

## BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Vibrantly open to the spirit, Bethel Lutheran Church seeks to serve God and its neighbors by joyfully living into the good news of Jesus Christ.*

Sunday, July 30, 2023  
9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Stefan Swanson, Interim Vicar  
Jan Smith, Accompanist

### GATHERING

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

Prelude

Gathering Songs      Green Binder #3 "This Is The Day"  
                                 Green Binder #7 "He Has Made Me Glad"  
                                 Green Binder #72 "Heaven Is in My Heart"  
                                 Green Binder #10 "I Will Sing of the Mercies"

Welcome and Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, + one God, whose steadfast love endures forever.

**Amen.**

Merciful God,

**we confess that we have not followed your path but have chosen our own way. Instead of putting others before ourselves, we long to take the best seats at the table. When met by those in need, we have too often passed by on the other side. Set us again on the path of life. Save us from ourselves and free us to love our neighbors. Amen.**

Hear the good news! God does not deal with us according to our sins but delights in granting pardon and mercy. In the name of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. You are free to love as God loves.

**Amen.**

Entrance Song      Green Binder #111 "Open the Eyes of My Heart"

Prayer of the Day

**Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

### WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

First Reading      1 Kings 3:5-12      The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 119L129-136 (read responsively)

Second Reading Romans 8:26-39 The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Children's Sermon

Gospel Song Green Binder #5 "Open Our Eyes"

Gospel Reading Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Sermon

Song of the Day Green Binder #21 "Seek Ye First"

Blessing of the Garden

Apostles Creed (p. 105)

Prayers of the People God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Passing of the Peace The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

Offering

Offertory Song Green Binder #65 "I Surrender All"

Offertory Prayer

**God of field and forest, sea and sky, you are the giver of all good things.  
Sustain us with these gifts of your creation, and multiply your graciousness in  
us, that the world may be fed with your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior  
and Lord. Amen.**

Communion

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

Communion Song GB #32 "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love"

Prayer after Communion

**SENDING**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

Benediction Song Green Binder #20 "I've Got Peace Like a River"

Blessing

Sending Song Green Binder #30 "Shine, Jesus Shine"

Sending Words Go in peace. Share the harvest.

**Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

# WELCOME

Bethel Lutheran Church—July 30, 2023, 9th Sunday after Pentecost

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT**—Vibrantly open to the Spirit, Bethel Lutheran Church seeks to serve God and its neighbors by joyfully living into the good news of Jesus Christ.

**QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS?** Please contact the church office at 320-395-2125 at [bethellutheranlp@gmail.com](mailto:bethellutheranlp@gmail.com). For emergency pastoral care needs, please call the church office first, and if nobody answers, call Pr. Jeff Engholm, Trinity Lu Church, Watertown, 320-212-0976. Bulletin submissions due: Wednesdays at noon. Newsletter deadline: 25<sup>th</sup> of the month. **GivePlus Text 866-298-7547**

SIMPLY GIVING offers convenience for you and much needed consistency for Bethel! Try it this summer! If you have questions contact Stacy Meyer, Financial Secretary, at [finsec@lpbethel.org](mailto:finsec@lpbethel.org).

## TODAY

- Hearing assist devices are available: Speak to an usher for assistance.
- Noisy offering: Supports camperships for Bethel youth attending Green Lake Bible Camp. On your way out of the sanctuary, drop your loose change into the metal can with a clang! Although paper bills and checks won't have the same noisy effect, they will be accepted and appreciated!
- Farewell party: Please stay after worship today to enjoy a cupcake, coffee, and lemonade as we say farewell to Vicar Stefan. We wish him God's blessings in his new position and hope he knows how much Bethel loves him and will miss him!

