



"The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread." Matthew 13:33

9th Weekend after Pentecost

July 25, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

July 26, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

First Lutheran Church
Decorah, IA

WELCOME TO FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Whatever your country of origin or ancestry, your race or ethnic heritage, and whether you are religious or not, Christian or not, or Lutheran or not, you are welcome here.

Whether you are male, female or transgender, young or old, straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual, you are welcome here.

Whether you are single or partnered, married, widowed or divorced, you are welcome here.

Whether you are wealthy or poor, own a home or rent, live at home or are homeless, you are welcome here.

Whatever your political views - whether to the right, to the left or to the center, you are welcome here.

Whatever your strengths or weaknesses, gifts or challenges, they will be honored, for you are welcome here.

First Lutheran Church is committed to being a loving and welcoming community centered in the Good News of Jesus Christ. In faithfulness to the Christian Gospel, in reflection of our Lutheran emphasis on grace, and in celebration of our shared baptismal journey, we promise to enter into ministry with all who seek God here.

We invite you to join us for worship and take up your place with us in ministry for you are welcome at First Lutheran Church.

NOTES ABOUT WORSHIP:

This **bulletin** contains the prayers, readings, some music, and responses that you will need to participate in worship.

Hymnals can be found in the pews for most congregational songs. We use both the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) and purple All Creation Sings (ACS) hymnals.

The **communion meal** is open to all who desire to participate, of any age. Gluten-free wafers and juice are available. Individual communion kits are also available as you enter the worship space for those who wish to remain in the pews.

Children are welcome at all of our worship services. A play area, where you'll also find quiet bags, is available for families in sanctuary. Feel free to nurse or feed your child in the sanctuary. We also have a staffed nursery during Sunday worship. Ask an usher for directions or follow the signs out the door at the northeast corner of the sanctuary.

Are you visiting? We invite you to fill out a yellow connection card found in your pew. Please also introduce yourself to Pr. Mike and Pr. David on your way out! Consider yourself welcome and invited to participate in the activities and worship life of this congregation!

In January 2026 we began Phase 2 of our **For Generations to Come** building project. While we are under construction, **restrooms** are available on the 1st level near the kitchen, our new nursery bathroom, and on the 2nd floor education wing. Visit firstlutherandecorah.org for weekly construction updates.

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

WELCOME *Everyone is invited to share their prayer requests on the yellow cards found in the pews. If you are new to worship, please also include your contact information.*

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

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
Silence is kept for reflection.

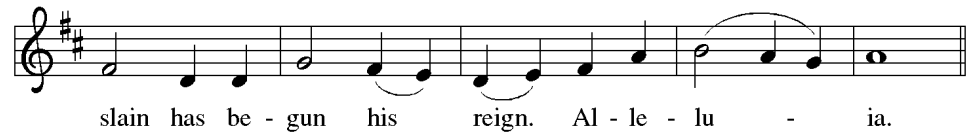
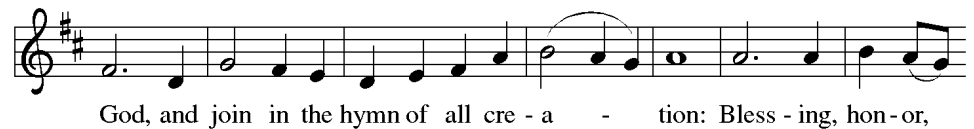
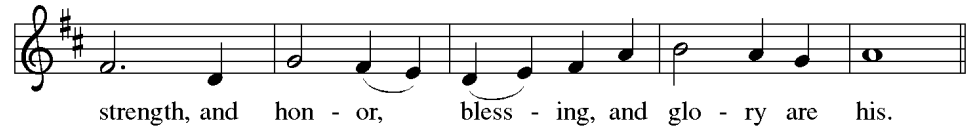
By water and the Holy Spirit God gives you a new birth, and through the death and resurrection of † Jesus Christ, God forgives you all your sins. The God of mercy and might strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb

who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.



***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.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY** *After we pause to breathe and for personal prayer, the presiding minister will pray.*

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

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

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE *Sunday only*

FIRST READING

Laban deceives Jacob by giving his older daughter, Leah, to Jacob in marriage instead of the promised younger daughter, Rachel. Because of his love for Rachel, Jacob agrees to work for Laban for an additional seven years so that he may also be married to her.

Genesis 29:15-32 (Contemporary English Version)

¹⁵ Laban said to Jacob, "You shouldn't have to work without pay, just because you are a relative of mine. What do you want me to give you?" ¹⁶⁻¹⁷ Laban had two daughters. Leah was older than Rachel, and her eyes were tender, while Rachel was graceful and beautiful. ¹⁸ Since Jacob was in love with Rachel, he answered, "If you will let me marry Rachel, I'll work seven years for you." ¹⁹ Laban replied, "It's better for me to let you marry Rachel than for someone else to have her. So stay and work for me." ²⁰ Jacob worked seven years for Laban, but the time seemed like only a few days, because he loved Rachel so much. ²¹ Jacob said to Laban, "The time is up, and I want to marry Rachel now!" ²² So Laban gave a big feast and invited all their neighbors. ²³ But that evening he brought Leah to Jacob, who married her and spent the night with her. ²⁴ Laban also gave Zilpah to Leah as her servant woman. ²⁵ The next morning Jacob found out that he had married Leah, and he asked Laban, "Why did you do this to me? Didn't I work to get Rachel? Why did you trick me?" ²⁶ Laban replied, "In our country the older daughter must get married first. ²⁷ After you spend this week with Leah, you may also marry Rachel. But you will have to work for me another seven years." ²⁸⁻³⁰ At the end of the week of celebration, Laban let Jacob marry Rachel, and he gave her his servant woman Bilhah. Jacob loved Rachel more than he did Leah, but he had to work another seven years for Laban. ³¹ The Lord saw that Jacob loved Rachel more than he did Leah, and so he gave children to Leah, but not to Rachel. ³² Leah gave birth to a son and named him Reuben. Then she said, "The Lord has seen my sorrow. Now my husband will love me more than he does Rachel."

Word of God, word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death and resurrection and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.

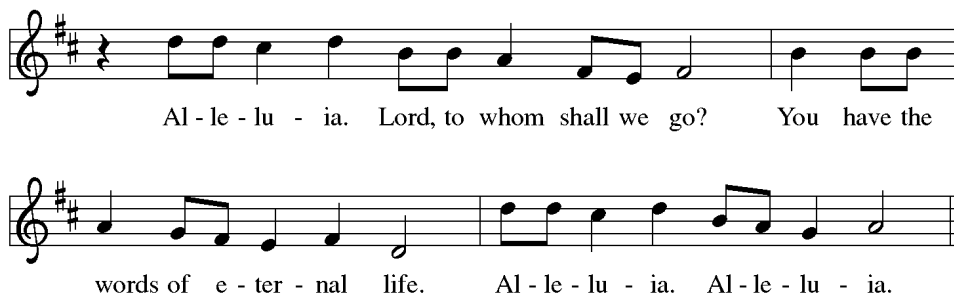
Romans 8:26-27, 31-35, 37-39 (New Living Translation)

²⁶ And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. ²⁷ And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.

³¹ What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? ³² Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? ³³ Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. ³⁴ Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us. ³⁵ Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? ³⁷ No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. ³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. ³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Word of God, word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



***GOSPEL** The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 (New Living Translation)

³¹ Here is another illustration Jesus used: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. ³² It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches." ³³ Jesus also used this illustration: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she hid only a little yeast in sixty pounds of flour, it permeated every part of the dough. ⁴⁴ The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field. ⁴⁵ Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. ⁴⁶ When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it! ⁴⁷ Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a fishing net that was thrown into the water and caught fish of every kind. ⁴⁸ When the net was full, they dragged it up onto the shore, sat down, and sorted the good fish into crates, but threw the bad ones away. ⁴⁹ That is the way it will be at the end of the world. The angels will come and separate the wicked people from the righteous, ⁵⁰ throwing the wicked into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹ Do you understand all these things?" "Yes," they said, "we do." ⁵² Then he added, "Every teacher of religious law who becomes a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is like a homeowner who brings from his storeroom new gems of truth as well as old."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON Pr. David Severtson

***HYMN OF THE DAY** ELW 622 Neither Death nor Life

HOLY BAPTISM Greta Sophia Jones

*5:00 p.m. only
see yellow insert*

***PRAYERS OF
INTERCESSION**

This summer we bring both our thanksgivings and prayers to God, who hears and holds us in love. First we'll give our thanks, ending each petition: Thank you, God. The congregation responds **Alleluia!** Then we'll share our prayer concerns ending each petition: God have mercy. The congregation responds **Hear our prayer.**

A brief silence. The minister concludes each petition:

Let us pray.

A brief silence for prayer follows each petition.

Mighty God of mercy, we thank you for the resurrection dawn, bringing the glory of our risen Lord who makes every day new.

Especially we thank you—

for the sustaining goodness of your creation . . . Thank you, God.

Alleluia!

for the new creation in Christ and all gifts of healing and forgiveness . . . Thank you, God. **Alleluia!**

for the gifts of relationship with others . . . Thank you, God.

Alleluia!

for the communion of faith in your church . . . Thank you, God.

Alleluia!

Congregation members may add other thanksgivings.

Merciful God of might, renew this weary world, heal the hurts of all your children, and bring about your peace for all in Christ Jesus, the living Lord.

Especially we pray—

for our friends and family members seeking healing and peace including *(the minister will read names from our congregational prayer list; congregation members can also add additional names)* . . . God have mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

for those who govern nations of the world . . . God have mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

for the people in countries ravaged by strife or warfare . . . God have mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

for all who work for peace and international harmony . . . God have mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

for all who strive to save the earth from carelessness and destruction . . . God have mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

for the church of Jesus Christ in every land . . . God have mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Congregation members may add other intercessions.

Receive our prayers, O God, and come quickly to our aid, through the power of the Spirit and the love of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

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

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS Prayers, announcements, and updates can be found in the weekly AfterWord. To view the AfterWord or to subscribe online, visit firstlutherandecorah.org/afterword or scan the QR code.



MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Christ.

OFFERING 5:00 p.m. - Poco tranquillo - Edvard Grieg
9:00 a.m. - Tryggare kan ingen vara - arr. M. Sedio

