



# September 3, 2023 Season of Stewardship

*An asterisk \* invites you to stand in body or in spirit,  
and you are invited to read aloud responses found in **bold**.*

*We welcome you to First Lutheran Church!*

## we GATHER

*In our Gospel lesson, Jesus tells his disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. In the **Prelude** (text found at hymn no. 803), we reflect on the “amazing” and “divine” love of Christ that “demands [our] life, [our] all.” Then, we “lift high the cross” and proclaim “the love of Christ” in this rousing **Gathering Hymn!***

**Prelude** — “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

Setting by Hal Hopson  
Carrie Stelter, cello

### Words of Welcome

**\*Gathering Hymn** — no. 660

“Lift High the Cross”

### **\*Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be God,  
the one who forms us,  
✠ Jesus who bears the cross,  
the Spirit who makes our joy complete.  
**Amen.**  
Let us bow before God in humility,  
confessing our sin.

Steadfast and faithful God,  
**you have revealed the ways of justice,  
yet we fail to follow you.**  
**We are overwhelmed  
by the world’s violence and suffering.**  
**We are afraid to risk what we have  
for the sake of others.**  
**For the harm we have caused,  
known and unknown, forgive us.**

**For the unjust demands  
we place on others  
and your creation, forgive us.**  
**For the ways we turn away  
from you and our neighbor, forgive us.**  
**Lead us back to you  
and set us on the right path;  
in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.**  
**Amen.**

Beloved in Christ, God’s justice stretches  
beyond all understanding. God’s  
compassion is beyond compare.  
In Jesus, God is always making a new way  
for us. In ✠ Christ, we are already and  
always forgiven.  
**Amen.**

*We return to this liturgy by Marty Haugen for our Season of Stewardship!*

**\*Apostolic Greeting & Kyrie** — page 120, front of hymnal, ELW Setting Two

**\*Canticle of Praise** — page 122, front of hymnal, from ELW Setting Two

### **\*Prayer of the Day**

May God be with you. **And also with you.** Let us pray.

O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

# we LISTEN and RESPOND

## A Reading from Jeremiah — Jeremiah 15:15-21

O Lord, you know; remember me and visit me,  
and bring down retribution for me on my  
persecutors.  
In your forbearance do not take me away;  
know that on your account I suffer insult.  
Your words were found, and I ate them,  
and your words became to me a joy  
and the delight of my heart;  
for I am called by your name,  
O Lord, God of hosts.  
I did not sit in the company of merry-makers,  
nor did I rejoice;  
under the weight of your hand I sat alone,  
for you had filled me with indignation.  
Why is my pain unceasing,  
my wound incurable, refusing to be healed?  
Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook,  
like waters that fail.

Therefore thus says the Lord:  
If you turn back, I will take you back,  
and you shall stand before me.  
If you utter what is precious, and not what is  
worthless,  
you shall serve as my mouth.  
It is they who will turn to you,  
not you who will turn to them.  
And I will make you to this people a fortified  
wall of bronze; they will fight against you,  
but they shall not prevail over you,  
for I am with you  
to save you and deliver you, says the Lord.  
I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked,  
and redeem you from the grasp of the  
ruthless.  
Grace-filled Word for creating generous hearts.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm 26:1-8 — sung responsively by verse



Give judgment for me, O Lord, for I have lived | with integrity;  
I have trusted in the Lord and | have not faltered.

**Test me, O | Lord, and try me;**  
**examine my heart | and my mind.**

For your steadfast love is be- | fore my eyes;  
I have walked faithful- | ly with you.

**I have not sat | with the worthless,**  
**nor do I consort with | the deceitful.**

I have hated the company of | evildoers;  
I will not sit down | with the wicked.

**I will wash my hands in inno- | cence, O Lord,**  
**that I may go in procession | round your altar,**

singing aloud a song | of thanksgiving  
and recounting all your won- | derful deeds.

**Lord, I love the house in | which you dwell**  
**and the place where your glo- | ry abides.**

## A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans — Romans 12:9-21

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate

with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Grace-filled Word for creating generous hearts. **Thanks be to God.**

**\*Gospel Acclamation — ELW Setting Two**

"Alleluia"

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,  
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

**\*Gospel — Matthew 16:21-28**

The Gospel of Matthew, the 16th chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

From that time on, [after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah,] Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?"

"For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*We pray in this hymn, "As long as I live, Jesus, make me your servant, to carry your cross and to share all your burdens and tears." As we begin our Season of Stewardship, you are invited to reflect on how you are serving Jesus in the world around you.*

**Sermon**

Pastor Chris Culuris

**\*Hymn — no. 808**

"Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song"

**\*The Apostles' Creed**

P: Let us confess our faith together:

**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 power of 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.**

### **\*Prayers of Intercession**

A: Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

God of life, your words are the joy at the heart of your church. Draw the seeker to you, place messages of hope and healing in the mouths of your witnesses, and open your children to your truth when we stumble. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of steadfast love, renew the earth by your Spirit, that lands and oceans reveal the beauty of your creation. Challenge us to live humbly and peaceably as part of your world. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of patience, lead those who govern to hold fast to what is good. Guide them to show honor to the people in their care. Overcome evil in all nations and grant peace to peoples and places mired in conflict. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of deliverance, remember all who are suffering, lonely, and in pain. Liberate your people being insulted, persecuted, or in the grasp of the ruthless. Give endurance to workers who persevere on this Labor Day and insure fair wages and safe working environments. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of justice, equip this congregation to boldly follow you in uncertain times and to remain faithful in prayer when facing challenges. Show us how best to love and care for one another and our communities. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of glory, we give thanks for the saints who now dwell with you. Nurture us in faith until the day we join their heavenly song. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*Responding to the call from Christ to follow him, this prayer asks for guidance "upon life's way." (Full text found at hymn no. 767.)*

