

Faith ALIVE

**May 21, 2023 + Seventh Sunday of Easter
Graduate Blessing 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

*In "Alleluia! Sing to Jesus" (text at hymn no. 392), there is joyful proclamation in the victory of Jesus and in our unity as faithful followers. In the **Gathering Hymn**, we respond to the actions of the Holy Spirit with a rousing call to unified action!*

Prelude — "Prelude on Hyfrydol"

Setting by Donna Hanna

***Words of Welcome**

Alleluia! Christ is risen! **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

***Gathering Hymn** — no. 400

"God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind"

***Thanksgiving for Baptism**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, by whose hand we are given new birth, by whose speaking we are given new life. Amen.

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are welcomed, restored, and supported as citizens of the new creation.

Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Holy God, you are the river of life, you are the everlasting wellspring. In mercy and might you have freed us from death and raised us with Jesus, the firstborn of the dead. In baptismal waters our old life is washed away, and in them we are born anew.

Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams. Honor to you for waters that wash us clean, quench our thirst, and nurture both lands and creatures. Praise to you for the life-giving water of baptism, the outpouring of the Spirit of the new creation.

Wash away our sin and all that separates us from you. Empower our witness to your resurrection. Strengthen our resolve in seeking justice for all.

Satisfy the world's need through this living water. Where drought dries the earth, bring refreshment. Where despair prevails, grant hope. Where chaos reigns, bring peace. We ask this through Christ, who with you and the Spirit reigns forever. **Amen.**

***Canticle of Praise** — page 140, front of hymnal, from ELW Setting Three

***Prayer of the Day**

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

O God of glory, your Son Jesus Christ suffered for us and ascended to your right hand. Unite us with Christ and each other in suffering and in joy, that all the world may be drawn into your bountiful presence, through Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Stewardship Story Sharing

Bruce Gray

we LISTEN and RESPOND

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles — Acts 1:6-14

When [the apostles] had come together, they asked [Jesus], "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Word of God. Word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

The Psalm will be spoken responsively by verse between the leader and congregation.

Let God arise, and let God's enemies be scattered;
let those who hate God flee.

**As smoke is driven away, so you should drive them away;
as the wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.**

But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God;
let them also be merry and joyful.

**Sing to God, sing praises to God's name; exalt the one who rides the clouds;
I Am is that name, rejoice before God!**

In your holy habitation, O God,

you are a father to orphans, defender of widows;

**you give the solitary a home and bring forth prisoners into freedom;
but the rebels shall live in desert places.**

O God, when you went forth before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness,

the earth quaked, and the skies poured down rain,

at the presence of God, the God of Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

You sent a bountiful rain, O God;
 you restored your inheritance when it languished.
Your people found their home in it;
in your goodness, O God, you have made provision for the poor.
 Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth;
 sing praises to the Lord.
You ride in the heavens, O God, in the ancient heavens;
you send forth your voice, your mighty voice.
 Ascribe power to God,
 whose majesty is over Israel; whose strength is in the skies.
How wonderful you are in your holy places, O God of Israel,
giving strength and power to your people! Blessed be God!

A Reading from the First Letter of Peter — 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Word of God. Word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

***Gospel Acclamation** — *from ELW Setting Three*

"Alleluia"

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
 words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

***Gospel** — John 17:1-11

The Gospel of John, the 17th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

After Jesus had spoken these words [to his disciples], he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you

sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.”

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

Sermon

Pastor Chris Culuris

In today's gospel, Jesus prays aloud for his disciples. This hymn references our calling to be "one in mission," mirroring Christ's desire for his disciples to be unified. In what ways are we unified as members of Christ's church?

***Hymn** — no. 576

“We All Are One in Mission”

Blessing of Graduates

We are delighted to honor you as you graduate from High School. We are proud of you! It is our privilege to affirm you as members of this congregation. You have completed an important phase of your lives and you are entering another.

The graduates come to the communion railing with their parents. The leader addresses the graduates.

I ask you to affirm your commitment to a life of faith in the body of Christ.

Graduates, as you celebrate your achievements and prepare for your new endeavors, do you thank God for the many ways your faith has been your strength and guide?

Response: With God's help, I do.

As you consider the next steps of your journey of life, do you acknowledge God going with you, before you, behind you, below you, above you, and within you?

Response: With God's help, I do.

As you make choices about your new endeavors, will you offer your gifts to the world as part of the body of Christ and welcome the support of a family of faith?

Response: With God's help, I will.

The assembly stands. The leader addresses the assembly with these or similar words.

People of First Lutheran Church: Do you claim these graduates as siblings in Christ, called to ministry according to their talents? **In God's love, we claim them.**

As their home congregation, do you promise to support them, take an interest in their future, be with them in their celebration and sadness, and welcome them whenever they return to First Lutheran Church? **In God's love, we support them.**

Do you promise to faithfully pray for these siblings, placing their futures into God's loving hands as they make their choices? **In God's love, we pray for them.**

At this time the parents are invited to share a word of blessing with their graduate privately.

Next, the prayer shawl creators are invited to come forward and place the shawls around the graduates' shoulders.

Gracious God, you bless your servants with many achievements.

