

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost September 27, 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

Ann Sjodin

Acolyte

Kalyse Black

Lector

Holly Diaz

Ushers

Roger & Mia Binggeli

A/V

Prakash Pandian

Altar Care

Ann Sjodin

Prelude

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: "The Trumpets Sounds, the Angels Sing"



1 The trum - pets sound, the an - gels sing, the feast is
2 Ta - bles are la - den with good things; oh, taste the
3 The hun - gry heart he sat - is - fies, of - fers the



read - y to be - gin. The gates of heav'n are o - pen wide,
peace and joy he brings. He'll fill you up with love di - vine;
poor his par - a - dise. Now hear all heav'n and earth ap - plaud



and Je - sus wel - comes you in - side.
he'll turn your wa - ter in - to wine.
the a - maz - ing good - ness of the Lord.



Sing with thank - ful - ness songs of pure de - light.



Come and rev - el in heav - en's love and light.



Take your place at the ta - ble of the King.



The feast is read - y to be - gin;



the feast is read - y to be - gin.

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.

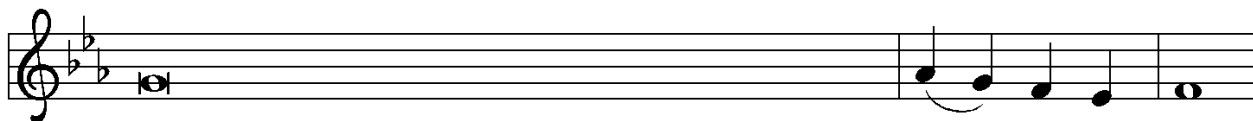
Kyrie



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



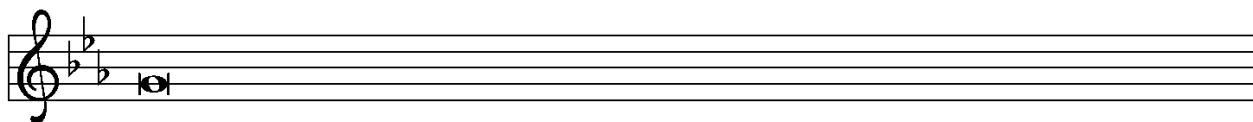
Lord, have mer - cy.



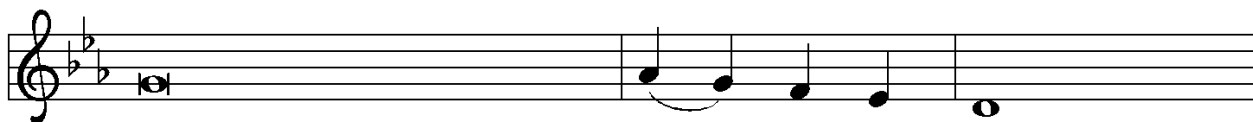
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



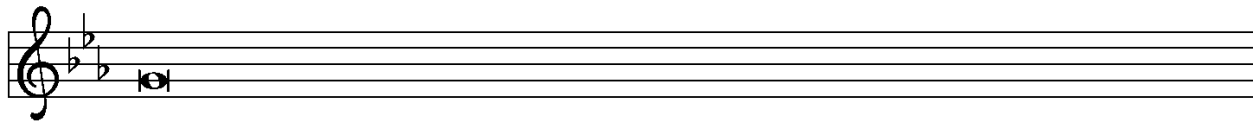
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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



Lord, have mer - cy.



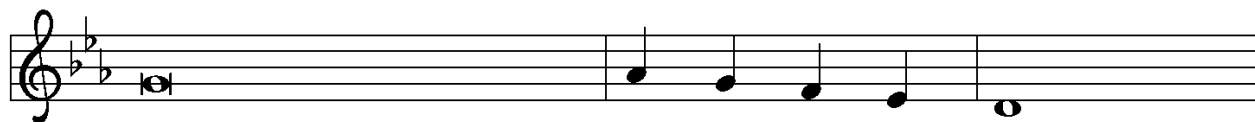
For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

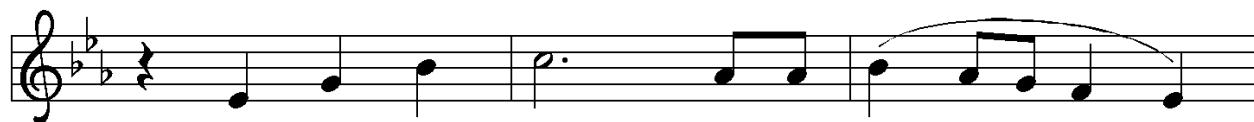


Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.

