

St. Matthew 13:24b

“The Kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.”



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 23, 2023

Prelude

*The Processional Hymn *Come, Ye Thankful People, Come* (ELW) No. 693

*The Confession and Forgiveness (ELW) page 94

P: In the name of the Father, and of the †Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: God of all mercy.....of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Most merciful God,

C: We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P: In the mercy of almighty God,.....in the name of the Father, and of the †Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

*The Apostolic Greeting (ELW) page 138

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

*The Kyrie (*sung response*) (ELW) page 138

P:, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: Amen.

*The Hymn of Praise *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound* (ELW) NO. 779

*Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray,

C: Let Your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Your humble servants; that You may hear our petitions. In all things, help us to ask for what will please You; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Reading

Isaiah 44:6-8

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

The Psalmody for the Day *(read responsively)*

Psalm 119:57-64

⁵⁷You only are my portion, O LORD;

I have promised to keep Your words.

⁵⁸I entreat You with all my heart,

be merciful to me according to Your promise.

⁵⁹I have considered my ways

and turned my feet toward Your decrees.

⁶⁰I hasten and do not tarry

to keep Your commandments.

⁶¹Though the cords of the wicked entangle me,

I do not forget Your law.

⁶²At midnight I will rise to give You thanks, because of Your righteous judgments.

⁶³I am a companion of all who fear You

and of those who keep Your commandments.

⁶⁴The earth, O LORD, is full of Your love;

instruct me in Your statutes.

Second Reading

Romans 8:18-27

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

*The Gospel Acclamation (*sung*)

(ELW) page 142

C: Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia.

* The Gospel

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

C: Glory to You, O Lord. (sung after announcement of the Gospel)

C: Praise to You, O Christ. (sung after conclusion of the Gospel)

Sermon

Rev. Robert B. Grewe

*The Hymn of the Day

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

(ELW) No. 733

*The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints; the forgiveness of sins; the Resurrection of the body, and the Life everlasting. Amen.

*The Prayers of the Church (response)

P: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

*Sharing of the Peace

The Musical Offering

*The Offertory

Create in Me a Clean Heart

(ELW) No. 188

*The Lord's Prayer

C: Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Announcements

*The Benediction (*sung response*)

C: Amen, Amen, Amen.

