

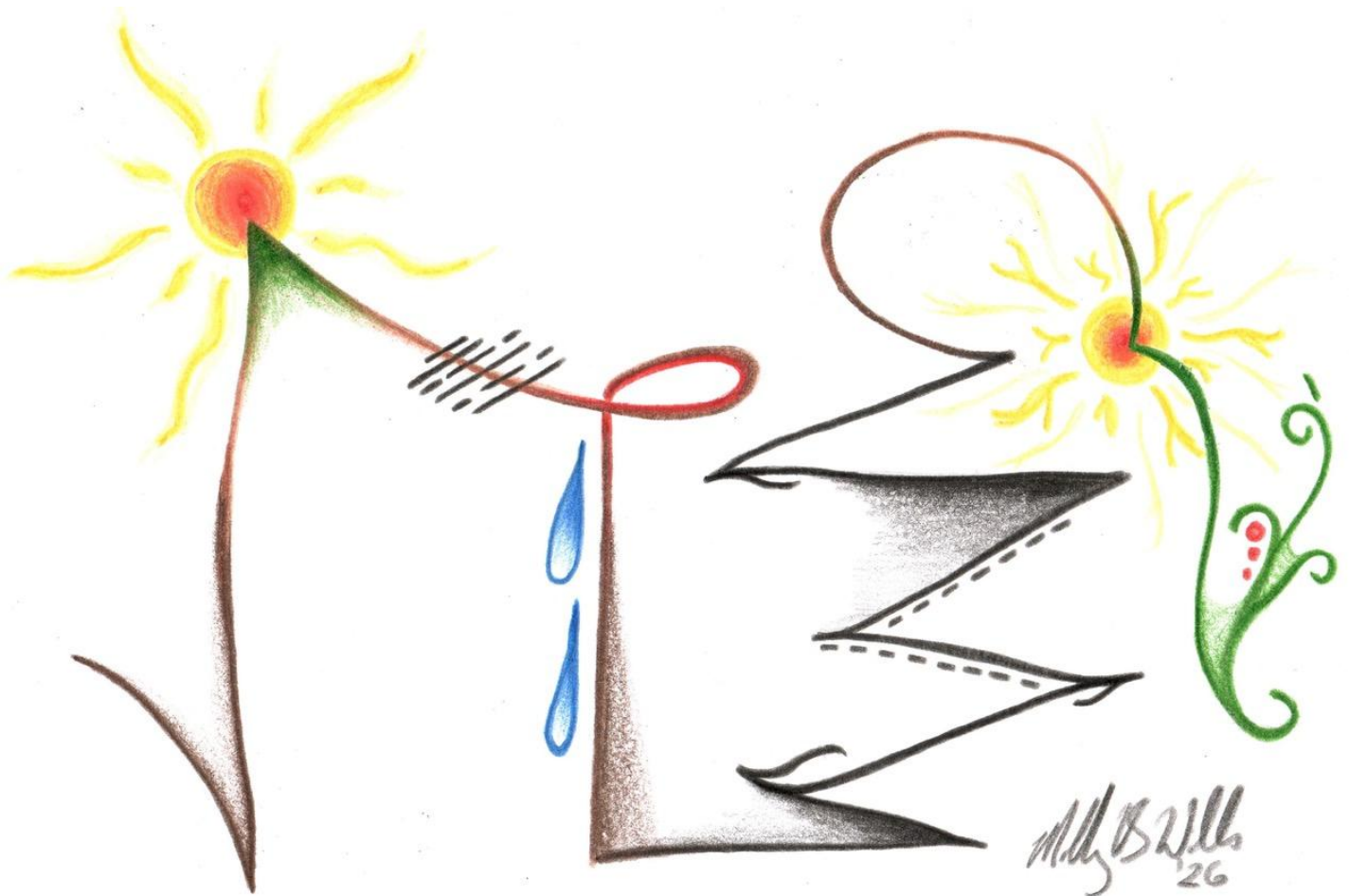


WELCOME TO BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH!

16th Sunday after Pentecost | Sunday, September 13, 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 *Open My Eyes That I May See* arr. by David Gale

What a Friend We Have in Jesus arr. by Anna Laura Page

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.

