



# seeking:

*Who are you  
looking for?*

**April 9, 2023 + Easter 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 here**

*During the  
prelude, the  
handbell prepares  
us for our  
Processional  
Hymn by playing  
this majestic,  
English tune!*

**Prelude** — “O God Beyond All Praising”

Setting by Lee J. Afdahl  
Handbell Choir

### **\*Call to Worship**

What are you looking for?  
**The light before dawn.**  
What are you looking for?  
**A reason to hope.**  
What are you looking for?  
**Joy after grief and flowers after winter.**  
What are you looking for?  
**A place to belong.**  
What are you looking for?  
**We are looking for the Messiah.**  
Good news! Come in. Love is alive!  
**Surely God is in this place.**

*This joyful hymn  
of praise is fitting  
for our Easter  
celebration. In  
the second  
stanza, we sing  
that ‘Christ...from  
death has set us  
free, and we  
through him are  
given the final  
victory.’*

**\*Processional Hymn** — no. 880

“O God beyond All Praising”  
Setting for Brass by Robert Hobby

### **\*Words of Welcome**

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

### **\*Confession and Forgiveness**

Friends, sometimes our relationship with God can feel like a mystery. We seek after God. We swear that we’re looking, and yet so often we miss when the Divine is right under our noses. So let us pray together, knowing that our seeking has its limits, but God’s love does not. Let us pray:

God of resurrection,  
 We confess, like a dog with a bone, we run aimlessly.  
 We chase our tails, looking for things that provide answers  
 to the suffering of the world, looking for comfort to our longest nights.  
 You meet us in the darkness before dawn, but we mistake you for the gardener.  
 Forgive us for seeking after worldly things.  
 Forgive us for forgetting to seek you.  
 Speak to us. Call us by name, that we might recognize you in our midst.  
 With hope and gratitude we pray, amen.

Family of faith, no matter how many times we lose sight of God, God never loses sight of us. We might spend our whole days seeking, but we are always found. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel, that in Jesus' name † your sins are forgiven. Hear the good news proclaimed in resurrection:

**What once was lost is found. We are held in God's loving embrace: forgiven, claimed, and sent to serve. Alleluia! Amen.**

*Setting Three is a tried and true liturgical setting by Richard Hillert, which we return to this Easter season.*

**\*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.

Rabbouni, Teacher, we have spent the past six weeks asking questions. We have turned over every rock. We have shined a light in every dusty corner. We have opened the blinds. We have wrestled with truth. We have sought after you. So on this Easter morning, bring wisdom to our seeking. Move through this room until the walls echo with the sound of alleluias. Roll back the stones that might prevent us from drawing closer to you. Calm our hearts. Say our names. Awaken us to your presence in our midst. We are here. We are listening. We are seeking after you. Alleluia. Amen.

## we LISTEN and RESPOND

**A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles** — Acts 10:34-43

Peter began to speak to [the people]: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

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

**Psalm 118** — Led by the Sanctuary Choir and Handbell Choir

*For today's psalm, the choir will introduce the refrain; then, all may join in the refrain thereafter. The choir will sing the psalm verses.*



The love of God is stead-fast, sus-tain-ing all,

Give thanks to the Lord, for the | Lord is good;  
 God's mercy en- | dures forever.  
 Let Israel | now declare,  
 "God's mercy en- | dures forever."  
 The Lord is my strength | and my song,  
 and has become | my salvation.  
 Shouts of rejoicing and salvation echo in the tents | of the righteous:  
 "The right hand of the | Lord acts valiantly! **Refrain**  
 I give thanks to you, for you have | answered me  
 and you have become | my salvation.  
 The stone that the build- | ers rejected  
 has become the chief | cornerstone.  
 By the Lord has | this been done;  
 it is marvelous | in our eyes.  
 This is the day that the | Lord has made;  
 let us rejoice and be | glad in it. **Refrain**

**A Reading from Paul's letter to the Colossians — Colossians 3:1-4**

If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

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

*We break our  
 Lenten silence  
 and once again  
 sing "Alleluia" as  
 we prepare to  
 hear the  
 resurrection  
 gospel!*

**\*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 — Matthew 28:1-10**

The Gospel of Matthew, the 28th chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Sermon

Pastor Chris Culuris

*This hymn joyfully concludes the Sanctified Art hymn series with new words to a very familiar tune. In it, we sing of an expansive God who brings new life and who cannot be boxed in! Where is God in your life right now? In the world around you?*

**\*Hymn** — *from A Sanctified Art, see back page*

“Who Are You Looking For?”

### \*Affirmation of Faith

P: You are invited to share in this litany of affirmation:

We believe in resurrection—

**mysterious, beyond our understanding, and yet, like tulips after the snow: real.**

We believe in Easter morning—

**in the promise of a God who would roll back every stone to return to us.**

We believe in Jesus—

**who calls us by name and asks,**

**“Who are you looking for?”**

So we look—

**for justice, for mercy, for God in our midst.**

And as we look, we sing, “Alleluia!”

