




**WE
WALK
BY FAITH**

NOT BY SIGHT

2 CORINTHIANS 5:7


**June 16, 2024
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
9:30 AM Worship**

First Lutheran Church
709 5th Ave. – P.O. Box 218
Washburn, North Dakota 58577
www.flcwashburn.com
701-462-3775

PRELUDE AND BELLS

AS WE GATHER

(There is nothing greater than the ability to trust someone wholeheartedly – and that’s what FAITH is. Faith is nothing more than taking God at His word and trusting him wholeheartedly for everything in our lives. Today we celebrate the blessings of faith in Christ. Welcome to God’s house today!)

WELCOME

(put prayer requests on yellow cards)

HYMN LBW #479 “My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

TRUST, GUIDANCE

479

My Faith Looks Up to Thee

1 My faith looks up to thee, Thou Lamb of Cal - va - ry,
2 May thy rich grace im - part Strength to my faint - ing heart,
3 While life's dark maze I tread And griefs a - round me spread,
4 When ends life's tran - sient dream, When death's cold, sul - len stream

Sav - ior di - vine! Now hear me while I pray, Take all my
My zeal in - spire; As thou hast died for me, Oh, may my
Be thou my guide; Bid dark - ness turn to day, Wipe sor - row's
Shall o'er me roll; Blest Sav - ior, then, in love Fear and dis -

guilt a - way, Oh, let me from this day Be whol - ly thine!
love to thee Pure, warm, and change - less be, A liv - ing fire!
tears a - way, Nor let me ev - er stray From thee a - side.
trust re - move; Oh, bear me safe a - bove, A ran - somed soul!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESSp. 56

P: In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by 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

P: Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

L: 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.

A In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **G** Lord, have mer - cy.

A For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

G Lord, have mer - cy.

A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

G Lord, have mer - cy.

A For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. **G** Lord, have mer - cy.

A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra- cious Lord. **G** A - men

☐ This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,

al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. ☐ Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was

slain, whose blood set us free to be peo-ple of God.

☐ This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,

al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. ☐ Pow-er, rich-es, wis-dom, and

strength, and hon-or, bless-ing, and glo-ry are his.

☐ This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,

al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. ☐ Sing with all the peo-ple of God, and

join in the hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing, hon-or, glo-ry, and

might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.

SALUTATION



☩ The Lord be with you. ☩ And al - so with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Let us pray.

C: Almighty One, renew us daily through the power of your Holy Spirit that we might be nurtured in faith and holiness through having been grafted onto the true vine, Jesus Christ, our Lord; in whose holy name we pray. Amen.

FIRST READING Ezekiel 17:22-24
(The Lord made a promise to replant Israel, a tiny sprig that would grow sturdy branches and bear fruit until it would become like a great and noble cedar. God's people drew hope by trusting His promise.)

²²Thus says the Lord GOD: "I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of the cedar and will set it out. I will break off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. ²³On the mountain height of Israel will I plant it, that it may bear branches and produce fruit and become a noble cedar. And under it will dwell every kind of bird; in the shade of its branches birds of every sort will nest. ²⁴And all the trees of the field shall know that I am the LORD; I bring low the high tree, and make high the low tree, dry up the green tree, and make the dry tree flourish. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it."

PSALM (Read responsively) Psalm 1
(Dwelling in the ways of God gives great delight and makes life solid and secure, like a tree that grows and flourishes when planted next to water.)

¹Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

²but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

³He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does
not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

⁴The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the
righteous;

⁶for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

SECOND READING 2 Corinthians 5:1-10
(Even though life can be difficult, Paul assured us we can be filled with courage: Christ has prepared each of us for this life of faith and has prepared a place for us with him forever.)

¹For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ³if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened — not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. ⁶So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

ALLELUIA

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 4th chapter.

Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL READINGMark 4:26-34
(The growth of the tiniest seed, a mustard seed, reminds believers that though we may not see it, God is still in control. His big purposes will always come to pass.)

²⁶{Jesus} said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. ²⁷He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. ²⁸The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." ³⁰And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? ³¹It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." ³³With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. ³⁴He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON Pastor Paul Krueger
"Little is Large When God is In It!" – Mark 4:26-34

APOSTLES' CREEDp. 65

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. 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

HYMN LBW #234
"Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast"

THE WORD

234 Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast

1 Al-might - y God, your Word is cast Like seed in - to the ground;
2 Let not the sly sa - tan - ic foe This ho - ly seed re - move,
3 Let not the world's de - ceit - ful cares The ris - ing plant de - stroy,
4 So when the pre - cious seed is sown, Your quick-'ning grace be - stow,

Now let the dew of heav'n de - scend And righ - teous fruits a - bound.
But give it root in ev - 'ry heart To bring forth fruits of love.
But let it yield a hun - dred - fold The fruits of peace and joy.
That all whose souls the truth re - ceive Its sav - ing pow'r may know.

