

Roots of Life Community, ELCA

Sunday, October 5, 2025

Sending Liturgy for Pastor Teri

It's a miracle! Multiple miracles! The waters of holy baptism have healed us. The body and blood of Jesus in holy communion have made us clean. We have died with Christ and been raised with him. For all this we have returned to offer thanks. From this place we are sent on our way rejoicing to share the good news.

Welcome

Pastor: This is the day that the Lord has made!

ALL: We will rejoice and be glad in it!

Remembrance of Baptism

In a time where there is too much water and not enough water. Tears sting our eyes and our cheeks flare hot with grief when we witness how greed sets the ocean aflame. Billows of smoke are our anger. Crops toasting dry, our heartbreak. Rush of rising water wiping away homes, our weeping. In our grief, here we are: Blood in our veins, riverbeds of our bodies. Air in our lungs, trees inhaling.

We tip cups of tea to our lips. We hear the sound of rain and can finally fall asleep. Some lucky days we might float in water with our faces to the sky, or take a hot shower smelling of soap. Can you see our sibling, the Earth-being, Jesus, waist-deep in the river saying, yes John, yes. This is why I came: to be immersed in what I am already made of—grief, anger, heartbreakingly beautiful joy.

The gift is being blessed by another with what's on hand. The gift is the sheer ability to receive the blessing in the first place. So today, at the water's edge, today with cupped hands, today with a light touch to your forehead, dipping your fingers into a bowl, watching the ripples spread out: remember.

Remember that the water brimming your cells to life is the same water that has been on this planet since conception. Cycling into ancient newness: tomato on a vine, body of a beetle, lapping of a lake, life pulsing in our hearts.

Beloved Interdependence. Remember your baptism. You are being made new over and over again. Remember, even in your grief, you are held in the Still Living Waters of Creation, determined, with hearts on fire, to bless Them back.

— Rev. Molly Bolton, enfleshed

Gathering Song

Gather Us In

ELW 532

- 1 Here in this place the new light is streaming, now is the darkness vanished away;
see in this space our fears and our dreamings brought here to you in the light of this
day. Gather us in, the lost and forsaken, gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken, we shall arise at the sound of our name.
- 2 We are the young, our lives are a myst'ry, we are the old who yearn for your face;
we have been sung throughout all of hist'ry, called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty, gather us in, the proud and the strong;
give us a heart, so meek and so lowly, give us the courage to enter the song.
- 3 Here we will take the wine and the water, here we will take the bread of new birth,
here you shall call your sons and your daughters, call us anew to be salt for the earth.

**Give us to drink the wine of compassion, give us to eat the bread that is you;
nourish us well, and teach us to fashion lives that are holy and hearts that are true.**

- 4 Not in the dark of buildings confining, not in some heaven, light years away—
here in this place the new light is shining, now is the kingdom, and now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever, gather us in and make us your own;
gather us in, all peoples together, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.**

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Prayer of the Day

Pastor: Almighty and most merciful God, your bountiful goodness fills all creation. Keep us safe from all that may hurt us, that, whole and well in body and spirit, we may with grateful hearts accomplish all that you would have us do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

ALL: Amen.

Psalm

Psalm 111:1-10

Leader: Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

ALL: Great are your works, O Lord, pondered by all who delight in them.

Leader: Majesty and splendor mark your deeds, and your righteousness endures forever.

ALL: You cause your wonders to be remembered; you are gracious and full of compassion.

Leader: You give food to those who fear you, remembering forever your covenant.

ALL: You have shown your people the power of your works in giving them the lands of the nations.

Leader: The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice; all of your precepts are sure.

ALL: They stand fast forever and ever, because they are done in truth and equity.

Leader: You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever; holy and awesome is your name.

ALL: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who practice this have a good understanding. God's praise endures forever. Amen.

