



FIRST LUTHERAN

CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Say to them, "As I live, declares the Lord God, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from their way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why should you die, O house of Israel?"

EZEKIEL 33:11

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

SEPTEMBER 6, 2026

Welcome



Worship Series: Unexpected Truths

September 6, 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: I Am My Brother’s Keeper

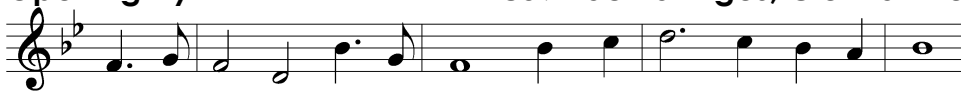
When danger strikes, most people instinctively move away from it. Fire, violence, accidents, and disasters trigger a natural desire to find protection and safety. Yet first responders do the opposite.

Firefighters, police officers, and paramedics run toward the very scenes others are fleeing. They enter burning buildings, approach violent situations, and kneel beside the injured in chaotic moments. This response is unexpected because it goes against basic human instinct.

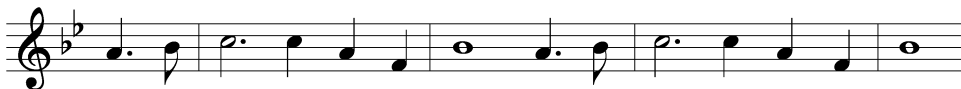
Today God calls us to be spiritual first responders when we see people in trouble because of sin. Instead of self-preservation and comfort, we choose service to them and to our Lord. Our motive is the grace of God and his desire for the salvation of all mankind.

Opening Hymn

839 Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me



- 1 Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee;
- 2 Not the la - bors of my hands can ful - fill thy law's de - mands;
- 3 Noth - ing in my hand I bring, sim - ply to thy cross I cling;
- 4 While I draw this fleet - ing breath, when mine eye - lids close in death,



let the wa - ter and the blood, from thy riv - en side which flowed,
could my zeal no res - pite know, could my tears for - ev - er flow,
na - ked, come to thee for dress, help - less, look to thee for grace;
when I soar to worlds un - known, see thee on thy judg - ment throne,



be of sin the dou - ble cure: cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.
all for sin could not a - tone; thou must save and thou a - lone.
foul, I to the foun - tain fly; wash me, Sav - ior, or I die.
Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee.

Text: Augustus M. Toplady, 1740–1778, alt.
Tune: Thomas Hastings, 1784–1872
Text and tune: Public domain



O Lord, o - pen my lips,



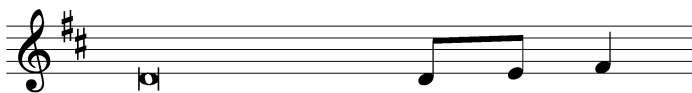
and my mouth shall de - clare your praise.



Has - ten to save me, O God;



O Lord, come quick - ly to help me.

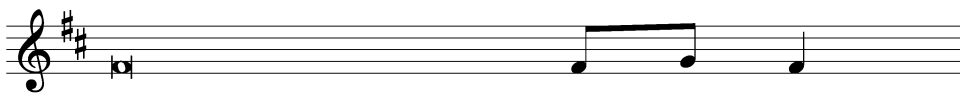


General Jesus Christ is Lord of all:

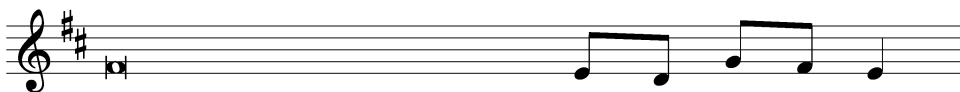


praise and thanks to God!

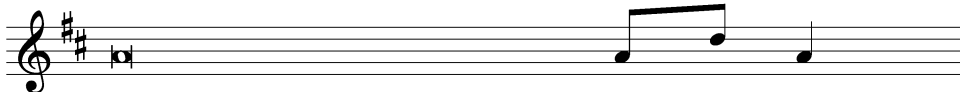
O Come, Let Us Sing to the Lord



1 O come, let us sing to the Lord,
2 For the Lord is a great _____ God
3 The sea is his, for he made _____ it,



1 let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our sal - va - tion.
2 and a great king a - bove all gods.
3 and his hand formed the dry _____ land.



- 1 Let us come into his presence with thanks - giv - ing,
- 2 The deep places of the earth are in his hand;
- 3 O come, let us worship and bow _____ down,
- 4 For he is our God,



- 1 let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise.
- 2 the heights of the hills are al - so his.
- 3 let us kneel before the Lord our mak - er.
- 4 and we are the people of his
pasture and the sheep of his _____ hand.

First Reading

Ezekiel 33:7-11

The Lord told Ezekiel if he didn't warn the Israelites about their sin, he was going to hold Ezekiel accountable.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm

Psalm 32

Refrain

Be glad, you right - eous ones; re - joice!

