



Bethel Lutheran Church

To Live & Share the Love of Christ

Pastor Melissa Pagel

Director of Music Rowen Erickson

Sunday, July 26th 2026

Lectionary 17 (Pentecost 9)

*Congregational responses are printed in **Bold Type**.*

OUR VISION : Growing In Faith Together,

boldly inviting others to share in God's love.

Welcome to this service of worship in Jesus' name!

We are especially glad to welcome our guests and visitors! We hope that you will hear a word of hope during our worship together that will convey the fullness of God's love for you in the living of your life.

Contact Us

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INTRODUCTION

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

O give thanks to God!

Remember the wonderful things God has done!

Glory in God's holy name!

Sing of God's acts and promises!

We will seek God's presence;

Let the hearts of those who seek God rejoice.

INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP

Scripture shows us there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus, who invites us into deep restoration and relationship.

For there is nothing—neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation—that can separate us from God's love.

Receive this relationship and experience the transformative power of this love.

Let it renew your heart, your relationships and the world around you. **Amen**

GATHERING HYMN

Gather Us In Cranberry 532

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Loving God, while we were sinners, you sent Christ to die for us that we might be justified by grace through faith and have peace with you. Yet we continue to live in sin. We know what is good and right but we do what is hateful and evil. We live according to the flesh and resist the work of the Spirit. We reject and deny you're calling to the other children of Abraham. We fail to love our neighbors and thereby fail to fulfill your law. We do not

contribute to those in need or extend hospitality to strangers. We ignore the groaning of creation and forget the hope of the gospel. Forgive us, loving God. Pour out your Spirit in our hearts, that we may learn to live as those who are dead to sin and alive to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

What can separate us from the love of Christ? Nothing. Neither death, or life, Nor heavenly beings, nor earthly powers, Nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of our ancestors, you have always been faithful to us, keeping your promises to us, even when we have not kept our promises to you. As we praise you this day, guide us into new understandings of your love for us and all of the kingdom you call us to be. Amen.

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

WORD

FIRST READING: 1 Kings 3:5-12

⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I should give you.” ⁶ And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷ And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹ Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?” ¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ God said to him, “Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a

wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you.”

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

PSALM: Psalm 119:129-136

¹²⁹ Your decrees are wonderful; therefore, I obey them with all my heart.

¹³⁰ **When your word is opened it gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.**

¹³¹ I open my mouth and pant because I long for your commandments.

¹³² **Turn to me and be gracious to me, as you always do to those who love your name.**

¹³³ Order my footsteps in your word; let no iniquity have dominion over me.

¹³⁴ **Rescue me from those who oppress me, and I will keep your commandments.**

¹³⁵ Let your face shine up on your servant and teach me your statutes.

¹³⁶ **My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your teaching.**

SECOND READING: Romans 8:26-39

²⁶ The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. ³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?

³⁶As it is written “for your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God!**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Optional descant

I will call up-on the Lord

I will call up-on the Lord who is wor- thy to be

who is wor- thy to be praised. So shall I be

praised. So shall I be saved from my en - e - mies.

saved from my en - e - mies.

I will call up - on the Lord. The

Lord liv-eth, and bless-ed be the Rock, and let the God of my sal -

va - tion be ex - alt - ed. The Lord liv-eth, and bless-ed be the Rock,

and let the God of my sal - va - tion be ex - alt - ed.

Text: Michael O'Shields
Music: O'SHELDs, Michael O'Shields

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The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 13th Chapter.
Glory to you O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

³¹ [Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.” ³³ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.” ⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. ⁴⁷ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹ “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵² And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Pastor Melissa Pagel

HYMN OF THE DAY *Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God* **WOV 783**

Descent

Al - le - lu - ia, al -

D F#m G D G

1 Seek ye . . . first the king - dom of God and its
 2 Ask and it shall be giv - en un - to you; seek and
 3 We do not live by bread . . . a - lone, but by

le - lu - ia, al - le -

D Em A⁷ D F#m

righteousness, and all these things shall be
 you shall find; knock and the door shall be
 every word that pro - ceeds from the

lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

G D G D Em A D

add - ed un - to you. Al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia.
 o - pened un - to you. Al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia.
 mouth . . . of . . . God. Al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia.

