



**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street • Valparaiso, IN 46385

(219) 462-6660

clcvalpo.org • office@clcvalpo.org



**Season of Creation
“PRAY”
September 1, 2024
9:30 a.m.**

We Welcome You to Christ Lutheran Church! We are a community of people sharing God's love through Christ and growing together in faith.

We celebrate all the ways we are made in the image of God, seeking to see God in everyone. We honor and respect each person's age, ethnicity, family composition, gender identity, gender expression, life history, mental well-being, physical ability, relationship status, sexual orientation, skin color, and socioeconomic standing. Together, we strive to love and serve our neighbor and all creation, including working toward racial and social justice. We would love to walk with you on this creative adventure* of faith, grace, and love.

** The first sermon ever preached at Christ Lutheran was titled "A Call to Creative Adventure."*

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 and doodle pads**. 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.

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.

Jesus protests against human customs being given the weight of divine law, while the essence of God's law is ignored. True uncleanness comes not from external things, but from the intentions of the human heart. Last week Jesus told us "the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (John 6:63). Now James says God has given us birth by the word of truth. We who were washed in the word when we were born in the font return to it every Sunday to ask God to create in us clean hearts.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

WELCOME

If you are a guest with us, welcome! We'd love to meet you and 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)



***Prayer requests** can be posted to the livechat or use a yellow Prayer Request form and give them to an usher.*

*If you are joining 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).*

LITANY OF PRAISE FOR CREATION

Glory to you, O God:

you speak a word of power,
and so you create the world.

We praise you, O God:

We praise you, O God.

For the Spirit hovering to bring forth life,
for the earth ordered from chaos,
and for light and dark,

We bless you, O God:

We bless you, O God.

For the cosmos beyond our earth,
for the sky above our heads,
and for the cycle of evening and morning,
we exalt you, O God:

We exalt you, O God.

For the seas, the lakes, and the rivers,
for the land with its mountains and plains,
and for the trees, the plants, and their fruits,
we magnify you, O God:

We magnify you, O God.

For the sun to rule the day,
for the moon to brighten the night,
and for the shining stars,
we extol you, O God:

We extol you, O God.

For the fish in the sea,
for the birds of the air,
and for the monsters in the deep,
we glorify you, O God:

We glorify you, O God.

For wild animals and creatures of all kinds,
for cattle and all livestock,
and for everything that creeps on the earth,
we adore you, O God:

We adore you, O God.

For humankind made in your image,
for setting us on your good earth,
and for providing us food to eat,
we worship you, O God.

We worship you, O God.

Bless us, your creatures.
Accept our praise,
and make us stewards of your marvelous creation.

We praise you, O God:

We praise you, O God.

Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving
and honor and power and might
be to you, our God, forever and ever.

Amen.

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!

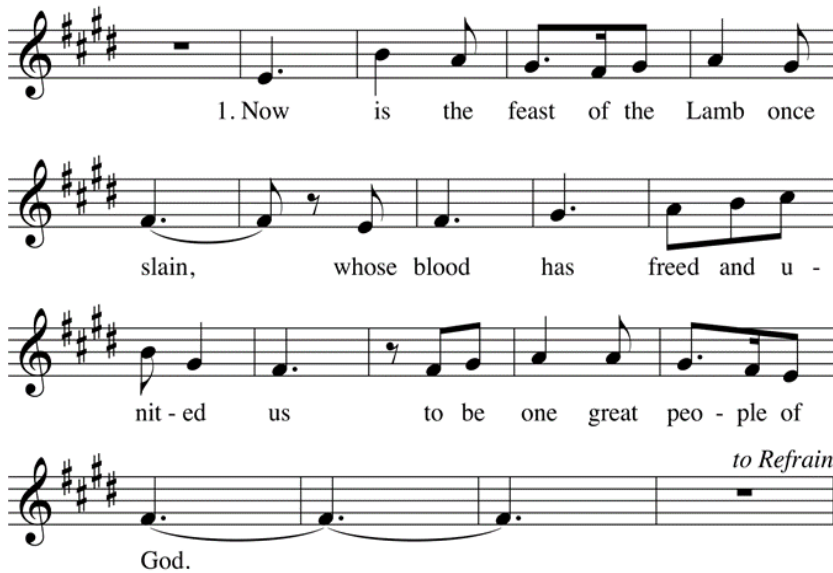
CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Refrain

Congregation:

Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,
all of cre - a - tion sings for joy
to the God of life and love and
free-dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -
er - more!