*The Recessional Hymn

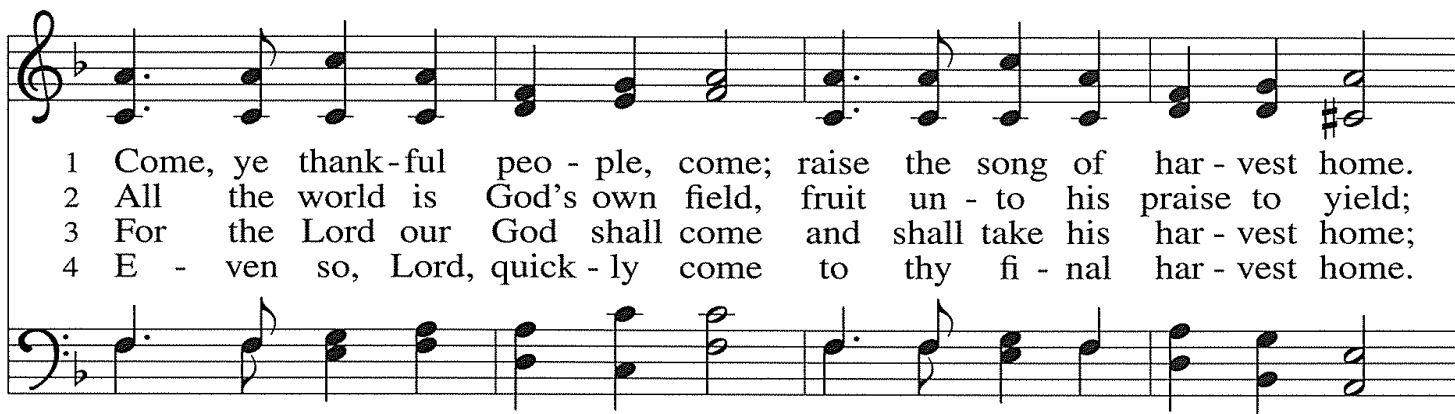
Blessed Assurance

(ELW) No. 638

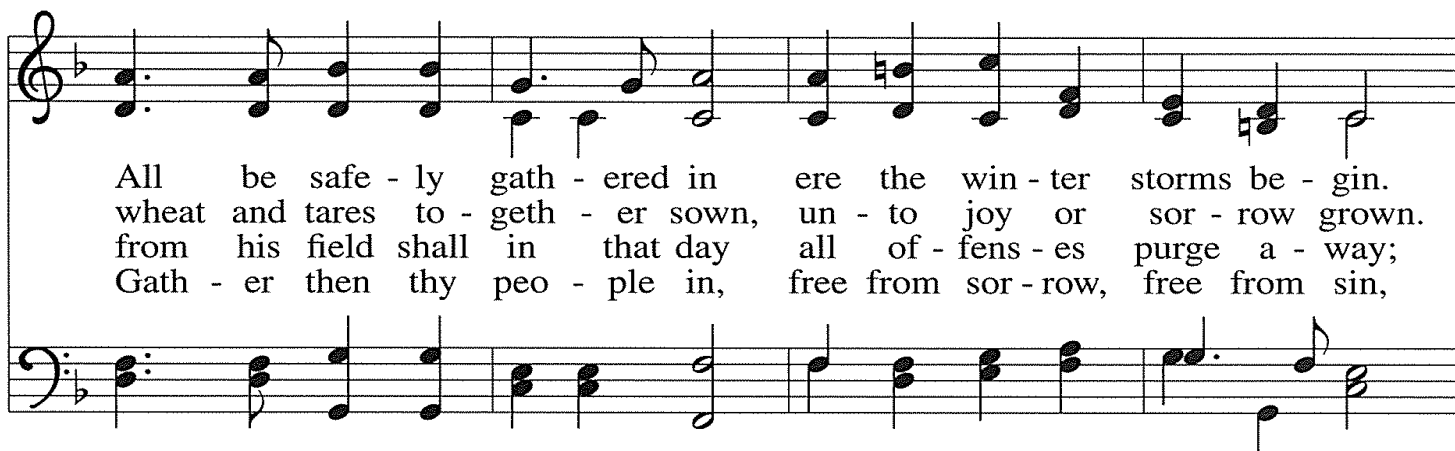
*The Dismissal (*response*)

C: Thanks be to God.

