



"The LORD sets the captive free." Psalm 146:7

6th Weekend after Pentecost USA Semiquincentennial

July 4, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

July 5, 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.

Notes on Today's Hymns

America the Beautiful is sung to the tune MATERNA, composed by Samuel A. Ward (1847–1903), a New Jersey church organist and music-store owner. The words were written by Katharine Lee Bates (1859–1929), a professor of English at Wellesley College, following a trip west in 1893. Standing atop Pikes Peak in Colorado and looking out over the vast plains, Bates was moved to write a poem in praise of the land's beauty; she first published it in 1895 and revised it into its familiar form in 1913. Ward had composed his melody years earlier, reportedly on a ferry home from a summer day at Coney Island, and the words and tune were joined only after both authors had died. Bates was a social reformer as well as a poet, and her hymn is more than scenery: each verse of praise turns to prayer — "God mend thine every flaw," "God shed his grace on thee" — asking that the nation's beauty be matched by brotherhood, self-control, and a goodness confirmed by law. It is a patriotic song that dares to pray for the country's mending as much as it celebrates its gifts.

This Is My Song is sung to the tune FINLANDIA. The melody comes from a symphonic poem by Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) which he wrote while his homeland was under Russian occupation in 1899. Lloyd Stone, a school teacher, wrote the first two stanzas in 1934 during the peace between two world wars. The final stanza was written by Methodist theologian and pastor, Georgia Harkness (1891-1974) in the late 1930s. Harkness transforms a hymn of peace with vague religious overtones into a prayer for peace that comes from the author of peace, Jesus Christ.

Lift Every Voice and Sing was written and composed by James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938) and J. Rosamond Johnson (1873-1954) in 1900 for a children's musical celebration of Abraham Lincoln's birthday in Jacksonville, Florida. James was the first African American lawyer admitted to the bar in Florida and was a US diplomat 1906-1912. He was a prolific author including the publication of *God's Trombones* in 1927. Rosamond was a music school teacher and Baptist church organist and choral director. *Lift Every Voice and Sing* is regarded by many African Americans as a "national anthem" because of its profound association with the struggle for equality and civil rights in the USA. It is both a biography and an expression of Black people. Besides being a magnificent sacred hymn, it is an important historical document. It should be taught to, sung by, and remembered by all Americans.

GATHERING

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

PRELUDE 5:00 p.m. - This Is My Song - Jean Sibelius/Lorie Line
9:00 a.m. - Finlandia - arr. R.A. Hobby

WELCOME *As we celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, let it be our duty and delight to remember once more the faith of our forebears, who shaped our nation with their dreams and their tears. Let us remember those in our own time whose faiths guide and sustain them in the hard work of building a better country for all people. Sometimes it is the work of listening; sometimes the work of speaking up; sometimes the work of protest; sometimes the work of governing. Today's service is shaped by the Scripture texts appointed for a national holiday, and it holds together praise and lament, confession and rededication.*

We gather on the homelands of the Ioway, the Sauk and Meskwaki, and the Dakota peoples, and on the so-called Neutral Ground where the Ho-Chunk were forced to live during their removal from Wisconsin—the town of Decorah and Winneshiek County still bear the names of Ho-Chunk leaders. We remember, too, that our own church shared in the harm: First Lutheran and Luther College helped found and sustain Bethany Indian Mission, part of a national system that separated Native children from their families, languages, and traditions in the name of the Gospel. We name this not to diminish our gratitude for this country, but to deepen it—for a nation strong enough to tell the truth about itself is one worth building. And so we commit ourselves to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly alongside our Indigenous neighbors.

***GATHERING HYMN** ELW 888 America the Beautiful

***HAUDENOSAUNEE
GREETINGS TO THE
NATURAL WORLD**

*Learn about the
Haudenosaunee:*



*Learn about the
Palatine Lutherans:*



*The Haudenosaunee — the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy — open every gathering with these words of thanksgiving, bringing the minds of all people together as one before the Creator and all creation. We pray them today with gratitude and humility, mindful that our own Lutheran ancestors once received mercy from the Haudenosaunee people that we have not always returned. We receive this thanksgiving now as the gift it is. Voices from around the room offer each greeting; all respond, "**Greetings and thanks.**"*

Today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as People.

