

**The Presque Isle Congregational Church**  
**United Church of Christ**  
**July 23, 2023**

**Prelude**

Barbara Merryman

**Welcoming Music**

*You Are Welcome Here*

**Words of Welcome**

Jennifer Gillis-White

**Introit**

*Each Blade of Grass*

*Pacific Spirit United Church*

**Call to Worship**

One: As we harvest our growing abundance in this time of mid-summer, may we relish in the fruit of our labor,  
**Many: As we harvest the fruitful seeds of nature and God's Garden, let us share in the bounty with our neighbors.**

One: While we channel resources – water, light, fertile ground to the produce we desire in our gardens,

**Many: May we also recognize that the weed, the rabbit, the caterpillar also has needs for sustenance.**

One: We have enough, and an attitude of plentifulness increases through sharing.

**Many: For what our land grows with our tending, is only ours for a moment in time, filling a short term and immediate need.**

All: May we share the harvest by tithing back to nature, feeding the hungry among us, storing for the future without hoarding, and setting enough seed aside for the next season of planting.

**Opening Prayer**

God of many names, mother of all creation, father of all that is, womb of life, and wellspring of all that we can ever know, we invite your presence here as we seek to embody your loving spirit and create your presence among us. We are in need and we turn to you to be with us as we practice creating the kin-dom of heaven here on earth.

**Opening Hymn**

*Come, O Thankful People, Come*

**Prayer of Confession**

God of creation and plenty, it can be easy for us to forget the abundant nature of your love. We forget that there are ample riches from this earth if we manage your resources and we share generously among all your beloved children. We forget that we are all created in your divine beauty, perfect specimens of your holy vision for a people who can love without bounds, share without tallying, and celebrate among the great diversity you created to thrive together. Guide us to give of that abundance, to receive with grace and gratitude, and to turn our hearts from the perception of scarcity. We confess that we fall short; and we ask that you show us the path again to your fruitful garden where all things grow and flourish.

**Assurance of Pardon**

Let us know that God has always provided us with growth and abundance and will continue to guide us in the care of bounteous fields that spring forth with plant and animal, both weed and seed. We are all worthy of this enduring joy and sustenance as beloved children of God.

**Two-Minute Message/ Hymn**

*I Can Feel You Near Me God*

Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like someone who planted good seed in his field. While people were sleeping, an enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat and went away. When the stalks sprouted and bore grain, then the weeds also appeared “The servants of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Master, didn’t you plant good seed in your field? Then how is it that it has weeds?’ ““An enemy has done this,’ he answered. “The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us to go and gather them?’ “But the landowner said, ‘No, because if you gather the weeds, you’ll pull up the wheat along with them. Let both grow side by side until the harvest. And at harvest time I’ll say to the harvesters, “First gather the weeds and tie them together in bundles to be burned. But bring the wheat into my barn.””

Jesus left the crowds and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.” Jesus replied, “The one who plants the good seed is the Son of God. The field is the world. And the good seeds are the followers of the kingdom. But the weeds are the followers of the evil one. The enemy who planted them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the present age. The harvesters are the angels. Just as people gather weeds and burn them in the fire, so it will be at the end of the present age. The Son of God will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that cause people to fall away and all people who sin. He will throw them into a burning furnace. People there will be weeping and grinding their teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the Holy kingdom. Those who have ears should hear.”

**Reflection**

“The Parable of the Wheat and Tares”  
Written by Dr. Philip W. McLarty<sup>1</sup>

Jennifer Gillis-White

**Reflective Music**

Barbara Merryman

**Prayer of the People and The Lord’s Prayer**

Our **Creator\***, 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. Amen

*\*Please use whatever name is most familiar/comfortable when you pray to God.*

**Closing Hymn**

*Bringing in the Sheaves*

**Community News and Announcements****Benediction and Response**

God’s people, you are called to go forth and appreciate the weeds among us, as we have each been in the wrong place at times. Go from this place during this harvest time and taste the ripeness of a plump tomato, the sweetness of fresh steamed corn, the crisp coolness of cucumbers. Please go in the knowledge that there is enough for all, be it God’s earthly blessings that are so delicious and nourishing or God’s love that connects us. Share in these gifts and know that we are all enough.

*God Be With You*

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<sup>1</sup> “The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares.” McLarty, Philip W. Dr. Copyright 2004. Used with permission [.sermonwriter.com](http://sermonwriter.com).