September 20th, 2026 ☩
17th Sunday after Pentecost

We welcome you to First Lutheran Church!

"God's Work. Our Hands. To serve ALL people."

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

P: Indicates the Presider. AM: Indicates the Assisting Minister.

We Gather

Prelude - "Air" arr. Bob Moore

Words of Welcome

***Gathering hymn** – no. 685 vs 1,2 & 6 "Take My Life, That I May Be"

***Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.

Amen.

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.
Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God, **we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

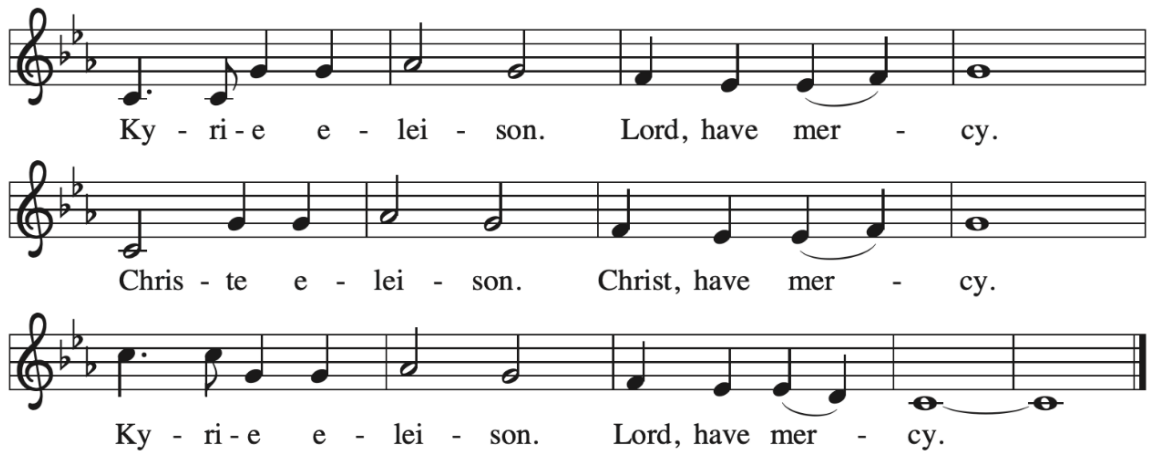
Hear this good news: We have peace with God through ☩ Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

Amen.

***Apostolic Greeting**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

***Kyrie –**



***Hymn of Praise –**

***Prayer of the Day** P: Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Temple Talk – *First Facing Out* – Mission Support: Pastor Heather Culuris

We Listen to God's Word

First Reading: Jonah 3:10-4: 11

10 When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God
changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not
do it.
4:1 But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. 2 He prayed to the LORD and said,
"O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to
Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger,
abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. 3 And now, O LORD, please take my
life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." 4 And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to
be angry?" 5 Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made a booth for
himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.
6 The LORD God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his
head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the bush. 7 But when dawn
came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. 8 When
the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so
that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

9 But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes,
angry enough to die." 10 Then the LORD said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you
did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a
night. 11 And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more
than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left
and also many animals? "

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 145:1-8 *we will speak the psalm responsively, assembly responds with bold print.*

1 I will exalt you, my God and king,
and bless your name forever and ever.
2 **Every day will I bless you**
and praise your name forever and ever.

3 Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised!
There is no end to your greatness.
4 **One generation shall praise your works to another**
and shall declare your power.
5 I will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty
and all your marvelous works.
6 **They shall tell of the might of your wondrous acts,**
and I will recount your greatness.
7 They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness;
they shall sing joyfully of your righteousness.
8 **The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,**
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Second Reading: Philippians 1:21-30

21 For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. 23 I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. 25 Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, 26 so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

27 Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel 28 and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. 29 For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, 30 since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Word of God, Word of Life**. Thanks be to God.**

***Gospel Acclamation** – *The verse will be sung by a soloist*

***Gospel:** Matthew 20:1-16

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 20th Chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 1 "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the laborers for a

denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. [3] When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, [4] and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. [5] When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. [6] And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' [7] They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' [8] When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' [9] When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. [10] Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. [11] And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, [12] saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' [13] But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? [14] Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. [15] Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' [16] So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

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

Sermon – Pastor Chris Culuris

Hymn – *See back page for music* "God Be the Love to Search and Keep Me"

***The Apostles Creed**

P: Together let us profess our faith:

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

***Prayers of Intercession** –

AM: Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us. *At the conclusion of each petition:* Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

AM: Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

***Sign of Peace**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**
Please offer one another some sign of Christ's peace.

