (MH)

* Doxology

TH # 551

* Offertory Prayer

May these gifts plant seeds of justice for God’s children who seek it; may they remind us to love more mercifully; may all walk humbly as we learn to trod gently upon this earth. Amen.

* *Closing Hymn*

“Rescue the Perishing”

Mt Hope VH #412

Greenfield CH #441

Grace VH #412

* *Benediction*

God’s people, you are called to go forth and appreciate the weeds among us, as we have each been in the wrong place at times. Go from this place during this harvest time and taste the ripeness of a plump tomato, the sweetness of fresh steamed corn, the crisp coolness of cucumbers. Please go in the knowledge that there is enough for all, be it God’s earthly blessings that are so delicious and nourishing or God’s love that connects us. Share in these gifts and know that we are all enough. Amen.

* *Three-Fold Amen*

TH # 558

* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

The Seed: Serviced Prayers for the Eighth Sunday after Pentecost was written by Dr. Sherry Warren who serves as Minister of Women’s and Gender Justice for the National Ministries of the UCC. She loves to garden and grow things.