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**BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Rev. Molly Wills, Pastor | Emily Koehler, Accompanist

Third Sunday of Easter | Sunday, May 4, 2025

ELW Holy Communion Setting 3

**SPIRIT ART**

**A meditative study of scripture through art.**

**Acts 9:1-6 [7-20]**

**WELCOME, WE’RE GLAD YOU’RE HERE!**

***If you are new to Bethel, here is some helpful worship information****: We use the ELW (red hymnal) and the supplement ACS (purple hymnal), which contain liturgy and hymns. Liturgy pages are at the front of each hymnal, with the page numbers at the bottom and in the bulletin as (red ELW p.) or (purple ACS p.) Hymn pages are in the back two-thirds of the hymnals, with the page numbers at the top and in the bulletin as (red hymnal #) or (purple hymnal #). The songs from the Green Book are in the bulletin as (green binder #).* ***Hearing assistive devices are available;*** *speak to an usher for assistance.*

**GATHERING**

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

Meditation time

Welcome & Announcements

Call to worship song Come Into His Presence (green binder #17)

Confession & Forgiveness

Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen, indeed. Alleluia!**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive 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.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ? Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

**Amen.**

song of praise Love, Love (green binder #18)

Greeting (red ELW p. 138)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

**Eternal and all-merciful God, with all the angels and all the saints we laud your majesty and might. Bye the resurrection of your Son, show yourself to us and inspire us to follow Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

SONG OF PRAISE Jesus We Love You (green binder #57)

**WORD**

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

STAR WARS CHRIST PLAY (Bethel Youth)

Gospel: Acts 9:1-6 [7-20] The holy gospel according to Acts. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

1 Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” 5 He asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” 7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. 8 Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 For three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank. 10 Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” He answered, “Here I am, Lord.” 11 The Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” 13 But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem, 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” 15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; 16 I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” 17 So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, 20 and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**BLESSING OF FIRST COMMUNION STUDENTS**

**Avery Burchett, Evie Koehler, Grant Serum, Kaelyn Schultz, Lachlynn Sawatzke, Lennon Sawatzke, Livie Serum, Mia Serum**

**SERMON**

Hymn of the Day *Open the Eyes of My Heart* (green binder #111)

apostles’ Creed (red ELW p. 105) Prayers of intercession Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.** Peace The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

**MEAL**

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

offering song Create in Me a Clean Heart (green binder #22)

OfferING Prayer

**Risen One, you have gathered us around your table of grace along with these gifts we bring. Come among us again, breathe your life into us, and enliven us with this meal, that we may live as your risen body in the world. Amen.**

Thanksgiving at the Table (red ELW p. 145)

lord’s prayer (red ELW p. 145)

COMMUNION

SONG during communion *Lamb of God* (green binder #73)

Prayer after Communion

**SENDING**

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

BENEDICTION SONG My Peace (green binder #39)

Blessing

The triune God, who was, who is, and who is to come, Sovereign, + Savior, and Spirit, light your way with resurrection dawn, now and always. **Amen.**

Sending SONG *Heaven is in My Heart*(green binder #72)

Dismissal Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

God in peace. In Christ, you are made new. Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

Postlude

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NEXT SUNDAY’S READINGS: Acts 9:36-43; Ps 23; Rev 7:9-17; Jn 10:22-30

STAR WARS CHRIST PLAY PERFORMERS

Jesus (Obiwan Kenobi) McCoy Helland

Pontius Pilate (Palpatine) Pete Hallberg

Soldiers (Storm Troopers) Sunday school children

Peter (Han Solo) Liam Wills

Judas (Darth Vadar) Jaxen McBride

Thomas (Luke) Grady Meyer

Mary Magdalene (Leia) Addie Helland

Levi (Chewbacca) Max Petersen

Crowds Sunday school children

Bystander 1 Theo Wills

Bystander 2 Charlotte Wills

Servant Girl 1 Etta Helland

Servant Girl 2 Charlotte Wills

Chief Priest Liam Wills

Elder Stacy Meyer

Scribe Grady Meyer

Man Pete Hallberg

Woman Etta Helland

**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.

**THIS WEEK AT BETHEL**

**Today**

* First Communion: *Avery,* *Evie, Grant, Kaelyn, Lachlynn, Lennon, Livie, Mia*
* Sunday school; BLTs-Earth Day clean-up: following worship

**Wednesday, May 7**

* Bible study: 11:30 a.m.
* Quilting: 1:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
* Choir: 6:30 p.m.

