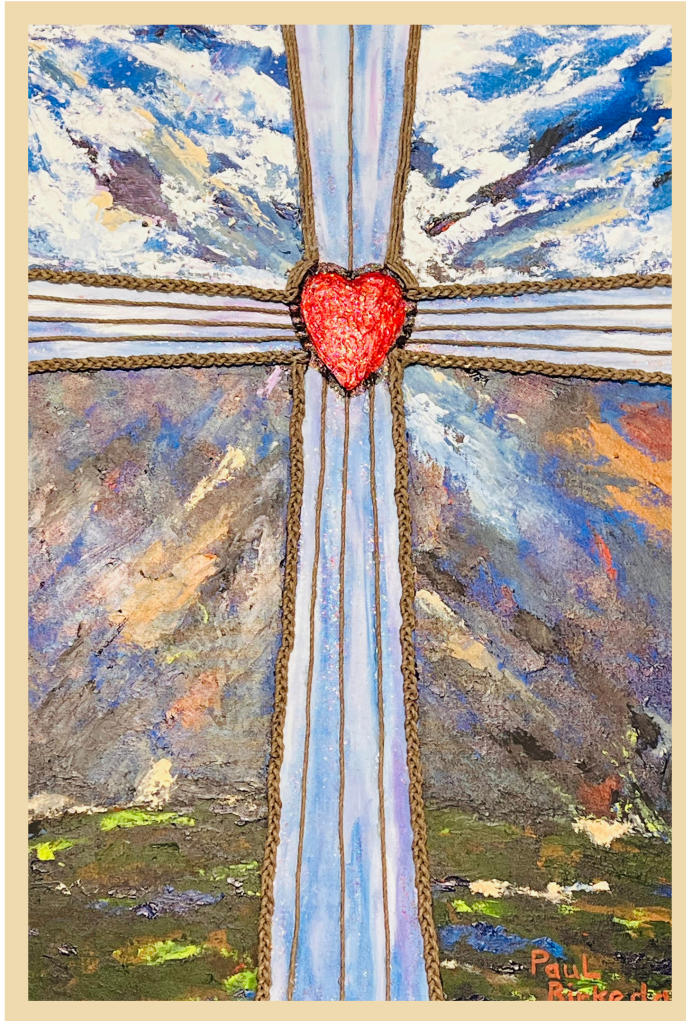


# Synod Gathering Worship



*Our cover art has been created by Pastor Paul Birkedal and is titled "We are More Than Victorious." You can read more about this piece at the back of your bulletin.*



North Carolina Synod  
ELCA



## GATHERING

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

### WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**PRELUDE** “Oh, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing” Carl Gläser arr. Mark Hayes

### INVOCATION

We gather in the name in which we are baptized - in the Triune name. God the Creator who makes us all in a beautifully diverse image, so that we may live in loving and affirming relationship. God the Redeemer, in whom we are centered, who offers reconciliation to our broken world. God the Sustainer, who inspires our gratitude to become generosity with the gifts we have been given. May the Holy Trinity + bless and guide our worship today. **Amen.**

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,  
who looks upon us in compassion,  
forgives our sin, and heals our lives. **Amen.**

Have mercy, O God,

**against you, you alone, we have sinned.**

**In your compassion, cleanse us from our sin and take away our guilt.**

**Create in us a new heart and give us a steadfast spirit. Do not cast us away, but fill us with your Holy Spirit and restore your joy within us. Amen.**

As high as heaven is above earth, so vast is God’s love for you.

As far as east is from west,

so far God removes your sin from you, renewing your life through Jesus Christ.

Blessed be God who crowns us with mercy and love.

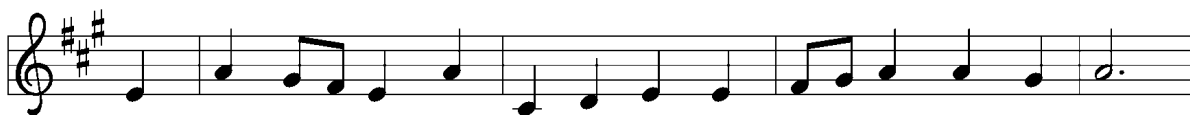
**Blessed be God forever.**

# GATHERING SONG

“O, Day of Rest and Gladness” ELW 521



1 O day of rest and glad - ness, O day of joy and light,  
2 On you, at earth's cre - a - tion, the light first had its birth;  
3 To - day on wea - ry na - tions the heav'n - ly man - na falls;  
4 New grac - es ev - er gain - ing from this our day of rest,



