



**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

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Season of Pentecost

July 30, 2023

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

At Christ Lutheran people of all backgrounds and experiences gather to worship because we all share a common hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin. If you have a prayer request, the yellow cards in the seatback holders have a place for them; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!

God's people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child's life. There's some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the **activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary** as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God's love takes root in their lives!

WHEN NURSERY CARE IS NEEDED DURING WORSHIP

A fully equipped and staffed Nursery is available for both infants and toddlers during all services. The Nursery is located west of our gathering area in **Room 110**.

RESTROOMS

Men's and women's restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all-gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. **WINE** is lighter-colored, and **GRAPE JUICE** is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays, please indicate which you want. The **COMMON CUP** is available for anyone who wishes. **USED GLASSES** are placed in the basket located near the ramp. **GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE**, please indicate to the server that you require this. Also, if you unable to come up to the altar, let the usher know so that pastor can bring communion to you.

COVID Procedure Update

Masks are encouraged but optional during worship. Naturally if you prefer to stay masked throughout the service, you are of course welcome to do so. Masks are not required for singing but suggested.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.

A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty

W. Hiltcher
J. Bender
D. Cherwien

WELCOME

If you are a guest with us, welcome! We'd love to meet you, or if there's anything you'd like to know about the ministry of Christ Lutheran Church, please consider [filling out a Connection Card online](#) (you can point your phone at the graphic to the right) or using a yellow Connection Card in the pew holders.



***Prayer requests** can be posted to the livechat or use a yellow Prayer Request (backside of the Connection Card) and give them to an usher.*

*If you are worshipping with us via livestream, consider **preparing your space for Communion**: light a candle (if appropriate and safe), and have a plate with bread/cracker/tortilla and a cup for wine or grape juice (or an empty cup as a sign Jesus is sufficient in one or both elements).*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who greets us in this and every season,
whose word never fails,
whose promise is sure.
Amen.


Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of our neighbors.

Silence is kept for reflection.



Righteous God,
we confess that we have sinned.
We have failed to be honest.
We have lacked the courage to speak.
We have spoken falsely.
In the name of Jesus,
forgive us and grant us your mercy.

God is a cup of cold water when we thirst.
God offers boundless grace when we fail.
Claim the gift of God's mercy:
you are freed and forgiven
in the name of ✠ Jesus Christ.
Amen.







1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty, Zi - on, let me en - ter there,
 2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore thee; come thou al - so un - to me;
 3 Here thy praise is glad - ly chant - ed, here thy seed is du - ly sown;
 4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick - en, let me keep thy gift di - vine;
 5 Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done in - deed;

where my soul in joy - ful du - ty waits for God who an - swers prayer.
 where we find thee and a - dore thee, there a heav'n on earth must be.
 let my soul, where it is plant - ed, bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone,
 how - so - e'er temp - ta - tions thick - en, may thy word still o'er me shine
 may I un - dis - turbed draw near thee while thou dost thy peo - ple feed.

Oh, how bless - ed is this place, filled with so - lace, light, and grace!
 To my heart, oh, en - ter thou, let it be thy tem - ple now!
 so that all I hear may be fruit - ful un - to life in me.
 as my guid - ing star through life, as my com - fort in all strife.
 Here of life the foun - tain flows; here is balm for all our woes.



Text: Benjamin Schmolck, 1672–1737; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
 Music: UNSER HERRSCHER, Joachim Neander, 1650–1680

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Children: This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE



1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.

2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.

3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:

Son of God and gra-cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;

Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.

on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.

Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.

Hear our prayer; re - store, for-give us; in your prom-ise firm we stand.

For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Scandalous God,
sowing weeds among the crop,
raising bread with impure yeast,
offering treasure beyond price,
casting a net that catches good and bad:
throw down our mean idols
of purity and possession
and let the Son of man
show us your inclusive,
provocative,
wide-branching love;
through Jesus Christ, the stumbling block.
Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

When children read, they may read a version that is appropriate to their reading level and voice, which may vary from the printed texts.

CHILDREN'S TIME

The assembly is seated as children are invited forward for a time together.

READING: Genesis 29:15-28

Laban deceives Jacob by giving his older daughter, Leah, to Jacob in marriage instead of the promised younger daughter, Rachel. Because of his love for Rachel, Jacob agrees to work for Laban for an additional seven years so that he may also be married to her.

