



**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street • Valparaiso,
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clcvalpo.org • office@clcvalpo.org



**Time after Pentecost
June 2, 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."*

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.

Deuteronomy makes clear that sabbath-keeping is meant for the welfare of all. God delivered the Israelites out of slavery, so they should observe this freedom with a day of rest. No one should work seven days a week; even slaves and foreigners should be able to rest. Yet human beings can turn even the most liberating religious practice into a life-destroying rule. Jesus does not reject sabbath-keeping, but defends its original life-enhancing meaning. Our worship and our religious way of life are to lead to restoration: the hungry being fed and the sick being healed.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Canon

Pachelbel/Hopson

WELCOME

If you are joining us for the first time, 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).



***Prayer requests** can be posted to the livechat or ushers have yellow Prayer Request cards. Fill out and give 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).*



GATHERING HYMN ELW #532

Gather Us In



1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing, now is the dark-ness
 2 We are the young, our lives are a mys-t'ry, we are the old who
 3 Here we will take the wine and the wa-ter, here we will take the
 4 Not in the dark of build-ings con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,



van-ished a-way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings
 yearn for your face; we have been sung through-out all of his-t'ry,
 bread of new birth, here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,
 light years a-way— here in this place the new light is shin-ing,



brought here to you in the light of this day.
 called to be light to the whole hu-man race.
 call us a-new to be salt for the earth.
 now is the king-dom, and now is the day.



Gath-er us in, the lost and for-sak-en, gath-er us in, the
 Gath-er us in, the rich and the haugh-ty, gath-er us in, the
 Give us to drink the wine of com-pas-sion, give us to eat the
 Gath-er us in and hold us for-ev-er, gath-er us in and



blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a-wak-en,
 proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low-ly,
 bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash-ion
 make us your own; gath-er us in, all peo-ples to-geth-er,



we shall a-rise at the sound of our name.
 give us the cour-age to en-ter the song.
 lives that are ho-ly and hearts that are true.
 fire . . . of love in our flesh and our bone.

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!

HYMN 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!

(vs. 1-3 pg. 6)

Verse 1



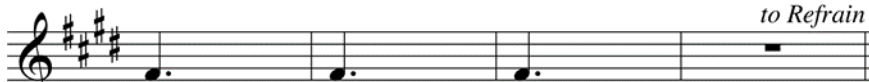
1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once



slain, whose blood has freed and u -



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




God. *to Refrain*

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*

Verse 3



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

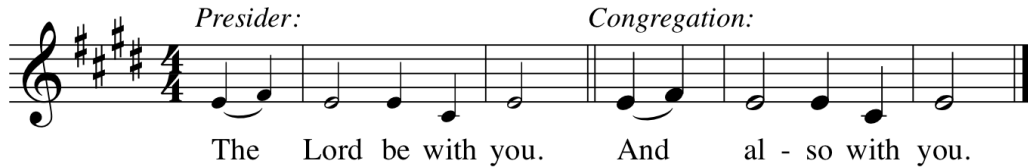


make us peo - ple of God; to make



all things new. *to Refrain*

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.

God made known
in human frailty;
your chosen one
walked through fields
where bitterness flourished
and mercy was enclosed:
break through our conspiracies
of unholy power
and teach us what it means
to save and honour life;
through Jesus Christ, lord of the Sabbath.
Amen.

WORD

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

CHILDREN'S TIME

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

READING: 1 Samuel 3:1-10

At a time when visions are rare and unexpected, the LORD comes to Samuel and calls him to speak the divine word. Though just a boy, Samuel responds to God obediently, as Eli the priest has taught him to respond. This marks the beginning of Samuel's prophetic ministry.

¹Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

²At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me."

But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again."⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.⁸ The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy.⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSE: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

¹ LORD, you have searched me out;

O LORD, you have known me.

