

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost September 20, 2026

Welcome!

We delight in having guests and are glad that you have joined us today.

First Lutheran Church

6 Eddy Street
Waltham, MA 02453-7753
781-893-6563

firstlutheranwaltham.org

Follow us on Facebook at
First Lutheran Church - Waltham, MA

The Rev. Thomas E. Maehl,
Pastor tmaehl@rcn.com

Ms. Cynthia Niiler,
Director of Music
and Parish Secretary
firstlutheranwalthamoffice@gmail.com

Vicar Jessica Labenski, Intern
firstlutheranwalthamvicar@gmail.com

Today's Worship Leaders

Pastor

Tom Maehl

Vicar

Jessi Labenski

Musician

Cynthia Niiler

Assistant Minister

LuAnn Kimker

Acolyte

Haven Waters

Lector

Vicki DeVault-Nelson

Ushers

Milena & Aidan Rauhut

A/V

Hazel Maehl

Altar Care

Geri Nederhoff

Counters

Joan Clemens
Scott Niemann

Prelude: "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

setting, David Cherwien

Welcome and Announcements

GATHERING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

The congregation is invited to stand

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,

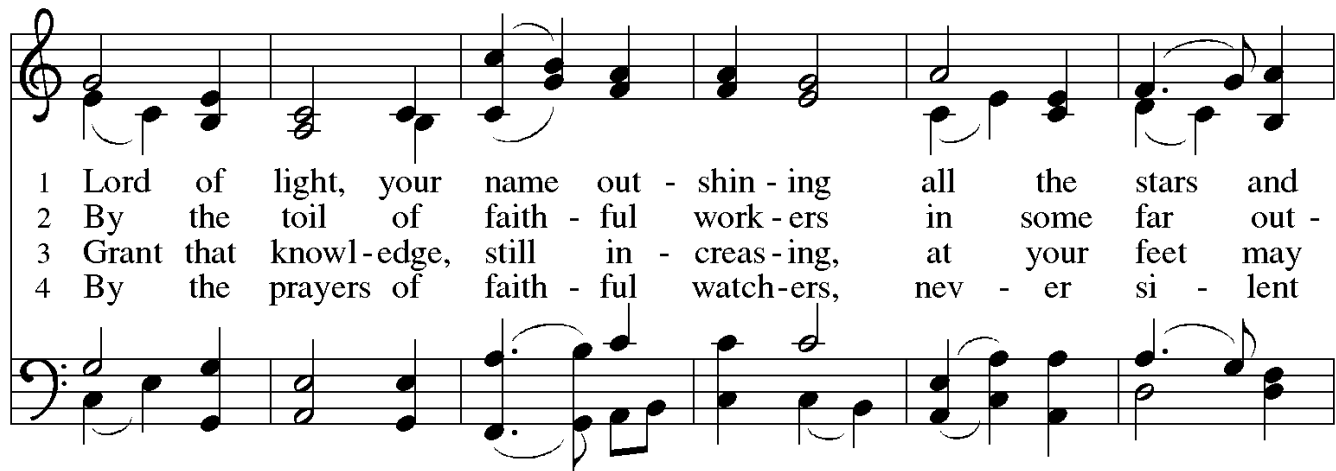
in whom there is no condemnation,

but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.

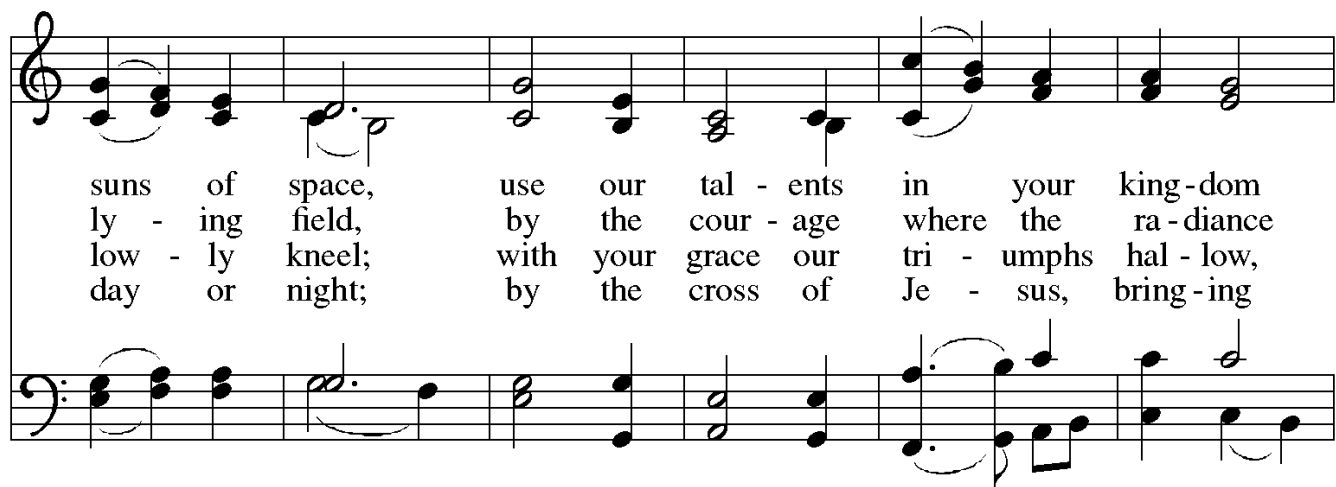
Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