We give thanks especially today for the milestones that these graduates have attained. As they begin new phases of their lives, may they know your love in all the experiences they have.

Bless the parents of these students, who have raised their children and nourished them in Christian faith. **Give them strength in your holy presence, and give them many joyful reunions with their sons and daughters, those who are leaving home to go far away, and those staying close by.**

Bless these shawls, lovingly made, that each student here may feel the loving embrace of God and a connection to their First Lutheran family in Christ. From Psalm 139 “O Lord, you have searched me and know me. You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. **In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.**

***Prayers of Intercession**

A: United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

God of harmony, as you drew your son to your side, you draw us to you and unite us with the planet and one another. Weave your church together in a web of mutual love for the sake of the world. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

As your Spirit hovered over the waters of creation, so your Spirit hovers over all that you have made. Bless the water that sustains the planet and grant wisdom to use it wisely. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You empower your people with the fire of your Spirit. Challenge activists and organizers, teachers and politicians, and all in leadership to speak a message of peace and justice. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You care for all your children. Show your steadfast love to those suffering isolation, especially exiles, refugees, or prisoners. Break the chains of all held fast by systemic oppression of any kind. Comfort all who are afraid or suffering from illness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks that humankind serves as your body in the world, stewarding your abundant gifts. Guide this congregation’s leaders as they seek your will. We pray for our staff and council. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You raise your saints to new life in Christ. We give you thanks for all your saints who have given us glimpses of your redeeming love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Rejoicing in the joy of Christ’s resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Savior. **Amen.**

In the text of this hymn (no. 476), there is a prayer to “increase our faith and love, that we may know the hope and peace which from thy presence flow.” We offer this prayer for faith, love, hope, and peace to our graduates on this special morning.

Offering

Music During Offering

“Thee We Adore, O Savior”

Setting by Cathy and David Mokolbust
Nancy Timm, handbell solo

***Offering Prayer**

A: Generous God, in this meal you offer your very self. We give thanks for these gifts of the earth. In the breaking of this bread reveal to us the Risen One. In the pouring of this wine pour us out in service to the world; through Christ our Savior. Amen.

we SHARE the meal

***Great Thanksgiving & Preface** — *page 144, front of hymnal, from ELW Setting Three*

***“Holy, Holy, Holy”** — *page 144, front of hymnal, from ELW Setting Three*

***Words of Institution and The 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.

Celebrating this meal in the joy of our risen Savior, we 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: Come and know Christ, broken and poured out for you. **Thanks be to God.**

Distribution of Communion

We will observe continuous communion this morning and sing this song that highlights our unity “in Christian love.” The following reflection (hymn no. 403) is a prayer for the Holy Spirit, seeking “healing of division” and “peace beyond compare.”

“Lamb of God” — *page 146, front of hymnal, from ELW Setting Three*

Hymn — no. 656

“Blest Be the Tie that Binds”

Reflection — **“Like the Murmur of the Dove’s Song”** Setting by Emily Porter

Prayer After Communion

P: Gracious God, in you we live and move and have our being. With your word and this meal of grace, you have nourished our life together. Strengthen us to show your love and serve the world in Jesus’ name. Amen.

we DEPART to serve the world

Announcements

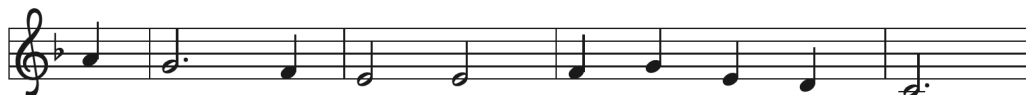
***Sending Hymn** — no. 991, from *All Creation Sings*

“Go to the World”

United as one in Christ, we are commissioned to “go to the world” to baptize, preach, and to “live the word of God’s redeeming Grace” as we serve one another. May this hymn carry us to our Pentecost celebration next Sunday!



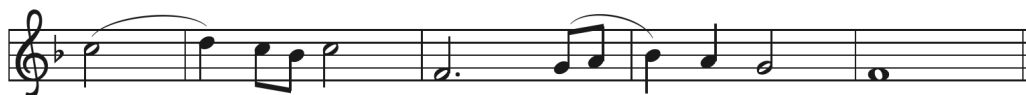
1 Go to the world! Go in - to all the earth.
2 Go to the world! Go in - to ev - 'ry place.
3 Go to the world! Go strug - gle, bless, and pray;
4 “Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,



Go preach the cross where Christ re - news life’s worth,
Go live the word of God’s re - deem - ing grace.
the nights of tears give way to joy - ous day.
for I am with you till the age shall end,



bap - tiz - ing as the sign of our re - birth.
Go seek God’s pres - ence in each time and space.
As ser - vant church, you fol - low Christ’s own way.
when all the hosts of glo - ry cry, A - men!”



Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

***Blessing & Dismissal**

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen! **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

The God of all, who raised ☩ Jesus from the dead,
bless you by the power of the Holy Spirit to live in the new creation. Amen.

