

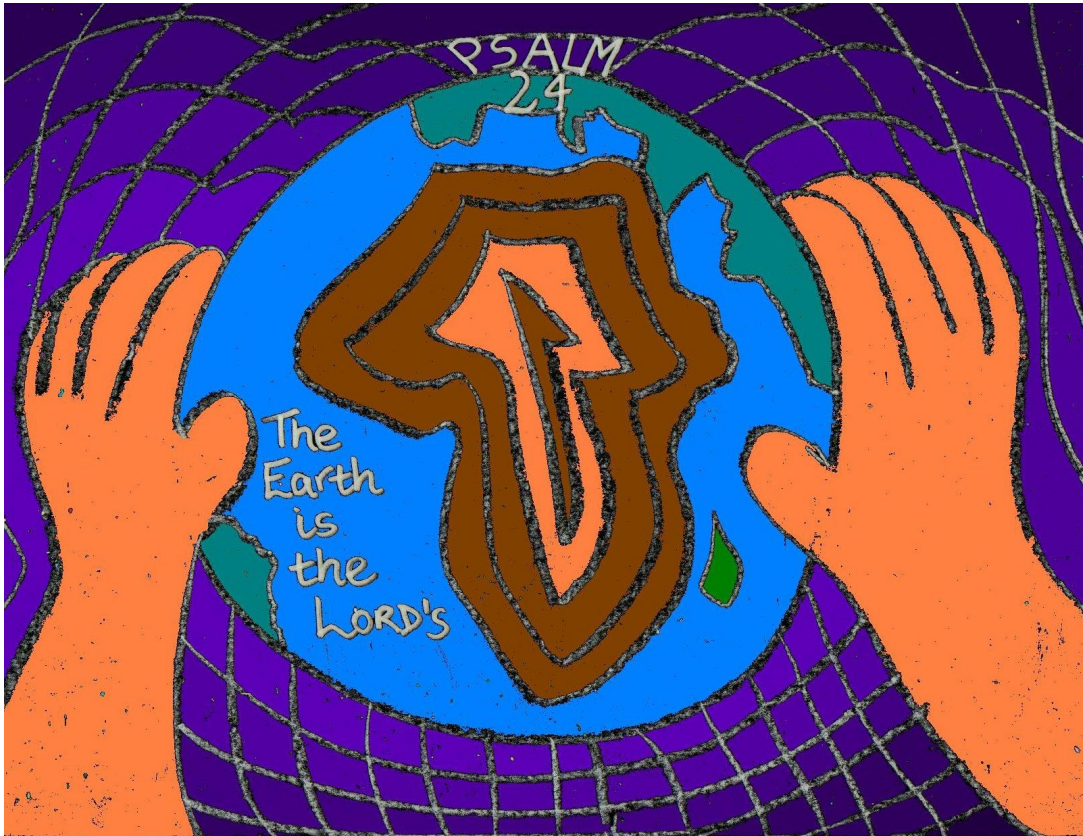


**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street • Valparaiso, IN 46385

(219) 462-6660

clcvalpo.org • office@clcvalpo.org



**Time after Pentecost
July 14, 2024**

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."*

ABOUT WORSHIP

We gather to worship weekly to hear and remember our shared 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, with hymns found in the red hymnals ("ELW") in the seats in front on you.

If you have a prayer request, note it on a yellow card from the seatback holder and pass it to an usher; 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.

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.

When Amos reports his vision of God judging Israel for its mistreatment of the poor, he becomes a threat to the power of the priests and the king. John the Baptist also speaks truth to power, and Herod has him killed. In Herod's fear that Jesus is John returned from the dead, we may hear hope for the oppressed: all the prophets killed through the ages are alive in Jesus. We are called to witness to justice in company with them, and to proclaim God's saving love.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE (8:00 am): *Sonata de 5th Tono* de Larrañaga
(10:30 am): *The Mountain Maid* Grieg
(Veslemøy- The Mountain Maid; Møte - Tryst)

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 (on the 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,
the God of manna,
the God of miracles,
the God of mercy.
Amen.

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our provider,
help us.

It is hard to believe there is enough to share.

**We question your ways when they differ from the ways
of the world in which we live.**

**We turn to our own understanding
rather than trusting in you.**

We take offense at your teachings and your ways.

Turn us again to you.

Where else can we turn?

**Share with us the words of eternal life
and feed us for life in the world.**

Amen.

Beloved people of God:

in Jesus, the manna from heaven,
you are fed and nourished.

By Jesus, the worker of miracles,
there is always more than enough.

