

Creation in Christ Sunday September 6, 2026

Welcome!

We delight in have 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

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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

Inpakala Pandian

Acolyte

?????

Lector

Vicki DeVault-Nelson

Ushers

Heather Fahey

Signe Johns

A/V

Scott & Henry Niemann

Altar Care

Geri Nederhoff

Counters

Steve Latter, Meg Maehl

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

GATHERING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

The congregation is invited to stand

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
our hope, our heart, our home.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God, the Alpha and the Omega,
the beginning and the end,

we confess that

we participate in systems

that perpetuate oppression and injustice.

**We are often numb to the pain of the world around us,
resistant to change that costs us something,
and reluctant to love our neighbors as ourselves.**

**We sin against your good creation,
failing to be faithful stewards**

of the land, the sea, and all their creatures.

**Make your home among us once more, O God,
naming us beloved and opening our hearts
to do your will.**

Amen.

All you saints and sinners, this good news is for you:
God knows you,

forgives you by the self-giving of ✝ Jesus Christ,
and frees you to love the world as you have been loved.

Creation's story will not end

until mourning, crying, and pain are no more.

When everything else changes, God's love is steadfast and sure.

Nothing can ever separate you from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Litany

This litany is inspired by the poem in Genesis 1.

Glory to you, O God:
you speak a word of power,
and so you create the world.
We praise you, O God:
We praise you, O God.

For the Spirit hovering to bring forth life,
for the earth ordered from chaos,
and for light and dark,
we bless you, O God:
We bless you, O God.

For the cosmos beyond our earth,
for the sky above our heads,
and for the cycle of evening and morning,
we exalt you, O God:
We exalt you, O God.

For the seas, the lakes, and the rivers,
for the land with its mountains and plains,
and for the trees, the plants, and their fruits,
we magnify you, O God:
We magnify you, O God.

For the sun to rule the day,
for the moon to brighten the night,
and for the shining stars,
we extol you, O God:
We extol you, O God.

For the fish in the sea,
for the birds of the air,
and for the monsters in the deep,
we glorify you, O God:
We glorify you, O God.

For wild animals and creatures of all kinds,
for cattle and all livestock,
and for everything that creeps on the earth,
we adore you, O God:
We adore you, O God.

For humankind made in your image,
for setting us on your good earth,
and for providing us food to eat,
we worship you, O God:
We worship you, O God.

Bless us, your creatures.
Accept our praise,
and make us worthy of your marvelous creation.
We praise you, O God:
We praise you, O God.

Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving
and honor and power and might
be to you, our God, forever and ever.
Amen.
Amen.

Gathering Hymn: "For the Beauty of the Earth"



1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the beau - ty of the skies,
2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,
3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,
4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
5 For each per - fect gift of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n;



for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:
hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:
for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:
friends on earth and friends a - bove; for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:
for thy - self, best gift di - vine, to our world so free - ly giv'n:

Refrain



Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sac - ri - fice of praise.

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.

Children's Sermon

Kyrie



A Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **C** Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:



A Chri - ste e - le - i - son: **C** Christ, have mer - cy.
Christ, have mer - cy:



A Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **C** Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:

Hymn of Praise



C Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God in the high - est;



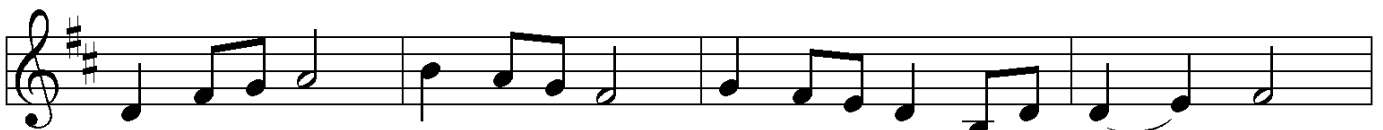
glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.



