

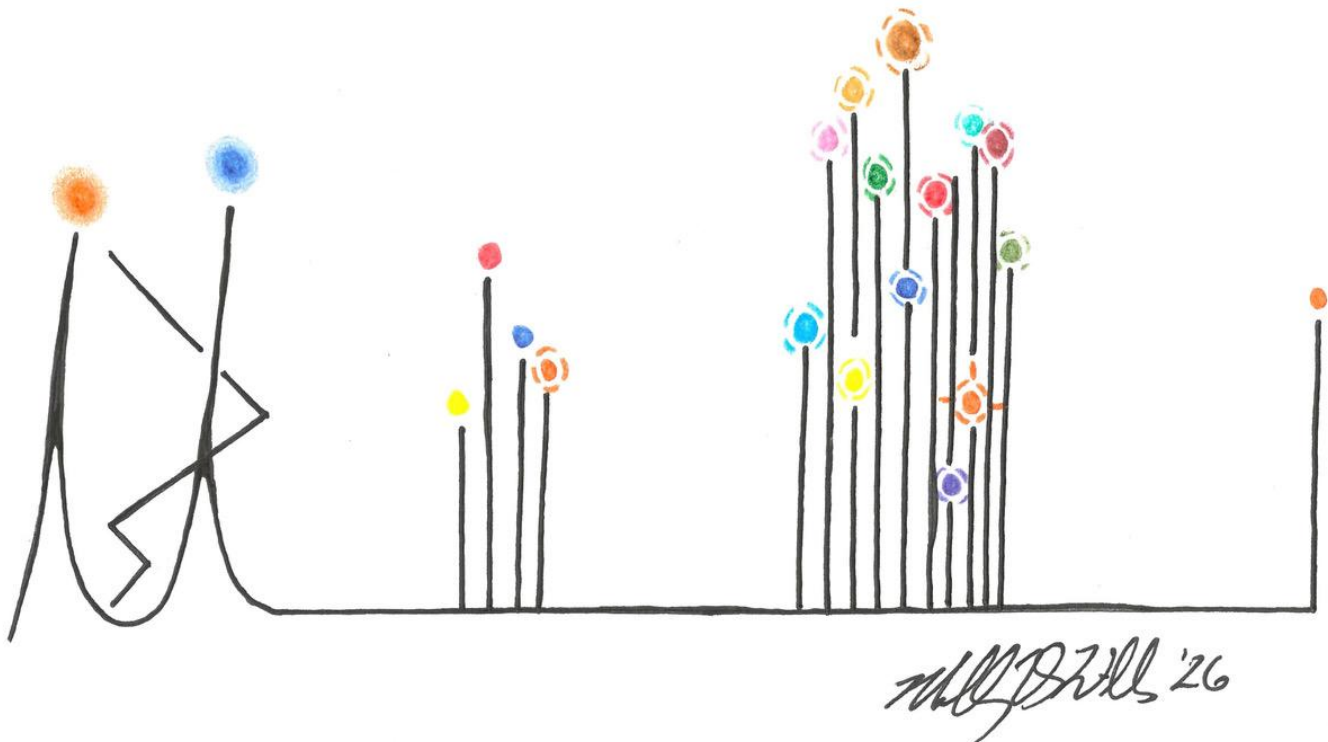


WELCOME TO BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH!

15th Sunday after Pentecost | Sunday, September 6, 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 *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee*

All Praise to Thee, My God (both arr. by Laura E. Wasson)

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP SONG *Open My Heart to Your Love* (verse 1 only)

OPEN MY HEART TO YOUR LOVE

Hans Peterson

Swing eighth notes

♩ = 95

C **F** **G7** **C**

O - pen my heart to your love, oh God.
 Hea - ler of na - tions and bro - ken hearts,
 O - pen my heart to your love, oh God.

F/C **C** **G** **C**

O - pen my eyes to your grace.
 you are the path - way to your peace.
 O - pen my eyes to your grace.