To the Earth, Mother of all, who gives us all we need for life,
greetings and thanks.

To all the waters, waterfalls and rain, rivers and oceans,
greetings and thanks.

To all the fish life, **greetings and thanks.**

To the grains and greens, beans and berries, as one we send thanks to the food plants; to the medicine herbs of the world and their keepers, **greetings and thanks.**

To all animals and their teachings, **greetings and thanks.**

To the trees for shelter and shade, fruit and beauty,
greetings and thanks.

To all birds, large and small, **joyful greetings and thanks.**

And from the four directions, the Four Winds, thank you for purifying the air we breathe and giving us strength,
greetings and thanks.

To the Thunderers, our grandfathers in the sky, we hear your voices, **greetings and thanks.**

And now the Sun, for the light of a new day and all the fires of life,
greetings and thanks.

To our oldest Grandmother, the Moon, leader of women all over the world, **greetings and thanks.**

And to the stars for their mystery, beauty, and guidance,
greetings and thanks.

To our teachers from all times reminding us how to live in harmony,
greetings and thanks.

And for all the gifts of creation, for all the love around us,
greetings and thanks.

We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way.

Now our minds are one.

***THIS IS THE FEAST**

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.

Refrain

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

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and

strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

Refrain

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

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of

God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or,

glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

* Please rise in body or spirit.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,
 al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 4 For the Lamb who was
 slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

Final refrain

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

***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.*
 Lord God Almighty, you have made all the peoples of the earth for your glory, to serve you in freedom and in peace: Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

WORD

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

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE *Sunday only*

FIRST READING Jeremiah 29:7-11

⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. ⁸ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to your dreams that you dream, ⁹ for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the LORD.

¹⁰ For thus says the LORD: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

Word of God, word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 146

¹ Hallelujah!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

² I will praise the Lord as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

³ Put not your trust in rulers,

in mortals in whom there is no help.

**⁴ When they breathe their last, they return to earth,
and in that day their thoughts perish.**

⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the Lord their God;

⁶ who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps promises forever;

⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to
those who hunger.

The Lord sets the captive free.

⁸ The Lord opens the eyes of the blind;

the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;

the Lord loves the righteous.

⁹ The Lord cares for the sojourner;

the Lord sustains the orphan and widow,

but frustrates the way of the wicked.

¹⁰ The Lord shall reign forever,

your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

***GOSPEL** The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Luke 6:20-26 (CEV)

²⁰ Jesus looked at his disciples and said:

God will bless you people who are poor. God's kingdom belongs to you!

²¹ God will bless you hungry people. You will have plenty to eat! God will bless you people who are crying. You will laugh!

²² God will bless you when others hate you and won't have anything to do with you. God will bless you when people insult you and say cruel things about you, all because you are a follower of the Son of Man. ²³ Long ago your own people did these same things to the prophets. So when this happens to you, be happy and jump for joy! You will have a great reward in heaven.

²⁴ But you rich people are in for trouble. You have already had an easy life!

²⁵ You well-fed people are in for trouble. You will go hungry! You people who are laughing now are in for trouble. You are going to cry and weep!

²⁶ You are in for trouble when everyone says good things about you. That is what your own people said about those prophets who told lies.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON Pr. Mike Wilker

***HYMN OF THE DAY** ELW 887 This Is My Song

***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. - My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less - John Dykes/
Phillip Keveren
9:00 a.m. - God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens - arr. W.
Held