Amen.

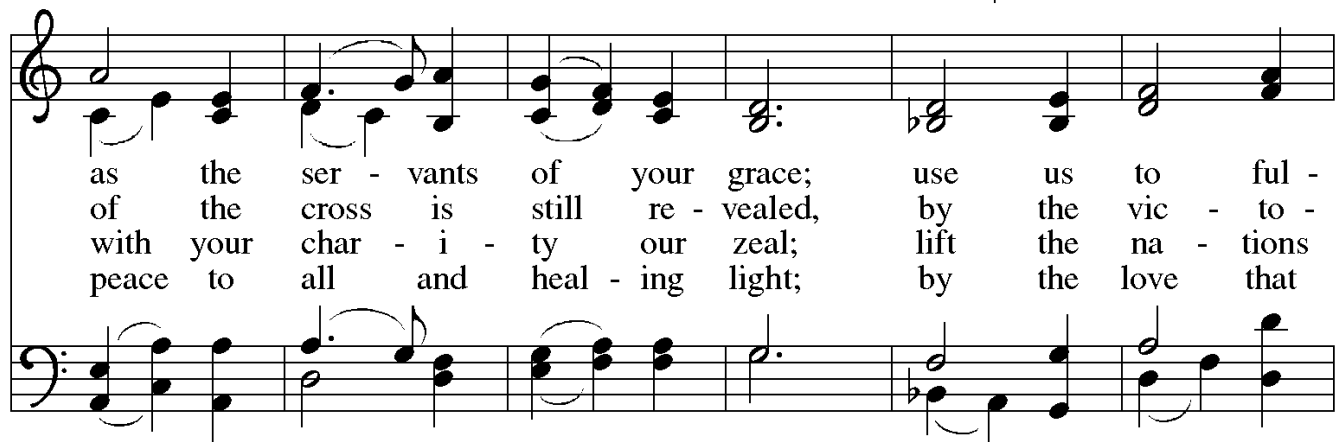
Gathering Hymn: "Lord of Light"



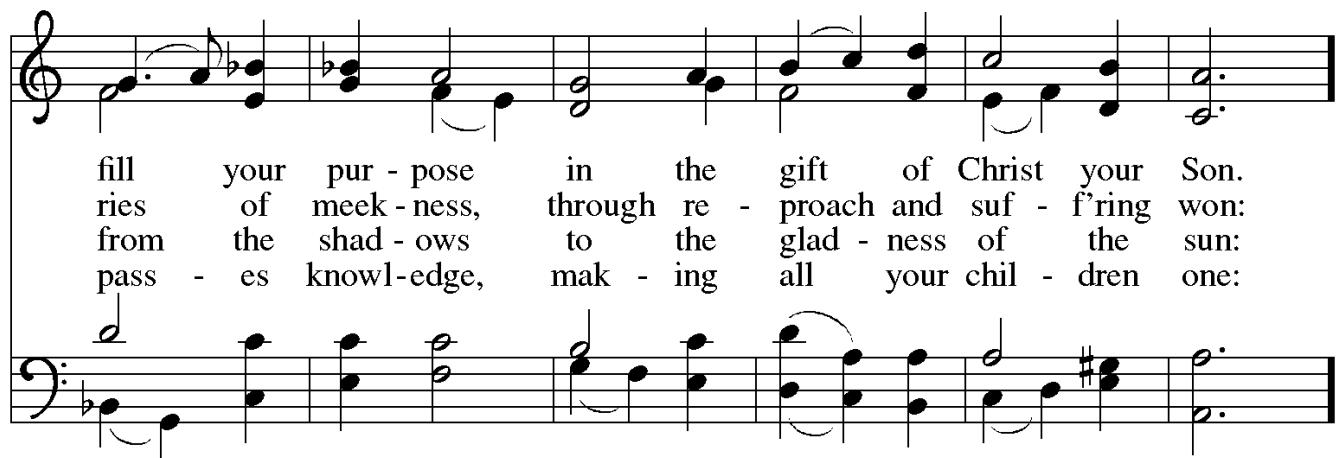
1 Lord of light, your name out - shin - ing all the stars and
 2 By the toil of faith - ful work - ers in some far out -
 3 Grant that knowl - edge, still in - creas - ing, at your feet may
 4 By the prayers of faith - ful watch - ers, nev - er si - lent



