Welcome to Christ Lutheran Church & Preschool

August 23, 2026
13th Sunday after Pentecost
Blessing of Backpacks & Blessing of Staff

Rev. Gail Heidtke

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Member of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
(ELCA – www.elca.org*)*

All Are Welcome – All the Time!

You do not need to be a member of this church or Lutheran to participate in any part of worship. If you wish to take communion, we ask that you desire a relationship with Jesus. His body and blood were given and shed for you.

Christ Lutheran Church & PreSchool is a community committed to the work of equity and inclusion, bringing justice and support for all of God's beloveds. We welcome those who are seeking God's love and grace for the first time or as a life-long believer. We welcome because Jesus shows us how to welcome, regardless of race, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, economic resources, relationship status, health challenges or anything else that too often divides us. It is in our welcome which we commit ourselves to being an anti-racist space, a space where we seek daily to deepen our work of inclusion in the life of our church. Our unity is in Christ. All are welcome here.

CHIMES

No announcements or prayer requests today.

WORDS OF WELCOME

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit that we may perfectly love you
and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

– Silence for reflection –

Most merciful God,

We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.
We have sinned against you in thought, word and deed,
by what we have done and what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ have mercy on us.
Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may
delight in your will and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin,
and made us alive together in Christ. By grace we have been saved.
In the name of + Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.
Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit
that Christ may live in our hearts. **Amen.**

SONG: Take My Life, That I May Be, #685

Printed on bulletin insert or in hymnal

Take my life, that I may be, consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands and let them move, at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet and let them be, swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice and let me sing, always, only, for my King;
take my lips and let them be, filled with messages from thee.

Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect and use, ev'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour, at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself, and I will be, ever, only, all for thee.

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

O God, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING OF PRESCHOOL MINISTRY STAFF
(Staff members come to the front)

We join together in prayer to honor, thank and lift up our PreSchool Ministry staff members: Kelsey Ebling, Jen Gitzinger-Mills, Stephanie Lazzari, Younbi Lee, Charlotte Lehmann, Elise Nelson, Christine Nitz, Julie Sofranko, Jen Termyn and director Stephanie Vertucci.

As part of Christ Lutheran Church & PreSchool, you have been called to teach and lead this important ministry. You are being asked to commit yourself to your role as a teacher, guide, leader and encourager – helping to create a place where all children and their families may feel welcome to learn about God's message of love and grace. In this role, you have also been called to be diligent in your own faith and prayer life. **PreSchool Ministry Staff,** if you are able to accept this call, please answer, "We will, and we ask God to help us."

Staff: We will, and we ask God to help us.

Congregation, today we joyfully receive these people who stand before you as ministers in our community. Will you faithfully support this ministry – those who serve and those who are served – with your actions and your prayers? If you are able to accept this call, please answer, "We will, and we ask God to help us."

All: We will, and we ask God to help us.

Father in heaven, thank you for these dedicated, gifted people whom you have called to Christ Lutheran PreSchool. We marvel at their abilities and their patience – at their enthusiasm and their expertise – at their love for all of the children, and their love for You. We lift each of them up today, asking that you continue to bless them with energy and strength and the ability to reach each child given to their care. May the children of our preschool come away knowing not only their alphabet, but more importantly the boundless and unending love found in You. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(We ask the congregation to show their appreciation as each staff member is provided with a small token – faith prayer stones and small crosses that can be kept in purse or pocket.)

READING – Isaiah 51:1-6

Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were hewn and to the quarry from which you were dug.

Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah, who bore you, for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many.

For the Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation, for a teaching will go out from me and my justice for a light to the peoples.

I will bring near my deliverance swiftly; my salvation has gone out, and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope.

Lift up your eyes to the heavens and look at the earth beneath, for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats, but my salvation will be forever, and my deliverance will never be ended.

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

RESPONSIVE READING – Psalm 138

I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;

I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name
for your steadfast love and your faithfulness,

for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.
On the day I called, you answered me;
you increased my strength of soul.

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord,
for they have heard the words of your mouth.

They shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
for great is the glory of the Lord.

For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly,
but the haughty he perceives from far away.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies;
you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me.

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands.

READING – Romans 12:1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, on the basis of God's mercy, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; **t**he encourager, in encouragement; the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

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

We invite children, caregivers, students of all ages, teachers and other school staff to come forward for a brief message and blessing.
If you have your backpack or book bag, you can bring that with you. Otherwise just bring yourself

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Everyone, especially any children, older students or educators, are invited to the front for a brief message. If you have your backpack or book bag, please bring it with you for a blessing. But please bring yourself up so we may cover you with blessings for the new school year.

BACKPACK BLESSING

(Blessing not provided in bulletin)

Dear God, as we begin another year in school, we ask your blessing upon these backpacks and book bags and especially upon the children who will wear them. As they do the very important work of being students, bless them with eagerness to learn, that their world may grow large. Bless them with respect for teachers and fellow students, that they may form healthy relationships. Bless them with love for nature, that they may become caretakers of your creation. Bless them with happiness when learning is easy and stick-to-it-iveness when learning is hard. Bless them with faith in Jesus as their best and closest friend. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY

(Children may leave service for a brief activity)

A brief activity is available for children (and guardians) who are interested. The group will return to worship after the sermon. Children are always welcome to remain in worship – their energy is appreciated. Books, color sheets, sketch pads and other items are also available in the entry.

– Please stand as you are able –

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (SUNG) – ELW 172

Halle, halle, halle – lujah. Halle, halle, halle – lujah.
Halle, halle, halle – lujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah!

