

# September 24, 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** — “SLANE”

Setting by Joel Raney

Handbell Choir; Rebecca Carpenter & Nancy Nelson, flutes; Erik Lutz, cello

**Words of Welcome**

*This Trinitarian  
Gathering  
Hymn speaks of  
the Spirit  
“kindl[ing] faith  
within each  
heart” and  
“through our  
hands your love  
impart.” We give  
thanks for our  
generous God!  
How can we use  
“our hearts and  
hands and voices”  
in service to our  
community?*

**\*Gathering Hymn** — no. 845

“Voices Raised to You”

Stanzas 1, 3, & 5: All    Stanza 2: High Voices    Stanza 4: Low Voices

**\*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, Cantic 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.

Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants.  
Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and  
train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**Stewardship Sharing Story**

Jan Jensen

# we LISTEN and RESPOND

## A Reading from Jonah — Jonah 3:10-4:11

When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

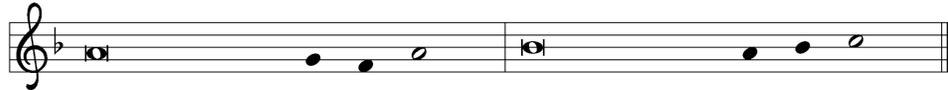
But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” And the Lord said, “Is it right for you to be angry?” Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

The Lord God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?” And he said, “Yes, angry enough to die.” Then the Lord said, “You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?”

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

## Psalm 145:1-8 — *sung responsively by verse*



I will exalt you, my | God and king,  
and bless your name forev- | er and ever.

**Every day | will I bless you  
and praise your name forev- | er and ever.**

Great is the Lord and greatly | to be praised!  
There is no end | to your greatness.

**One generation shall praise your works | to another  
and shall de- | clare your power.**

I will speak of the glorious splendor | of your majesty  
and all your | marvelous works.

**They shall tell of the might of your | wondrous acts,  
and I will re- | count your greatness.**

They shall publish the remembrance of | your great goodness;  
they shall sing joyfully | of your righteousness.

**The Lord is gracious and full | of compassion,  
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love.**

## A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Philippians — Philippians 1:21-30

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

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 20:1-16

The Gospel of Matthew, the 20th chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

*This hymn walks us through various times of day, praying for God's presence during all parts of our labor and rest.*

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

Pastor Chris Culuris

\*Hymn — no. 765

“Lord of All Hopefulness”

## \*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 who is gracious and merciful, teach your church to invite and welcome all. Lead us to be grateful for the blessing of community. Challenge your church to choose equity and compassion over judgment. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God who sends the wind and the sun, you know every worm and bush by name. Help us remember that even the humblest parts of creation are precious to you. Show us how best to care for the earth and its creatures. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God who is ready to relent from punishing, impart your compassionate wisdom to our leaders and government officials. Give them courage to serve their communities in times of uncertainty, stress, or exhaustion. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God who saves, direct your people who are tempted by evil ways. Protect your children from calamity and disaster. Strengthen all who are incarcerated. Encourage all who are in despair or pain of any kind. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God who is slow to anger, may we boast about the goodness of Jesus with the confidence of Paul in prison. Inspire us to find abundance in whatever vocation we are called to in the world and in our congregation. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God who abounds in steadfast love, we give thanks for the saints called to the kingdom of heaven. United with them in spirit, hold us firm as we labor in this life and look to the life to come. 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*

"Bunessan"

Setting by Douglas Wagner

Nancy Timm & Carrie Stelter, handbell duet

## \*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.**

*In the  
stewardship  
hymn "Praise and  
Thanksgiving"  
(no. 689), the  
second stanza  
offers this prayer:  
"God, bless the  
labor we bring to  
serve you, that  
with our neighbor  
we may be fed."*

# 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

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. 695

“As Saints of Old”

## 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 will observe continuous communion this morning. This hymn of harvest speaks to a world needing us “to make our life an offering to God, that all may live.”*

# we are SENT to serve the world

## Announcements

*“Help us, O Lord, we pray, to do your will today.” In whatever time you have to offer, how will you use “your hands to serve and give” in the coming week?*

## Blessing of Backpacks, Students, and Teachers

\*Sending Hymn — no. 538

“The Lord Now Sends Us Forth”

## \*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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## **Worship Assistants**

Pastor: Chris Culuris

Director of Music: Emily Bruflat

Audio/Video: Shanon Nowell

Musician: Handbell Choir

Assisting Minister: John Malm

Reader: Sharon Malm

Ushers:

Greeter:

Communion Preparers: Mary Thompson

Communion Servers: Sharon Doemeier

Bread Bakers: Stewarts

## **Announcements**

- Flowers for the altar are given today by the family of Paul & Helen Baumgartner in remembrance of them.
- First Forum following worship: Pastor Keith Pearson - ELCA Regional Gift Planner will be presenting in the Dining Hall. Please join us to learn from Pr. Keith and our own Funds Management Committee ways we may contribute to the ongoing mission of our congregation.
- There was a brief delay in the organ repairs this fall, so David Fienen’s recital scheduled for September 24 will be postponed to November 12. We will begin the series with Chad Winterfeldt on October 15!
- First is serving at “The Kitchen” tomorrow night at Trinity Lutheran. Helpers are needed to set up, serve and clean up between 3:00 - 7:00 p.m. Questions- please contact Marilyn Kochsiek.
- We want to include you, so please make sure that you are signed up to get your picture taken for our new church directory. Pictures will be taken this week: Sept 26 - 29 from 2:00-8:30 p.m. and Sept 30 from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- Pastor Chris will be away for Continuing Education from Sept. 28 - Oct. 4. Please call the church office if you have any pastoral emergencies.

## **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, Takhmina White.

- We pray for the victims of the flooding in Libya and for all victims of natural disasters.