

CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH

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The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 12, 2026

Isaiah 55: 10-13; Psalm 65:1-13; Romans 8:1-11; Saint Matthew 13: 1- 9, 18-23

In nomine Jesu!

Imagine, for a moment, a world shaped by Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds. Not a perfect world—evil still grows alongside good—but a world where final judgment belongs to God alone. A world where we stop sorting one another into the saved and the suspect, the worthy and the disposable; where no one claims the role of purifier or judge, and all learn to live as recipients and witnesses of grace.

Imagine a society marked not by suspicion but by compassion: rich and poor, every race and culture, every neighbor held with patience, dignity, and restraint. Imagine communities that resist the urge to dominate, label, or erase, and instead practice forbearance, forgiveness, and peace.

This is the world Jesus opens before us. When the servants want to pull up the weeds, he warns them with the wisdom history keeps teaching us: "In gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them."

Can we see it? Can we picture it—not as fantasy, but as the holy "design of God's love"?

Imagine that vision in this moment: in Israel, Palestine, and Lebanon; in Russia and Ukraine; in Iran and the United States. Imagine it shaping how we speak about immigrants and refugees, how we order our economy, how we treat those who feel left behind, afraid, or unseen.

Can we see it here, now, in the world we actually inhabit?

Closer to home, what would this vision do to this metropolitan area—to our treatment of the working poor, the unhoused, children, strangers, and those whose lives do not mirror our own? What would it ask of our policing, our politics, our privileges, our congregation, our workplaces, and our homes?

Next Sunday we will hear Paul's great promise: "Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus." Put that promise beside the wheat and the weeds, and the church's mission becomes clear: not to purify the field by force, but to bear witness to the love from which no one is beyond God's reach.

Across two thousand years, the Church has often confused mission with control. We have preached the Gospel while baptizing domination; defended truth while wounding neighbors; championed freedom while denying it to others; served the poor while sometimes helping create their poverty. Called to be servants, we have too often become masters.

But Jesus and Paul give us another way. The parable teaches patience before God's mystery; the promise teaches trust in God's unbreakable love. Together they form a new imagination and send us into the world with a different mission—one nourished here at the table of the Holy Eucharist. Here, on this holy ground, wheat and weeds gather together. Here we discover again that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Separated—or so they believed—from the love of God, Israel lived as outcast exiles in Babylon, in a world painfully different from the one they had known. They wondered, as they lamented in the psalm, "How could we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?" Unable, and perhaps unwilling, to imagine a place where they and their God could be at home again, they stood where we so often stand: unable to see a way back to the life, the community, and the future they had lost. And still, into that exile, God spoke a promise through the prophet: "You shall go out in joy and be led back in peace." That promise is the Word which, as Isaiah declares, "shall accomplish that which [God] purpose[s], and succeed in the thing for which [God] sent it."

In the Eucharist we taste the first fruits of the final harvest. We receive the feast that is still to come. We stand together—not separated, not sorted, not cast out—but held in the love and compassion of God and sent to embody that compassionate love for the life of the world.

Imagine that! Receive that! And then, fed and strengthened, live toward that day, a day when the kingdom of heaven is not just imagined, but experienced "on earth as it is in heaven."

Amandus J. Derr, Interim Senior Pastor