suns of space, use our tal - ents in your king - dom
 ly - ing field, by the cour - age where the ra - diance
 low - ly kneel; with your grace our tri - umphs hal - low,
 day or night; by the cross of Je - sus, bring - ing



as the ser - vants of your grace; use us to ful -
 of the cross is still re - vealed, by the vic - to -
 with your char - i - ty our zeal; lift the na - tions
 peace to all and heal - ing light; by the love that



fill your pur - pose in the gift of Christ your Son.
 ries of meek - ness, through re - proach and suf - f'ring won:
 from the shad - ows to the glad - ness of the sun:
 pass - es knowl - edge, mak - ing all your chil - dren one:

Refrain

Fa - ther, as in high - est heav - en, so on earth your will be done.

Greeting:

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

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

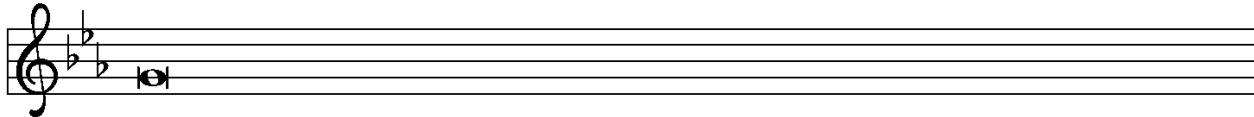
Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



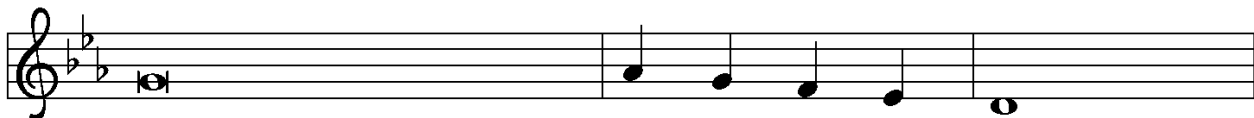
For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