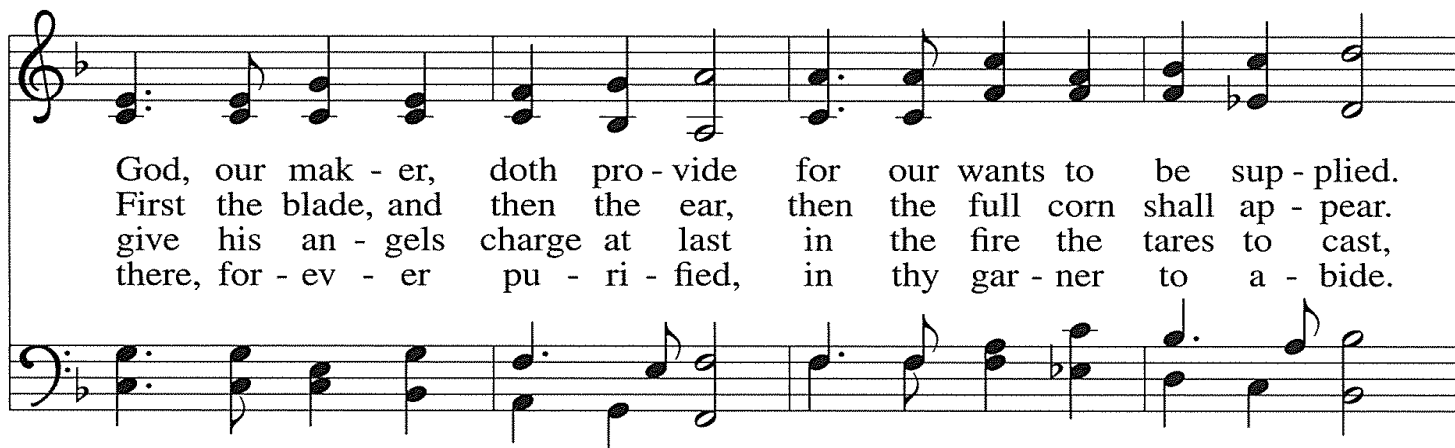
Postlude



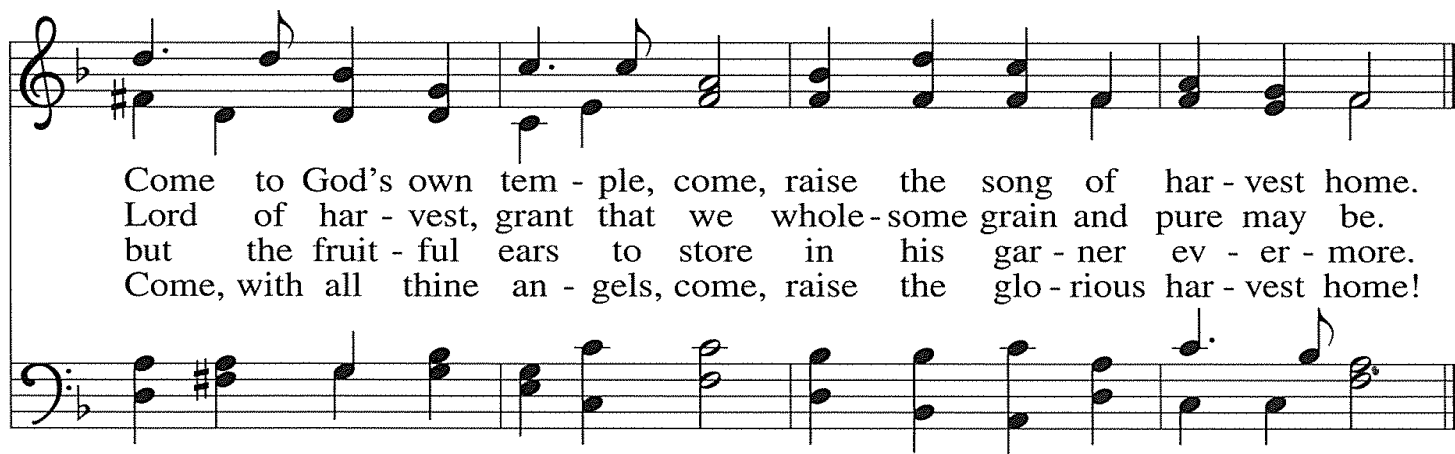
1 Come, ye thank-ful peo - ple, come; raise the song of har - vest home.
 2 All the world is God's own field, fruit un - to his praise to yield;
 3 For the Lord our God shall come and shall take his har - vest home;
 4 E - ven so, Lord, quick - ly come to thy fi - nal har - vest home.



All be safe - ly gath - ered in ere the win - ter storms be - gin.
 wheat and tares to - geth - er sown, un - to joy or sor - row grown.
 from his field shall in that day all of - fens - es purge a - way;
 Gath - er then thy peo - ple in, free from sor - row, free from sin,



God, our mak - er, doth pro - vide for our wants to be sup - plied.
 First the blade, and then the ear, then the full corn shall ap - pear.
 give his an - gels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast,
 there, for - ev - er pu - ri - fied, in thy gar - ner to a - bide.



Come to God's own tem - ple, come, raise the song of har - vest home.
 Lord of har - vest, grant that we whole - some grain and pure may be.
 but the fruit - ful ears to store in his gar - ner ev - er - more.
 Come, with all thine an - gels, come, raise the glo - rious har - vest home!