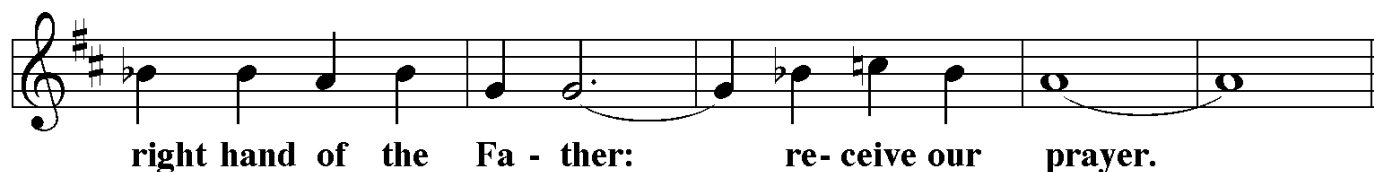
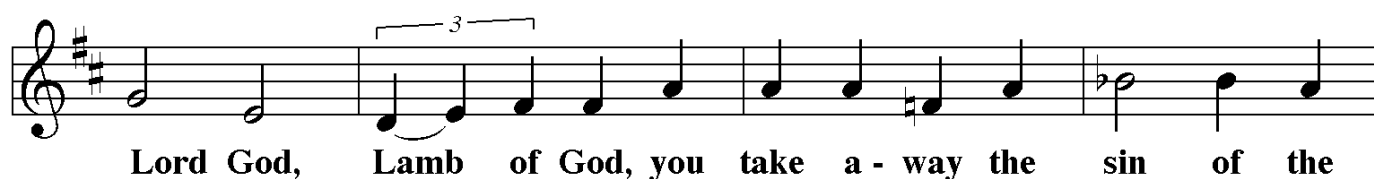
I Lord God, heav - en - ly king, al - might - y God and Fa - ther, we

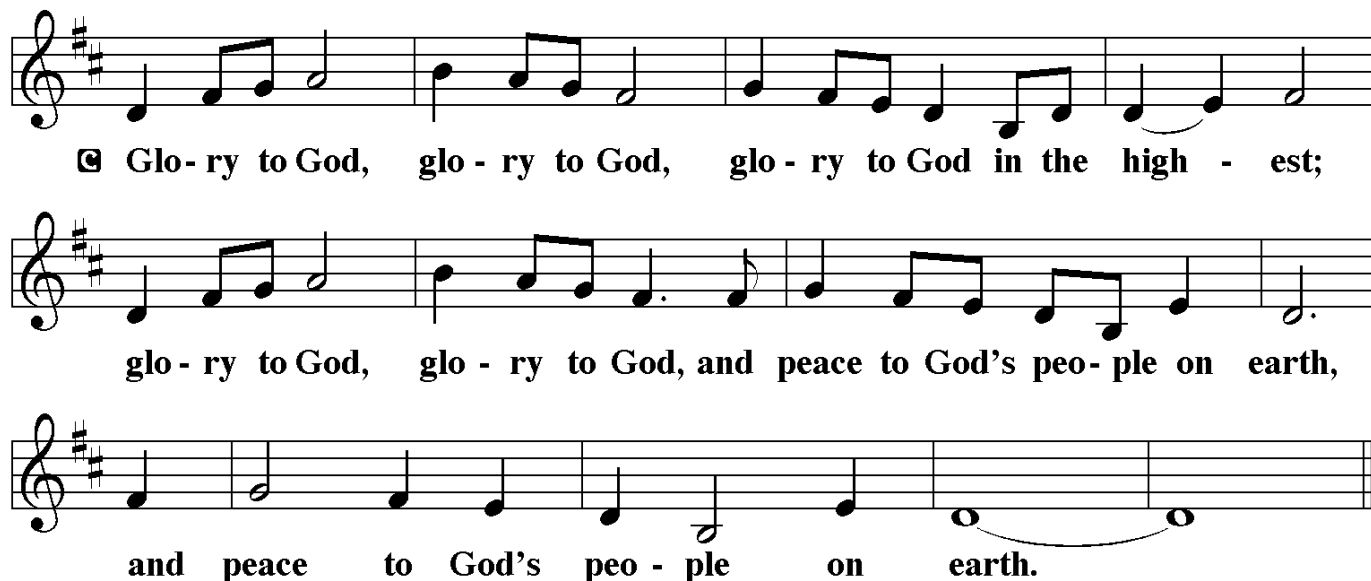


wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



C Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God in the high - est;





