

Stories of CHALLENGE

— AND —

STORIES OF Blessing

SEASON OF PENTECOST

17TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST AT UNITED | SEPTEMBER 20, 2026 | 10:15AM

~ WE GATHER ~

Welcome to worship at United Lutheran Church. We are glad you are here!

PRELUDE

Yen Lee Loh

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Please stand
as you are able.*

In preparation for worship we make confession of our sins to God asking for God's forgiveness for all our failures to live as God intends. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, [God] who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
(1 John 1:8-9)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS*

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.

All: Amen.

P: Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God,

C: we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

P: Hear this good news: We have peace with God through + Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, in whom forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

All: Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

Lord of Light

ELW Hymn #688

GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

The main thoughts of the day are collected, or summarized in this short prayer. The prayers for the season of the church year have come to us from the rich treasury of the church's heritage.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

All: Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

~ WORD ~

FIRST LESSON

Jonah 3:10—4:11

First Lesson:
After Jonah’s short sermon in 3:4, the Ninevites all repented and God decided to spare the city. Jonah objected to this and became even more angry when God ordered a worm to destroy a plant that was providing shade. The book ends with a question that challenges any who are not ready to forgive: You, Jonah, are all worked up about a bush, but shouldn’t I be concerned about a hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites?

¹⁰ When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it.
^{4:1} But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ² He prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. ³ And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” ⁴ And the Lord said, “Is it right for you to be angry?” ⁵ Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.
⁶ The Lord God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give

shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the bush. ⁷ But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered.
⁸ When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”
⁹ But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?” And he said, “Yes, angry enough to die.” ¹⁰ Then the Lord said, “You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹ And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also many animals?”
P : Word of God, word of life.
C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 145:1-8

¹ I will exalt you, my God and king, and bless your name forever and ever.
² Every day will I bless you and praise your name forever and ever.
³ Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised! There is no end to your greatness.
⁴ One generation shall praise your works to another and shall declare your power.
⁵ I will speak of the glorious splendor of

your majesty and all your marvelous works.
⁶ They shall tell of the might of your wondrous acts, and I will recount your greatness.
⁷ They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness; they shall sing joyfully of your righteousness.
⁸ The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

SECOND LESSON

Philippians 1:21-30

Second Lesson:
Paul writes to the Philippians from prison. Though he is uncertain about the outcome of his imprisonment, he is committed to the ministry of the gospel and calls on the Philippians to live lives that reflect and enhance the gospel mission.

²¹ For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, ²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵ Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and

continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶ so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.
²⁷ Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side

by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of be-

lieving in Christ but of suffering for him as well, ³⁰ since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

P: Word of God, word of life.

C: Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

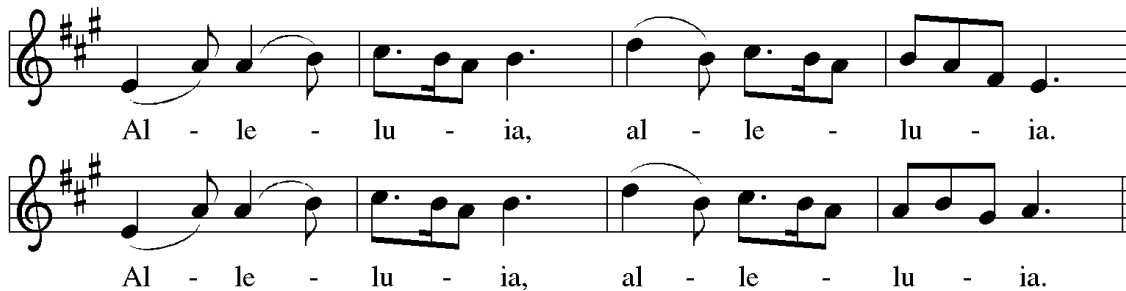
Interim Pastor Rich Kramer

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION*

Celtic Alleluia

ELW Hymn #174

**Please stand
as you are able.*



GOSPEL

Matthew 20:1-16

P: The holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 20th Chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹ "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' ⁷ They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.'

⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to

the first.' ⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' ¹³ But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?' ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Gospel:
Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve.

SERMON

Interim Pastor Rich Kramer

HYMN OF THE DAY

God's Work, Our Hands
Tune: Earth and All Stars

ACS Hymn #1000

Hymn of the Day
This hymn follows the theme of the readings and reflects the message of the sermon.

**1. God's work, our hands: working together,
building a future, repairing the world,
raising up homes, planting new gardens,
feeding the hungry and shelt'ring the cold.
Bless, God, our hands as we work in your name,
sharing the good news of your gospel.**

continues

2. God's work, our feet: trav'ling together,
following Jesus to places unknown,
walking as friends, marching for freedom,
running the race with God's future the goal.
Bless, God, our feet as we follow your way,
sharing the good news of your gospel.
3. God's work, our voice: singing together,
praising, proclaiming to all who will hear,
praying for peace, shouting for justice,
claiming God's love for the lost and the least.
Bless, God, our voice as we speak in your name,
sharing the good news of your gospel.
4. God is at work in and around us:
seedlings are sprouting and bread's on the rise!
Washed and set free, humbled and honored,
gifted by grace, we respond in God's love.
Bless, God, our lives as we answer your call,
sharing the good news of your gospel.

Apostles' Creed

We respond to God's word together when we say the Creed. Creed comes from the Latin word "credo" which means "I believe". In our worship we use either the Apostles' or Nicene Creed. These Creeds were written over 1700 years ago so the world would know what Christians believe.

APOSTLES' CREED*

ELW Page #127

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.

Prayers of Intercession

These prayers in the service follows the directive of the Apostle Paul to young Timothy, a pastor: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for Kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness".

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION*

P: ...Hear us, O God,
C: your mercy is great.

GREETING OF PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.
C: And also with you.

~ MEAL ~

The Offering

Another way of responding to God's Word is by giving ourselves and our money for the work of Christ's Church throughout the world.

**Please stand
as you are able.*

OFFERING

OFFERING SONG*

Come to the Table

Daniel Pederson

**Refrain: Come to the table, come as you are! Come as you're able:
see whose child you are. There is room at the table of the Lord.**

1. **Bring your burdens and your cares, take them to the lord in prayer.**
In our weakness, God is there, can't you see? Refrain
2. **In the mercy that abounds and accepting love we've found;**
with the blessed tie we're bound as family. Refrain

OFFERING PRAYER*

P: God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always.
All: Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW page #129

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The Great Thanksgiving

The opening dialogue between pastor and people that begins the Holy Communion part of the service. These words, dating from the second century, are likely the most ancient part of the Great Thanksgiving.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

LAMB OF GOD

from ELW pg. 208



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;

2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;

3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.

you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.

e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

Communion Distribution

Communion will be served at two stations, center and pulpit side. The ushers will direct you forward. All bread is gluten free. Grape juice is available. If you would like grape juice, please indicate that to the server.

The Lamb of God

This is our way of saying to God and to each other that it was Jesus who died for our sins as that perfect sacrifice, that perfect lamb that was slain for our life. It also focuses our attention on what we are about to receive in Holy Communion, which is Christ's true body and blood 'given and shed for the forgiveness of sins'. "The next day [John] saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION*

P: Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. **All: Amen.**

~ SENDING ~

**Please stand as you are able.*

BLESSING

P: The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus.

C: Amen.

P: The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding of the Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: The God of grace + bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Blessing/Benediction

This prayer asking for God's blessing upon the assembly as we go out into the world doing God's will.

CLOSING HYMN

Take My Life, That I May Be

ELW Hymn #583

DISMISSAL

P: Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace. **C: Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Yen Lee Loh

ELW #688, Lord of Light, ACS #1000, God's Work, Our Hands, ELW #583, Take My Life, That I May Be, Gospel Acclamation, Offering Song, Come to the Table, Daniel Pederson, Lamb of God, Paul Vasile. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #22289. A-800051. CCLI License # 1621695.

Greater Grand Forks Area
ELCA Churches Present

GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS.

