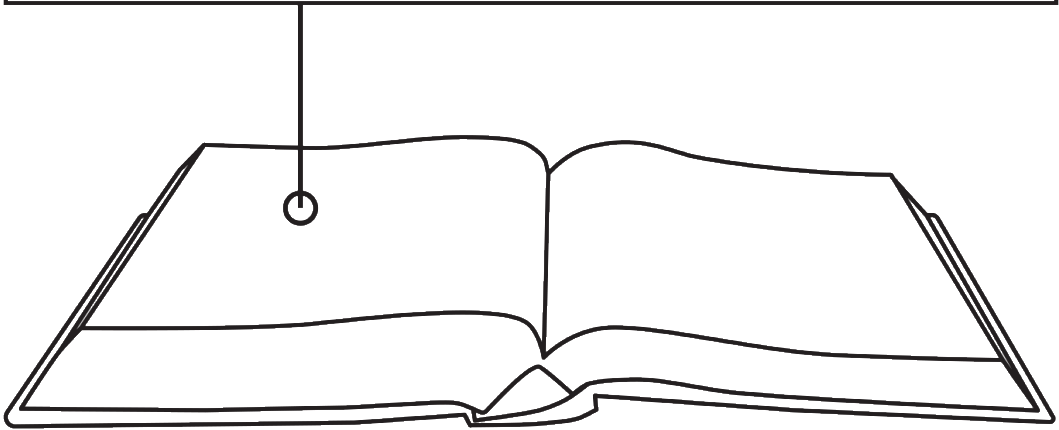


# Define: Christian



## **THE CHRISTIAN LIVES AS WHEAT AMONG WEEDS**

The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

# **BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH** | York, Nebraska

*July 23, 2023*

## **SERIES THEME: DEFINE CHRISTIAN**

Ask ten different people to define Christian and you may get ten different answers. One might say, "A Christian is someone who believes in Jesus." Okay. But the demons believe that Jesus exists and is the Son of God. So is that definition adequate? Another person might have a more negative view. He says, "A Christian is someone who believes he is better than others." Is that completely false? And if you aren't humble, does that mean you aren't Christian? In our next worship series Christ himself defines the term Christian and describes what Christians do. We will be struck by how often we do not do all those things. There likely are times when people could look at our behavior and assume we were unbelievers. Yet throughout this series Jesus will demonstrate that ultimately a Christian is one who runs to Christ for forgiveness precisely because he has failed to live like what he is—a Christian. As we receive the mercy of Christ, it moves us to strive with all our being to better fit Christ's beautiful definition, doing all the things Jesus says that Christians do.

## **THEME OF THE DAY: THE CHRISTIAN LIVES 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. Try and pull the weeds out of a wheat field and you will likely pull up a fair amount of wheat accidentally. So you need to wait for the harvest to separate wheat from weeds. This week Jesus uses that image to illustrate life this side of heaven. Christians are pictured as wheat planted by the Lord. Evil and unbelieving evildoers are pictured as weeds. We might want God to take care of evil now—to pull up all the weeds. But he tells us to wait for the harvest. God is going to fix the problem of evil in this world, but it might not be today or even tomorrow. 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.

**Worship Leader**  
**Organist/Pianist**

Pastor Justin Wilkens  
Timothy Richert

## **Acknowledgments**

Software distributed in partnership with Northwestern Publishing House. Created by Christian Worship: Service Builder © 2022 Concordia Publishing House. Scripture quotations The Holy Bible, Evangelical Heritage Version® (EHV®) copyright © 2017 The Wartburg Project/NPH. All rights reserved.  
[www.wartburgproject.org](http://www.wartburgproject.org)

## **The Service, Setting Two (page 172 in Christian Worship 21)**

### **Hymn: 873 Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray**

*Stand*

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

### **Confession**

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just  
and will forgive us our sins  
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**Holy God, gracious Father,**

**I am sinful by nature**

**and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.**

**I have not loved you with my whole heart;**

**I have not loved others as I should.**

**I deserve your punishment both now and forever.**

**But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins**

**with his innocent suffering and death.**

**Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

*Silence for meditation and reflection*

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

### **Lord, Have Mercy**

CW 174

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

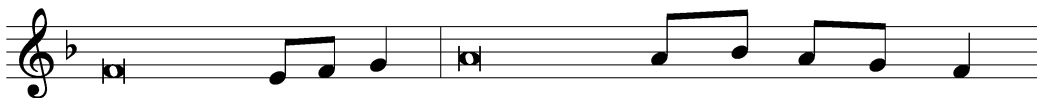
**Lord, have mercy.**

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

**Amen.**

### Glory Be to God on High

CW 157



Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



We praise you, we bless you, we wor - ship you, we glorify you,



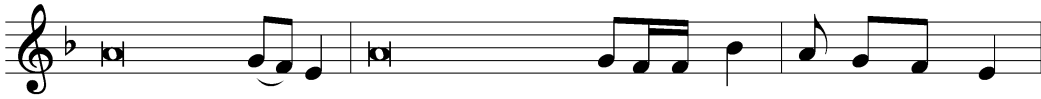
we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,



God the Fa-ther Al - mighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sin of the world;



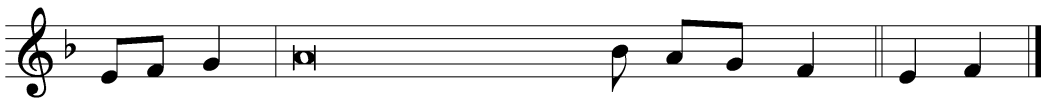
have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; re-ceive our prayer.



You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.