O balm for care and sad - ness, most beau - ti - ful, most bright:  
on you, for our sal - va - tion, Christ rose from depths of earth;  
to ho - ly con - vo - ca - tions the sil - ver trum - pet calls,  
we reach the rest re - main - ing to spir - its of the blest.



on you the high and low - ly, through a - ges joined in tune,  
on you, our Lord vic - to - rious the Spir - it sent from heav'n;  
where gos - pel light is glow - ing with pure and ra - diant beams  
We sing to you our prais - es, O Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son;



sing, “Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly,” to the great God tri - une.  
and thus on you, most glo - rious, a three - fold light was giv'n.  
and liv - ing wa - ter flow - ing with soul - re - fresh - ing streams.  
the church its voice up - rais - es to you, blest Three in One.

Text: Christopher Wordsworth, 1807–1885, alt.

Music: ELLACOMBE, German melody, 18th cent.; adapt. X. L. Hartig, *Melodien zum Mainzer Gesangbuche*, 1833

## 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.**

## HYMN OF PRAISE



1 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;  
2 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;  
3 Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;



yours is the prom - ise, the bless - ing, the birth.  
yours the ho - san - nas, the dy - ing, re - birth.  
yours the a - noint - ing, the ra - di - ant worth.



Ours the re - joic - ing for Word giv - en frame;  
Ours the re - joic - ing for na - ture re - claimed;  
Ours the re - joic - ing for spir - its a - flame;



ours the thanks - giv - ing to your ho - ly name.



Ours be the tell - ing of deeds great - ly done;



yours be the glo - ry, O God, yours a - lone.

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-living God, throughout time you free the oppressed, heal the sick, and make whole all that you have made. As we come together at this Synod Gathering, remind us of your presence, remind us of the ways you are working in us, help us to see that because of you we are more through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**



**WORD** We hear the Word of God in Scripture, preaching, and song.

## **FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 5:12-15**

Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 4:5-12**

We do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.



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



Our hearts burn with - in us as you open to us the scriptures.

## GOSPEL: Mark 2:23—3:6

The Holy Gospel according to Mark, the second chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

One sabbath [Jesus] was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?” And he said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions.” Then he said to them, “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.”

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, “Come forward.” Then he said to them, “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

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

## SERMON

**Bishop Timothy Marcus Smith**

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

## Faith Begins By Letting Go



- 1 Faith be - gins by let - ting go, giv - ing up what had seemed sure,
- 2 Faith en - dures by hold - ing on, keep - ing mem-'ry's roots a - live
- 3 Faith ma - tures by reach - ing out, stretch - ing minds, en - larg - ing hearts,



tak - ing risks and press - ing on, though the way feels less se - cure:  
so that hope may bear its fruit; prom - ise - fed, our souls will thrive,  
shar - ing strug - gles, liv - ing prayer, bind - ing up the bro - ken parts;



pil - grim - age both right and odd, trust - ing all our life to God.  
not through mer - it we pos - sess but by God's great faith - ful - ness.  
till we find the com - mon - place ripe with wit - ness to God's grace.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

Music: RATISBON, J. G. Werner, *Choralbuch*, 1815

Text © 1996 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved.

Duplication in any form prohibited without securing permission from copyright administrator or reporting usage under valid license.

## **COMMISSIONING OF NC SYNOD AUTHORIZED LAY PREACHERS**

After prayerful consideration, we certify that:

**Nina Allen, Meg Fielding, Kathy Jo McLean, and Lucille Vogel**

have been prepared to work as Lay Preachers in the NC Synod. Our Lord, who came among us as a servant, calls us to faith and a life of loving service to our neighbor. You stand among us as those called to render a particular service, a gift from God to inspire us to love and good works.

*A reading from Romans:*

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”

*A reading from 1 Peter:*

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever.”

Will you assume this ministry in the confidence that it comes from God?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you be diligent in your study of the Holy Scriptures and faithful in prayer?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you trust in God’s care, seek to grow in love for those you serve, strive for excellence in your skills, and adorn the gospel of God with a godly life?

I will and I ask God to help me.



People of God, will you receive these lay preachers into this ministry as those sent to serve in the church of Jesus Christ?

**We will, and we ask God to help us.**

DW: Will you pray for them, help and honor them for their work's sake, and strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ in all things?

