

# October 8, 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

*This African American Spiritual reflects on wanting to be a Christian and wanting to be more loving “in my heart.” What does it mean to be a follower of Christ?*

*We hear another parable from Jesus in the gospel today, where he invites his disciples to “listen.” In the **gathering hymn**, we are invited to open our ears to the “words of wisdom” in the scriptures.*

**Prelude** — “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”

Setting by Stan Pethel  
FLC Wind Ensemble

**Words of Welcome & Stewardship Moment-** Carl Bruihler & Annalise Rivas

**\*Gathering Hymn** — no. 519

“Open Your Ears, O Faithful People”

**\*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.**

**\*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.

Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

# we LISTEN and RESPOND

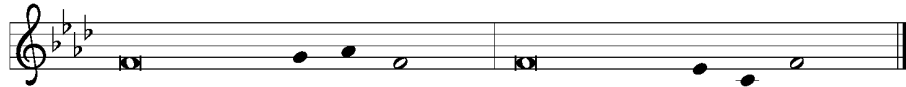
## A Reading from the prophet Isaiah — Isaiah 5:1-7

Let me sing for my beloved  
my love-song concerning his vineyard:  
My beloved had a vineyard  
on a very fertile hill.  
He dug it and cleared it of stones,  
and planted it with choice vines;  
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,  
and hewed out a wine vat in it;  
he expected it to yield grapes,  
but it yielded wild grapes.  
And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem  
and people of Judah,  
judge between me  
and my vineyard.  
What more was there to do for my  
vineyard  
that I have not done in it?  
When I expected it to yield grapes,  
why did it yield wild grapes?

And now I will tell you  
what I will do to my vineyard.  
I will remove its hedge,  
and it shall be devoured;  
I will break down its wall,  
and it shall be trampled down.  
I will make it a waste;  
it shall not be pruned or hoed,  
and it shall be overgrown with briars and  
thorns;  
I will also command the clouds  
that they rain no rain upon it.  
For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts  
is the house of Israel,  
and the people of Judah  
are his pleasant planting;  
he expected justice,  
but saw bloodshed;  
righteousness, but heard a cry!

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

## Psalm 80:7-15 — *sung responsively by verse*



Restore us, O | God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.  
**You have brought a vine | out of Egypt;**  
**you cast out the nations and | planted it.**  
You cleared the | ground for it;  
it took root and | filled the land.  
**The mountains were covered | by its shadow**  
**and the towering cedar trees | by its boughs.**  
You stretched out its tendrils | to the sea  
and its branches | to the river.  
**Why have you broken | down its wall,**  
**so that all who pass by pluck | off its grapes?**  
The wild boar of the forest has | ravaged it,  
and the beasts of the field have | grazed upon it.  
**Turn now, O | God of hosts,**  
**look | down from heaven;**  
behold and | tend this vine;  
preserve what your right | hand has planted.

## A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Philippians — Philippians 3:4b-14

[Paul writes:] If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of

Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

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 21:33-46**

The Gospel of Matthew, the 21st chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the people:] “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:

‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;

this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’?

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

Pastor Chris Culuris

**\*Hymn — no. 342**

“There in God’s Garden”

*In this hymn, the Tree of Wisdom holds “the healing of the nations” in its leaves. Human greed may try to get in the way, but Christ offers another path, “its branches reach to us in welcome.”*

**Celebration of Holy Baptism** — *page 227, front of hymnal*

**\*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 all grace, you are the source of life and joy. Strengthen the resolve of your church throughout the world, that together we press on toward the goal of your heavenly call in Jesus Christ. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of all creation, you plant and nourish the earth as your own precious vineyard. Bless fields and orchards and the hands of those who labor in them, that your people are fed with an abundant harvest of good fruit. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of all the earth, you desire peace and justice between nations and peoples. Guide leaders of nations, states, and cities, that they faithfully govern your people with wisdom, integrity, and compassion. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of all steadfastness, you set Christ as the cornerstone and foundation of the church. Build up this congregation as living stones, that it stands in the community as a witness to your enduring faithfulness and love. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of all hope, the saints who came before us lived and died with their hearts fixed on you. We give you thanks for their faithful witness, and we wait with hope for the great day when we join their voices in praise. God of grace, **hear 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.**

