

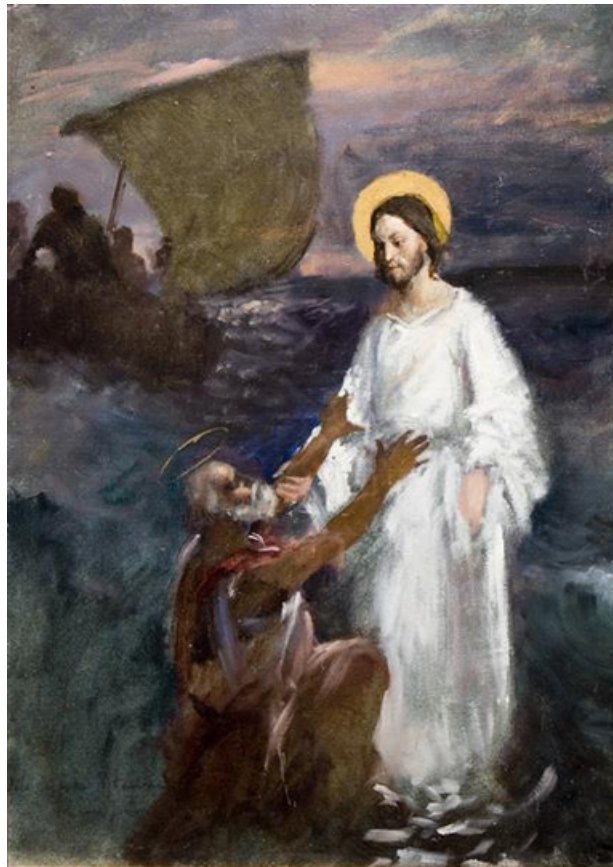


WEEKLY WORSHIP

love all ● live spiritually ● rejoice in hope ● show hospitality

The Rev. Kara Hillhouse, *Pastor*
Mark W. Miller, *Director of Worship, Music & Sacred Arts*
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Week of August 9, 2026
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Community Prayer

Through the storms of life, O God, you are with your people in the person of Jesus your Son. Calm our fears and strengthen our faith that we may never doubt his presence among us but proclaim that he is your Son, risen from the dead, living for ever and ever. Amen.

*"Reprinted and Revised Common Lectionary Prayers,
copyright 2002 Consultation on Common Texts"*

Call to Worship

One: Upon Mount Horeb, Elijah heard the voice of God, not in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire, but in the sound of sheer silence.

Many: Holy God, quiet our minds and our hearts, rid us of distraction, so we can hear you and know you among us.

Sermon

From The Rev. Kara Hillhouse

Matthew 14:22-33

Burden of Proof

People didn't really understand who Jesus was. This confusion was evidenced throughout his ministry--indeed, to the very end of his life. People even argued over what the sign on his cross should say: "The King of the Jews" or "This man says he is the King of the Jews." I imagine, during his life, there was a lot of mumbling within the crowds, people whispering to each other "who is this man?" What I hadn't realized was the number of times people actually questioned Jesus' identity to his face, almost like a dare: "*If you are*" who you say you are. Or, "*If you are*" the Son of God. It happened quite a lot, it turns out. I wonder if we ever dare Jesus to prove his identity, without even realizing we're doing it. Not in so many words, maybe, but in our beliefs. *If you are God*, heal me. *If you are God*, make ____ happen. And then, when the healing doesn't come, or other things don't happen, we jump to the conclusion that Jesus isn't really God after all, and walk away. We place the Burden of Proof on Jesus, but the evidence is already there. Join us for worship at First Christian--a time to expand our hearts, grow our minds and refuel our spirits. We'll see you at First!

Pastor Kara



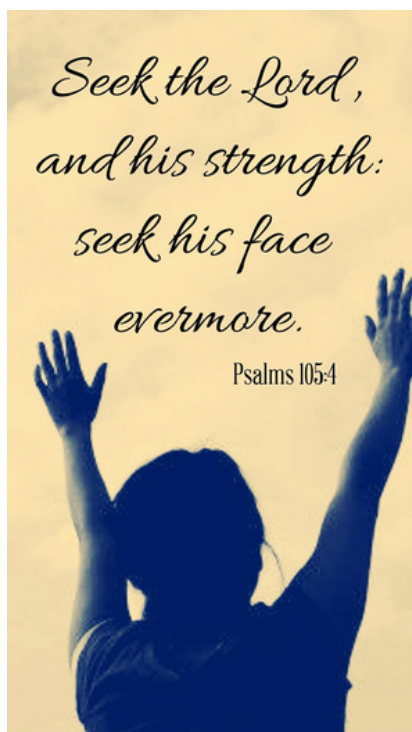
Scripture Reading

Psalms 105:1-6,16-22,45b

Matthew 14:22-33

“O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples. Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually. Remember the wonderful works he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he uttered, O offspring of his servant Abraham, children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