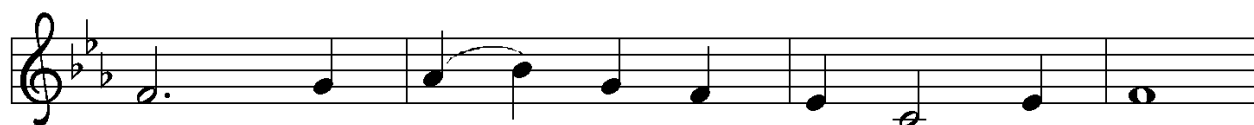


A - men, a - men.

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



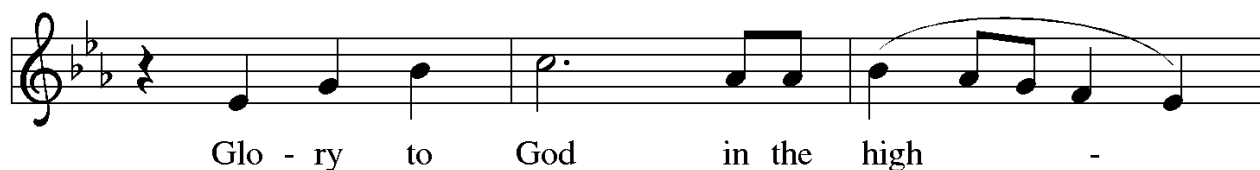
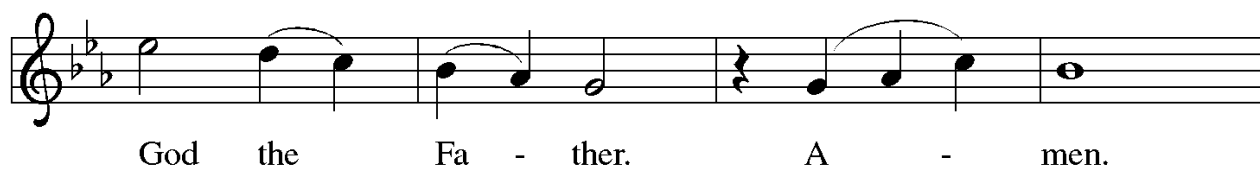
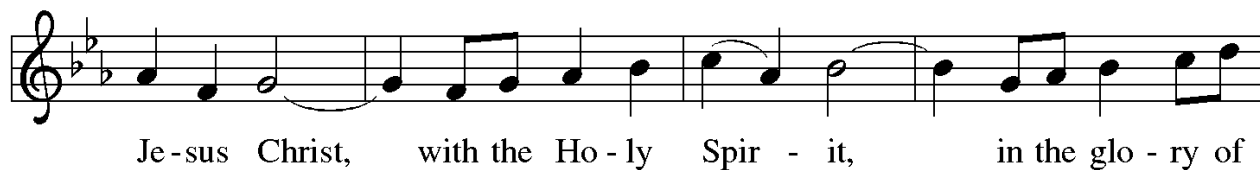
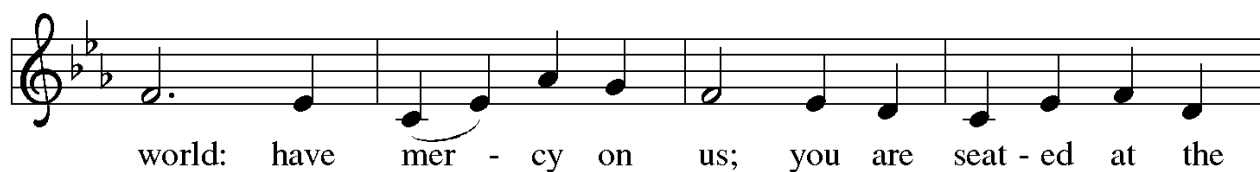
praise you for your glo - ry. Lord Je - sus



Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther,



Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



The Prayer of the Day

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

The congregation is seated

First Reading: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

The word of the Lord came to me: What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die.

Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

The word of the Lord.

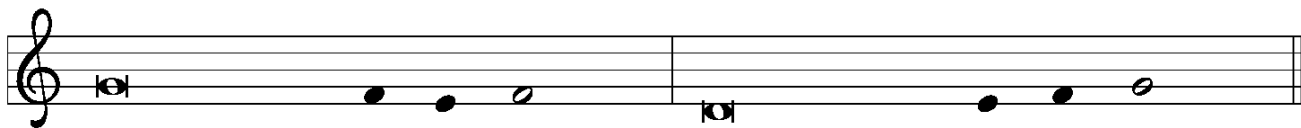
Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 25:1-9

Refrain:



Tone:



Refrain

To | you, O Lord,
I lift | up my soul.

**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be | put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph | over me.**

Let none who look to you be | put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame | who are treacherous.

**Show me your | ways, O Lord,
and teach | me your paths.**

Refrain

Lead me in your | truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all | the day long.

**Remember, O Lord, your compas- | sion and love,
for they are from | everlasting.**

Remember not the sins of my youth and | my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your good- | ness, O Lord.

**You are gracious and up- | right, O Lord;
therefore you teach sinners | in your way.**

You lead the low- | ly in justice
and teach the low- | ly your way.

Refrain

Second Reading: Philippians 2:1-13

If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he existed in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Therefore God exalted him even more highly
and gave him the name
that is above every other name,
so that at the name given to Jesus
every knee should bend,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The congregation is invited to stand

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glorify to you, O Lord

When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him."

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: "Faith Begins by Letting Go"



The musical score is written for a two-part setting (Soprano and Bass) in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

1 Faith be - gins by let - ting go, giv - ing up what had seemed sure,
2 Faith en - dures by hold - ing on, keep - ing mem - 'ry's roots a - live
3 Faith ma - tures by reach - ing out, stretch - ing minds, en - larg - ing hearts,

tak - ing risks and press - ing on, though the way feels less se - cure:
so that hope may bear its fruit; prom - ise - fed, our souls will thrive,
shar - ing strug - gles, liv - ing prayer, bind - ing up the bro - ken parts;

pil - grim - age both right and odd, trust - ing all our life to God.
not through mer - it we pos - sess but by God's great faith - ful - ness.
till we find the com - mon - place ripe with wit - ness to God's grace.

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: "Above All Else"

