

WELCOME TO BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH!

9th Sunday after Pentecost | Sunday, July 26, 2026

ELW Holy Communion Setting Eight

Rev. Molly Wills, Pastor | Jan Smith, Accompanist



GATHERING

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

(Congregational response in bold print)

MEDITATION TIME *God We Gather as Your People* by Anthony Giamanco
 Be Thou My Vision arr. by Michael Larkin

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP SONG *We Are Gathered Here*

WE ARE GATHERED HERE

Larry Olson
Karol Baer
David Lee Brown

♩ = 100

E F#m7 G#m7 A E F#m7 G#m7 A

We are gathered here in the name (of the Maker). We are gathered here to sing God's praise.
(of the Savior)
(of the Spirit)

E F#m7 G#m7 A C#m B E

We are gathered here in the name (of the Maker). Cho- sen by God's grace.
(of the Savior)
(of the Spirit)

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose compassion endures forever. Amen.

Let us confess our sin to God. Compassionate God, **we confess to you all our sins. Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves. In your mercy, call us back to you. Your yoke is easy, and your burden is light. Restore us to dwell in your peace. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." In the name of God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. Rest in God's love. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG *Gather Us In* (ELW 532)

GREETING

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

KYRIE (ELW p. 184)

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (ELW p. 187) **This is the feast...**

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: 1Kings 3:5-12

A reading from Kings. ⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I should give you.” ⁶ And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷ And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹ Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?” ¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ God said to him, “Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you.”

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 119”129-136 (responsive reading)

¹²⁹ Your decrees are wonderful; therefore I obey them with all my heart.

¹³⁰ **When your word is opened it gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.**

¹³¹ I open my mouth and pant because I long for your commandments.

¹³² **Turn to me and be gracious to me, as you always do to those who love your name.**

¹³³ Order my footsteps in your word; let no iniquity have dominion over me.

¹³⁴ **Rescue me from those who oppress me, and I will keep your commandments.**

¹³⁵ Let your face shine upon your servant and teach me your statutes.

¹³⁶ **My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your teaching.**

SECOND READING: Romans 8:26-39

A reading from Romans. ²⁶ The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. ³¹ What then

are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 188) **Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go...**

GOSPEL: Matthew 13:31-31-33, 44-52

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

³¹ [Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." ³³ He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened." ⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. ⁴⁷ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹ "Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." ⁵² And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old." The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *Be Thou My Vision* (ELW 793)

APOSTLES' CREED (ELW p. 105)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

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 *Now the Feast of Celebration* (ELW 167)

OFFERING PRAYER

Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts you first gave to us. Loosen the bonds these material things have wrapped around us. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your gifts and love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING (ELW p. 190)

DIALOGUE

PREFACE

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 190)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 191)

COMMUNION

COMMUNION SONG (ELW p. 191)

SONG DURING COMMUNION *Sometimes Our Only Song Is Weeping* (ACS 1050)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

SENDING

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

BLESSING

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, + one God, bless, heal, and hold you today and always. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG *May This Church Be like a Tree* (ACS 1042)

DISMISSAL Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news! **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE *When In Our Music Christ Was Glorified* arr. by Michael Larkin

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NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS: Is 55:1-5; Ps 145:8-9, 14-21; Rom 9:1-5; Matt 14:13-21

THANK YOU TO THOSE SERVING TODAY!

QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS

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.

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BULLETIN SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Wednesday at noon

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: 25th of the month

BETHEL'S 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...

Sunday, July 26

- Worship: 9 a.m.
- Common cup school supply offering

Monday, July 27 (office hours)

- Mosaic event: 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, July 29 (no office hours)

- No Bible study
- Quilting: 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 2

- Worship: 9 a.m.
- Intergenerational Vacation Bible School “Just Like Me: Digging In and Growing Deep”: 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.



Maybe you look at what others give and feel like your contribution doesn't make much difference — but Jesus noticed the widow who gave two small coins and said she had given more than anyone. Your gift matters here.