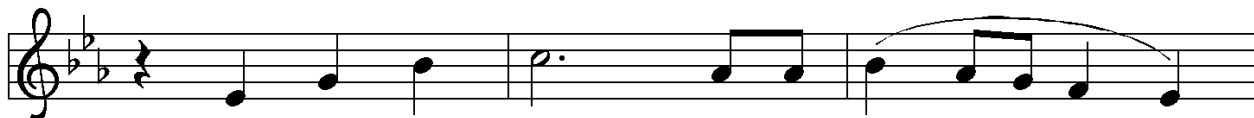


Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

Hymn of Praise



Glo - ry to God in the high -



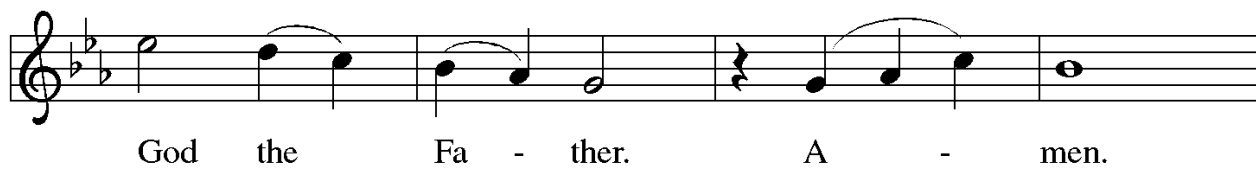
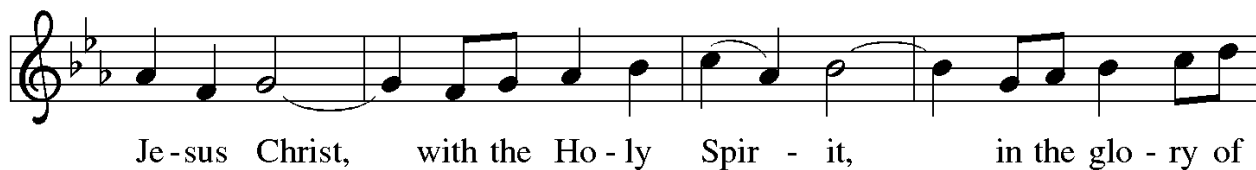
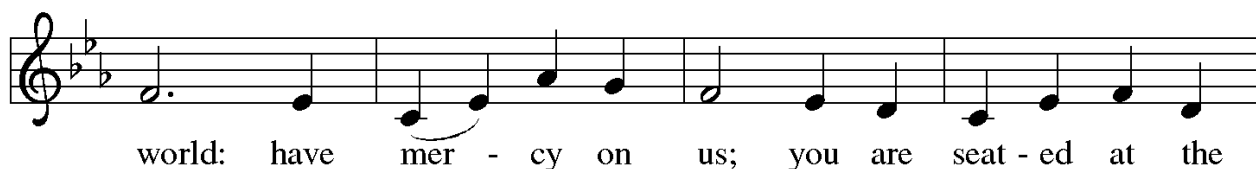
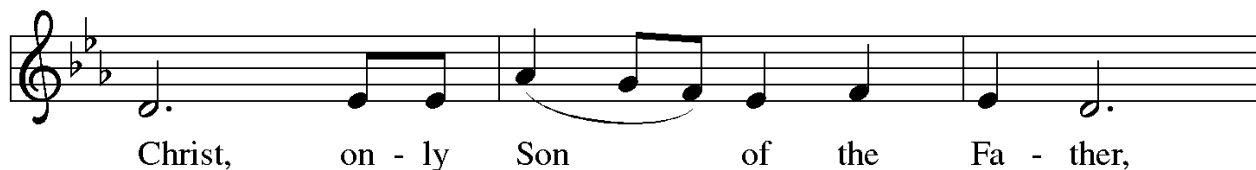
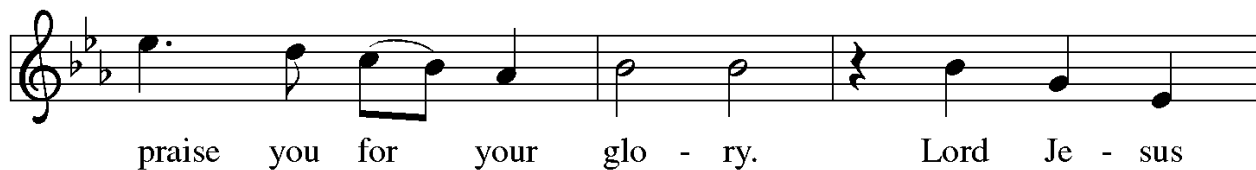
est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

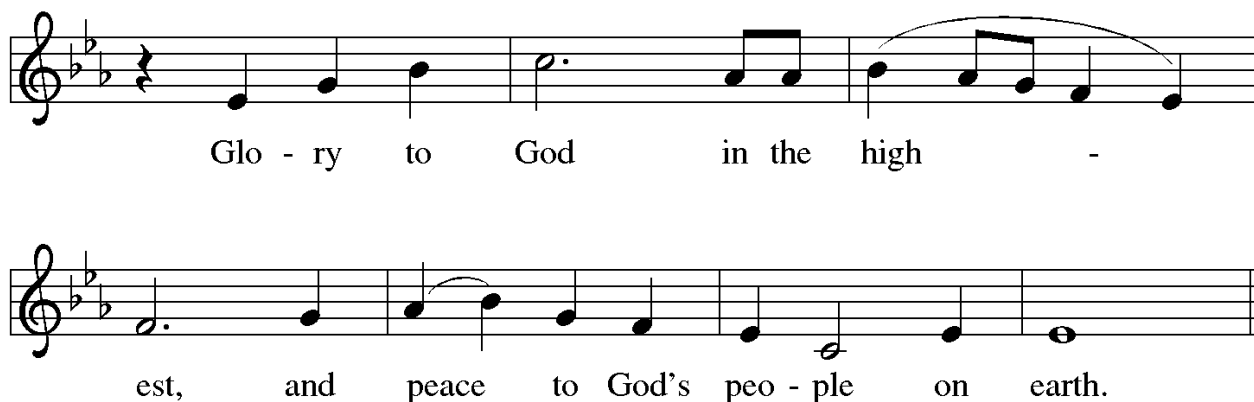


Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and



Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we





The Prayer of the Day

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.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

The congregation is seated

First Reading: Jonah 3:10 - 4:11

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.