Verse 1



1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once
slain, whose blood has freed and u -
nit - ed us to be one great peo - ple of
God.

to Refrain

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for Verse 1. It consists of four staves of music in a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The melody is written on a single line. The lyrics are: "1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain, whose blood has freed and u - nit - ed us to be one great peo - ple of God." The word "God." is on a separate line below the fourth staff. The phrase "to Refrain" is written above the end of the fourth staff.

Verse 2

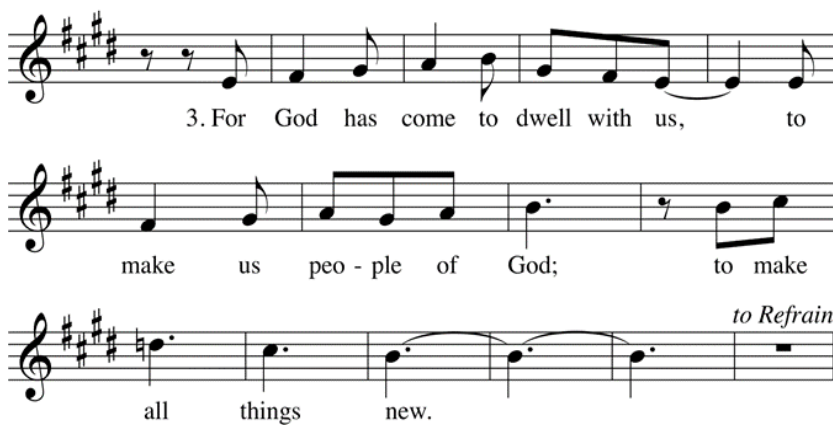


2. Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and
might, all hon - or and glo - ry to Christ
for ev - er.

to Refrain

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for Verse 2. It consists of three staves of music in a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The melody is written on a single line. The lyrics are: "2. Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and might, all hon - or and glo - ry to Christ for ev - er." The phrase "to Refrain" is written above the end of the third staff.

Verse 3



3. For God has come to dwell with us, to
make us peo - ple of God; to make
all things new.

to Refrain

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for Verse 3. It consists of three staves of music in a treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The melody is written on a single line. The lyrics are: "3. For God has come to dwell with us, to make us peo - ple of God; to make all things new." The phrase "to Refrain" is written above the end of the third staff.

SALUTATION

Presider: *Congregation:*

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Lord of all love and glory, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Creation; give us growth in unity; nourish the world with all goodness; and bring forth the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

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

CHILDREN'S TIME

Children are invited forward for a time together.

READING: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

The Israelites believed the law was a divine gift that provided guidelines for living out the covenant. Moses commands the people to obey the law and to neither add to nor subtract from it. The Israelites are also to teach the law to their children and their children's children.

¹ So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. ² You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the LORD your God with which I am charging you.

⁶ You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!" ⁷ For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him? ⁸ And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

⁹ But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

READING: James 1:17-27

The letter of James was intended to provide first-century Christians with instruction in godly behavior. Here Christians are encouraged to listen carefully and to act on what they hear, especially by caring for those least able to care for themselves.

¹⁷ Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸ In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

¹⁹ You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. ²¹ Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

²² But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. ²³ For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; ²⁴ for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. ²⁵ But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

²⁶ If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. ²⁷ Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.



Al-le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we



go? You have the words of e - ter - nal



life. Al - le - lu - ia!

HOLY GOSPEL: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Mark's gospel depicts Jesus as challenging traditional ways in which religious people determine what is pure or impure. For Jesus, the observance of religious practices cannot become a substitute for godly words or deeds that spring from a faithful heart.