² **You know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.**

³ You trace my journeys and my resting-places
and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴ **Indeed, there is not a word on my lips,
but you, O LORD, know it altogether.**

⁵ You encompass me, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

⁶ **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain to it.**

¹³ For you yourself created my inmost parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ **I will thank you because I am marvelously made;
your works are wonderful, and I know it well.**

¹⁵ My body was not hidden from you,
while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ **Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; all of them were written
in your book; my days were fashioned before they came to be.**

¹⁷ How deep I find your thoughts, O God!
How great is the sum of them!

¹⁸ **If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand;
to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.**

READING: 2 Corinthians 4:5-12

When we carry out God's ministry we do so not for our glory but for the sake of Jesus Christ whom we proclaim as Lord. The power for ministry comes from God, not us, so that we persevere no matter what, trusting in God's power and promises at work through us.

⁵We do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. ⁶For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

⁷But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. ⁸We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. ¹¹For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. ¹²So death is at work in us, but life in you.

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 2:23—3:6

Jesus challenges the prevailing interpretation of what is lawful on the sabbath and tells his critics that the sabbath was made for humankind, not the other way around. Healing the man with the withered hand is work that cannot wait until the next day.

The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²³One sabbath [Jesus] was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. ²⁴The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?” ²⁵And he said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food?

²⁶He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions.” ²⁷Then he said to them, “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; ²⁸so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.”

^{3:1}Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand.

²They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. ³And he said to the man who had the withered hand, “Come forward.”

⁴Then he said to them, “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. ⁵He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. ⁶The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

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 #729 *The Church of Christ, in Every Age*

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



1 The church of Christ, in ev - 'ry age be - set by
2 A - cross the world, a - cross the street, the vic - tims
3 Then let the ser - vant church a - rise, a car - ing
4 For he a - lone, whose blood was shed, can cure the
5 We have no mis - sion but to serve in full o -



change, but Spir - it - led, must claim and test its
of in - jus - tice cry for shel - ter and for
church that longs to be a part - ner in Christ's
fe - ver in our blood, and teach us how to
be - dience to our Lord; to care for all, with -



her - i - tage and keep on ris - ing from the dead.
bread to eat, and nev - er live be - fore they die.
sac - ri - fice, and clothed in Christ's hu - man - i - ty.
share our bread and feed the starv - ing mul - ti - tude.
out re - serve, and spread his lib - er - at - ing word.

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000

Music: WAREHAM, William Knapp, 1698–1768

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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.

We come before the triune God to pray for our communities, ourselves, and our world.
A brief silence.

Guide your church to expressions of faith that bring rest and release. Teach your faithful people to be attentive to the spiritual, physical, and societal weariness of our neighbors, that we proclaim your grace through tangible acts of mercy and justice. Give your Spirit to Voting Members of our upcoming Synod Assembly; bless the work of the Assembly and guide the process to our next Bishop. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Keep us mindful of the rhythms of nature as the days lengthen and the seasons shift toward summer. Grant relief to areas facing flooding or drought and bring favorable weather for the flourishing of crops, gardens, and orchards. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Where there is affliction in our world, bring healing. Where world leaders are perplexed, bring clarity of vision. Give a spirit of discernment to political advisors, institutional researchers, economic analysts, and all vocations that inform the work of governments and policymakers. In Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Eswatini, empower churches; bless work for peace, justice, and the welfare of all. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Provide wholeness and respite to all who are weary: those who struggle in any way and those who care for them. Strengthen first responders and health care workers in their times of exhaustion or frustration. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Stir our hearts toward abundant generosity among neighbors who experience hunger and food insecurity. Bless feeding ministries and community food efforts, especially community gardens, farmers markets, food pantries and Little Free Pantries. Open both our hearts and our tables.

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We remember the communion of saints whose lives made visible the saving life of Jesus Christ, including John, Boniface, Seattle, and the Martyrs of Uganda. Guide us by their example to embody the treasure of your love for the sake of our world, until we come to our final rest in you. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Receive our prayers, O God, and come quickly to our aid, through the power of the Spirit and the love of Jesus Christ.

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

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

Food Bank of Northwest Indiana www.foodbanknwi.org and

Project Neighbors <https://projectneighbors.org> or www.facebook.com/ProjectNeighbors.

