



The seventh Sunday after TRINITY

19th July 2026

In the name of the + Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The Greeting

Grace, mercy, and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

HYMN

1 Let all the world in every corner sing,
"My God and King!"
The heavens are not too high,
God's praise may thither fly;
the earth is not too low,
God's praises there may grow.
Let all the world in every corner sing,
"My God and King!"

2 Let all the world in every corner sing,
"My God and King!"
The church with psalms must shout:
no door can keep them out.
But, more than all, the heart
must bear the longest part.
Let all the world in every corner sing,
"My God and King!"

Invitations to Confession

Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God,
who in Jesus Christ has given us
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
forgive us our sins, +
open our eyes to God's truth,
strengthen us to do God's will
and give us the joy of his kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Lord of all power and might,
the author and giver of all good things:
graft in our hearts the love of your name,
increase in us true religion,
nourish us with all goodness,
and of your great mercy keep us in the same;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

A reading from the Old Testament
Isaiah 44. 6-8

⁶ “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.
⁷ 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.
⁸ 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.”

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalms 86. 11-end

11 Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth;
knit my heart to you, that I may fear your name.
12 I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart,
and glorify your name for evermore;



13 For great is your steadfast love towards me,
for you have delivered my soul from the depths of the grave.
14 O God, the proud rise up against me
and a ruthless horde seek after my life;
they have not set you before their eyes.
15 But you, Lord, are gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and full of kindness and truth.
16 Turn to me and have mercy upon me;
give your strength to your servant
and save the child of your handmaid.

17 Show me a token of your favour,
that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed;
because you, O Lord, have helped and comforted me.

12 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. 13 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

HYMN

City of God, how broad and far
outspread thy walls sublime!
The true thy chartered freemen are
of every age and clime.

How purely hath thy speech come down
from man's primeval youth!
How grandly hath thine empire grown
of freedom, love and truth!

One holy Church, one army strong;
one steadfast, high intent;
one working band, one harvest song,
one King omnipotent

How gleam thy watch fires through the night
with never fainting ray!
How rise thy towers, serene and bright,
to meet the dawning day!

In vain the surge's angry shock,
in vain the drifting sands;
unharm'd upon the eternal Rock
the eternal City stands.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

Welcome with meekness the implanted word

That has the power to save your souls

Alleluia.

The Holy Gospel is from the 13th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew beginning at the 24th verse.

Glory to you O Lord

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.'"

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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ

Reflection

As last week with the parable of the sower, this week's parable, the weeds and tares, is also explained by Jesus.

The idea and images were very familiar in the ancient world. Unlike our farming methods today, both sowing and reaping were precarious and labour intensive and the outcome always variable and uncertain. Sprouted wheat is almost impossible to distinguish from sprouted 'tares'*. It is not until the seed head is formed that it becomes obvious. By that time the roots have become so intertwined that it is impossible to pull up the weed without damaging the wheat.

Both are left to grow together. After harvest and threshing the seeds were spread on the ground and the dandel seeds (greyish in colour) removed by women. Dandel is slightly poisonous, so separation is essential. The mention of an 'enemy' sowing dandel was not unknown. It was codified in Roman law, forbidden and punishment laid down.

So much for the factual explanation; Jesus' hearers would know this situation well. It is a picture of the coming Kingdom of God and perhaps the most practical parable which Jesus ever told.

It teaches that we will live now with two aspects of perceived 'wrongness'. The first is the one often used as a cry against God; if God is Almighty and good why do awful things happen? This is often heard following a natural catastrophe, earthquake, tsunami, hurricane, etc. Our world is not a dead planet. Of all known planets it is the only one with tectonic plates – such movement sustains life. Land masses move; weather shapes our world (as we are only too aware now). It is vibrant with continued creation.

Change will be constant, and it will have its effect on the natural world and its creatures which include us. This is just how it is. A world where none of this happened would not be 'alive' as ours is. Earth scientists use the concept of Gaia to describe the earth as a complex living organism. Our lived experience is within the bigger picture of the world and our place within the universe.