A: Go in peace. Serve the Risen One. **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

***Postlude** — “Toccata and Fugue”

Anonymous, 18th Century Italian

Acknowledgements

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Worship Assistants

Pastor: Chris Culuris
Director of Music: Emily Bruflat
Assisting Minister: Nancy Nelson
Audio/Video: Shannon Nowell

Greeter: Diane Stenson
Reader: Cheryl Kautt
Ushers: Tom Thorkelson
Musicians: Handbell Choir; Nancy Timm

Communion Preparers: Banks Family
Communion Servers: Sharon Domeier, Diane Stenson, Jim Stenson, Cheryl Kautt

Announcements

- We congratulate and celebrate with our High School graduates of First Lutheran Church!
- Fellowship refreshments will be served by the Lifelong Learning Committee today.
- Worship and Arts is piloting a pew cushion program. If you would like to use one during worship, simply take a cushion from the ushers and bring it back to the bin after worship. We currently have one dozen available, so if we notice that we are running out, we can look into providing more. If you would be interested in donating to help offset the expense, the cost for one cushion is roughly \$25.
- All are invited to come celebrate Gene Lund's birthday with her from 2-4pm, on May 23rd, in the Three Crowns Room at the GAC Dining Hall.
- FLC is URGENTLY seeking the following for our Greenlake VBS on August 6th-10th (camp timing 4:30pm-7:30pm): Housing for VBS Greenlake Staff! As long as each staff member has their own individual sleeping surface (cot, couch, bed, air mattress, etc.) and a place to shower, they will feel right at home! Alternative options: empty cabin, camper, separate living space. Volunteers (16 + ages welcome)! Greenlake will come completely prepared for the full week of activities, games, worships, etc! We are searching for volunteers to provide flexibility for the day camp team to focus on the main camp experience! Roles volunteers will play: Assist in serving and cleaning up meals. Shepherding campers to each activity. Assisting staff with check-in and check-out of campers.

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, Karen Smithers, Paul Aasen, Shirley Storkson, Claire Cardwell, and Ella Twaddle.
- We pray for Kathryn Christenson's sister-in-law, Faye Christensen, who is recovering from surgery and mourning the loss of her sister.
- We pray for Bill and Cheryl Kautt as they mourn the loss of Bill's father, William.
- We pray for the family of Robert Samuelson, who recently died.
- We pray for the family of Glenn Stryker, who died on May 9.

Celebrate FLC's Graduating Class of 2023



Name: Isabel Hope Avant

Parents: Monique Sebring

Plans after graduation: I strive to make a positive impact in the world. I committed to U of M, Duluth and am excited to pursue a social work career. I am a highly empathic person and my goal is to work in the mental health field. Learning from other perspectives and other disciplines would boost my capacity to help others, aid in personal and community growth!

"Playing music with Emily, Bob Ross painting with Calleigh, Wednesday Soup suppers and volunteering at the Kitchen are favorite FLC memories!"

Prayer Shawl Creator: Nancy Timm



Name: Sam Buffington

Parents: Angie & Bryan Buffington

Plans after graduation: Attend University of North Dakota for Commercial Aviation!

"My favorite memories at FLC were the candlelight Christmas services."

Prayer Shawl Creator: Shanon Nowell



Name: Alex Davig

Parents: Marty & Bonnie Davig

Plans after graduation: Attend Minnesota State University - Mankato for Computer Science!

Prayer Shawl Creator: Sarah Chambers



Name: Eleanor Fu Sha Kennedy

Parents: Dave Kennedy and Paula Eickman

Plans after graduation: I plan to attend Columbia College Chicago for a BA in musical theater!

"My favorite memories from FLC have been participating in any music related activities/ensembles!"

Prayer Shawl Creator: Sharon Malm



Name: David Marlow

Parents: Richard & Kristen Marlow

Plans after graduation: I plan on attending the University of Minnesota Twin Cities with a major in Pre-Law and a minor in Theatre!

"My favorite memory has been performing trumpet and piano in the church, including both solos and ensembles"

Prayer Shawl Creator: Ellis Jones



Name: Daisy Pehrson

Parents: Denise Pehrson

Plans after graduation: Attend Minnesota State University - Mankato for Dental Hygiene!

"My favorite memory at FLC was lighting the candles in the sanctuary on Christmas Eve!"

Prayer Shawl Creator: Becky Otterness



Name: Natalie Petersen

Parents: Brett & Linda Petersen

Plans after graduation: Attend St. Thomas University and major in Psychology!

Prayer Shawl Creator: Rachel Szybnski



Name: Maya Adelia Pettis

Parents: Darrell & Bonnie Pettis

Plans after graduation: I will be attending Michigan Technology University to pursue a degree in Civil Engineering!

"My favorite memories at FLC included WOW after school on Wednesday's and playing games with everyone and going to Shetek."

Prayer Shawl Creator: Ruth Johnson



Name: Raina Roemhildt

Parents: Mark & Gabriela Roemhildt

Plans after graduation: Attending the University of Washington to earn her degree as a civil engineer. She will be part of the Naval ROTC program and will join the Navy post-graduation!

"My favorite memories at FLC have been Wednesday night dinners before confirmation!"

Prayer Shawl Creator: Ruth Edberg/Brenda McHugh