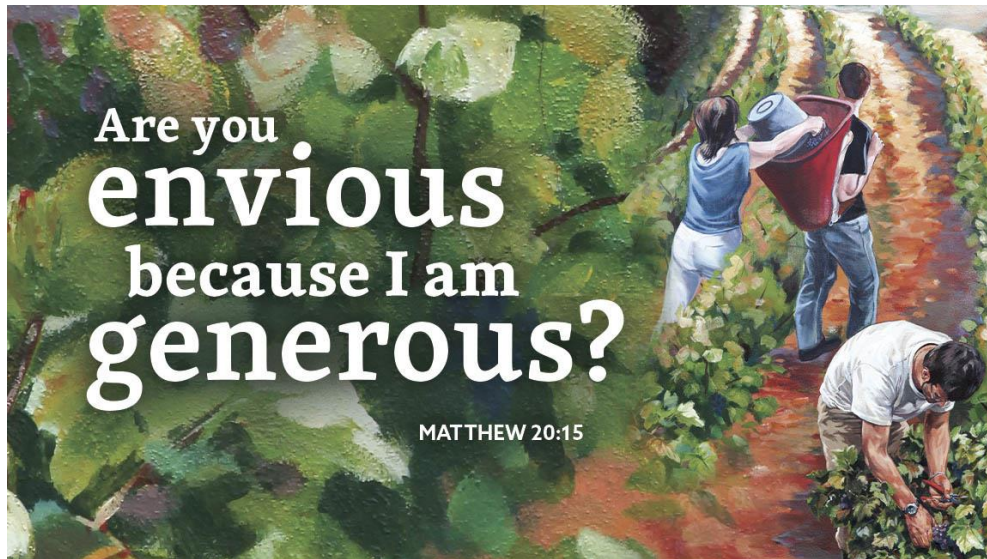

Bethesda Lutheran Church

21590 Hwy 47, Isle, Minnesota 56342

September 20th, 2026

9:00 am



We are a community of faith centered in Christ and rooted in God's grace. Through worship, learning, fellowship, and service, we encourage one another in faith and seek to share God's love with our neighbors, our community, and the world.

*We're glad you're here. We are a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and celebrate the work we're able to do together.
(To learn more about the ELCA visit www.elca.org).*

Those joining worship online, whether live or later in the week, are invited to prepare their worship space by creating a home altar. You might include meaningful linens, candles, a cross, enough bread or crackers and wine or juice for everyone at your table, and anything that helps you engage more fully in worship. This altar becomes a gathering place for prayers, songs, communion, and a shared sense of God's presence in your home.

✠ GATHERING ✠

~ The Holy Spirit calls us together as people of God. ~

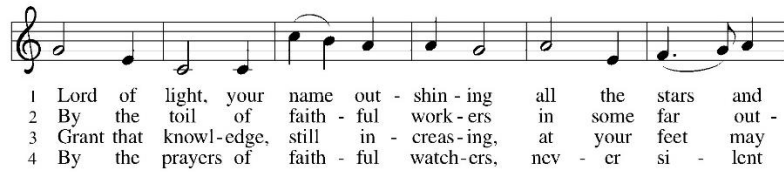
~ The gathering responds together with texts in bold print ~

Good morning and welcome to worship. Today Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables in which Jesus says that the reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. When God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.

WELCOME

LIFE TOGETHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

A full list of announcements is near the end of the bulletin.



Text: Howell E. Lewis, 1860–1953, alt.
 Music: ABBOT'S LEIGH, Cyril V. Taylor, 1907–1991
 Text © Union of Welsh Independents
 Music © 1942, ren. 1970 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.
 Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who pours love into our hearts
 and healing upon the earth. **Amen.**

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God, **we confess that we fall short of the life to which you call us. We misuse your creation, allow hurt to divide our relationships, and turn away from the needs of our neighbors. Too often, fear and indifference keep us from sharing your love with others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore what is broken, reconcile us to one another, and renew us by your Spirit to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Hear this good news: Through ☩ Jesus Christ, we have peace with God. You are forgiven, you are beloved, and you are set free to live in God's grace. **Amen.**