D#dim **C/E** **Am** **C/G** **Dm7** **C/E** **F**

life to re - ceive your word. Send wis - dom and cour - age to
 life in the face of death, may we be your ves - sels so
 life to re - ceive your word. Send wis - dom and cour - age to

C/G **G** **C** **C7** **F/C** **Fm/C** **1, 2 C** **G7** **3 C**

fol - low your way.
 love will in - crease.
 fol - low your way.

*Consider singing verse one by itself as
 a refrain between scripture readings.

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth. **Amen.**

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

Compassionate God, **we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Hear this good news: We have peace with God through + Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG *As We Gather at Your Table* (ELW 522)

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

Oh Lord God, enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy. Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

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

FIRST READING: A reading from Ezekiel 33:7-11

⁷ So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸ If I say to the wicked, “O wicked ones, you shall surely die,” and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. ⁹ But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

¹⁰ Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel: Thus you have said: “Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?” ¹¹ Say to them: As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

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

PSALM: Psalm 119:33-40 (responsive reading)

³³ Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end.

³⁴ **Give me understanding, and I shall keep your teaching; I shall keep it with all my heart.**

³⁵ Lead me in the path of your commandments, for that is my desire.

³⁶ **Incline my heart to your decrees and not to unjust gain.**

³⁷ Turn my eyes from beholding falsehood; give me life in your way.

³⁸ **Fulfill your promise to your servant, which is for those who fear you.**

³⁹ Turn away the reproach that I dread, because your judgments are good.

⁴⁰ **Behold, I long for your commandments; by your righteousness enliven me.**

SECOND READING: A reading from Romans 13:8-14

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. ¹¹ Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹² the night is far gone; the day is near. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³ let us walk decently as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in illicit sex and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 188)

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL: The holy gospel according to Matthew 18:15-20. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵ "If your brother or sister sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If you are listened to, you have regained that one. ¹⁶ But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If that person refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

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

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *In All Our Grief* (ELW 615)

APOSTLES' CREED (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 *God Bless to Us Our Bread* (ACS 1056)

OFFERING PRAYER

God of creation, you send rain and sunshine, and in response the earth springs forth abundantly. All that we have is from you; help us be generous with what you have bestowed on us. Use our gifts of treasure, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING (ELW p. 190)

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

PREFACE

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 190)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

HYMN The Lord's Prayer (GB 134)

COMMUNION

COMMUNION SONG (ELW p. 191)

SONG DURING COMMUNION *When We Are Living* (ELW 639)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

SENDING

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

BLESSING

The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus.

The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding of the Spirit. The God of grace + bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG *Go, My Children, with My Blessing* (ELW 543)

DISMISSAL Go out in joy. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE *I Sing the Mighty Power of God* arr. by Michael Larkin

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NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS: Gen 50:15-21; Ps 103 [1-7] 8-13; Rom 14:1-12; Matt 18:21-35

THANK YOU TO THOSE SERVING TODAY!

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.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Please let Lisa Klobe know if you have altar flowers you would like to share.



"You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

2 Corinthians 9:11

THIS WEEK AT BETHEL

Sunday, September 6

- Worship: 9:00 a.m.

Monday, September 7 (Labor Day)

Wednesday, September 9 (office hours)

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

Friday, September 11-13: Women's Retreat

Sunday, September 13

- Worship: 9:00 a.m. (3rd grade Bibles)
- First Bible Class following worship
- God's Work. Our Hands. activities
- *The Chosen*: 6:30 p.m.

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.

QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS

E-MAIL: bethellutheranlp@gmail.com

PHONE: **320-395-2125** *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, Lester Prairie, MN 55354

WEBSITE: www.lpbethel.org

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/lpbethel

BULLETIN SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Wed. at noon

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: 25th of the month

MISSING GARAGE KEY

DID YOU MISTAKENLY TAKE THE GARAGE DOOR KEY FROM THE LOCKBOX? IF SO, PLEASE RETURN IT.
THANK YOU!



ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL INFORMATION:

1. The first day of Sunday school for children, preschool through grade 6, will be **Sunday, September 27**.
2. Bibles will be given to third graders during worship on **Sunday, September 13**. Following the worship service, a short "Introduction to the Bible" lesson will be offered for these children, and parents are welcome to join. There will also be time after the lesson to participate in "God's Work. Our Hands." activities.
3. All children and families are invited to take part in the Harvest Festival on **Sunday, September 20**. This would be a great time to invite friends, neighbors, and their families to enjoy a fun time at Bethel!
4. Looking ahead, on **Sunday, October 4**, a representative from Water's Edge Ministries (formerly Green Lake Ministries) will lead our worship and discuss Bible camp opportunities with both the Sunday School children and adults.

GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS. **Sunday, September 13.** We are looking for ways we can help a neighbor (anyone) in need. If you have any ideas, please speak to Pastor Molly. **Also on September 13th, Bev Bonte, Director of Common Cup Ministries,** will visit Bethel during worship. She is grateful for all the support that Bethel has provided to the organization and will tell us about the amazing undertakings the group has been focusing on. Let's see if we can have a nice applesauce/fruit cup collection ready for her to take back! A collection basket is in the "Common Cup Corner" of the narthex. Thank you!

THE CHOSEN: We are bringing back *The Chosen* this fall! **Season 5, episodes 1-8,** will be shown at Bethel on **Sunday evenings at 6:30 p.m. beginning September 13**. This has become a beloved series for those who have participated in the past, and we invite everyone to join in viewing these stories of Jesus from the Gospels. You may contact Jill with questions. ***The Chosen* DVDs from Seasons 1-4** are now available in our church library for anyone to borrow and view at home! (You could binge-watch and be all caught up before Season 5 begins!) In addition, the stories are available in print form (novels), and a guidebook/workbook is also available for each season. Please sign these resources out and return them within a month so we can maintain a complete set and others can use them as well.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY: The Women's Bible study will again meet on **Thursday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. on September 17th & 24th and October 1st**. All women are invited and encouraged to attend and bring a friend as well. The group will focus on topics in the book ***A is for Alabaster*** by Anna Carter Florence. All materials and resources are provided, and no prior participation is required. If you have questions, ask Jan Smith.

HARVEST FESTIVAL-Sunday, September 20th, 10:30 AM-12:30 PM: Join us as we celebrate the season's bounty and give thanks for God's provision! Bethel Lutheran Church will host our annual Community Garden Harvest Festival right after worship, with food, fellowship, and fun for all ages! Invite your friends and family!

HARVEST FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Whether you can help set up, run an activity table, bring a dish, or lend a hand during the event, we'd love to have you! Do you have a favorite harvest tradition or activity idea? In the past, we've had cookie and cupcake decorating, games, fire truck

rides, face painting, crafts, and food, but we welcome suggestions! If you would like to volunteer or share ideas, contact Emily Koehler at 605-661-5717 or emily.e.koehler@gmail.com. Let's make this a wonderful celebration of community and harvest season!

CROW RIVER CONFERENCE WOMEN OF THE ELCA FALL GATHERING: **Saturday, September 26, 2026**, Ostmark Lutheran Church, Watkins (handicap accessible); Program: "Here I Am, Send Me", with Special Guest: Pastor Tom Evenson. The Reservation fee is \$12 per person, payable by check to Women of the ELCA and given to Jill Duncan, PO Box 745, Lester Prairie, MN 55354 **by Monday, September 14th**.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: A sign-up sheet is available on the bulletin board for families or individuals interested in serving in various ways on Sunday mornings. This sign-up rotation ensures that not one person is solely responsible and everyone has an opportunity to serve.

BETHEL T-SHIRTS: If you missed ordering a Bethel T-shirt last year, we are now compiling another order! Prices will likely be adjusted due to the size of the order. Both long-sleeve and short-sleeve shirts are available. Contact Jean Hallberg at 507-430-2671 to order a T-shirt.

BETHEL'S WISH LIST: If you're looking for more ways to support our church community, check out Bethel's Wish List and contact information on the bulletin board.