Offering – For electronic giving please see Refrigerator Page for QR code and ***Thank you!***

Offering Music: "Ballade" Bob Moore

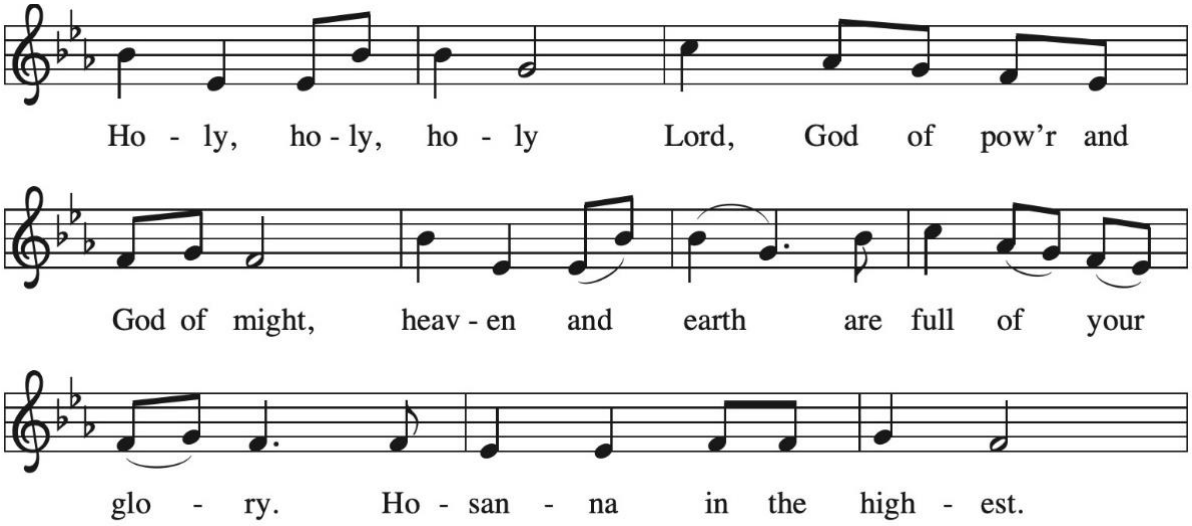
***Offering Prayer**

AM: God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. **Amen.**

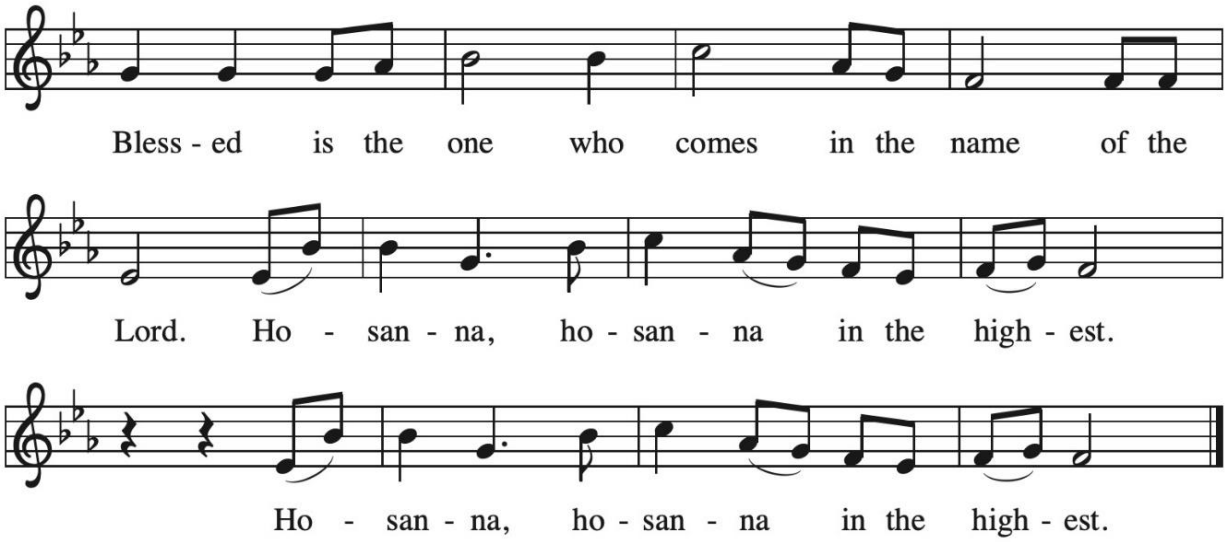
We Share God's Holy Meal

Great Thanksgiving - *(spoken)*
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.**
The thanksgiving continues with the preface, the assembly responds:

Sanctus –



Sanctus continues…

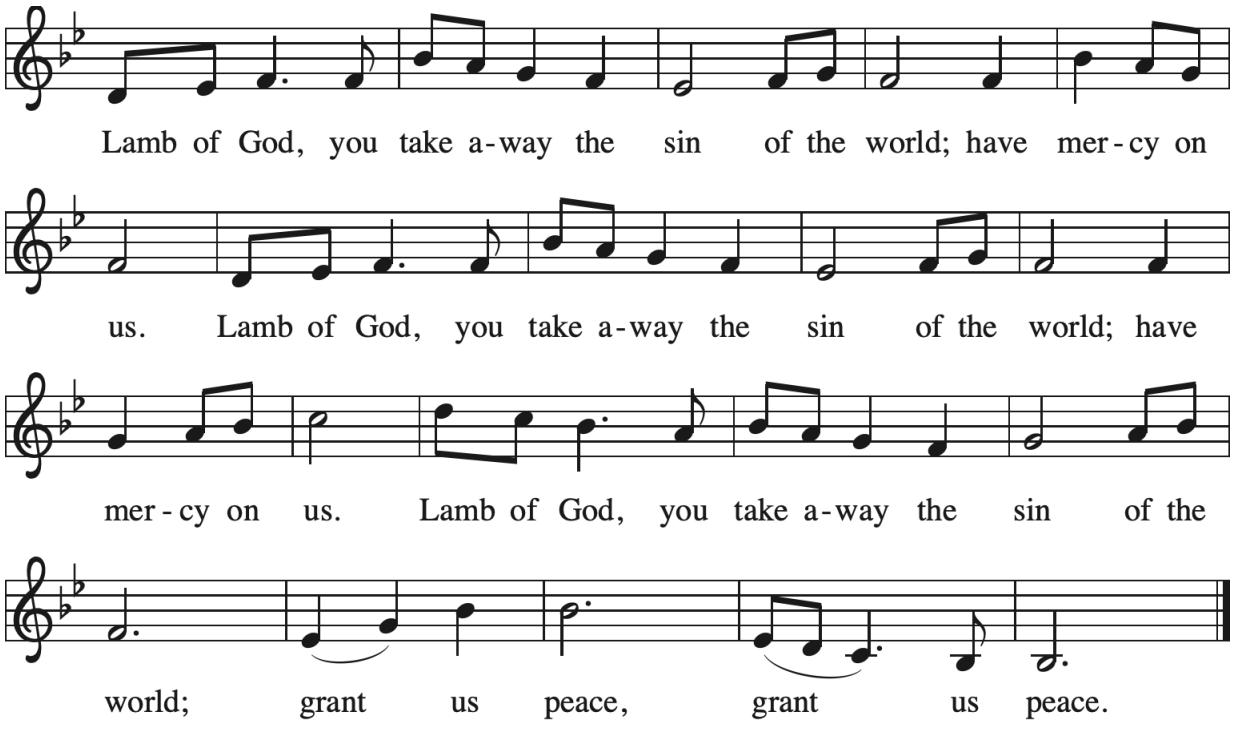


***Words of Institution and The Lord's Prayer**

> Together let us pray as Jesus taught us 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** – P: Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

Lamb of God



Distribution of Communion - *Hymns during communion:*
no. 659 "Will You Let Me Be Your Servant"
no. 401 "Gracious Spirit, Heed our Pleading"

Prayer After Communion
P: Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

We Go in Peace

Announcements

***Sending Hymn** – no. 583 vs. 1, 3 & 4 "Take My Life, That I May Be"

***Blessing & Dismissal**

P: The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus. **Amen.**
The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding of the Spirit. **Amen.**
The God of grace ☩ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**
AM: Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace. **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude – "Take My Life, that I May Be" *(Toma Mi Voluntad)* setting, Lynette Maynard

In Worship today:

Pastor: Chris Culuris
Musician: Deacon Brenda Handel-Johnson
Assisting Minister: Grace Timm
Musician: Annaeka Johnson, oboe

Ushers: Harry Hunt, Pat Pehrson
Communion Preparers: Mary Thompson
Communion Servers: Mike and Diane Stewart

Bread Baker: Betsy Bolint
Audio/Video: Rachel Ribar

Prayers: We pray for those on our long-term list: Betty Gustafson, Paul Aasen, Karen Handel, Erika Schuldt, Ruth Edberg, Bob Lamb, Dorothy and Paul Lutz, Steve Erickson, Laurie Dietrich, Barbra Grabowski (Ted Mary ThompsonKunze's sister), Garrett and Betsy Paul, Mary Ann Scharf, Janice and John Holte, Kay Moline, Kevin Nicholson (Betty Thompson's nephew), Leah Crosby and baby (niece of Aileen Bipes), Hazel Adelman (niece of Mary Gaebler), Lisa Handel-Dalvand, family of Barb Moss (friend of Deacon Brenda).

