

September 17, 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

Prelude — “Where True Charity and Love Abide” Setting by Sally Drennan Mossing

Forgiveness is the theme of today’s lesson from Jesus, and in this hymn, we encounter these imperatives: “Then walk in love as Christ has loved,” and “with kind and gentle hearts forgive as God in Christ forgave.”

Words of Welcome

***Gathering Hymn** — no. 452

“Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death”
Choir Stanza by Michael Costello

Stanzas 1 -3 : All Stanza 4: Choir Stanza 5: All

*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.

***Greeting, Kyrie, Canticle of Praise** — pg. 120 & 122, front of hymnal, ELW Setting Two

*Prayer of the Day

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

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

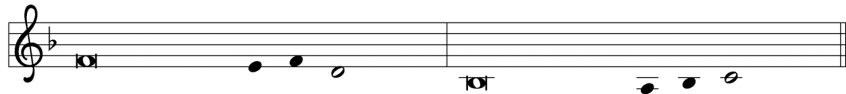
we LISTEN and RESPOND

A Reading from Genesis — Genesis 50:15-21

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" 16So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

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

Psalm 103:8-13 — sung responsively by verse between choir and congregation



Lord, you are full of compas- | sion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love;
you will not al- | ways accuse us,
nor will you keep your an- | ger forever.
You have not dealt with us according | to our sins,
nor repaid us according to | our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high a- | bove the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for | those who fear you.
As far as the east is | from the west,
so far have you removed our transgres- | sions from us.
As a father has compassion | for his children,
so you have compassion for those who fear | you, O Lord.

A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans — Romans 14:1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written,

"As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

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 18:21-35

The Gospel of Matthew, the 18th chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

We learn about forgiveness in today's gospel lesson, and we sing of forgiving others, “that we may love each other well in Christian gentleness.”

Sermon

Gordon Long

***Hymn** — no. 359

“Where Charity and Love Prevail”

***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.

We pray for the church. Bless the missions and ministries of diverse congregations, that they uplift the good news of salvation in ways that can be understood. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for creation. Send rain to lands experiencing drought and healing to rivers clogged with pollution. Enrich the soil for trees and plants. Protect the crops needed to feed those who hunger. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for all who govern. Encourage those in positions of power to lead with empathy, practice forgiveness, and care for those who struggle. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for our neighbors who face illness of any kind. For those strained financially; for all living with chronic pain, mental illness, the disease of addiction, or in harm's way. Protect all who cry out for mercy. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for this congregation. Open our hearts to practice intentional invitation. Help us to forgive each other, practice patience, and choose welcome over judgment. Move us to care for those in our community seeking refuge and safety. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We give thanks for the saints who died in faith. Show us how to live faithfully, creatively, and lovingly in your church and world. 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.**

Offering

Music During Offering

"Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive"

Setting by Nancy Raabe
Sanctuary Choir

The choir offers this reflection on a prayer about forgiveness during the offering time this morning.

*"Forgive our sins as we forgive," you taught us, God, to pray,
but you alone can grant us grace to live the words we say.*

*How can your pardon reach and bless the unforgiving heart,
that broods on wrongs and will not let old bitterness depart?*

*In blazing light your cross reveals the truth we dimly knew:
how trifling other's debts to us; how great our debt to you!*

*God, cleanse the depths within our souls and bid resentment cease;
then, by your mercy reconciled, our lives will spread your peace.*

-Rosamond E. Herklots

***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 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**

We will observe continuous communion this morning. Our hymn is about the conditions of being human: living and dying, suffering and rejoicing. When we help and feed “those who are crying” in the world, “we belong to God.”

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

Distribution of Communion

“Lamb of God” — page 135, front of hymnal, ELW Setting Two

Hymn — no. 639

“When We Are Living”

Stanza 1 in Spanish: Choir Stanzas 1-3 in English: All

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

We are “ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven” by the “God of Heaven.” How do you show praise to God, knowing that you are loved and forgiven unconditionally?

Announcements

***Sending Hymn** — no. 864

“Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven”

Stanzas 1 & 2: All Stanza 3: Choir Stanza 4: All

***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!**

Acknowledgements

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“Offering Prayer”; “Prayer After Communion”; “Dismissal” from ELCA God’s Work. Our Hands. 2023 planning materials. <https://tinyurl.com/mryruck8>
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Worship Assistants

Pastor: Chris Culuris

Supply Pastor: Gordon Long

Director of Music: Emily Bruflat

Audio/Video: Rachel Ribar

Musician: Sanctuary Choir

Assisting Minister: Liz Power-Hawkinson

Greeter: Annalise Rivas

Reader: David Stenson

Ushers: Patric Pearson

Communion Preparers: Banks Family

Communion Servers: Sharon Domeier

Bread Bakers: Diane Stewart

Photo Directory FAQs

What if I can not attend any photo sessions between Sept. 26th and September 30th? You can have your picture taken at another church or location near you before, during or after our September dates. Call United Church Directories at 419-522-5011 to schedule offsite.

What if I do not want my contact information shared and or published? No problem! When you have your photo session, you can designate what information may or may not be shared.

Is my contact information shared with the church office? You will also be able to specify what information is to be shared ONLY with the church office. This is a great opportunity to update church records.

I need transportation or am unable to leave my residence. FLC volunteers will provide transportation to your photo appointment. To make that request, please call the church office.

As a member of our church family, we want YOU to be a part of our new directory. There is no cost to you and you will receive a free 8x10 photo and church directory. If you have any additional questions, feel free to call the church office (507-934-3060) or Betsy Paul (507-720-5006.) Thank you for your participation!

Announcements

- The Stewardship Committee will be staffing tables with balloons in the Gathering Space to promote the work of our various committees and to invite our members to join them in God’s work.
- FLC’s Got Talent is tonight at 7:00 p.m. in the Dining Hall. Don’t forget to bring your visual arts and/or snacks between 6:30 and 7:00. Be prepared to have a fun evening!
- Refreshments during fellowship will be served by the Altar Guild after worship. Thank you!
- Today is the deadline to register your Pre-K through 4th Graders for Sunday School. Questions, please contact Calleigh Carlson: cc.flcstp@gmail.com
- Do you notice our larger choir leading worship this morning? It is *not too late* to start attending choir rehearsals on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. to prepare for the big cantata for All Saints Sunday, November 5th!
- There was a brief delay in the organ repairs this fall, so David Fiener’s recital scheduled for September 24 will be postponed to November 12. We will begin the series with Chad Winterfeldt on October 15!

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, Gretchen Bray, Bob and Kay Moline.