But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. 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. And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." And the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" 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.

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. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. 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."

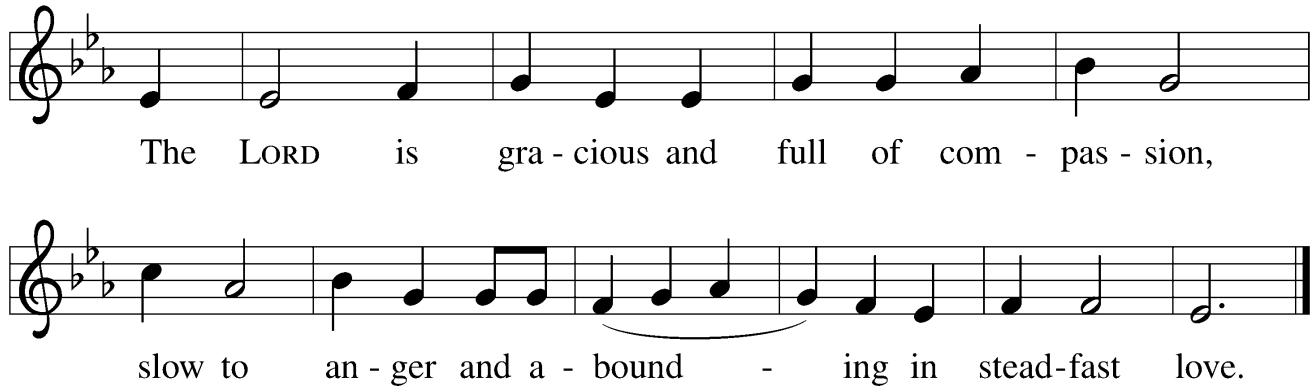
But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." Then the Lord said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned 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?"

The word of the Lord.

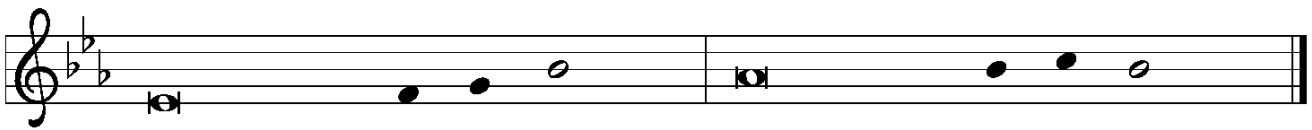
Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 145:1-8

Refrain:



Tone:



Refrain

I will exalt you, my | God and king,
and bless your name forev- | er and ever.

Every day | will I bless you

and praise your name forev- | er and ever.

Great is the Lord and greatly | to be praised!

There is no end | to your greatness.

One generation shall praise your works | to another

and shall de- | clare your power.

Refrain

I will speak of the glorious splendor | of your majesty
and all your | marvelous works.

They shall tell of the might of your | wondrous acts,

and I will re- | count your greatness.

They shall publish the remembrance of | your great goodness;

they shall sing joyfully | of your righteousness.

The Lord is gracious and full | of compassion,

slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love.

Refrain

Second Reading: Philippians 1:21-30

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. 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, so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

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 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. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The congregation is invited to stand

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. 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?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' 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.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, 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.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The congregation is seated

Children's Sermon

Sermon

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

The congregation is invited to stand

Hymn of the Day: "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"



- 1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer - cy, like the wide - ness of the sea;
- 2 There is wel - come for the sin - ner, and a prom - ised grace made good;
- 3 For the love of God is broad - er than the mea - sures of our mind;
- 4 'Tis not all we owe to Je - sus; it is some - thing more than all:



there's a kind - ness in God's jus - tice which is more than lib - er - ty.
there is mer - cy with the Sav - ior; there is heal - ing in his blood.
and the heart of the E - ter - nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind.
great - er good be - cause of e - vil, larg - er mer - cy through the fall.