Trust in the LORD and sing for joy.

Tone

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are for- / given,
whose / sins are covered.

Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count a- / gainst them
and in whose spirit is / no deceit.

When I kept silent, my bones wast- / ed away
through my groaning / all day long.
For day and night your hand was heav- / y on me;
my strength was sapped as in the heat of / summer.

Then I acknowledged my / sin to you
and did not cover up my in- / iquity.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions / to the LORD."
And you forgave the guilt / of my sin. *Refrain*

You are my / hiding place;
you will protect / me from trouble.
Many are the woes of the / wicked,
but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the one who / trusts in him.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the / Holy Spirit,
as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

Tune: Thomas Pavlechko (after Georg C. Neumark's WER NUR DEN LIEBEN GOTT), alt.; (after Georg C. Neumark's WER NUR DEN LIEBEN GOTT): Thomas Pavlechko, alt.
Setting: Thomas Pavlechko (after Georg C. Neumark's WER NUR DEN LIEBEN GOTT), alt.; (after Georg C. Neumark's WER NUR DEN LIEBEN GOTT): Thomas Pavlechko, alt.
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Second Reading

Galatians 2:11–16

Paul wins his brother Cephas (Peter) over to the truth of the gospel.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel

Matthew 18:15–20

Jesus teaches us how to practice Christian discipline lovingly.

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

Hymn

654 Jesus Sinners Does Receive



1 Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive; oh, may all this
 2 We de - serve but grief and shame, yet his words, rich
 3 Sheep that from the fold did stray are not by the
 4 I, a sin - ner, come to you with a pen - i -



say - ing pon - der who in sin's de - lu - sions live
 grace re - veal - ing, par - don, peace, and life pro - claim;
 Lord for - sak - en; wea - ry souls who lost their way
 tent con - fes - sion. Sav - ior, show me mer - cy, too;



and from God and heav - en wan - der. Here is hope for
 here their ills have per - fect heal - ing who with hum - ble
 are by Christ, the Shep - herd, tak - en in his arms that
 grant for all my sins re - mis - sion. Let these words my



all who grieve: Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive.
 hearts be - lieve: Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive.
 they may live: Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive.
 soul re - lieve: Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive.

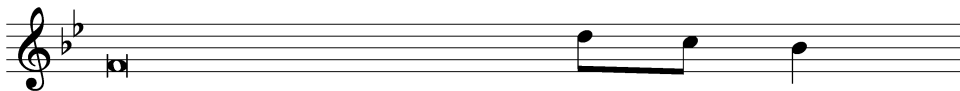
- 5 Oh, how blest it is to know,
 were as scarlet my transgression,
 it shall be as white as snow
 by your blood and bitter passion,
 for these words I do believe:
 Jesus sinners does receive.

- 6 Now my conscience is at peace,
 from the law I stand acquitted.
Christ has purchased my release
 and my ev'ry sin remitted.
Naught remains my soul to grieve:
Jesus sinners does receive.
- 7 Jesus sinners does receive,
 even I have been forgiven.
And when I this earth must leave,
 I shall find an open heaven.
Dying, still to him I cleave:
Jesus sinners does receive.

Text: Erdmann Neumeister, 1671–1756, abr.; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, alt.
Tune: Neu-verfertigtes Darmstädtisches Gesang-Buch, Darmstadt, 1699
Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon

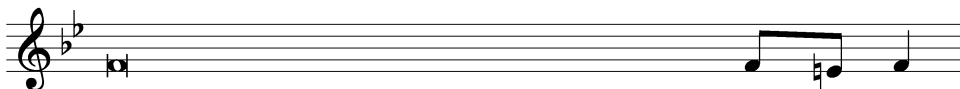
We Praise You, O God



- 1 We praise you, O God, we acclaim you as Lord;
 2 Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of heav'n - ly hosts,
 3 The white-robed army of martyrs praise — you.



- 1 all creation worships you, Fa - ther ev - er - last - ing.
 2 heaven and earth are full — of your glo - ry.
 3 Throughout the world the ho - ly Church ac - claims you:



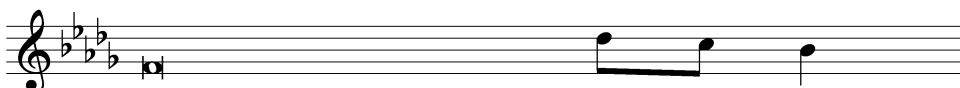
- 1 To you all angels, all the pow'rs of heav'n,
 2 The glorious company of apostles praise — you.
 3 Father of majesty unbounded; your glorious, true, and on - ly Son;



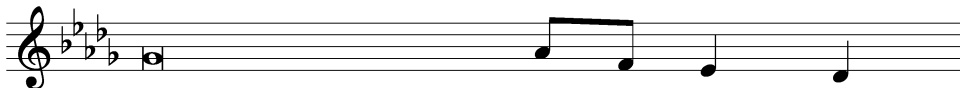
- 1 cherubim and seraphim, sing in end - less praise:
 2 The noble fellowship of proph - ets praise — you.
 3 and the Holy Spirit, ad - vo - cate and guide.



