

Wheat and Weeds Together



**Bethel United Church of Christ
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost-
July 19, 2020**

"If you judge people, you have no time to love them."
Mother Teresa

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING MUSIC *"Days of Elijah"*
Bethel Praise Team

CALL TO WORSHIP *(responsive)*

We have gathered in God's open sanctuary for worship.

How awesome is this place!

Our journeys this week have brought us back here together.

In this place we will be renewed and refreshed.

God is here with us. Let us lift our voices in praise!

PRAYER OF INVOCATION *(unison)*

We have gathered today O God to hear your wisdom and offer our thanks for your presence. You provide opportunities for us to learn in new ways by telling us stories that open our eyes and our hearts. Pour out your spirit on your people, so we can live and learn and grow in Christ Jesus. Amen.

OPENING HYMN#2

"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" (vs. 1&2)

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Descant

4. Mor-tals, join the hap - py cho - rus; stars of morn - ing, take your part;

1. Joy - ful, joy - ful, we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love;
 2. All thy works with joy sur-round thee, earth and heaven re - flect thy rays,
 3. Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blest,
 4. Mor-tals, join the hap - py cho - rus; stars of morn - ing, take your part;

love di - vine is reign - ing o'er us, bind - ing those of ten - der heart. So

hearts un - fold like flowers be - fore thee, open - ing to the sun a - bove.
 stars and an - gels sing a - round thee, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.
 well - spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean depth of hap - py rest!
 love di - vine is reign - ing o'er us, bind - ing those of ten - der heart.

sing - ing, move we on - ward, vic - tors in the midst of strife;

Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, drive our fear and doubt a - way;
 Field and for - est, vale and moun - tain, flow - ery mead - ow, flash - ing sea,
 Thou our Fa - ther, Christ our Broth - er, all who live in love are thine;
 Ev - er sing - ing, move we on - ward, vic - tors in the midst of strife,

WORDS: Henry van Dyke, 1907, alt.
 MUSIC: Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824; arr. Edward Hodges, 1864.
 desc. Susan Adams, 1995.

SACRED STORY

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. 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?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. 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.'" 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." He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

"Weeding Our Garden"

SPECIAL MUSIC

"He is Exalted"

Bethel Praise Team

MESSAGE

"Wheat or Weed?"

HYMN#2

"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" (vs. 3&4)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/LORD'S PRAYER *(forgive us our sins...)*

OFFERING OF OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Invitation

Offertory

Response in Praise (tune 46)

*God of our lives whose call comes clear
through Jesus Christ, your presence near.
By Spirit led, your will we heed,
Your grace to show in word and deed. Amen.*

Prayer of Dedication

CLOSING HYMN#529

"I'm So Glad, Jesus Lifted Me"

I'm So Glad, Jesus Lifted Me

1. I'm so glad, Je - sus lift - ed me,
 2. Sa - tan had me bound,
 3. When I was in trou - ble,

I'm so glad, Je - sus lift - ed me,
 Sa - tan had me bound,
 When I was in trou - ble,

I'm so glad, Je - sus lift - ed me, sing - ing
 Sa - tan had me bound,
 When I was in trou - ble,

glo - ry, hal - le - lu - jah! Je - sus lift - ed me.

COMMISSION & BENEDICTION

Wait patiently for what God is yet to sow and reveal.

We live with the confidence and hope that your love will be planted and grow.

We live with God's vision for a world that is nurtured with wisdom and compassion and may God's blessing be poured out on all creation-wheat and weed alike. Let us say together:

Alleluia! Amen.

POSTLUDE

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 19, 2020

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Wheat and Weeds Together

Jesus taught an agricultural and fishing people who were close to the source of the food they shared and consumed. Most people are many steps separated from the production of the food we eat each day. But, even if we have less understanding of agriculture than our ancestors did, we still understand that Jesus' command to feed one another refers to physical as well as spiritual feeding.

Whether or not they know where or how their food is grown, many United Church of Christ congregations affirm that food once produced is meant to be shared. Food pantries and meals offered by UCC congregations live out the most basic form of care for one another - giving of food.

Windsor Severance Food Pantry at Faith UCC in Colorado gives away the canned goods familiar to many food pantries. But they also offer an evening of fellowship and eating together each Wednesday evening. The pantry truly offers "a place at the table" for anyone in the neighborhood looking for a hot meal. You can find out more about their work at: <https://www.faithunitedchurchofchrist.com/a-place-at-the-table>.

The food pantry in Kirtland, Ohio's Old South United Church of Christ has seen so much need in recent years that they have expanded into three times their former space. Now Kirtland's pantry has moved to a more modern model of providing food. Clients to the pantry now shop the shelves, as if they are in a grocery store. You can read more at: https://www.news-herald.com/news/ohio/kirtland-s-old-south-united-church-of-christ-reopens-food/article_10bbff05-6707-52e0-af30-f795736acf98.html.

In Connecticut, the food pantry in Norfolk United Church of Christ pantry recently expanded not space, but hours, making their food pantry more accessible to those in need in their town. More here: <http://norfolkctucc.org/ucc/norfolk-food-pantry/>.

Wherever you are located, give some thought to your local congregation. How do you follow Christ's lead in feeding people in body as well as spirit? Prayerfully consider if there is some way that you could expand your feeding programs.