WAYS TO GIVE

- **TEXT GIVING:** Text the dollar amount to **866-298-7547**

- **VANCO GIVING:** Scan QR code



- **VISIT www.lpbethel.org:**
Click under the “Give” section
- **COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FORM**
[found on the narthex wall] and submit it to the church office.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

COMMON CUP FACILITATES A SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE annually for families in McLeod County (including Lester Prairie) who need support in obtaining school supplies for their children. This year, Bethel and churches in the area have been asked to contribute to the drive by making financial donations. Common Cup Ministries will then purchase the exact items needed.

How can you help? Today, Sunday, July 26th, a pencil pouch will be available at church for you to contribute to this cause. (Your donations may also be given to Jill Duncan.) Checks may be written to Bethel or WELCA. Bethel WELCA has offered to match up to \$150.00! (WOW) Let's see if we can meet their challenge!

COMMON CUP DONATIONS: Please bring in your donations of applesauce cups and fruit cups for the food program at Common Cup Ministries. You can leave them in the basket in the “Common Cup Corner” of the narthex. Thank you!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL IS COMING! Just Like Me: Digging In and Growing Deep

Everyone is invited to join us at Bethel on **Sundays, August 2, 9, and 16**, after worship until 12:30 p.m. (lunch at noon) for an inclusive, multi-age Vacation Bible School centered on the active faith lives of children, youth, and families, and the real-world context in which we live. We will practice

sharing what we have, finding our community, and using our voices for others. We will meet in small groups for Bible lessons and hands-on activities appropriate for each age group. Each session will also include time for all age groups to gather, sing, share an activity, eat, and end the day together. To register, sign the sheet in the narthex or email bethellutheranlp@gmail.com. All participants are asked to fill out a participation form. If you have questions, ask Jan S. or Katie R.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL HELP NEEDED! We are looking for people who are willing to help facilitate Bible story lessons for children, youth, and adults during Vacation Bible School. The lessons will be planned and the materials gathered for you. You may volunteer to teach one lesson once, or you may choose to teach a lesson each day of VBS. We are very flexible! It will also be just fine for two people to work as a team. We are also seeking people willing to prepare food for meals. Of course, the facilitators and cooks need people to teach and feed, so registering to attend is an important task too! **The “sign-up” to help is in the church narthex.**

JOIN US FOR NATIONAL NIGHT OUT! Bethel members will be handing out frozen treats on Tuesday, August 4, at the Downtown Square Park in Lester Prairie.

JOIN US FOR OUTDOOR WORSHIP—Sunday, August 16, 9:00 a.m.

Remember to bring a blanket or lawn chairs. Worship will be held indoors if the weather is bad. (Stay for Intergenerational Vacation Bible School-everyone is welcome to join in the fun!)

POOLSIDE PLATES—Wednesday, August 19, serving Noon-1:00 p.m. (or until the food is gone) Free meals for any Lester Prairie kids under age 16 at the 2nd Ave. Park Picnic Shelter. If you have questions, contact Terri Helland at terrihelland@gmail.com. Sponsored by Bethel Lutheran Church Endowment grant, Lester Prairie Youth Task Force, Lester Prairie Lions Club, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, and St. Paul's Sandwich Ministry, Lester Prairie.

BETHEL'S WISH LIST: If you're looking for more ways to support our church community, please check out **Bethel's Wish List: riding lawn mower and Security camera system.** Please let a council member know if you would like to donate! Thank you to those who have already donated!

SAVE THE DATE: Women's Retreat at Water's Edge, Medayto Lodge, September 11-13

NEW ALTAR CHAIRPERSON NEEDED: We are seeking a volunteer to serve as the Altar Chairperson. The role involves preparing the sanctuary for worship, including arranging the sacraments, filling the oil altar candles, changing altar cloths, preparing for baptisms, and ordering supplies or coordinating with others for assistance. If you are interested in this position, contact Judy Angvall at 612-501-3233 as soon as possible so she can guide you through the process. *Additionally, a sign-up sheet is available on the bulletin board for families or individuals who would like to volunteer for any Sunday. A sign-up rotation helps ensure that no one person is solely responsible every week, allowing us to continue having weekly communion.*