THE GOSPEL – Matthew 16:13-20

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to You, O Christ.**

SERMON: Rev. Gail Heidtke

SONG: Blest Be the Tie that Binds, #656

Printed on bulletin insert or in hymnal

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
the unity of heart and mind is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts & our cares.

We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear,
and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.

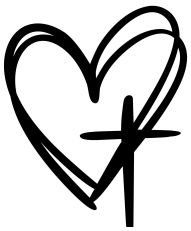
From sorrow, toil and pain, and sin we shall be free;
and perfect love and friendship reign through all eternity.

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 INTERCESSION *(on separate sheet)*

Merciful God… ***receive our prayer.***



PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**
– *Please share a greeting or sign of peace –*

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks & praise.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION *(Presider's book on altar)*

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 COMMUNION AT THE FRONT

All are welcome to receive the Real Presence of Christ in the bread and wine of Holy Communion. You do not need to be a member of this church or Lutheran to receive the sacrament. We ask that you desire a relationship with Jesus Christ. Those who are interested will be invited by an usher to come up the center aisle to the front to receive Communion or a blessing. If you would like Communion brought to you, please let an usher know. You are also welcome to remain in your seat to pray. Welcome!

Today we will offer both traditional distribution of bread and wine as well as single-serving Communion kits. Please choose as you feel comfortable. If you would like **Traditional Communion,** select an empty cup from the tray and come forward to receive a piece of bread in your open hand. The assistant will then pour wine into your cup. Your empty cup may be placed in the trays at each side as you return to your seat. **Single-serving kits** are available in the second tray. Select a sealed cup and bring it back to your seat to open and partake. Once at your seat, peel back the top layer to find the wafer, and then the bottom seal to drink. An usher will offer a basket to collect the empty container.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

BENEDICTION

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you.
May the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

SONG: Sent Forth by God's Blessing, #547

Printed on bulletin insert or in hymnal

Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The supper is ended. Oh, now be extended
the fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of Christ's teaching, receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.
Your grace shall incite us, your love shall unite us
to work for your kingdom and answer your call.

With praise and thanksgiving to God ever living,
the tasks of our everyday life we will face –
Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,
embracing God's children, the whole human race.
With your feast you feed us, with your light now lead us;
Unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving
give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Thank you for your presence!

Please enjoy refreshments and conversation.

Our PreSchool Open House will be held until 1 p.m.

In addition, our worship partners at South Lake Chinese Christian Church have invited us to their worship and picnic luncheon at the Deerpath Park shelter at the end of Warrington Road.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **PS Open House/Blessing of Backpacks** – Today we will pray over our PreSchool staff and bless backpacks, book bags and the children and adults who carry them. Followed by PS Open House/Meet Your Teacher from 11a to 1p.
- **We Welcome South Lake Chinese Christian Church** – We continue to worship at 9:30 a.m. while South Lake offers education time; South Lake will worship after us. Please hold this partnership in your prayers that we may all worship, praise and serve as God intends.
- **Sign up for Fall Preschool** with programs starting at age 2.5. Learn more at PreSchool.ChristlutheranVH.org or email info@PreschoolChristLutheranVH.org
- **Meals in a Bag** – 2 gal ziplocks with all the nonperishable ingredients needed to make a hearty meal – bags and ingredient list/recipe cards available in the Narthex or on our website. We will provide these as needed and encourage everyone to have a couple to hand out.
- **Stock the Pantries! – Non-Perishables Needed.** Bring your donations of nonperishable food, paper goods, hygiene supplies, etc. and we will deliver to local pantries, which need all they help they can get. Also collecting fresh milk, eggs, meat, produce for specific families.Thanks!
- **Sue's Pantry Special Request** – Rice, pasta, Mac & cheese, tuna, canned chicken, zip lock bags with after-school snacks.
- **Here to help.** Do you or someone you know need food or support, especially with the loss of benefits? Reach out to the church at ChristLutheranVH@aol.com or 847-367-5787**.**
- **Alert Whistles & Rights Cards** – On the bulletin table. To use or share as needed.
- **Donating to Victims of Flood, Earthquake, Fire, Drought, War** – ELCA's Lutheran Disaster Response is one of the oldest, most effective and most respected organizations for getting money where it can be put to good use. Donate at ELCA.org. There is also a link on our website under "WORK."
- **Scouting! – Keep our Scouts in Prayer** – Summer is a busy time for Scouting adventures. Please keep the youth and adults in your prayers. Christ Lutheran is the Charter Organization for Pack 273 & Troop 273. Programs for girls and boys ages Kindergarten through high school, building skills, making connections and having fun. Younger kids: committee.chair@Pack273VH.org. For older kids, email committeechair@troop273vh.net. Thanks to Holly & Bill Jones and their volunteers for their efforts in leading the groups. Thanks for supporting our Pack/Troop 273!
- **Sue's Pantry** – Sue has moved her pantry to a space in Arlington Heights. We will continue to collect anything needed to keep a home and family clean.
- **Love INC** – Housewares, nonperishables and volunteers. Know a family in need of a bundle of clothes or housewares? Give the details to Natalie! (https://loveinclakecounty.org/)
- **COOL Ministries** – We support the COOL pantry in Waukegan with non-perishables. Collection bins in hallway or give online. (CoolMinistries.org)
- **Prayer concerns?** Consider reaching out so that our network of Prayer Warriors can pray. You may remain anonymous. Email ChristLutheranVH@aol.com with your request. Would you join with us in prayer? Send an email to be included on the prayer mailing list. The task is simple-but-powerful – when time permits, open the email and read/pray with us.
- **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.** Thank you for being part of this community of faith. If you would like to support our service, we welcome donations, which can be provided by credit card or Paypal through the link at the bottom of our webpage, ChristLutheranVH.org. Thank you!