



# Season of Creation

July 24, 2022 + Rainbow Sunday

An asterisk (\*) invites you to stand in body or in spirit.

In call and response sections, the congregation is invited to read the **bold print** all together.

Welcome to First Lutheran Church!

## Gathering in God's Presence

**Prelude** — “For the Wholeness of the Earth”

Hymnal Setting by Bret Hesla

**Welcome**

**\*Confession & Forgiveness** — *see Green Supplement*

**\*Opening Canticle** — *see Green Supplement*

“God of Stars and Distant Planets”

**\*Holy Baptism of Emma Lynn Thompson** — *the congregation will be prompted at various points*

**Do you believe in God the Father?**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

**Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?**

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

**Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?**

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Let us welcome the newly baptized.

**We welcome you into the body of Christ  
and into the mission we share:**

**join us in giving thanks and praise to God  
and bearing God's creative and redeeming  
word to all the world.**

## \*Opening Blessing for Rainbow Sunday

In the name of the Creator who made the first covenant with creation.

In the name of Christ who made a new covenant with us through his blood.

In the name of the Spirit who animates Earth with whom we make our covenant this day.

**Shalom! Shalom! Shalom! We come to make our covenant with creation.**

## \*Prayer of the Day

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

God, our Creator, **as we reflect on the mystery of our fragile planet, we celebrate the wonders of Earth as our home. Help us to discern how we have polluted our planet and to empathize with the groaning of creation beneath us. Teach us to sense the presence of God pulsing through Earth. We have lifted up animals, storms, the sun, the waters of the Earth, and our climate crisis. 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, gratefully we pray, amen.**

# Hearing & Responding to Scripture

**Scripture Readings** – you are invited to open your own bible to the passage or to listen to the lessons

Genesis 9:8-17

Psalm 33:4-9

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

## \*Gospel Acclamation



## \*Gospel — Mark 16:14-15



**Sermon** — “Keeping Our Part of the Covenant”

Pastor Chris Culuris

**\*Rainbow Covenant** — with “Rainbow Covenant Hymn” sung between each section, tune BUNESSAN (“Morning Has Broken”)

## *The First Covenant Promise – Red*

We worship in a sanctuary called Earth

**A sanctuary filled with the vibrant presence of the Creator.**

The glory, the fire-filled presence of God, once filled the tabernacle.

**Now that same presence fills Earth, the sanctuary in which we worship.**

We worship in a sanctuary called Earth,

**A sanctuary filled with the cosmic presence of Christ,**

The risen Lord, who is now the cosmic Christ,

**Who fills and reconciles all creation.**

We worship in a sanctuary called Earth,

**A sanctuary filled with the Spirit,**

The life-giving breath of God,

**The Spirit that fills and renews all creation.**

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. Those worshipers with red banners or flags raise them now as witness to our promise.

**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. Those worshipers with orange banners or flags may raise them now as witness to our promise.

**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.**

### ***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.**

The covenant connection between God and Earth is not confined to God's promise after the Flood, but is present throughout our planet. Earth is not only a sanctuary filled with God's vibrant presence, but like a court filled with God's righteousness and covenant loyalty. For the Psalmist says in Psalm 33, 'Earth is filled with God's *chesed*, that is, with God's covenant loyalty. So we can sing, with the Psalmist,

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of justice, the whole Earth is filled with your covenant loyalty.**

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. Those worshipers with yellow banners or flags raise them now as witness to our promise.

**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. After each confession we pause to reflect on the effects of these crimes on our planet, our lives and those of our kin in creation. 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.**

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. Those worshipers with green banners or flags raise them now as witness to our promise.