The Prayer of the Day

O God, in whom we live and move and have our being, in Christ you created the worlds, and your Spirit breathes life into the universe. We praise you for your wondrous creation. Bless us and all your handiwork with your infinite light, and direct our lives to the care of this good earth, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

The congregation is seated

First Reading: Genesis 2:4b-25

In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no vegetation of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground, but a stream would rise from the earth and water the whole face of the ground—then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird

of the air and brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of the air and to every animal of the field, but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken.”

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 148

Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise God in the heights.

**Praise the LORD, all you angels;
sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

Praise the LORD, sun and moon;
sing praise, all you shining stars.

**Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens,
and you waters above the heavens.**

Let them praise the name of the LORD,
who commanded, and they were created,
**who made them stand fast forever and ever,
giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps;
**fire and hail, snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars;
**wild beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds;**
sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the world;
**young men and maidens,
old and young together.**

Let them praise the name of the LORD,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

**The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

Second Reading: Acts 17:22a, 24-28

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps fumble about for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said,

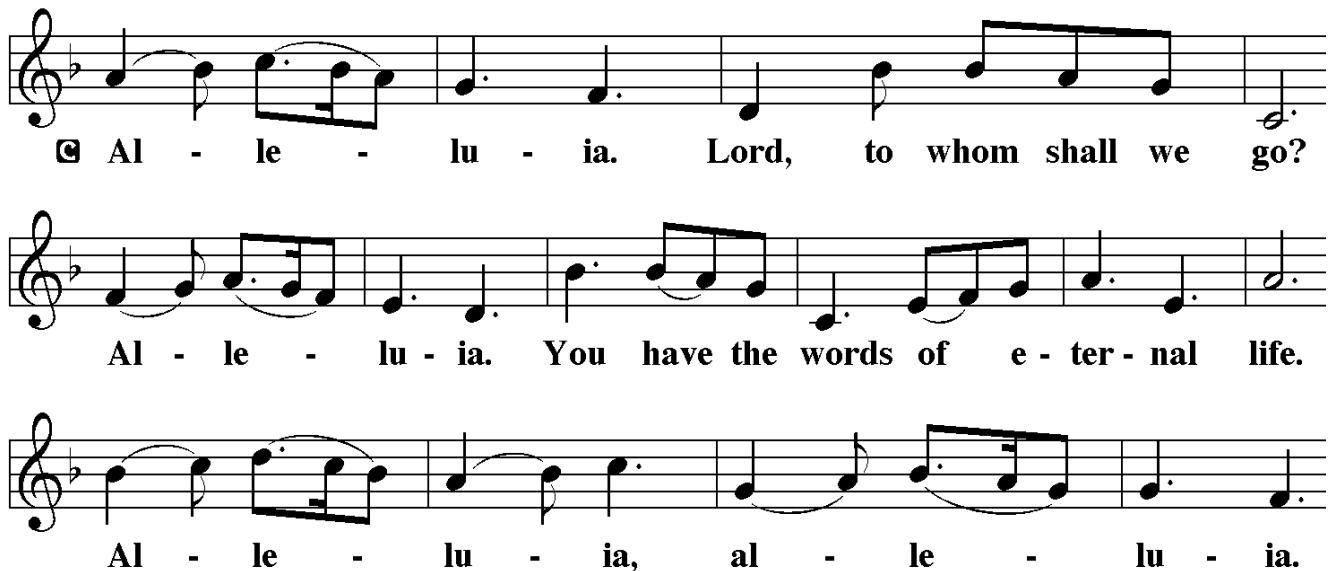
‘For we, too, are his offspring.’