**We will, and we ask God to help us.**

I commission you as Lay Preachers in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Grant them joy and a spirit of bold trust, that their work may stir up each of us to a life of faithfulness. Strengthen and bless them that they may boldly proclaim the good news of salvation and reconciliation. Fill them with wisdom and patience, with love, and with faithfulness to your word, that they may with gladness preach, teach, comfort, and guide your people to maturity in Christ Jesus through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior, and Lord. **Amen.**

People of God, let us welcome our new Lay Preachers in the name of Christ.

1 This lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;  
 2 Ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;  
 3 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;

oh, oh,

this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;  
 ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;  
 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;

oh,

this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine,  
 ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine,  
 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine,

oh,

let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.  
 let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.  
 let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

For the holy catholic church, that, filled with your love, it may hunger for truth and thirst after righteousness. Strengthen our ecumenical partnerships, help us to work collaboratively, help us to celebrate and work to be the church together. God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all ministers of Word and Sacrament; for all ministers of Word and Service; for Lay Preachers and SAMs. For our bishops, Elizabeth and Tim, that, together with all those responsible for the care and nurture of your people, they may support one another in serving Christ. We pray for those who are preparing for ordination, those discerning a call, those on sabbatical, for chaplains, those on leave from call, and those who continue to answer your call each day. Help all those who serve to know that their labor in the Lord is not in vain. God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the mission of the church, that in faithful witness it may proclaim the gospel and, in humble love, serve all in need. We give thanks for dedicated volunteers, congregation councils, and outreach ministries. We give you thanks for the vital congregations of this synod and the ministry they are engaged in. We thank you for our mission congregations. God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the nations of the world and their leaders, that they may work for justice and promote the dignity and freedom of every person. We pray especially for a ceasefire between Ukraine and Russia and Palestine and Israel. Help us to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, the lonely, the forgotten, and all who suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger; that they may be relieved and protected: We pray for all those we name out loud or in the silence of our hearts. God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

## PEACE

May the peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

## OFFERING

Our offering today is to support the 14 campus ministries of the NC Synod. We are more together as a synod because of these intentional communities in our synod.

You can give in the offering plate or online w/ the QR Code



## OFFERTORY

“Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”  
Anthony Showalter arr. Mark Hayes

## OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray, God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is sure. Word and water, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Receive the gifts we bring, and nourish us to proclaim your abiding love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. Amen.



**MEAL**

We share at Christ's table together.

## DIALOGUE

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.**

## PREFACE

It is good and joyous when we come together in worship, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Parent, almighty and eternal God.

In the generosity of your heart, you bestowed the Holy Spirit on those you made your adopted children by uniting them to your Only Begotten Son. This same Spirit, as the Church came to birth, opened to all peoples the knowledge of God and brought together many unique people through the gift of relationship. Therefore, overcome with the promise of the resurrection, every land, every people exults in your praise and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and



God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your



glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the



Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.



Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

When the time was right, God sent Jesus to be among us. Born into this life, through Mary, growing, seeing Your grace revealed in all things, Jesus laughed with those who laughed and mourned with those who mourned.

Today, we remember, joined here today with their families, with love and thanksgiving the rostered leaders who joined the church triumphant in our synod over the past year:

**The Rev. Ted Goins, Sr.**  
**The Rev. Dr. Carl McKenzie**  
**The Rev. Thomas E. Nelson, Jr.**  
**The Rev. Charles R. Huggins**  
**The Rev. Glenn Reichley**  
**The Rev. Carl Fisher**  
**The Rev. Dr. Robert G. Walker**  
**The Rev. Charlie McManus**  
**The Rev. Earl McCombs, Jr.**  
**The Rev. Michael Frye**

We give thanks for their ministry and thank you for having them preside at altars across our synod and inviting more people to your table. We remember them as we gather today.

Through Your love, Jesus healed the sick, Jesus welcomed the outcast, Jesus challenged those in power and the structures that kept them there.

In the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus laughs and cries, heals and welcomes, challenges, and loves, again and again and again.

We remember together that, on the night before he was taken to be tortured to death on a cross, Jesus sat with his disciples and ate with them in a meal of remembrance. Jesus took a loaf of bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take this – all of you – and eat it. This is my Body. Given for you. Each time you eat it, remember me."

Close to the meal's end, he took a cup filled with wine, asked Your blessing upon it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

“Take this—all of you—and drink it. This cup is a new covenant in my blood, Shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. Each time you drink it, remember me.” So we, his disciples, eat bread and drink wine—and remember that we are more together—in the sharing of this meal when we come together in worship.

We are more forgiven, more loved, and we are more because of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus and this Holy Meal.

