

First St. John Lutheran Church

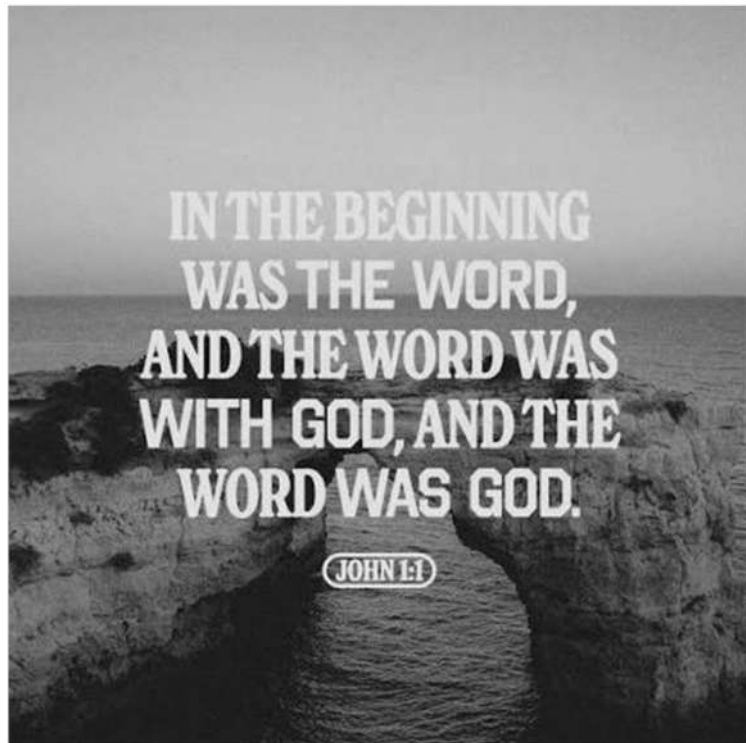
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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician
Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director of Music
Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir, Director
Jessica Miller, Office Manager



Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

September 6, 2026 - 9:00 am

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Creation In Christ Sunday

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! Through the Summer months we offer one service. Holy Communion will be celebrated every Sunday throughout the Summer.

9:00 am Worship

LIVESTREAM AND RECORDED WORSHIP: We livestream the service on our church website at www.firststjohn.com. Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website

SMILE! YOU'RE ON CAMERA: Please remember you may be on camera during the livestream and the recording of the service.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Please remember to silence your cell phone before church begins. Thanks!

NURSERY is not monitored during the summer months but you are welcome to sit with your child downstairs as needed. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

RESTROOMS are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

FLOWERS: If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the lounge. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

MEMORIALS: If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office.

ORDER OF WORSHIP—9:00 am

Prelude Dr. Anthony Pattin
Ringing of the Bell

Opening Hymn “All Creatures, Worship God Most High!” No. 835

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, whose compassion endures forever.

C: Amen

P: Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God,

C: we confess to you all our sins. Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves. In your mercy, call us back to you. Your yoke is easy and your burden is light. Restore us to dwell in your peace. In Christ’s name we pray, Amen.

P: Jesus says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” In the name of God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. Rest in God’s love.

C: Amen.

P: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share the peace of the Lord.

The congregation may greet one another by shaking hands, fist bumping, or any other form of greeting with the words, “Peace be with you.” We conclude the sharing of the peace by singing:

“Lord I Lift Your Name on High” No. 857

***“Lord I lift your name on high;
Lord I love to sing your praises,
I’m so glad you’re in my life,
I’m so glad you came to save us.***

***You came from heaven to earth to show the way.
From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay,
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky;
Lord, I lift your name on high.”***

Prayer of the Day

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.

P: Let us pray. O God, in whom we live and move and have our being, in Christ you created the worlds, and your Spirit breathes life into the universe. We praise you for your wondrous creation. Bless us and all your handiwork with your infinite light, and direct our lives to the care of this good earth, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

Announcements

Introduction

Since the seventh century, September 1 has symbolized the day of the creation of the world in the Byzantine tradition and has been the opening feast of its liturgical year (known as the Feast of the Indiction), in parallel with Rosh Hashanah marking the Jewish New Year. Creation in Christ celebrates the ongoing creation of the world in and through Christ, who sustains, unites, and holds all created things. We hear today of the triune God who creates all things: sun and moon, shining stars, sea monsters, creeping things and flying birds—and, yes, even human beings. God-in-Christ still takes care of all things and invites us to join in as caretakers of God's good creation.