Children's Song

Tony Chestnut

**Tony Chestnut knows I love you. Tony knows. (Tony knows.)
Tony Chestnut knows I love you. That's what Tony knows.
Tony, Tony and his sister Eileen. And Eileen loves Neil and Neil loves Pat.
But Pat still loves Bob. And there's Russell and Skip.
This song is silly, but it's hip. How it ends, just one man knows.
And guess what (what), it's Tony Chestnut.**

Children's Message

Pastor Teri

Saying Goodbye is Hard, Plant a Flower

Gospel

Mark 4:3-20 MSG

Pastor: "Listen. What do you make of this? A farmer planted seed. As he scattered the seed, some of it fell on the road and birds ate it. Some fell in the gravel; it sprouted quickly but didn't put down roots, so when the sun came up it withered just as quickly. Some fell in the weeds; as it came up, it was strangled among the weeds and nothing came of it. Some fell on good earth and came up with a flourish, producing a harvest exceeding his wildest dreams. "Are you listening to this? Really listening?"

When they were off by themselves, those who were close to him, along with the Twelve, asked about the stories. He told them, "You've been given insight into God's kingdom—you know how it works. But to those who can't see it yet, everything comes in stories, creating readiness, nudging them toward a welcome awakening. These are people—Whose eyes are open but don't see a thing, Whose ears are open but don't understand a word, Who avoid making an about-face and getting forgiven."

He continued, "Do you see how this story works? All my stories work this way. "The farmer plants the Word. Some people are like the seed that falls on the hardened soil of the road. No sooner do they hear the Word than Satan snatches away what has been planted in them.

"And some are like the seed that lands in the gravel. When they first hear the Word, they respond with great enthusiasm. But there is such shallow soil of character that when the emotions wear off and some difficulty arrives, there is nothing to show for it.

"The seed cast in the weeds represents the ones who hear the kingdom news but are overwhelmed with worries about all the things they have to do and all the things they want to get. The stress strangles what they heard, and nothing comes of it.

"But the seed planted in the good earth represents those who hear the Word, embrace it, and produce a harvest beyond their wildest dreams." The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, O Christ.

Message

Rev. Dr. Teri Ditslear

Hymn of the Day

What a Fellowship What a Joy Divine

ELW 774

- 1 **What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms;
what a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning on the everlasting arms.**
Refrain **Leaning, leaning, (Leaning on Jesus, leaning on Jesus,)
safe and secure from all alarms;
leaning, leaning, (leaning on Jesus, leaning on Jesus,)
leaning on the everlasting arms.**
- 2 **Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way, leaning on the everlasting arms;
oh, how bright the path grows from day to day, leaning on the everlasting arms.** *Refrain*
- 3 **What have I to dread, what have I to fear, leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near, leaning on the everlasting arms.** *Refrain*

Text: Elisha A. Hoffman, 1839-1929

Prayers of the People

Leader: God of grace,

ALL: receive our prayer.

Stewardship Moment & Announcements

- **Book Study** *Tears of Things* by Richard Rohr, Thursdays 6:30-8 pm (until Nov 20th) See Gail
- **Book Club** *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon. October 28, 7:00 at Panera on Mercantile
See Nikki for details
- **Meditation Group** is being formed. See Alex for details
- **Advent Devotional** sign ups for submissions of art and writing will begin next week! See Pat

Offering Prayer

Pastor: Lord of the harvest, we return to you a portion of what you have given to us. Turn us to set our hope not on the uncertainty of riches, but on you, who richly provides for us. Multiply what we have gathered to bless all who are suffering and in need, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

Song of Praise

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful

ELW 184

**Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.
Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gather the hopes and the dreams of all; unite them with the prayers we offer.
Grace our table with your presence, and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.**

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Communion

Re-Member Us

Pastor: Lord, re-member us with you—With this bread, with this cup—Lord, re-member us with you—With this love, with this care—Lord, re-member us with you—On this day, in this hour—Lord, re-member us with you.