Together we remember in the language of our heart us the prayer that Jesus taught us:

### **THE 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.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

We are here because Jesus has called us—strangers and friends, locals and visitors, believers and doubters, the certain and the curious.

It is always a mixed company that Jesus gathers and invites to his table where, in bread and wine, he meets us and through him we, who are different,

We are joined to each other. We are more together at this table.

So come, not because you understand, but because you are understood.

Come, not because of how you feel, but because God has food for you.

Come, not because you deserve a place, but because Jesus invites you, just as you are.

Join us now in this meal where Jesus reminds us that we are more.

## COMMUNION

This is Christ's table and all are welcome to commune this day. We will commune by intinction. You will receive gluten free bread and dip it into either the wine or juice vessel. Please follow the directions of the usher to the nearest communion station. If you are unable to come forward for communion please raise your hand and our ushers will have communion brought to you. If you would prefer not to commune and would prefer to receive a blessing instead, simply inform the person at your station.

## COMMUNION HYMNS

"Be Known to Us" ACS



Be known to us, Lord Je - sus, in the break - ing of the bread.



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



Be known to us, Lord Je - sus, in the break - ing of the bread.



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



COMMUNION MUSIC

“All Are Meant to Be” Tom Eure

3

1. With o - pen hands we will come Just like  
 2. Lamb of God you take a - way All the  
 3. The tab - les set, sin - dis - missed E - ven  
 4. Hal - le - lu - ia Hal - le - lu - ia

7

so man - y have done At your tab - le we are one Great com - mu -  
 sions of the day By your side we long to stay lead the way  
 Ju - das and his kiss On - ly through the Eu - cha - rist Do we know  
 lu - ia Hal - le - lu - ia Hal - le - lu - ia

11

- nion has be - gun With this bread and with this  
 - a love like this Great Cre - a - tor Christ the  
 - - - - - Love in - car - nate Bread Of  
 - - - - - Hal - le - lu - ia

15

wine I ac - cept a love Di - vine Gi - ven free - ly it is  
 Son Ho - ly Spir - it three in one Your feast spread for ev' - y -  
 Life Love be - cause nev - er in spite Salva - tions cup it is  
 ia Hal - le - lu - ia Hal - le - lu - ia

19

mine Love Di - vine it is mine Hum - bly we  
 one Christ is pres - ent none are shunned  
 right We are bathed in your light  
 ia Hal - le - lu - ia

23

lift this song Re - newed our chains are gone. Your gift of

27

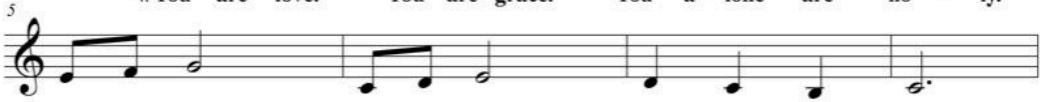
Grace sets free All we are meant to be.

2

# "We Come Praising You, God" Tom Eure



1. You are love. You are grace. You a - lone are ho - ly.  
2. Sing with praise. Sing with joy. Sing with hope un - bound - ed.  
3. We are bound in your love. Each of us your chil - dren.  
4. You are love. You are grace. You a - lone are ho - ly.



Hear our song; meet us here, here in this place,  
Let each note show our hearts brim - ming with love.  
Hand in hand, we ex - alt Your ho - ly name.  
Hear our song; meet us here, here in this place.



Great Cre - a - tor, Christ the Sav - ior,



Par - ent, Reb - el, Spi - rit, Love.



Here we stand as faith - ful dis - ci - ples;



heart to song we come prais - ing you God.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

Living God, as the disciples ate and drank with their risen Lord, we have been nourished with the very presence of Christ. Through this meal may we be strengthened to keep your word and to proclaim the power of your love in Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**



## **SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

## **BLESSING**

May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, remind you that you are more in the abiding love of Christ.

The blessing of God, Sovereign,  $\mp$  Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always.

**Amen.**

# SENDING SONG

## “Sing Out, Earth and Skies” W&P 126

Leader All



1 Come, O God of all the earth: come to us, O  
2 Come, O God of wind and flame: fill the earth with  
3 Come, O God of flash - ing light: twin - kling star and  
4 Come, O God of snow and rain: show - er down up -  
5 Come, O Jus - tice, come, O Peace: come and shape our

Leader



Righ - teous One; come, and bring our love to birth:  
righ - teous - ness; teach us all to sing your name:  
burn - ing sun; God of day and God of night:  
on the earth; come, O God of joy and pain:  
hearts a - new; come and make op - pres - sion cease:

All



in the glo - ry of your Son.  
may our lives your love con - fess.  
in your light we all are one.  
God of sor - row, God of mirth.  
bring us all to life in you.

