



# Season of Creation

August 27, 2023 + Rainbow 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.” On this last day in our Season of Creation, you are invited to participate in this acknowledgement as a blessing to those who first called this land home.

### Prelude

Steve Kidder, voice and guitar

### \*Words of Welcome and Land Acknowledgment

In the name of the Creator, the fountain of life, the name of Christ, the pulse of life, and 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.**

\***Canticle of Praise** — *See Green Supplement* “Praise to You, O Great Creator”

### \*Prayer of the Day

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

God, our Creator, **we celebrate the wonders of Earth as our home. Help us to discern how we have polluted and abused our planet and to consider tangible ways to restore its wonders. We have lifted up Creation care, trees and plants, the land, the waters and storms, and our wilderness places. Inspire us today to live into our promise of care, respect, concern, and action in restoring and protecting all of Creation. In the name of Christ, amen.**

### Reception of New Members

## we LISTEN and RESPOND

**A Reading from Genesis** — Genesis 9:8-17

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

**Children’s Time** — Paraphrase of Psalm 147 “All of Creation”  
from *Psalm Book: Prayers and Poems for Kids*; Brenda McHugh & Pastor Chris

## A Reading from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians — 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

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 28:16-20

*Before the lesson:* The Gospel of Matthew, the 28th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*After the lesson:* The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

Pastor Chris Culuris

**\*Rainbow Covenant**

### ***The First Covenant Promise – Red***

We worship in a sanctuary called Earth,

**A sanctuary filled with the vibrant presence of the Creator, cosmic Christ, and life-giving Spirit.**

We therefore make our first covenant promise:

**We promise to respect and protect Earth as a sanctuary filled with the vibrant presence of the creator, the cosmic presence of Christ, and the life-giving presence of the Spirit.**

We call our God to hear our covenant and the rainbow to testify to our promises.

Red is the symbol of God's glory, the fire-filled presence of God.

**Remember, rainbow, remember, and bear witness to our words!**

Sing: Red is the fire of God's holy presence filling with life the planet we share; here is our vow to hold the Earth sacred, tend it with love and covenant care.

### ***The Second Covenant Promise - Orange***

For our second covenant promise we return to the beginning, the primal world of our first parents. In the beginning Earth was barren, without rain, vegetation or a custodian to nurture the land...

**So God created humans from the orange clay of Earth and breathed into their bodies the breath of life.**

And God created a forest of trees where humans could live,

**And God commissioned the first humans to be partners with Earth, to nurture and preserve both land and life.**

In the light of this commission we make our second covenant promise:

**We promise to activate our primal mission to be partners who nurture and preserve Earth in ways that will facilitate the healing of Earth in the current environmental crisis.**

We call our God to hear our covenant and the rainbow to testify to our promises.

Orange is the symbol of clay, the primal stuff of living creatures.

**Remember, rainbow, remember, and bear witness to our words!**

Sing: Orange is the clay that makes us all mortal filled with God's breath since humans were born.

Given a mission: treat Earth as partner! Now we affirm that calling once more.

*Throughout the Rainbow Covenant, we will sing a stanza of the “Rainbow Covenant Hymn” to the tune BUNESSAN after each color.*

### ***The Third Covenant Promise - Yellow***

A covenant is a binding commitment between two parties, a promise to be loyal and faithful to each other and an agreement to recognize the rights, integrity and intrinsic worth of each other in all future relationships.

**So when God, after the Flood, makes a covenant with humans, all living creatures and Earth itself, that means God is thereby affirming the rights and worth of all God's majestic creation.**

Yes, indeed. Creation is not a lifeless mass of matter, but a living partner with God and with us, a partner we ought to respect, protect and celebrate.

**So, all creatures of creation are kin with rights, and all domains of Earth have intrinsic worth.**

We therefore make our third covenant promise:

**We promise to respect the integrity of Creation and protect the rights of all life on this planet as well as the various domains of earth who are partners in our covenant with Creation.**

We call our God to hear our covenant and the rainbow to testify to our promises. The symbol of intrinsic worth is yellow, like gold.

**Remember, rainbow, remember, and bear witness to our words!**

Sing: Yellow, like gold, means all things are precious,  
each with a right to sing and be free;  
this is our pledge to hold all that's living, valued as part of Earth's majesty.

### ***The Fourth Covenant Promise - Green***

We now confess our crimes against creation in preparation for our fourth covenant promise. Have you kept covenant with Earth and held this planet sacred?

