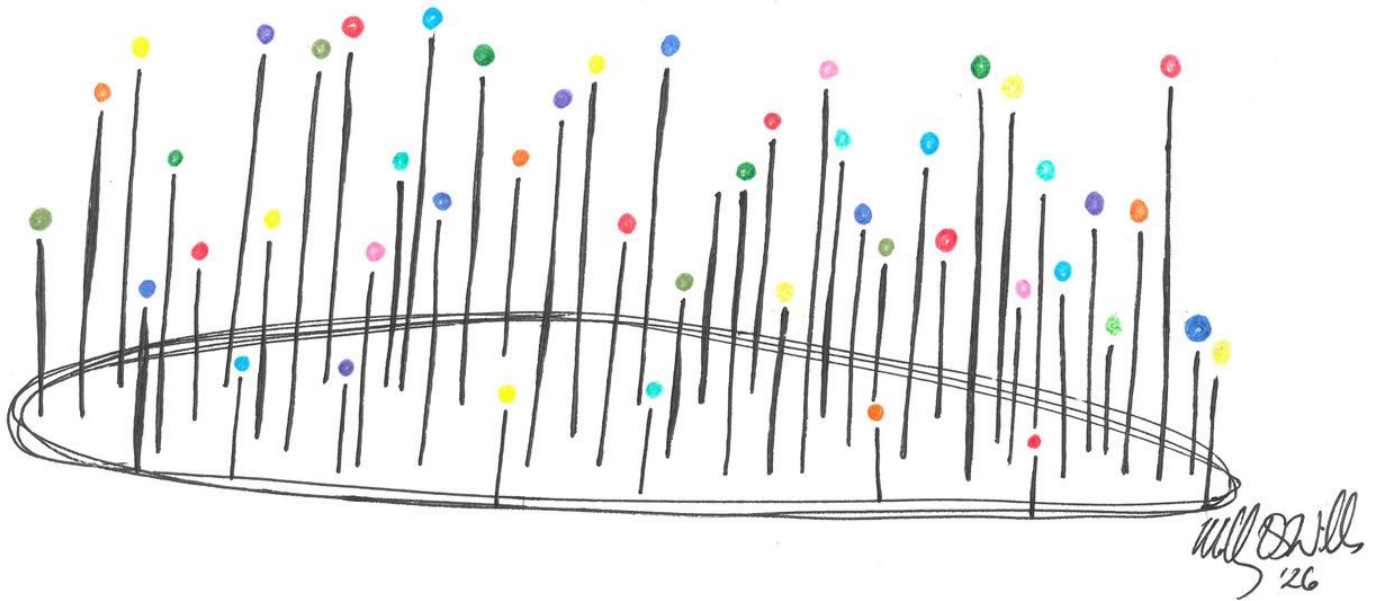


WELCOME TO BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH!

13th Sunday after Pentecost | Sunday, August 23, 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 *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less* arr. by Glen Wonacott
 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee arr. by Laura 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

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.

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

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

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

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

©2007 Dakota Road Music
All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission.

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 *Making Their Way* (ACS 979)

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. 185) **Glory to God...**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

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

FIRST READING: A reading from Isaiah 51:1-6

¹ Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the LORD. Look to the rock from which you were hewn and to the quarry from which you were dug. ² Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah, who bore you, for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many. ³ For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song. ⁴ Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation, for a teaching will go out from me and my justice for a light to the peoples. ⁵ I will bring near my deliverance swiftly; my salvation has gone out, and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope. ⁶ Lift up your eyes to the heavens and look at the earth beneath, for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats, but my salvation will be forever, and my deliverance will never be ended. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 138 (responsive reading)

¹ I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing your praise.

² **I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name, because of your steadfast love and faithfulness; for you have glorified your name and your**

word above all things.

³ When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me.

⁴ **All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O LORD, when they have heard the words of your mouth.**

⁵ They will sing of the ways of the LORD, that great is the glory of the LORD.

⁶ **The LORD is high, yet cares for the lowly, perceiving the haughty from afar.**

⁷ Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall save me.

⁸ **You will make good your purpose for me; O LORD, your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon the works of your hands.**

SECOND READING: A reading from Romans 12:1-8

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, on the basis of God's mercy, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship. ² Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. ³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

⁴ For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶ We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸ the encourager, in encouragement; the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

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

GOSPEL: The holy gospel according to Matthew 16:13-20. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." ²⁰ Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

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

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *Ask the Complicated Questions* (ACS 1005)

APOSTLES' CREED (ELW p. 105)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION Merciful God, **receive 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 *To God Our Thanks We Give* (ELW 682, sing 2x)

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

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

LORD'S PRAYER

COMMUNION

COMMUNION SONG (ELW p. 191)

SONG DURING COMMUNION *We Are an Offering* (ELW 692)

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 *Here on Jesus Christ I Will Stand* (ACS 1024)

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

POSTLUDE *The Solid Rock* by Anna Laura Page

From sundaysandseasons.com | Copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS: Jer 15:15-21; Ps 26:1-8; Rom 12:9-21; Matt 16:21-28

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.

THIS WEEK AT BETHEL...

Sunday, August 23

- Worship: 9:00 a.m.

Monday, August 24

(Pastor working from home)

Wednesday, August 26 (office hours)

- Bible study: 11:30 a.m.
- End of Summer Potluck: 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 30

- Worship: 9:00 a.m.

When we give to our church's endowment or long-term funds, we're doing something remarkable — we're making a decision today that will bless people we will never meet. That's faith with a very long horizon.



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](tel: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

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

"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.

MISSING GARAGE KEY: Did you mistakenly take the garage door key from the lock box? If so, please return it. Thank you!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: A sign-up sheet for August 30th through October 25th 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 no one person is solely responsible and everyone has an opportunity to serve. Please let Lisa K. know if you have flowers you'd like to share for the altar.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDED! The Education Board is looking for volunteers to teach Sunday school, essentially looking for a team of people to sign up for any given Sunday, but to have enough volunteers [on the team] to be consistent in teaching every Sunday. (Beginning September 27th through mid-May, with holiday time off.) The Education Board will choose the curriculum and provide lessons to follow. Please speak to Jan Smith at 952-261-4380 or kay.peterson69@yahoo.com, or Katie Radtke at 952-215-6878 or gemini.radtke@gmail.com if you are interested in this opportunity or have questions!

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.

END OF SUMMER POTLUCK: Join us on **Wednesday, August 26 at 6:00 p.m.** in the church basement. Bring a dish to share. A fire will be going in our outdoor fire pit area to roast marshmallows and create your own s'more. All ingredients for the s'mores will be provided.

SIGN UP FOR WOMEN'S RETREAT: Women's Retreat at Water's Edge, Medayto Lodge, September 11-13, **Registration deadline: September 1, 2026.** Place your registration form and payment in the envelope on the retreat display at church or mail your form and payment to: Jill Duncan, PO Box 745, Lester Prairie, MN 55354.

NEW MEMBER INFORMATIONAL MEETING: There will be a meeting on **Sunday, September 6, following the service** in Pastor Molly's office for those who are interested in potentially becoming Bethel members. If you plan to come, please let Pastor Molly know.

SAVE THE DATE: 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.

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! **WE NEED HARVEST FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS:** 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 are looking for suggestions! Your ideas are welcome! 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!

COMMON CUP DONATIONS: We are collecting donations of applesauce cups and fruit cups for the food program at Common Cup Ministries. A collection basket is in the "Common Cup Corner" of the narthex. Thank you!

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.