

**Southwest California Synod Digital Service  
Seventh Sunday of Pentecost | July 19, 2020**

Welcome to the digital worship provided by the Southwest California Synod. I am James Phillips, the pastor at Holy Trinity Inglewood and the Coordinator of African Descent Ministries for the Southwest California Synod. Today's music is offered by Ascension Lutheran in Thousand Oaks.

In today's gospel, we answer the 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.

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.**

The holy gospel according to Matthew, chapter 13:

<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!"

## Gospel Acclamation | "In This Very Room" – Ascension Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks

### Sermon

Isaiah 44:6-8 (New International Version)

"This is what the LORD says—

Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty:

I am the first and I am the last;

apart from me there is no God.

<sup>7</sup> Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it.

Let him declare and lay out before me

what has happened since I established my ancient people,

and what is yet to come—

yes, let them foretell what will come.

<sup>8</sup> Do not tremble, do not be afraid.

Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago?

You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me?

No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."

## Hymn of the Day | "Chain Breaker" – Praise Alive, Ascension Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks

### Prayers of God's people

Sovereign God, apart from You there is no God. We pray for the church, the world and all who are in need.

Sovereign God, we praise you and thank you for the prophets of times past. Raise up in our own day pastors, teachers and prophets inspired by your spirit, whose voices give strength to your church, and proclaim the reality of your just and eternal reign. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Sovereign God, you sow the good seed of the gospel of Jesus Christ into your field. Help your church throughout the world to be both diligent and patient, full of resolve and gentleness, that our witness may be faithful to our intentions. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Sovereign God, teach us your ways, that we may walk in your truth. Mend the fabric of the human family, now torn apart by our fearful and conflicting ways. We lift up the people of Hong Kong, Afghanistan and even the people of our own nation. We ask that you bring us all to a peaceful and just resolution. Guide us by your mercy, grace, and steadfast love. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Sovereign God, you accompany those who suffer and are near to the brokenhearted. Open our hearts to your children who are lonely and abandoned, who feel trapped by despair,

and all who suffer in any way, especially those challenged with issues of mental, emotional and physical health, financial and labor deficits. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Sovereign God, creator of the seasons, in the midst of summer, give us refreshment, renewal, and new opportunities. We pray for the safety of those who travel. We pray for those who cannot take the rest they need. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Sovereign God, those who have died in you shine like the sun in your endless kingdom. We remember with thanksgiving the saints of all times and places and saints close to us.

(silence) Gather us with them on the day of salvation. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

In confidence of your promises, that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **Blessing**

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord watch over your going out and your coming in,

Your rising up and your coming down.

May the Lord God Almighty,

Touch you on the crown of your head

Down to the soles of your feet

And make you whole.

In the name of

God, the creator, ✝ Jesus, the Redeemer ,

and the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier,

**Amen.**

### **Dismissal**

Go in peace and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude| "Final Variations" – Ascension Lutheran Church, Thousand Oaks**