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ORDINARY 16A

19th July 2026

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Take a moment to be peaceful.

If you are able you may like to plant your feet on the floor and concentrate on your body being still (if this is hard then do just sit quietly and comfortably). Notice how you feel and what you are thinking about and let those things float away giving thanks for each even if they are difficult feelings or thoughts.

When you are ready: raise your hands open before you and give thanks for the moment you are in.

Pause

Place your open hands on your lap and consider all that's happened this week and what you might want to lay down before God asking for help or offering thanks.

Pause

Lift one hand high in the air and think about what you will offer of yourself as you worship today.

Pause

Lower your hands and breathe out.

If you feel able offer the following prayer out loud:

Loving God, I am here in this moment to worship you.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar

Readings: Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

This is one of Jesus' more challenging parables.

A farmer sows good seed in a field, but during the night an enemy comes and scatters weeds among the wheat. As the plants begin to grow, the servants are alarmed. They want to act immediately. "Shall we go and pull up the weeds?"

The farmer surprises them.

"No," he says. "For in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest."

It is not the answer many of us would expect.

We often like things to be clear-cut. We want to separate good from bad, right from wrong, us from them. We are tempted to believe that if we could just identify and remove all the "weeds," everything would be fine.

But Jesus seems to suggest that life, and people, are more complicated than that.

For one thing, we are rarely as good at identifying weeds as we think we are.

History is full of examples of individuals and communities who were labelled dangerous, unworthy, sinful, or beyond redemption, only to reveal gifts, wisdom, and holiness that others failed to see. The Church itself has often made painful mistakes when it has rushed to judge, exclude, or condemn.

This parable invites humility. It reminds us that God sees more than we do. Human beings are complex. Communities are complex. Even within ourselves there are mixed motives, unfinished growth, strengths alongside weaknesses.

And yet God is patient. The farmer does not give up on the field because weeds are present. The existence of imperfection does not prevent growth. In fact, wheat and weeds grow side by side.

Many of us carry the burden of believing that we must somehow become perfect before God can use us. But discipleship is not about achieving flawlessness. It is about growing. God's grace works within the messiness of real life.

At the same time, the parable challenges us not to become complacent. The presence of weeds is real. Injustice, prejudice, selfishness, and fear can take root in individuals and societies. We are called to resist them, not by becoming self-righteous judges, but by cultivating what is good. Our task is not to decide who belongs to God and who does not. Our task is to nurture love, justice, mercy, and truth wherever we find them.

So today, you might like to reflect on these questions:

- Where are you tempted to judge too quickly?
- What would it mean to trust God's patience, with others and with yourself?
- How can you focus less on identifying weeds and more on cultivating good fruit?

The kingdom of God is not built through exclusion or fear. It grows through grace, patience, and faithful tending.

May you trust the wisdom of the divine gardener, find patience for your own unfinished growth, and devote yourself to nurturing the seeds of love wherever they are found.

Hymn / Song:

367 STF – When I was lost you came and rescued me – [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Lord, take this spark of faith in me, and turn it into a flame.
May I share the love that is at work in my life with those I meet this week,
And may I be an agent of peace, inclusion and grace, I pray,
in Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers For This Week

Monday 20th July

- Today is world refugee day (as designated by the UN). You might like to pray for all those who have been displaced from the place or country that they call home, especially those who have done so without a choice.
- You might like to do some research and find out if there are people living near you who have fled their homeland – is there anything you can do to make them feel welcome?
- Pray about how this feels and seek guidance from God on what is yours to do.

Tuesday 21st July

- Today, pray for those who work with food: farmers, shop workers, delivery drivers, cooks, food bank volunteers, and hospitality staff.
- Pray also for those who do not have enough to eat.
- God of daily bread, make us grateful and generous. Amen.

Wednesday 22nd July

- On this day in 1990 the iconic 'Checkpoint Charlie' in Berlin was dismantled. This gateway in the Berlin Wall was an important symbol of the division in the city (and across Europe) during the Cold War and this day of taking it apart was significant for those who hoped for unity and peace.
- Sadly, there are still many walls, checkpoints and military outposts preventing people from moving, travelling or even seeing their families around the world. Today, you might like to pray for a world in which we might be able to build bridges, not walls, both metaphorically and literally.

Thursday 23rd July

- Today is the anniversary of the founding of the International Olympic Committee in 1894.
- Amongst this summer of sport, let us give thanks for the role that sport has played across history in bringing people and nations together, and pray that those in positions of power may continue to use all the tools that are available to them to build for peace, not greed and/or conflict.

Friday 24th July

- Come, Lord of light, into my life.
Come into this day, in unexpected ways.
Help me to notice your presence in all those around me,
Through the miraculous power of your Spirit I pray, Amen.

Saturday 25th July

- Think back over this week.
- Where did you notice grace? Where did you miss it?
- God of patient love, help me learn from the week behind me and step gently into what comes next. Amen.