Through Jesus, † the bread of life,
you are shown God's mercy:

you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

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:

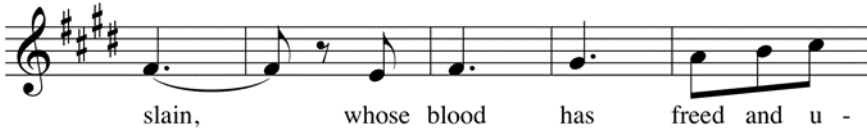
Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,
all of cre - a - tion sings for joy
to the God of life and love and
free-dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -
er - more!

The musical score is written on five staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/8 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some phrases ending in a fermata. The lyrics are aligned with the notes below each staff.

Verse 1



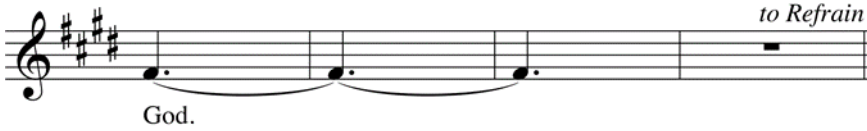
1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once



slain, whose blood has freed and u -



nit - ed us to be one great peo - ple of

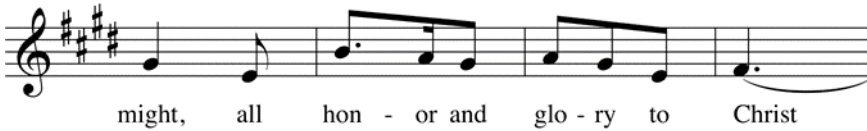


to Refrain
God.

Verse 2



2. Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and



might, all hon - or and glo - ry to Christ



to Refrain
for ev - er.

Verse 3



3. For God has come to dwell with us, to



make us peo - ple of God; to make



to Refrain
all things new.

paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. ¹⁴David danced before the LORD with all his might; David was girded with a linen ephod. ¹⁵So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

¹⁶As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

¹⁷They brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and offerings of well-being before the LORD. ¹⁸When David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the offerings of well-being, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts, ¹⁹and distributed food among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, to each a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. Then all the people went back to their homes.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM 24

¹The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world and those who dwell therein.

²**For the LORD has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.**

³Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD, and who may stand in God's holy place?

⁴**Those of innocent hands and purity of heart, who do not swear on God's being, nor do they pledge by what is false.**

⁵They shall receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of their salvation.

⁶**Such is the generation of those who seek you, O LORD, of those who seek your face, O God of Jacob.**

⁷Lift up your heads, O gates; and be lifted up, O everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in.

⁸**Who is this King of glory?**

The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!

⁹Lift up your heads, O gates; and be lifted up, O everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in.

¹⁰**Who is this King of glory?**

Truly, the LORD of hosts is the King of glory.

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 6:14-29

As Jesus and his disciples begin to attract attention, Mark recalls the story of John the Baptist's martyrdom. Like John, Jesus and his disciples will also suffer at the hands of those opposed to the gospel of salvation.

The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁴King Herod heard of [the disciples' preaching,] for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him."¹⁵ But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old."¹⁶ But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

¹⁷For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her.¹⁸ For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."¹⁹ And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not,²⁰ for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him.²¹ But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee.²² When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it."²³ And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom."²⁴ She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer."²⁵ Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."²⁶ The king was

deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, ²⁸brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

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 #776 *What God Ordains Is Good Indeed*

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



1 What God or - dains is good in - deed, for all life well pro - vid - ing.
 2 What God or - dains is good in - deed: my light, my life, my Sav - ior!
 3 What God or - dains is good in - deed. When hope seems like de - lu - sion,
 4 What God or - dains is good in - deed. My Lord will nev - er fail me



The will of God is best for me, the ground of my con - fid - ing.
 No ill can get the best of me; God's care will nev - er wa - ver.
 I taste the bit - ter cup and plead, "Lord, quench my fear, con - fu - sion."
 on dan - ger's path, in deep - est need, when death in grief shall veil me.



My faith - ful God, on ev - 'ry road you know the way un -
 Through joy and pain I shall at - tain the dawn dis - clos - ing
 God ends the night, re - stores de - light; by faith I face to -
 My God so dear will draw me near, in lov - ing arms will



fold - ing and my hand you are hold - ing.
 clear - ly that God has loved me dear - ly.
 mor - row and yield to God all sor - row.
 hold me, at last in light en - fold me.

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.

One in the communion of saints and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we join our voices in prayer.

A brief silence.

