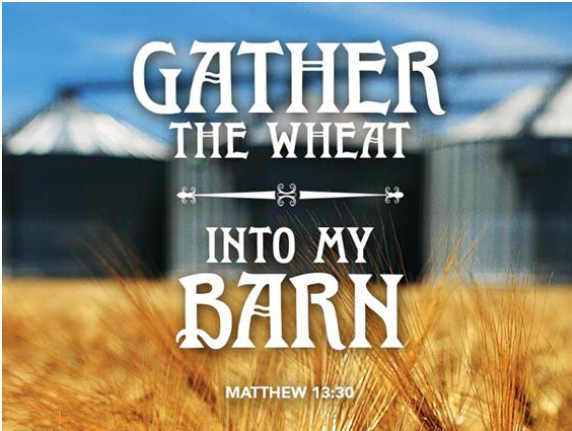


**Sunday, July 19, 2020**  
**Pentecost 7**  
**Grace Lutheran Church**  
**Somers Point, NJ 08244**  
**Interim Pastor: Rev. Kevin Hilgendorf**

**“In Nature There Are No Weeds”**



My dad had the title around the house as “The Happy Hoe-re.” It may have been something he grew up doing on the farm. We had a vegetable garden. Dad would be out there hoe-ing around carrots, beans, corn and the like. The weeds would not get a footing. However, dad kept hoeing beyond the garden and especially in the flower beds. To the chagrin of my mom saying, "Those were flowers planted there!"

I don't think dad would share this viewpoint on One Green Planet, an independent online publishing platform: "in nature there are no weeds." All plants have their roles, and if we can start to see the good in our weeds, perhaps they'll be welcome additions, or at least visitors, to our gardens or yards.

This past spring, I drove further down a familiar block in Manahawkin. To my surprise one yard was completely full of bright yellow blooms of dandelions! Wow an unexpected site in the midst of surrounding green yards! It was unbelievable! Didn't have my cell to take a pic. I wonder how the next door neighbors felt. Maybe this is for honey bees from a nearby hive. Dandelions leaves have nutritional value and according to my grandpa's how-to book, you can make dandelion wine. "In nature there are no weeds." All plants have their roles, if we can start to see the good in our weeds.

Leo Pasquale a writer let his yard just grow with all kinds of wild flowers. I have observed on a congested NJ parkway patches of delightful colorful wild flowers! I stopped pulling weeds. Now I trim them like I do with bushes and trees. If I see a milkweed, I leave it alone for the monarchs. If we can start to see the good in our weeds they can be welcomed as additions or visitors.

What do you think of the idea God does not sow weeds but we do by our own labels and then we act accordingly! We judge when we define who are righteous or unrighteous, good or evil, wheat or Tate's. I saw two young adults assisting an elderly man from the side walk back

up on his feet. Did I for a moment think this was a good act? I think very briefly because I did not see anyone wearing masks! I judged danger and risk in giving care without protective masks. Those without masks standing close to others are they good or evil or forgetful.

Jesus taught, "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get." (Matthew 7:1-2). *The Message* by Eugene Peterson puts it this way: "Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults- unless of course you want the same treatment. The critical spirit has a way of boomeranging."

Patience, don't be so quick to hand out judgment. Let both the weeds and wheat grow together until the harvest. Jesus explains, "The Son of Man will send his angels and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evil doers" (Matthew 13:41). You hear it when we say the creed, "He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end!"

One Saturday church work day, Jason volunteered garden duty to rake and pull up the weeds. He did not know like my dad what's what. As he was pulling up perennials, I stopped him and suggested something else for him to work on.

As we listen to this prayer we hope to see Christ in his kingdom let us pray: O Christ, you take upon yourself all our burdens so that, freed of all that weighs us down. We can constantly begin anew to walk with lightened step.

- from worry towards trusting

- from the shadows towards the clear flowing waters

- from our own will towards the vision of the coming kingdom,

And then we know, though we hardly dared hope so. That you offer to make every human being a reflection of your face. Amen. Your kingdom come on earth as in Heaven. Amen