

Sebastopol United Methodist Church  
Sunday, July 26, 2020 – Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

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Order of Worship, including Scripture

*Seasonal Theme:*

The teaching and ministry of Jesus the Christ.

*Theme for the day:*

The Kingdom of God and its implications for discipleship.

*Call to worship:*

*(please read the **BOLD** text, aloud or silently as you prefer)*

Pastor: Blessed be to God whose word gives hope and shapes our dreams.

People: **Praise the Lord.**

Pastor: Blessed be to God, who orders our way and guides our steps.

People: **Praise the Lord.**

Pastor: Blessed be to God, who leads us into life.

Unison: **He is the Lord our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.**

*Centering & Prayer of Illumination:*

*(please read along with Pastor, aloud or silently as you prefer)*

Loving God, we come to praise your name and to be glad in your unending grace. Open our heart to your presence. Open our ears to your word to be proclaimed, so that our lives reflect Christ who gives us life and to remind us that we are a part of your family. In Jesus's name and way, we pray. Amen.

*Readings from Scripture:*    **Matthew 13:31-35; 44-52**            **Romans 8:26-39**

*[texts of Scripture follow the service, beginning on page 2]*

*Message:*    **THE DECLARATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

*Pastoral Prayer*

*With thanksgiving for God's gifts to us, let us offer ourselves and the fruits of our labor for God's work in the world. Thank you for continuing to send your offerings and pledges by mail.*

*Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication:*

*(please read along with Pastor, aloud or silently as you prefer)*

Father God, the giver of every good and perfect gift, we thank you for giving us all that we have. We praise you, not with our lips only, but with our whole lives.

Bless all the gifts we bring in your honor, and turn us into a living sacrifice to you.

In your son Jesus, our Savior. Amen.

*Blessing and Benediction:*

May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. Stay safe, stay healthy, and remember your masks when you leave the house. Be patient.

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Scripture Readings – July 26, 2020

*first reading -- MATTHEW 13:31-35; 44-52*

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened." Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet: "I will open my mouth to speak in parables; I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world."

*(reading continues on the next page)*

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

*second reading* – **ROMANS 8:26-39**

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for

us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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*Thank you for worshipping with us today.*