Text: John Cavood, 1775-1852, alt.
Time: J. Day, Psalter, 1562

OFFERINGS ARE RECEIVED

OFFERTORY



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our
cup of bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the
seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u - nite them with the
prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: Merciful Father,

C: we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and 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.

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.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

(2 Aisle Floor Stations)

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION:

Lamb of God – p. 72

♩ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

LBW #327 – “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me”

LBW #328 – “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name!”

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

327

1 Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, Let me hide my - self in thee;
2 Not the la - bors of my hands Can ful - fill thy law's de - mands;
3 Noth - ing in my hand I bring; Sim - ply to thy cross I cling.
4 While I draw this fleet - ing breath, When mine eye - lids close in death,

Let the wa - ter and the blood, From thy riv - en side which flowed,
Could my zeal no res - pite know, Could my tears for - ev - er flow,
Na - ked, come to thee for dress; Help - less, look to thee for grace;
When I soar to worlds un - known, See thee on thy judg - ment throne,

Be of sin the dou - ble cure: Cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.
All for sin could not a - tone; Thou must save, and thou a - lone.
Foul, I to the foun - tain fly; Wash me, Sav - ior, or I die.
Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, Let me hide my - self in thee.

Text: Augustus M. Toplady, 1740-1778
Tune: Thomas Hastings, 1784-1872

TOPLADY
77 77 77

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!

1 All hail the pow'r of Je - sus' name! Let an - gels pros - trate fall;
 2 Crown him, you mar - tyrs of our God, Who from his al - tar call;
 3 O seed of Is - rael's cho - sen race Now ran - somed from the fall,
 4 Hail him, you heirs of Da - vid's line, Whom Da - vid Lord did call—

5 Bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem And crown him Lord of all.
 6 Ex - tol the stem of Jes - se's rod And crown him Lord of all.
 7 Hail him who saves you by his grace And crown him Lord of all.
 8 The God In - car - nate, man di - vine—And crown him Lord of all.

9 Bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem And crown him Lord of all.
 10 Ex - tol the stem of Jes - se's rod And crown him Lord of all.
 11 Hail him who saves you by his grace And crown him Lord of all.
 12 The God In - car - nate, man di - vine—And crown him Lord of all.

5 Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget
 The wormwood and the gall,
 Go, spread your trophies at his feet
 And crown him Lord of all.

6 Let ev'ry kindred, ev'ry tribe
 On this terrestrial ball
 To him all majesty ascribe
 And crown him Lord of all.

7 Oh, that with yonder sacred throng
 We at his feet may fall!
 We'll join the everlasting song
 And crown him Lord of all.

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

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, for ever and ever. Amen

BENEDICTION

Psalm 32:10

L: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✕ give you peace

Numbers 6:24-26

In the name of the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

CREATION, PRESERVATION

771

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

1 Great is thy faith - ful-ness, O God my Fa - ther; there is no
 2 Sum-mer and win - ter and spring-time and har - vest, sun, moon, and
 3 Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth, thine own dear

shad-ow of turn - ing with thee; thou chang-est not, thy com -
 stars in their cours - es a - bove join with all na - ture in
 pres-ence to cheer and to guide; strength for to - day and bright

pas - sions, they fail not; as thou hast been, thou for - ev - er wilt be.
 man - i - fold wit - ness to thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love.
 hope for to - mor-row, bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!

Refrain

Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Great is thy faith - ful - ness!

Morn-ing by morn-ing new mer-cies I see; all I have need-ed thy
hand hath pro - vid - ed; great is thy faith - ful-ness, Lord, un - to me!

Text: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1866–1960
 Music: William M. Runyan, 1870–1957
 © 1923, renewed 1951 Hope Publishing Co.

FAITHFULNESS
 11 10 11 10 and refrain

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

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Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish, Series B, Quarter 1.

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Today's Worship Leaders & Volunteers – Thank You!