When he summoned famine against the land, and broke every staff of bread, he had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. His feet were hurt with fetters, his neck was put in a collar of iron; until what he had said came to pass, the word of the Lord kept testing him. The king sent and released him; the ruler of the peoples set him free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his possessions, to instruct his officials at his pleasure, and to teach his elders wisdom. Praise the Lord!”



“Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’ And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, ‘Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.’ Peter answered him, ‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.’ He said, ‘Come.’ So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, ‘You of little faith, why did you doubt?’ When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God.’”



Prayers & Praises

August 9, 2026



Song of the Week

How Firm a Foundation



How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath
said, to you who for refuge to Jesus have
fled?

"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not
dismayed, for I am thy God, and will still give
thee aid; I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and
cause thee to stand, upheld by my righteous,
omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to
go, the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
for I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall
lie, my grace, all sufficient, shall be thy
supply; the flame shall not hurt thee; I only
design thy dross to consume, and thy gold to
refine.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for
repose, I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to
shake, I'll never, no, never, no, never
forsake."

In Our Church

Family:

- Donna Baker
- Cec Burkhart
- Joan Dietrich
- Monte Dietrick
- Polly Putney
- Bob Throop
- Marvin Thurber
- Phyllis Thurber
- Jessica Vocasek
- Roger Vocasek

Prayers for Jim Christ's nephew, Dennis Christ, in Oregon. His lymph nodes near the colon section removed showed no signs of cancer. Continued prayers for healing and comfort as he goes through chemotherapy.

Prayers for healing for Vince Ortega's sister, Linda De Los Santos, who has been diagnosed with liver cancer.

Prayers for Marvin and Phyllis Thurber, who are at Harbor House where she is doing rehab and he is receiving respite care.

Prayers for healing for Kristie Christianson's mom, Lucy Reuter-Masek, after a mild stroke.

Prayers for Monte Dietrick, for continued healing.

Prayers for Cec Burkhart for continued healing.

Prayers for Bob Throop for continued healing and strength.

Prayers for Roger Vocasek as he looks for a job.

Prayers for Jessica Stehlik-Vocasek for her health issues.

Prayers for Katelynn Long for continued healing and strength.

Friends:

- Ron Collamore, *prayers for his health.*

Our Timothy

- Rev. Bruce Frogge, *Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX*

In the Nebraska Region: Our Community Schools & Teachers

Our Global Ministries in: Korea

"God of peace and hope, heal the division and distrust that keep open the wounds of war on the Korean Peninsula. Strengthen all who work patiently for justice, reconciliation, and lasting peace. May small but courageous acts of faith continue to open new paths toward understanding and unity. Amen."

For more information and stories
about our Global Ministry partners
visit www.globalministries.org



AUGUST

Call to Confession

One:

While we may yearn to be like Jesus, we know that in our hotheaded choices, our frantic lives, our impetuous words, we are too often like the disciples. Because of this, we come here today to remember that Christ is our Lord, and that he invites us to a better way—his way. Let us confess together our need for his saving presence in our lives.

Prayer of Confession

Many:

We look for you in all the wrong places, God of the lost, and wonder why we cannot find you. We wander the corridors of power, while you sit beside those with no home. We applaud those who win the race, while you cheer on those who finish last. Forgive us, O Lord, and have mercy upon us. Warm our cold hearts with compassion for all of your children. Give us your grace, that we may faithfully proclaim you as Lord and Savior: the hope, the joy, the peace the world seeks.

Good News of God's Grace

One:

Here, face to face, God meets us. Here, face to face, we can speak the truth of our imperfect lives without fear. Here face to face, God forgives us.

Many:

Here, face to face, we meet the One who has great compassion for us, and who forgives us of every sin. Thanks be to God. Amen.



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