



# Season of Creation

August 20, 2023 + Wilderness Sunday

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 here on Earth

**A Land Acknowledgment** is “a ritual intended solely to show gratitude to the land and acknowledge the original and Indigenous peoples from whom the land was stolen.” For some, this might be an uncomfortable practice at first, but during our Season of Creation, you are invited into this ritual with an open heart.

In our **Gathering Hymn**, we sing about many examples of the challenges our wilderness places are facing.

**Prelude** — “All Earth Is Hopeful”

Setting by Anne Krentz Organ  
Rebecca Carpenter, flute

**\*Words of Welcome and Land Acknowledgment**

In the name of the Creator, the fountain of life, in the name of Christ, the pulse of life, and in the name of the Spirit, the breath of life. Amen.

**We, the people of First Lutheran Church, acknowledge and honor the Dakota peoples, upon whose ancestral homelands we gather for worship this morning, as well as all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to care for this place - this land - and call it their home.**

**\*Gathering Hymn** —

“The Climate Is Changing”  
sung to the tune *FOUNDATION*

1. The climate is changing!  
Creation cries out!  
Your people face flooding  
and fire and drought.

We see the great heat waves  
and storms at their worst.  
We pray for the poor, Lord —  
for they suffer first.

2. We pray for the animals here in our midst  
who cannot defend their own right to exist.  
We pray for the mountains and forests and seas  
that bear the harsh footprint  
of our human greed.

3. We thank you for people  
who treasure the earth,  
whose faith has long taught them  
its beauty and worth.  
We thank you as well

for the children and youth  
who look to the future  
and speak out the truth.

4. We thank you for leaders,  
courageous and brave,  
who know that the earth  
is worth fighting to save,  
who care about justice  
and what they should do,  
who listen to science  
and work hard for you.

5. You love this good earth,  
and you sent us your Son!  
May we love our neighbors -  
there's work to be done.  
May we, by your Spirit,  
do all in our power  
to care for your earth in this critical hour.

**\*Confession & Forgiveness & Canticle of Praise** — *See Green Supplement*

**\*Prayer of the Day**

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

God, our Creator, **help us to discern your vibrant presence among us and our kin in creation, especially in the rocks, the deserts, the forests, the plains, and all wilderness places. Help us empathize with your creatures who are suffering and where biodiversity is threatened. Lift our spirits to rejoice with the wild world. In the name of Christ, who reconciles and renews all things in creation. Amen.**

**Stewardship Sharing Story**

Mark Szybnski

## **we LISTEN and RESPOND**

**A Reading from Joel** — Joel 1:8-10, 17-20

Word of life. Word of growth. **Thanks be to our Creator God.**

**Children's Time** — Paraphrase of Psalm 18

"I Cry Out to You"

from *Psalm Book: Prayers and Poems for Kids*; Rachel Szybnski & Pastor Chris

**A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles** — Acts 7:35-38

Word of life. Word of growth. **Thanks be to our Creator God.**

**\*Gospel Acclamation** — *See Green Supplement* "Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil"

**\*Gospel** — Matthew 3:1-4

**Sermon**

Pastor Chris Culuris

**\*Hymn** — no. 266

"All Earth Is Hopeful"

**Affirmation of Faith**

Let us confess our faith using the words of this affirmation:

**We believe that God creates all things, renews all things and celebrates all things. We believe Earth is a sanctuary, a sacred planet filled with God's presence, a home for us to share with our kin.**

**We believe that God became flesh and blood, a human being called Jesus Christ, who lived and breathed and spoke among us, suffered and died on a cross, for all human beings and for all creation.**

**We believe that the risen Jesus is the Christ at the core of creation reconciling all things to God, renewing all creation and filling the cosmos.**

**We believe the Holy Spirit renews life in creation, groans in empathy with a suffering creation, and waits with us for the rebirth of creation. We believe that with Christ we will rise and with Christ we will celebrate a new creation.**

*Traditionally sung during Advent, this hymn of hope calls on the mountains and valleys to be prepared for the coming Christ. Jesus "is present in neighbors we see," including the wild places of our world.*

## \*Prayers of Intercession

We begin our time of prayer by singing this refrain and will sing it after each petition after the phrase "Hear us, O Creator."

Hope of all cre - a - tion, Heal - er of re -  
la - tions, We lift our prayer to you. We  
lift our prayer to you.

Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

You created the earth and all its inhabitants and declared it good. Clean polluted skies, seas, and soil, provide nourishment to plants and animals, and make us aware of our impact on the environment, especially the places that were once wild. Hear us, O Creator.

You call leaders to bridge differences and practice generosity. Inspire all in authority to protect people in harm's way, deliver those in bondage, support fair elections, provide care for military personnel and veterans, and show mercy to those for whom they have responsibility. Hear us, O Creator.

You provide for those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Embrace people who have been rejected because of difference, heal trauma caused by racism or prejudice, shield any who are persecuted, console the dying, and heal the sick. You journey with us in all of life's transitions. Guide those preparing for baptism, marriage, and retirement. Guide our church council and committees in their visioning and ministry. Safeguard those who travel. Hear us, O Creator.

We give you thanks for those who now rest from their labors. Motivate us by their lives of dedication to the gospel, until that day when we join with them in our eternal home. Hear us, O Creator.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the name of the one who reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

We ask in this canticle for God to "lead us home to rediscover [God], our Living Light." How have you discovered God in wilderness places?

