Westminster Presbyterian Church

LITURGY FOR JULY 19, 2020
7TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Welcome to Worship and Annoucements Dr. Enikő Ferenczy

Gathering Words

We look at this world, focusing on the pain and confusion, the fears and hatred which seem to abound.
For what can we hope?
We wait breathlessly for the goodness of creation to be made manifest in all the world, for this is the promise of God.
God is always with us, guiding, rescuing, healing, restoring us.
Get ready, dear friends, the promises of God are true.
Lord, quiet our spirits and open our hearts. Bring us hope and peace. AMEN.

Opening Prayer Cheryl and Bill Weiss

~inspired by Psalm 139~

God of surprises, we come here from the weariness of the week, from various triumphs, from fears and doubts. In some moments we feel at the "top of our game." Other times, we struggle to get through the challenges of the day.

Creator of all that is, you know us more intimately than we dare to recognize ourselves. You know our heart's deepest desires and joys. Also, its shadowy places.

As we worship, may we discover anew your unwavering love to us. May your love help us recognize that our lives are a mixture of wheat and weeds.

Search our hearts, O Spirit of renewal,
See if there is anything in us that chokes life and lead us into your ways.
In your holy name we pray. Amen.

Opening Hymn God is Here Today GTG 411

Prayer of Illumination Dr. Enikő Ferenczy

Scripture Reading
Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

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

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

Sermon Overwhelming the Weeds Dr. Enikő Ferenczy

Invitation to Offering Dr. Enikő Ferenczy

Hymn Help Us Accept Each Other GTG 754

Prayer of the People Cheryl and Bill Weiss

Holy One,
We come before you aware that we are a mixed bunch, with potential to bring forth goodness and beauty, but we and the world around us also nurture wheat-like things that poison, wound and break lives.
We are light and shadow, grace and judgement, goodness and sin, inside us and around us.
We lift our prayers to you because our deep longing is that the life-giving, nourishing fruit we bear may overwhelm whatever weeds may have crept in.
Hear our petitions for ourselves, for our community here in Wooster and the world:

Joys and concerns may be shared at this time…

May our capacity for love and friendship
grow stronger than our tendency to hatred and divisiveness;
May our search for truth and wisdom
be satisfied more than our quest for denial and self-justification;
May our desire for joy and goodness
overcome our lust for wealth and power;
May our journey to peace and wholeness
lead us away from the path of war, violence and self-destruction.

Transform us into people who live Your values and purpose
in a world that too easily chooses cursing over blessing,
wounding over healing,
and destruction over creativity;
so that all creation may finally find its place
in Your harvest of life and love. Amen.

Closing Hymn Come, Live in the Light GTG 749

Benediction Dr. Enikő Ferenczy

*Note: Prayer of the People adapted from the poem *Overwhelming the Weeds* by John van de Laar.