



**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street
Valparaiso, Indiana 46385
(219) 462-6660 • clcvalpo.org



**Time after Pentecost
July 19, 2026**

We welcome you to Christ Lutheran Church! We are a community of people sharing God's love through Christ and growing together in faith.

We celebrate all the ways we are made in the image of God, seeking to see God in everyone. We honor and respect each person's age, ethnicity, family composition, gender identity, gender expression, life history, mental well-being, physical ability, relationship status, sexual orientation, skin color, and socioeconomic standing. Together, we strive to love and serve our neighbor and all creation, including working toward racial and social justice. We would love to walk with you on this creative adventure* of faith, grace, and love.

** The first sermon ever preached at Christ Lutheran was titled "A Call to Creative Adventure."*

ABOUT WORSHIP

We gather to worship weekly to hear and remember our shared hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin, with hymns found in the red hymnals ("ELW") in the seats in front of you.

If you have a prayer request, note it on a yellow card from the seatback holder and pass it to an usher; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!

God's people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child's life. There's some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the **activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary** as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God's love takes root in their lives!

WHEN NURSERY CARE IS NEEDED DURING WORSHIP

A fully equipped and staffed Nursery is available for both infants and toddlers during all services. The Nursery is located west of our gathering area in **Room 110**.

RESTROOMS

Men's and women's restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all-gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.

A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.

It is an age-old question: why is there evil in the world? In the parable of the wheat and the weeds Jesus suggests that both grow together until the harvest. With Paul, we long for the day that all creation will be set free from bondage and suffering. Having both weeds and wheat within us, we humbly place our hope in the promises of God, and from the Lord's table we go forth to bear the fruit of justice and mercy.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Lord Jesus Christ, Turn Thou to Us

Walther

WELCOME

If you are joining us for the first time, welcome! We'd love to meet you, or if there's anything you'd like to know about the ministry of Christ Lutheran Church, please consider [filling out a Connection Card online](#) (you can point your phone at the graphic to the right) or using a yellow Connection Card in the pew holders.



***Prayer requests** can be posted to the livechat or use a yellow Prayer Request (on the backside of the Connection Card) and give them to an usher.*

*If you are worshipping with us via livestream, consider **preparing your space for Communion**: light a candle (if appropriate and safe), and have a plate with bread/cracker/tortilla and a cup for wine or grape juice (or an empty cup as a sign Jesus is sufficient in one or both elements).*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity,† one God,
whose compassion endures forever.
Amen.

Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God,
we confess to you all our sins.
Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves.
In your mercy, call us back to you.
Your yoke is easy and your burden is light.
Restore us to dwell in your peace.
In Christ's name we pray,
Amen.

Jesus says, "Come to me,
all you who are weary
and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest."
In the name of God,
Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit,
your sins are forgiven.
Rest in God's love.
Amen.

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: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

SONG OF PRAISE



1 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;
 2 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;
 3 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;



yours is the prom - ise, the bless - ing, the birth.
 yours the ho - san - nas, the dy - ing, re - birth.
 yours the a - noint - ing, the ra - di - ant worth.



Ours the re - joic - ing for Word giv - en frame;
 Ours the re - joic - ing for na - ture re - claimed;
 Ours the re - joic - ing for spir - its a - flame;



ours the thanks - giv - ing to your ho - ly name.



Ours be the tell - ing of deeds great - ly done;



yours be the glo - ry, O God, yours a - lone.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A silence is kept before the prayer.

Divine reaper,
who alone can judge
without vengeance or fear:
free us from our desire to repay evil with evil;
root us in creation's longing for freedom from oppression;
shape us by hope unseen for the victory of love;
through Jesus Christ, with whom we suffer and are gloried.
Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

CHILDREN'S TIME

Children are invited for a time together.

READING: Genesis 28:10-19a

God's graciousness to Jacob is shown in God's revelation of the divine self to the patriarch, who is running for his life after cheating his brother Esau out of the family inheritance. Jacob promises that if God brings him back to the land, he will be loyal to God and give God a tenth of everything (vv. 20-22).