¹⁵Laban said to Jacob, “Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?” ¹⁶Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. ¹⁷Leah’s eyes were lovely, and Rachel was graceful and beautiful. ¹⁸Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, “I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.” ¹⁹Laban said, “It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me.” ²⁰So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

²¹Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed.” ²²So Laban gathered together all the people of the place, and made a feast. ²³But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. ²⁴(Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.) ²⁵When morning came, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?” ²⁶Laban said, “This is not done in our

country—giving the younger before the firstborn. ²⁷Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.” ²⁸Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSIVE PSALM 105:1-11, 45b

¹Give thanks to the LORD and call upon God’s name;
make known the deeds of the LORD among the peoples.

²**Sing to the LORD, sing praises,
and speak of all God’s marvelous works.**

³Glory in God’s holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

⁴**Search for the strength of the LORD;
continually seek God’s face.**

⁵Remember the marvels God has done,
the wonders and the judgments of God’s mouth,

⁶**O offspring of Abraham, God’s servant,
O children of Jacob, God’s chosen ones.**

⁷The LORD is our God,
whose judgments prevail in all the world,
⁸**who has always been mindful of the covenant,
the promise made for a thousand generations:**

⁹the covenant made with Abraham,
the oath sworn to Isaac,

¹⁰**which God established as a statute for Jacob,
an everlasting covenant for Israel,**

¹¹saying, “To you will I give the land of Canaan
to be your allotted inheritance.” ^{45b}Hallelujah!

READING: Romans 8:26-39

These words celebrate the depth of God’s actions for us. Through Christ’s death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God’s love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.

²⁶The 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. ²⁷And 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.

²⁸We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For 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. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² 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? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ 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.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.



HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

³¹[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;³² 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."

³³He 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."

⁴⁴"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.

⁴⁵"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹"Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." ⁵²And 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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

The assembly is seated. Time for reflection follows the sermon.

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW #793

Be Thou My Vision

The assembly stands to proclaim the Word of God in song.



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
 3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,
 4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.
 thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,
 Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,
 thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
 great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860–1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880–1931
 Music: SLANE, Irish traditional

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

**Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.*

PRAYERS

Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

Almighty God, we pray for the church and all servants of the gospel. Equip rostered and lay ministers to proclaim that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Form confirmands and catechumens into disciples. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Gracious God, we pray for the well-being of creation. Safeguard the environment, clean polluted rivers and lakes, especially the Little Calumet River and all local waters affected by heavy industry. Preserve the mighty tree and the tiny mustard seed, and send advocates for sustainable practices. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Compassionate God, we pray for the nations. Instill in all who govern the ability to discern between good and evil, free those who are oppressed, and protect those facing danger. Promote peace across the world and in our towns and neighborhoods. In The Republic of Congo, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe, protect your beautiful creation; grant stable government and build prosperity. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Merciful God, we pray for all in any need. Protect those fleeing from war, shelter any who are in poverty, clothe the naked, soothe all who grieve, and heal the sick. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Holy God, we pray for this congregation, both those gathered today and those absent from our assembly. Grant safety to travelers and refreshment and safety for children attending summer camps or community programs. Give direction to any experiencing life transitions. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Eternal God, we give thanks for your saints who now rest from their labors. Inspire us by their witness to treasure the gospel, and continually nourish us with your grace.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the name of the one who reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshipping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!***

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING

The assembly is seated. This congregation serves our neighbors, community, and the world through the participation and support of its members and guests. Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts with ELCA Global Missions' Selian Lutheran Hospital in Tanzania Africa and AMOS, "A Mission of Service" in Guatemala/Honduras.



If you wish to give electronically, browse to our secure on-line portal at clcvalpo.org/give or use [our CLC app](#) (download at clcvalpo.org/app).

OFFERTORY

Be Thou My Vision

H. Willan

OFFERING PRAYER

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

God of field and forest, sea and sky,
you are the giver of all good things.
Sustain us with these gifts of your creation,
and multiply your graciousness in us,
that the world may be fed with your love,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The pastor begins the prayer and all join in singing:

SANCTUS

(An ancient practice invites us to make the sign of the cross in honor of Jesus at the words "Blessed is he.")



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -



san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

TABLE PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Children: The Spirit makes us one. We pray as Jesus taught us:

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

All people are called to Christ's table.
Come, eat what is good.
Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION

The assembly is seated.

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

*The pastor invites those worshipping via **livestream** to commune:*

The body of Christ, given for you.
Amen (receive the bread)

The blood of Christ, shed for you.
Amen (receive the cup)

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. WINE is lighter-colored, and GRAPE JUICE is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays, please indicate which you want. The COMMON CUP is available for anyone who wishes. USED GLASSES are placed in the basket located near the ramp. GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE, please indicate to the server that you require this. Also, if you unable to come up to the altar, let the usher know so that pastor can bring communion to you.