**We admit that we have not kept planet Earth sacred, that we have polluted this sanctuary filled with God's presence and so desecrated this house of God.**

Have you kept covenant with Earth and fulfilled your mission to be partners with Earth to nurture and sustain life.

**We confess that we have not always been partners nurturing Earth as Earth has nurtured us. Rather we have abused Earth's resources, consumed her gifts with greed, and viewed her as a temporary home given us by God to exploit en route to eternal life.**

Have you kept covenant with Earth seeking to protect the rights of all life and all domains of our planet because they have intrinsic worth in God's eyes?

**We confess that we have been preoccupied with our human rights and ignored the rights of the rest of creation, that we have viewed Earth as having little or no intrinsic value but as parts of nature to be harnessed and used for human interests.**

In the light of your confession, let us make our fourth covenant promise:

**We promise to find ways to reverse the current destructive practices of polluting Earth's atmosphere, felling Earth's forests, and violating Earth's waters.**

In Jesus's name ✠, we are loved, we are restored, we are forgiven. We call our God to hear our covenant and the rainbow to testify to our promises. The symbol of life flowing through the veins of Earth is green.

**Remember, rainbow, remember, and bear witness to our words!**

Sing: Green pulses flow through veins of creation,  
'til humans clear great forests in seed;  
this is our promise: keep all things growing, we will reverse our violent greed.

### ***The Fifth Covenant Promise – Blue***

Listen now to the blues, the cries of creation, the groaning of the domains of Earth, the anguish of disappearing species and the voices of nature deep in the world that surround us.

*I am the voice of the forest. I used to be the healthy lungs of our planet. But many of my trees have been slaughtered and decimated by human greed.*

*I am the voice of the air. Humans are polluting me with toxins that are changing the climate of Earth and upsetting the balance of nature.*

*I am the voice of disappearing species. We have a right to survive and celebrate life. But humans have destroyed our habitat, polluted our homes, and treated us as worthless.*

*I am the voice of the land. Indigenous peoples used to nurture my landscape and celebrate the intimate bond between human and non-human kin. But some humans have treated land as a source of wealth, not wonder.*

*We are groaning in pain because of the injustice we have suffered.*

Can you hear the cries of creation? Can you feel the groaning? Can you understand the injustice of it all?

**We are trying to hear. We are learning to feel. We are seeking to understand.**

Then let us make our fifth covenant promise:

**We promise to listen to the groaning of Creation and the cries of injustice rising from Earth and, as the prophets of old proclaim publicly on Earth's behalf, the wrongs humans have done to Earth.**

We call our God to hear our covenant and the rainbow to testify to our promises. The symbol of Earth's groaning is blue.

**Remember, rainbow, remember, and bear witness to our words!**

Sing: Blue is the song felt deep in the ocean, blues are the groaning deep in the sand.  
Now with our souls we promise to listen, publicly giving voice to the land.

### ***The Sixth Covenant Promise – Indigo***

As we anticipate the Greenhouse Age caused by the increasing changes to our climate being produced by global warming and other factors, we would be wise to follow the wisdom of their warnings.

**We need to work with scientists, engineers, architects, and forward planners to understand the 'ways' and mysteries of our planet and change our lifestyle so that life on Earth can flourish again.**

Even as we plan to understand the changing 'ways' of nature in a Greenhouse Age, we also need to prepare for the inevitable disasters associated with these climate changes.

**Crises such as droughts, famines, devastating storms, floods, wildfires, and rising seas. We must prepare for the food shortages and disasters to come.**

Let us then make our sixth covenant promise:

**We promise to prepare for impending disasters in the lives of humans and their fellow Earth beings resulting from climate change.**

We call upon God to hear our covenant and the rainbow to testify to our promises. Indigo is here a signal of danger for our planet.

**Remember, rainbow, remember, and bear witness to our words!**

Sing: Indigo sounds a signal for danger: refugees facing drought and despair; here we respond as climates are changing, we will take steps, find ways to prepare.

### ***The Seventh Covenant Promise - Violet***

The Rainbow Covenant is in tune with our contemporary mission to creation. This mission has been designated the third mission of the church.

**In the first mission, Christ enjoins his disciples to go into all nations proclaiming the good news of the Gospel to all peoples.**

In the second mission, we follow the mission of Christ who has been anointed by the Spirit to bring good news to the poor and liberation to the captives.

**What then is the Third Mission of the Church?**

In the closing verses of Mark's Gospel, an ancient witness of the church remembers another commission of Christ: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation."

