

Reconciling in Christ Sunday

Sunday, February 5, 2023

*An asterisk * invites you to stand in body or in spirit,
and you are invited to read responses found in **bold**.*

Welcome to First Lutheran Church!

Gathering in God's Presence

Prelude — “Prelude on All are Welcome”

Setting by Diane McAninch
Handbell Choir; Rebecca Carpenter, flute

Welcome

***Gathering Hymn** — Stanzas 1 & 2, *see Back Page*

***Thanksgiving for Baptism**

You call us through the waters of baptism to be our authentic selves. You called us holy and set us on a path to manifest your revolution on Earth. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, fountain of living water,
who is the source of breath and nourishment. **Amen.**

We praise you for the waters of life:

**for the streams and oceans, lakes and estuaries,
and for the rain and snow that gives life to every living thing.**

From the waters above and the waters below, you made sacred our bond with water.

**Through the waters of the flood and the parting of the seas,
you showed your promises to be true.**

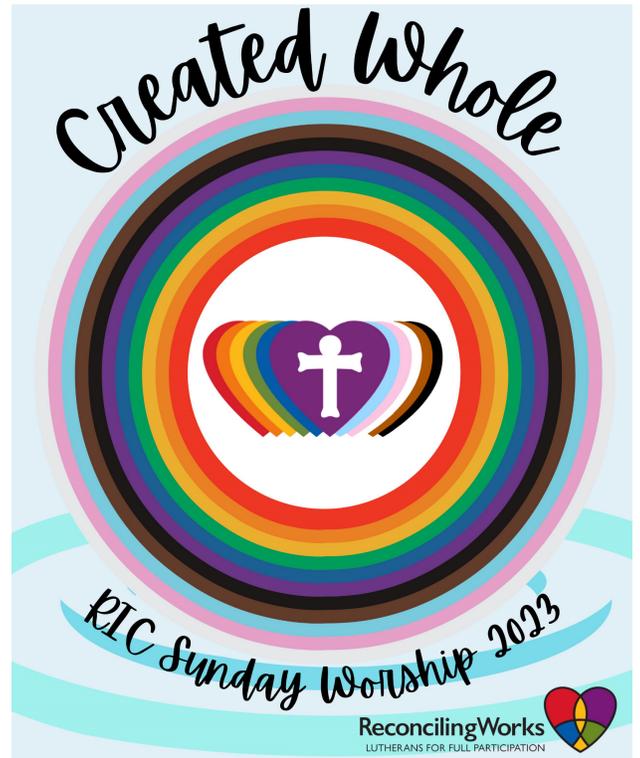
In the waters of baptism you claimed us and called each of us by our true name. Through baptism into the body of Christ, you transformed our lives and made us whole. Send now your Spirit to move in our midst and soak us with your gifts of mercy, love, and grace. **Amen.**

***Canticle of Praise** — *see Yellow Supplement - sing Stanza 3 only*

***Prayer of the Day**

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

Loving Creator, you knit us together and created our innermost beings. You created us loved, worthy, and unique. You created us LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, neurodiverse and physically diverse. Help us to find our wholeness in you and live into our divinely inspired purpose. Guide us to unfold your story of love. **Amen.**



Hearing & Responding to Scripture

A Reading from the book of Micah — Micah 6:1-8

Hear now what Yahweh says:
“Come, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice!
Listen to Yahweh’s indictment, you mountains
and you enduring foundations of the earth;
for Yahweh has a dispute with the people,
and is putting Israel on trial.
O my people, what have I done to you?
How have I wearied you? Give me an answer!
For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
and redeemed you from the house of slavery;
and I sent Moses to lead you,
and Aaron, and Miriam!
My people, call to mind the plans
devised by the ruler Balak of Moab,
and how Balaam ben-Beor answered him!

Remember the journey from Shittim to Gilgal,
and recall how Yahweh brought you justice!”

“What shall I bring when I come before Yahweh,
and bow down before God on high?” you ask.
“Am I to come before God with burnt offerings?
With year-old calves?

Will Yahweh be placated by thousands of rams
or ten thousand rivers of oil?

Should I offer my firstborn for my wrongdoings—
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

Listen here, mortal:

God has already made abundantly clear
what “good” is, and what Yahweh needs from you:
simply do justice, love kindness,
and humbly walk with your God.

