



# ABOUT THE PROPERS

*An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service*



## Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 11

July 23, 2023



### The Christian Lives as Wheat Among Weeds

Christians are pictured as wheat planted by the Lord. Evil and unbelieving evildoers are pictured as weeds. We might want God to take care of evil now—to pull up all the weeds. But he tells us to wait for the harvest. God is going to fix the problem of evil in this world, but it might not be today or even tomorrow. What does God want us to do while we wait? He wants us to live like wheat among weeds, serving the purpose for which he planted us. That means being faithful, fruitful, and mindful of the coming harvest.

### The Propers

*The Propers are those portions of the service that change (i.e. are “proper” to) each Sunday or season of the church year. The Propers differ from the Ordinary (from the Latin ordo, which means “regular order”) portions of the liturgy, which do not change (e.g. the Lord’s Prayer). The Propers offer the variety to the worship service and emphasize particular worship themes throughout the liturgical calendar.*

#### First Lesson <sup>1</sup>

Isaiah 44:6-11

Like wheat among weeds, Christians live surrounded by evil in this world. But God promises that the presence of evil in this world does not mean that God doesn’t care for us.

#### Second Lesson

Romans 1:18-25

Jesus’ parable about the wheat and weeds could give the impression that God is ambivalent about evil. But God’s wrath is real and will be fully revealed at the harvest.

#### Gospel of the Day <sup>1</sup>

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

God intended to have a weed-free field of wheat. From the beginning, however, the enemy thwarted his intentions with temptation and sin. How many Christians have seen the evil all around them and pondered the servants’ question, “Didn’t you sow good seed?” How many churchmen have tried to separate the wheat and weeds in the kingdom with rules or monasteries, with inquisitions or Pharisaical laws? Anyone who tries only succeeds in ruining wheat along with the weeds. They uproot the faith of the weak who fall into sin; they trample the faith of the strong by feeding their pride. The Lord most certainly has a plan to separate the wheat and weeds—just not yet. He has servants standing by to do the work—they’re just not us. Instead, God urges his people to live with their eye on the coming harvest. God does not want us to try and separate wheat from weeds before then. Christ tells us to live as wheat among the weeds of this world and wait expectantly for the harvest when the angels will sort it all out: weeds to fire, and wheat to shine as the righteous sons of God in the kingdom of their Father.

#### Psalm of the Day

Psalm 19 A

“The Heavens Declare the Glory of God.” God’s glory is seen in the beauty of the heavens and in the perfection of the law.

## Gospel Acclamation

Romans 11:33

“Oh, the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!” St. Paul tells us that God’s wisdom, knowledge, judgments, and ways are beyond our comprehension. We cannot understand them. Yet as true believers, we are to praise our divine Creator, who has shown unbounded mercy and grace toward us.

## Prayer of the Day

O God, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit that, ever mindful of your final judgment, we may be stirred up to holiness of living here and dwell with you in perfect joy hereafter; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## Hymn of the Day

491 “Come, You Thankful People, Come” (Henry Alford, 1810-1871)

## Minor Festivals

St. James the Elder, Apostle (July 25)

## Church Year Season<sup>3</sup>

Sundays after Pentecost

After reliving the great events of the life of Christ, the worshipping Church spends half a year focusing on the teachings of Christ. The Church wears green during the season of Pentecost as the Spirit uses those teachings of Jesus to grow the faith of believers. The appointed lessons cover a great body of doctrine for faith and life.

## Colors & Symbolism

Sundays after Pentecost: Green

Green is the color of life, refreshment, growth, and regeneration. Whereas the first half of the Church Year (the “Festival Half” or the “Half Year of Our Lord”) focused on the life of Christ during his earthly ministry, the emphasis for the second half (the “Non-Festival half” or the “Half Year of the Church”) shifts to the result of Christ’s work through the Word: the work of defining and creating faith, and inspiring its fruits. The theme of the Christian’s growth in faith (like healthy green plants) fills the season.

## Nain Paraments

Sundays after Pentecost

Superfrontal: When Isaiah was called to be a prophet of the LORD, two seraphs (a class of angels) appeared and called out to one another, “Holy, Holy, Holy” (Isaiah 6:3). The threefold repetition of the divine adjective emphasizes the infinite holiness of the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Some congregations count the Sundays in this season of the Church Year as the Sundays after the festival of the Holy Trinity, calling it the “Trinity season,” or the “Sundays after Trinity.” That is why most paraments for this season feature symbols of the Holy Trinity.

Lectern antependium: The equilateral triangle is one of the oldest emblems of the Holy Trinity. The three equal sides and angles represent the equality, unity, and co-eternal nature of the three persons of the Trinity. Though they are three distinct persons, they are of one essence as one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). The three interwoven circles represent the three members of the Trinity and emphasize their unity and eternal nature; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are without beginning or end.

Pulpit antependium: At each point of the triangle (the significance of the triangle is explained above) is a nimbus, Latin for *cloud*. The nimbus appears as a circle, or a halo. In Christian artwork, nimbi surround the head of the Father (when he is depicted as a human), Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit (when he is depicted as a dove) to signify their glory and holiness. In artistic depictions of believers (saints), nimbi are placed around their heads to show that they have been made holy by God’s grace in Christ and through faith. The three fish in between the nimbi and that meet in the middle of the triangle signify Christians who are united to the Triune God by faith. Fish have come to represent the followers of Jesus because believers have been brought into the ship of God’s church through the efforts of those who proclaim Gospel (cf. “fishers of men” in Matthew 4:19).

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

<sup>2</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

<sup>3</sup> Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

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