

# *FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH*



Creation

*July 30 and 31, 2022*

## ***PRELUDE***

### **OPENING HYMNS**

#### ***“For the Beauty” #879 (Red Hymnal)***

For the beauty of the earth, for the beauty of the skies, for the love which from our birth over and around us lies:

**Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.**

For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night, hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:

**Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.**

For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's delight, for the mystic harmony linking sense to sound and sight:

**Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.**

#### ***“Joyful, Joyful” #836 (Red Hymnal)***

Joyful, joyful we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love! Hearts unfold like flow'rs before thee, praising thee, their sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the gloom of doubt away. Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

All thy works with joy surround thee, earth and heav'n reflect thy rays, stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise. Field and forest, vale and mountain, flow'ry meadow, flashing sea, chanting bird, and flowing fountain call us to rejoice in thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest, wellspring of the joy of living, ocean-depth of happy rest! Thou our Father, Christ our brother, all who live in love are thine; teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine!

## LITANY FOR OUR COVENANT WITH CREATION

Leader: For the marvelous grace of your Creation, we pour out our thanks to You, our God.

**All: We praise you, O Lord for plants growing in earth and water, for life inhabiting lakes and seas, for life creeping in soils and land, for creatures living in wetlands and waters, for life flying above earth and sea, for beasts dwelling in woods and fields.**

Leader: How many and wonderful are your works, our God! In wisdom you have made them all!

**All: But we confess, dear Lord, as creatures privileged with care and keeping of Your Creation that we have abused Your Creation gifts through arrogance, ignorance, and greed. We confess, Lord, that we often are unaware of how deeply we have hurt Your good earth and its marvelous gifts. We confess that we are often unaware of how our abuse of creation has also been an abuse of ourselves. For our wrongs, Lord, we ask forgiveness. We offer our repentance. We promise to reverence Your Creation as a gracious gift entrusted to us by You, our God. We promise anew to be stewards and not pillagers of what You have entrusted to us.**

Leader: Creator God, You have given us every reason to learn and promote this wisdom of lives lived in harmony with Creation. May you daily be present with us, gracing our service, our loving, our striving, through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

**All: Amen**

### ***HYMN – “Joyous Light” #561 (Red Hymnal)***

Joyous light of heav'nly glory, loving glow of God's own face, you who sing creation's story, shine on ev'ry land and race. Now as evening falls around us, we shall raise our songs to you. God of daybreak, God of shadows, come and light our hearts anew.

In the stars that grace the darkness, in the blazing sun of dawn, in the light of peace and wisdom, we can hear your quiet song. Love that fills the night with wonder, love that warms the weary soul, love that bursts all chains asunder, set us free and make us whole.

You who made the heaven's splendor, ev'ry dancing star of night, make us shine with gentle justice, let us each reflect your light. Mighty God of all creation, gentle Christ who lights our way, loving Spirit of salvation, lead us on to endless day.

## LITANY OF PRAISE

Left side: "The Earth. . . is a sparkling blue and white jewel. . . laced with slowly swirling veils of white. . . like a small pearl in a thick sea of black mystery." (Edgar Mitchell, US Astronaut)

**All: "All creation is a song of praise to God."** (Hildegard of Bingen, Mystic)

Right side: "O moving force of Wisdom, you encircle the wheel of the cosmos, you encompass all that is, all that has life, in one vast circle." (Hildegard of Bingen, Mystic)

**All: "All creation is a song of praise to God."**

Left side: "It could be that God has not absconded but spread, as our vision and understanding of the universe have spread, to a fabric of spirit and sense so grand and subtle, powerful in a new way, that we can only feel blindly of its hem." (Annie Dillard, naturalist writer)

**All: "All creation is a song of praise to God."**

Right side: ". . . stardust is not just fairy-tale magic; it is what we are really made of. . ." (Elisabet Sahtouris, Ecofeminist)

**All: "All creation is a song of praise to God."**

Left side: "Great Spirit, . . . give me the strength to walk the soft earth, a relative to all that is! . . . all over the earth the faces of living things are all alike. . . This is my prayer; hear me!" (Black Elk, Oglala Sioux)

**All: "All creation is a song of praise to God."**

Right side: "There is not anything new to be born. It has been within you from the beginningless beginning. It has only to be awakened, to become aware of itself in you." (Zen saying)

**All: "All creation is a song of praise to God."**

Left side: ". . . for in God we live/ and move/ and have our being."  
(Acts 17:28)

**All: "All creation is a song of praise to God."**

Right side: "When you stand in the presence of the moon, you become a new creation. . . The elementary particles of your body have absorbed an influence and in that sense they--and you--are brand spanking new, a human being resonating everywhere with moonlight." (Brian Swimme, physicist)

**All: "All creation is a song of praise to God."**

Left side: "We shall not cease from exploration/ And the end of all our exploring/ Will be to arrive where we started/ And know the place for the first time." (T. S. Eliot, poet)

**All: "All creation is a song of praise to God."**

(Adapted from the North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology (Earth Prayers, 1991)

## **SPECIAL MUSIC**

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

#### ***A Reading from 1 Peter***

#### ***1 Peter 4:1-19***

<sup>1</sup>Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin), <sup>2</sup>so as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God. <sup>3</sup>You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry. <sup>4</sup>They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme. <sup>5</sup>But they will have to give an accounting to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup>For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does. <sup>7</sup>The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. <sup>8</sup>Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup>Be hospitable to one another without complaining. <sup>10</sup>Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. <sup>11</sup>Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. <sup>12</sup>Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup>But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup>If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. <sup>15</sup>But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. <sup>16</sup>Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name. <sup>17</sup>For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with

us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup>And "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinners?" <sup>19</sup>Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good. Here ends the reading.