The Light shines in the darkness, **and the darkness cannot overcome it.**

Psalm 15 — *spoken together in unison*

**Who has the right to enter your tent, Yahweh,
or to live on your holy mountain?
Those who conduct themselves with integrity
and work for justice,
who speak the truth from their heart
and do not use their tongues for slander,
who do not wrong their neighbors
and cast not discredit on their friends,**

**who look with contempt on the corrupt
but honor those who revere Yahweh,
who always keep their promises
even when it hurts,
who don’t demand interest on loans
and cannot be bribed to exploit the innocent.**

**If people do these things,
nothing can ever shake them.**

A Reading from Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians — 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

For the message of the cross is complete absurdity to those who are headed to ruin, but to us who are experiencing salvation, it is the power of God. Scripture says, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and thwart the learning of the learned.” Where are the wise? Where are the scholars? Where are the philosophers of this age? Has not God turned this wisdom of this world into folly? If it was God’s wisdom that the world in its wisdom would not know God, it was because God wanted to save those who have faith through the foolishness of the message we preach.

For while the Jews call for miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom, here we are preaching a Messiah nailed to a cross. To the Jews this is an obstacle they cannot get over, and to the Greeks it is madness—but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, Christ is the power and the wisdom of God. For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

Consider your calling, sisters and brothers. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were influential, and surely not many were well-born. God chose those whom the world considers foolish to shame the wise, and singled out the weak of this world to shame the strong. The world's lowborn and despised, those who count for nothing, were chosen by God to reduce to nothing those who were something. In this way no one should boast before God. God has given you life in Christ Jesus and has made Jesus our wisdom, our justice, our sanctification, and our redemption. This is just as it is written, "Let the one who would boast, boast in our God."

The Light shines in the darkness, **and the darkness cannot overcome it.**

***Gospel Acclamation** — *see Yellow Supplement, refrain only (sung twice)*

***Gospel** — Matthew 5:1-12

The Gospel of Matthew, the 5th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the mountainside, and after he sat down and the disciples had gathered around, Jesus began to teach them:

"Blessed are those who are poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Blessed are those in mourning; they will be consoled.

Blessed are those who are gentle; they will inherit the land.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice; they will have their fill.

Blessed are those who show mercy to others; they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are those whose hearts are clean; they will see God.

Blessed are those who work for peace; they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those persecuted because of their struggle for justice; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

You are fortunate when others insult you and persecute you, and utter every kind of slander against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward in heaven is great. They persecuted the prophets before you in the very same way.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon —

Pastor Scott Richards

***Hymn** —

"Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit"
Sung to the tune JOYOUS LIGHT

**1. Blessed are the poor in spirit;
all God's realm is surely theirs.
Those in mourning will find comfort
as an answer to their prayers.
Meek ones whom this world despises
will inherit everything.
God, your kingdom still surprises;
may we seek the reign you bring.**

**2. Blessed, too, are those who hunger
and who thirst for what is right.
They will not be prone to wander,
for your will is their delight.**

**Those who show God's care and mercy
will receive that mercy too.
God, in Christ you show us clearly
of the joy we have in you.**

**3. Those who share the peace God gives them
will find blessings as God's own.
Those oppressed for faithful living
will call heaven's kingdom Home.
When the world's ways seem distressing
and we feel life's painful sting,
God, remind us of the blessings
of the wondrous life you bring.**

***Creed** — *from ReconcilingWorks*

Let us profess our faith:
**We believe in one God, the Architect and Guardian,
who, in the beginning, breathed life into the void,
sprouting all that is seen and unseen.
We believe in Jesus Christ,
that in order to reconcile the cosmos
this God sent a piece of God's own self
to be born human as kin to us all.
And who, at the hands of
political tyranny, was killed.
He rose again to new life in love
to return the world to God.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who is one with the Creator and Savior.
She is our guide and wisdom.
She pours her spirit into apostles,
prophets, teachers, healers, and
listeners.
We believe in the uniting of all
Christians into the one body of Christ,
And we believe in our return to God at
the end. Amen.**

***Prayers of Intercession**

Trusting in God's extraordinary love, let us come near to the Holy One in prayer.