Joel Raney



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

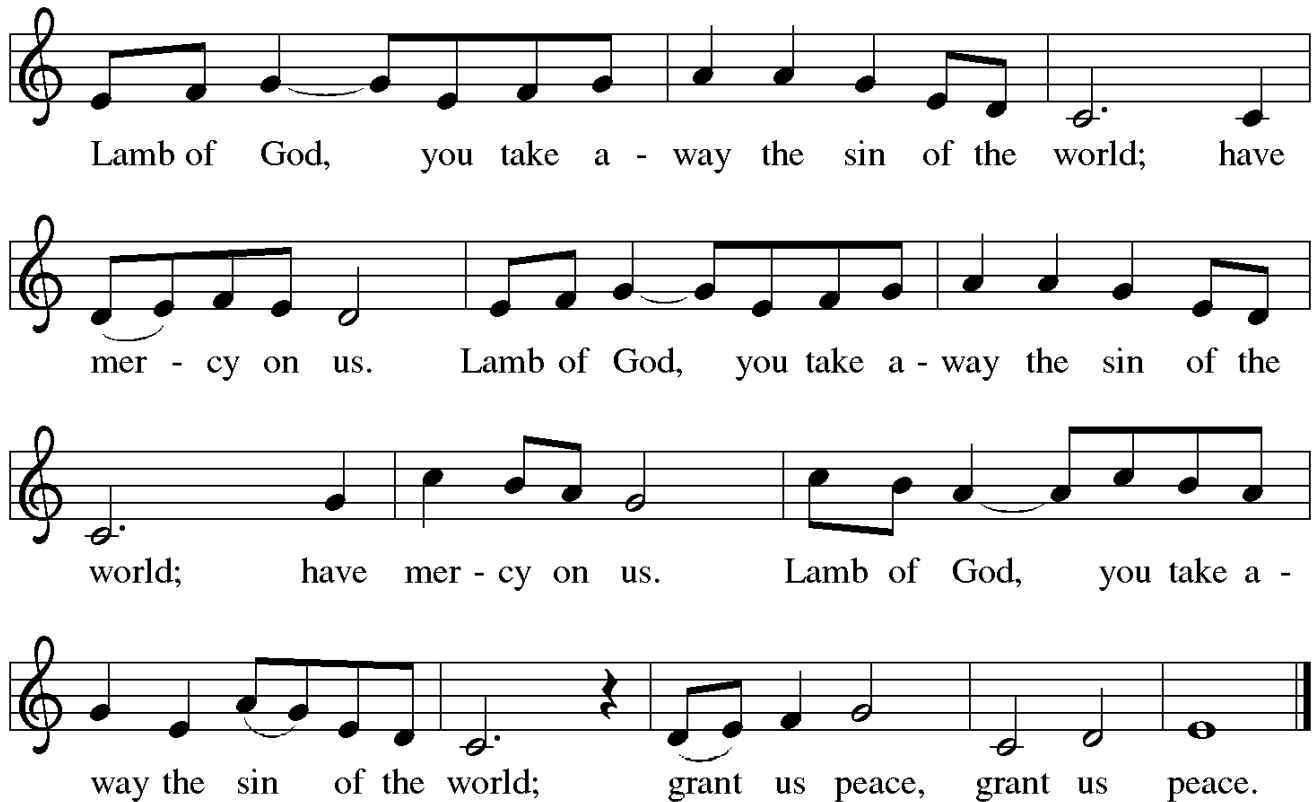
Lord's Prayer

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

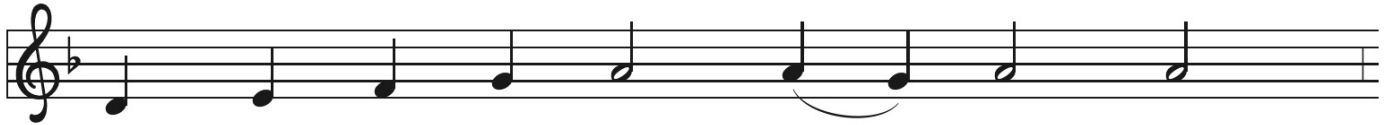


Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Distribution of Communion

Communion Hymns:

"You, Lord, Are Both Lamb and Shepherd"



1 You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shep - herd.
 2 Clothed in light up - on the moun - tain,
 3 You, who walk each day be - side us,
 4 Wor - thy is our earth - ly Je - sus!



You, Lord, are both prince and slave.
 stripped of might up - on the cross,
 sit in pow - er at God's side.
 Wor - thy is our cos - mic Christ!



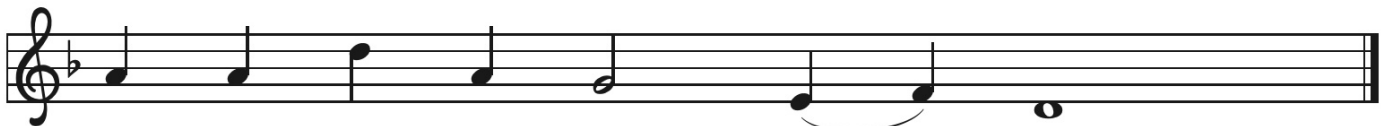
You, peace - mak - er and sword - bring - er
 shin - ing in e - ter - nal glo - ry,
 You, who preach a way that's nar - row,
 Wor - thy your de - feat and vic - t'ry;



of the way you took and gave.
 beg - gared by a sol - dier's toss,
 have a love that reach - es wide.
 wor - thy still your peace and strife.



You, the ev - er - last - ing in - stant;
 you, the ev - er - last - ing in - stant;
 You, the ev - er - last - ing in - stant;
 You, the ev - er - last - ing in - stant;



you, whom we both scorn and crave.
 you, who are both gift and cost.
 you, who are our pil - grim and guide.
 you, who are our death and life.