The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around [Jesus], ² they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. ³ (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; ⁴ and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) ⁵ So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” ⁶ He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
⁷ in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.’

⁸ You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

¹⁴ Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.

²¹ “For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²² adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

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 ACS #1072

Abba, Abba, Hear Us

The assembly proclaims the word of God in song.



1 "Ab - ba, Ab - ba, hear us," we cry; God's Spir - it
2 With the whole cre - a - tion we cry, groan as in
3 As we pray, the Spir - it breathes sighs, sighs far too



cries in us, names us a - dopt - ed and be - lov - ed
child - birth. Soon all sin, all death's de - cay will be no
deep for words; God, who search - es hearts and knows the Spir - it's



heirs, the heirs of God. All cre - a - tion
more; we shall be free. All cre - a - tion
mind, hears all our prayer. All cre - a - tion



waits, ea - ger and long - ing, for the glo - rious
waits, ea - ger and long - ing; for the prom - ised
waits, ea - ger and long - ing. As we live in



free - dom of God's chil - dren soon will be re - vealed.
glo - ry that we soon shall see we wait and pray.
hope, we know that in all things God works for good.

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

Our prayers draw on the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle and the Church's calendar of Commemorations—further information is found each week at the end of the bulletin.

Drawn together in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray with confidence for the church, God's good creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God of every generation, give the church a sense of purpose and belonging. Sustain and build up leaders and lay people as we accompany one another in our life with Christ.

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God of creation, you named humans as co-creators with you. Where the earth cries out in pain, bring wholeness. Guide governments and industry, that environmental laws and practices seek to heal and not harm. Bring relief and justice to people and places suffering from a changing climate, especially those threatened by increased fires, hurricanes, and floods. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Sovereign God, we pray for local communities of every kind: rural and urban; established and new. Lead those in authority to seek the good of all through their words and actions and to mentor others in honest and generous ways. Bless the lands, people, and churches of Benin, Ivory Coast, and Togo. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Healing God, you draw near to all who are hurting. Be with all who desire relief from chronic and acute illness, cancer, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Strengthen health care workers, therapists, and caregivers. Tend to those who are close to our hearts.

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

On this Labor Day weekend we remember and give thanks for all who have fought for workers' rights around the world. Continue to improve working conditions and establish fair wages so that all people may thrive. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Comforting God, console us as we mourn our departed. With Nicolai Grundtvig and all who have gone before us, help us hold fast to the promise that death has been defeated by our Savior Jesus Christ. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We entrust these and all our prayers to you, holy God, in the name of your beloved child, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshiping 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

*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 **Compass International Family Center**, Valparaiso compassIFC.org and **Project Neighbors** – **Freedom Recovery Fund** projectneighbors.org/frf*

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



OFFERTORY

OFFERING SONG

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

Refrain

Congregation:



As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were



gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread;



so may all your peo-ple from all the ends of earth be



gath-ered in - to one in you.

Verses



1. As this cup of bless - ing is shared with-in our midst


2. Let this be a fore-taste of all that is to come when



may we share the pres - ence of your love.
all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

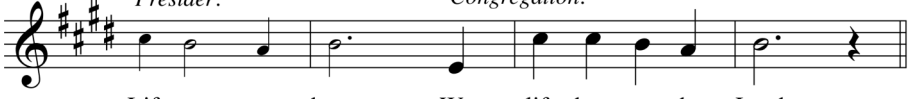
GREAT THANKSGIVING

Presider: *Congregation:*




The Lord be with you. And al-so with you.

Presider: *Congregation:*

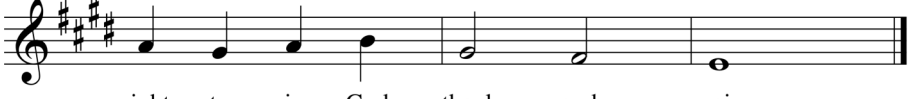


Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Presider: *Congregation:*



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is



right to give God thanks and praise.

