

**Service of Thanksgiving:  
37 Years of our Synod Home  
3:00 p.m. August 20, 2025**

**Gathering**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who spreads forth the heavens like a tent, who shelters our lives, who comes to make a home with us. **Amen.**

Friends in Christ: Today we give thanks to God for the ministry that has happened in and through this building, and for the staff who listened, equipped, supported, comforted, loved, served, and cared for the congregations, lay leaders, and rostered ministers of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA. This building was dedicated to God's glory on April 16, 1989. Today we mark a 37-year era housed in this entire building, and we look ahead to the new ways we are being called to steward this space as participants in God's mission.

**Hymn, Rise, Shine, You People – st. 1**

Rise, shine, you people, Christ the Lord has entered  
our human story, God in him is centered.

He comes to us by death and sin surrounded, with grace unbounded.

**Outdoors – by the trees, above the river**

*A reading from Psalm 98:* Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises... Let the sea roar and all that fills it, the world and those who live in it. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the Lord.

Let us pray.

O God, we praise you for the trees that have surround us in this park and on this hill, providing shade and peace for reflection. We thank you for the gift of water – for the waters of the Redwood and Minnesota Rivers, for the refreshment they give across this valley, and for the life they have given to our neighbors at the Upper Sioux and Lower Sioux Communities. Create in us such a sense of wonder and delight in all your gifts, that we receive them with gratitude, care for them with love, and generously share them with all your creatures. In the name of Jesus we pray. **Amen.**

**Letting Go**

*A reading from Ecclesiastes:* For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to keep, and a time to cast away.

*Phyllis Tickle, The Great Emergence:* The church goes through a “rummage sale” approximately every 500 years. It was her belief that we are currently “living in and through one of those five-hundred-year sales.”

Let us pray.

Gracious God, we give thanks for all the resources that have sustained ministry in this place. We have been blessed with so much. Now, some of these gifts have worn out, served their purpose; and we release them. Teach us to consider the new things you are doing in us and in your church in this time. Let us receive whatever else is to come with glad and generous hearts and to continue to steward faithfully all that you place in our hands, including the ministries of this synod. In the name of Jesus we pray. **Amen.**

**20 + C M B + 25 – The Blessing for Epiphany**

The tradition of Epiphany home blessings involves writing an inscription over the lintel of the main door to the outside. It refers to the year the inscription is made; the initials stand for the Latin blessing “Christe mansionem benedicat” and for the legendary names of the magi. We have passed under this blessing entering and leaving.

*A reading from Psalm 121:* The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth forevermore.

Let us pray.

O God, we thank you that you have watched over those who served here in all their going out, their coming in, and all the miles in-between. We pray for all who will enter and leave this place in the future. Keep all evil away from our door; and let all who enter know your hospitality, love, and peace. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

### **Baptismal Font & Tapestry**

*A reading from Romans:* All who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Let us pray.

O God, through the flood in the time of Noah, and through the waters of the Red Sea, you saved your people of old. Through the waters of baptism your people are born to new life and commissioned for service in Christ's name. May all the baptized in this synod and our companion synod in South Africa continue to give witness to your saving grace throughout the world. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

### **Offices – places of welcoming, conversation, study, administration, and communication**

*A reading from Romans:* Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

*A reading from Proverbs:* To get wisdom is to love oneself; to keep understanding is to prosper.

*A reading from Proverbs:* Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.

*A reading from Psalms:* May the graciousness of the Lord our God be upon us; prosper the work of our hands; prosper our handiwork.

Let us pray.

O God, you are the teacher who leads us to all truth and the source of our creativity. You fashioned our minds to imagine and our hands to shape new things. We thank you for all who served on synod staff and welcomed those who visited and met at this office, for the warmth and peace our staff have extended to them.

We give you thanks for the staff who have served your people here.

- Sarah Johnson, Sarah Hausken, Bill Elmstrom, Deb Kaardal;
- Donna Ihrke, Marlis Jacobson, Linda Fixsen, Linda Shaw, Carla Klawitter, Liza Fagen, Caitlin Kodet;
- Marcus Kunz, Joyce Piper, Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, Kathryn Skoglund
- Barbara Knutson, Stephanie Frey, Linda Pedersen, Steve Cook, Naomi Mahler
- Larry Wohlrabe, Jeff Engholm, Larry Strenge
- Darold Beekman, Charles Anderson, Stan Olson, Paul Ranum, Jon Anderson

All these used their knowledge to equip, help, support, and bring encouragement and healing to our congregations, rostered ministers, the ELCA, and your world. For all these, held in our hearts and in the stories we tell, serving elsewhere or singing in the heavenly chorus, we give you thanks.

Bless those who serve here now: Maggie Berggren, Tammy Schacher, Heather Culuris, Kristin Bakeberg, Seyward Ask, Troy Pflibsen, and Keith Klawitter. Continue to draw us together with your wisdom and use our technology for every good purpose. As you blessed Sarah and Abraham when they entertained angels unawares, use us to bless all who come to this place in the future. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

## **Kitchen / Break Room**

*A reading from the Psalms:* The eyes of all wait upon you, O LORD, and you give them their food in due season. You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, Creator of heaven and earth, for you give us food and drink to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad. We give thanks for the fellowship, prayers, conversations, and meals that have been received in this place. Make us grateful for all your mercies, and mindful of the needs of others. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen**

## **Prayers of Intercession**

For the one holy catholic and apostolic church in all times and places,  
of which this synod and its building have been a part,  
**we give our thanks and praise.**

For the men and women who served here,  
who made personal sacrifices in order for it to grow and flourish,  
and who used their talents and skills in building up a community of faith,  
**we give our thanks and praise.**

For this synod's ministries throughout its life,  
its gatherings for praise and prayer,  
its faithful administration of the means of grace,  
and its study of the scriptures,  
**we give our thanks and praise.**

For the work of mission this congregation has supported,  
for our local partners of ministry – especially Gloria Dei Lutheran Church,  
and for all the lives that have been affected by God's work through us,  
**we give our thanks and praise.**

For this building that has sheltered staff for 37 years,  
that the memory of this place will continue to inspire devotion to the God  
who makes all things possible,  
**we give our thanks and praise.**

For the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA,  
its present and past staff, bishops, and other leaders  
who helped your people know new life in the cross and resurrection of Christ,  
who remained constant in the face of conflict and challenges;  
for all those who moved away,  
and all who have died and now rest in you, we give you thanks,  
rejoicing that we are joined together in one eternal communion.  
worship together around the throne of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

### **Blessing**

May the witness of all who served here continue to live on as we take up our work in new ways.  
Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

## The Church of Christ, in Every Age



1 The church of Christ, in ev - 'ry age be - set by  
2 A - cross the world, a - cross the street, the vic - tims  
3 Then let the ser - vant church a - rise, a car - ing  
4 For he a - lone, whose blood was shed, can cure the  
5 We have no mis - sion but to serve in full o -



change, but Spir - it - led, must claim and test its  
of in - jus - tice cry for shel - ter and for  
church that longs to be a part - ner in Christ's  
fe - ver in our blood, and teach us how to  
be - dience to our Lord; to care for all, with -



her - i - tage and keep on ris - ing from the dead.  
bread to eat, and nev - er live be - fore they die.  
sac - ri - fice, and clothed in Christ's hu - man - i - ty.  
share our bread and feed the starv - ing mul - ti - tude.  
out re - serve, and spread his lib - er - at - ing word.

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000

Music: WAREHAM, William Knapp, 1698–1768

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