
Bethesda Lutheran Church

21590 Hwy 47, Isle, Minnesota 56342

September 27th, 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 Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.

WELCOME

LIFE TOGETHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

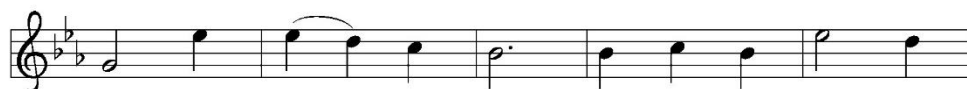
A full list of announcements is near the end of the bulletin.

O Master, Let Me Walk with You

ELW 818



1 O Mas - ter, let me walk with you in low - ly
2 Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear,
3 Teach me your pa - tience; share with me a clos - er,
4 In hope that sends a shin - ing ray far down the



paths of ser - vice true; tell me your se - cret;
win - ning word of love; teach me the way - ward
dear - er com - pa - ny, in work that keeps faith
fu - ture's broad - 'ning way, in peace that on - ly



help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.
feet to stay, and guide them in the home - ward way.
sweet and strong, in trust that tri - umphs o - ver wrong,
you can give; with you, O Mas - ter, let me live.

Text: Washington Gladden, 1836–1918, alt.
Music: MARYTON, H. Percy Smith, 1825–1898

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

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.**

BELL CHOIR ANTHEM

Hyfrydol

Rowland H. Prichard, 1811–1887 arr. Erin MacGorman

✠ **WORD** ✠

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

SCRIPTURE READING

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

A reading from Ezekiel:

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²What 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"? ³As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know 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.

²⁵Yet 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? ²⁶When 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. ²⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹Yet 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?

³⁰Therefore 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. ³¹Cast 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? ³²For 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

Psalms 25:1-9

¹To 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.**

³Let 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.**

⁵Lead 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.**

⁷Remember 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.**

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

SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 2:1-13

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

A reading from Philippians:

¹If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though he existed in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,

⁷but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,

⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God exalted him even more highly
and gave him the name
that is above every other name,

¹⁰so that at the name given to Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, 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,

¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good
pleasure.

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

GOSPEL

Matthew 21:23-32

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

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

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

²³When [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?" ²⁴Jesus 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. ²⁵Did 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?'" ²⁶But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet." ²⁷So 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.”

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

SERMON

Reverend Christina K.

Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways

ELW 772



- 1 Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways to keep his stat - utes still!
- 2 Or - der my foot-steps by your word and make my heart sin - cere;
- 3 As - sist my soul, too apt to stray, a strict - er watch to keep;
- 4 Make me to walk in your com-mands, 'tis a de-light - ful road;



Oh, that my God would grant me grace to know and do his will!
let sin have no do - min-ion, Lord, but keep my con-science clear.
and should I e'er for - get your way, re - store your wan-d'ring sheep.
nor let my head or heart or hands of - fend a - gainst my God.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.

Music: EVAN, William H. Havergal, 1793–1870

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 and sings as the gifts are brought forward.

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!

1 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

2 Pow - er and rich-es, wis-dom and might, all hon - or and
glo - ry to Christ for - ev - er.

Refrain

3 For God has come to dwell with us, to make us peo-ple of
God; to make all things new.

Refrain

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!

COMMUNION MUSIC

He Is Among Us (The Least Of These)

The Porter's Gate | Paul Zach | Published by Integrity Music, Paul Zach Publishing

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.**

The Lord Now Sends Us Forth
Enviado soy de Dios

ELW 538



En - via - do soy de Dios, mi ma - no lis - ta, es - tá
The Lord now sends us forth with hands to serve and give,
pa - ra cons - truir con él un mun - do fra - ter - nal.
to make of all the earth a bet - ter place to live.
Los án - ge - les no son en - via - dos a cam - biar
The an - gels are not sent in - to our world of pain
un mun - do de do - lor por un mun - do me - jor;
to do what we were meant to do in Je - sus' name;
me ha to - ca - do a mí ha - cer - lo rea - li - dad.
that falls to you and me and all who are made free.
A - yú - da - me, Se - ñor, a ha - cer tu vo - lun - tad.
Help us, O Lord, we pray, to do your will to - day.