**In other words, we need to discern Christ's healing presence, not only our own lives, but also in all the intricate ecosystems of life on Earth and in the cosmos beyond.**

Are you ready then to make your final covenant promise?

**We promise to explore with the cosmic Christ how the gospel is good news for healing creation in the current ecological crisis.**

We call our God to hear our covenant and the rainbow to testify to our promises. Violet reminds us of the passion of Christ but also the presence of the Christ who permeates our cosmos.

**Remember, rainbow, remember, and bear witness to our words!**

Sing: Violet announces Christ in our cosmos, holding our Earth in all of its pain. Christ now invites us: join in my mission! Cov'nant with me to heal Earth again.

*We conclude our Season of Creation and reflect on ways to "turn our vision into action," that God's "work of art be sustained."*

### **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.**

**\*Eucharistic Prayer**

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.

**\*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.**

**\*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.**

*All are welcome to this meal - there are no prerequisites or exceptions! We will observe continuous communion this morning - the ushers will guide you.*

**Distribution of Holy Communion**

**Reflection — “Healer”**

Song by Larry Olson  
Steve Kidder, voice and guitar

**\*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**

*We began our  
Season of  
Creation with this  
tune, and now we  
sing it with these  
new words and  
reflect on the  
covenant  
promises we just  
made to care  
deeply for  
Creation through  
our deeds.*

### **\*Sending Hymn**

**“Shades of Purple, Shades of Blue”**  
*sung to the tune DIX*

1. Shades of purple, shades of blue,  
green and yellow, orange, red —  
Noah and his family, too,  
saw the rainbow overhead.  
God, Creator, high above  
you displayed your sign of love.

2. Soon new life was springing forth,  
filling land and sea and air.  
God, you chose to bless the earth  
with the promise of your care —  
And your promised love extends  
far beyond our human friends.

3. In the rainbow, you were clear:  
every living thing has worth.  
You love every creature here  
on this planet we call Earth.  
God, forgive when we destroy  
gifts from you that bring you joy.

4. May your church begin to see  
in that rainbow high above:  
We are daily called to be  
stewards of this world you love.  
Since the earth is dear to you,  
may we treat it kindly, too.

### **\*Commission**

Christ has heard your covenant  
promises and commissions you as  
partners with Earth to nourish our  
planet with covenant care.

**We will seek to keep our promises  
and maintain covenant care.**

Christ also commissions you today to  
bring the good news to all creation,  
discerning the cosmic Christ at work  
healing and reconciling all things  
throughout the cosmos.

**We are honored to be disciples  
and heralds of the cosmic Christ.**

May the rainbow remind you of your  
promises and the meanings behind those  
promises: red for the fire of God's holy  
presence, orange for the clay we share with  
our partner Earth, yellow, like gold,  
for the great worth of all that is, blue for the  
groaning and cries deep in creation, indigo for  
dangers our environment faces, and violet  
for the healing presence of our cosmic Christ.

Will you care for creation?

**We will care for creation! We will honor  
the covenant! 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 — “Go, Make Disciples”**

Song by Handt Hanson  
Jeremiah Band

### **Acknowledgements**

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### Worship Assistants

Pastor: Chris Culuris

Director of Music: Emily Bruflat

Musicians: Jeremiah Band - Steve Kidder, Ivy McHugh,

Ella Twaddle, Nancy Timm

Readers: The Green Committee

Ushers: John Nadeau

Communion Servers: Cindy Nadeau

Greeter: Julie Johnson

### Announcements

- There's another music ministry outreach happening after church today! Meet Emily outside of the Chapel after church; we are scheduled to sing during Benedictine Living Community's lunch hour from 11:30 - 12:30. After that, we will be headed to Benedictine Court at 1:00 and down to Ecumen Sand Prairie at 2:00 for similar sing-a-long programs. Join us for one, two, or all three - the more the merrier! (You may want to bring a bag lunch or snack!)
- Following worship, Shanon Nowell will be in the gathering space helping those who wish to sign up for a time to get your picture taken for the church directory.
- The deadline to sign up for "FLC's Got Talent" is next Sunday, September 3. 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 5:30 before orientation begins at 6:30. 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 11.
- God's Work Our Hands Sunday is September 10. 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 Freiart.
- The deadline to register for Faith Formation and Confirmation is Sept. 15 and for Sunday School is Sept. 17. Orientation for Faith Formation and Confirmation is Sept. 20 at 6:30pm. We will meet in the Dining Hall.
- Refreshments after worship will be served by the Green Committee. Thank you!

### 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, 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.