INTERIM PASTOR..... Pastor Paul Krueger

USHERS/GREETERSEric & Sarah Rosenquist

READERKellie Sheldon

COMMUNION ASSISTANTSKellie Sheldon

Alexis Solomonson, Brent Petersen

ORGANIST Theresa Petersen

VIRTUAL SERVICE Nate Fiedler

ALTAR GUILD.....Jolene Scholl & Janell Ziemann

FELLOWSHIP/COFFEE HOUR.....Mac & Judy Beaudry

SERVICE GROUP COORDINATORSLarry & Kathy Keller

Eric & Sarah Rosenquist

First Lutheran Church
709 5th Ave. - PO BOX 218
Washburn ND 58577
701-462-3775

INTERIM PASTOR: Paul Krueger email:

revpaulkrueger@gmail.com

Cell phone: 701-240-4712

ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY: Jeannette Rost

Church Office: 701-462-3775

Email: flc@westriv.com

Website: www.flcwashburn.com

COORDINATOR OF STUDENT MINISTRIES: Melissa Rothe

Email: fly@westriv.com

OFFICE HOURS: T-T-F 9:00 am - 12:30 pm, 1:30 - 3:30

W – 9:00 am - 12:30 pm

ORGANISTS: Theresa Petersen and LeAnn Richard

CHOIR DIRECTOR: Randy Hall

BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR: Gwen Hall

CUSTODIAN: Jeff Schmidt

Our Mission

“Working hand in hand to know Christ and make Christ known through Worship, Christian Education, Evangelism, Fellowship, Caring Ministries, and Service.”

Welcome to all who have come to worship.

Happy Father’s Day to all who share a caring relationship with a dad or dad-figure – even as we gather to worship the most loving Father of all, our God is infinite goodness.

Visitors

We welcome all visitors to First Lutheran today and ask that you sign our guest book in the narthex.

Nursery

The nursery, located beside the narthex, is available for use for any parent feeling the need to use it during worship services with their child.

Thank you for your giving

Sunday, June 9th

Attendance – 99

Online Viewing – 33

General Fund & Plate Giving - \$8,404.00

Hearing Assist

First Lutheran has hearing assist systems to be used during the worship services. If you feel you could benefit from this or want to try it, please see the ushers in the narthex.

Holy Communion

All are welcome to receive the Lord's Body and Blood who are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and believe that Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is truly present in, with and under the forms of bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Receive the bread into your open, flat palm. Ask if you wish to receive grape juice or a gluten free wafer. Alert an usher if you, or someone you know, needs communion served in the pew.

Pastoral Care

Please call Pastor Paul (701-240-4712) or the church office (701-462-3775) if you or a loved one are in the hospital or know you will be going to the hospital. The church does not get informed of your stay by any of the hospitals even if you are registered under our congregation's name. We want to make sure you get pastoral care. Thank you!

This week we pray for:

This Week's New Prayer Requests:

Prayers of Christian Sympathy: Family of Melisa Chrest

Long Term prayer requests:

Members: Alton Krebsbach, Howard Johnson, Karen Goehring

* The person in parenthesis is who the person is related to or friends of. Please feel free to ask these individuals how best you can pray for their family/friend.

This month we pray for:

Members: Elmer Schwarz

Friends & Family:

This Quarter we pray for:

Members and Nonmembers: Perry Thyberg, Corrine Kerzmann (Donna Gunderson), Marion Narum (Peggy Moran), Ty Brown (Jody & Nicole Brown), Alice Richard, Jackie Olson

Military Prayer and Card List

We pray for the Men & Women in our Military who protect our country, especially those assigned to serve overseas or away from home.

- **Members of First Lutheran on Active Duty in the Military and the National Guard:**
 - SGT Bryce Rost – Army National Guard
 - SPC Olivia Retterath – National Guard - Deployed
 - SPC Christian Gardner – Army National Guard
 - SPC Cassidy Sommer – National Guard
 - SGT Jonathan Melvard – Army National Guard
- **Friends and Family on Active Duty in the Military and in the National Guard:**
 - SGT Dustin Enockson – National Guard
 - Emily Johnson – Air Force
 - Bryar Anderson – Marines
 - 1SGT Jordan Ternes – Army National Guard
 - Tech. SGT Andre Austin – Air Force
 - Hunter Feigum – National Guard
 - Morris Duffy – Medical Air Guard
 - Adam Walsvik – National Guard

Notice of Prayer List Policy

We have a monthly /quarterly prayer list cycle. When you add someone to our prayer list the request will remain on our monthly list for four weeks and then be removed. If you would like to have the request moved to our quarterly list, please contact the office and the request will be added to our “This Quarter we pray for:” list for the next three months. Please help us keep our prayer list current by communicating updates to the office at 701-462-3775. Thank you all for your faithful prayers for all of God’s people.

Sympathy

Our sympathy goes out to the family of Melisa Chrest. Melisa's funeral was this past Friday here at First Lutheran. May God give them comfort in this time of sorrow.

Celebration of Life

A Celebration of Life will be held on June 23rd, from 2:30 – 5:00 pm for Tom Rothmann at the Lewis and Clark Interpretative Center. All family and friends are invited to attend.

