



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 11

July 19, 2026



What Makes Christians Different
Christians Live as Wheat Among Weeds

The wheat that grows in the Middle East is a variety that looks much like wild grass or weeds. It is difficult to tell wheat and weeds apart until shortly before harvest time, when the wheat stalks develop a head containing the kernels of grain. Pulling the weeds out of a wheat field could lead to pulling up a fair amount of wheat. People need to wait for the harvest to separate wheat from weeds. Jesus uses that image to illustrate life this side of heaven. What makes Christians different? They are wheat planted by the Lord. Unbelieving evildoers are pictured as weeds. We might want God to take care of evil now, pulling up all the weeds. But he tells us to wait for the harvest on the Last Day when he will fix the problem once and for all. 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.

First Lesson ¹

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 he doesn't care for us. He promises to preserve his Church in righteousness because he alone is the "King of Israel, Israel's Redeemer." Since all things are in his gracious care and keeping, "do not tremble, and do not be frightened."

Second Reading

Romans 1:18-25

Unbelievers have no excuse for not turning to the Lord in repentance. Creation demonstrates God's existence, and God has written knowledge of his law on the hearts of all people. 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 ¹

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 ⁴

Psalm 19 A

"The Heavens Declare the Glory of God"

The Church sings Psalm 19 in services that investigate the interplay between the natural knowledge of God and the revealed knowledge of his perfect Word. The Lord God reveals his glory, and human beings become aware of both their sinfulness and their salvation. Martin Luther said, "Psalm 19 is a prophecy of the gospel. It goes out into all the world and is spread abroad under heaven day and night. The old law is removed, and the new law of the gospel shines just like the sun in every land, to teach, enlighten, comfort, and purify everything everywhere."

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.

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.

Hymn of the Day

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

Church Year Season ¹

Season 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.

Minor Festivals

St. Mary Magdalene (July 22)

Mary was a woman who came from Magdala on the southwest coast of the Sea of Galilee. She became a devoted follower of Jesus after he cast seven demons out of her (Mark 16:9; Luke 8:1-2). She is often regarded as the sinful woman who anointed Jesus’ feet and wiped them with her hair (Luke 7:37-50). She was among the women who witnessed Jesus’ death and burial (Matthew 27:56; John 19:25). On Easter morning, she went to Jesus’ tomb and was the first person to whom the risen Lord appeared (Mark 16:1-9).

Colors & Symbolism

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).

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

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

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

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