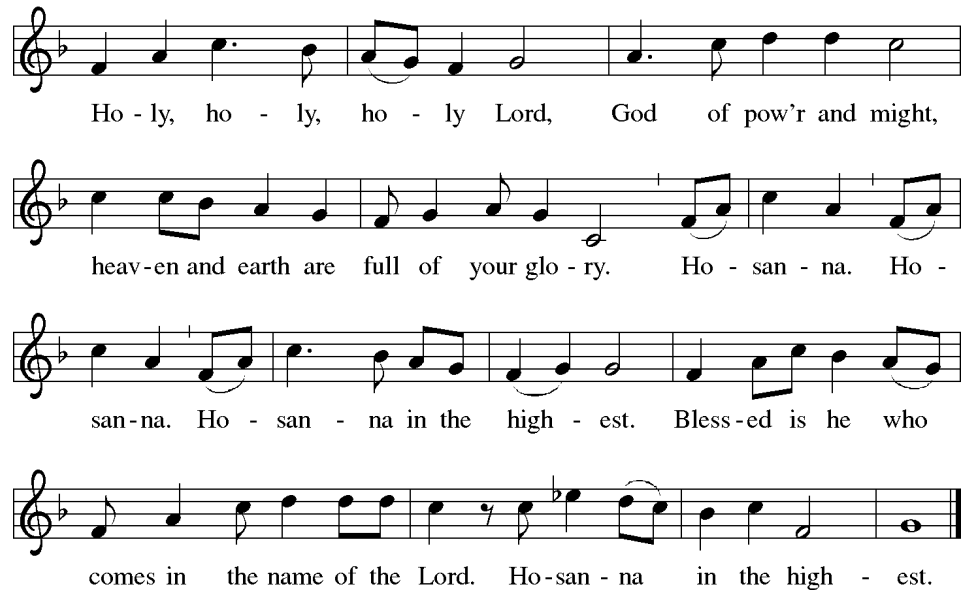


Give online at firstlutherandecorah.org/give, text "GIVE" to (563) 412-2243, or scan the QR code.

***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**



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. 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.

***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. - They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love - Peter Scholtes/Mark Hayes
9:00 a.m. - ELW 726 Light Dawns on a Weary World & ELW 765 Lord of All Hopefulness

***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.

***AFFIRMATION OF CHRISTIAN VOCATION IN CIVIC COMMUNITY** Baptized and set free by Jesus Christ, we are blessed and called by the Holy Spirit to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

On this Independence Day Weekend, we give thanks for the gifts of this land and for all who have labored for liberty and justice within it. With humility, we also confess the ways we and our nation have fallen short of that promise—the harm done to peoples and to creation, and our own captivity to sin. Yet we are not bound by our failures. The same Christ who sets us free for love also frees us to repent, to repair, and to begin again.

So, in gratitude and hope, we renew our vocation as baptized Christians within our nation's diverse civic community.

Will you endeavor to pattern your life on Jesus Christ, in gratitude to God and in service to others?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you strive to pursue the common good in public life,
nurturing mutual care among neighbors near and far?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you pledge to bear witness in word and action,
commending what is true and right,
renouncing what is unjust and harmful,
and working to mend what is flawed?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, by the power of the Holy Spirit you have knit these
your servants into the one body of your Son, Jesus Christ. Look
with favor upon them and their civic lives. Give them courage,
patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation
of witness in the world and service to others; through Jesus Christ,
our savior.

Amen.

Go out into the world in peace. Be of good courage. Hold fast to
what is good. Return no one evil for evil. Strengthen the faint-
hearted, support the weak, help the suffering. Delight in beauty.
Honor all beings. Love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of
the Holy Spirit.

***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 841 Lift Every Voice and Sing

***DISMISSAL** Go in peace, free to love.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

POSTLUDE 5:00 p.m. - America the Beautiful - Samuel Ward/Mark Hayes
9:00 a.m. - Battle Hymn of the Republic - arr. C.Ore

5:00 P.M. WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Pr. Mike Wilker, preaching & presiding minister

Jon Thompson, reader, communion assistant, & worship welcome team

Mike Ellingsen, piano



9:00 A.M. WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Pr. Mike Wilker, preaching & presiding minister

Karen Martin-Schramm, assisting minister

Nate Benish, reader & communion assistant

Jim Martin-Schramm, communion assistant

Serina Norvold Hallquist, organ

Heidi Snell-Anderson, stream team

Niva Anderson, stream team

Kara Franke, nursery

Jim & Laurie Biedermann, worship welcome team

Larry & Diane Grimstad, worship welcome team

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