



WELCOME TO BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH!

17th Sunday after Pentecost | Sunday, September 20, 2026

ELW Holy Communion Setting Six | Peace of the Prairie

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 *Blessed Be Your Name* arr. by Mark Hayes

Be Thou My Vision arr. by Marianne Kim

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING OF QUILTS FOR LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Please lay a hand on whatever quilt is closest to you, in front or behind. Let us pray -
Caring God, bless these quilts, made lovingly by Lois Severson. Fill them with your peace and love, so that all who are wrapped within them are blessed with, feel and are comforted by your presence, love, and peace within their lives. Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP SONG *God is Here* (ACS 993, sing 2x)

INVOCATION

Grace and peace to you from the God of Shalom, who creates, claims, and calls you for here and now. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG *The Earth with Heaven's Music Rings* (Peace of the Prairie, pg. 2)

GATHERING PRAYER

God of every time and every place, by your Spirit we have been gathered from the rhythms and rituals of daily life to remember who and whose we are. Guide our attention to the here and now, so that we take root like lilies of the field and spread our wings like birds of the air, restored by your provision and peace. Amen.

LITANY

The Christian faith asks us to hold many truths in tension with one another. We plant our feet on Dakota land, on layers of soil and stories and acknowledge that people and places contain multitudes.

We remember the generous gifts of creation and God's promise of enough.

We remember glacial melt, the birth pangs of the prairie, ancestors singing, *Water is Life!*

We remember acres sold and treaties breaking, settlers unsettling and systems taking.

We remember the legacy and loss of bison, of nations oppressed and removed.

We remember the isolation of immigration, homesteads far from new neighbors and old country.

We remember Dakota people already and not yet, and resilient voices in this generation.

We remember farmers who labor to feed the world, who know wind and weather in their bones.

We remember the call to turn from the myth of scarcity, to interrupt patterns of harm with justice.

We remember we belong to each other and to this land, all relations of the God who re-members.

Re-member us, O God. Amen.

WORD

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

FIRST READING: Jonah 3:10-4:11

10 When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it. 4:1 But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. 2 He prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. 3 And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." 4 And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" 5 Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city. 6 The LORD God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the bush. 7 But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live." 9 But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." 10 Then the LORD said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. 11 And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also many animals?"

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

CHOIR ANTHEM *A Round of Praise* arr. by Douglas Wagner
"THE DREAM" BY REV. MOLLY B. WILLIS

The dream began with a canvas
Black as night. And as the dreamer
Painted with her imagination, the brush
Warm and alive in her hand,
Sparks flew, bright and brilliant, droplets
Of color growing and expanding, the night
Blending and melding into morning hues of blue.

With giant sweeps and strokes, the brush
Captured movement, a wave crashing, rolling,
Breaking, retreating back to itself.
Whites, blues, greens, purples, blacks, glistening and rich,
Deep and mysterious.

With chaotic dabs and dips, the brush
Sculpted tone, an eruption, cracking, fissuring,
Breaking, reaching out of itself.
Blacks, reds, oranges, yellows, browns, vibrant and bold,
Confident and stark.

With a smile on her heart,
The dreamer rent the world
Apart.

Then, with semi-contained glee, her imagination
Spinning, the dreamer stepped into her creation.

Gathering the blacks, whites, yellows, oranges, and blues
to herself, she welded and fused, feather and stippled.
Letting out a gust of breath, she made them dance
Through the air and sea.

With a start, she gave a surprised laugh
Of delight as she watched the elegant promenade.

Inspired by the waltz, she scooped from the browns, blacks,
And greens, shaping and casting.
Through water and air, she helped them branch and root
Down into the earth and stretch far up
Into the sky.

Dipping her fingertips into the purples, reds, yellows,
And oranges, she fingerpainted bright spots
Of joyful wonder throughout
the browns, blacks, and greens.
The dreams grinned from ear to ear,
Seeing her fingerprints dotting and lighting up
The world.

Since the plants looked so lonely,
She took up some clay - patting, pulling,
Scraping, molding.
The dreamer brought her imaginary friends
To life. Furred and scaled, long and short,
large and small, loud and quiet,
brilliant-hued and somber-colored.
They growled, croaked, barked,
Snapped, hissed, and sang.
Her laughter at their antics
Rang out with gaiety.

But though her creation loved her
And she delighted in it, it didn't give her
The companionship she desired.
The dreamer yearned for someone
To talk with, laugh with,
And be enchanted by her creation
With her.

So once more lifting up clay, the dreamer
Folded, kneaded, layered, and formed.
Then with fire she set them ablaze
And amalgamated them together.

Mingling whites, blacks, browns, reds, yellows, greens,
Blues, purples, and oranges, the dreamer
Painted and combined so all of her creation
Could be found in this one small part –
In their eyes, their skin, their hair, their teeth,
Their blood, muscles, and bones.