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).



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

OFFERING PRAYER

Jesus, Bread of life,
**you have set this table with your very self,
and called us to the feast of plenty.
Gather what has been sown among us,
and strengthen us in this meal.
Make us to be what we receive here,
your body for the life of the world.
Amen.**

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)

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 #614 *There Is a Balm in Gilead*

Refrain

There is a balm in Gil-e-ad to make the wound-ed whole;

there is a balm in Gil-e-ad to heal the sin-sick soul.

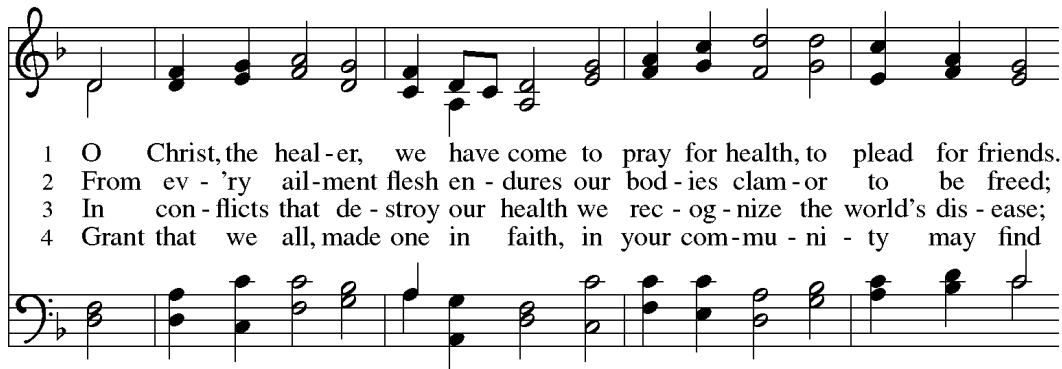
1 Some - times I feel dis - cour - aged and think my work's in vain,
 2 If you can - not preach like Pe - ter, if you can - not pray like Paul,
 3 Don't ev - er be dis - cour - aged, for Je - sus is your friend;

Refrain

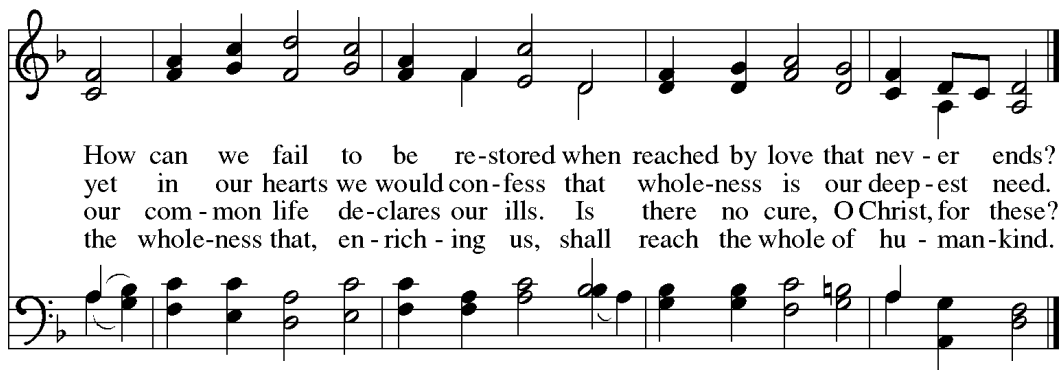
but then the Ho - ly Spir - it re - vives my soul a - gain.
 you can tell the love of Je - sus and say, "He died for all."
 and if you lack for knowl - edge, he'll ne'er re - fuse to lend.