It is our duty and delight ...and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

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

Congregation:



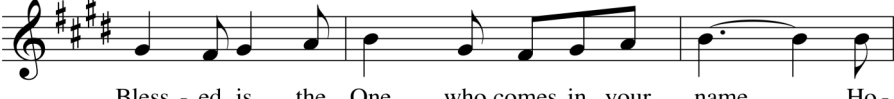
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and




might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your



glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est!



Bless - ed is the One who comes in your name. 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 THE TABLE

From the beginning, God fed us and all of creation - come now and share this foretaste of the feast to come, in the new creation.

Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION

*The assembly is seated. 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; wine is received either by Common Cup or from individual cups in the trays. 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.

LAMB OF GOD



1. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
2. Lamb of God, you break the chains of ha - tred and fear;
3. Lamb of God, you are the way of jus - tice and peace:
4. Lamb of God, you are the way of mer - cy and love:



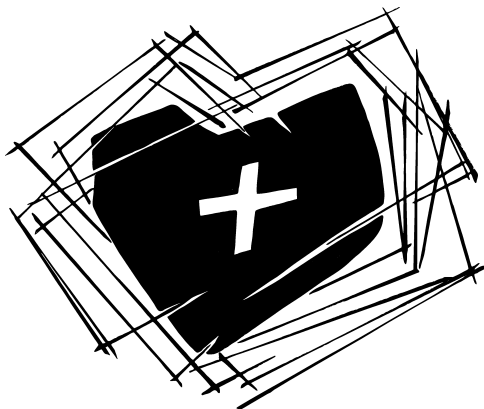
have mer - cy on us, mer - cy on us, mer - cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world:



grant us peace, grant us peace, grant us peace.



COMMUNION HYMNS: ELW #879 *For the Beauty of the Earth*

1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the beau - ty of the skies,
 2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,
 3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,
 4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
 5 For each per - fect gift of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n;

for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:
 hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:
 for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:
 friends on earth and friends a - bove; for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:
 for thy - self, best gift di - vine, to our world so free - ly giv'n:

Refrain

Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sac - ri - fice of praise.

Text: Follitt S. Pierpoint, 1835–1917, alt.
 Music: DIX, Conrad Kocher, 1786–1872

ELW #772 *Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways*

1 Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways to keep his stat - utes still!
2 Or - der my foot - steps by your word and make my heart sin - cere;
3 As - sist my soul, too apt to stray, a strict - er watch to keep;
4 Make me to walk in your com - mands, 'tis a de - light - ful road;

Oh, that my God would grant me grace to know and do his will!
let sin have no do - min - ion, Lord, but keep my con - science clear.
and should I e'er for - get your way, re - store your wan - d'ring sheep.
nor let my head or heart or hands of - fend a - gainst my God.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.
Music: EVAN, William H. Havergal, 1793–1870

When all have returned to their places, the presiding minister continues.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Jesus, you have fed us with your presence:
create in us a new heart and a new vision,
that the gifts of your Spirit may work in us
and renew the face of the earth.

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

God of the galaxies,
God of the starburst and sunlit morning,
God of the forest and shining seas,
God of the blooming desert and rolling grasslands -
Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit -
Shine on you and bless you today and always.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN ELW #328 *Restore in Us, O God*



1 Re - store in us, O God, the splen - dor of your love; re -
2 O Spir - it, wake in us the won - der of your pow'r; from
3 Bring us, O Christ, to share the full - ness of your joy; bap -
4 Three - per - soned God, ful - fill the prom - ise of your grace, that



new your im - age in our hearts, and all our sins re - move.
fruit - less fear un - furl our lives like spring - time bud and flow'r.
tize us in the ris - en life that death can - not de - stroy.
we, when all our search - ing ends, may see you face to face.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944
Music: BAYLOR, Hal H. Hopson, b. 1933
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Children join the pastors to send us in mission

DISMISSAL

Children: Go in peace. Follow Jesus.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

A Reading from Morals on the Book of Job, St. Gregory the Great (540-604)

Pope Gregory I (c. 540-604) is known for instituting the first recorded large-scale mission from Rome to convert the then largely pagan Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. Gregory is also well known for his writings, which were more prolific than those of any of his predecessors as pope. The epithet Saint Gregory the Dialogist has been attached to him in Eastern Christianity because of his Dialogues.