There is no place where earth's sor - rows are more felt than up in heav'n.
There is grace e - nough for thou - sands of new worlds as great as this;
But we make this love too nar - row by false lim - its of our own;
Make our love, O God, more faith - ful; let us take you at your word,



There is no place where earth's fail - ings have such kind - ly judg - ment giv'n.
there is room for fresh cre - a - tions in that up - per home of bliss.
and we mag - ni - fy its strict - ness with a zeal God will not own.
and our lives will be thanks - giv - ing for the good - ness of the Lord.

Prayer List

Members of our First Lutheran

Community: Glow, Bethany, and Roland Adams; Joyce Anderson; Jen Biter; Ardeith Froeberg; June Jahrling; Erika Jerram; Lovequist/Shread family; Kathryn McCowan; Don & Britta McNemar; Kerry Meaney; Cynthia Niiler; Joan Niiler, Stacey Reed; Karson Sprague; Flavio Vallejos; Valarie Waters.

Friends and Family: Rhona Chen; Emily Dallman; Evan DaRos; Sheila Dumbrowik; Wendy Fournier; Lisa Fugger; Neil Galloway; Jay Higham; Josh Kalisa; Sylvia & Chris Lee-Thompson; Mark Lewis; Nathan Maehl; Pappas family; Roland Pesch; Rachel and sons; Lynn Reihart; Bill Sanderson; Brian Schmitz; Roger & Margie Schroeder; JoAnn Shade; Fay Sieving; Betsy Smith; Wilson Viertel; Chip Weinkauff; Jim Wroe; Marlys Yu.

For our partners: Santuario Luterano, the Spanish speaking Lutheran congregation in Waltham. For other organizations we actively support: the Waltham Family School, the Waltham Community Day Center, Chaplains on the Way, WATCH, Camp Calumet, and ELCA World Hunger.

Apostles' Creed

**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:

Response: Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

The Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

The congregation is seated

Offering is Gathered

Musical Offering: "Lyric Sinfonia" Christopher Uehlein, OSB



Another way to collect the offering.

Our church provides both spiritual, physical and emotional nourishment for all who attend in person and online. We invite you to consider donating to support the mission of our church, as we work to support programs in the church, in the community, and for the online community.

To make your offering through credit card, scan the code to the left.

The congregation is invited to stand

Congregational Offertory



3 Lord, we share in this com-mu - nion as one fam-'ly of God's chil - dren,



rec - on-ciled through you, our broth-er, one in you with God our Fa - ther.



Give us grace to live for oth - ers, serv-ing all, both friends and strang-ers,



seek - ing jus-tice, love, and mer - cy till you come in fi - nal glo - ry.

Offering Prayer

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.

About Communion

We believe that Jesus Christ is present in the bread and wine we share and therefore he is the host of the meal. In his name, we welcome all who desire to commune.

- An usher will direct you to come forward, and you may either kneel or stand at the altar rail.
- *Bread*: The pastor will place bread in your hands, which you may then consume. We have gluten free bread available; indicate to the pastor/vicar if that is your preference.
- *Wine/Juice*: the assistant will then offer a tray of individual glasses (juice in the center ring). The acolyte will follow with a tray for empty glasses. Also, you may skip the wine altogether trusting that Christ is fully present in the bread.
- Children and adults who do not yet commune are welcome to come to the altar for a blessing.
- If walking is difficult for you, please inform an usher, then stay in your pew and the pastor will come to you.

SHARING THE LORD'S SUPPER

The congregation is invited to stand

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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 musical notation is written on four staves in G major (one sharp). The first staff has a repeat sign after the first measure. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables across measures.

Holy, Holy, Holy

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of

pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the

name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The musical notation is written on four staves in G major (one sharp). The first staff has a repeat sign after the first measure. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables across measures.

