

New Hope Lutheran Church

189 Regent St. 12 Collins Dr.
Sudbury, Ontario Copper Cliff, Ontario
P3C 4C4 P0M 1N0
705-673-2933 705-682-2511
email: office@nhlc.ca
website: nhlc.ca
face book: New Hope Lutheran Church

Pastor:

Rev. Charles Nolting
phone: 705-920-3573 email: pcn@nhlc.ca

July 19, 2020

7th Sunday after Pentecost

**ALL EVENTS FOR THE COMING
WEEK HAVE BEEN CANCELLED**

Please remember to send in your offering.

*We now have a **donate button** on our web site nhlc.ca*

Previous Sunday sermons and bible studies can be found on the website.

The office is closed, but phone messages, email and mail are being checked regularly.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Fred, Pentti, Esme, Martha, Derek, Maria and Kai.

Funeral Frances Korpi 72 yrs



Mighty, gracious, compassionate Lord, we pray today for the family of Frances Korpi, that you would comfort them in their grief, guide them in their sorrow, and give them your peace. We pray this in the name of Jesus our Lord and Savior.
Amen

First Reading 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.”

Psalm 86:11 – 17

11 Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. 12 I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever. 13 For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths, from the realm of the dead. 14 Arrogant foes are attacking me, O God; ruthless people are trying to kill me— they have no regard for you. 15 But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. 16 Turn to me and have mercy on me; show your strength in behalf of your servant; save me, because I serve you just as my mother did. 17 Give me a sign of your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame, for you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

Second Reading Romans 8:12 – 25

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 first fruits 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.

Gospel Matthew 13:24 – 30, 36 – 43

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.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

July 19, 2020 – 7th Sunday after Pentecost From the Summer Sermon Series 2020 by Rev. Kathy Martin

Jesus put before the crowd 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. For a few weeks this summer, Matthew’s gospel takes us down by the sea where a huge crowd has gathered. It is so large that the only way Jesus can continue to be seen and heard is to push back from the shore in a boat. From there he presents, in rapid succession, one curious story after another, inviting those listening into a place of thoughtful, imaginative reflection on the nature of life in the kingdom of heaven.

Listen! A sower went out to sow.....
The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed,
like yeast, like treasure hidden in a field,
like a merchant in search of fine pearls,
like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind.....

all these stories and parables including the one we have before us today about weeds in a wheat field.

It is an interesting parable to read in the midst of a global pandemic when the weeds in our world, in ourselves, are ever so obvious everywhere. Spending a lot of time and energy trying to discover how they got there seems a lot less important than trying to figure out what to do now that they have appeared.

As with all of his parables, Jesus starts his story with a situation from everyday life that his audience would have recognized immediately. A farmer sows good seed in a field but

at night an enemy, a rival, enters and scatters seeds for weeds. In time, those working in the field discover the weeds and come to the landowner to point out the problem. “Did you not sow good seed in your field?” “Where, then, did these weeds come from?” The farmer’s reply is brief “an enemy has done this.”

What now? What is the best way to handle this situation? The workers offer to take on the job. Their plan is to head straight into the wheat field and begin pulling weeds. It sounds like a reasonable approach. However, pulling weeds is rarely as straightforward as it seems.

The weed Jesus is talking about is something called darnel or ‘false wheat’ as it was known. It is a rye grass that looks almost identical to wheat through most of its development but when it matures, the seed it produces is poisonous. It is risky to remove since this weed often wraps its roots around those of the grain and hastily plucking out one might mean the end of the other. The problem with the worker’s approach is that some of the weeds the workers pull out might be grain and some of the “wheat” they leave in, may later turn out to be weeds. There is no way to easily tell until the plants are mature.

The farmer tells his workers to leave the field alone, to let the wheat and weeds grow together until the harvest. It may sound as though the farmer is favouring the weeds over the wheat but this is not the case. Out of an abundance of caution and in the hope that all the wheat will survive, the farmer decides that patience is the best option.

It is not Jesus’ intent to tell us we are to ignore the evil in this world and do nothing about it. There is a time and place to take action but the point of the parable is that we are not to do so when it is difficult to tell whether something is evil, a weed and contrary to the gospel or simply a bit of wheat that we do not recognize yet.