Text: st. 1, Matt. 6:33, adapt. Karen Lafferty, b. 1948; st. 2, Matt. 7:7; st. 3, Matt. 4:4
 Music: Karen Lafferty, b. 1948
 Text st. 1 and music © 1972 Maranatha! Music, admin. The Copyright Co.

LAFFERTY
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APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.***

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Trusting in God's steadfast love for all God has made, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation. God our source, protect your church from those who sow weeds among the wheat. Where we trade grace for judgment, restore us, and where we get lost among the complexities of life, guide us. God of grace,
Hear our prayer.

Grateful for your abundant provision and trusting in your goodness, we cast all our cares upon you, through the abundant grace of Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your 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.**

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

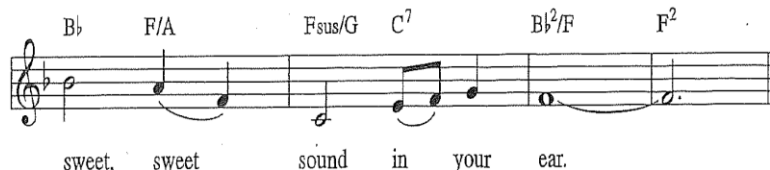
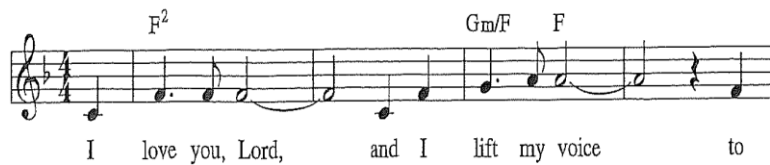
The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord, Our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is indeed, our right, our duty, and our joy...and join their unending hymn:



On the night...let us pray as Jesus taught us.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

This table is a harvest; the place where God’s good seeds—sown with love and care over centuries and across generations and in every corner of the earth—have taken root, weathered seasons and faithfully borne fruit with every passing year. It is the place where we receive sustenance from the efforts of those who came before us. It is where we dine with them and are encouraged by them, remembering that we do not walk alone as we seek to live lives shaped and guided by God’s grace, Come to this table.

TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Compassionate God,
through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, ✝ one God, bless, heal, and hold you today and always. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN *Every Time I Feel the Spirit* **ACS 942**

Refrain

Ev - 'ry time I feel the spir - it mov - ing
in my heart, I will pray. Ev - 'ry time I feel the
spir - it mov - ing in my heart, I will pray.

1 Up - on the moun - tain my Lord spoke,
2 . . All a - round me looked so fine,
3 . . Jor - dan riv - er, chilly and cold,

Refrain

out of his mouth came fire and smoke.
asked my Lord if all was mine.
chills the bod - y but not the soul.

Text: African American spiritual

Music: PENTECOST, African American spiritual; arr. Melva W. Costen, b. 1933

Arr. © 1990 Melva W. Costen, admin. Augsburg Fortress

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THE BLESSING

Go in peace, to live and share the love of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

Office Hours: Mon 1:30-3:30 Tue-Thur 9:00 am-3:30 pm

Tuesday - BBB's 6:30	Sunday- Worship 8:30
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Meal Prep Workshops at Resurrection

Are you looking for healthy, tasty meals? There will be a series of workshops held in the church kitchen. This workshop has you walking away with three different dinners, each giving you 4-6 servings, along with a dozen delicious muffins or some sort of dessert. All the planning and grocery shopping are done for you! You'll go home with one meal ready to eat and two prepped for whenever you need them.

If the meal isn't to your liking, give it as a gift!

All meat is sourced from local farmers and ranchers

Come prep three amazing meals with a fun group!