Just a Pinch

A pinch of yeast within the flour—A treasure hidden in the ground—We know not the day nor hour
When the pearl is finally found—Secrets held in mustard seeds—Salty grains give food its worth—All
our small but loving deeds—Show your presence in the earth.

Real as Bread

You bring alive what once seemed dead—Your word becomes as real as bread—Your love we taste
in sips of wine—Your meal reveals the life divine.

Feast and Fast

So let us feast on simple pleasures, and fast from all that gets our bodies and souls out of balance—
Let us feast on kindness, and fast from sarcasm—Let us feast on compassion, and fast from holding
grudges—Let us feast on patience, and fast from anxiety—Let us feast on peace, and fast from
stirring up needless conflict.

Let us feast on acceptance, and fast from judgment—Let us feast on joy, and fast from jealousy—Let
us feast on faith, and fast from fear—Let us feast on creativity, and fast from all that deadens our
souls—Let us feast on social justice and let us fast from negligence of the most vulnerable.

Let us feast on service to others, and fast from selfishness—Let us feast on delight, and fast from
despair—Let us feast on bread and wine in spiritual communion, and fast from all that keeps us from
communing deeply with each other and with God. So that our lives might be sufficient, fulfilled,
complete, whole, enough. Amen!

The Table

“This is my body.”

This body knows what it is like to have a nice house and a good job. It knows what it is like to feel uneasy about being wealthy. And it knows what it is like to be lonely, a stranger. It knows what it is like to live under a bush in a city park. It knows what it is like to try to sleep in a rain-soaked sleeping bag. This body knows what it is like to sit politely in meetings. And it knows how to howl in protest at injustice.

It knows what it is like to eat right and exercise often. And it knows what it is like to wake up the morning after drinking a fifth of vodka. This body knows what it is like to do a triple flip on the bars of a jungle gym. And what it is like to lie paralyzed in a hospital bed for five years. This body knows what it is like to make love. And to make war.

This body knows what it is like to be shunned because of the way it looks. And to be wanted because of the way it looks. This body knows what it is like to be afraid even of being afraid. And it knows what it is like to delight in taking crazy chances. This body knows what it is like to be treated like an anybody instead of like a some-body. “This is my body.” Take it in, take it on: receive the body of Christ.

The Vine

“I am”, said God to Moses from the burning bush. “Before Abraham was, I am”, said Jesus. “I am the vine,” said Jesus. “And you are the branches.” Gnarled and twisted, my woody sinews holding you aloft. You, my branches, spreading, budding leaves, giving shelter, sharing beauty.

I am the vine, you are the branches. We are members of each other. I need the nourishment you pass from your leaves back down to my trunk. As much as you need the water and food, I pour into you, up from my roots.

Re-member me when you feel cut off—Graft yourselves back on to me— When you are lonely or afraid—Re-member me so that together we may thrive and serve. I am the wine. Take me and drink. We are one, and this is the sign—as the vine turns water into grapes, I turn water into wine. Through me you will find that you and I are divine.

Words of Institution

We remember the way that Jesus showed us His love: On the evening before He died, He had supper with His friends. During the meal, He took the loaf of bread, gave thanks for it, broke it and then passed it around with these words: This is my body broken for you. Eat this and remember Me. And, after the meal He took the cup of wine, gave thanks for it and then passed it around with these words: This is my blood shed for you. Drink this and remember Me. And now, every time we eat bread like this, and every time we drink wine like this, we remember Jesus, and His everlasting love.

As often as we eat of this bread and drink of this vine we remember the prayer that you taught us:

The Lord's Prayer

ALL: Our Creator, 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

Pastor: Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them. Come to this meal of mercy.

Prayer after Communion

Pastor: O God, through this meal you have strengthened us and appointed us to be your servants. Send us to do good and to share our possessions with all in need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

ALL: Amen.