Acknowledgments
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FLC Refrigerator Page - take this home with you!

Worship, Education and Service:

- **Fellowship** will be provided and served by Pat Pehrson and Carla Demers.
- **Rental and Driver's Ed Assistance:** The need for emergency funds continues. All money collected is dispersed through the Good Neighbor Diversity Council's Emergency Fund. We are also collecting money for new drivers at SPHS whose families have been affected by the ICE action. Students need money to take Driver's Ed. Use special envelopes on sign up table.
- **Personal care donation for SPAF:** FLC is collecting dish soap in September. Place any donations in the grocery cart in the Gathering space. Thank you.
- **Wednesday Meal Volunteers:** Servers and clean-up crew needed for the month of September. We also need a meal host for September 30. Sign up at **https://bit.ly/flcmeals9-26** to lend a hand!

Events at FLC and around the area:

- **Chankaska Creek Winery outing** - Please join fellow FLC members for a relaxed time of Fellowship today! We will meet at the winery at 4:00 pm. If you would like to carpool, please meet in the FLC parking lot at 3:40pm. Hope to see you there.
- **Join the community FLC Watch Party - Tuesday, September 22,** Join with others for the Fretheim Lecture in Biblical Theology with Craig Koester. "The Death of Jesus and the Message of Life: According to the Gospel of John" 6-8:30 pm - Livestream event - FLC Dining Hall.
- **Faith Night at First continues this Wednesday, September 23.**
- **Judy Chaffee's Funeral:** Sat., Sep. 26, 10am Visitation; 11am Funeral; followed by lunch.
- **Special NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness) presentation - Wednesday, September 30 at 7 pm** on mental health and anxiety for High School students for students and parents. The community is welcome. (Junior High presentation for students and parents on Wednesday, October 7)
- **2026 Minnesota Welsh Hymn Singing Festival** on Sunday, September 27. The event will be held at First Presbyterian Church in Mankato, 220 East Hickory Street, at 1:30 PM. There is no charge to attend, but a freewill offering will be received to help defray expenses. Refreshments will follow. Laurie D
- **September is God's Work Our Hands month of service; opportunities to serve:**
  - Singalong/visiting - Benedictine Court: Tuesday, Sept. 22 - 2 pm
  - Prairie Hill singing and visiting – Friday, September 25, 2 pm.
  - Doubles Dice at Nursing Home - date TBA
- **Be a generous neighbor!** We invite you to help us tell our story. There are multiple ways to support God's mission and show generosity. By October 11, consider:
  - Completing the time & talent survey (contact Annalise Rivas **asblech@gmail.com**) to express interest in volunteering .
  - Making an annual financial pledge (complete a pledge card or contact Karen Smithers **ksmithers@flcstp.org**).
  - Trying out one of our church committees to see where your voice can help us grow our mission (see list on the website **http://www.flcstp.org/committees.html**)
- **First Fall Festival** on Sunday, October 11 from 2 - 4 p.m. Lots of help is still needed - look for a sign-up sheet in the gathering space today! Contact Gabriela Roemhildt for more information, 507-420-9566.

Offering code

God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me

O Christ, Surround Me

1 God, be the love to search and keep me; God, be the prayer to
2 Bind to my-self the name of Ho - ly, great cloud of wit - ness -
3 Bright-ness of sun and glow of moon-light, flash - ing of light - ning,
4 Walk - ing be-hind to hem my jour - ney, go - ing a - head to
5 Christ in the eyes of all who see me, Christ in the ears that

move my voice; God, be the strength to now up - hold me:
es en - fold; proph - ets, a - pos - tles, an - gels wit - ness:
strength of wind, depth of the sea to soil of plan - et:
light my way, and from be - neath, a - bove, and all ways:
hear my voice, Christ in the hearts of all who know me:

Refrain

O Christ, sur - round me; O Christ, sur - round me.