LAMB OF GOD



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



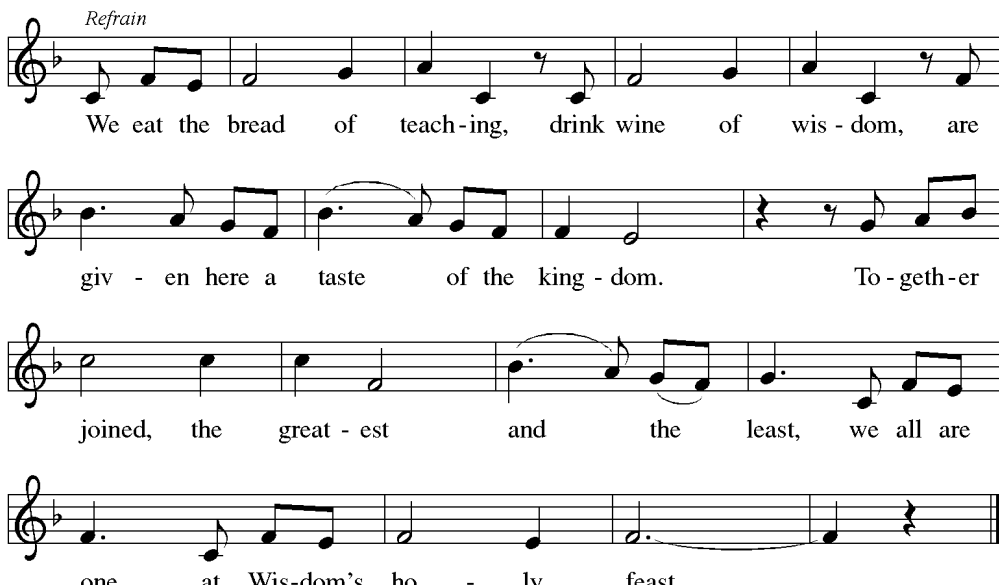
you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.



COMMUNION HYMNS ELW #518

We Eat the Bread of Teaching

Refrain



We eat the bread of teach-ing, drink wine of wis-dom, are
giv-en here a taste of the king-dom. To-gether
joined, the great-est and the least, we all are
one at Wis-dom's ho-ly feast.

1 Wis-dom calls through-out the cit-y, knows our
2 Sim-ple ones whose hearts are yearn-ing, come and
3 En-ter with de-light and sing-ing, for her

hun-ger, and in pit-y gives her lov-ing in-vi-
gain from Wis-dom's learn-ing; bread and wine she is pre-
rich-ness now is bring-ing us this joy-ous cel-e-

Refrain



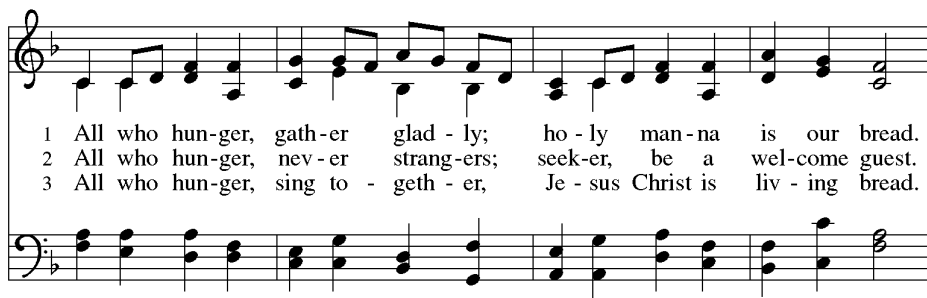
ta-tion to the ban-quet of sal-va-tion.
par-ing, know her lov-ing in the shar-ing.
bra-tion; eat and drink in ju-bi-la-tion.