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

**Sing: Green pulses flow through veins of creation,  
Till 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, the trees God first planted in Eden. I used to sing with joy on the banks of the Amazon and in the tropics of Indonesia, in the jungles of Africa and the old growth regions of Australia. I used to be the healthy lungs of our planet. But many of my trees have been slaughtered and decimated. Humans have cut down my pride and reduced my living presence. I am groaning in pain because of the injustice I have suffered.*

*I am the voice of the atmosphere, the air. I am the breath of life from God that gives life to all of Earth. I am God's breath. Through me, God continues to create life in Earth day and night. But I am beginning to choke. Humans are polluting me with toxins that are changing the climate of Earth and upsetting the balance of nature. I am groaning in pain because of the injustice I have suffered.*

*I am the voice of disappearing species. We have been created by God to be precious creatures of Earth. We are among the wonders of nature that God has created in this sacred planet. We have a right to survive and celebrate life. But humans have destroyed our habitat, polluted our homes, and treated us as worthless. We are groaning in pain because of the injustice we have suffered.*

*I am the voice of the land. Indigenous peoples used to hear my voice, nurture my landscape, and celebrate the spirit within me. They knew there was an intimate bond between all my kin, human and non-human. But in recent years some humans have cleared the face of the land and turned the landscape into wasteland. They have treated the land as a source of wealth, not wonder. I am groaning in pain because of the injustice I have suffered.*

*I am the prophet Jeremiah. Long ago I heard Earth mourning, animals weeping, and forests crying in pain. I felt the pain of our planet caused by human crimes against God and creation. I call you now to be prophets like me and give voice to the cries of Earth.*

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 fourth 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. Those worshipers with blue banners or flags raise them now as witness to our promise.

**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 the sages in the past. The wise magi in biblical days were equivalent to the scientists of today. They observed society and nature to discern the 'way' that is, the essential nature of how things worked. Today, we would speak of the laws or ecosystems of nature.

**So, 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.**

This will especially affect refugees on lands without food and lands that have flooded. That means we need to invoke the wisdom of the Joseph Principle. Joseph, you recall, interpreted the dream of Pharaoh about seven thin cows eating seven fat cows and staying thin. By preparing for the seven years of drought during the years of plenty, Joseph saved all the peoples and living creatures of Egypt from disaster.

**It is time we invoked the Joseph Principle and prepared for the food shortages and disasters of the coming Greenhouse Age.**

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. Those worshipers with indigo banners or flags raise them now as witness to our promise.

**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."

**What then is the whole creation? A metaphor for people or nations?**

The Greek word *ktisis* means creation, the physical universe, the visible cosmos. There is not only good news for humans who have sinned against God but also for suffering and groaning creation. In the past we have focused primarily on how Christ has suffered and died for human beings. This text and others also raise the question of how the risen Christ works in this world as that cosmic presence which reconciles, heals, and liberates creation.

**In other words, we also 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. Those worshipers with violet banners or flags raise them now as witness to our promise.

**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.**

**\*Sharing of the Peace**

The peace of our Creator be with you always. **And also with you.**

**Offering**

*Music at the Offering*  
"Healer"

*see Green Supplement*

## *Sharing the Lord's Supper*

**\*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.

On the night before he died, he 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.**

## \*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

*All are welcome to this meal - there are no prerequisites or exceptions! Instructions for Communion will be given verbally.*

## Prayer After Communion

Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into your heart, your mind, and your body to heal your wounds, to calm your fears, and through you to bring healing to Earth. In Jesus' name. **Amen**

# *Departing to Serve God's Creation*

## Announcements

### Sending Hymn —

“Creator God”  
Sung to SINE NOMINE

1. Creator God, your children's voices rise,  
Fed by your earth, uplifted by your skies,  
Thankful for all its beauty and surprise,  
Praise ever singing, ever singing.

2. Where forests range their canopies of trees,  
May we sustain such vital gifts as these,  
Let woodland shelter still resound with bees,  
Birds ever singing, ever, singing.

3. Beneath the moon the ocean lifts its tide,  
Help us to curb our poisoned human pride  
Still may the whales, the fish and dolphins ride  
Seas ever singing, ever singing.

