



**PROJECT RECONNECT**

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH GOD, EACH OTHER AND THE COMMUNITY

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***Pentecost 7 Year A, July 12th 2026***

***Presenter: Rev Josh McPaul***

***Focus Reading: Matthew 13:1-9,18-23***

**Message:** 7 minutes 45 seconds

**"The Gentle Invasion"**

### **Discussion Starters**

1. Jesus talks a lot about hearing and listening in this passage. Why does Jesus focus so much on how we hear?
2. Has there been a time in your faith journey when you heard something, but didn't yet understand it? Or weren't ready to hear it?
3. Churches can be noisy places. Thorns and weeds (even good church ones) can choke out good growth. Where does your church need to prune back the weeds to listen better?
4. Some of the seeds fall on hard ground. The evil takes it away. Abuse, violence, poverty can all harden our hearts. It makes it harder for people to hear and believe good news. Where can your church soften the soil by bringing healing and grace?

### **Readings for this day**

**Isaiah 44:6-8** The people are told there is one God and one God only – this is understood to be the Lord who rules and protects Israel.

**Psalms 119:105-112** This section of the psalm holds in tandem the benefits of right living and the challenge of keeping the law as an act of faith in God.

**Romans 8:1-11** Paul juxtaposes life in the flesh, lived according to the law, which is death; with life in the spirit, directed by the indwelling of Christ, which gives hope of eternal life.

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### **Intergenerational Talk**

**"Cracks in the Footpath"**

**Rev Josh McPaul**

**Length:** 1 minutes 56 seconds

**Precis of IT** Cracks in the footpath are caused by many things. Tree roots are mostly the reason. That seed grew from a very small seed. God's work is like that seed, breaking through the hardest places. In every crack, God is at work deep in our hearts and changing us.

**Uniting in Worship (Blue Book). Psalm 19:105-112 – not listed in Blue Book**

**Rev Josh McPaul**

I'm the minister at Northern Illawarra Uniting Church, just north of Wollongong. I am married to Robin, a teacher who comes from California, USA. I spent most of my working life in the US, helping to start a church in Oakland, California, focussed on racial reconciliation. I love living near Wollongong, close to family – swimming, kayaking and camping up and down the coast.