FIRST READING: Genesis 1:1—2:4a

Reader: ¹ When God began to create the heavens and the earth, ² the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

Pastor: ⁴ And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

Cong: And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Reader: And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.”⁷ So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so.⁸ God called the dome Sky.

Cong: And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

*Reader:*⁹ And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.”

Pastor: And it was so.

*Reader:*¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas.

Pastor: And God saw that it was good.

*Reader:*¹¹ Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.”

Pastor: And it was so.

*Reader:*¹² The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it.

Pastor: And God saw that it was good.

Cong:¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

*Reader:*¹⁴ And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years,¹⁵ and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.”

Pastor: And it was so.

*Reader:*¹⁶ God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.¹⁷ God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth,¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness.

Pastor: And God saw that it was good.

Cong:¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

*Reader:*²⁰ And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.”

²¹ So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm and every winged bird of every kind.

Pastor: And God saw that it was good.

*Reader:*²² God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”

Cong:²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

*Reader:*²⁴ And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.”

Pastor: And it was so.

*Reader:*²⁵ God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind and the cattle of every kind and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind.

Pastor: And God saw that it was good.

*Reader:*²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

*Pastor:*²⁷ So God created humans in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

*Reader:*²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”²⁹ God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.”

Pastor: And it was so.

*Reader:*³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

Cong: And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Reader: ^{2:1} Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their multitude. ² On the sixth day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done.

Pastor: ³ So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

Cong: ^{4a} **These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.**

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 148 (congregation responds in **BOLD**)

¹ Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens;

praise him in the heights!

² **Praise him, all his angels;**

praise him, all his host!

³ Praise him, sun and moon;

praise him, all you shining stars!

⁴ **Praise him, you highest heavens**

and you waters above the heavens!

⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord,

for he commanded and they were created.

⁶ **He established them forever and ever;**

he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

⁷ Praise the Lord from the earth,

you sea monsters and all deeps,

⁸ **fire and hail, snow and frost,**

stormy wind fulfilling his command!

⁹ Mountains and all hills,

fruit trees and all cedars!

¹⁰ **Wild animals and all cattle,**

creeping things and flying birds!

¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples,

princes and all rulers of the earth!

¹² **Young men and women alike,**

old and young together!

¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord,

for his name alone is exalted;

his glory is above earth and heaven.

¹⁴ **He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the Lord!**

SECOND READING: Acts 17:22a, 24-28

In Athens, Paul faces the challenge of proclaiming the gospel to Greeks who know nothing of either Jewish or Christian tradition. He proclaims that the “unknown god” whom they worship is the true Lord of heaven and earth who will judge the world with justice through Jesus, whom God has raised from the dead.

^{22a} Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, ²⁴ “The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶ From one ancestor he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷ so that they would search for God and perhaps fumble about for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said,

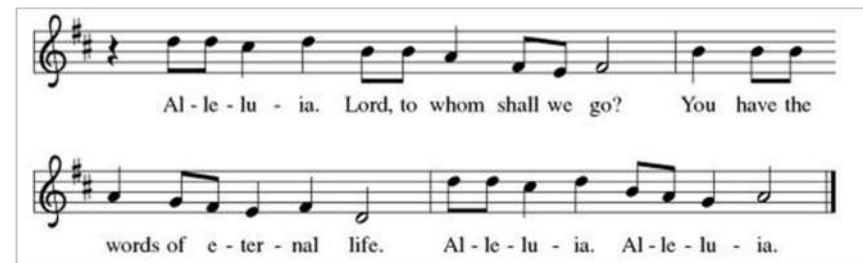
‘For we, too, are his offspring.’

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel Announcement

P: The Gospel according to St. John, Chapter 1.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: John 1:1-5

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

SERMON

Pastor Rayl

Sermon Hymn

"For the Fruit of All Creation"

No. 679

(Please stand)

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,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again 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.

Pastoral Prayer (Each petition concludes with this response)

P: Hear us, O Lord,

C: your mercy is great.

The Offering

Offertory Music

Dr. Anthony Pattin

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray. 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.

C: Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

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.

P: It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



P: In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

P: Again, after supper, He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

The Lord's Prayer *(prayed by all)*

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

P: The risen Christ invites us to this table.