Community Service & Learning Event

FREE COMMUNITY MEAL
September 23 • Grand Forks Town Square
5:30–7:00 PM

5:30–6:15 PM | Eat + Serve
6:15–7:00 PM | Music + Community

FILL THE TRUCK
Bring nonperishable food items to donate to St. Joe's Food Shelf

EAT
everyone's welcome

PACK
food kits for neighbors

ACT
learn about food justice in our area

CONNECT
music & community

HELP US

FILL THE TRUCK
Bring nonperishable food items to donate to St. Joe's Food Shelf

Join United and area ELCA Churches in coming together **THIS Wednesday, September 23 at Town Square** for an evening of service, learning, and community – to put faith into action and love our neighbors. **Meal begins at 5:30pm followed by serving, music, and community. Please join us!**

As part of this event we will be packing food kits for St. Joe's Food Shelf! In order to **FILL THE TRUCK** we are asking for donations of nonperishable food items, and size 6 diapers. **Please bring them with you to Times Square on Sept. 23!**

***Please note that this collaborative event will take place in lieu of regular Wednesday activities on Sept. 23rd so ALL can attend!**

We are looking for your church photos!

In honor of our nation's semiquincentennial, **Partners for Sacred Places** is holding a national photo contest to highlight the important roles historic churches, and other religious spaces, play in their local communities and we are looking for your church photos!

The categories are: The Arts, Spiritual Moments, Architecture & Open Spaces, and Community

If you have any pictures you would like to share of United, please email them to reception@unitedgf.org or bring in to the church office. Please submit your photos by September 30, 2026. Thank you for your consideration!

BREAKFAST Club

Not Your Average Sunday School!

FAMILY-STYLE BREAKFAST for everyone!
PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR PREK-5TH GRADE
YOUTH-LED WORSHIP TIME
LESSON-THEMED ACTIVITY

EVERY OTHER SUNDAY FROM 9AM - 10AM
United Lutheran Church Lounge

- SEPTEMBER 27
- OCTOBER 11
- OCTOBER 25
- NOVEMBER 8
- NOVEMBER 22
- DECEMBER 6

Mark your calendar so you don't miss out!

~ Congregational News ~

Our sympathy to the family of Jerry Rolland whose funeral will be at United on Monday, Sept. 21 at 2pm. Visitation will begin at 1pm.

Thank you to the Cathedral Choir, directed by Michael Marcotte, and Yen Lee Loh, piano for providing special music and leading us in worship this morning!

Join us next Sunday, September 27 for Allen Quie's last Sunday at the organ, as we wish Allen and Jim Taylor Farewell and Godspeed with our sincerest THANK YOU as they head back to AZ!

Please keep our Castaway youth and chaperones in your prayers as they make their way to the Fall Youth Retreat at Castaway Club in Detroit Lakes this coming weekend, September 25-27.

Loved by God. United in Christ. Living love out loud.

United Lutheran Church Missional Narrative

OUR CALLING

Because Jesus calls us into love that restores, shows up, and is lived out loud.

We are grounded in the truth that we are already loved by God. From that love flows hope - hope for restoration, healing, and new life in a world longing for wholeness. We believe the Gospel is not meant to be quiet or contained, but embodied through lives shaped by grace, courage, and compassion.

Because God's love shapes and moves us, we have something to offer: hope where there is despair, love where there is division, and presence where voices have gone unheard. Following Jesus calls us into God's ongoing work of restoration by loving our neighbors, standing with the vulnerable, and choosing unity over separation.

OUR POSTURE

We embody this calling through love that restores, draws us together, and is lived out loud.

Shaped by Christ, we seek to be a genuinely welcoming community where each person is received as they are and where belonging is practiced. We remain attentive to the realities of our world and to the lived experiences of our neighbors—creating space where those who have felt overlooked are recognized and drawn into community, and where all are invited into authentic connection and shared growth.

Rooted in God's love, we intentionally cultivate relationships within our walls and beyond them, trusting that faith, healing, and restoration grow when people are present for one another. We do not seek to erase difference, but to honor it, engaging one another with grace and honesty and believing unity deepens when people are seen, valued, and loved in their fullness.