We pray for our pastors, deacons, bishops, and church leaders, that they may lead us to be a loving and welcoming community in Jesus Christ. We give thanks for ReconcilingWorks and all of our Reconciling in Christ partners. We pray that the whole church may someday be a refuge for all of our LGBTQIA+ siblings. Merciful God, **send wholeness to our church.**

We pray for change. For the dismantling of systems rooted in oppression and discrimination. Make us bold in our proclamation that the lives, loves, and gifts of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Aromantic, Black, Brown, Indigenous, Incarcerated, Disabled, and Migrant people matter to you, and so they matter to all of us – manifest in both word and deed. Teach us to see and celebrate the stunning beauty in all you have made. Merciful God, **send wholeness to your people.**

We pray for the sustainability of our Earthly home. Guide us to care for creation, be mindful of waste, carbon emissions, and the impact of these sins on poor and marginalized communities. Merciful God, **send wholeness to our Earth.**

We pray for our siblings all around the world. We pray that governments enact laws that protect and defend the poor, marginalized, and persecuted. We pray that your hand of justice intercedes for us. Merciful God, **send wholeness to the nations.**

We pray for those that have chaos swirling with them. We pray for those that have been told they are “less than”, “wrong”, or an outcast for who they are. We pray that all of us find our true peace and wholeness of ourselves in you. We pray for those that are victims of violence at the hands of homophobia, transphobia, racism, and ableism. We pray for your mercy, love, and healing to care for them. Merciful God, **send wholeness to your children.**

We pray that our faith community and its ministries uplift and care for all of your diverse created beings. We pray that we work towards justice and peace in our own family and community. Merciful God, **send wholeness to us.**

We pray for LGBTQIA+ saints, all those have gone before us in the fight for justice, freedom, and peace. Those that have boldly stood as themselves, showing the substance you created even when the world told them to hide. Merciful God, **receive our saints in peace.**

Receive the prayers of your children, merciful God, and hold us forever in your steadfast love; through Jesus Christ, our holy wisdom. **Amen.**

Offering

Music at the Offering

“As One”

Sally Drennan Mossing

Offering Prayer

God of all creation, you have given us life, love, compassion and hope. We offer the gifts of our very beings to your holy calling. Strengthen us through these gifts to be the arms of mercy and justice for the world. **Amen.**

Sharing the Meal

***Great Thanksgiving & Preface** — *see Yellow Supplement*

***“Holy, Holy, Holy”** — *see Yellow Supplement*

*Eucharistic Prayer

Holy, just, and merciful God. In the intersection of the waters above and the waters below, you created life out of the void.

We thank you for the gift of creation.

Through Miriam and Moses, you lead your people from oppression into liberation.

We thank you for your gift of liberation.

You sent the prophets to warn to love not hate, and guide us to your faithfulness in your promises.

We thank you for your promise to love.

In the intersection of the divine and humanity, you made us whole through Jesus Christ.

We thank you for the gift of Christ.

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 sins. Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this holy sustenance we are made new creatures in the covenant of your son, Jesus Christ. Together we remember his life, death, and resurrection in this meal and await a new and unending life in you.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Please send your Spirit to this place, to this meal, and to your church. May her life-giving wisdom be upon us now renewed and nourished in your holy promises to be creators of justice, wholeness, and freedom.

Come, Holy Spirit.

With the birds of the air and fish in the sea, with the flora and fauna, with saints of all time and space, we praise you always, O God, blessed Trinity, to the very end of the age. **Amen.**

To our God of true inclusion and justice, we pray the prayer Jesus taught us, using these expansive words or the words of your preference:

Our Beloved Parent in heaven,
 Let your name be sanctified. Let your realm come.
 Let your will happen in heaven and also upon earth.
 Give to us today our nourishment that is necessary for life
 And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
 Do not ever carry us into testing situations but rescue us from the evil one.
 For yours is the kin-dom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

***Invitation to Communion**

Here is the table set for our special meal. The bread, the wine, prepared and presented.
 Ready to be served and shared.
 We remember Jesus sharing a meal like this with his disciples, his friends.
 He included everyone, those he could trust and those he could not trust.
 Today we are his disciples, his friends. Each one of us is welcome. How amazing it is to be loved and
 wanted even when we have not been perfect. How wonderful it is to be included as we are.

Distribution of Communion

Communion Canticle — no. 1056, from *All Creation Sings* “God Bless to Us Our Bread”

Ben - di - ce, Se - ñor, nues - tro pan, y da pan a los que tien - en
 God bless to . . us our . . bread, and give bread . . to all those who are

ham - bre y ham - bre de jus - ti - cia a los que tien - en
 hun - gry, and hun - ger for jus - tice to those who are

pan. Ben - di - ce, Se - ñor, nues - tro pan.
 fed. God bless to . . . us our . . . bread.