Who may see to the bottom of the marvelous works of Almighty God, how God made all things of nothing, how the very framework of the world is arranged with a marvelous mightiness of power, and the heaven hung above the atmosphere, and the earth balanced above the abyss, how this whole universe consists of things visible and invisible, how God created humanity, so to say, gathering together in a small compass another world, yet a world of reason; how constituting this world of soul and flesh, God mixed the breath and the clay by an unsearchable disposal of God's Might? A part, then, of these things we know, and a part we even are. Yet we omit to admire them, because those things which are full of marvels for an investigation deeper than we can reach, have

become cheap from custom in the eyes of people.

Hence it comes to pass that, if a dead man is raised to life, all people spring up in astonishment. Yet every day one that had no being is born, and no one wonders, though it is plain to all, without doubt, that it is a greater thing for that to be created, which was without being, than for that which had being, to be restored. Because the dry rod of Aaron budded, all were in astonishment; every day a tree is produced from the dry earth, and the virtue residing in dust is turned into wood, and no one wonders. Because five thousand men were filled with five loaves, all were in astonishment that the food should have multiplied in their teeth; every day the grains of seed that are sown are multiplied in a fullness of ears, and no one wonders. All wondered to see water once turned into wine. Every day the earth's moisture being drawn into the root of the vine, is turned by the grape into wine, and no one wonders. Full of wonder then are all the things which we never think to wonder at, because they are by habit become dull to the consideration of them.

A Reading from the Mystic Treatises, St. Isaac the Syrian

Isaac the Syrian (613-700), also remembered as Saint Isaac the Syrian, Isaac of Nineveh, Abba Isaac, Isaac Syrus and Isaac of Qatar, was a 7th-century Syriac Christian bishop and theologian best remembered for his written works on Christian asceticism.

What is a charitable heart? It is a heart burning with love for the whole of creation, for humans, for the birds, for the beasts, for the demons—for all creatures. One who has such a heart cannot see or call to mind a creature without having eyes being filled with tears by reason of the immense compassion which seizes the heart; a heart which is softened and can no longer bear to see or learn from others of any suffering, even the smallest pain, being inflicted on any creature. That is why such a person never ceases to pray also for the animals, that they may be preserved and purified. This person will even pray for the reptiles, moved by the infinite pity which reigns in the hearts of those who are becoming united with God.

A Reading from Disciplines of the Spirit, Howard Thurman

The Rev. Howard Washington Thurman (1899-1981) was an American author, philosopher, theologian, Christian mystic, educator, and civil rights leader. As a prominent religious figure, he played a leading role in many social justice movements and organizations of the twentieth century.

To Jesus, God breathed through all that is: the sparrow overcome by sudden death in its flight; the lily blossoming on the rocky hillside; the grass of the field and the clouds, light and burdenless or weighted down with unshed waters; the madman in chains or wandering among the barren rocks in the wastelands; the little baby in his mother's arms; the strutting insolence of the Roman Legion, the brazen queries of the tax collector; the children at play or old men quibbling in the market place; the august Sanhedrin fighting for its life amidst the arrogances of empire; the whisper of those who had forgotten Jerusalem, the great voiced utterance of the prophets who remembered—to Jesus, God breathed through all that is.

A Reading from This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation, and the Stories that Make Us, Cole Arthur Riley

Cole Arthur Riley is the creator of Black Liturgies, a space where Black words of dignity, lament, rage, and rest, are curated and integrated with a liberating spirituality. An excellent collection of prayers, poems, and meditations was published under this title in 2024. She serves as the content and spiritual formation manager for Chesterton House: A Center for Christian Studies at Cornell University.

Have you ever stood in the presence of a tree and listened to the wind pass through its leaves? The roots and body stand defiant and unmoved. But listen. The branches stretch out their tongues and whisper *shhhhh*.