**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.

You bring abundant life throughout creation. The green blade rises, and all creation greets the resurrection dawn. Guide us in our care for lands, waters, animals, and plants, seeking always to live in harmony. Risen Christ, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You show your steadfast love without regard to borders, barriers, or human-made divisions. Infuse your justice in every nation of the world that all experience the peace that only you can give. Risen Christ, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power. Encourage us by his example in our ministries of healing, care, and outreach. We pray for all who are sick or hospitalized and for all health care workers who care for them. Risen Christ, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You have put gladness in our hearts. Inspire musicians and dancers to rejoice with songs of victory. Bless the music ministries of this congregation and all who foster our assembly’s song. Risen Christ, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As you have raised Jesus from the dead, you show us your resurrection promise. With your holy ones who have sung your praise, free us from fear and empower us to go and tell the good news. Risen Christ, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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.**

### Offering

*Music During Offering*

“Easter Carol”

*The choir will sing this joyful rendition of DANCING DAY. The middle stanza tells the story: “First witnesses to Easter morn were women three who came forlorn; then Magdalen did cease her sighs, when Christ she saw with joyful eyes.”*

Setting by Richard Proulx  
Sanctuary Choir; Rebecca Carpenter, flute

**\*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 Prayers**

Resurrecting God, Mary went to the garden looking for you. Two thousand years later, we follow in her footsteps. We seek after you, hungry for a garden moment where we might hear you say our name or feel you in our midst.

So before the hallelujahs begin, we empty our pockets of our prayers and remember where we've been.

With gratitude, we recall Maundy Thursday. We are grateful for the tables we gather around, for the friends that feel like family, and for this church—which acts as our band of disciples. We hold onto the reminder of you washing the disciples' feet that night, and trust that that same love extends to us.

With sorrow, we recall Good Friday. We grieve the depths of cruelty woven into that day—a cruelty so many in this hurting world know. So, for those who are still caught in grief and loss, for those whose days have turned to night, relieve them of their suffering. Find them in the crowd. Wipe their tears. Hold their grief for them and point them toward peace.

Now, with hope we enter into this Easter morning, to find ourselves face-to-face with your good news. Thank you for giving us reason to hope. Thank you for the sunrise after a long night, for the healing of bones and hearts, for laughter that is contagious, and for the joy felt in community. Tether every gratitude and joy in our life back to you.

And now, as we come to the Table, just as Mary came to the tomb, we ask that in every stage of our seeking, you would be near to us. Pour out a double portion of your Spirit on this bread and cup that we might see you as clearly as Mary did.

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.

May this meal nourish us to build your kingdom here. Until that promised day, we will pray. Until that 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

*We will observe communion at the rail this morning. During this time, you are invited to sing this joyful Easter favorite, followed by a more introspective hymn found in our newer All Creation Sings hymnal.*

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

**Hymn** — no. 365

**"Jesus Christ Is Risen Today"**  
Setting for Brass by James Biery

**Hymn** — no. 938

**"Christ Has Risen While Earth Slumbers"**



1 Christ has ris - en while earth slum - bers, Christ has ris - en  
2 Christ has ris - en for the peo - ple whom he died to  
3 Christ has ris - en to com - pan - ion for - mer friends who  
4 Christ has ris - en and for - ev - er lives to chal - lenge



where hope died, as he said and as he prom - ised,  
love and save; Christ has ris - en for the wom - en  
fear the night, sens - ing loss and lim - i - ta - tion  
and to change all whose lives are messed or man - gled,



as we doubt - ed and de - nied. Let the moon em -  
bring - ing flow'rs to grace his grave. Christ has ris - en  
where their faith had once burned bright. They be - moan what  
all who find re - li - gion strange. Christ is ris - en,



brace the bless - ing; let the sun sus - tain the cheer; let the  
for dis - ci - ples, hud - dled in an up - stairs room. He whose  
is no long - er, they ex - pect no hope - ful sign till Christ  
Christ is pres - ent mak - ing us what he has been: ev - i -



world con - firm the ru - mor: Christ is ris - en, God is here!  
word in - spired cre - a - tion can't be si - lenced by the tomb.  
ends their con - ver - sa - tion, break - ing bread and shar - ing wine.  
dence of trans - for - ma - tion in which God is known and seen.

## 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

*We sing "Jesus is risen and we shall arise"! Another text set to this tune calls us to be the hands and feet of Christ. May we arise into the world - "walking the way" - and take to all people the good news of the risen Jesus and his example of love.*

*Written in 1879, this postlude has become a staple recessional for festival occasions!*

### Announcements

**\*Sending Hymn — no. 377**

**"Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!"**

Setting for Brass and Choir by Hal Hopson

Stanzas 1 & 2: All    Stanza 3: Choir, All on *refrain*

Stanza 4: Choir, All on *refrain*    Stanza 5: All

**\*Blessing & Dismissal**

P: 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.

A: In the name of our loving God, who is always seeking us, go now in peace.