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

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.

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Trusting in God's forgiveness, let us in silence confess our feelings and acknowledge our part in the pain of the world.

Before God, with the people of God, I confess to turning away from God in the ways I wound my life, the lives of others, and the life of the world.

May our Triune God – Creator, Christ, and Spirit forgive you, renew you, and enable you to grow in love. Amen.

Before God with the people of God, we confess to turning away from God in the ways we wound our lives, the lives of others, and the life of the world.

May our Triune God – Creator, Christ, and Spirit forgive you, renew you, and enable you to grow in love. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG *Lord, Speak to Us, That We May Speak* (ELW 676)
Avery Burchett and Mia Serum, Guitar

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

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, forgiving others as you have forgiven us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

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

FIRST READING: A reading from Genesis 50:15-21

¹⁵ Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶ So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷ 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹ So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

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

PSALM: Psalm 103:1-13 (responsive reading)

¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

² **Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all God's benefits—**

³ who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases;

⁴ **who redeems your life from the grave and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy;**

⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

⁶ **O LORD, you provide vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.**

⁷ You made known your ways to Moses and your works to the children of Israel.

⁸ **LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**

⁹ you will not always accuse us, or will you keep your anger forever.

¹⁰ **You have not dealt with us according to our sins, nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**

¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.

¹² **As far as the east is from the west, so far have you removed our transgressions from us.**

¹³ As a father has compassion for his children, so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.

SECOND READING: A reading from Romans 14:1-12

¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables.

³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has welcomed them. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall.

And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. ⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord.

Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God. ⁷ For we do not live to ourselves,

and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

¹¹ For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." ¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable. 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 18:21-35. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

²¹ Peter came and said to [Jesus,] "Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "Not seven

times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. ²³ “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

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

THIRD GRADERS RECEIVE BIBLES

Axel Klumb, Lennon Sawatzke, and Grant Serum

COMMON CUP SPEAKER

Bev Bonte, Director of Common Cup Ministries

HYMN OF THE DAY

Listen, God Is Calling (ELW 513)

APOSTLES' CREED (ELW p. 105)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of grace, we pray, **hear us when we call.**

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's Work Our Hands (ACS 1000)

OFFERING PRAYER

Holy God, giver of all things, receive the gifts you first gave to 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

Honor, praise, glory, and thanksgiving to you, God, our loving creator... we proclaim the mystery of faith: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.** All honor and praise and glory to you... and guides our hands, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 191)

COMMUNION

COMMUNION SONG (ELW p. 191)

SONG DURING COMMUNION *Spirit, Open My Heart* (ELW 1043)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

SENDING

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

BLESSING

Creator who sets forth the law of love, Jesus who fulfills the law for you, and the spirit through whom you are called to love, + bless you this day, that you may be God's hands and heart and voice at work in the world. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG *To Be Your Presence* (ELW 546)

Avery Burchett and Mia Serum, Guitar

DISMISSAL Go in peace. You are God's hands at work in the world.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE *Let All Things Now Living* arr. by Michael Larkin

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NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS: Eccl 3:1-8; Matt 20:1-16

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.



And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Hebrews 13:16

THIS WEEK AT BETHEL

Sunday, September 13

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

Monday, September 14 (office hours)

- Worship & Music Committee mtg: 5:00 p.m.
- Council meeting: 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, September 16 (office hours)

- Bible study: 11:30 a.m.
- Quilting: 1:00 p.m.
- Choir practice: 6:30 p.m.
- Book club discussion: 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 17

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

Sunday, September 20

- Worship: 9:00 a.m.
- Harvest Festival: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- *The Chosen*: 6:30 p.m.

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

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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

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL INFORMATION:

1. Bibles will be given to third graders today during worship, **Sunday, September 13**. After 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.
2. 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!
3. 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.)
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. Thank you, **Bev Bonte, Director of Common Cup Ministries**, for sharing information about Common Cup Ministries. After worship, there will be opportunities to get involved in God's Work. Our Hands activities!

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 today.** 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 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!

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!

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.**

CELEBRATION BANK: Thank you for sharing your celebrations! The Celebration Bank collected \$196.67 from June through August. The donations will be used to purchase organizational items for the garage.

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.