C: Come, eat and be satisfied.

(Please be seated)

The Communion *(distribution will be continuous)*

All baptized Christians, believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord's table. Infants, children and others who have not been baptized are welcome to come to receive a blessing; please make an X with your arms across your chest."

**** Please be certain to fill our a communion record card then put it in the offering plate or hand it to the usher when directed to go up to receive the bread and wine.*

If you wish to receive apple juice instead of wine, place your hand over your shoulder as you approach the person distributing the wine.

(After all have received communion, please stand.)

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and sustain you in God's grace.

C: Amen.

Prayer after Communion

P: Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing

P: Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, (+) bless you now and always.

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn

"Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

No. 836

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Dr. Anthony Pattin

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Bob Haar
Sherrie Haar

READER

Susie Purewal

SOUND BOARD

Ross Church

FIND YOUR PLACE AT FIRST ST JOHN

Check anything that interests you. You can choose more than one—and you don't have to commit today.

MUSIC	■ Adult Choir ■ Bell Choir ■ Organ/Piano ■ Worship
FAITH & PRAYER	■ Prayer Chain ■ Adult Sunday School ■ J.A.M. ■ Readers ■ Youth
CHILDREN & YOUTH	■ Nursery ■ Scouting ■ VBS ■ Youth Ministry
HELPING OTHERS	■ Personal Needs Pantry ■ Feed Your Neighbor ■ WELCA ■ Bereavement
FRIENDSHIP & FELLOWSHIP	■ Hannah Circle ■ Rebecca Circle ■ Miriam Circle ■ Ruth Circle ■ Dartball
HANDS-ON / BEHIND THE SCENES	■ Quilters ■ Altar Guild ■ Library ■ VBS Team ■ Event Help
COMMUNITY	■ East Toledo outreach ■ Community partners ■ Other service
RECONNECTING	■ Worship ■ Coffee/conversation ■ Prayer ■ I want someone to contact me

Something else I would enjoy: _____

I'd like someone to contact me about: _____

Name (optional): _____ Phone/Email: _____

Remember: You don't have to do everything. Find one thing that fits you, try it, and see where it leads.

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY

Please purchase full size items.

dish soap	shampoo, child	disposable razors
paper towel	laundry soap	toothbrush, adult
toilet paper	fabric softener sheets	toothpaste, adult
tissues	body lotion	sanitary pads
deodorant	body soap	band aids
shampoo, adult		

This is a list of the items that will provide a month's worth of hygiene supplies to families or individuals in our neighborhood to help them stay clean and healthy. We always welcome any donations from our congregation members.

If you would like to donate items, please donate only full size products as sample sizes will not last a month. If you would prefer a Pantry volunteer to do the shopping for you, we welcome monetary donations. Please make out checks to First St. John Lutheran Church and write Personal Needs Pantry on the memo line.



SERMON NOTES:



September 6, 2026

CREATION IN CHRIST SUNDAY

From the Heart

"Forgive and forget" the proverb goes, but aren't we more likely to forgive and remember? Or not forgive at all? We keep score. Our capacity for remembering wrongs inflicted on us is enormous. That we are guilty of sin against others might seem less important than pointing out the ways in which we ourselves have been hurt. Fairness demands that we keep score, that we take notice of who has done what to whom. Forgiving means undoing our "moral economics"--the bookkeeping we rely on to keep life in balance.

Jesus tells a story about a king who wants to settle accounts. His slave owes him an incredible amount of money--millions of dollars. What does it mean to settle this account with forgiveness, to wipe the scoreboard clean? How do you make that much indebtedness disappear from the books?

This is a case study in Jesus' new economics. The only adequate way to settle our moral account is to internalize the debts we ourselves have incurred by our misdeeds against others. The moral record keeping which motivates Peter's initial question ("How often am I going to have to forgive?") will get in the way of this revolution. Jesus invites a transformation of the heart, a deep identification with the offender which allows us to experience our neighbor's pain as well as our own.

Perhaps we are capable of forgiving only to the extent that we ourselves have been forgiven! The new economics of the heart begins with an inner transformation generated by undeserved love. Forgiveness is meant to create a chain reaction that not only changes who we are but also alters how we deal with others. It begins from the forgiving heart of God and flows into us. It takes over inside us, pouring from our hearts into the lives of others.