

**Bulletin for Sunday**

**19th July 2020**

Dear Friends

Greetings! Last week our gospel reading was the familiar agricultural parable of the sower. This week we return to the fields with another parable, perhaps more appropriate to the current season - the story of the wheat and the weeds.

Hymn:           New every morning is the love                   (Rejoice & Sing 536)

Prayer:           God of creation, every day is a gift from you,  
and every morning we awake to new opportunities.  
We thank you for today - wherever it may take us;  
we thank you for the constant growth which life involves;  
and we ask your blessing on everything we do,  
and everything we give in your service,  
today and every day.   Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings:           Matthew chapter 13: verses 24-30 and 36-43

Reflection:   Those of us who are less than perfect gardeners are familiar with the idea that the plants that grow in our gardens are not always exactly or exclusively what we expected! There are so many ways that a weed can make its way into the soil next to the intended plants: perhaps seeds blown on the wind, introduced in home-made compost, or lying dormant from many years ago.

In Jesus' parable the weeds were probably darnel, a species of ryegrass which looks like wheat, both as a seed and as a young plant, and has been sneaking into our fields ever since people first cultivated wheat. It tends to be poisonous, so farmers want to remove it; but its roots go deeper than those of the wheat, so pulling it up at an early stage may lead, disastrously, to the wheat being pulled up with it. The wheat and weeds must be allowed grow together - definitely a case of patience being a virtue.

We are all aware that the world we live in, like the field of the parable, contains both good and bad - both the signs of God's kingdom, and things which are clearly wrong, perhaps even evil. Like the slaves (or servants) in the story, we want to have things sorted out - to live in a world where there are no weeds, but everything is cozy and good, all 'motherhood and apple pie' as the saying goes. Jesus counsels that there will be a time

for that, but the time is not now; and that the responsibility for creating this monoculture of wheat isn't ours, but God's.

Does this mean we should ignore injustice, or abandon victims of abuse to their plight? Surely not. God is already at work in the world - it isn't static. But we do have to be sure we are working with God, rather than entirely on our own initiative. We need the humility to remember that God can tell the difference between the wheat and the weeds, and sometimes we can't.... Amen

Hymn: God is working his purpose out (R&S 573)

Prayer: God of glory... and God of love,  
we pray for our world and all it's people:  
your children and our neighbours, no matter where they live.  
We pray for peace and understanding;  
and we pray that all may learn to care about each other.  
As the Coronavirus brings fear, grief and poverty around the globe  
we pray for the sick and the bereaved.  
We hold before you our loved ones, and our communities,  
our hopes, our fears and our future.....  
In Jesus' name, Amen

Hymn: Thou whose almighty word (R&S 38)

May we become aware of the many good things  
planted by God in our world;  
and may the blessing of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with us and with all those we love  
this week and every week. Amen

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There will again be an evening service - Sunday at Six - on Zoom at six o'clock tonight;  
contact me for an invitation.

Please let me know of any news or prayer requests to be shared.  
Every blessing for the coming week - stay safe.

Anne Lewitt