For you on-ly are holy; you on-ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the



Ho - ly Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

## THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

## Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

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.**

*Be seated*

## First Reading

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 God doesn't care for us.*

### The LORD, Not Idols

<sup>6</sup>This is what the Lord, the King of Israel,  
Israel's Redeemer, the Lord of Armies, says.

I am the first, and I am the last.

Except for me, there is no god.

<sup>7</sup> For who is like me? Let him declare it.

Let him recite in order for me the things that took place  
since the time I established an ancient people.

Or let them declare what is yet to come,  
and what is going to take place.

<sup>8</sup> Do not tremble, and do not be frightened.

Did I not announce this to you,  
and declare it already long ago?

You are my witnesses.

Is there any god except me?

There is no other Rock. I am not aware of any other.

<sup>9</sup> All those who form an idol are good for nothing.

All the things which delight them provide no benefit.

As for their witnesses—they do not see.

They know nothing, so they will be ashamed.

<sup>10</sup>Who is this who forms a god or casts a metal image that can provide no profit? <sup>11</sup>Look at him!

All his associates will be ashamed. The craftsmen are merely men. Let them all gather themselves  
and take a stand. They will be terrified and ashamed together.

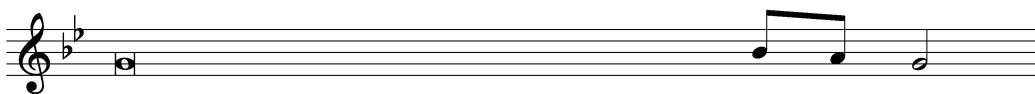
The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

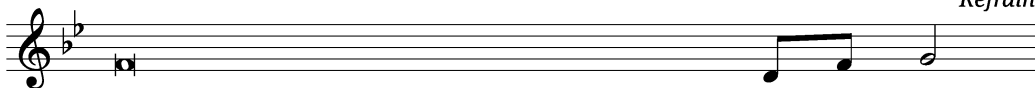
**Psalm of the Day: 19- In front of hymnal: The Heavens Declare the Glory of God**



Tone



Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!



How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

Tune: © 2010 GIA Publications, Inc. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 713578

## Gospel

Matthew 13:24–30,36–43

*The Lord has a plan to separate wheat and weeds. Christians will be perfectly separated from every evil at the final harvest.*

### The Parable of the Weeds

<sup>24</sup> He presented another parable to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. <sup>25</sup> But while people were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. <sup>26</sup> When the plants sprouted and produced heads of grain, the weeds also appeared. <sup>27</sup> The servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where did the weeds come from?' <sup>28</sup> He said to them, 'An enemy did this.' The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and gather up the weeds?' <sup>29</sup> 'No,' he answered, 'because when you gather up the weeds, you might pull up the wheat along with them. <sup>30</sup> Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "First, gather up the weeds, bind them in bundles, and burn them. Then, gather the wheat into my barn.'"<sup>31</sup> <sup>36</sup> Then Jesus sent the people away and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

<sup>37</sup> He answered them, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> The field is the world. The good seeds are the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the Evil One. <sup>39</sup> The enemy who sowed them is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the world. The reapers are angels. <sup>40</sup> Therefore, just as the weeds are gathered up and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the world. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will pull out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and those who continue to break the law. <sup>42</sup> The angels will throw them into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup> Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**



*Be seated*

## **Hymn of the Day: 491 Come, You Thankful People, Come**

### **Sermon**

*Stand*

### **Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell.**

**The third day he rose again from the dead.**

**He ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.**

**From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*Be seated*

## **Prayer of the Church**

Almighty God and Father, we thank you for all your mercies, especially for the gift of your Son, through whom you have revealed your gracious will. We praise you for the Holy Spirit and his working through the means of grace.

**Plant your Word in our hearts, and cause it to produce fruit in our lives.**

Strengthen and defend your Church, that by your Word and sacraments faith may grow and love toward all may increase.

**Support all who spread the light of your truth throughout the world.**

Keep our children in the grace of their baptisms. Enable their parents to train them in lives of faith.

**Raise up Christians to serve you in the ministry of the Word and in all godly walks of life.**

Preserve our nation in justice and honor. Guide and bless all who make, administer, and judge our laws.

**Give them wisdom that they may promote justice and hinder evil.**

Let your blessing rest on planting and harvest, commerce and industry, medicine and science, the arts and culture. Protect all who travel, and care for those whose work is difficult or dangerous.

**Be with all who devote themselves to any useful task.**

Comfort all who are in sorrow or need, sickness or adversity, *[especially . . . here name the person and the cause of the petition]*. Remember those who suffer persecution for the faith. Have mercy on those for whom death draws near.

**Grant them your love, and take them into your tender care.**

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

*Silent prayer*

We remember with thanksgiving those who have loved and served you, who now rest from their labors, *[especially . . . here name the person]*. Console those who are mourning or living with sadness.

**Keep us in the true faith, and bring us at last to the joys of heaven.**

Grant us these things, Father, for the sake of Jesus, who died and rose again.  
**Amen.**

## **Offering**

**Offering Hymn: 641 Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide**

*sts. 1–2*

## **Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

## **Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.  
**Amen.**

**Hymn: 605 From All That Dwell below the Skies**

## **NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Today:** 10:30 AM Worship

**Sunday:** 10:30 AM Worship and Communion

**CONNECTION CARDS:** Visitors or members with changes in contact information, please fill out a connection card online at [www.bethelyork.com](http://www.bethelyork.com) on the member connect tab or scan this code.



Find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/bethelyork](http://www.facebook.com/bethelyork)



Personal assisted listening devices are available.

**Given to the Lord:** Attendance: Worship 54, Offerings: Operating: Needed 2,854.90, Given \$1,190.25. **To God be the glory!**

800 N East Ave | York, NE | [www.bethelyork.com](http://www.bethelyork.com)