



seeking:

Who are you
looking for?

April 8, 2023 + Easter Vigil

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

Welcome to First Lutheran Church!

*The service begins in darkness, after nightfall, by the light of a fire.
All gather in silence and take an unlighted candle.*

we GATHER at twilight

***Prelude** — “In Silence We Wait” - sung three times

In si - lence we wait, in dark - ness you
come to us; bring us your light.

*At the appointed time, everyone is welcome to light their individual candles
originating from the light of the paschal candle.*

***Procession (to the Gathering Space)**

Sung each time the pastor stops with the paschal candle.

The light of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

***Prayer of the Day**

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

O God, you are the creator of the world, the liberator of your people, and the wisdom of the earth. By the resurrection of your Son free us from our fears, restore us in your image, and ignite us with your light, through Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Please extinguish your candle at this time.

A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans — Romans 6:3-11

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Hear these words of old as we seek to know God today.

Poem — "Lost and Found"

Rev. Sarah Speed

Mary wept.
Standing in the garden,
soft dirt under her feet,
sun still tucked away,
sleeping under the horizon.

The other disciples left,
but Mary stayed.
Mary wept.
Shoulders shaking,
tears running down her face.
She said, *They have taken my Rabbi away,*
and I don't know where they put him.

But here's what Easter taught me:
if you think you've lost God,
if it feels like heaven has slipped through the cracks,
if you feel like the night will never end,
then know, there is no hide-and-seek with the divine
that doesn't end in you being found.

Stay still.
Keep breathing.
God is closer than you think.

*Gospel Processional — Hymn no. 449, Stanzas 1 & 2

"We Know That Christ Is Raised"

*Gospel — John 20:1-18

The Gospel of John, the 20th chapter.

Glory to you, O God.

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to

them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

The Gospel of Jesus.
Praise to you, O Christ.

***Gospel Recessional** — Hymn no. 449, Stanzas 3 & 4

“We Know That Christ Is Raised”

we REMEMBER our baptism

All are welcome to gather around the font with a bulletin and a hymnal turned to page 234.

***Thanksgiving for the Waters of Baptism**

We bless you, almighty God, for the gift of water—
for the oceans that surround the earth,
for the rivers that nurture the land,
for the Minnesota River that you provide for our community—
we bless you, O God, for the waters of earth:
We bless you, O God, for the waters of earth.

We honor you, merciful God, for showering us with water—
for the rain that nourishes the plants and trees,
for the floods that restore the fields,
for the dew that freshens dry places—
we honor you, O God, for the waters you send:
We honor you, O God, for the waters you send.

We glorify you, gracious God, for the waters of baptism—
for the water of the Jordan that washed our Lord Jesus,
for the water that baptized the believers on Pentecost,
for the water that illuminates us with your Word,
for the water that pours out the gifts of the Spirit,
for the waters that bathes the church universal—the Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Protestants,
Pentecostals, Evangelicals, independents—
we glorify you, O God, for the waters of baptism:
We glorify you, O God, for the waters of baptism.

We worship you, O God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, almighty, merciful, and gracious.
Well of forgiveness, you revive us, Cup of cold water, you refresh us, Pool of rebirth, you renew us.
To you comes the worship of all your people, now and forever:
To you comes the worship of all your people, now and forever. Amen.

***Affirmation of Baptism** — *page 234, front of hymnal*

Offering of Our Gifts

Music at the Offering

“Now the Green Blade Rises” (refer to hymn no. 376 for the text)

Setting by Valerie A. Floeter
Rebecca Carpenter, flute

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 Prayers**

God of the lost and the found, surely it is right for us to give our thanks and praise;
for day after day we look for you, and day after day we find you:
in the laughter of children, in the sun rising over the horizon, in the flowers of spring.

Our seeking does not go unanswered, and for that we are grateful.
So first and foremost, we come to you in prayer to say thank you, for when we're seeking beauty, you give us mountains and freckles, green eyes and brown eyes.
When we're looking for reason to hope, you give us rainbows after the storm, and candles flickering in the window. When we're seeking peace, you give us three part harmony and the sound of the rain.
And when we're seeking justice, your life reminds us that everyone is welcome at your Table, and none shall be turned away.

For all these reminders we are deeply grateful.
And yet, gracious God, our seeking does not stop.
For even though your fingerprints are all over this world,
we are not yet at your promised day.

So in addition to our gratitude, we also pray today for conviction.
Do not let us get comfortable with half-hearted seeking.
Do not let us grow numb to the suffering of this world.
Make us relentless in our pursuit of justice—
relentless in our consoling of the grieving,
in our welcoming of the stranger, and in the feeding of the hungry.
Like a dog with a scent, may we walk toward your kingdom,
never giving up, never wandering off the path.

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.

And as we see and as we seek, pour out your Spirit on this ordinary bread and cup.
May this meal be the nourishment we need to continue seeking you in the world.