The church has been wrong enough times in these situations of trying to determine what is wheat and what is weed, that we need to exercise a fair bit of caution before we judge or uproot things we think don’t belong. I think of the church’s involvement in unbelievable things in the past like witch burning or crusades, in our treatment of the LGTBQIA+ community, or... well I’m sure if you take a few moments it won’t take you long to add to the list. Attempts to weed out those we think don’t belong can have horrible consequences for generations.

Barbara Brown Taylor says in her sermon on this text, “Sometimes it is mighty hard to tell the difference between a good plant and a bad one especially when it can act both ways. I suppose we have all had the experience of uprooting the raspberries by mistake or protecting something interesting that turns out to be a thistle. I don’t know what makes us think we are any smarter about ourselves or about the other people in our lives. We are so quick to judge, as if we were sure we knew the difference between wheat and weeds, good seed and bad, but that is seldom the case. Turn us loose with our machetes and there is no telling what we will chop down and what we will spare. Meaning to be good servants, we go out to do battle with the weeds and end up standing in a pile of wheat” ¹

Weeds and wheat, I didn’t expect to see this parable come to life during the global pandemic. Think back with me for a minute to the anxiety and pace of those first few weeks of COVID-19 here in Canada. Businesses were closing, grocery shelves were emptying and no one was sure what the future was going to hold. Some of us were fortunate to have employment that allowed us to work from home but many people lost their income when their place of business or their children’s schools closed. There was a palatable sense of panic as people wondered how they would pay their rent and other bills, or buy groceries. Employment Insurance would not work for most and many people needed the help right away.

Almost overnight, government leaders and staff set aside party politics and worked together to create the Canada Emergency Response Benefit or CERB. You may recognize it more by the numbers. It is the \$2000/month program for people who had to stop working for reasons related directly to COVID-19. One of the things that makes it so unusual and controversial is the government’s decision to use what I would call a “wheat and weeds” approach to this program.

You see, to ensure people could receive their payment quickly the application is on the “honour” system. Rather than a lengthy interview process and numerous verifications, CERB is paid to anyone who states that they qualify simply by applying. There is almost no screening so nearly every application receives approval.

You may remember, almost immediately, people were upset. There were many questions about the lack of scrutiny and financial controls for this mixed field of applicants “What about those are not really eligible but end up getting the money

anyway?” “How will you root out the falsified applications?”
“What kind of punishment will there be for those who take advantage of the system?”

Patiently, calmly and in a way that made it evident that they had already considered most of these questions, our government indicated that they had decided to err on the side of grace. They would trust that in time things would be sorted out. What was needed most now was to ensure that those who needed the funding would have it, and have it quickly...and that no one in need would be missed.

I never imagined there would be a day that I would compare the actions of our politicians to the wise, gracious and patient farmer in this parable. Our story is not a perfect fit but it is close enough. It is a glimpse of the way God is at work in our world, in the places and the people where we least expect God to be. This parable might sound like judgement but it is really all about grace and the incredible patience of God made known to us most fully in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God. Amen

¹¹ Barbara Brown Taylor, The Seeds of Heaven: Sermons on the Gospel of Matthew.

Prayers

Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

Gracious God, your word has been sown in many ways and places. We pray for missionaries and newly planted congregations around the world. Inspire us by their witness to the faith we share.

Creating God, the mountains and hills burst into song and the trees and fields clap their hands in praise. We pray for the birds and animals who make their home in the trees, and for lands stripped bare by deforestation. Empower us to sustainably use what you have given.

Reigning God, we pray for our nation's leaders. Increase their desire for justice and equality. We pray for our enemies. Bridge the chasms that divide us and guide authorities to a deep and lasting peace.

Abiding God, care for all who are in need. For those who are doubting, renew faith. For those who are worrying,

provide release. For those who are struggling, ease burdens. For those in fear, give hope.

Renewing God, revive your church in this place. Nourish and nurture the seeds you have planted, that we might grow as disciples. Replace what has been depleted. Sustain our ministries and deepen relationships with the wider community.

Eternal God, we give thanks for all who have died. Comfort us in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection.

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**