¹⁰ Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹ He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. ¹² And he dreamed that there was a stairway set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ And the LORD stood beside him and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring, ¹⁴ and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. ¹⁵ Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." ¹⁶ Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!" ¹⁷ And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

¹⁸ So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. ^{19a} He called that place Bethel.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

READING: Romans 8:12-25

For Paul, true spirituality means that we experience the reality of the Spirit, which enables us to pray as God's children, keeps us in solidarity with creation, and gives us unseen hope that God will liberate us and creation from bondage to death and decay.

¹² So then, brothers and sisters, we are obligated, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh- ¹³ for if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if we in fact suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor, ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.



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



Repeat alleluia

Our hearts burn with - in us as you open to us the scriptures.

GOSPEL: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Jesus tells a parable about the coexistence of good and evil in this world. God's judgment will remove all evildoers and causes of sin, but not until the end of human history.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you O Lord.

²⁴ [Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field,²⁵ but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away.²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well.²⁷ And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’²⁸ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’²⁹ But he replied, ‘No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them.³⁰ Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’ ”

³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.”³⁷ He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man;³⁸ the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one,³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers,⁴² and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

The assembly is seated. Time for reflection follows the sermon.

HYMN OF THE DAY ACS #1082***O God, You Search Me***

The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.



1 O God, you search me and you know me.
2 You know my rest - ing and my ris - ing.
3 Be - fore a word is on my tongue, Lord,
4 Al - though your Spir - it is up - on me,
5 For you cre - at - ed me and shaped me,



All my thoughts lie o - pen to your gaze.
You dis - cern my pur - pose from a - far,
you have known its mean - ing through and through.
still I search for shel - ter from your light.
gave me life with - in my moth - er's womb.



When I walk or lie down you are be - fore me:
and with love ev - er - last - ing you be - siege me:
You are with me be - yond my un - der - stand - ing:
There is no - where on earth I can es - cape you:
For the won - der of who I am, I praise you:



ev - er the mak - er and keep - er of my days.
in ev - 'ry mo - ment of life or death, you are.
God of my pres - ent, my past, and fu - ture,
e - ven the dark - ness is ra - diant in your sight.
safe in your hands, all cre - a - tion is made new.

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.

**Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.*

PRAYERS

Our prayers draw on the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle and the Church's calendar of Commemorations—further information is found each week at the end of the bulletin.
Trusting in God's steadfast love for all God has made, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

God our source, protect your church from those who sow weeds among the wheat.
Where we trade grace for judgment, restore us, and where we get lost among the complexities of life, guide us. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God our creator, sustain creation in places not easily seen; the depths of oceans, microscopic plants and animals, galaxies beyond our own. May we share earth's dedication to hope for what we do not yet see. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God our soil, we yearn to live on your lands and waters with justice and in righteousness. Renew the hearts of all in authority, that our leaders guide wisely toward the flourishing of all. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God our rock, be a source of constancy for those whose lives have been uprooted by war, eviction, global climate change, unemployment, harassment, false witness to their character, or illness or injury. We pray especially for the lands, nations, and people of Djibouti and Somalia, that your care and keeping would sustain the work of all who build peace and justice, care for creation, and tend to the needs of those who flee for refuge. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God our teacher, guide and provide for all summer camp staff and campers, daycare professionals, librarians, summer school educators and coaches, teachers preparing for the coming academic year, and youth becoming first-time babysitters. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God our hope, the message of your salvation is planted among us in all times and places. We give you thanks for Mary Magdalene, Birgitta, and James, and for the witness of all the saints who shine like the sun in your presence. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Grateful for your abundant provision and trusting in your goodness, we cast all our cares upon you, through the abundant grace of Christ Jesus.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshiping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!***

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING

*This congregation serves our neighbors, community, and the world through the offerings of its members and guests. Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts with **Food Bank of Northwest Indiana** foodbanknwi.org and **Project Neighbors** projectneighbors.org or facebook.com/ProjectNeighbors.*



If you wish to give electronically, use the QR code or browse to our secure on-line portal at clcvalpo.org/give.

OFFERTORY

For the Beauty of the Earth

Burkhardt

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

OFFERING PRAYER

Loving God,

we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts.

**Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love,
so that all creation can taste your abundance.**

**We ask this in the name of Jesus,
through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever.
Amen.**

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.