You gather your people into the body of Christ. Where your church is wounded, heal it. Where it is right, strengthen it. Where it is divided, reunite it. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

From before the foundation of the world, you are God. Revive ecosystems destroyed by human greed. Curb our desire to put wealth ahead of the health of all who call this planet home. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You establish equity and make justice. Within every nation, tribe, and land, cause laws to be written and customs to be observed that protect the most vulnerable. In Djibouti and Somalia, grant good governance, stability, and enough for all. In your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You rule in every place and time. Guide our United States. Help us to treat one another as neighbors and resist temptations to hostility and hate. Open our hearts to listen to one another. Give your spirit to those in leadership positions, to guide us toward healing, hope, and wisdom. Shape us to be a nation that cares for its people, that works for peace, and follows the paths that reflect your loving will. In your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

On the cross your beloved Son endured pain and death. Bring healing to those in need, hope to any in despair, and comfort to the dying. In your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You send your Spirit into this community of faith. Empower our ministries that serve and build up local communities, especially Little Lamb Preschool and the Men's Overnight Shelter. Nurture our partnerships with other community organizations – Alcoholics Anonymous, New Creations, CoAction Housing Opportunities, Hilltop House, and the Interfaith Action Network. In your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

All peoples praise you, O God. We give you thanks and praise for the lives of our loved ones who now rest in you, especially Bartolomé de Las Casas. In the fullness of time gather us with all your saints in light. In your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Holy God, holy and merciful: into your outstretched arms we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in the one who is the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

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 **ELCA's Global Missions' Selian Lutheran Hospital in Tanzania Africa and AMOS, "A Mission of Service" in Guatemala/Honduras.***



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(8:00 am):
(10:30 am):*O Had I Jubal's Lyre*
*Aria*Handel
Bozza**OFFERING SONG***The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.***Refrain***Congregation:*

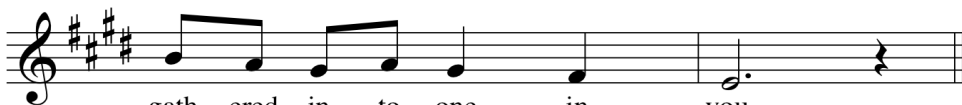
As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were



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.

to Refrain

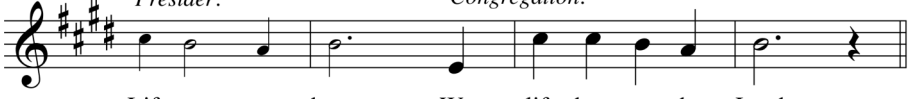
GREAT THANKSGIVING

Presider: *Congregation:*




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

Presider: *Congregation:*

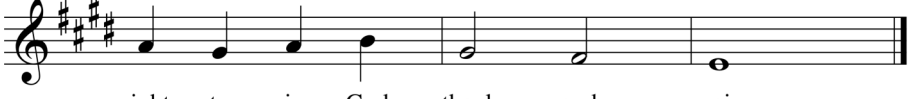


Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

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:



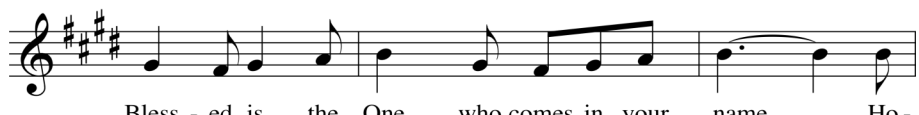
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and




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 COMMUNION

Christ has set the table with more than enough for all. Come!

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 #594 *Dear Christians, One & All, Rejoice (st. 1 – 4)*



1 Dear Chris-tians, one and all, re-joice, with ex-ul-ta-tion
2 Fast bound in Sa-tan's chains I lay, death brood-ed fierce-ly
3 O God, you saw my deep dis-tress be-fore the world's foun-
4 You said to your be-lov-ed Son: "'Tis time to have com-



spring-ing, and, with u-nit-ed heart and voice and ho-ly
o'er me, sin was my tor-ment night and day; in sin my
da-tion, and, with your mer-cy mea-sure-less, you planned for
pas-sion. Then go, bright jew-el of my crown, and bring to



rap-ture sing-ing, pro-claim the won-ders God has done, pro-
moth-er bore me. My own good works all came to naught, free
my sal-va-tion. You turned to me a fa-ther's heart; you
all sal-va-tion; from sin and sor-row set them free; slay



claim the vic-t'ry God has won, how pre-cious was our ran-som!
will a-against God's judg-ment fought, so firm-ly sin pos-sessed me.
did not choose the eas-y part, but gave your dear-est trea-sure.
bit-ter death for them that they may live with you for-ev-er."

ELW #717 *Let Justice Flow like Streams*



- 1 Let jus - tice flow like streams of spar-king wa - ter, pure,
- 2 Let righ-teous-ness roll on as oth - ers' cares we heed,
- 3 So may God's plumb line, straight, de - fine our mea - sure true,



en - a - bling growth, re - fresh - ing life, a - bun - dant, cleans-ing, sure.
an ev - er - flow - ing stream of faith trans-lat - ed in - to deed.
and jus-tice, right, and peace per-vade this world our whole life through.

When all have returned to their places, the assembly stands.

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

Amen.