### **Offering**

*Music During Offering*

"Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me"

Setting by Donald Busarow  
Carrie Stelter, cello

### **\*Offering Prayer**

A: Holy God, giver of all good things, receive the gifts we bring, fruit of the earth and the work of human hands, that they may be used to your purposes for life and love in the world. **Amen.**

## **we SHARE the meal**

**\*Great Thanksgiving & Preface** — page 129, front of hymnal, ELW Setting Two

**\*"Holy, Holy, Holy"** — page 130, front of hymnal, ELW Setting Two

## \*Words of Institution and The Lord's Prayer

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

We remember Christ - our example of good stewardship - who taught us to pray: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

## \*Invitation to the Table

P: Jesus invites you to this table with no exception. Come, eat and live.

*We will observe continuous communion this morning and sing this hymn of walking with Jesus and following his example.*

## Distribution of Communion

**"Lamb of God"** — page 135, front of hymnal, ELW Setting Two

Hymn — no. 802

"Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus"

## Prayer After Communion

P: Holy Jesus, in this meal you have fed and nourished us to work in your beloved world. Send us now, filled with yourself and strengthened by your Spirit to live your love for others. **Amen.**

# we are SENT to serve the world

## Announcements

*Directly quoting today's gospel, this hymn sends us out to "forsake the past...and humbly follow after" the Savior. How will you follow Christ this week?*

## \*Sending Hymn

"Take Up Your Cross,' the Savior Said"



1 "Take up your cross," the Sav - ior said, "if you would  
2 Take up your cross; let not its weight per - vade your  
3 Take up your cross, nor heed the shame, nor let your  
4 Take up your cross and fol - low Christ, nor think till



my dis - ci - ple be; for - sake the past, and  
soul with vain a - larm; his strength shall bear your  
fool - ish heart re - bel; for you the Lord en -  
death to lay it down; for on - ly those who



come this day, and hum - bly fol - low af - ter me."  
spir - it up, sus - tain your heart, and nerve your arm.  
dured the cross to save your soul from death and hell.  
bear the cross may hope to wear a gold - en crown.

*In the hymn text of the **postlude**, the author proclaims “Your all-sufficient grace shall guide me all my pilgrim days in all my ways.” (No. 831)*

### **\*Blessing & Dismissal**

P: The God of grace, ☩ Jesus Christ, the example of stewardship, and the Spirit who kindles generosity, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

A: Go in peace. You are God’s hands at work in the world! **Thanks be to God!**

### **\*Postlude — “The God of Abraham Praise”**

Setting by Thomas Keesecker  
Keith Stelter, oboe; Carrie Stelter, cello

## **Acknowledgements**

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### **Worship Assistants**

Pastor: Chris Culuris

Director of Music: Emily Bruflat

Audio/Video: Brad Chambers

Musician: Carrie and Keith Stelter

Assisting Minister: Nancy Nelson

Greeter: Julie Johnson

Reader: Mary Spear

Ushers: Tom Thorkelson

Communion Preparers: Banks Family

Communion Servers: Sharon Domeier, Patricia & Patrick

Duenwald

Bread Bakers: Michelle Doose

## **Announcements**

- The deadline to sign up for “FLC’s Got Talent” is today! Talk to Emily if you have interest in participating!
- Do you have a student entering 5th through 12th grade this fall? We are starting up a Youth Chime Choir, directed by Sarah Chambers! We will kick off rehearsals on Wednesday, September 20 at 5:30pm before orientation begins at 6:30pm. This will be a fun opportunity for youth to make music and build relationships - talk to Sarah or Emily for more information!
- The Sanctuary Choir is kicking off rehearsals with a choir retreat on Sept 9 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. A catered lunch will be provided! Regular rehearsals are Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. beginning Sept 13. The choir is preparing for a very special event on Nov 5, when they will sing a cantata for our All Saints worship that morning. Choir Scholars from GAC will be participating as well, so NOW is a great time to join the choir at FLC!
- Join us at the Mankato Pride Parade September 9. Meet at 10:30 a.m. at the corner of Plum and Riverfront streets in Mankato. Parade begins at 11am.
- “God’s Work, Our Hands” Sunday is next week. Remember to wear your yellow shirt! There are a few different options to participate outdoors at Union Place and indoors at Church as well.
- Monday Adult Bible Study resumes on September 11. Everyone is welcome. Morning Prayer will be offered in the chapel at 9:30am. Classes will be held in the Conference Room starting at 9:45am. The focus is on Hebrews - “A New and Better Way” written by Bishop Herb Chilstrom. Class leaders will be Bob Stenson and Will Friert.

## **Prayers**

We lift up prayers for those on our long-term list: Elgene Lund, Chuck Petry, Bob Cady, Joan Williams, Betty Gustafson, Erika Schuldt, Ursula McRostie, Karen Wendroth, Allen Storkson, Gene Roemhildt, Paul Aasen, Shirley Storkson, Claire Cardwell, Ella Twaddle, Tim Schwartz, Carol Peterson, Sarah Smith, and Gretchen Bray.