"We Place Upon Your Table, Lord"

1 We place up - on your ta - ble, Lord, where you by
2 With - in these sim - ple things there lie the height and
3 Ac - cept them, Lord; they come from you; we take them

grace have bid us dine, these to - kens of our dai - ly
depth of hu - man life: our pain and tears, our thoughts and
hum - bly from your hand; put these your gifts to high - er

The musical score is written for a choir or congregation. It features a treble and bass staff. The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides harmonic support. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The music is in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. The tempo is moderate. The lyrics are: 1 We place up - on your ta - ble, Lord, where you by; 2 With - in these sim - ple things there lie the height and; 3 Ac - cept them, Lord; they come from you; we take them. The second system continues the lyrics: grace have bid us dine, these to - kens of our dai - ly; depth of hu - man life: our pain and tears, our thoughts and; hum - bly from your hand; put these your gifts to high - er.

"Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am"

Take, oh, take me as I am; sum-mon out what I shall be;

set your seal up - on my heart and live in me.

The musical score is written for a choir or congregation. It features a treble and bass staff. The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides harmonic support. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The music is in a key with three flats (B-flat, E-flat, and A-flat) and a common time signature. The tempo is moderate. The lyrics are: Take, oh, take me as I am; sum-mon out what I shall be; set your seal up - on my heart and live in me.

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: "We Are Marching in the Light of God"

Si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos', si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha -
We are march - ing in the light of God, we are march-ing in the

nyen' kwen - khos'. light of God. Si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos',
We are march - ing in the light of God,

si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.
we are march-ing in the light of God.

si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.
we are march - ing in the light of God.

si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.
we are march - ing in the light of God.

Additional stanzas:

We are dancing

We are singing

We are praying

Si - ya - ham - ba _____
We are march - ing _____

oo _____
oo _____

Si - ya - ham - ba, ham - ba, si - ya - ham - ba, ham - ba,
We are march - ing, march - ing, we are march - ing, march - ing,

si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.
we are march - ing in the light of God.

si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen-, kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.
we are march - ing in the light of, the light of God.

si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.
we are march - ing in the light of God.

Si - ya - ham - ba _____
We are march - ing _____

oo _____
oo _____

Si - ya - ham - ba, ham - ba, si - ya - ham - ba, ham - ba,
We are march - ing, march - ing, we are march - ing, march - ing,

si - ya - hamb' e - ku - kha - nyen' kwen - khos'.
we are march - ing in the light of God.

Dismissal

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

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"The Trumpets Sound, the Angels Sing/The Feast Is Ready"

Text and music: Graham Kendrick, b. 1950 © 1989 May Way Music, admin. Music Services in the Western Hemisphere

"Faith Begins by Letting Go"

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944 © 1996 Hope Publishing Company

Music: J.G. Werner, *Choralbuch*, 1815

"You, Lord, Are Both Lamb and Shepherd"

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955-1993 © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

Music: French folk tune, 17th cent.

"Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am"

Text and music: John L. Bell, b. 1949 © 1995 Iona Community, admin. GIA Publications, Inc.

"We Are Marching in the Light"

Text: South African traditional; tr. Freedom Is Coming, 1984

Music: South African traditional; arr. Freedom Is Coming

tr. and arr. © 1984 Utryck, admin. Walton Music Corp.

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"Above All Else" Joel Raney © 2016 and this Arr. © 2025 Hope Publishing Company

Announcements

Pearson Room Groundbreaking! Join us after worship for a brief ceremony outside of the Pearson Room followed by refreshments. 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. ***Thanks to all who are supporting our Centennial Campaign with prayer, service, and financial support.***

Justice and Service Team Meeting: Following the groundbreaking ceremony, the Justice & Service Team will be meeting in the large hall in the basement (Founder's Hall). The team invites anyone interested to join us as we discuss our food sharing ministry, ideas for book studies and/or "watch parties", and other ways we might serve our neighbors in need and advocate for justice.

Name Tags! If you would like a name tag and do not yet have one, please 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.