Text: Omer Westendorf, 1916–1997

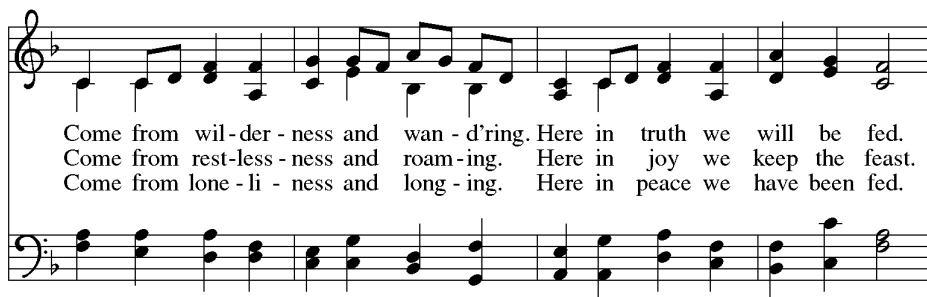
Music: WISDOM'S FEAST, Jerry Ray Brubaker, b. 1946

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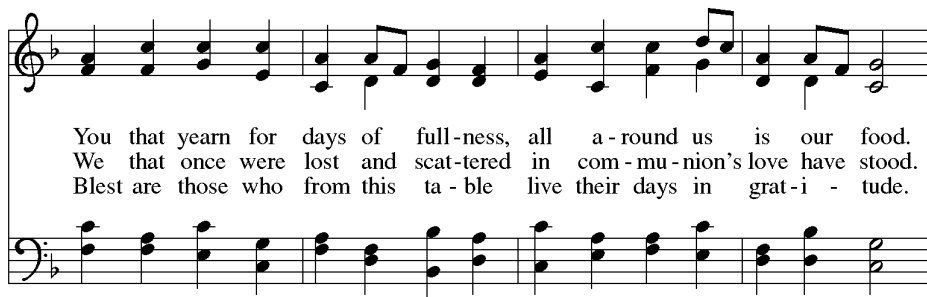
ELW #461 *All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly*



1 All who hun-ger, gath-er glad - ly; ho - ly man - na is our bread.
 2 All who hun-ger, nev - er strang-ers; seek-er, be a wel-come guest.
 3 All who hun-ger, sing to - geth - er, Je - sus Christ is liv - ing bread.



Come from wil-der - ness and wan - d'ring. Here in truth we will be fed.
 Come from rest-less - ness and roam-ing. Here in joy we keep the feast.
 Come from lone - li - ness and long - ing. Here in peace we have been fed.



You that yearn for days of full-ness, all a - round us is our food.
 We that once were lost and scat-tered in com - mu - nion's love have stood.
 Blest are those who from this ta - ble live their days in grat-i - tude.



Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal. Taste and see that God is good.
 Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal. Taste and see that God is good.
 Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal. Taste and see that God is good.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993

Music: HOLY MANNA, W. Moore, *Columbian Harmony*, 1825; arr. hymnal version

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After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands as the minister continues.
The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We thank you, generous God,
for the refreshment we have received
at your banquet table.
Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world,
through the one who is our dearest treasure,
Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

INVITATIONS

Brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.

BLESSING

The God who calls across the cosmos
and speaks in the smallest seed
✠ bless, keep, and sustain you
now and to the end of the age.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN ELW #547

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

1 Sent forth by God's bless - ing, our true faith con - fess - ing,
 2 With praise and thanks - giv - ing to God ev - er - liv - ing,

the peo - ple of God from this dwell - ing take leave.
 the tasks of our ev - 'ry - day life we will face—

The sup - per is end - ed. Oh, now be ex - tend - ed
 our faith ev - er shar - ing, in love ev - er car - ing,

the fruits of this ser - vice in all who be - lieve.
 em - brac - ing God's chil - dren, the whole hu - man race.

The seed of Christ's teach - ing, re - cep - tive souls
 With your feast you feed us, with your light now

reach - ing, shall blos - som in ac - tion for God and for all.
 lead us; u - nite us as one in this life that we share.

Your grace shall in - cite us, your love shall u - nite us
 Then may all the liv - ing with praise and thanks - giv - ing

to work for your king - dom and an - swer your call.
 give hon - or to Christ and his name that we bear.

Text: Omer Westendorf, 1916–1997, alt.
 Music: THE ASH GROVE, Welsh folk tune
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Children join the pastors to send us in mission.

DISMISSAL

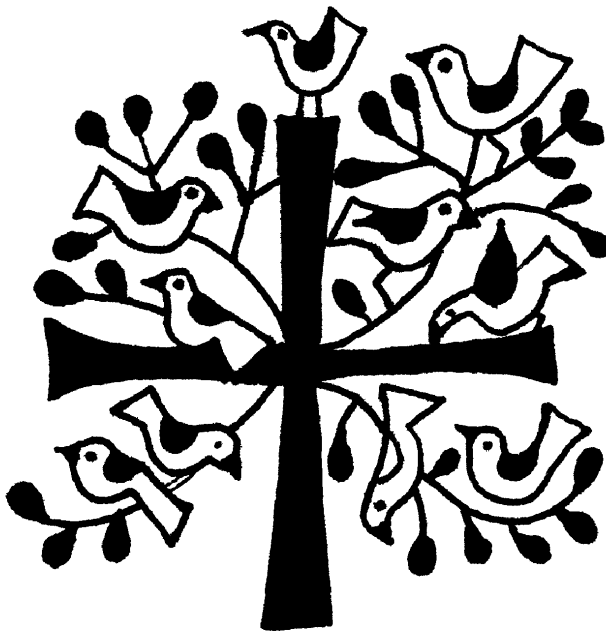
Go in peace. Share the harvest.
Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Toccata