Second it suggests hostile power in the world, seeking and waiting to destroy the good seed. In our daily lives we are aware of the influence which will help the seed of the word (God's word within us) grow and the ever-present influence of the world around us and our own inner struggles. Add to this the enemy whose purpose is to alienate us from God. Jesus said the Way was narrow and hard that leads to life, but broad and easy that leads to destruction. It is all too easy to drift through life; the Christian life will not allow this, we are to be people of prayer and scripture, vigilant and strong in faith

The parable also teaches us how hard it is to distinguish between those who are in the Kingdom and those who are not. We are much too quick to classify people and to label them good or bad without knowing necessary knowledge. We are not to be quick in our judgements. The reapers in the story were all for pulling up the weeds and then the whole harvest would have been lost. Judgement awaits harvest time; but it is the whole of our life that matters. We may make great mistakes but recover ourselves and redeem the time. Knowing only a part of a life is not the basis for the judgement of the whole.

This parable teaches two things; a warning not to judge other people and a warning to us that in the end there comes the judgment of God. There is a new world to redress the balance of the old. The only one with the right to judge is God.

This can seem a fearful thing and an 'unpleasant' teaching which is why it is rarely given so as not to offend – but it is there from the lips of Jesus. Oddly, people who find this offensive can, at the same time, quite glibly condemn people to 'hell' which suggests they demand righteous judgement. It seems that we hold the persistent idea of right and wrong and good and bad – judgment is recognised.

It is here that the saving work of Jesus is the glorious truth. This is the 'good news', the Gospel:

'God loved the world so he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes him will not die but would at that point have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world in order to judge the world, but so that the world would be saved through his Son. Whoever believes him is not judged; but whoever does not believe him has already been judged...'

As Christians the 'judgement' we face is, what have we done with the grace given us – what has been our response to so great a salvation?

'bearded darnel' (lolium temulentum)

The Apostle's creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Intercessions

In peace, let us pray to Jesus our Lord,
who ever lives to make intercession for us.

Jesus calls us to obedience.

Lord you call men and women to follow you. Challenge us. Keep us from just being converts - taking comfort in ideas about you - but help us hear and understand your call to be your disciples, to learn from you, to be changed by you and to make a difference with our lives.

Jesus calls us to hope.

For your church here and throughout the world we pray. Enable us by your spirit to proclaim boldly that you are the source of truth, of real life, and the way to know God as Father. Help us do this by the way we live as well as what we say.

Jesus calls to responsibility

We hold in our prayer those who have authority and power. Our King and Government and leaders of nations. By your Spirit, strengthen what is good and restrain what is evil. Make us good stewards of the gift of creation and give us wisdom to repair and restore, for we are accountable for our common life.

Jesus gives us forgiveness.

Search my heart Lord, help me to release any I hold in unforgiveness so that they and I may be free.

Jesus calls us to love.

You have blessed us with so much for which we give thanks. Now open our hands and our hearts as we are often the answers to our prayers. Break our hardness open to generosity – not just the easy way with money but with the gift of time, of ourselves.

Jesus the resurrection.

Comfort the bereaved. Receive in your mercy those who have died this night and those who come to our minds now whom we remember – those who were dear to us. Those we have forgotten but who were dear to us in their time - have mercy. We are thankful for their lives, how they enriched ours, and we place them in your love.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.
Amen

Being made one by the power of the Spirit,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever.
Amen

Blessings and Ending

The God of all grace
Who called you to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus
Establish, strengthen, and settle you in the faith
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
Be with us and remain with us always.
Amen

HYMN

Eternal Ruler of the ceaseless round
Of circling planets singing on their way;
Guide of the nations from the night profound
Into the glory of the perfect day;
Rule in our hearts, that we may ever be
Guided and strengthened and upheld by thee.

We would be one in hatred of all wrong,
One in our love of all things sweet and fair,
One with the joy that breaketh into song,
One with the grief that trembles into prayer,
One in the power that makes thy children free
To follow truth, and thus to follow thee.

O clothe us with thy heavenly armour, Lord,
Thy trusty shield, thy sword of love divine:
Our inspiration be thy constant Word;
We ask no victories that are not thine.
Give or withhold, let pain or pleasure be;
Enough to know that we are serving thee.