Until your promised day, we will pray. Until your promised day, we will seek, saying: **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**

Friends, it would have been easy on that Easter morning for Jesus to roll away the stone, walk to the city center, and declare that death had not won.

Instead, Jesus waited in the garden. He waited for the people who needed him most. He waited for Mary. He called her by name. He stopped her crying. He gave her a reason to hope.

So if you have ever doubted that God's love for you is personal and specific, may the truth of this day remind you otherwise. The God you seek will meet you in the garden on your hardest days. And that same God has a seat saved at this Table, specifically for you.

So, come. Come, whether you are dancing for joy, or like Mary, still feeling a little lost. Come with your questions. Come with your hunger. Come, whether this is your first time or your hundredth. Come, because this feast is a reminder that God's Table is big enough for all of us. Jesus Christ is risen today and he rose for *you*.

So, come. *All* are welcome.

Distribution of Communion

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

Hymn — no. 455

“Crashing Waters at Creation”

Hymn — no. 456

“Baptized in Water”

Prayer After Communion

Where don't we seek after you, God? We look for you in the mirror, in strangers, in sunrises, on mountain tops, in the laughter of children, and in meals shared together. We look for you on the city streets, in hospital rooms, in jail cells, in poetry, and hymn melodies. We look for you everywhere!

Sometimes the seeking is hard, but then at other times, we come to this Table and all are fed, and all are welcomed, and there is room for everyone, and no one is turned away, or made to feel unworthy. And in those moments, we see you clearly.

So thank you for meeting us in our seeking. Please don't stop seeking us. Gratefully we pray, amen.

we DEPART to serve the world

Announcements

***Sending Hymn** — no. 933, *see back page*

“Christ, Be Our Light”

*Blessing & Dismissal

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

As you leave this place, may God bless you with seeking.

Seek out the hungry. Seek the weary. Seek the good in every person you pass.

Seek out the hopeful. Seek the faithful. Seek God in each of us.

As you seek and as you wonder, may you find what you are looking for.

In the name of our loving God, who is always seeking us, go now in peace. **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

Postlude — “Engelberg”

Setting by David Cherwien

Acknowledgements

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Words for Worship (Poem, Communion Prayers and Invitation, Benediction) Adapted from “Seeking” by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | www.sanctifiedart.org

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Worship Assistants

Pastor: Chris Culuris

Director of Music: Emily Bruflat

Musicians: Rebecca Carpenter, flute

Readers: Clementson Family, Hoenke
Family, John Bipes

Communion Preparers: Michelle Doose

Communion Servers: Nancy Timm, John & Aileen Bipes

Bread Bakers: Michelle Doose

First Lutheran Church’s Statement of Welcome!

Held in Christ, our Center, and living in grateful response to God’s love and grace, we welcome everyone, without exception. We make known our gratitude and appreciation of all, including people of every race, sex, age, color, creed, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital and familial status, physical and mental ability, health status, socioeconomic situation, education level and political affiliation.

Please join with us as we seek to celebrate the image of God in all people, nurture meaningful relationships, and share our collective gifts in response to the world’s deep hunger for hope, love, grace, justice, and peace.

Learn more about us at <http://www.flcstp.org/welcome-to-flc.html>

We Belong to the ELCA

“The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States. . . This is Christ’s church. There is a place for you here. We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God’s grace. Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person--questions, complexities and all. Join us as we do God’s work in Christ’s name for the life of the world.” More info at <https://elca.org/About>



FLC Is a Reconciling in Christ Congregation

“The Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Program is for Lutheran communities that publicly welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.” For more info, visit

<https://www.reconcilingworks.org/>

“We believe that God values and embraces each person as a beloved child, that the Spirit gives a diversity of gifts for the common good, and that Jesus Christ calls us to work for justice.”

CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT (EASTER VIGIL TEXT)

Bernadette Farrell



1. This is the night of new be - gin - nings. This is the
2. This is the night Christ our re - deem - er rose from the
3. Now will the fire kin - dled in dark - ness burn to dis -
4. Sing of the hope deep - er than dy - ing. Sing of the
5. In - to this world morn - ing is break - ing. All of God's



1. night when heav - en meets earth. This is the night _____
2. grave tri - um - phant and free, leav - ing the tomb of
3. pel the shad - ows of night. Star of the morn - ing,
4. pow'r _____ strong - er than death. Sing of the love _____
5. peo - ple, lift up your voice. Cry out with joy, _____



1. filled with God's glo - ry, prom - ise of our new birth!
2. e - vil and dark - ness, emp - ty for all to see.
3. Je - sus our Sav - ior, you are the world's true light!
4. end - less as heav - en, dawn - ing through - out the earth.
5. tell out the sto - ry, all of the earth re - joice.



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.



Shine through the dark - ness. Christ, be our light!



Shine in your church gath - ered to - day.