J. Krueger

*As worship concludes we move to the Gathering Place, where we are invited
to greet one another and share in fellowship.*



Worship Leaders

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Luke Ridley	Portia Novak
Lector	Reagan Jackson	Crill Family
Prayer Assistant	Kathy Sutherland	Crill Family
Communion Assistants	Lisa Swayne Betty Luckett	Erin Crill Audrey Crill
Ushers	Reagan Jackson Ramona Krueger	
Sound/Light	Zach Wehner	Jeff Peiffer
Video/Livestream	_____	Tony Reinhold
Pastor	Rev. Dr. Amanda Brobst-Renaud	

Rev. Dr. Brobst-Renaud is assistant professor of theology at Valparaiso University. Her teaching and scholarly work is in the Gospel of Luke, where she focuses on the way rhetoric undergirds both ancient and modern communication. Amanda's curiosity about the Bible and the ways it engages ancient and modern audiences drives her research and preaching. The parables hold particular interest for Amanda, especially in their capacity to engage and transform their audiences. Her book *Lukan Parables of Reckless Liberality* (2021) draws together these interests. These interests are also apparent in Amanda's work as a professor and as a preacher, where her love of storytelling and teaching come to the fore.

Guest Organist	Bill Ickstadt
Communion Baker	Marilyn McGawn

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **The Republic of Congo, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe.**

We are **thankful** for:

- wildlife and rainforests in these lands, and those who protect this habitat
- the oral traditions, folklore, and good practices that have been preserved
- rich minerals and economic development, although benefits need to be shared more fairly
- healing from exploitative practices that began under colonial rule.

We **pray** for:

- democratic fair elections and political stability in this region
- economic development that benefits all the people, especially those living in poverty
- preservation of the wildlife and the land
- the witness of the churches and other faith groups in the midst of the challenges.

July Altar Gifts

Holy Communion	In celebration of Sara & Jeremy Long's anniversary
Altar Candles	Celebration of Kelly & Cam Kozloski's 10th wedding anniversary Marilyn McGawn ~ In memory of Malcolm's birthday (7/17) Grace & Jeff Safrin ~ celebrating our daughter, Kara Rozin's birthday
Eternal Lamp Candles	In Memory of Jake Kozul, son-in-law of Grace & Jeff Safrin

Stewardship Snippet

Jesus 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."

– **Matthew 13:33**

Bread-baking enjoyed renewed popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic, so much so that yeast is in short supply. Thankfully, it takes only a little dab of yeast to leaven an entire loaf of bread. Likewise, a little bit of Christian civility in our relationships encourages our neighbors to act with a little more kindness and consideration, and love.

The Greatest of Shrubs

Surely God's kingdom should end up sounding more impressive. Surely God can do better. Providing shelter for birds does sound like something God would do, but why can't the birds nest in a more attractive tree? A mustard seed, at its best, grows into a sort of weedy shrub. The greatest of shrubs is not that great.

Maybe that's the point. Maybe these little stories are supposed to seem a little strange. After all, God's choices often seem that way to us. God does not always value what we value. God likes small, weedy shrubs as much as big, majestic trees.

That is extremely good news for those of us who suspect we have more in common with the shrub than the tree. It is good to know that God loves both! It is good to know that God loves the mustard seeds of this world enough that God sends Jesus to be a mustard seed, to be the living proof that the kingdom of heaven is real. And the kingdom of heaven is here, because Jesus is here. And as we are filled with his Spirit, we also become living signs of that same kingdom.

After all, a God whose kingdom can be compared with something like a mustard seed is probably not going to stop short of using other unlikely things. A God like that might even decide to use people like us. So look around. What do you see? What do you see that surprises you? What do you see that you normally take for granted? What do you see that's alive? The kingdom of heaven is like that. The kingdom of heaven is even like us, right now. The kingdom of heaven may not do what we expect, or even what we want—but one way or another, the kingdom of heaven will grow.

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Portions from *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* by Steven Shakespeare.