Eucharistic Prayer

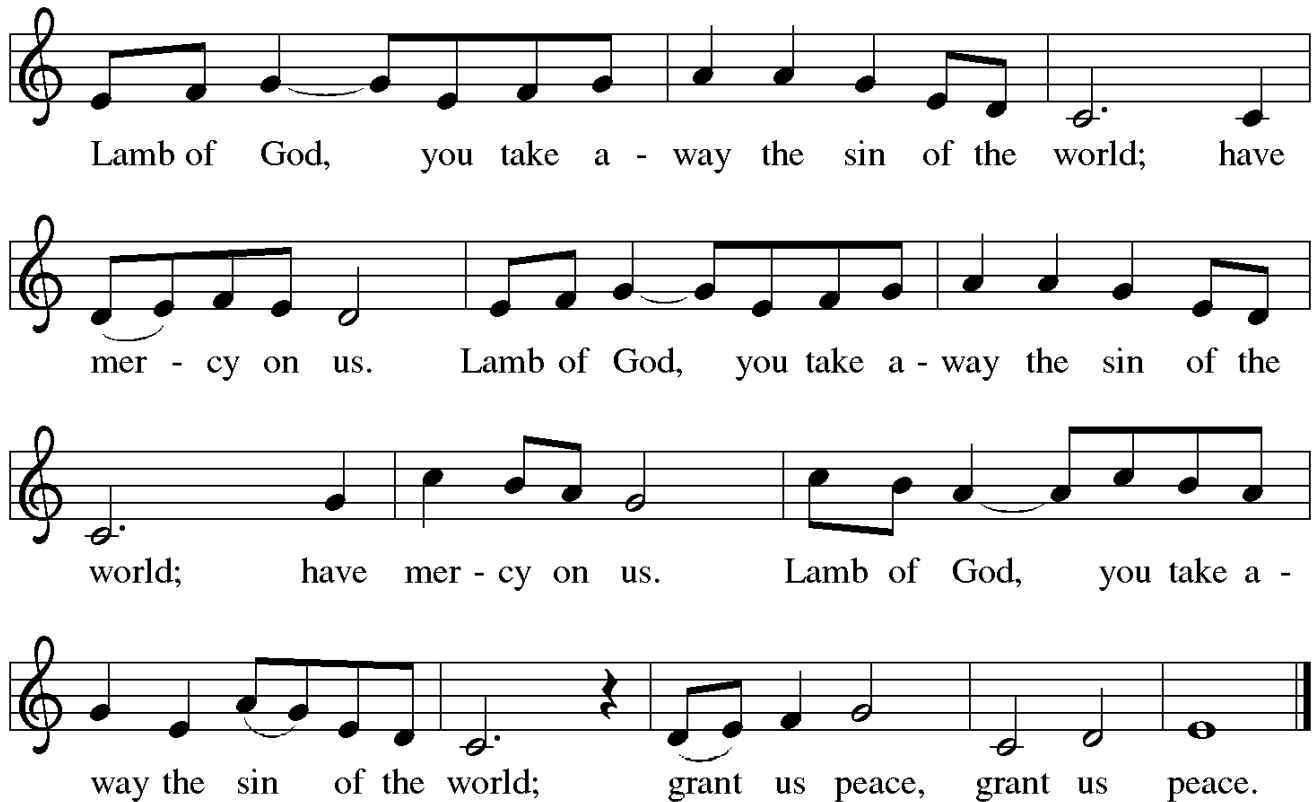
Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen

The gifts of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

The congregation is seated

Lamb of God



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Distribution of Communion

Communion Hymns:

"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:



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

"O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts"

1 O Je - sus, joy of lov - ing hearts, the fount of
2 We taste you, ev - er - liv - ing bread, and long to
3 For you our rest - less spir - its yearn, wher - e'er our
4 O Je - sus, ev - er with us stay! Make all our

life, the light of all: from ev - 'ry bliss that earth im -
feast up - on you still; we drink of you, the foun - tain -
chang - ing lot is cast; glad, when your smile on us you
mo - ments fair and bright! Oh, chase the night of sin a -

parts we turn, un - filled, to hear your call.
head; our thirst - ing souls from you we fill.
turn, blest, when by faith we hold you fast.
way! Shed o'er the world your ho - ly light.

The congregation is invited to stand

Post-Communion Prayer

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.

SENDING

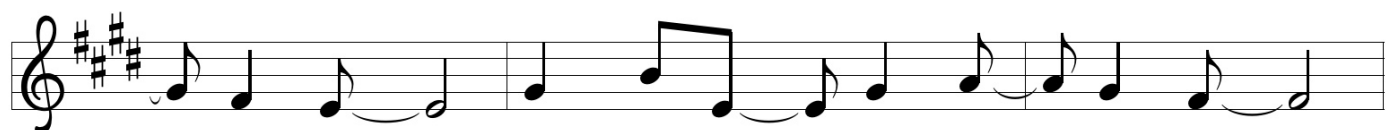
Benediction

Sending Hymn: "Take My Life, That I May Be"

Refrain/Estribillo



To - ma, oh Dios, mi vo - lun - tad, y haz - la tu - ya, na -
Take my life, that I may be con - se - crat - ed, Lord,



da más; to - ma, sí, mi co - ra - zón
to thee; take my mo - ments and my days;