Text: African American spiritual
 Music: BALM IN GILEAD, African American spiritual

ELW #610 *O Christ the Healer, We Have Come*



1 O Christ, the heal-er, we have come to pray for health, to plead for friends.
2 From ev - 'ry ail-ment flesh en - dures our bod - ies clam - or to be freed;
3 In con - flicts that de - stroy our health we rec - og - nize the world's dis - ease;
4 Grant that we all, made one in faith, in your com - mu - ni - ty may find



How can we fail to be re-stored when reached by love that nev - er ends?
yet in our hearts we would con-fess that whole-ness is our deep-est need.
our com - mon life de-clares our ills. Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?
the whole-ness that, en - rich - ing us, shall reach the whole of hu - man-kind.

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000

Music: DISTRESS, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

Text © 1969 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

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

Congregation:

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.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Jesus, Bread of life,
we have received from your table
more than we could ever ask.
As you have nourished us in this meal,
now strengthen us to love the world with your own life.
In your name we pray.
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 blessing of God,
who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us,
✠ be upon you now and forever.
Amen.



1 Let us en-ter in to the song of thanks - giv - ing and free - dom.
 2 Let us en-ter in to the place where our God has pre - ced - ed.
 3 Let us en-ter in to the heart of a world that is bro - ken.



Let us en-ter in to the long line of peo - ple in need.
 Let us en-ter in to the face of the fear and the pain.
 Let us en-ter in to the start of a hope we can share.



Let us en-ter in to the strong mind that God is still liv - ing.
 Let us en-ter in to the grace of the love when it's need - ed.
 Let us en-ter in to the part where we call one an - oth - er



Heal - ing, for - giv - ing— Let us en - ter in.
 Death is de - feat - ed! Let us en - ter in.
 sis - ter and broth - er. Let us en - ter in.

Text: Ray Makeever, b. 1943
 Music: LET US ENTER IN, Ray Makeever
 Text and music © 1983 Ray Makeever, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Children join the pastors to send us in mission

DISMISSAL

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

Thanks be to God!

