

## Sunday 'Spiritual Communion' in Ordinary Time

*You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of a cross, a candle, or a special place. The words in **bold** you are encouraged to say out loud as worship and prayer.*

### Opening Prayer

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members.

**We are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.**

### Opening Sentences in the Season of Ordinary Time

To fulfill the ancient promise of salvation, O God,  
**you made a covenant with our ancestors  
and pledged them descendants more numerous than the stars.**  
Grant that all people may share in the blessings of your covenant,  
accomplished through the death and resurrection of your Son  
**and sealed by the gift of your Spirit.**



### Prayers of Preparation and Confession

**Almighty God to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen**

We exist in a complex web of relationships - links to nature, to people, to God.

Take a moment this morning to trace out these links,  
Giving thanks for the life that flows through them.  
Where some links are twisted or broken we may feel regret, anger, disappointment.

Let us pray for the gift of acceptance and forgiveness.

You may wish to pray:

**Lord, have mercy.**

**Christ, have mercy.**

**Lord, have mercy.**



A reading from the Gospel

Read Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 (A reflection is attached to the end of the service sheet)

### Intercessions

Let us pray for the needs of the world, for our local community, and for those close to you.

End with the Lord's Prayer.

### **Our Father...**

Through dreams and visions, O God,  
you broaden the horizon and hope of your people,  
that they may discover the meaning of your covenant,  
even in the midst of trial and exile.

Increase the number of those who believe in your word  
so that all people may joyfully respond to your call and share in your promises.

**O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**

Holy One, hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards of the fragile bounty of this earth  
so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven.

Life-giving God, heal our lives, that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds  
and offer you thanks from generation to generation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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### Blessing and Peace

May the Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,  
and keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**



The Peace of the Lord be always with you

## Reflection on Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

We continue our journey through Matthew this morning. We are once again presented with the metaphor of God's kingdom being like the seed and the sower. It strikes me therefore that this repetition means we should pay close attention to the connection Jesus' is making between God's purposes and the process of sowing, germination, flowering, bearing fruit and harvesting! The comparison is not an accident. Jesus uses this connection to reveal something deep and profound about the purpose and experiences of life. Let us therefore reflect purposefully on the parable of the sower and ask what we can learn from it about God, about humanity, about evil and about the future of our world. What does Jesus say about this?

In the reading from the Gospel of Matthew we find, once again, God the Father is likened to one who sows seed. We are told He sowed good seed into the soil of the earth and is surprised to find weeds appear alongside the good He has sown. What does this initial opening to our story tell us about God?

Well it tells us that God's intentions are good! That the beginnings of life and purpose of Creation were founded on sowing good and not evil. God intended for life to be fruitful and therefore the pain and suffering of life were not an intended part of the Divine plan. This might be a difficult concept to accept for those who have suffered pain and have seen evil in this world. We might have shaken our fist at God and blamed God for making a mistake with this world. But Jesus tells us God is like the farmer who sowed good seed and was dismayed by the growth of weeds. This is an important idea in Christian theology because it asks us to trust and believe that God's intentions for us and for our world are good!

We are then told in this parable that rather than abandon the project the sower chooses to allow both the fruitful and the harmful to grow together. The farmer tells the workers 'do not destroy that which is bad' because in doing so the original intention of growing goodness would also be destroyed. The Sower believes that despite the presence of the weeds the good seed will produce fruit and achieve the purpose which it was intended to! And so despite the presence of the weeds the field is left to produce fruit. Both good and bad are allowed to grow alongside one another. There is a struggle and a battle for the light and the food between the good seed and the bad weeds. The field is a mixed blessing! Once again the connection between the field and the world is clear as we ourselves have experienced the mixed blessing of life!

Finally we are told at the end of the season of waiting the harvest arrives. We note the original intention of the sower is achieved. Despite unexpected frustrations and fears the workers go out into the field and remove that which was not intended to grow, the weeds and all that chokes goodness are removed and destroyed, and what is left is the intended crop of righteousness that was originally sown. The sower's purposes are complete as the fruitfulness of the seeds that were sown is apparent.

In this far too short reflection on the story of the sower we begin to see something of what Jesus was wanting to tell us about God, about life and about the future. That the gift of life is one of good intention and of hopes for fruitfulness. The world is not as it was intended but the presence of both good and bad reflects the patience and desire of a good Creator. And out of this Divine patience the original intention of fruitfulness and beauty will still be achieved. Let us therefore share in God's patience as we await the glory which is ours in the eternal kingdom of the Divine Sower.