4. From south to north,  
from deeps to thinnest air,  
Kingdoms of creatures flourish everywhere,  
Open our hearts and let us learn to share  
Life ever singing, ever singing.

5. God gave the word,  
and earth spins out in space,  
Made us custodians of this glorious place,  
Then let us give the future human race  
Worlds ever singing, ever singing.

## \*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 the dangers our environment faces, and violet for the healing presence of our cosmic Christ.

## \*Benediction & Dismissal

May God our Creator bless and keep you, may Jesus, child of the earth, walk with you, and may the Holy Spirit, wind and fire, give you hope and peace. **Amen.**

Go in peace, care for all creation. **Thanks be to God!**

## Postlude — “We Are One”

John Ylvisaker

## Acknowledgements

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## Worship Assistants

Pastor: Chris Culuris

Director of Music: Emily Bruflat

Audio/Video: Rachel Ribar, Malcolm McHugh

Greeter/Reader: Annalise Rivas

Green Committee Readers: Judy Fienen, Julie Johnson

Ushers: Cindy & John Nadeau

Musicians: Steve Kidder, Ivy McHugh, Ella Twaddle, Tom

Baumgartner

## Announcements

- We have suggested many documentaries over the past several weeks about our changing climate and specific impacts it is having on our world. What was your favorite? Have you adopted any new sustainable ways of living? We would love to know!
- We give thanks for the baptism of Emma Lynn Thompson, daughter of Cody & Samantha Thompson. Special thanks to her sponsors, Collin Lynn Thompson and Jennifer Lynn Zak.
- The flowers are in honor of the wedding anniversary of Cheryl and Bill Kautt. We wish them happiness as they celebrate 50 years of marriage!
- Join us for a special summer educational and worship opportunity! On Wednesday, July 27, you are invited to a Bible Study led by Pastor Chris from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. in the Dining Hall and worship at 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel.
- The celebration of life service for Tom Stenson will be held on Saturday, July 30 at 10:00 a.m.

## Prayers

- We lift up prayers for those on our long-term list: Tom and Deb Johnson, Abigail Christenson, Elgene Lund, Chuck Petry, Bob Cady, Joan Williams, Myrene Bunge, Glenn Stryker, Erika Schuldt, Gwen Powell, Nancy Maag, Claire Cardwell, Ursula McRostie and Betty Gustafson.
- We pray for Nancy Timm for a quick recovery from double knee surgery.
- We pray for lasting peace in Ukraine, on the streets of America, and in the hearts of all who have been affected by violence.

## Notes from Season of Creation:

The Season of Creation (Australia) liturgies were the inspiration and oftentimes the text of many prayers, litanies, and scripture choices during our worship today. Why were these lessons chosen? A description was provided with brief rationale (below), also found in documents here: <https://seasonofcreation.com/worship-resources/liturgies/>

**Hebrew Scripture: Genesis 9:8-17** After the flood, God makes a covenant not only with Noah and his family, but also with all living creatures and specifically with Earth. This covenant is a binding promise never to destroy Earth with floods. The rainbow is the visible witness in the sky to God's promise and a reminder for God to be faithful to that promise.

**Psalm 33:4-9** The psalmist here not only reminds us that heaven and Earth were created by the Word and breath of God, but that the whole Earth is filled with God's righteous presence and covenant loyalty. This presence affirms the intrinsic value of Earth.

**Epistle: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26** Also informing our covenant with Earth is the new covenant Christ has made with his blood, a covenant that brings healing to all who celebrate with Christ.

**Gospel: Mark 16:14-15** This commission in Mark represents the Third Mission of the Church. In Matthew 28 we are called to proclaim the Gospel to all nations. In Luke 4 we join with Christ in his mission to bring good news to the poor and liberate the oppressed. In Mark 16 our mission is to proclaim the good news specifically to 'the whole creation,' that is, the physical universe. Through the cosmic Christ there is reconciliation for all things, the entire cosmos.