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

**\*Postlude — *Symphony for Organ No. 5, Op. 42 no. 1***

**Charles-Marie Widor**

V: Toccata

### **Acknowledgements**

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### Worship Assistants

Pastor: Chris Culuris  
Director of Music: Emily Bruflat  
Assisting Minister: David Fielen  
Reader: David Fielen

Ushers: Carol Solberg, Bill Kautt, Betty Thompson  
Musicians: Sanctuary Choir; Handbell Choir;  
Brass Ensemble

Communion Preparers: Hunt Family  
Communion Servers: Cheryl Kautt, Sharon Domeier  
Audio/Video: Brett Peterson

### 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.

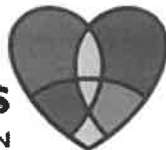
Learn more about us at <http://www.flcstp.org/welcome-to-flc.html>

### 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>



**ReconcilingWorks**  
LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION



### 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."

### Announcements

- Our High School youth lock-in will take place this Saturday, April 14, from 6:30-11:30 p.m. at FLC.
- Upcoming First Forums: April 16- Grass & Roots Organization, April 23- New Adult Day Program & April 30-FLC's Strategic Plan Framework 2023-2028. Come and join us!
- You are invited to join Emily and other musicians for an outreach opportunity to Ecumen Sand Prairie on Sunday, April 23 from 1:30 - 2:15 in the afternoon. We will be providing a program including instruments and a sing-a-long of familiar hymns for the residents. Stay tuned for two other similar opportunities the following week, and email Emily to sign up at [musicflcstp@gmail.com](mailto:musicflcstp@gmail.com). The more the merrier!
- Easter Flowers for the Altar today are given in honor of and in memory of special friends and family.

### Prayers

- We lift up prayers for those on our long-term list: Elgene Lund, Chuck Petry, Bob Cady, Joan Williams, Betty Gustafson, Glenn Stryker, Erika Schuldt, Ursula McRostie, Karen Wendroth, Allen Storkson, Gene Roemhildt, Karen Smithers, Paul Aasen, Shirley Storkson, Dorothy Lutz, Claire Cardwell, and Ella Twaddle.
- We pray for the family of Judy Mechura who died on March 17; she is the sister in law of Kathryn Christenson.
- We pray for those who mourn family and friends who have recently died.





# Flowers for the Altar



Emil & Carolyn Trnka in Honor of Our Children & Granddaughter

Betty Thompson in Memory of Henry Thompson

John & Sharon Malm in Celebration of Our Children & Grandchildren

Carol Solberg & Family in Memory of Stan & Jeffrey Solberg

Barbara Haack in Loving Memory Dale Haack

Paul & Rebecca Carpenter in Honor of Darlene Lee

Tom, Emily & Grant Nelsen in Memory of Linda Nelsen

Judy Chaffee in Memory of Forrest Chaffee & Trip Kilander

Elgene Lund in Memory of Doniver Lund

Rebecca Otterness in Memory of David Otterness

Aileen & John Bipes in Honor of Grandchildren

Mary Lynn Ditsch in Memory of Husband Leroy Ditsch, Siblings Mark Mattison & Joan Reschke

Will & Patricia Freiart in Support of Our Friends Mourning, in Rehab, doing Chemo, & in Hospice

Onie Isenberg in Memory of Bob Isenberg

Karen & Jon Smithers in Memory of Our Parents

Harry & Bonnie Hunt in Memory of Our Parents

Ted & Marcia Kunze in Memory of Our Parents & Other Loved Ones

Sophie Martinez In Memory of Roy Johnson Jr & Roberta Berghoff

Mary & Gordon Long in Honor of Rosalind & Sylvie Long And Chaz & Alexandra Smalkoski

Barbara Wilkinson in Memory of Steve Wilkinson

Diane & Jim Stenson in Memory of Tom Stenson

Mary Thompson & Family in Memory of Gordon, Eleonora & Judy Johnson

Annalise Rivas in Memory of George Rivas, Sr.

Jeanie Ribar & Family in Memory of Gale Ribar

Mark & Gabriela Roemhildt in Honor of Our Daughters Raina & Rebekah

Ken & Patsy Rossow in Memory of Jim Hannah and in Honor of Joyce Hannah

John & Shirb Sylvester in Memory of Our Parents and in Honor of Our Children & Grandchildren

Bruce & Sue Gray in Honor of Paul Aasen and in Honor of Mark & Frani Anderson

Jim & Kim Neubauer in Honor of Kaylee, Noelle & Jaden

Bob & Kay Moline in Memory of Joseph Antrim

Cheryl & Bill Kautt in Celebration of Friends & Family

Jean & Gary Hayer in Honor of Families

Judy & David Fienen in Honor of Our Children



Who are you look-ing for? A bo-dy in the  
Who are you look-ing for? The man of Gal-i-  
Who are you look-ing for? An an-swer to pin  
tomb? The grave is death but God has breath The  
- lee? He is not here but al-ways near Lift  
down? We can-not know where God will go But  
Spi rit's wings need room Who are you look-ing for? He  
up your head and see Who are you look-ing for? Your  
seek ing we are found Who are you look-ing for? God  
is not here but raised The emp-ty tomb is  
rab - bi and your friend Is God in flesh who  
will not be boxed in What we have found is  
now a womb New life! Let God be praised!  
con-querred death Whose reign is with-out end  
love un - bound Dyn - am - ic as the wind