The pastor begins the prayer and all join in singing:

SANCTUS

(An ancient practice invites us to make the sign of the cross in honor of Jesus at the words "Blessed is the one.")

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and

God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the

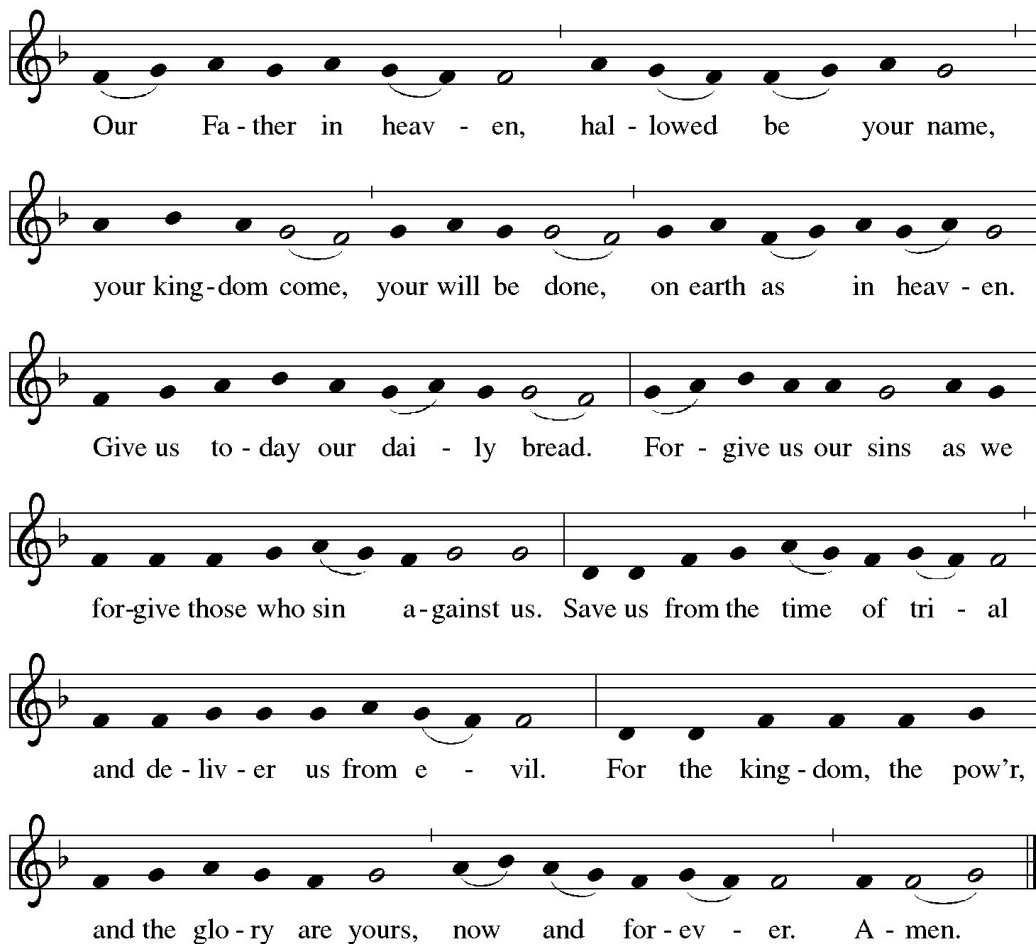
Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

TABLE PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Children: The Spirit makes us one. We pray as Jesus taught us:



Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,
your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we
for - give those who sin a - gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al
and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,
and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Heaven has come near.
Come, share in the feast!
Thanks be to God!

The assembly is seated.

DISTRIBUTION

*The pastor invites those worshipping via **livestream** to commune:*

The body of Christ, given for you.

Amen (*receive the bread*)

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen (*receive the cup*)

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. **WINE** is lighter-colored and **GRAPE JUICE** is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays. **USED GLASSES** are placed in the basket located near the ramp. **GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE**, please indicate to the server that you require this.

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.