*Refrain*



Sing out, earth and skies! Sing of the God who



loves you! Raise your joy - ful cries!



Dance to the life a - round you!

Text: Marty Haugen  
Music: SING OUT, Marty Haugen

Text and music © 1985 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Remember you are more!

**Thanks be to God!**

**POSTLUDE** “This Little Light of Mine” African American spiritual, arr. Chuck Mahronic.

**From [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com).**

**Copyright © 2024 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.**

**CCLI #11534973**

**OneLicense #A-735307**



# Synod Gathering Closing Worship

This worship has been lovingly prepared by youth and youth ministry professionals and uses the 2024 Youth Gathering “Created to Be,” theme materials. The daily themes are created to be: brave, authentic, free, and disruptive.



**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as people of God

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

God is our light and our salvation; whom shall we fear?

**We are created to be brave.**

Christ shines through our unique gifts, giving glory to God.

**We are created to be authentic.**

The Spirit transforms us through God's Word, renewing Christ's presence among us.

**We are created to be free.**

God is calling us to lives of justice, following the example of Jesus.

**We are created to be disruptive.**

Guided by the Spirit, we love others as God loves us.

**We are created to be disciples.**

## OPENING SONG

“How Great is Our God” Chris Tomlin

Verse 1:

The splendor of a King,  
clothed in majesty  
Let all the Earth rejoice,  
All the Earth rejoice  
He wraps himself in light  
And darkness tries to hide  
And trembles at His voice,  
Trembles at His voice

Chorus:

How great is our God, sing with me  
How great is our God, and all will see  
How great, how great is our God

Verse 2:

Age to age He stands,  
And time is in His hands  
Beginning and the end,  
Beginning and the end  
The Godhead Three in One  
Father Spirit Son  
The Lion and the Lamb,  
The Lion and the Lamb

Chorus:

How great is our God, sing with me  
How great is our God, and all will see  
How great, how great is our God

Bridge:

Name above all names  
(how great is our God, sing with me)  
Worthy of our praise (how great is our  
God, and all will see)  
My heart will sing,  
How great is our God  
You're the name above all names  
(how great is our God, sing with me)  
You are worthy of our praise (how  
great is our God, and all will see)  
And my heart will sing  
How great is our God

Chorus:

How great is our God, sing with me  
How great is our God, and all will see  
How great, how great is our God  
How great is our God, sing with me  
How great is our God, and all will see  
How great, how great is our God  
How great is our God, sing with me  
How great is our God, and all will see  
How great, how great is our God

## THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, † one God, the wellspring of grace, our Easter and our joy. **Amen.**

Look, here is water! **Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

Immersed in the promises of baptism, let us give thanks for what God has done for us. We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning, your voice thundered over the deep and water became the essence of life. Adam and Eve beheld Eden's flowing rivers.

The ark carried your creation through the flood into a new day. Miriam led the dancing as your people passed through the sea into freedom's land.

Look, here is water! **Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

On a stormy sea, Jesus calmed the storm and walked on the water,  
On the last night before his death,  
Jesus stooped down, washing the feet of his beloved friends,  
In a desert pool the Ethiopian official entered your boundless baptismal life.

Look, here is water! **Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

At the river your beloved Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit.

By the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection you opened the floodgates of your reconciling love, freeing us to live as Easter people.

We rejoice with glad hearts, giving all honor and praise to you,  
through the risen Christ, our source of living water,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

**Amen.**

Look, here is water! **Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**



## **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**

Creator God,

You have called us all and created us to be unique. You have set us free; you love us as our authentic selves; you call us to be disruptive to bring about your kingdom on earth. Thank you for inviting us into a ministry of discipleship. Help us to embody your love for the sake of the world. **Amen.**



## **WORD**

We hear the Word of God in Scripture, preaching, and song.

## **READING: Romans 8: 31-38**

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;  
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## **READING Psalm 139: 1-18**

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.

**You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.**

**Even before a word is on my tongue,**

O Lord, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

**Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?**

**If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.**

If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.

**If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and night wraps itself around me,” even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.**

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

**My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.**

**Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book, you wrote about all the days that were formed for me, when none of them yet existed.**

How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!