**Sunday, May 11:**Mother’s Day

* Worship: 9:00 a.m. (2025 HS Graduate Blessing for Logan M. & Oliver A.)
* Sunday school and last day of Confirmation class: following worship

**QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS?** Contact the church office at 320-395-2125 or bethellutheranlp@gmail.com. If you need emergency pastoral care, please call Pastor Molly Wills at 320-339-8169 or email her at pastor@lpbethel.org.

**ADDRESS:** 77 Lincoln AVE N, Lester Prairie, MN 55354, (Mailing USPS: PO Box 207)

**WEBSITE**: [www.lpbethel.org](http://www.lpbethel.org)

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Description automatically generatedFACEBOOK:** www.facebook.com/lpbethel

**BULLETIN SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** Wednesdays at noon

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:** 25th of the month

**ONLINE GIVING:** Scan the QR code

**TEXT GIVING:** To give, text dollar amount to **866-298-7547**

**SIMPLY GIVING** offers convenience for you and much-needed consistency for Bethel! For more information, contact Stacy Meyer, Financial Secretary, at finsec@lpbethel.org.

**FINANCIAL UPDATE THROUGH APRIL 13**

Weekly Average Attendance: 64

$ Contributions: 1,456.00

$ To Meet Budget: 10,262.01

$ Difference: -8,806.01

**FOR THE YEAR 2025**

YTD $ Contributions: 26,701.79

YTD $ To Meet Budget: 41,048.04

YTD $ Difference: -14,346.25

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS**

* **WELCA EASTER PROJECT:** During the Easter season, WELCA will facilitate a collection of specific food items to donate to the McLeod County Common Cup Ministry. We encourage you to bring **applesauce** (cups or pouches), **instant breakfast bottles, juice boxes**, and **fruit cups** and place them in the collection containers in the narthex. These items will support the Weekend Food Program, which assists McLeod County families in need. Children who qualify for the program receive a bag of food at the end of each week to take home, helping to supplement their meals over the weekend when they are not in school and unable to benefit from school lunches and breakfasts. Since November, several Bethel members have been packing and delivering these food bags to the Lester Prairie school for local students. Check out the display in the narthex to learn more about this program.
* **EASTER FLOWERS:** You are welcome to take home the Easter flowers you purchased.
* **THANK YOU** to those who came out on a beautiful Saturday morning to rake, trim, and pull weeds at the cemeteries and the old Bergen Church site. *God’s peace, Cemetery Committee.*
* **QUILTING** begins again weekly on Wednesdays from 1:00-4:00 p.m. All are welcome! There are several tasks for all levels of expertise.
* **A NEW MEMBER CLASS** will be held on Sunday, May 18, following the service. Please let Pastor Molly know if you are interested in becoming a member of Bethel Lutheran Church!
* **BETHEL CHURCH PARKING LOT FUNDRAISER**: We are raising funds to rebuild the parking lot. Our goal is to raise $30,000, in addition to the $30,000 already allocated from church funds. We aim to complete this project in September. Please consider donating to this much-needed project. You can scan the QR code on the opposite page to access the online Parking Lot Fund, or you may place your donation in the offering plate. If you choose to donate by check or cash, please indicate on the envelope or check that your contribution is for the parking lot. A mock-up of the parking lot is displayed in the narthex to help track our progress. Thank you for your support!
* **WHAT IS ORDINARY TIME?:** Ordinary Time is a restful, reflective, and beautiful experience taking place this summer at Camp House. It provides an opportunity to step away from the noise and embrace the quiet. This program is designed for individuals, couples, families, and groups, including youth, men, women, and shared interest clubs-anyone seeking a slower pace and deeper connection with God, nature, and one another. For more information, visit GLLM.org/Ordinary-Time.

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