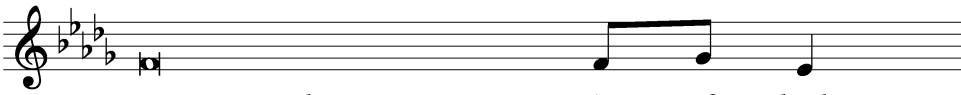
- 4 You, Christ, are the King of glo - ry, the eternal Son of the Fa - ther.



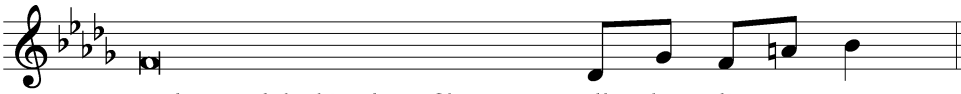
- 5 When you became man to set us free,
 6 You sit at the right hand of God



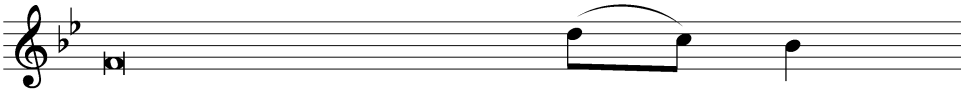
- 5 you humbled yourself to be born of a vir - gin.
 6 in the glory of the Fa - ther.



5 You overcame the sting of death
6 We believe that you will come



5 and opened the kingdom of heaven to all be - liev - ers.
6 to be our judge.



7 Come then, Lord, and help your peo - ple,



7 bought with the price of your own blood,

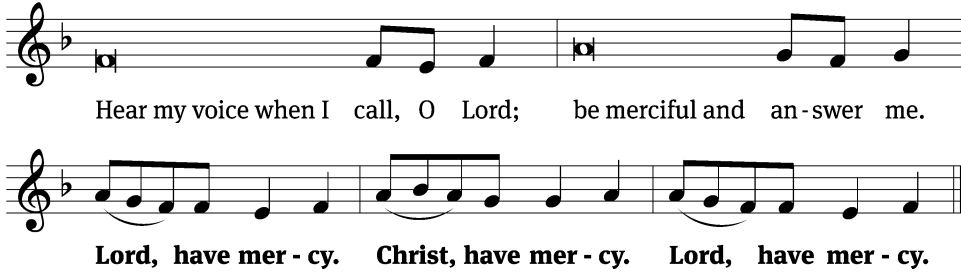


7 and bring us with your saints to glory ev - er - last - ing.

Offering

WELS Connection

Lord, Have Mercy



Prayer of the Day

O Lord Jesus Christ, preserve the congregation of believers with your never-failing mercy. Help us avoid whatever is wicked and harmful, and guide us in the way that leads to our salvation; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger. And in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

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.



Let us praise the Lord.



Thanks be to God.



The grace of our Lord + Je - sus Christ and the love of God



and the fellowship of the Holy Spir - it be with you all.



A - men.

Closing Hymn

321 God's Own Son Most Holy



1 God's own Son most ho - ly came a ser - vant
 2 Still he comes in preach - ing, truth e - ter - nal
 3 Still he comes pro - vid - ing proof of love a -
 4 Come, then, O Lord Je - sus, from our sins re -



low - ly, came to live a - mong us,
 teach - ing: "Turn a - way from e - vil;
 bid - ing: he whose death has freed us
 lease us. Keep our hearts be - liev - ing



came to suf - fer for us; bore the cross to
 turn to me, my peo - ple. I pro-nounce you
 gives him - self to feed us, thus to us ex -
 that, your grace re - ceiv - ing, we may here con -



save us, hope and free - dom gave us.
 sin - less; trust in my for - give - ness."
 tend - ing peace and joy un - end - ing.
 fess you till in heav'n we bless you.

Text: Johann Horn, c. 1490–1547, abr.; (sts. 1, 4): tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.; (sts. 2–3): tr. Michael D. Schultz, b. 1963
 Tune: attr. Michael Weisse, c. 1480–1534
 Text (sts. 2–3): © 2021 Northwestern Publishing House. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 712282
 Text (sts. 1, 4) and tune: Public domain

SERVING IN GOD'S HOUSE TODAY

Presiding Minister: Pastor Derek Bartelt

Accompanist: Robert Joseph | **Elder:** Jacob Pelas

Altar Guild: Gail Michnay | **Projectionist:** Margie Smith

Acknowledgments

Morning Prayer 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.