Living love out loud requires courage. We are willing to take faithful risks, remain flexible, and adapt as needs emerge—trusting that the Spirit continues to guide us toward wholeness, reconciliation, and hope.

OUR WELCOME

United Lutheran Church embraces the gift of God's love for all creation. We rejoice in the way diversity informs, nurtures, and enriches the life and ministry we share. In a world that is often unloving, we are called by the Gospel to be workers for justice, peace, and healing. Wherever you are on your faith journey, we welcome all ages, races, nationalities, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, physical and mental abilities, educational levels, family configurations, and economic realities. We commit to the ongoing work of Jesus' welcome for all.

WEDNESDAY



SEPTEMBER 30

- 10:30AM- COFFEE AND DEVOS IN THE LOUNGE
- 5:15PM - SING & RING CHOIR IN THE CHOIR ROOM
- 6:00PM - FAITH FRIENDS + PIZZA IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL
- 7:00PM - CONFIRMATION IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL
- 7:00PM - CATHEDRAL CHOIR IN THE CHOIR ROOM

BIBLE PRESENTATION

Sunday, October 4th



Preschoolers, 3rd graders, and 6th graders will be presented with a NEW bible during our 10:15am worship!

Welcome visitors to UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH



Welcome to worship at United Lutheran Church, we are glad you are here.

Please take a moment to fill out a visitor card in the pew and place it in the offering plate. Restrooms are located in

the Fellowship Hall directly below the Sanctuary at the bottom of the stairs from the narthex. **Check out the calendar below for what's happening at United in the week ahead.**

WORSHIP LEADERS

Interim Pastor

Rev. Rich Kramer

Worship Accompanist

Yen Lee Loh

Special Music and Song Leader

Cathedral Choir

Michael Marcotte, *director*

Yen Lee Loh, *piano*

United in Serving

Donna Pearson

Lector

Donna Pearson

Usher

Mary Sand

Communion Servers

Donna Pearson

Suzu Belyea

Technical Team

Mackenzie Brown

Jayson Helseth

Jonah Helseth

Darren Lee

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

- 10:15am - Worship with Communion (SA)
- 11:15am - Coffee Fellowship (FH)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

- 1:00pm - Visitation for Jerry Rolland (SA)
- 2:00pm - Funeral for Jerry Rolland (SA/FH)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

- 9:00am - Quilting (FH)
- 11:00am - Staff Meeting (RM 106)
- 5:30pm - ULC Council (LG)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

NO REGULAR ACTIVITIES SO ALL CAN ATTEND THE EVENT AT TOWN SQUARE

- 5:30pm - God's Work, Our Hands Event at Town Square

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 - OFFICE CLOSED

- 4:00pm - Castaway departs from Sharon Lutheran Church

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

- 9:00am - Breakfast Club (LG)
- 10:15am - Worship with Communion (SA)
- 11:15am - Coffee Fellowship (FH)



We are a
Reconciling in Christ
Congregation



We are always looking for volunteers to help Sunday mornings. If you are able to help, please sign up at the QR code below or in the binder found at the United in Serving stand just down the hall from the office.



United Lutheran Church

324 Chestnut Street

Grand Forks, ND

PH: 701-775-4279

www.unitedgf.org

reception@unitedgf.org

Office hours:

M-TH: 8am - 4pm

LOCATION GUIDE:

- SA: Sanctuary; LG; Lounge located on the lower level; FH: Fellowship Hall located on the lower level directly below the Sanctuary; RM 106: Room 106 located down the hall from the office; CR: Choir Room located on the upper level; YR: Youth Room located on the upper level

Cathedral Choir at United Lutheran



Cathedral Choir, with director Michael Marcotte, rehearses Wednesdays at 7pm in the choir room. The choir will sing during Sunday worship 2 to 3 times a month. If you are interested in joining the choir, or would like more information, please reach out to Michael!

DONATE ONLINE TO UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH!

If you would like to make a
secure, online donation to United
Lutheran Church now, please
scan the QR code provided.