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

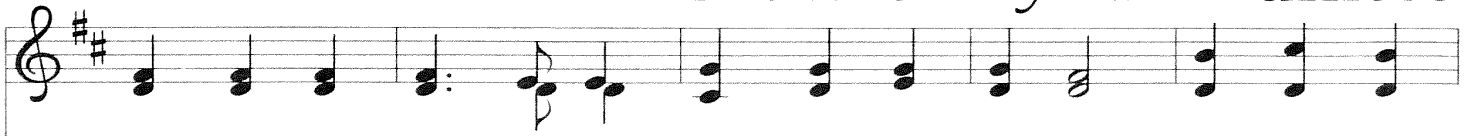
779

1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

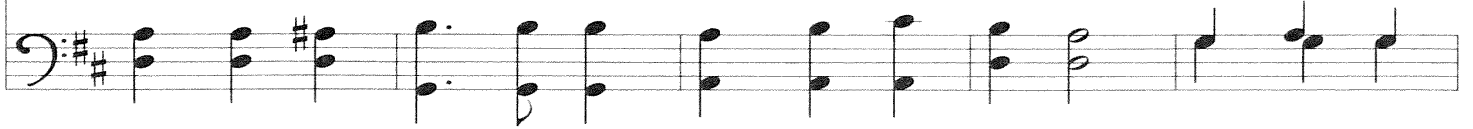
saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to

now am found; was blind, but now I see.
grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Great Is Thy Faithfulness



1 Great is thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther; there is no
 2 Sum - mer and win - ter and spring - time and har - vest, sun, moon, and
 3 Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth, thine own dear



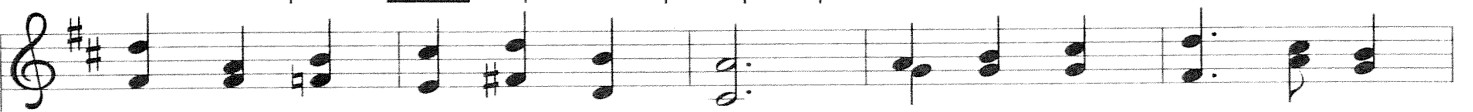
shad - ow of turn - ing with thee; thou chang - est not, thy com -
 stars in their cours - es a - bove join with all na - ture in
 pres - ence to cheer and to guide; strength for to - day and bright



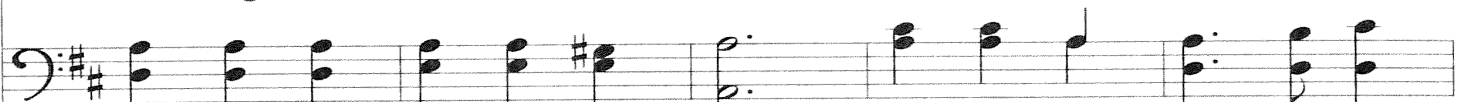
pas - sions they fail not; as thou hast been, thou for - ev - er wilt be.
 man - i - fold wit - ness to thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love.
 hope for to - mor - row, bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!

*Refrain*

Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Morn - ing by



morn - ing new mer - cies I see; all I have need - ed thy



hand hath pro - vid - ed; great is thy faith - ful - ness, Lord, un - to me.



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right

The first system of music consists of a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style with quarter and eighth notes. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff shows a melodic line with some rests and ties. The bass staff continues with a steady accompaniment.

pres-ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -

The third system continues the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff shows a melodic line with some rests and ties. The bass staff continues with a steady accompaniment.

store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,

The fourth system continues the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff shows a melodic line with some rests and ties. The bass staff continues with a steady accompaniment.

and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

The fifth system concludes the piece. The treble staff shows a melodic line with some rests and ties. The bass staff continues with a steady accompaniment.



- 1 Bless-ed as-sur-ance, Je-sus is mine! Oh, what a fore-taste of glo-ry di-vine!
 2 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, per-fect de-light, vi-sions of rap-ture now burst on my sight;
 3 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, all is at rest; I in my Sav-ior am hap-py and blest,



Heir of sal-va-tion, pur-chase of God, born of his Spir-it, washed in his blood.
 an-gels de-scend-ing bring from a-bove ech-oes of mer-cy, whis-pers of love.
 watch-ing and wait-ing, look-ing a-bove, filled with his good-ness, lost in his love.



This is my sto-ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long:



this is my sto-ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long.