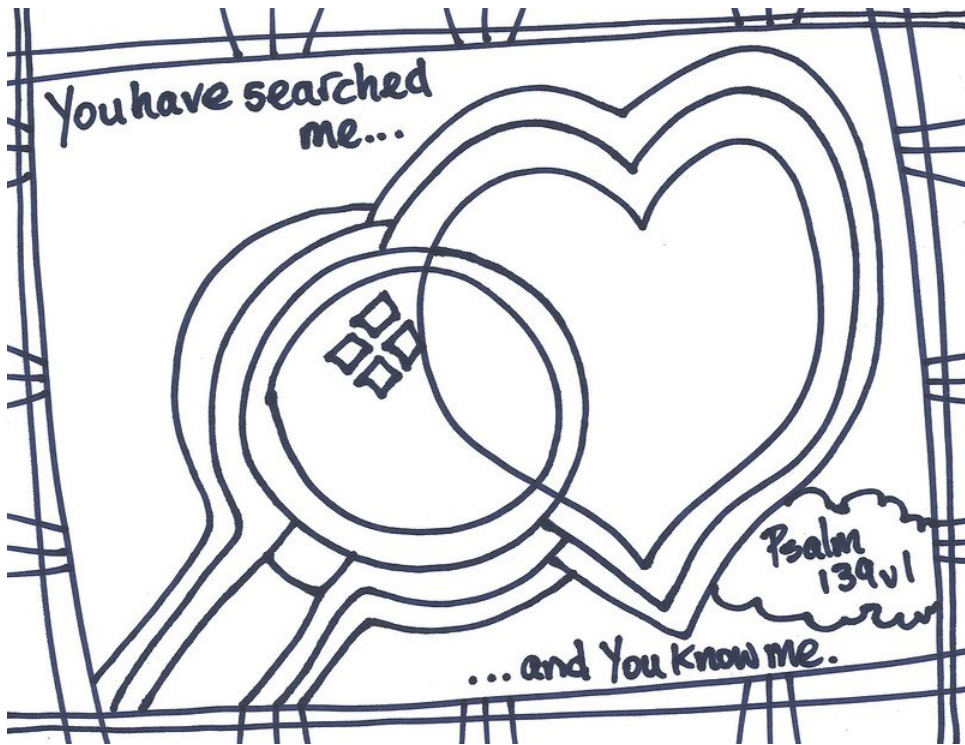
POSTLUDE

Chorale

Larkin

Worship Leaders

Acolyte	Luke Ridley	
Lector	Karen Harper	
Prayer Assistant	Darla Hernandez	
Communion Assistants	Darla Hernandez Barbara Clements	
Ushers	Tim Sutherland Bob Lockett	
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Communion Baker	Bull Family	
Communion Table	Barb Clements Terry Albrecht Helen Arvidson	Diana Ahlbrand Marilyn McGawn Marla Niksch Lori Schwartz



COMMEMORATIONS

Week of June 2, 2024

June 3

John XXIII, Bishop of Rome, died 1963

When elected pope, the former Angelo Roncalli was expected to be a short-term caretaker. He showed great spirit, though, and convened the Second Vatican Council which helped bring great changes to Roman Catholic and other churches.

June 3

The Martyrs of Uganda, died 1886

On June 3, 1886, thirty-two young men were burned to death for refusing to renounce Christianity. The confident manner in which these Christians went to their deaths contributed to a much stronger Christian presence in Uganda.

June 5

Boniface, Bishop of Mainz, missionary to Germany, martyr, died 754

Boniface was a native of England who became a Benedictine monk and was called to missionary work among the Vandal tribes of Germany. With fellow workers, he established churches and schools, and he also worked to reform the church.

June 7

Seattle, chief of the Duwamish Confederacy, died 1866

Noah Seattle led a coalition of tribes, and convinced them to live peacefully with encroaching white settlers. When he became a Roman Catholic, he held morning and evening prayer with his tribe. The city of Seattle is named for him.

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Eswatini.**

We are **thankful** for:

- the rich biodiversity of plants and animals and of mineral resources in this region
- the faithful witness of churches throughout the world during apartheid and how people of different races and lifestyles have come together since then
- the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and others to bring healing from the atrocities committed
- how South Africa has made antiretroviral drugs accessible to all with HIV and AIDS

We **pray** for:

- protection of resources for the good of all rather than their exploitation for economic gain
- more democratic and transparent governance in these countries, at all levels
- effectively countering rape, sexual violence, and other crime

Stewardship Snippet

Deuteronomy 5:12 – Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you.

Do you need a break? In today's nonstop, 24/7 world, we need Deuteronomy's reminder that God actually commands us to stop working one day a week. Sabbath literally means "stop." Good stewards maintain a good work/life balance. What would a "Holy stoppage" look like for you?

What's the Point?

Here's what the point of this gospel reading is *not*: it's not about grain, and it's not about bread, and it's not about Pharisees, and it's not about David, the temple, or the priests; it's not about the synagogue, a withered hand, or lawfulness, and it's not even, finally, about the sabbath—as important as all these details are to the story.

The point of this gospel is to set eyes on and crack open hearts to what is most holy. Jesus would, over and over again, insist in word and deed that compassion and mercy trump tradition and supersede ritual when it comes to the sacred. As scandalous as that may look in action, and as unsettling as it felt to cautious stewards of the religious order, it is precisely what Jesus meant when he argued that “the sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath.” Elsewhere, he similarly challenged the religious elite, “For the sake of your tradition, you make void the word of God” (Matthew 15:6), and preached audaciously in his Sermon on the Mount that he had not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17).

Elie Wiesel, a Jewish survivor of the Nazi Holocaust who became a writer, activist, and teacher, taught that “if even the most authoritative teaching, the most sacred text, leads to dehumanization, to humiliation, to harm, then we must reject it.” So, too, did Jesus reject the misuse of the law, demonstrating instead how God intended it as gift, as grace. He exposed the broken-open heart of God's love for humanity in all the places where people react to mercy with hostility. Not only grieved but angry at the hardness of heart of those around him, at their silence and resistance to doing mercy and choosing compassion, in a mere four words—“Stretch out your hand”—Jesus defied tradition and chose the holy, the sacred—making his point. That's gospel.

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