Trees make symphonies without their trunks ever moving, almost as if the stillness of their centers amplifies their sound. The tree may appear still, but if you look closer, you'll see that each leaf flails with breath. The tree may seem alone, but plow deep and you'll unearth its secret gnarled roots—the grotesque and the beautiful—creeping in the soil, reaching toward the ancestors.

Thomas Merton said, “No writing on the solitary, meditative dimensions of life can say anything that has not already been said better by the wind in the pine trees.” I hold this

Worship Leaders

Acolyte	<u>9:30 a.m.</u> Olivia Hernandez
Lector	Jorunn Scheiderich
Prayer Assistant	Sue McPherson
Communion Assistants	Darla Hernandez Barbara Clements
Ushers	Irene Adams Luke Venstrom
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch
Worship Participant	Phil Hahn, trumpet
Communion Baker	Candace Jacques
Communion Table	Barb Clements Terry Albrecht Helen Arvidson Diana Ahlbrand Marilyn McGawn Marla Niksch Lori Schwartz

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of September 1, 2024

September 2

Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, bishop, renewer of the church, died 1872

Grundtvig was one of two principal Danish theologians of the nineteenth century; the other was Søren Kierkegaard. Grundtvig's ministry as a parish pastor had a difficult start. He was officially censured after his first sermon, though he did receive approval a year later to be ordained. He served with his father for two years but was unable to receive a call for seven years after that. In 1826 he was forced to resign after he attacked the notion that Christianity was merely a philosophical idea rather than God's revelation made known to us in Christ and through word and sacrament. This belief would be a hallmark of Grundtvig's writing. He spent his last thirty-three years as a chaplain at a home for elderly women. From his university days he was convinced that poetry spoke to the human spirit better than prose. He wrote more than a thousand hymns, including "God's Word Is Our Great Heritage" (ELW 509)

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Benin, Ivory Coast, Togo.**

We are **thankful** for:

- the beauty, natural resources, wildlife and different cultures in these countries
- the produce that small farmers continue to grow amid environmental and other hardships
- the spiritual vitality and growth of the churches and how they are cooperating with each other and those of other faiths and practices
- the relative peace and stability that prevails after long years of civil war and political struggle.

We **pray** for:

- more democratic governments that are free of corruption and that prioritize what the people most need
- those working to alleviate the poverty, illiteracy and hunger that so many in these countries still experience
- churches faithfully bringing the gospel to, and serving, all people with greater respect for how those of other faiths express their spirituality
- emotional and physical healing, and restoring hope in people who are victims of conflict, disease and human rights abuses

What Would Jesus Do?

At the outset, rules seem simple. They divide the world into good and bad and help us restore a measure of order to a chaotic world. Unfortunately, the same rules that we use to bring order out of chaos are often insufficient to deal with the complexity of our lives, which is one of the reasons there truly is an exception to every rule. This is also the reason we appoint judges: to interpret the law when it fails to adequately address the circumstance to which it is applied.

In Jesus' day the Pharisees and scribes were known for their strict observance of the law. So when they notice the disciples of Jesus eating with defiled hands, the Pharisees and scribes bring this perceived breach of the law to Jesus' attention. The law itself, which requires that people wash their hands before eating, originated from ancient purity laws. Jesus understands this and simultaneously upholds and reframes the law by drawing his listeners' attention away from the washing of hands to what truly defiles. In doing so, Jesus acts as a judge and offers an interpretation of the law that both upholds its original intent of purity and absolves the disciples of wrongdoing. At the same time, he exposes the prioritization of human precepts over God's command and reminds us of God's sovereignty and compassion.

Rules are simple, but our world is not. Through the incarnation, the Word made flesh, God meets us at the intersection of law and life. In Jesus, God the judge enters our world in a new way and interprets the law. And through Jesus, we come to understand God's will in a messy world. Therefore, if we as Christians truly want to live out the will of God, we do well to start with that old and simple question "What would Jesus do?"

Stewardship Snippet

James 1:17 – Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.

Make a list of the blessings in your life. Go ahead! These are gifts to you from God, the source of all. Now review the list and pray for each, "I thank God for" Do this every day and see how you feel.

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