COMMUNION HYMNS

ACS #967 *This is Christ's Body (sung 4 x)*
(you are invited to sing harmony if you wish)

This is Christ's bod - y, bro - ken and blest. Feed us with

The first system of musical notation for the hymn. It consists of a treble and bass staff in B-flat major (two flats). The treble staff has a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first line of the hymn is: "This is Christ's bod - y, bro - ken and blest. Feed us with".

mer-cy and love. We are Christ's bod - y,
with mer - cy and love.

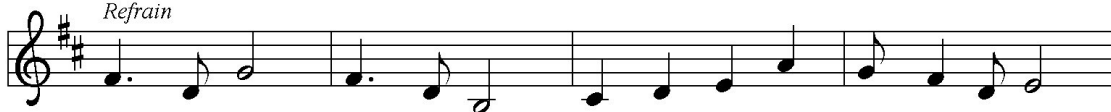
The second system of musical notation. It continues the melody from the first system. The lyrics are: "mer-cy and love. We are Christ's bod - y, with mer - cy and love." The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style. The lyrics are written below the notes.

bro - ken and blest. Heal us and make us one.

The third system of musical notation. It continues the melody from the second system. The lyrics are: "bro - ken and blest. Heal us and make us one." The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style. The lyrics are written below the notes.

ELW #492 *Eat This Bread, Drink This Cup*

Refrain



Eat this bread, drink this cup. Taste and see the good-ness of God.



Bread of life, cup of love, we re-joice in your pres-ence.



- 1 I will bless the Lord at all times, praise with heart and voice;
- 2 Look up - on the Lord, be ra - dant, nev - er turn a - way.
- 3 An - gels fold their wings a - round us, guard through good and ill.
- 4 Saints of God, bow down and wor - ship, bless the ho - ly name.

Refrain



in my God I glo - ry for - ev - er: lis - ten and re - joice!
 God will save in ev - 'ry af - flic - tion, hear us when we pray.
 Those who seek the Lord will lack noth-ing; taste, and have your fill.
 Rise to tell God's great-ness for - ev - er, won-drous deeds pro - claim!

ELW #689 *Praise and Thanksgiving*

1 Praise and thanks-giv-ing, God, we would of-fer for all things
2 God, bless the la-bor we bring to serve you, that with our
3 Fa-ther, pro-vid-ing food for your chil-dren, by Wis-dom's
4 Then will your bless-ing reach ev-'ry peo-ple, free-ly con-

liv-ing, you have made good: har-vest of sown fields, fruits of the
neigh-bor we may be fed. Sow-ing or till-ing, we would work
guid-ing teach us to share one with an-oth-er, so that, re-
fess-ing your gra-cious hand. Where you are reign-ing, no one will

or-chard, hay from the mown fields, blos-som and wood.
with you, har-vest-ing, mill-ing for dai-ly bread.
joic-ing with us, all oth-ers may know your care.
hun-ger; your love sus-tain-ing show-ers the land.

After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands as the minister continues.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Compassionate God,
through the gifts of bread and wine
our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love.
Strengthen us that we
may share your love freely as you have shared with us.
We ask this in the name of Jesus,
through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

INVITATIONS

The assembly is seated as brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.

BLESSING

God, who creates, redeems and sustains,
bless, heal, and hold you
today and always.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN ELW #516***Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast***

1 Al - might - y God, your word is cast like seed in - to the ground;
2 Let not the sly sa - tan - ic foe this ho - ly seed re - move,
3 Let not the world's de - ceit - ful cares the ris - ing plant de - stroy,
4 So when the pre - cious seed is sown, life - giv - ing grace be - stow,

now let the dew of heav'n de - scend and righ - teous fruits a - bound.
but give it root in ev - 'ry heart to bring forth fruits of love.
but let it yield a hun - dred - fold the fruits of peace and joy.
that all whose souls the truth re - ceive its sav - ing pow'r may know.

The musical score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody is in the Treble staff, and the bass line is in the Bass staff. The lyrics are written below the staves, with line numbers 1 through 4 corresponding to the first four lines of the hymn. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Children join the pastors to send us in mission.