**The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew** (Matthew 5:43-48)

<sup>43</sup>"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup>But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup>so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup>For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup>Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord

**All: Praise to you O Christ.**

**A LITANY OF GRATITUDE**

Leader: We live in all things. All things live in us.

**All: We rejoice in all life.**

Leader: We live by the sun. We move with the stars.

**All: We rejoice in all life.**

Leader: We eat from the earth. We drink from the rain. We breathe from the air.

**All: We rejoice in all life.**

Leader: We share with the creatures. We have strength through their gifts.

**All: We rejoice in all life.**

Leader: We depend on the forests. We have knowledge through their secrets.

**All: We rejoice in all life.**

Leader: We have the privilege of seeing and understanding. We have the responsibility of caring. We have the joy of celebrating.

**All: We rejoice in all life.**

Leader: We are full of the grace of creation. We are graceful. We are grateful.

**All: We rejoice in all life**

## MESSAGE ON CREATION

### **HYMN – “For the Fruit” # 679 (Red Hymnal)**

For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God. For these gifts to ev'ry nation, thanks be to God. For the plowing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we are sleeping, future needs in earth's safekeeping, thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labor, God's will is done. In the help we give our neighbor, God's will is done. In our worldwide task of caring for the hungry and despairing, in the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God. For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God. For the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us, most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.

### **APOSTLE'S CREED**

**All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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.**

### **LITANY FOR GROWTH**

Leader: God, Source of all life, how excellent is your name in all the earth.

**All: All people glorify your holy name together.**

Leader: The majesty and vastness of your creation wraps us round with power and wonder.

**All: We thank you, O God.**

Leader: For the fertility to nourish cattle and fields, for the means allowing persons and families to survive.

**All: We thank you, O God.**

Leader: God made these great works, the gardens and seas; God's hands these wonders wrought.

**All: We praise you, O God.**

Leader: For the joy of being a part of nature throughout all our days and in all our ways.

**All: We praise you, O God.**

Leader: That it may please you to sustain that mighty power which made the mountains rise and sets forth each morning's challenge.

**All: We beseech you to hear us, O God.**

Leader: That it may please you to continue to guide us through the dark nights and never-ending days of our creation.

**All: We beseech you to hear us, O God.**

Leader: O God, whatever is true, whatever is just, we have received from your hand.

**All: We praise you, O God, and bless your Holy Name. Amen.**

## **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**People: And also with you.**

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Leader: God our provider, we bring nothing into this world and we can take nothing out of it. Accept the gifts you have first given us, which we bring to your table, and with them the offering of our lives. Nourish us now with the life that really is life, revealed to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**All: Amen**

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Leader: Trusting in God's extraordinary love, let us come near to the Holy One in prayer.

A brief silence.

Leader: O God, you are wholeness. Where there is division in your church, bring reconciliation and healing. Guide the work of theologians, Sunday school teachers, seminary professors, and all who provide instruction for the building up of your church. Merciful God,

**All: receive our prayer.**

Leader: O God, you are the source of all life. Where creation cries out in distress, bring relief and renewal. Bless farmers, ranchers, distributors, and all who provide our food. Nourish the land and all its habitants. Merciful God,

**All: receive our prayer.**

Leader: O God, you are wisdom. Where nations and communities yearn for peace, bring justice. Strengthen those who toil for the welfare of others, especially military personnel, police, first responders, and activists, and for the healing of the nations. Merciful God,

**All: receive our prayer.**

Leader: O God, you are life. Where your people are overwhelmed with the busy-ness of life, bring encouragement. Accompany all who experience emotional, mental, or physical distress. Renew us at your table of mercy. Merciful God,

**All: receive our prayer.**

Leader: O God, you are our treasure. Where scarcity and anxiety pervade your church, bring abundance and vitality. Guide the work of church councils and committees and give them clarity for the work of ministry in this place. Merciful God,

**All: receive our prayer.**

Leader: O God, you are resurrection. We give you thanks for all your saints. Inspire us by their example of faithful living to set our minds on things above and to be rich in love toward you. Merciful God,

**All: receive our prayer.**

Leader: Receive the prayers of your children, merciful God, and hold us forever in your steadfast love; through Jesus Christ, our holy Wisdom.

**All: Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

Leader: The God of peace, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you, comfort you, and show you the path of life this day and always.

**People: Amen.**

## **CLOSING HYMN – “Let All Things” #881 (Red Hymnal)**

Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving to God the creator triumphantly raise, who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us, who still guides us on to the end of our days. God's banners are o'er us, God's light goes before us, a pillar of fire shining forth in the night, till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished, as forward we travel from light into light.

God rules all the forces: the stars in their courses and sun in its orbit obediently shine; the hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains, the deeps of the ocean proclaim God divine. We too should be voicing our love and rejoicing; with glad adoration a song let us raise till all things now living unite in thanksgiving: "To God in the highest, hosanna and praise!"

## **SENDING**

Leader: Go in peace. Jesus meets you on the way.

**All: Thanks be to God.**