GREETING

The immeasurable grace upon grace of Christ Jesus, the rich mercy and unconditional love of God, and the unity of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and eternal God, **your steadfast love surrounds us and your grace sustains us each day. Teach us to trust in your mercy, open our hearts to the needs of our neighbors, and shape our lives in the generous love of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

CHOIR ANTHEM: Down to the River to Pray with Lord, Listen to Your Children

Trad. Spiritual by Ken Medema Arr. by Mary McDonald | © 1973 and this Arr. © 2015 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188

✠ WORD ✠

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

SCRIPTURE READING

Jonah 3:10—4:11

After Jonah's short sermon in 3:4, the Ninevites all repented and God decided to spare the city. Jonah objected to this and became even more angry when God ordered a worm to destroy a plant that was providing shade. The book ends with a question that challenges any who are not ready to forgive: You, Jonah, are all worked up about a bush, but shouldn't I be concerned about a hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites?

A reading from Jonah:

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!**

PSALM

Psalm 145:1-8

¹ I will exalt you, my God and king, and bless your name forever and ever.

² **Every day will I bless you and praise your name forever and ever.**

³ Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised! There is no end to your greatness.

⁴ **One generation shall praise your works to another
and shall declare your power.**

⁵ I will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty and all your marvelous works.

⁶ **They shall tell of the might of your wondrous acts,
and I will recount your greatness.**

⁷ They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness;
they shall sing joyfully of your righteousness.

⁸ **The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 1:21-30

Paul writes to the Philippians from prison. Though he is uncertain about the outcome of his imprisonment, he is committed to the ministry of the gospel and calls on the Philippians to live lives that reflect and enhance the gospel mission.

A reading from Philippians:

²¹ For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, ²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵ Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶ so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

²⁷ Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, ³⁰ since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

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

GOSPEL

Matthew 20:1-16

Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve.

The gospel is announced: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

This is the story of grace flowing down. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹ "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."

This is the story of grace that covers us. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Reverend Christina K.

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

ELW 588



1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer - cy, like the wide-ness of the sea;
2 There is wel - come for the sin - ner, and a prom - ised grace made good;
3 For the love of God is broad - er than the mea - sures of our mind;
4 'Tis not all we owe to Je - sus; it is some - thing more than all:



there's a kind-ness in God's jus - tice which is more than lib - er - ty.
there is mer - cy with the Sav - ior; there is heal - ing in his blood.
and the heart of the E - ter - nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind.
great - er good be - cause of e - vil, larg - er mer - cy through the fall.



There is no place where earth's sor - rows are more felt than up in heav'n.
There is grace e - nough for thou - sands of new worlds as great as this;
But we make this love too nar - row by false lim - its of our own;
Make our love, O God, more faith - ful; let us take you at your word,



There is no place where earth's fail - ings have such kind - ly judg - ment giv'n.
there is room for fresh cre - a - tions in that up - per home of bliss.
and we mag - ni - fy its strict - ness with a zeal God will not own.
and our lives will be thanks - giv - ing for the good - ness of the Lord.

Text: Frederick W. Faber, 1814–1863, alt.
Music: LORD, REVIVE US, North American, 19th cent.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe in God, who creates all things, who embraces all things,
who celebrates all things, who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.
We believe in God as the source of all life,
who baptizes this planet with living water.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ, seen in the suffering one, the poor one,
the malnourished one, the climate refugee - who loves and cares for this world
and suffers with it. And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life,
who came to reconcile and renew this world and everything in it.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God, who moves with God
and who moves among and with us today.**

We believe in everlasting life in God. And we believe in the hope that one day God will put an end to death and all destructive forces.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion,
reflecting the wideness of God's mercy for the whole world.*

*Each petition of the prayers ends with these words: Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**
Response to the conclusion of the prayers of intercession: **Amen.***

PEACE

May Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, fill you with unconditional love,
mend you with mercy, and grant you perfect peace. **And also with you.**

*We are changed by Christ's peace
and now we have the holy opportunity to extend that peace to others.*

✠ **MEAL** ✠

~ God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ. ~

OFFERING

*In this season after Pentecost, we offer our gifts in response to God's grace.
Our time, talents, and resources support the ministry we share and help us care for our
neighbors in Christ's name. Thank you for your faithful generosity.
The offering is gathered and the table is set.*

Ways to Give:

- Give electronically through Vanco Services.
- Use the giving app by scanning the QR code.
- Recurring or one-time online options: <https://app.autobooks.co/pay/bethesda-lutheran-church-of-malmo>



The gathering stands as the gifts are brought forward.

OFFERING HYMN "Now the Feast and Celebration" ELW 167

Refrain

Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion, all of cre - a - tion
sings for joy to the God of life and love and free - dom;
praise and glo - ry for - ev - er - more!

I Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain, whose blood has
freed and u - nit-ed us to be one great peo - ple of God.

Refrain

The image shows the musical notation for the hymn "Now the Feast and Celebration" (ELW 167). It consists of five staves of music in G major (one sharp). The first three staves are the main body of the hymn, and the last two are the refrain. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff is marked "Refrain" at the beginning. The fifth staff is also marked "Refrain" at the end.



Text and music: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
 Text and music © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc. 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.
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OFFERING PRAYER

God of creation, **you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

The presiding minister continues with the words of institution.

*The gathering responds: **Amen.***

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, and trusting in the wide welcome of God, let us pray as Jesus taught us: **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 COMMUNION

Holy Communion is a gift of grace, where we receive the presence of Jesus in bread and wine and are reminded that we are deeply loved. All who hunger for mercy and hope are welcome at this feast. Jesus is the host, and the invitation is wide. Even across time and space, God is present in these gifts, and we, the community, are present to one another.

Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

Will You Let Me Be Your Servant

ELW 659

1 Will you let me be your ser - vant, let me be as
2 We are pil - grims on a jour - ney, we are trav - 'lers
3 I will hold the Christ - light for you in the night - time
4 I will weep when you are weep - ing; when you laugh I'll
5 Will you let me be your ser - vant, let me be as

Christ to you? Pray that I may have the grace to
on the road; we are here to help each oth - er
of your fear; I will hold my hand out to you,
laugh with you. I will share your joy and sor - row
Christ to you? Pray that I may have the grace to

let you be my ser - vant, too.
walk the mile and bear the load.
speak the peace you long to hear.
till we've seen this jour - ney through.
let you be my ser - vant, too.

Text: Richard Gillard, b. 1953
Music: THE SERVANT SONG, Richard Gillard
Text and music © 1977 Scripture In Song (c/o Integrity's Hosanna Music)/ASCAP.
c/o Integrity Media, Inc., 1000 Coady Road, Mobile AL 36695.

God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me *O Christ, Surround Me*

ACS 1084

1 God, be the love to search and keep me; God, be the prayer to
2 Bind to my - self the name of Ho - ly, great cloud of wit - ness -
3 Bright - ness of sun and glow of moon - light, flash - ing of light - ning,
4 Walk - ing be - hind to hem my jour - ney, go - ing a - head to
5 Christ in the eyes of all who see me, Christ in the ears that

move my voice; God, be the strength to now up - hold me:
es - en - fold; proph - ets, a - pos - tles, an - gels wit - ness:
strength of wind, depth of the sea to soil of plan - et:
light my way, and from be - neath, a - bove, and all ways:
hear my voice, Christ in the hearts of all who know me:

Refrain
O Christ, sur - round me; O Christ, sur - round me.

Text: Richard Bruxvoort Colligan, b. 1967
Music: GREEN TYLER, Richard Bruxvoort Colligan
Text and music © 2004 This Here Music, admin. Augsburg Fortress

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

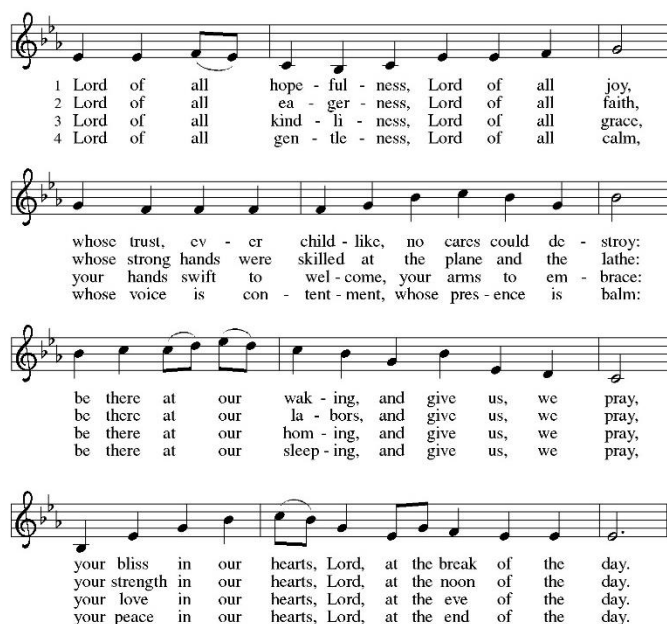
Sustaining God, **with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

✠ SENDING ✠

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

BLESSING

Creator God bless you and keep you. Creating Christ shine through you with grace and mercy. Creative Spirit nourish you and give you ✠ peace. **Amen.**



1 Lord of all hope - ful - ness, Lord of all joy,
 2 Lord of all ea - ger - ness, Lord of all faith,
 3 Lord of all kind - li - ness, Lord of all grace,
 4 Lord of all gen - tle - ness, Lord of all calm,

whose trust, ev - er child - like, no cares could de - stroy:
 whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe:
 your hands swift to wel - come, your arms to em - brace:
 whose voice is con - tent - ment, whose pres - ence is balm:

be there at our wak - ing, and give us, we pray,
 be there at our la - bors, and give us, we pray,
 be there at our hom - ing, and give us, we pray,
 be there at our sleep - ing, and give us, we pray,

your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
 your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
 your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
 your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Text: Jan Struther, 1901–1953
 Music: SLANE, Irish traditional
 Text © Oxford University Press 1931.

DISMISSAL

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace. **Thanks be to God.**

We give thanks for worshiping together today.

Wherever you are on your journey of faith, know that you are warmly welcomed here.

Return again to join us in service, prayer, and fellowship throughout the week.

Acknowledgments: Texts and hymns from sundaysandseasons.com copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License # SAS028183. New Revised Standard Version updated edition Bible Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. Cover Image from Mural depicting grape harvest. Beaujolais, France. Photo by Eric D ricochet69. Copyright © 2025 Alamy Stock Photo. Used by permission. Affirmation of Faith from Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute (a seminary in South India), adapted by Keld B. Hansen, 2009, as provided in "Listen to the Voice of Creation," Season of Creation Celebration Guide 2022, 33. Included in Season of Creation, Ecumenical Liturgy Guide, 2026. Additional Liturgical texts adapted for Bethesda Lutheran by Reverend Christina Kadelbach.

LIFE TOGETHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Life together announcements reflect the shared life of our congregation by highlighting upcoming events, service opportunities, and ways we continue to grow in faith together. We invite you to read through what's ahead and participate as you are able. Your presence matters.

PRAYER & CARE Jan & Ron Aho, Jim Christensen, Sherry Whipple, Kaye Bresnahan family & Erick.

As a community of faith, we are committed to holding one another in prayer & care. We invite you to pray for those listed here and offer support as you are able. To request prayers for yourself or someone else (with their permission). Please contact the office.

WELCOME Friends in Christ, we're glad you're here. Your presence is a gift to this community. If you would like us to be in touch or want to learn more about Bethesda, you're welcome to share your name in the friendship/welcome notebook.

COFFEE HOSPITALITY contributions for the freezer are always welcome. Please sign-up to help serve in the kitchen on Sunday mornings. Coffee is needed, both regular and decaf.

HELP NEEDED We're looking for a few more people to help run the iPad during Sunday worship and funerals. Training will be provided, so no experience is necessary. If you're interested in helping, please contact Jim C. or the church office.