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The congregation is invited to stand

Gospel Acclamation



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

Al - le - lu - ia. You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Gospel: John 1:1-5

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The congregation is seated

Sermon

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

The congregation is invited to stand

Hymn of the Day: "Before the Waters Nourished Earth"

1 Be - fore the wa - ters nour - ished earth or night im -
 2 This Love re - mained as time re - vealed the loss of
 3 De - spair, so deep it bears no name, or sor - rows
 4 The Love that called cre - a - tion good all good - ness

ag - ined morn - ing, a Love con - ceived the
 E - den's glo - ry and, griev - ing, holds in
 par - a - lyz - ing can - not re - voke Love's
 still is bring - ing. This Love turns death a -

u - ni - verse and rev - eled in its form - ing.
 mem - o - ry each trag - ic hu - man sto - ry.
 faith - ful claim to dwell with - in our dy - ing.
 gain to life and si - lence in - to sing - ing.

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 those who grieve: the family and friends of Louis Simon (father of Inpakala Pandian)

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: Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

The Peace

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

The congregation is seated

Offering is Gathered

Musical Offering: "Make Me Pure, O Sacred Spirit:
Georg Philipp Telemann



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



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were
sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gath - er the hopes and dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we
of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence,
Lord, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

Offering Prayer

O God, maker of heaven and earth,
your steadfast love embraces all creation.
You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth
and bring forth its bounty.
Through these gifts of bread and wine,
draw us into the death and life of your Son,
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
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 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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy ...

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the
high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Eucharistic Prayer

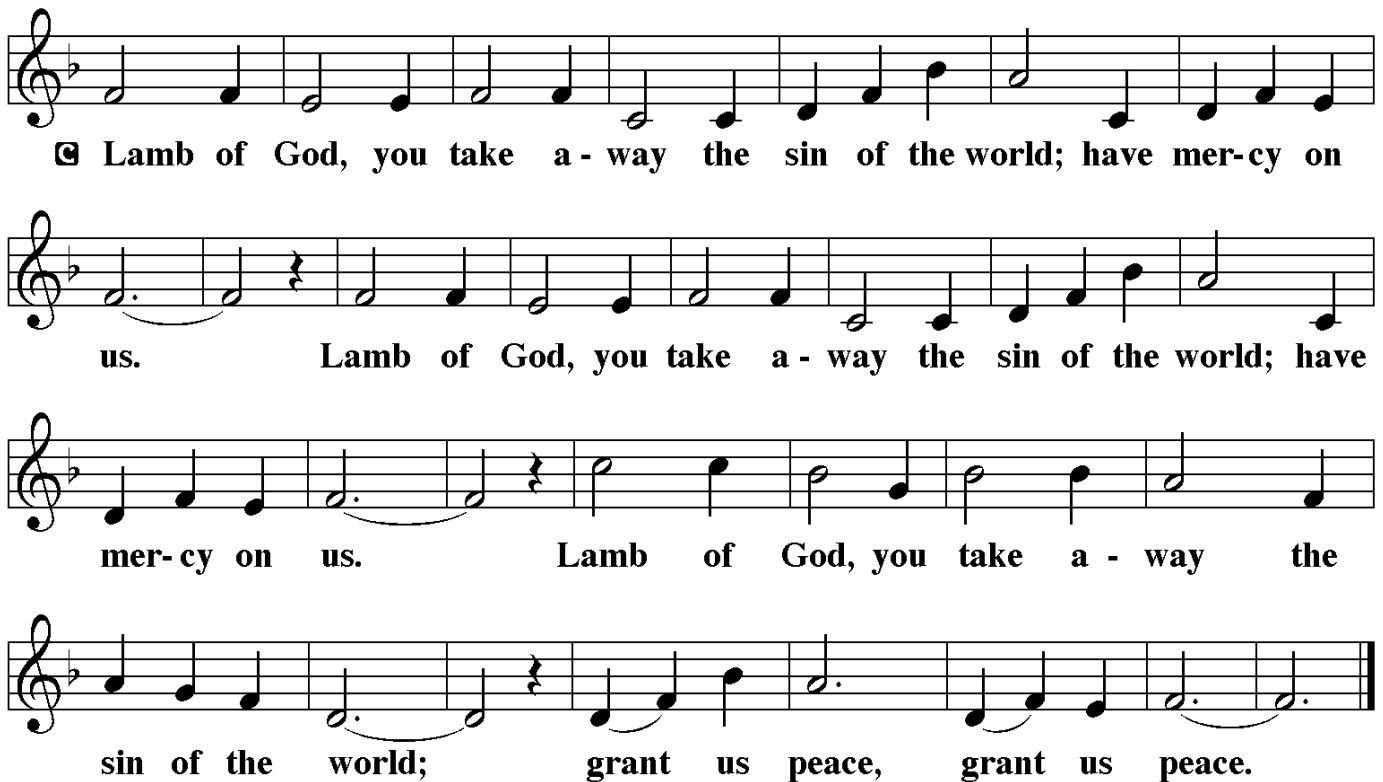
Lord's Prayer

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

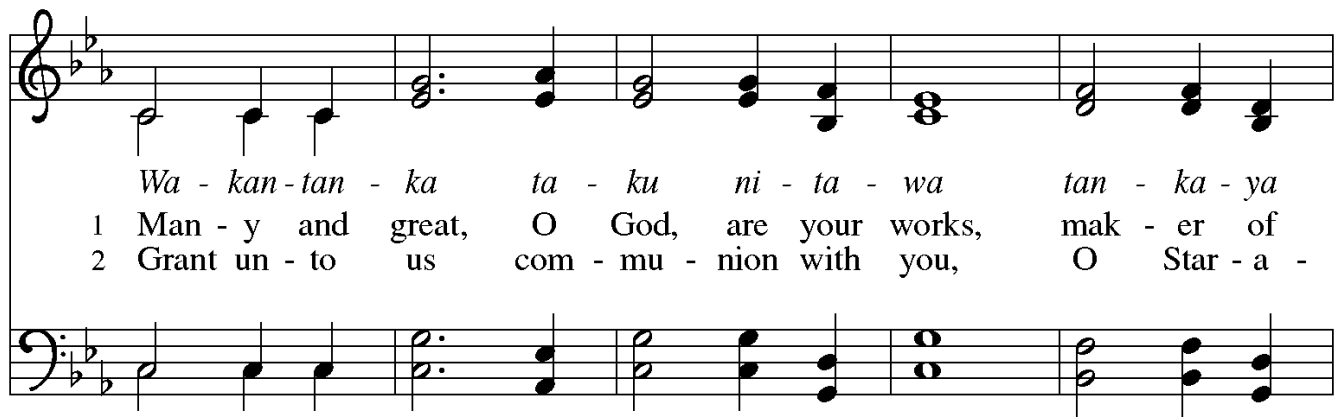
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the

sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Distribution of Communion

Communion Hymns:

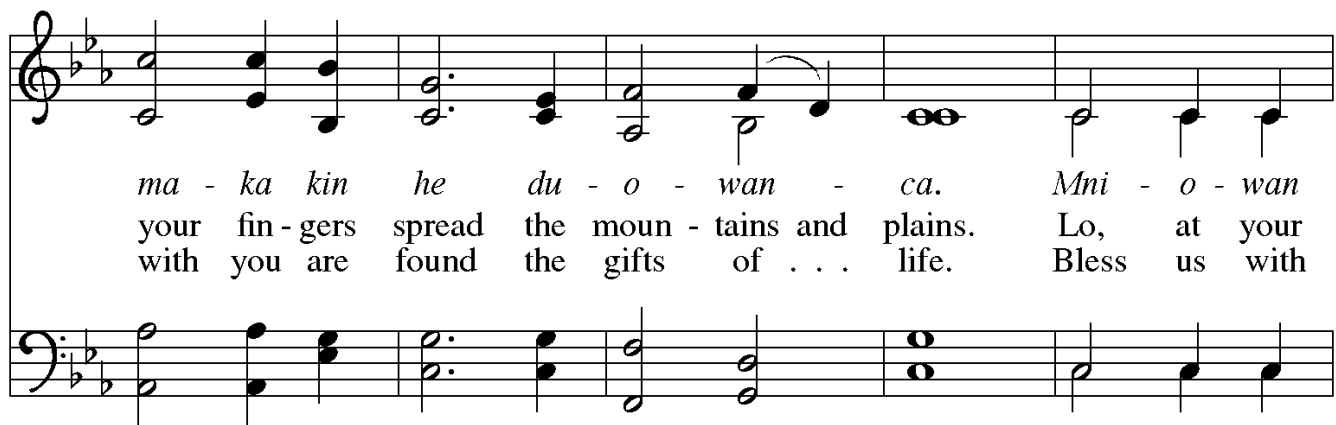
"Many and Great, O God"



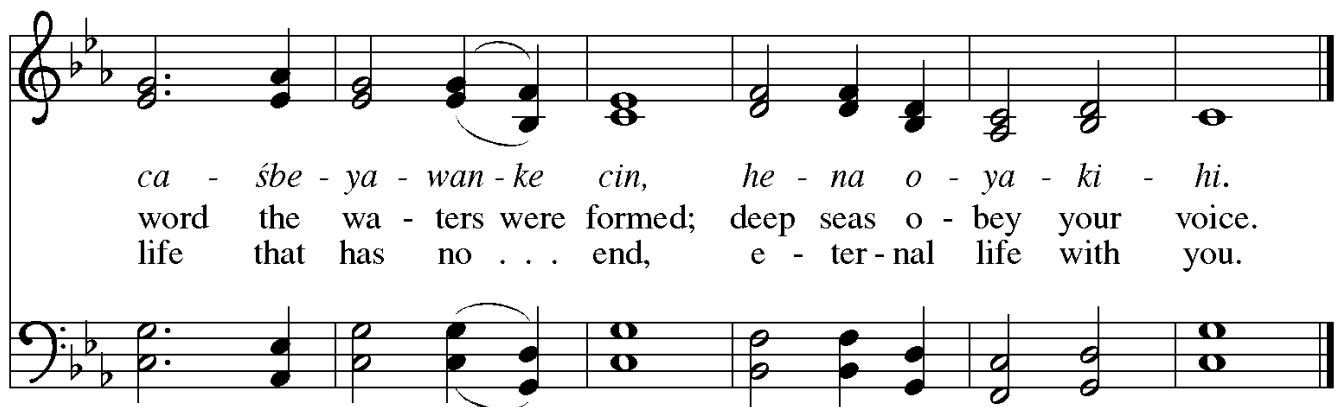
Wa - kan - tan - ka ta - ku ni - ta - wa tan - ka - ya
 1 Man - y and great, O God, are your works, mak - er of
 2 Grant un - to us com - mu - nion with you, O Star - a -



qa o - ta. Ma - hpi - ya kin e - ya - hna - ke ca,
 earth and sky. Your hands have set the heav'ns with stars;
 bid - ing One. Come un - to us and dwell with us;



ma - ka kin he du - o - wan - ca. Mni - o - wan
 your fin - gers spread the moun - tains and plains. Lo, at your
 with you are found the gifts of . . . life. Bless us with



ca - šbe - ya - wan - ke cin, he - na o - ya - ki - hi.
 word the wa - ters were formed; deep seas o - bey your voice.
 life that has no . . . end, e - ter - nal life with you.

"God, the Sculptor of the Mountains"



1 God the sculp - tor of the moun - tains,
 2 God the nui - sance to the Pha - raoh,
 3 God the dress - er of the vine - yard,
 4 God the un - ex - pect - ed in - fant,



God the mill - er of the sand,
 God the cleav - er of the sea,
 God the plant - er of the wheat,
 God the calm, de - ter - mined youth,



God the jewel - er of the heav - ens,
 God the pil - lar in the dark - ness,
 God the reap - er of the har - vest,
 God the ta - ble - turn - ing proph - et,



God the pot - ter of the land:
 God the bea - con of the free:
 God the source of all we eat:
 God the re - sur - rect - ed truth:



you are womb of all cre - a - tion,
 you are fount of all de - liv - 'rance,
 you are host at ev - 'ry ta - ble,
 you are pres - ent ev - 'ry mo - ment,



we are form - less; shape us now.
 we are sight - less; lead us now.
 we are hun - gry; feed us now.
 we are search - ing; meet us now.

The congregation is invited to stand

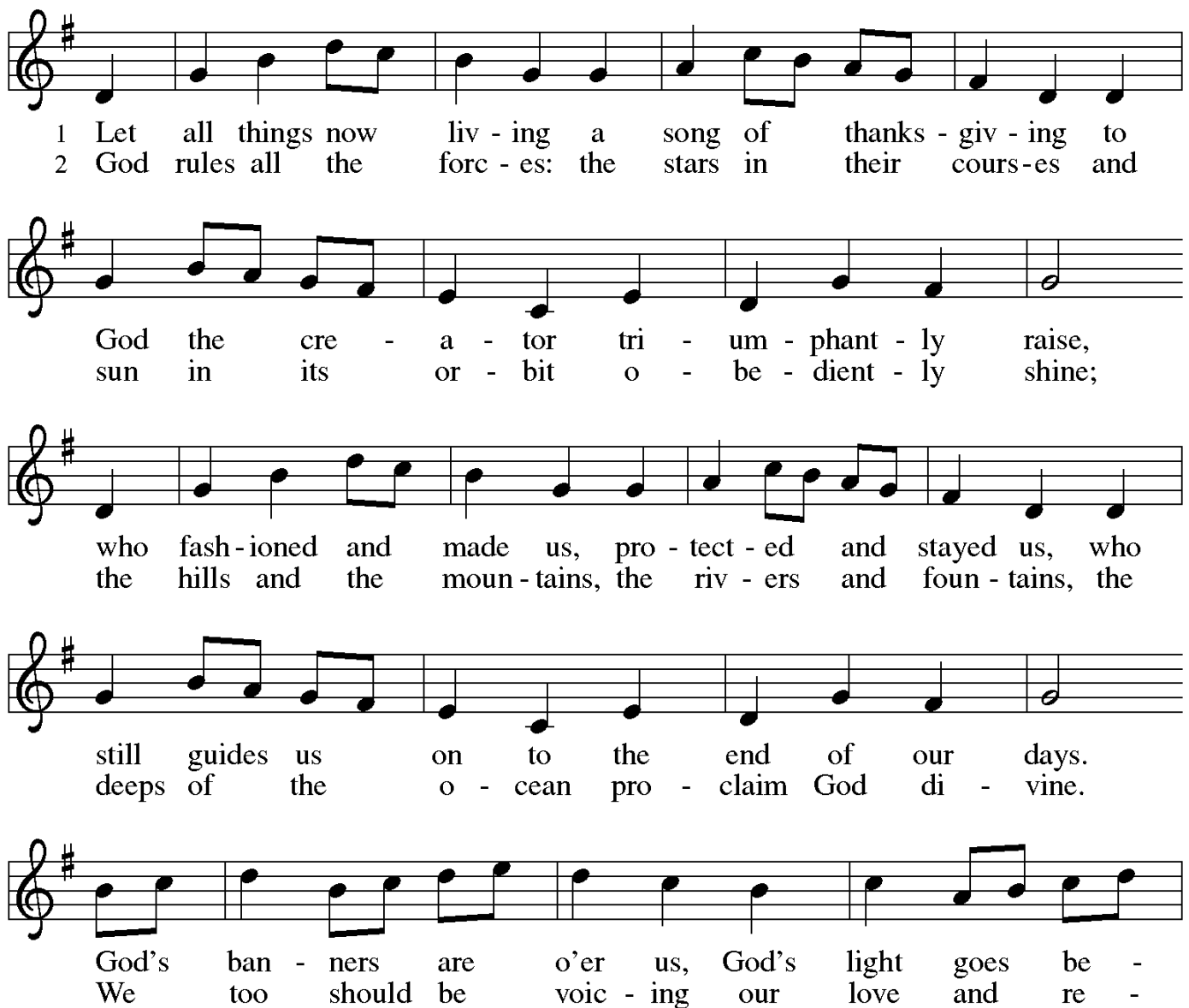
Post-Communion Prayer

God of our salvation,
we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.
Through the body and blood of your Son,
may we become Christ's body in the world,
bearing witness to your love for all creation,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

SENDING

Benediction

Sending Hymn: "Let All Things Now Living"



1 Let all things now liv - ing a song of thanks - giv - ing to
2 God rules all the forc - es: the stars in their cours-es and

God the cre - a - tor tri - um - phant - ly raise,
sun in its or - bit o - be - dient - ly shine;

who fash - ioned and made us, pro - tect - ed and stayed us, who
the hills and the moun - tains, the riv - ers and foun - tains, the

still guides us on to the end of our days.
deeps of the o - cean pro - claim God di - vine.

God's ban - ners are o'er us, God's light goes be -
We too should be voic - ing our love and re -

fore us, a pil - lar of fire shin - ing forth in the night,
joic - ing; with glad ad - o - ra - tion a song let us raise

till shad - ows have van - ished and dark - ness is ban - ished, as
till all things now liv - ing u - nite in thanks - giv - ing: "To

for - ward we trav - el from light in - to light.
God in the high - est, ho - san - na and praise!"

Dismissal

Go in peace. Flourish with creation..

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

**Fall Schedule starts
Next Sunday!**

9:15 am	Learning Hour
10:30 am	Worship



Announcements

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, let the church office know.

Come and sing with the Adult Choir! First rehearsal for the fall is this Tuesday 9/8 from 7:15—8:45 pm. We rehearse and sing about every other week through the school year. All are welcome!

The Alleluia Choir - our children's and youth choir is back! This fall we will continue learning about worship, learning about our voices, learning basic musicianship skills and we will learn more about playing tone chimes. ***Join us on Sunday 9/20 at 9:15 am!***

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: *Two slots are still open - 9/15 and 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.

Thinking about the Future

a Luncheon Conversation

September 13



Next Sunday after worship, you are invited to join in a conversation about the ongoing mission of First Lutheran. Pastor Maehl will share ideas for the future and eventual leadership transition. For those unable to attend in person, yet who would like to participate, a Zoom link will be shared this week via email. ***Lunch will be provided.***

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"For the Beauty of the Earth"

Text: Folliott S. Pierpoint, 1835-1917, alt.

Music: Conrad Kocher, 1786-1872

"Before the Waters Nourished Earth"

Text: Jeannette M. Lindholm, b. 1951 © 1996 Jeannette M. Lindholm, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Music: Irish Melody

"Many and Great, O God"

Text: Joseph R. Renville, 1779-1846; para. Philip Frazier, 1892-1964, alt.

Music: Dakota tune; arr. *Songs of the People*, 1986 © 1986 Augsburg Publishing House

"God the Sculptor of the Mountains"

Text: John Thornburg, b. 1954 © 1993 John Thornburg

Music: Amanda Husberg, b. 1940 © 1996 Abingdon Press, admin. The Copyright Company

"Let All Things Now Living"

Text: Katherine K. Davis, 1892-1980, alt. © 1939, 1966 E.C. Schirmer Music Company

Music: Welsh folk tune



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.