Upcoming Menus:

- **Monday, August 17th:**

Great Northern Enchiladas with Cilantro Lime Corn

Baked Ziti

Cilantro Lime Chicken

Fresh Berry Dessert Salad

- Time is 6-8 PM

- **Saturday, September 5th:**

Stuffed Bell Peppers

Beef & Broccoli Teriyaki (Local Beef)

Quinoa Pizza Bites

Lazy Day Oatmeal Cake

- Time is 1-3 PM

More information is in the hallway and the cost is \$60. You can call, email or text Emily Cowles to register: Please sign up by the Wednesday prior to the workshop.

- 605-515-3910 or RDEmily@emskitchentable.com

Or Purchase Online:

<https://emskitchentable.com/productdetails/product/mealprep>

The Chosen Bible Study at Resurrection

Please bring your own lunch and join us for episodes of *The Chosen* followed by a discussion in the Gathering Room at church on the following Wednesdays from 11:30-1:00 pm.

- July 29
- August 12
- August 26

Beer & Theology (changing to Breaking Bread & Theology)

Join us the second Tuesday of each month for Beer and Theology at Cheesecake Heaven at 5:30 pm. Food and drink will be available for purchase.

Used Sheets and Blankets Needed (Resurrection)

Have you cleaned out your linen closet lately? If so and you have sheets and blankets you no longer need or use, please bring them to the church so the quilters may recycle them into their beautiful quilts!

Save the date: A Fond Farewell to Waypost

For generations, Waypost Camp has been a place where faith has grown, friendships have been formed, and lives have been changed. As they prepare to close this chapter of Waypost's ministry, they hope you'll join us for a meaningful weekend of celebration, gratitude, and remembering.

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN:

Fill The Manna Pack: You can pick up your manna pack bag at both entrances and in the lounge. Please use this bag to collect your donations at mealtimes. Fill your plate, fill the manna pack!

Aluminum Can Drive: Bring your empty aluminum cans to St John the Baptist Catholic Church (behind the building) at 2597 Glendale Ave in Howard. All proceeds from the can collection will go to FMSC. Collection will run through the end of July.

Funding for Mission & Budget

Monthly Receipts through 7/20/26	\$ 6,707.00
Monthly Budget Expenses:	\$18,843.00
YTD Receipts through 6/30/26:	\$114,749.00

Worship Assistants

Sunday, July 26th

Assisting Minister:	Cindy Michalski
Reader:	Dawn Schroder
Altar Guild:	Dawn Schroder
Communion Assist:	Linda Wery
Ushers:	Julie Juranitch & Volunteer
Video Tech:	Doug Scholes
Fellowship Hour:	Angel & Bella Upstone

Sunday, August 2nd

Reader:	Sandi Tibbetts
Altar Guild:	Peggy Hansen
Communion Assist:	Linda Wery
Ushers:	Carol Wehunt & Kay Smith
Video Tech:	Rick Johnson
Fellowship Hour:	Volunteer

Sunday, August 9th

Reader:	Cindy Michalski
Altar Guild:	Karen Hervas
Communion Assist:	Karen Hervas
Ushers:	Cindy Michalski & Volunteer
Video Tech:	Yvonne Pamperin
Fellowship Hour:	Volunteer

Keep in Prayer:

Alli	Ron Kasulke
Caryl Peters	Ron Niemuth
Christina Petzel	Gloria Treptow
Deb McAllister	Sally Caylor
Elaine Barber	Sandy Elbe
Eric Pedersen	Sheila O'Connor
Karen Koblenz	Paislee Porod
Kathy Forrest	Dick Schoen
Kelly Schmidt	Luke Wubben
Lou Warner	Nadine Knoll
Mel Chaltry	Brenda Fruechette
Stacy	Doug Hanson
Elizabeth K.	Jackie
Adam	Scott
Lorenzo & Family in Columbia	
The Family of Willow VanVonderen	
The Family of Elizabeth Hagen	
The Family Sharon Bryfczynski	
The Family of Connie Ashley	

Prayer Request

Please remember _____ in prayer. Briefly describe the need or joy for which prayers are requested:

Your Name: _____

Phone: _____

*Please place this form in the Offering Plate or in the church office.
Your request will be shared with members of Bethel's Prayer Chain*