Text: Anonymous, Central America; tr. Gerhard M. Cartford, b. 1923
Music: ENVIADO, anonymous, Central America
English text © 1998 Augsburg Fortress.

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.

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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 Ron and Jan A.; Kaye B.; Eric B.; Jim C.; Carolyn M.; Wally S.; Sherrie W.

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 church 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.

CHILDREN WELCOME Children are a gift we celebrate and are welcome at Holy Communion. We trust that worship belongs to people of all ages.

FELLOWSHIP TIME All are invited to gather in the fellowship hall following worship for coffee, treats, and conversation. This is a wonderful opportunity to spend time together as a community of faith.

WORSHIP AT BETHESDA Join us for worship every Sunday at 9:00 am. Holy Communion is celebrated most Sundays.

PASTORAL CARE Caring for one another is part of who we are. If you are hospitalized or going through a difficult time, please let Pastor Christina or our parish nurses know. We would be honored to support you.

CRAFTERS Projects are simple and fun: painting base coats on wood items, beading, cutting, and more. Every little bit helps! Watch the bulletin for updates. Future Crafter Dates: Sept. 28, Oct. 19th, Oct. 31 — Holiday Bazaar

VINTAGE MARKET New this year! Our Holiday Bazaar will feature a Vintage Market, and we're collecting donated vintage items. "Vintage" means prior to 1970, think jewelry, art glass, vinyl records, old books, Pyrex, ashtrays, embroidered linens, advertising pieces, costume brooches, cuff bracelets, toys, and more. Contact Judie B.

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.

HEARTLAND CONFERENCE The Northeastern Minnesota Synod Women of the ELCA Fall Conference will be held Saturday, October 3, at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 30985 Front Street, Pequot Lakes. This year's theme is "Love Your Neighbor," based on Matthew 19:19c. Vicky Kinney of My Neighbor to Love Coalition will be the featured speaker. Registration is \$10 and begins at 8:30 a.m. A light brunch of breakfast casserole, fresh fruit, pastries, coffee, and juice will follow.

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 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.

BLESSING BOX On October 4th, we welcome Deacon Stephanie, Executive Director of Camp Onomia. In this ministry, she cares for the people, land, and resources entrusted to the camp as it invites people of all ages to encounter Christ through creation and community. Our October Blessing Box gifts will support Camp Onomia's ministry of faith, belonging, and renewal. Thank you for giving generously as you are able.

FLU SHOT CLINIC AT BETHESDA Aitkin County Health & Human Services will offer a flu shot clinic at Bethesda on Monday, October 5th, 2026, from 1:00–4:00 p.m. Pre-registration is preferred. To schedule an appointment, scan the QR code or call Aitkin County at 218-927-7200. For additional information, please see the poster on the narthex bulletin board.



RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD Sunday, September 20th, 2026 In-Person 74 | Online 15

THIS WEEK AT BETHESDA

Sunday, September 27th | Season of Creation | 18th Sunday after Pentecost

9:00 am Worship with Holy Communion

10:00 am Time of fellowship

Monday, September 28th

9:00 am Crafting

11:30 am Pinochle

7:00 pm AA/Alanon

Tuesday, September 29th

9:00 am Chair Yoga

3:00 pm Choir Practice

4:00 pm Bell Choir Practice

Wednesday, September 30th

9:00 am Women's Bible Study

Thursday, October 1st

8:00 am ROMEOS (Men's Bible Study)

9:15 am Chair Yoga

Saturday, October 3rd

8:30 am Heartland WELCA Conference gathering

Sunday, October 4th | Season of Creation | 19th Sunday after Pentecost

9:00 am Worship with Holy Communion | Blessing Box: Camp Onomia

10:00 am Time of fellowship

Informational session on Bethesda's constitutional revisions

Bethesda Lutheran Church blcmalmo.org

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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 F., Kat C.

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

Ushers: David, Libby B. **Greeters:** LuAnn, Ron G. **Lector:** Jeannine B.

Hospitality: Rocky & Jo D.

Serving on October 4th | Season of Creation | 19th Sunday after Pentecost

October Altar Care: Elsa C. & Carol P.

Communion Assistants: Kat C., Dennis H., Julie S.

Ushers: Mary, Mark V. **Greeters:** Darrell K., Winnie Z. **Lector:** Dennis H.

Hospitality: