



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

*be kind and compassionate to one
another, forgiving one another, just
as God in Christ has forgiven us.*

Ephesians 4:32

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 13, 2026

Welcome



Worship Series: Unexpected Truths

September 13, 2026

The opening lines of the United States Declaration of Independence boldly assert that certain truths are “self-evident”—truths accessible to human reason and widely recognized by observation of the world. Among these are that all people are created equal and possess unalienable rights such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The founders appealed to principles they believed reasonable people could recognize simply by reflecting on human nature and justice. These truths were meant to be obvious, clear to the mind, and persuasive in the public square.

Lutherans, however, note that the most important truths revealed in the Bible are not self-evident at all. In fact, they frequently appear surprising or even contrary to human expectations. Scripture teaches that humanity is not naturally good but deeply sinful. It declares that salvation cannot be achieved through human effort but comes entirely by God’s grace. Most unexpected of all is the message that God brings forgiveness and eternal life through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. Biblical truth is revealed by God rather than discovered by reason alone. While some truths may seem obvious to human judgment, the truths of the Bible are often unexpected.

Today’s Focus: Forgiveness is for Me

Forgiveness does not come naturally to human beings. It is expected that humans will defend themselves, lash out when attacked, hold grudges, and bite back. So, when human beings hear that they are forgiven, they may even be suspicious or skeptical.

Jesus tells a parable that contrasts the forgiveness of God with our own unforgiving sinful nature. God forgives our huge debt. Who can comprehend such unexpected mercy? Certainly not unmerciful servants, who refuse to forgive small debts. Have mercy on us, Lord, and teach us to forgive like you!

Opening Hymn

623 O Bless the Lord, My Soul



1 O bless the Lord, my soul! Let all with-in me join and
2 O bless the Lord, my soul, nor let his mer-cies lie for-
3 'Tis he for-gives your sins, 'tis he re-lieves your pain, 'tis
4 He fills the poor with good; he gives the suf-f'ers rest. The
5 His won-drous works and ways he made by Mo-ses known but



aid my tongue to bless his name whose fa-vors are di-vine.
got-ten in un-thank-ful-ness and with-out prais-es die.
he that heals your sick-ness-es and makes you young a-gain.
Lord has judg-ments for the proud and jus-tice for th'op-pressed.
sent the world his truth and grace by his be-lov-ed Son.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, abr., alt.
Tune: Aaron Williams, 1731-1776
Text and tune: Public domain

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our
sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**Holy God, gracious Father, I am sinful by nature and have sinned
against you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have not loved you
with my whole heart; I have not loved others as I should. I deserve your
punishment both now and forever. But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my
sins with his innocent suffering and death. Trusting in him, I pray: God,
have mercy on me, a sinner.**

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the $\dagger$ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

Glory to God in the Highest



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to his

peo - ple on earth. 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. Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and

peace to his peo - ple on earth.

Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther,

Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

world; have mer - cy on us. You are seat - ed at the

right hand of the Fa - ther; re - ceive our prayer.

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to his

peo - ple on earth. For you a -

lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,

you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ,

with the Ho - ly Spir - it in the glo - ry of

God the Fa - ther. A - men. A - men.

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to his

peo - ple on earth.

Tune: Marty Haugen
Tune: © 1984 GIA Publications, Inc. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 712282

The Word

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, heavenly Father, you graciously forgive us all our sins and abundantly provide for all our needs of body and soul. Give us confidence in your mercy, and teach us also to be merciful to our neighbor, that we willingly forgive all people, and judging only ourselves, lead blessed lives to your glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading

Genesis 50:15–21

Joseph was quick to forgive his brothers.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 103



1 Praise, my soul, the King of heav - en; to his feet your
2 Praise him for his grace and fa - vor to his peo - ple
3 Fa - ther - like he tends and spares us; well our fee - ble
4 An - gels, help us to a - dore him; you be - hold him



trib - ute bring. Ran - somed, healed, re - stored, for - giv - en,
in dis - tress. Praise him, still the same as ev - er,
frame he knows. In his hand he gent - ly bears us,
face to face. Sun and moon, bow down be - fore him;



ev - er - more his prais - es sing; Al - le - lu - ia,
slow to chide, and swift to bless, Al - le - lu - ia,
res - cues us from all our foes; Al - le - lu - ia,
all who dwell in time and space, Al - le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia! praise the ev - er - last - ing King!
al - le - lu - ia! glo - rious in his faith - ful - ness!
al - le - lu - ia! wide - ly yet his mer - cy flows!
al - le - lu - ia! praise with us the God of grace!

Text: Henry F. Lyte
Tune: John Goss
Text and tune: Public domain

Second Reading

Ephesians 4:29—5:2

Kindness, compassion, and forgiveness are marks of God's Church.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Colossians 3:13

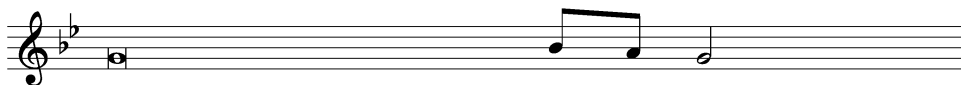


Refrain



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

Tone



Bear with each other and forgive one an - oth - er.

Refrain



Forgive as the Lord for - gave you.

Tune: © 2010 GIA Publications, Inc. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 712282

Gospel

Matthew 18:21–35

The ability to forgive others comes from the Spirit enabling us to understand how much God has forgiven us.

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

Hymn of the Day

587 Come Down, O Love Divine



1 Come down, O Love di - vine, seek thou this soul of mine,
 2 O let it free - ly burn, till earth - ly pas - sions turn
 3 Let ho - ly char - i - ty mine out - ward ves - ture be,
 4 And so the yearn - ing strong, with which the soul will long,



and vis - it it with thine own ar - dor glow - ing.
 to dust and ash - es in its heat con - sum - ing;
 and low - li - ness be - come mine in - ner cloth - ing—
 shall far out - pass the pow'r of hu - man tell - ing;



O Com - fort - er, draw near; with - in my heart ap - pear,
 and let thy glo - rious light shine ev - er on my sight,
 true low - li - ness of heart, which takes the hum - bler part,
 no soul can guess his grace till it be - come the place



and kin - dle it, thy ho - ly flame be - stow - ing.
 and clothe me round, the while my path il - lum - ing.
 and o'er its own short - com - ings weeps with loath - ing.
 where - in the Ho - ly Spir - it makes his dwell - ing.

Text: Bianco da Siena, c. 1350–1434; tr. Richard F. Littledale, 1833–1890
 Tune: Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872–1958
 Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

Offering

The Sacrament

Preface

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

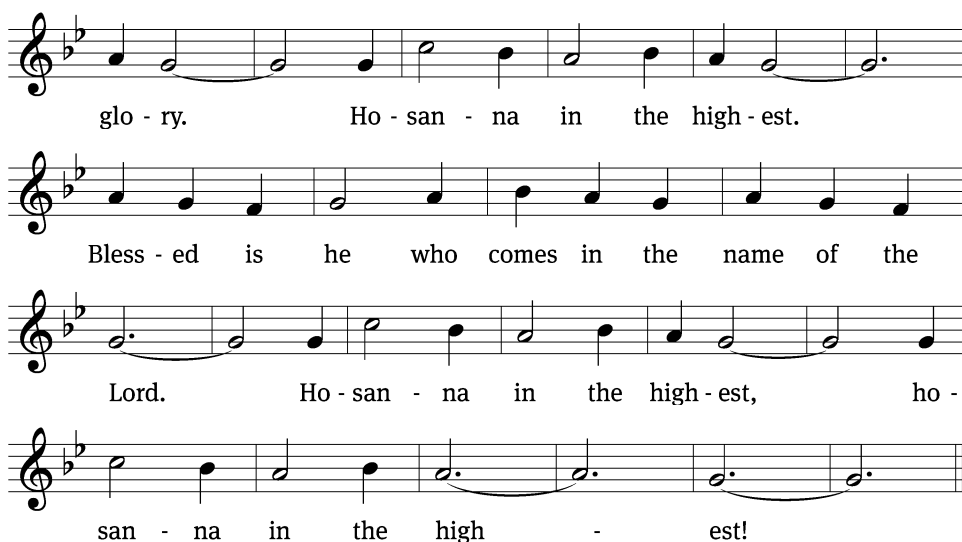
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock until he comes again in glory. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Holy, Holy, Holy





Tune: Marty Haugen
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Prayer of Thanksgiving

Lord God, you are worthy to receive thanks and praise from all people. You created the world and all who live in it, and in your mercy you saved us. We give thanks to you for the grace of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Though in very nature God, he took the nature of a servant and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. He offered himself as a sacrifice for sin and redeemed us from its curse and penalty. He rescued us from the terrors of death and restored eternal life with you. He conquered our enemies and gained for us the kingdom of grace and glory.