Large Print Bulletins

We have large print bulletins for those wanting or needing larger print. Ask the ushers for one.

Office Hours

Jeannette will be in the office this week Monday thru Thursday. She will be out off the office on Friday and back next week Tuesday.

Newsletter Deadline

Please have all articles for the July newsletter to the church office no later than noon on Monday, June 17th.

Church Council Meeting

Church Council will meet this Monday, June 17th, at 6:30 pm.

Deborah Bible Study

Deborah Bible Study will meet this Thursday, June 20th, at 9:30 am at the church. Lesson is Tender Warrior – Lesson 5. Mary Ann Beeks and Sylvia Thompson host.

Help Needed To Water Outdoor Flowers

We are still in need of people to help water the flowers outside the church. If you are willing to help, please talk to Donna Gunderson. You can do a day, a week or more or even a month at a time. The choice is yours as to how often you would like to help out. The more volunteers the less you have to do it.

Vacation Bible School

First Lutheran Church Vacation Bible School, “The Great Jungle Journey, An Epic Cruise from Genesis to Revelation”, is July 30, 31 and August 1 from 10:00 am – 5:00 pm. Lunch will be provided. Please scan the QR code below to register your child(ren) to guarantee souvenirs! If you have additional questions or comments, please call or text Kellie Sheldon at 701-840-8454 or Kacy Hardt at 701-351-0742. **Last day to sign up to receive all the extras is July 1st.**



Altar Flower Signup Sheet

A signup sheet for altar flowers through September 29th is on the table in the narthex. Signup for that Sunday you want before it is taken. You furnish the flowers and make sure they get to the church.

Connections

The May/June issue of *Connections* is in the magazine racks in the narthex. Take a copy today to read updates on the LCMC and NALC plus other interesting articles.

Our Daily Bread and Portals of Prayer

The June/July/August issue of *Our Daily Bread* and the April - June 2024 issue of *Portals of Prayer* are in the magazine racks in the narthex. Pick up a copy to use with your daily devotions.

THIS WEEK AT FIRST LUTHERAN

TODAY	9:30 AM	Worship w/Holy Communion
	10:30 AM	Fellowship/Coffee Hour
	10:45 PM	Fireside Bible Study
	7:00 PM	AA Meeting Al-Anon Meeting
MON.	Noon	Newsletter Deadline
	6:30 PM	Church Council Meeting
TUES.	10:00 AM	Mommy's Group
WED.	7:00 PM	FLY
THURS.	9:30 AM	Deborah Bible Study
SUN.	9:30 AM	Worship
	10:30 AM	Fellowship/Coffee Hour
	10:45 AM	Fireside Bible Study
	7:00 PM	AA Meeting Al-Anon Meeting

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 6) – June 16, 2024

“²⁴And all the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord; I bring low the high tree, and make high the low tree, dry up the green tree, and make the dry tree flourish. I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it.”

–Ezekiel 17:24–

It has been said that one way to dispose of an old, tattered bible is to bury it in the earth and plant a tree on top of it. Why? The idea is that the bible was written down on paper—paper that came from a tree. Burying it beneath a new tree allows the tattered pages to be returned to the earth, to nourish the new growing tree. Then, perhaps, that tree might one day be used to make paper for a new bible. And so the cycle comes full circle.

We find countless images of trees throughout Scripture. Here in this passage from Ezekiel we have a few verses that are reminiscent of Jesus’ parables. The Lord uses the images of a tree and birds as a way to talk about the Kingdom of God. Birds find refuge in a tree. It’s a place of safekeeping for them. Ezekiel speaks of a “sprig of Judah” in verse 22. This image might sound a lot like Isaiah 11: “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.” This “shoot” or “sprig” we know to be Jesus Christ.

Jesus grows like any human being, from a tiny infant into an adult. As he becomes an adult, he is sent forth to complete the work and mission God intended for him. As this tree grows and spreads its branches, birds will flock to it, finding refuge in its shade and branches. All the other trees will know that this tree is different. All the other trees will know God and will fear God, acknowledging his power and wisdom.

It is God who brings the low tree high and the high tree low. It is God who dries up the green tree and makes the dry tree flourish. God is the one with the authority and power to make these things happen. It is not up to you and me. God is bigger than the human authorities and power. He always has been, and he always will be. And that’s great news for us because God is always ready to restore us to life and salvation with him, finding refuge in him, much like a bird finds safety and refuge in a large tree.

The image of birds in a tree also drums up the image of a family tree. Indeed, we are members of the family of God. May we find refuge and security in Jesus Christ, the source of life and salvation.