How vast is the sum of them!

try to count them—they are more than the sand; I have come to the end. I am still with you.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

Deacon Beka Forst, Synod Gathering Champion, Holy Comforter Belmont

## SERMON SONG

“Reckless Love” Cory Asbury

Verse 1:

Before I spoke a word, You were singing  
over me, You have been so, so good to me  
Before I took a breath,  
You breathed Your life in me  
You have been so so kind to me

Chorus:

Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending,  
reckless love of God  
Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found,  
leaves the 99  
And I couldn't earn it, I don't deserve it, still  
You give yourself away  
Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending,  
reckless love of God

Verse 2:

When I was Your foe, still Your love fought  
for me  
You have been so, so good to me  
When I felt no worth, You paid it all for me  
You have been so, so kind to me

Chorus:

Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending reckless  
love of God  
Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found,  
leaves the 99  
And I couldn't earn it I don't deserve it, still You  
give yourself away  
Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending reckless  
love of God

Bridge:

There's no shadow You won't light up  
, Mountain You won't climb up  
Coming after me  
There's no wall You won't kick down, Lie You  
won't tear down  
Coming after me (3X)

Chorus:

Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending reckless  
love of God  
Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found,  
leaves the 99  
I couldn't earn it, I don't deserve it, still You give  
yourself away  
Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending reckless  
love of God

## **INSTALLATION OF DEANS**

### **CREED**

Let us profess our faith using the words of the Apostles' Creed:

**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 THE PEOPLE**

**"Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying"**

**Lord, listen to your children praying,  
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;  
Lord, listen to your children praying,  
Send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.**

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

Lord, you make us to be brave. Like the disciples, though, we know what it is to be afraid. Like the disciples, we know what it is to carry around our doubts. Help us to be brave enough to follow you.

Lord, you crafted us to be authentic. Your creativity knows no bounds and that is reflected in the diversity of your world. May we be united in your church reflecting and celebrating our diversity. May we see your handiwork within us and the gifts that all have to offer. Send your Holy Spirit to blow through your congregations, so your people may be their authentic selves in sharing the Gospel.

Lord, you have created us to be free. We lift to you the world that faces war, division, and destruction. Show your steadfast love without regard to borders, barriers, or human-made divisions. Bring your presence to this place and to all people who witness the effects of war daily, especially Israel, Palestine, Ukraine, Russia, and all who long for peace. Infuse your justice in every nation of the world that all may experience the peace that only you can bring.

Together, we sing...

### **“Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying”**

Lord, you fashioned us to be disruptive. You came into this world to love and teach, heal and instruct. Yet, you also came to turn the core ideas and thoughts of the world upside down. You brought a disruption to ways of thinking and living life. You call us to act counterintuitively to the world. Give us the clarity to know and act when you call us to be disruptive for the sake of your kingdom and our neighbors.

Lord, you are forming us to be your disciples. You call us to follow you. We give you thanks for bishops, especially Bishop Tim Smith, pastors, rostered leaders, teachers, ministers, and all who you call to service. Equip all the baptized with the gifts needed to share this witness to our community, state, region, and throughout the world. Guide this church in the path you lay out before us. Empower us to meet the needs of those around us.

You anointed your Son with the Holy Spirit and, with power. Encourage us to be disciples, who are ministering care, outreach, and healing in this broken world. We pray for all who are sick or hospitalized, especially those who we name in our hearts and on our lips at this time.

(We now invite you to speak aloud the names of those for whom you are praying.)

Into your hands, most gracious and merciful God, we entrust to you all for whom we pray, trusting in your constant presence and living in your abiding love, through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord, and we sing our amen...

**“Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying”**

## **PEACE**

May the peace of Christ be with you always . **And also with you.**  
Let us share Christ’s peace with one another!

## **OFFERING**

Our offering today is to support the Children, Youth, and Family ministries of the NC Synod. We are more together as a synod because of our children and youth and the gifts they share with the Church.

You can give in the offering plate or online w/ the QR Code



## **OFFERING SONG** “Amazing Grace, My Chains are Gone” Chris Tomlin

### Verse 1

Amazing grace how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now I'm found  
Was blind, but now I see  
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
And grace my fears relieved  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed

### Chorus:

My chains are gone, I've been set free  
My God, my Savior has ransomed me  
And like a flood His mercy reigns  
Unending love, Amazing grace

### Verse 2:

The Lord has promised good to me  
His word my hope secures  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures

### Chorus:

My chains are gone, I've been set free  
My God, my Savior has ransomed me  
And like a flood His mercy reigns  
Unending love, Amazing grace  
My chains are gone, I've been set free  
My God, my Savior has ransomed me  
And like a flood His mercy reigns  
Unending love, Amazing grace

### Verse 3:

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow  
The sun forbear to shine  
But God, who called me here below  
Will be forever mine, will be forever mine  
You are forever mine

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Jesus, Bread of life,  
you have set this table with your very Self and called us to the feast of plenty.  
Gather what has been sown among us, and strengthen us in this meal.  
Make us to be what we receive here, your body for the life of the world.