DISMISSAL

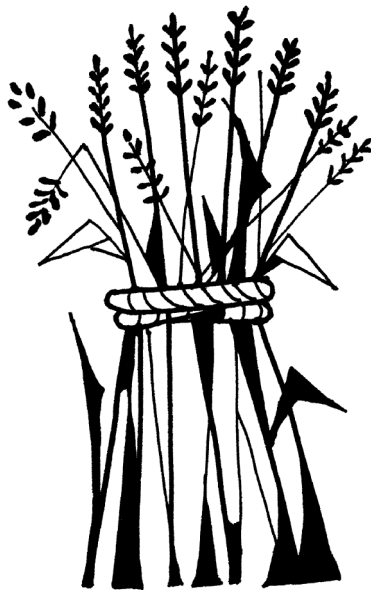
Children: Go in peace, share the good news!

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

I'll Praise My Maker

Page



Worship Leaders	<u>9:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Mila Pineda
Lector	Doug Schmidt
Prayer Assistant	Kathy Sutherland
Communion Assistants	Violet Furuness Gabby Soleim Holly Knauff Phyllis Schroeder Darla Hernandez
Ushers	Tim Sutherland Ben Lieske
Sound/Light	Tony Reinhold
Video/Livestream	Joey Rodeck
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch
Communion Baker	Bull Family

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Djibouti, Somalia.**

We are thankful for:

- the beauty of Creation and resources from lands and sea
- the stable governance and economic development that Djibouti has experienced in recent years
- the many ways churches and humanitarian organizations have prayed for and responded to the needs in Somalia.

We pray for:

- protection of natural resources and coastal land
- an end to hunger, violence, crime and conflict in Somalia
- effective reconciliation and peace-building
- stable governments that further the common good for all the people
- those who have fled this area that they may be welcomed in new homelands.

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of July 19, 2026

July 22

Mary Magdalene, Apostle

Sometimes called “the apostle to the apostles” because she told them of her encounter with the risen Lord, Mary was a woman of Galilee who followed Jesus throughout his ministry. She was present at Jesus’ crucifixion and his burial.

July 23

Birgitta of Sweden, renewer of the church, died 1373

Birgitta married at age thirteen and had four daughters. Widowed at age thirty-eight, she gave all that she owned to the poor, and founded a community of monks and nuns led by a woman. Her work is continued today by the Society of St. Birgitta.

July 25

James, Apostle

James and his brother John were the sons of Zebedee, fishermen by trade before their call from Jesus. He was the first of the twelve apostles to be martyred, and his death is the only one recorded in scripture (Acts 12:1-2).

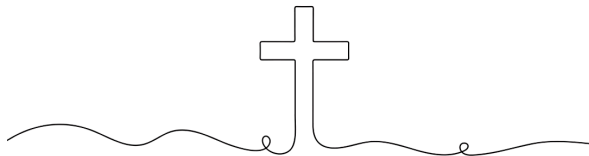
Deep-Seated Grace

The things we learn early on in life matter. Maybe the first time you rode a bike taught you about a deep sense of fulfillment. The first time your heart swooned with romance taught you about a whole new dimension of love. Painfully, we find out the stove is hot by that first, uninformed touch, and we learn to watch for the flame. That first heartbreak sows some mistrust in future relationships.

These core memories inform how we see and interact with the world, shaping our expectations and actions. They are like seeds planted deep that grow and grow within. As Jesus speaks in this parable of weeds among the wheat, we are reminded that within us are both good seeds and invasive plants that get in the way. As our early memories remind us, people can sow both good and evil. There is fulfillment and romance, and there is pain and mistrust—good seeds and pesky weeds.

In a radical move, God the gardener has planted the deepest seed, a seed of grace. And herein lies the promise of this story from Jesus: Though we may try to uproot the sin—the weeds—separating us from God and each other, only God can make this grace come to life. With dusty overalls and a warm smile, God, the greatest gardener, removes the weeds of pain and mistrust. In Jesus, all that separates us from one another and from God is no more. The earliest seed planted deep within (even before we can remember) is the seed of grace that cultivates the deepest connection to God.

How have you seen God's grace at work in you, and how has the Spirit sown trust and connection in your life?



From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2026 Augsburg Fortress.

All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #26201.

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Portions printed under OneLicense.net License #A-711129.