Hymn — no. 641 “All Are Welcome”

Communion Blessing and Prayer

Holy One, we thank you for the healing that springs forth abundantly from this table. Renew our strength
 to do justice, love kindness, and journey humbly with you. Amen.

Departing to Serve God’s World

Announcements

***Sending Hymn** — Stanzas 3 & 4, see *Back Page* “God, We Gather as Your People”

***Benediction & Dismissal**

May the God of creation bless you and claim you,
 May the Savior give you peace and wholeness,
 and may the Spirit guide you and lead you to mercy + and justice.
Amen.
 Go now in wholeness to love and deliver the justice of God.
OK, we will! Thanks be to God!

Acknowledgements

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Worship Assistants

Pastor: Chris Culuris

Guest Pastor: Scott Richards

Director of Music: Emily Brufat

Audio/Video: Brett Petersen

Acolytes: Lucas Chambers

Greeter: Cole Buffington, Lewis Nowell

Reader: Mary Spear

Ushers: Tom Thorkelson

Musicians: Handbell Choir; Rebecca Carpenter, flute

Communion Preparers:

Communion Servers: Sharon

Domeier, John Bipes, Aileen Bipes

Announcements

- **Resources for LGBTQ+ Allyship in a Christian Context:** Would you like to learn more about being an ally to the LGBTQ+ community? Or, perhaps you have questions about your own sexuality and/or gender identity. There are numerous resources, and several can be found here: <http://queergrace.com/books/>. Remember to support local and/or minority-owned bookstores! <https://bookshop.org/pages/bookstores>
- We give thanks today for Pastor Scott Richards (who serves St. Paul’s and Trinity Lutheran Church in Gaylord, MN) for his leadership on this Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Sunday!
- Following worship, please join Mary Spear and Amy Ronnkvist of the Social Justice Committee for Welcome Waffles and our First Forum in the Dining Hall as they lead a discussion on what it means to be an RIC congregation.
- Next Sunday, Feb. 12, Scouts will help us as worship assistants. We will also install our Council Officers during worship.
- Following worship next Sunday, Feb. 12, you are invited to join Pastor Chris in the Dining Hall as we continue our Bible study on *Making Sense of Martin Luther*. Please join us!
- After worship next Sunday, the Green Committee will be gathering signatures as part of a letter writing campaign regarding composting in the City of St. Peter.
- FLC will be collecting LED light bulbs for the month of February for the St. Peter Area Food Shelf! Please drop them off in the office.
- Flowers for the Altar today are given by the Social Justice Committee in honor of RIC Sunday.
- For the month of February FLC will receive double the usual amount from our Kwik Trip Card program.

Prayers

- We lift up prayers for those on our long-term list: Elgene Lund, Chuck Petry, Bob Cady, Joan Williams, Betty Gustafson, Myrene Bunge, Glenn Stryker, Erika Schuldt, Ursula McRostie, Karen Wendroth, Allen Storkson, Gene Roemhildt, Karen Smithers, Paul Aasen, and Shirley Storkson.
- We pray for Karen Smithers, who is recovering from hip surgery.
- We pray for Shirley Storkson, Shanon Nowell’s mother-in-law, who is recovering from a broken hip.
- We pray for healing for all who are sick, for the families of all victims of violence and for peace and unity throughout our country and around the world.



1 God, we gath - er as your peo - ple to raise our song a -
2 Oh, we sing for all the chil - dren, that one day they be
3 Oh, we pray for all the young lives cut short by fear and
4 God, we're work - ing for the fu - ture when chil - dren far and



bove, and we dare to claim the prom - ise of your love.
free; and we sing for gen - er - a - tions yet to be,
shame, so a - fraid of who they are and whom they love.
wide can . . . live their lives with dig - ni - ty and pride.



Though the day may not yet be here, we
that they nev - er have a rea - son to
May the mes - sage now be ban - ished that your
As they grow in strength and stat - ure, may they



trust it soon will be, when your chil - dren will be free.
doubt that they are blest. May they, in your love, find rest.
love is for the few; may their faith in you re - new.
join us hand in hand, as a - gainst all hate we stand.

Refrain



Oh, may our hearts and minds be o - pened, fling the church doors o - pen



wide. May there be room e - nough for ev - 'ry - one in - side.



For in God there is a wel - come, in God we all be -



long. May that wel - come be our song.