FLU SHOT CLINIC at Bethesda! Aitkin County Health & Human Services will run a flu shot clinic on Monday, October 5th, 2026, from 1:00-4:00pm. Pre-registration is preferred. Scan the QR code from the poster in the Narthex or call Aitkin County at 218 927-7200 to schedule an appointment. For more information, see the poster on the bulletin board in the Narthex.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF SCHOOL KITS! Back-to-school sales are here, making it the perfect time to help children around the world stay in school! Our Bethesda WELCA group is collecting specific items to assemble LWR School Kits. These kits are sent to children living in refugee camps, disaster zones, and areas where poverty makes basic supplies unaffordable. We are also continuing the newborn care kits. Please donate new items only (no camo, flags, or religious symbols): 70-sheet notebooks, 16-24 pack of crayons, 30-cm ruler & safety scissors, #2 pencils & black/blue pens, pencil sharpener & 2.5" eraser. A full list is available at <https://lwr.org/kits/school-kits/instructions>

SAVE THE DATE Constitution Revision info sessions following church service (approximately 10:30 am) on October 4 & 18 | Holiday Bazaar Saturday, October 31st
INFORMATION SESSIONS: BLC CONSTITUTION REVISIONS Members are invited to attend an information session regarding the proposed revisions to the BLC Constitution. Sessions will be held on Sunday, October 4, and Sunday, October 18, following coffee hour. Each session will cover the revision process, proposed changes, and next steps leading up to the vote at the annual congregational meeting on Sunday, December 13th.

HEARTLAND CONFERENCE The NEMN Synod Women's (WELCA) Fall Conference will be on October 3rd at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 30985 Front Street, Pequot Lakes, MN. "Love Your Neighbor" is the theme based on Matthew 19:19c. The speaker is Vicky Kinney of My Neighbor to Love Coalition. Registration is \$10 and begins at 8:30am. A light meal of breakfast casserole, fresh fruit, pastries, coffee and juice will follow.

THIS WEEK'S MISSING BIRTHDAYS FROM SEPT. NEWSLETTER: Larry P. – Sept 23
 We celebrate you and give thanks for you!

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD LAST WEEK

Sunday, Sept. 13th, 2026, In Person: 72 Online: 18

THIS WEEK AT BETHESDA

Mon., Sept. 21st	9:00 am	Crafters
	11:00 am	Council Meeting
	11:30 am	Pinochle
	7:00 pm	AA/Alanon
Tue., Sept. 22nd	9:00 am	Quilters
	9:00 am	Chair Yoga
	3:00 pm	Choir Practice
	4:00 pm	Bell Choir Practice
Wed., Sept. 23rd	9:00 am	Women's Bible Study
Thur., Sept. 24th	8:00 am	ROMEOS
	9:15 am	Chair Yoga

Sunday Sept. 27th | 18th Sunday after Pentecost

9:00 am Worship (with Communion)
 10:00 am Time of fellowship

Bethesda Lutheran Church blcmalmo.org

Office: 320-684-2123 (1-877-684-2123)

Fax: 320-684-2836

E-mail address: blcmalmo@gmail.com

A member congregation of the NE MN Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Ministers: All People of Bethesda Lutheran Church

Pastoral Ministries: Reverend Christina K.

blc.reverend@gmail.com 320-684-2123

Church Secretary: Mary B.

Custodian: Ari D.

Digital Music & Sound System Coordinator: Jim C.

Parish Nurses: Darlene C., RN, Kathy B. RN ANP

Prayer Chain Contacts: Char B. or Darlene C.

Praise Team: Darlene & Jim C., Sherry W., Sheila P.

Choir Director: Sheila P.

Hand Bell Choir Director: Donna M.

September Altar Care: Barb Forrester & Kat Carlson

Serving September 20th

Music: Adult Choir

Communion Assistants: Sheila P., Karen C., Darlene C.

Ushers: Lee & Barb F.

Greeters: Carol & Larry P.

Lector: London F.

Hospitality Hosts:

Serving on September 27th

Communion Assistants: Judie B., Darlene C., Dennis H.

Ushers: David & Libby B.

Greeters: LuAnn & Ron G.

Lector: Jeanine B.

Hospitality Hosts: Rocky & Jo D.