Sending Liturgy for Pastor Teri

Leader: Pastor Teri, in 2012 you had the vision and the guts to start a new church. Then, after many years of grit and determination, in 2019 we formally called you to be our pastor: to proclaim God's Word, to baptize any who came to the font, to announce God's forgiveness to us, to preside at our celebration of the Lord's Supper, and to give a radical welcome to all people. With the Gospel, you have comforted us in times of sickness and trouble, and at the death of our loved ones.

Sharing our joys and sorrows, you and John have embodied love, compassion, and service to this community. You have served Roots of Life faithfully for 13 years. But now it is time for you to answer God's call to become the pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Cody, Wyoming.

As your fellow siblings of Christ in this community, we wish to honor your ministry among us and bid you farewell and Godspeed in your new endeavor.

Pastor Teri: I want to thank all of you...the always attenders, the seldom attenders, those of you who have come and gone, and even those who have never attended but sit on the fringe of this ministry... thank you to Roots of Life for the love, the kindness, and the support shown to me and my family during my active ministry among you. I ask forgiveness for the ways I have sinned against you.

I am grateful for the ways my ministry has been accepted. – (You have given me a long leash). I have made mistakes, but we together have always moved forward. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here and all of your love.

Community: **We receive your thankfulness and offer you our forgiveness. Likewise, we ask forgiveness for the ways we have sinned against you.**

We are deeply grateful for the lessons you have taught us. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will endure long after your departure.

Pastor Teri: I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God. You will always remain in my heart.

Leader: Do you, members of Roots of Life Community, release Pastor Teri from service as your pastor?

Community: **We do, with God's help.**

Leader: Pastor Teri, do you recognize and accept the completion of your ministry with Roots of Life Community?

Pastor Teri: I do, with God's help.

Leader: We pledge our support and love to you and wish you God's blessing as you begin your new ministry. Let us pray. Almighty God, through your Son Jesus Christ you gave the holy apostles many gifts and commanded them to feed your flock. You equip your people with abilities that differ according to the grace given to them, and you call them to various avenues of service.

We give you thanks for the ministry of Teri and John among the people of God in this place.

You watch over our going out and our coming in: *bless this time of ending and beginning.*

You surround your people in every time and place: *keep us close in your love.*

You accompany your people in times of joy and times of trial: *prosper all that has been done to your glory in this time together; heal and forgive all that has fallen short of your will for us.* Help Teri and John, and their family, and all of us to live with courage and gladness in the future you give to us. As they have been a blessing to us, so now send them forth to be a blessing to others; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Community: Amen.

Leader: Your siblings in Christ in the Indiana/Kentucky Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America give thanks to God for the ministry you have shared. We promise you our continued support and prayer. Rejoicing in the blessings of God in this congregation and in the ministry of Teri and John, with hope in God's abundant grace in years to come, I announce that Teri Ditslear's service as pastor in this congregation is now concluded. Let us bless the Lord.

Community: Thanks be to God.

Leader: The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

Community: Amen.

Blessing

Pastor: The God of righteousness, who gives justice to the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry, who sets the prisoners free, + bless you now and forever.

ALL: Amen.

Sending Song

God Be With You Till We Meet Again

ELW 536

- 1 God be with you till we meet again; by good counsels guide, uphold you,
 with a shepherd's care enfold you; God be with you till we meet again.**

Refrain **Till we meet, (till we meet,) till we meet, (till we meet again,)
 till we meet at Jesus' feet; (till we meet,) till we meet, (till we meet,)
 till we meet, (till we meet again.) God be with you till we meet again.**

- 2 God be with you till we meet again; holy wings securely hide you,
 daily manna still provide you; God be with you till we meet again. Refrain**
- 3 God be with you till we meet again; when life's perils thick confound you,
 put unfailing arms around you; God be with you till we meet again. Refrain**

Text: Jeremiah E. Rankin, 1828-1904, alt.

Sending

Pastor: Go in peace. Do not lose heart. God goes with you!

ALL: Thanks be to God.

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