They were her mirror, the world, the universe
In a microcosm. She breathed life

Into them, that they might
Sing and talk with her all of her days.
And she reveled, laughing in delight, to see
Them joining her, smiling at her creation.

CENTERING SONG *Here and Now* (Peace of the Prairie pg. 3)

GOOD NEWS READING: Matthew 20:1-16

¹ “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ ⁹ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

CHILDREN’S SERMON & SERMON

Emily Koehler

PEACE (ELW p. 172) The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING

HYMN OF THE DAY/OFFERTORY *Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive* (ELW 605)

OFFERING PRAYER

Lord of the harvest, we return to you a portion of what you have given to us. Turn us to set our hope not on the uncertainty of riches, but on you, who richly provides for us. Multiply what we have gathered to bless all who are suffering and in need, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

GREAT THANKSGIVING (ELW p. 172)

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.**

PRAYERS FOR THE PRAIRIE (Inspired by Psalm 8)

Let us pray and give praise for the whole creation and our place within the order of things.

O LORD, our God, your name is glorified and fills the earth!

Vast like a crown set above the heavens and near like babble from the mouths of infants, a refuge of protection to shelter and keep us in the acoustics and chorus of your truth, an anthem of liberation and life written on our hearts at the beginning of time!

O LORD, our God, your name is glorified and fills the earth!

When we behold the magnitude of your making, the cosmic labor of your love for us: the moon and stars that you have established; the wind, streams, prairie, and fields; we marvel that we are so small – and still we matter so much to your delight and design!

O LORD, our God, your name is glorified and fills the earth!

You made us in your image; every neighbor, stranger, kin; called stewards of your beauty and belonging, all that lives entrusted to our good care. Let every creature that grazes and frolics, that slithers, flutters, burrows, and swims be fruitful and multiply, in praise to you!

O LORD, our God, your name is glorified and fills the earth!

Receive these prayers of praise and adoration, O God, and hear us when we pray as Jesus taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 173)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

COMMUNION (ELW p. 174)

COMMUNION SONG *God of Shalom* (Peace of the Prairie pg.4)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

SENDING

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

SENDING SONG *Enough for Today* (Peace of the Prairie pg.5)

BLESSING & DISMISSAL

May Creator God give you courage to trust tomorrow with its troubles and grant you strength enough for today. Go forth in peace. **Amen.**

POSTLUDE *For the Beauty of the Earth* arr. by Carol Tornquist

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

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS: Ezek 18:1-4, 25-32; Ps 25:1-9; Phil 2:1-13; Matt 21:23-32

THANK YOU TO THOSE SERVING TODAY!

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.

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.



"The generous will themselves be blessed."

Proverbs 22:9

THIS WEEK AT BETHEL

Sunday, September 20

- Worship: 9:00 a.m.
- Bethel's Community Garden Harvest Festival: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- *The Chosen*: 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 23 (office hours)

- Bible study: 11:30 a.m.
- Quilting: 1:00 p.m.
- MEFS Outreach bus: 2:30 p.m.
- Choir practice: 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 24

- Women's Bible study: 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Sunday, September 27

- Worship: 9:00 a.m.
- Sunday school class: following worship
- Confirmation class: following worship

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:

Wednesdays at noon

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

The 25th of the month

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL INFORMATION:

The first day of Sunday school for children, preschool through grade 6, will be **Sunday, September 27**, following worship. (Also, the first day of Confirmation class.)

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.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER SIGN-UP: A sign-up sheet for anyone interested in volunteering to teach Sunday School on a specific Sunday or Sundays is posted in the narthex. Please prayerfully consider this invitation to share your love for the Lord with the children in our congregation. You may volunteer individually or as a team. We will help you by providing lessons and materials. (Jan Smith and Katie Radtke would be delighted to answer your questions and offer words of encouragement and gratitude.)

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 everyone has an opportunity to serve and one person is not solely responsible.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS: Bev Bonte was grateful to take your donations for the **Weekend Food Program** with her back to the Common Cup office after visiting with us last Sunday. We had collected 90 applesauce cups and 20 fruit cups. Keep up the good work!

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

THE CHOSEN: *The Chosen* is back! **Season 5, episodes 1-8**, will be shown at Bethel on **Sunday evenings at 6:30 p.m. Dates: Sept. 20, Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25, Nov. 8, 15, & possibly Nov. 22** if needed. 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. 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.

LADIES—SAVE THE DATE: Tuesday, October 27, another Mosaic Making event-this time jewelry!

SIGN UP TO PURCHASE A BETHEL T-SHIRT: If you missed ordering a Bethel T-shirt last year, now is the time to order! Prices will likely reflect the order size. Both long-sleeve and short-sleeve shirts are available. Sign up in the narthex or contact Jean H. 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.