THANKS BE TO YOU



1. Praise to you, O God of mer - cy:
2. From of old you loved and sought us:

Thanks be to you for ev - er! Rais - ing high the
Thanks be to you for ev - er! Truth and jus - tice

weak and low - ly: Thanks be to you for ev - er!
you have taught us: Thanks be to you for ev - er!

Strong is your faith - ful - ness, strong is your
love, re - mem - b'ring your cov - e - nant of
life with us. 3. Praise to you, O
God of mer - cy: Thanks be to you for ev - er!
Rais - ing high the weak and low - ly: Thanks be to you for
ev - er! Thanks be to you for ev - er!

Text and Music: Marty Haugen; © 1990, GIA Publications, Inc.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

YOUTH GATHERING SENDING

INVITATIONS

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

BLESSING

The blessing of God,
who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us,
✠ be upon you now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN ELW #807 *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*



1 Come, thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless-ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
2 Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer: "Hith-er by thy help I've come";
3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be;



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud-est praise.
and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
let that grace now like a fet - ter bind my wan-d'ring heart to thee.



While the hope of end-less glo - ry fills my heart with joy and love,
Je - sus sought me when a strang - er, wan-d'ring from the fold of God;
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.



teach me ev - er to a - dore thee; may I still thy good-ness prove.
he, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre-cious blood.
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Children join the pastors to send us in mission

DISMISSAL

Children: Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Roberts

Worship Leaders

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Shawn Longacre	Noah DeJesus
Lector	Paula Katsahnias	Sheila Burnside
Prayer Assistant	Sue McPherson	Lois Felten
Communion Assistants	Barbara Clements Kathy Sutherland	Holly Knauff
Ushers	Irene Adams Luke Venstrom	
Sound/Light	Lance Nolting	Jeff Peiffer
Video/Livestream	-----	Tony Reinhold
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	

Worship Participants

Lutheran Summer Music Students

Christian Chiasson, trumpet
Aria Morgan, saxophone
Nicole Lee, accompanist

Communion Baker

Jonathan Bull Family

Communion Table

Barb Clements
Terry Albrecht
Helen Arvidson

Diana Ahlbrand
Marilyn McGawn
Marla Niksch
Lori Schwartz

Altar Flowers this morning are given in Memory of Paul Noe by his daughters:
Jennifer Noe
Gabrielle Noe

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of July 14, 2024

July 17

Bartolomé de Las Casas, missionary to the Indies, died 1566

Bartolomé de Las Casas was a Spanish priest and a missionary in the Western Hemisphere. He first came to the West while serving in the military, and he was granted a large estate that included a number of Indigenous enslaved people. When he was ordained in 1513, he granted freedom to his servants. This act characterized much of the rest of Las Casas's ministry. Throughout the Caribbean and Central America, he worked to stop the enslavement of native people, to halt the brutal treatment of women by military forces, and to promote laws that humanized the process of colonization.

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Djibouti, Somalia**.

We are **thankful** for:

- the beauty of Creation and resources from lands and sea
- the stable governance and economic development that Djibouti has experienced in recent years
- the many ways churches and humanitarian organizations have prayed for and responded to the needs in Somalia

We **pray** for:

- protection of natural resources and coastal land
- an end to hunger, violence, crime and conflict in Somalia
- effective reconciliation and peace-building
- stable governments that further the common good for all the people
- those who have fled this area that they may be welcomed in new homelands

Risk-taking Witness

What makes a good leader? Confidence, compassion, or courage? Popularity and prestige? A quick Google search offers no shortage of books, articles, and classes on leadership. And it's no wonder: organizations, communities, and entire governments depend on the abilities of those who step into decision-making roles. A good leader can inspire the masses and impact the world in profoundly positive ways, while a corrupt leader can cause entire systems to crumble, resulting in devastation for individuals and communities alike.

It turns out these concepts are not new. Scripture has much to say about the qualities of leaders and the consequences of their decisions. The Bible offers several stories of faithful leaders: those who think about what is best for the whole community, particularly the people who are most vulnerable. These kinds of leaders follow God's call at great personal risk. John the Baptist is just one example.

Meanwhile, corrupt leaders are most concerned with self-preservation. They are governed by fear and greed, easily threatened by those on the margins. Herod finds himself in this position. While he may have been intrigued by John, saving his own reputation mattered more to him than John's life. The result is nothing short of horrific, culminating with an innocent man's head on a platter.

Our world is full of leaders who wield their power for their own benefit. But the good news is, God continues to call faithful leaders who pave the way with risk-taking, truth-telling witness. This type of leadership is not easy, and the personal risk is great. John's story illustrates this in alarming ways. And yet, John's story is not defined by his death—in Christ, his prophetic words and deeds echo through the ages. His impact lives on, calling us to the humble, compassionate way of Jesus.

So, what kind of leader will you be? And whom will you choose to follow?

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