**Amen.**

## COMMUNION

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.**

Blessed are you, O God. Before our beginnings, you have always been, the three-in-one being who was and is and is to come. From before time, you have been dreaming us up, imagining a world, forming us into creatures who might come to love you in return. By your breath and with your hands, you made us from the dust of the earth and have written us into the long story of your love.

## WORDS OF PROMISE

Around a table with the ones you called to carry on your story, you, Jesus Christ, took bread, gave thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to your disciples, saying:

"This is my body, given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me."

Send your Holy Spirit upon this bread and upon us, we pray.

Take, bless, break, and give US,

that we might be your body in the world.

After the meal had ended, you, Jesus, took the cup of wine.

Again, you gave thanks and praise, and gave the cup to your disciples, saying,

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, poured out for you and for ALL people for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

Send your Holy Spirit upon this cup and upon us, we pray.

Take, bless, pour, and give US,

that we might be your life flowing for the world.

## COMMUNION INSTRUCTIONS

This is Christ's table and all are welcome to commune this day. We will commune by intinction. You will receive gluten free bread and dip it into either the wine or juice vessel. Please follow the directions of the usher to the nearest communion station. If you are unable to come forward for communion please raise your hand, and our ushers will have communion brought to you. If you would prefer not to commune and would prefer to receive a blessing instead, simply inform the person at your station.



## COMMUNION SONGS “Oceans, (Where Feet May Fail)” Hillsong United

Verse 1:

You call me out upon the waters The great  
unknown where feet may fail  
And there I find You in the mystery In  
oceans deep my faith will stand

Chorus:

And I will call upon Your Name And keep  
my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise  
My soul will rest in Your embrace For I am  
Yours and You are mine

Verse 2:

Your grace abounds in deepest waters  
Your sovereign hand will be my guide  
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds  
me You've never failed and You won't start  
now

Chorus:

So I will call upon Your Name And keep my  
eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise  
My soul will rest in Your embrace For I am  
Yours and You are mine, oh

Bridge:

And You are mine, oh  
Spirit lead me where my trust is without  
borders  
Let me walk upon the waters Wherever You  
would call me  
Take me deeper than my feet could ever  
wander  
And my faith will be made stronger In the  
presence of my Saviour (x4)  
Chorus:  
I will call upon Your Name  
Keep my eyes above the waves  
My soul will rest in Your embrace  
I am Yours and You are mine

## “Sanctuary” Thompson

Lord prepare me, to be a sanctuary  
Pure and holy tried and true  
with thanksgiving  
I'll be a living sanctuary for you

## **POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

Shepherding God,

You have prepared a table before us and nourished us with your love. Send us forth from this banquet to proclaim your goodness and share the abundant mercy of Jesus, our redeemer and friend. **Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

Brave, authentic, free, and disruptive siblings: You have been created to use your voice, to be a presence of hope, to let your actions reveal the love of Christ throughout God's creation. May the blessing of God almighty, creator,+ redeemer, and sustainer, send you forth to do-amazing things as creative and faithful disciples. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

## SENDING SONG

“1000 Reasons” Matt Redman

Chorus:

Bless the Lord oh my soul, Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before, Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name

Verse 1

The sun comes up, It's a new day dawning  
It's time to sing Your song again  
Whatever may pass  
And whatever lies before me  
Let me be singing  
When the evening comes

Chorus:

Bless the Lord oh my soul, Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before, Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name

Verse 2:

You're rich in love And You're slow to anger  
Your name is great And Your heart is kind  
For all your goodness I will keep on singing  
Ten thousand reasons For my heart to find

Chorus:

Bless the Lord oh my soul, Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before, Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name

Bridge:

Bless You Lord And on that day  
When my strength is failing  
The end draws near  
And my time has come  
Still my soul will Sing Your praise unending  
Ten thousand years  
And then forevermore, Forevermore

Chorus:

Bless the Lord oh my soul, Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before, Oh my soul (3X)

Jesus I will worship Your Holy name  
Worship Your Holy name

## DISMISSAL

Go in Peace, love your neighbor! **Thanks Be to God!**

From [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com).