## SUNDAY 8/6 (Pentecost 10)

- Worship: 9 am (Pastor Donna Olsen)
- Fellowship Hour: following worship

**All Ages Vacation Bible School August 14-17**. We will gather for a meal from 5:30-6:00 pm, then lessons, activities, games, and crafts will focus on the theme "Blossoming in Faith" until 8:00 pm. We invite all ages to participate! If anyone is interested in volunteering to help with activities or preparing part of the meal contact Emily Koehler, Pete Hallberg, or Stacy Meyer. To register for VBS, go to <https://tinyurl.com/blcvbs2023> or pick up a paper form in the narthex.

**August Book Club:** United States of Grace by Lenny Duncan

Lenny Duncan brings us a deeply personal story about growing up black and queer in the U.S. He recounts an intimate portrayal of his life's struggles and joys. A love story about America, revealing the joy and resilience of places many call "the margins" but Lenny has called home. This book makes a bold claim that God is present with us in the most difficult of circumstances, bringing life out of death. Discussion date: Wednesday, August 16, 7:30 pm at church

**You are Invited to the Ordination of Stefan Swanson** to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the ELCA, Saturday, August 19, 2023, 2:00 pm Worship Service, Bethel Lutheran Church, punch and treats to follow. Service will livestream at: <https://www.facebook.com/lpbethel>. Stefan has been called by the SW MN Synod to serve as a Hospice Chaplain with the CentraCare Health Care System.

**Last Fellowship Around the Fire:** Wednesday, August 23, beginning at 6:30 pm. Join us around our beautiful fire pit for hot dogs, chips, and beverages. You are welcome to bring a side dish to share and bring your own lawn chairs.

**Prepare for the Back-to-School Kits Collection:** The collected school supplies will be put into backpacks and given to Lutheran World Relief to distribute to children around the world. Often, the ability to have school supplies is what makes it possible for some children to attend school. Thank you in advance for your generosity that helps provide basic education for children! Please donate *only* high-quality, name-brand supplies requested from the list. You may donate all the items for one or more kits or some items from the list. Watch for the donation drop-off area in the Narthex. Monetary donations are welcome, and will purchase additional supplies to complete the school kits. Earmark your monetary donation "school kits" for the weekly offering plate.

**School Kit List:**

Four 70-sheet notebooks, wide or college ruled, 8 X 10 1/2" (no loose-leaf paper)  
One 30 cm ruler (or a ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other)  
One pencil sharpener  
One 2 1/2" pink eraser  
One blunt point scissors (Fiskars brand)  
Five ballpoint pens, blue or black ink (no gel ink)  
One box of 24 crayons (Crayola brand)  
Five unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers

**Registration for the Bethel Women's Retreat is now open!** Join the fellowship and fun September 8-10 at Green Lake Bible Camp! Information and forms are on a table in the narthex. Give your registration form plus the fee to Diane Horsman or mail it to the church office. The registration deadline is September 1.  
Next WELCA meeting: August 9, 6:30 pm

## BLESSING OF THE GARDEN

Friends in Christ: Today we give thanks to God and we seek God's blessing as we gather to bless these garden plots to the praise and glory of God.

A reading from Psalm 104:14-21: You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use, to bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the human heart, oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart. The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. In them the birds build their nests; the stork has its home in the fir trees. The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the coney. You have made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. You make darkness, and it is night, when all the animals of the forest come creeping out. The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. You made the whole earth for your glory; all creation praises you. We lift our voices to join the songs of heaven and earth, of things seen and unseen. You stretched out the heavens like a tent; you divided the day from the night; you appointed times and seasons for work and rest, for tearing down and building up. You blessed your people through all generations and guided them in life and death, in sowing and reaping.

We give you thanks, O God, as we ask blessing on this garden and on those who tend it. Bless these tools for the working.

**We give you thanks, O God.**

Bless the water for the nourishing.

**We give you thanks, O God.**

Bless the sun for the shining.

**We give you thanks, O God.**

Bless the soil for providing.

**We give you thanks, O God.**

God of creation, you spoke life into the world and called all the universe good. Then you turned this good earth over to us for our care. Bless those who care and nurture this piece of your earth. May this our work be a reflection of your good work in us. We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**