

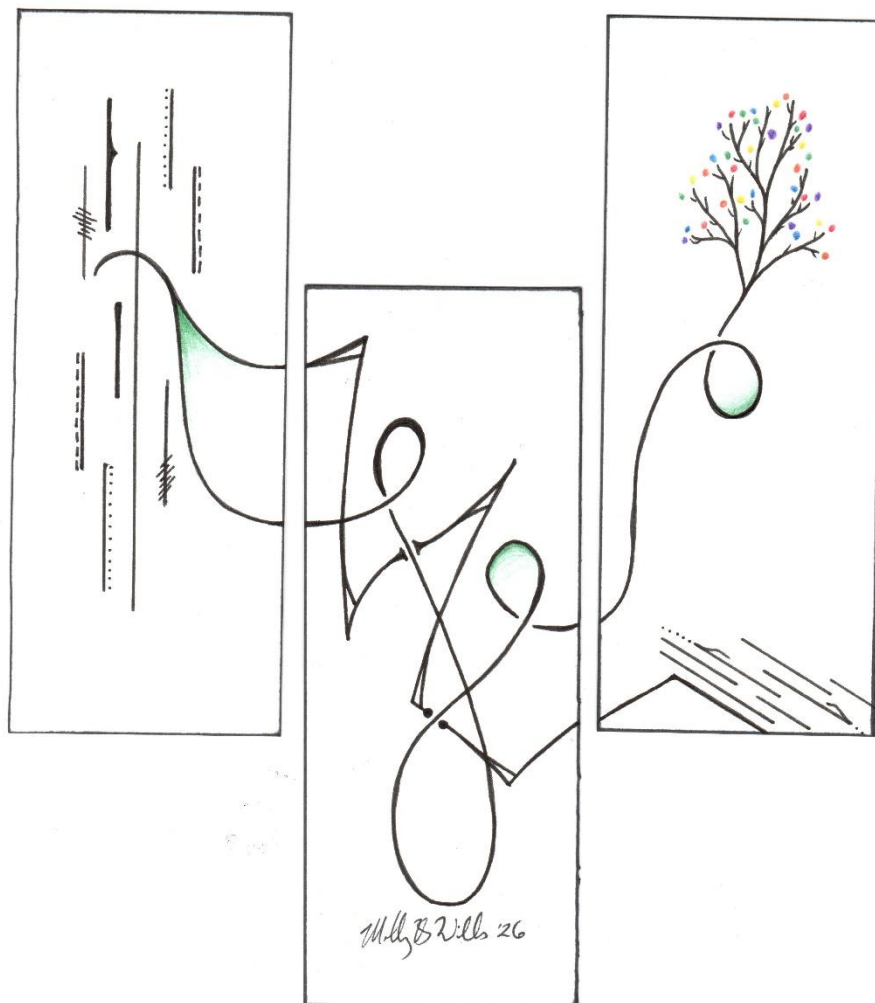


WELCOME TO BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH!

18th Sunday after Pentecost | Sunday, September 27, 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

My Faith Looks Up to Thee arr. by David S. Gaines

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

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.**

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Baptized into Christ, let us confess our sin.

Merciful God, **you free us to love others, but we neglect our neighbors and follow our own way. You lead us by the Spirit of joy and peace, but we turn away from the abundant life you offer. You surround us with patience, kindness, and generosity, but we grow weary in doing what is right. In your mercy, forgive us. Do not give up on us. Heal us, break our bonds, and show us the path of life. Amen.**

You belong to Christ Jesus and you are God's children through faith. In the cross of + Christ, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. Clothed with Christ, you are a new creation. **Amen.**

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

GATHERING PRAYER

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

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

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

¹ The word of the LORD came to me: ² What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? ³ As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die. ²⁵ Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶ When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live. Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-9 (read responsively)

¹ To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

² **My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

³ Let none who look to you be put to shame; rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

⁴ **Show me your ways, O LORD, and teach me your paths.**

⁵ Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

⁶ **Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.**

⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

⁸ **You are gracious and upright, O LORD; therefore you teach sinners in your way.**

⁹ You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way.

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:1-13

¹ If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, ⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, ¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

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

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 21:23-32

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

²³ When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’ ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the

prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.” The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN’S SERMON

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *We Are Called* (ELW 720)

APOSTLES’ CREED (ELW p. 105)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY SONG

OFFERTORY 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.

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.**

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

LORD’S PRAYER (ELW p. 173)

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 *Take My Life, That I May Be arr.* by Lynette Maynard

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NEXT SUNDAY’S READINGS: Is 5:1-7; Ps 80:7-15; Phil 3:4b-14; Matt 21:33-46

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.



Every great community is built by people willing to plant trees they know they may never sit under.

THIS WEEK AT BETHEL

Sunday, September 27

- Worship: 9:00 a.m.
- Sunday school class: following worship
- Confirmation class: following worship
- *(Pastor at Fall Theological Conference this evening through Tuesday, Sept. 29)*

Wednesday, September 30 *(pastor off)*
(National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools) Wear orange!

- No Bible study
- Quilting: 1:00 p.m.
- Choir practice: 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 1 *(pastor works from home)*

- Women's Bible study: 9:00-10:00 a.m.
- WELCA mtg: 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 4 *(pastor off)*

- Worship: 9:00 a.m. (Paul Hanson, Water's Edge Ministries Director)
- Sunday school 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:

Sunday school and confirmation classes begin today following worship. Sunday school class will meet in the chapel downstairs. Confirmation class will meet in the Fellowship Hall.

On **Sunday, October 4**, Paul Hanson, Water's Edge Ministries Director (formerly Green Lake Ministries), will lead our worship and discuss Bible camp opportunities with Sunday School children and adults.

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.

CAN YOU HELP? The Warm Coat Distribution sponsored by Common Cup Ministries is coming in October, and help is needed to collect new or gently used coats and winter gear for children through adults-all sizes. Special needs include waterproof mittens and gloves, heavy coats that are clean and washable. (Coats should not have the name of an employer or individual on them.) Donations may be placed in the Common Cup Corner at church on or before Sunday, October 12.

THE CHOSEN: Season 5, episodes 1-8, will be shown at Bethel on **Sunday evenings at 6:30 p.m. Dates: 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.