Bless us as we receive your Son's body and blood, and lead us to remember his suffering, death, and resurrection. Forgive our sins and fill us with the hope of new life in heaven. Hear our praise and receive our thanks as we worship you—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Words of Institution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my $\dagger$ body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my $\dagger$ blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
Amen.

Jesus, Lamb of God



Je - sus, Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
Je - sus, Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us your peace.

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Distribution Hymn

733 Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive

1 "For - give our sins as we for - give,"
2 How can your par - don reach and bless
3 In blaz - ing light your cross re - veals
4 Lord, cleanse the depths with - in our souls
you taught us, Lord, to pray, but you a - lone can
the un - for - giv - ing heart that broods on wrongs and
the truth we dim - ly knew: how small are oth - ers'
and bid re - sent - ment cease; then, bound to all in
grant us grace to live the words we say.
will not let old bit - ter - ness de - part?
debts to us, how great our debt to you!
bonds of love, our lives will spread your peace.

Distribution Hymn 661 Draw Near and Take the Body of Your Lord



1 Draw near and take the bod - y of your Lord,
 2 Christ our Re - deem - er, God's e - ter - nal Son,
 3 Let us ap - proach with faith - ful hearts sin - cere
 4 With heav'n - ly bread he makes the hun - gry whole,



and drink the ho - ly blood for you out - poured.
 has by his cross and blood the vic - t'ry won.
 and take the pledg - es of sal - va - tion here.
 gives liv - ing wa - ters to the thirst - ing soul.



Saved by his bod - y and his ho - ly blood,
 He gave his life for great - est and for least,
 Christ, who in this life all the saints de - fends,
 Lord of the na - tions, to whom all must bow,



with souls re - freshed we give our thanks to God.
 him - self the of - f'ring and him - self the priest.
 gives all be - liev - ers life that nev - er ends.
 in this great feast of love be with us now.

Text: Latin, 7th cent., abr.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt.
 Tune: Trente quatre Pseaumes de David, Geneva, 1551, ed. Louis Bourgeois
 Text and tune: Public domain

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
Amen.

Closing Hymn

562 Jesus Paid It All

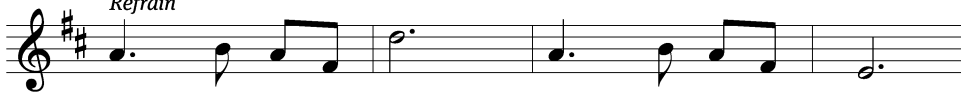


1 I hear the Sav - ior say, "Thy strength in - deed is small!
 2 Lord, now in - deed I find thy pow'r, and thine a - lone
 3 For noth - ing good have I where - by thy grace to claim;
 4 And when, be - fore the throne, I stand in him com - plete,



Child of weak - ness, watch and pray, find in me thine all in all."
 can _ change the lep - er's spots and _ melt the heart of stone.
 I'll _ wash my gar - ments white in the blood of Cal - v'ry's Lamb.
 "Je - sus died my soul to save," my _ lips shall still re - peat.

Refrain



Je - sus paid it all, all to him I owe;



sin had left a crim - son stain, he washed it white as snow.

Text: Elvina M. Hall, 1820-1889
 Tune: John T. Grape, 1835-1915
 Text and tune: Public domain

SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE TODAY

Presiding Minister: Pastor Derek Bartelt | **Preaching Minister:** Pastor Kenneth Frey

Accompanist: Kim Anderberg | **Elder:** Drew Sherman

Altar Guild: Kris Hills and Kelly Schwartz | **Projectionist:** Judy Gifford

Acknowledgments

Setting Two from Christian Worship

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JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

SUNDAYS

Worship | 9:00am

1ST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

Worship with Lord's Supper | 6:30pm

OUR STAFF

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OUR MISSION

As a family of believers, the mission of First Evangelical Lutheran Church is to glorify God by growing in the faith of our Savior Jesus Christ and by sharing the good news of His Word with others.

OUR INVITATION

It is a privilege for us to share with you the assurance Jesus offers about how imperfect people like us can enjoy a right relationship with our holy Creator.

Our church services are designed to be Christ-centered worship and include three main elements: God speaks to us in His Word, we respond with praises and prayers, and we encourage each other.

We are eager to have you learn more about the Triune God and about our church. If you are looking for a spiritual family in which you can be at home, please speak with our pastor.