*Please place your  
Estimate of  
Giving cards in  
the offering plate  
during this time.*

**Offering**

*Music During Offering*  
“A Royal Flourish”

Setting by Jason Krug  
Youth Handchime Choir; Sarah Chambers, director

**\*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.

*We will observe continuous communion this morning and sing a hymn depicting the actions of the Spirit throughout time. "When they [God's people] were blinded with idols and lies, then you spoke through your prophets to open their eyes."*

*We join in a Sending Hymn of harvest. We sing of God's "bounteous hand" and our calling to share with and care for others. It concludes with this prayer: "Guide all we say and do. Your will be done."*

*In the text connected to the Postlude, it is exclaimed: "Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving give honor to Christ and his name that we bear."*

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. 396

"Spirit of Gentleness"

### **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**

**\*Sending Hymn** — see back page

"God of the Fertile Fields"

### **\*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** — "Sent Forth by God's Blessing"

Setting by Stan Pethel  
FLC Wind Ensemble

### **Acknowledgements**

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## Worship Assistants

Pastor: Chris Culuris  
Director of Music: Emily Bruflat  
Audio/Video: Rachel Ribar, Maren Swenson  
Musician: FLC Wind Ensemble; Youth Handchime Choir

Assisting Minister: Aileen Bipes  
Greeter: Sharon Malm, Dylan Greenig  
Reader: David Stenson  
Ushers: Tom Thorkelson

Communion Preparers: Annalise Rivas & David Kennedy  
Communion Servers: Shanon Nowell  
Bread Bakers:  
Acolytes: Maxwell & Nolan Swenson

## Announcements

- Refreshments after worship today are provided by the Timm Family in honor of Grace's 18th birthday on October 31. Thank you to Grace for being a faithful and enthusiastic volunteer at FLC! Happy Birthday, Grace!
- Today we welcome Connor Cody Thompson into the Lord's family through Holy Baptism. Connor's parents are Cody and Samantha Thompson. His sponsors are Sara Lobatos and Curtis Thompson.
- Thanks to our youth worship assistants, who are starting their rotation for the fall! Your help during worship, along with the help of everyone who signs up, is very appreciated! Please sign up to help after church today.
- Thank you for bringing your Your Estimate of Giving cards today! If you forgot, please drop them off in the church office between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Monday - Wednesday of this week. We are so grateful for your gifts, which allow us to offer many ministries both inside and outside of this church!
- Next Sunday, on October 15, a couple of exciting things are happening. First, our Stewardship Committee has been hard at work planning The Generosity Project. We will have worship in the Dining Hall. Intrigued? You'll have to come and check it out! You're invited back to church at 4:00 p.m. that afternoon for Chad Winterfeldt's organ recital to celebrate the completed repairs!
- From our Safety and Security task force: FLC is hosting an awareness seminar to prepare us in case of an active shooter at the church, Saturday, Nov 18th from 10am - 1pm. This is especially important for Council members, ushers, greeters or any members who wish to have some preparedness training. Members of FLC can attend for free, see posters in the halls for registration information. The training will be open to members from all area churches as well. Contact Dawn Wenner if you have any questions.
- There will be an opportunity to have your photo taken for the directory here at FLC on Oct 23. Please check our website for more details.

## 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, and Jim Wendroth.

- We pray for Allison Ellingson, former FLC employee, who was recently diagnosed with cancer.

## **\*Sending Hymn** — no. 1063, from *All Creation Sings*

“God of the Fertile Fields”



1 God of the fer - tile fields, sha - per of  
2 We would be stew - ards true, hold - ing in  
3 As grows the hid - den seed, to fruit that  
4 God of the coun - try - side, dear to the



earth that yields our dai - ly bread: forth from your  
trust from you all that you give; help us in  
serves our need, so your reign grows. Let all our  
Christ who died to make us one: we pledge our



boun - teous hand come gifts your love has planned,  
love to share, teach us like you to care  
toil be used, no gift of yours a - bused,  
lives a - new in faith - ful love to you.



that all in ev - 'ry land be clothed and fed.  
for peo - ple ev - 'ry - where, that all may live.  
no hum - ble task re - fused your love be - stows.  
Guide all we say and do. Your will be done.