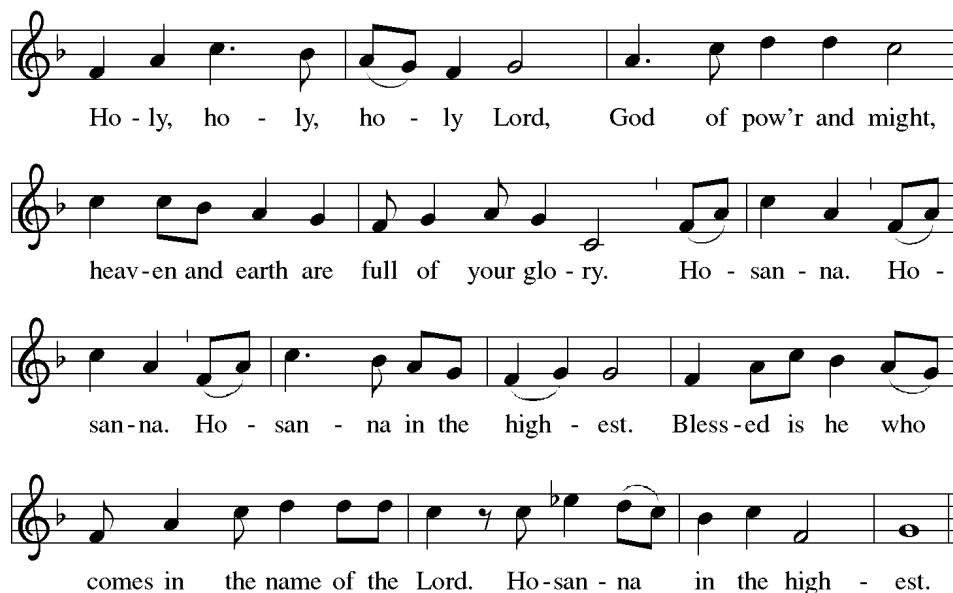


Give online at firstlutherandecorah.org/give, text "GIVE" to (563) 412-2243, or scan the QR code.

***OFFERING PRAYER** Let us pray.
**Come Lord Jesus be our guest. Let these gifts to us be blessed.
May there be a goodly share on every table everywhere. Amen.**

***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 our duty and delight that we should everywhere and always offer thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Savior Jesus Christ who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so with all the choirs of angels, church on earth, and the hosts of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**



***THANKSGIVING AT THE
TABLE WITH WORDS
OF INSTITUTION**

Holy God, how majestic is your name in all the earth. The earth is full of your glory. **The earth is full of your glory.**

Holy God, you took on our flesh in Jesus our healer. In Christ, you bring life from death. Broken like bread, he enlivens our body. Outpoured like wine, he fills the earth with goodness. The earth is full of your glory. **The earth is full of your glory.**

We praise you for the heart of Jesus, so filled with your love for this earth.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Gathered around this table, we your children unite in this song:
The earth is full of your glory. **The earth is full of your glory.**

Holy God, send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth. Strengthen us for our journey with this meal, the body and blood of Christ. Give us a future that trusts in you and cares for your earth. Encouraged by your promises, praise you again: The earth is full of your glory. **The earth is full of your glory. Amen.**

***LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered around this table by the Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught.
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

***INVITATION TO
COMMUNION**

We believe Jesus Christ is present when we share this meal. Here God nourishes our faith, forgives our sin, and calls us to share God's love. Adults and children of any age are welcome to receive communion.

COMMUNION MUSIC

5:00 p.m. - Children of the Heavenly Father - Swedish melody/
Lorie Line
9:00 a.m. - ELW 838 Beautiful Savior &
ELW 803 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION** O God, in this holy communion you have welcomed us into your presence, nourished us with words of mercy, and fed us at your table. Amid the cares of this life, strengthen us to love you with all our heart, serve our neighbors with a willing spirit, and honor the earth you have made; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in love to serve.

***BLESSING** The LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The LORD look upon you with favor and + give you peace. **Amen.**

***SENDING HYMN** ELW 705 God of Grace and God of Glory

***DISMISSAL** Go in peace. Free to love. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE 5:00 p.m. - Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen - Edvard Grieg
9:00 a.m. - God of Grace and God of Glory - arr. P. Manz

5:00 P.M. WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Pr. David Severtson, preaching minister
Pr. Mike Wilker, presiding minister
Melissa O'Rourke, reader
Mike Ellingsen, piano
Mike Johnson, clarinet
Joe Skoda & Melissa O'Rourke, worship welcome team



9:00 A.M. WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Pr. David Severtson, preaching minister
Pr. Mike Wilker, presiding minister
Myrv Christopherson, assisting minister
Ingrid Neste, reader & communion assistant
Serina Norvold Hallquist, organ
Noah Potvin, stream team
Simon Potvin, stream team
Kara Franke, nursery
Paul Pasche, worship welcome team
Pat Seckar, worship welcome team
Brian Erickson, worship welcome team
Sally Koop, worship welcome team

The flowers on the altar are given by Neal & Nancy Solomonson, from their garden.