## Offering

*Music During Offering*

Offering Canticle — See *Green Supplement* "God of Stars and Distant Planets"

## \*Offering Prayer

God of field and forest, sea and sky, you are the giver of all good things. Sustain us with these gifts of your creation, and multiply your graciousness in us, that the world may be fed with your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

# we SHARE the meal

## \*The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## \*An Earth Eucharistic Prayer

O God triune, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

Over the eons your merciful might evolved our home, a fragile tree of life.

Here by your wisdom are both life and death, growth and decay,  
the nest and the hunt, sunshine and storm.

Sustained by these wonders, we creatures of dust join in the ancient song:

The earth is full of your glory: **The earth is full of your glory.**

We praise you for the heart of Jesus, so filled with your love for this earth.

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.

Gathered around this table, we your children unite in this song:

The earth is full of your glory: **The earth is full of your glory. Amen and amen!**

## \*The Lord's Prayer

We pray as Christ - our example of love for all of creation - taught us:

**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.**

*All are welcome to this meal - there are no prerequisites or exceptions! We will observe continuous communion this morning. We sing of "wilderness and wandering" "restlessness and roaming" but know that we are welcomed to this table to "taste and see that God is good."*

## \*Invitation to Communion

Come, for all things are now ready. Come to the table with all your kin and share with all in need: the gift of healing for those in pain, the gift of forgiveness for those in sin, the gift of assurance for those in fear, and the gift of hope for those in tears.

**May we, who share these gifts, share Christ with one another and all our kin.**

## Distribution of Holy Communion

Hymn — no. 461

"All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly"

### \*Prayer After Communion

Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into our hearts, our minds, and our bodies to heal our wounds, to calm our fears, and through us to bring healing to Earth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# we DEPART to serve Creation

### Announcements

*This Sending Hymn serves as a calling to each of us to do what we can to remember the blessing of water and to do what we can to live in harmony with and protect this precious and life-giving resource!*

**\*Sending Hymn** — no. 1049, *All Creation Sings* "Before the Waters Nourished Earth"  
Sung to the tune *ST. COLUMBA*



1 Be - fore the wa - ters nour - ished earth or night im -  
2 This Love re - mained as time re - vealed the loss of  
3 De - spair, so deep it bears no name, or sor - rows  
4 The Love that called cre - a - tion good all good - ness



ag - ined<sup>3</sup> morn - ing, a Love con - ceived the  
E - den's glo - ry and, griev - ing, holds in  
par - a - lyz - ing can - not re - voke Love's  
still is bring - ing. This Love turns death a -



u - ni - verse and rev - eled in its form - ing.  
mem - o - ry each trag - ic hu - man sto - ry.  
faith - ful claim to dwell with - in our dy - ing.  
gain to life and si - lence in - to sing - ing.

### \*Sending Litany

Christ calls you to be his disciples, to serve him with love and compassion, to serve Earth by caring for creation.

**We will remember the wilderness! We will groan with creation! We will celebrate with the creatures of the wild!**

Will you care for creation?

**We will care for creation! We will preserve the wild! We will celebrate life!**

### \*Blessing and Dismissal

May the Spirit of God, who is above all and in all and through all, fill you with the knowledge of God's presence in Earth and the pulsing of Christ within you.

Go in peace! Serving Christ and loving Earth!

**We go in peace, serving Christ and loving Earth!**

**\*Postlude** — "All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly"

Setting by William Bliem  
Rebecca Carpenter, flute

## Acknowledgements

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### Worship Assistants

Pastor: Chris Culuris

Director of Music: Emily Bruflat

Audio/Video: Brett Peterson

Musicians: Rebecca Carpenter, flute

Greeter: Aileen Bipes

Reader: John Bipes

Ushers: Michelle Doose

Communion Preparers: Banks Family

Communion Servers: John & Aileen Bipes, Julie Johnson

Bread Bakers: Michelle Doose

## Announcements

- **First Forum:** After church today, Emily will continue a discussion of the book *This Is God's Table* by Rev. Anna Woofenden. Please gather in Pioneer Parlor from 11:15 - 11:45 for part two of this discussion - all are welcome!
- Following worship, Michelle Twait will help sign you up for a time to get your picture taken for our **new church directory** in the gathering space. If you need a ride to church to get your picture taken, please contact the church office.
- Join Emily this afternoon at Ecumen Prairie Hill for a **sing-a-long** with the residents at 1:00 p.m. If you plan to participate, please meet there at 12:50 to help hand out songbooks. You will have another chance the next week to lead a similar program at three different locations after church - you may want to pack a lunch or a snack if you plan to participate with all three. Check the Heartbeat this week for the details!
- Next Sunday, August 27th, we will conclude our "Season of Creation" by **worshipping outdoors**. You may bring your own lawn chair or use a chair provided for you. If it rains, we will worship indoors.
- We will welcome **new members** into our FLC family of faith on August 27th. If you would like to join our church, please contact the church office or see Pastor Chris.
- **Security Cameras** have been installed in the interior of the church. Exterior cameras will be installed when the weather is not so hot.

## 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, and Sarah Smith.

- We pray for Steve, Lynn, and Isaac Kidder as they mourn the loss of Isaac's girlfriend, Alana, to cancer.
- We pray for the Conovers as they mourn the loss of Ellen's mother, Theodora.