First Lutheran Church

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The Rev. Robert B. Grewe

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Dennis Schmidt, Lutheran Lay Worship Leader

J. Judson Lacko, Lutheran Lay Worship Leader

The Flowers on the Chancel are given to the glory of God by the William's.

The Lay Reader is Dennis Schmidt.

Acolytes are Lillah and Elijah Clark.

Counters/Greeters today are R. Williams and H. Quedenfeld.

Welcome to our Visitors! The people of this congregation welcome you as you join us in worship this morning. Please sign the register, located in the narthex. If you have questions, please see the pastor or contact the church office.

Do you wish to become a member of First Lutheran Church? Please contact Pastor Grewe.

Nursery: We welcome all children to be a part of worship, but we realize that sometimes the service can be too long for the little ones. We have a nursery for those attending to the needs of infants and small children. There is a speaker in the nursery so that parents can still hear the service. You are welcome to use the nursery for the entire service, or just a small part.

Bell Choir Practice on Monday at 6 PM.

The Flower Chart for 2023 is posted in the narthex. If you wish to place flowers, (real or artificial) near the altar, sign your name opposite the date of your choice. You will be reminded of your date and asked for the wording you want in the bulletin two weeks before the due date.

Sign-up sheets are posted to host a coffee hour in 2023. Please write your names under the month you would like to host. The coffee hours have been a wonderful time of fellowship and the hosts have been awesome! Thank you!!

Sign-up sheets are posted for Lay Readers in 2023. Please sign up.

Please remember to continue contributing donations to our girls in Ethiopia.
Please consider this as a call to help others in need.

Please pray for those in need of healing:

Janet Burke, Shari Kienzle, Susan Westott, baby Isaac Christian, the Pollana family, Sylvia Sunstrum, Fritz Group, Rosemary Dittman, Eric Group, Danielle Sherman, Amy Verderber, Tillie and Larry, and Lou Mayne.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

PA Mental health support and referral line

1-855-284-2494

WASHINGTON, PA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS LINE

1-877-225-3567

WASHINGTON COUNTY BHDS LINE

724-228-6832

SCOTT BERRY DIRECT LINE

724-250-4079 (FOR CHURCH MEMBERS ONLY)

FOR OTHER NEEDS, CONTACT 211 OR THE CHURCH.

Church Offering Change: Our ushers will pass the plates around during the Musical Offering.

Listening for the Promise

Weekly Devotional

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost—July 23, 2023

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.” -Matthew 13:24b-25-

In this parable Jesus describes the Kingdom of God as a wheat field which a farmer has planted and into which an enemy has sown tares. Although the farmer's servants want to pluck out the tares, he tells them not to, lest they pull up the wheat along with the tares. Instead, he tells them to let the wheat and tares grow together until the harvest, at which time he will separate the tares from the wheat and burn them.

The point of the parable is that the Kingdom of God currently consists of a mixture of Christians and non-Christians. However, when Christ returns, the non-Christians will be separated from the Christians, judged, and removed. Moreover, from elsewhere in Scripture, we know that God's Kingdom will then come in its fullness with the entire creation being renewed. Thus, the fullness of God's Kingdom, the New Creation, and the final removal of the non-Christians all coincide.

But this leaves the question of what we are supposed to do in the meantime. Should we just wait passively for the end? This would make no sense. We live between the penetrating victory of Christ's first coming and the sweeping victory of his second coming. During this time, we are called to be salt and light (see Matt. 5:13-16) and to occupy until he comes (see Lk. 19:13). Yet, we don't know how the proportion of wheat and tares will vary over time. When Christ returns, will there be a wheat field with a minority of tares or a tare field with a minority of wheat?

However, in light of Christ's past and future victory and in light of his command to occupy, we engage the world in hope. And we do so precisely by being the wheat that He has called us to be, growing, bearing fruit, and displacing the tares organically. Of course, if we yank out the tares mechanically, we will damage the wheat around them. However, if we keep on bearing fruit, we may not only displace many tares, but even convert others to wheat! After all, since God's Spirit works through his word (see Heb. 4:12), the pointed application of God's word will soften some hearts while hardening others. Thus, some of the tares will convert; others will simply leave, and still others will choose to remain unconverted in the field. With these last we must patiently bear.