Copyright © 2024 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.  
CCLI #11534973  
OneLicense #A-735307

## **SERVING IN WORSHIP**

### **Opening Worship**

**Presiding:** The Rev. Danielle DeNise, Director of Evangelical Mission  
The Rev. Margaret Herz-Lane, member, Lord of Life, Garner

**Preaching:** Bishop Timothy Marcus Smith

### **Assisting in Worship**

**Synod Staff:** The Rev. CeCee Mills, The Rev. Alfredo Oviedo, The Rev. Cassie Overcash, The Rev. Phil Tonnesen, and Deacon Wendy Roberts

### **Synod Gathering Chaplains:**

The Rev. Carl Rosenberg and Deb Rosenberg, SAM St. Mark's, Lumberton

### **Advanced Lay Ministry Program Leaders:**

The Rev. Christina Auch, Grace, Hendersonville; The Rev. Mark Fitzsimmons, interim, Advent, Spindale

### **Musicians From Trinity Sanford:**

Lynn Buckner, Jana Draper (keyboard), The Rev. Ann Kelly, Gregory Lewis (drums), Tamara Lewis (keyboard)  
Todd Lewis, Sherie Moses, Jes Sloan, Sam Sloan

### **Musicians From Morning Star Matthews:**

Tom Eure and Amelia Osborne

**The Synod Gathering worship team thoughtfully prepared this worship:** Deacon Laura Alexander, The Rev. Todd Cutter, The Rev. Ben Kifer, and the Rev. Christy Lohr Sapp. Tamara Lewis selected the music.

**Portions of this liturgy were written by:** The Rev. Ben Kifer and The Rev. Cassie Overcash

We used **All Creation Sings, Setting 12** for this worship service. All Creation Sings is a supplemental hymnal to Evangelical Lutheran Worship. This resource contains expansive hymns and liturgies that invite us to join our voices with God's whole creation. We hope you will consider trying this resource out in your congregation.

## **Closing Worship**

**Presiding:** The Rev. Melody Simpkins, Cross and Crown, Matthews

**Preaching:** Deacon Beka Forst, Holy Comforter, Belmont

**Assisting:** The Youth of the NC Synod

**Installing:** Bishop Timothy Marcus Smith and The Rev. Phil Tonnesen

**Musicians:** Gabe Simpkins, Will Taylor, Cole Zoutewell, Elizabeth Hollingsworth, Heather Webster, and Evan Van Horne

**This worship was thoughtfully prepared and written by:** Deacon Beka Forst, The Rev. Melody Simpkins, and The Rev. Cassie Overcash

**This worship uses the Created to Be theme materials from the ELCA.**

## **Our Gratitude**

Our set was creatively designed and built by Paul Sapp and Sam Miller.

We are so thankful for all the volunteers who have volunteered to usher, help with communion, and serve in other ways to make this event and these worship services possible.

We give thanks to Lenoir Rhyne-University and Pastor Todd Cutter for their hospitality.

## **About the Paraments**

The paraments used in worship were handwoven by Pastor Sharon Schulze for Our Savior Lutheran in Durham. Upon Our Savior's closure, the beauty of these paraments will live on in the NC Synod as a reminder of that congregation's legacy. The green paraments' double weave pattern creates a double-thickness cloth. On one side, a light border surrounds darker rectangles. The off-center cross motif reminds is of our call to reach out and share Good News with everyone we meet.

# **"We are More Than Victorious" Cover Art**

## Mixed Media

*Based on Romans 8:35-39 with Emphasis on v. 37*

We are more than victorious through Jesus' love in us!

I placed a heart at the center where the cross-pieces of the cross converge. The heart and cross stand out in bold contrast from the chaotic background which represents all that is listed in verses 38-39 of the created order, up and down, that could pull us away from God's love.

If you look carefully at the cross, you will see that the upper cross-piece differs from the others. It is bordered by three single strands of jute with a single strand in the middle coming down as if from heaven to touch the heart. On closer inspection, one might see the outward strands curve like hands to caress or bless the heart as does the love of the Creator for the Son.

The other cross-pieces are bordered by braided strands of jute. This represents the participation of our involvement in the cross of Christ and of the strength that we, as God's beloved, receive as we work together as God's people.

The three single strands within each of the cross-pieces going out and down from the heart represent the powerful work and direction of the Father, Son, and Spirit in the lives of all believers. The glitter that can be detected in these cross pieces spread out from the glitter of the heart of Christ and indicates the love and power that we are privileged to carry in our mission for the world!

"We are more than victorious" connected to the love of Christ!

Created by Pastor Paul Birkedal, retired, Hickory

March 2024