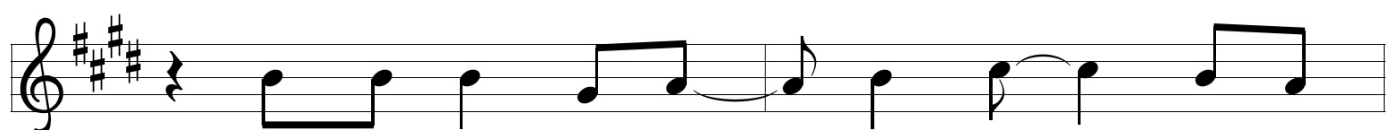
y tu tro - no en él ten - drás. ten - drás.
let them flow in cease - less praise. less praise.



1 Que mi vi - da en - te - ra es - té
1 Take my hands and let them move
2 Take my sil - ver and my gold,
3 Take my voice and let me sing
4 Take my will and make it thine;



con - sa - gra - da a ti, Se - ñor;
at the im - pulse of thy love;
not a mite would I with - hold;
al - ways, on - ly for my King;
it shall be no lon - ger mine;



que a mis ma - nos pue - da guiar el im -
take my feet and let them be swift and
take my in - tel - lect and use ev - 'ry
take my lips and let them be filled with
take my heart, it is thine own; it shall



pul - so de tu a - mor.
 beau - ti - ful for thee.
 pow'r as thou shalt choose.
 mes - sag - es from thee.
 be thy roy - al throne.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

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"Lord of Light"

Text: Howell E. Lewis, 1860-1953. alt. © Union of Welsh Independents

Music: Cyril V. Taylor, 1907-1991 © 1942, ren. 1970 Hope Publishing Company

"There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

Text: Frederick W. Faber, 1814-1863, alt.

Music: North American, 19th cent.

"God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me/O Christ Surround Me"

Text and music: Richard Bruxvoort Colligan, b. 1967 © 2004 This Here Music, admin. Augsburg Fortress

"O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts"

Text: attr. Bernard of Clairvaux, 1091-1153; tr. Ray Palmer, 1808-1887, alt.

Music: W. Gardiner, *Sacred Melodies*, 1815

"Take My Life, That I May Be"

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879, adapt.; Spanish text: Vincent Mendoza, 1875-1955

Music: William Dexheimer Pharris, b. 1956; arr. Mark Sedio, b. 1954 © 1999 Augsburg Fortress

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"There's a Wideness in God's Mercy" David Cherwien from *Lord, Thee I Love: Organ Settings* © 2017 Augsburg Fortress

"Lyric Sinfonia" Christopher Uehlein, OSB © 1993 Augsburg Fortress

Announcements

Join us next Sunday for the Pearson Room Groundbreaking! We expect construction to begin on the Pearson Room on Monday, September 28. Thus, on Sunday, September 27 we will be holding a brief “Groundbreaking” ceremony following worship. This will be a significant moment in the life of our congregation, as we begin removing the opaque glass wall that in a way hides us from the community, in preparation for the construction of the new wall that will help to open us up to the neighborhood. We want to do this prayerfully. ***Thanks to all who are supporting our Centennial Campaign with prayer, service, and financial support.***

Name Tags! Our new intern, Vicar Jessi Labenski has a lot of names to learn! This is a great time of year to get back into the habit of wearing our names tags on Sunday mornings. It will help everyone else too! ***If you need a name tag, fill out a pew card and place it in the offering plate.***

Blessing Box restocking: Twice a week we need people to check on our general blessing box - refilling it with items from the Pearson Room and occasionally emptying out some items. You can find a sign up in our This Week email. Thank you!

WFCF Farm shares—Pick up help: *One slot is still open on 10/6:* If you can pick up our blessing box farm share at the Mobile Outreach Market between 4:30 and 6:00 pm on Tuesdays at First Parish in Waltham. Sign up with the link in our "This Week" email.

Coffee Hosts Needed! Can you help foster community by hosting coffee? Sign up in the Pearson Room or by using the link in the This Week email. First time hosting? We’re happy to provide instructions.



First Lutheran's Welcome Statement

Walking together in God's love, we rejoice in the diversity of God's wonderfully made children. We celebrate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and non-binary people and all members of our human family regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, physical and mental ability, faith history, economic status, education, family configuration, or immigration status. We renounce the sin of racism and all forms of discrimination. We welcome all to join us in worship, leadership, participation in rites and sacraments of the church, and fellowship on our journey of nurturing faith, doing justice, and serving all.