



**16<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
**SEPTEMBER 17, 2023**  
**9:30 AM**



**Bethel Lutheran Church**  
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**Pastor Jessie Obrecht**

A congregation of the Montana Synod of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*Large print bulletins are available, please see the ushers for a copy.*

*As we gather for worship and prepare our hearts, we would ask that you please silence your cell phones for the duration of the service.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

*In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.*

## **WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **GATHERING SONG**

*LH 515      Freely, Freely*

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be God,  
the one who forms us,  
✠ Jesus who bears the cross,  
the Spirit who makes our joy complete. **Amen.**

Let us bow before God in humility,  
confessing our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Steadfast and faithful God,  
**you have revealed the ways of justice,  
yet we fail to follow you.**  
**We are overwhelmed  
by the world's violence and suffering.**  
**We are afraid to risk what we have  
for the sake of others.**  
**For the harm we have caused,  
known and unknown, forgive us.**  
**For the unjust demands we place on others  
and your creation, forgive us.**  
**For the ways we turn away  
from you and our neighbor, forgive us.**  
**Lead us back to you  
and set us on the right path;  
in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

Beloved in Christ,  
God's justice stretches beyond all understanding.  
God's compassion is beyond compare.  
In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us.  
In † Christ, you are already and always forgiven. **Amen.**

## **GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

## **KYRIE**

*Dakota Road Kyrie Eleison*

*R. Kyrie Eleison on our world and on our way.  
Kyrie Eleison ev'ry day.*

*1. For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the unity  
of all. For this holy house, for all who worship and praise, let us  
pray to the Lord! Let us pray to the Lord! R.*

*2. That we may live out your impassioned response to the hungry  
and the poor. That we may live out truth and justice and grace, let  
us pray to the Lord! Let us pray to the Lord! R.*

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. 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,**  
**through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

## **FIRST READING: GENESIS 50:15-21**

*After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness  
for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me  
harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do  
good and save many lives.*

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?" So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, '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. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? 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. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM 103:8-13**

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

**you will not always accuse us,  
nor will you keep your anger forever.**

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

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

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

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

### **SECOND READING: ROMANS 14:1-12**

*This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.*

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. 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. Who are you to pass judgment on servants 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.

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. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. 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. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

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. For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,  
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*Dakota Road Alleluia*

***R: Alleluia, alleluia, I am the light of the world. Alleluia, alleluia, I am the light of the world.***

*P: Those who follow me will not walk in darkness, those who follow me will have the light of life. R.*

The holy gospel according to Matthew the eighteenth chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

## **GOSPEL: MATTHEW 18:21-35**

*When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.*

Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. 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.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. 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. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. 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.**

## **CHILDREN’S MESSAGE AND SERMON**

Dave Scholten, LPA

## **HYMN OF THE DAY**

*LH 510*

*Bless the Lord, Oh My Soul*

## PROFESSION OF FAITH

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**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 CHURCH

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

## THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## OFFERING/OFFERTORY

*Dakota Road LH 135 Everybody's Got Something to Offer*

*R. Everybody's got something to offer young and old the prince and the pauper, everybody's got something to offer in the name of the Lord.*

*1. To the lost and lowly ones the message it is clear, we have all got a gift to give, our hands, our hearts, our tears. R.*

*2. To believers gathered here the message it is true, we have all got a gift to give in all we say and do. R.*

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. God of power, God of plenty,  
**all things belong to you.**

**We bring your gifts to the table,  
that all might be fed.**

**Form us into the body of your Beloved,  
Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

## WORLD HUNGER PRAYER

Gracious and living God,

**During this time of harvest,**

**we acknowledge the gracious bounty you bless us with.**

**We give you thanks for all creation,  
and know you have given us charge**

**to be stewards of air, land, water, and all living things**

**We thank you for those who grow food and farm.**

**We thank you for those who labor in the fields.**

**We thank you for those who bring crops to market.**

**We thank you for merchants,  
who give us access to your bounty.**

**We thank you for hands that make,  
and prepare our daily bread.**

**Give us nourishment to do your work in the world,  
so that, fed, we can feed others.**

**May our work and faith in you create  
that Heavenly community we're all are fed.**

**In Jesus name, Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give our thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

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



## **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

*Dakota Road LH 136 Holy, Holy, Holy*

*Holy, holy, holy tender, gentle God. Heaven and earth of full of You. Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in Your name.*

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus first 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**

*The Lord's Table is open to believers of all Christian traditions. We believe that Christ comes to us in the bread and cup for the forgiveness of sins and new life. Gluten free wafers are available, please let your server know. Choice of red wine and white grape juice offered.*

## **COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION**

*ELW 518 We Eat the Bread of Teaching*

*ELW 597 My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less [1,2,4]*

*ELW 523 Let Us God Now To the Banquet*

*ELW 483 Here is Bread*

## **COMMUNION BLESSING**

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace. **Amen.**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. Blessed be your name, O God,  
**for we have feasted on your Word,**  
**Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts.**  
**Strengthened by this food,**  
**send us to gather the world to your banquet,**  
**where none are left out and all are satisfied.**  
**In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

## BENEDICTION

The God of glory,  
✠ Jesus Christ, name above all names,  
and the Spirit who lives in you,  
bless you now and forever.  
**Amen.**

## SENDING HYMN

*ELW 801      Change My Heart, O God*

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. God is at work in you.  
**Thanks be to God**

And all God's children said: **Amen.**

## SERVING TODAY

<b>Accompanist</b>	Lynn Ryan, piano;
<b>Lay Assistant</b>	Walt Nuessle
<b>Usher</b>	Patty Braget
<b>Tech</b>	Gabe Smith
<b>Children's Church</b>	Addi Carlson and Rylee Virts
<b>Hospitality</b>	Bethel Lutheran Church
<b>Counters</b>	Patty Braget and Kaleb Stringer

**Flowers are given** by Shari Kohoutek in memory of Duane.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

We celebrate the 16<sup>th</sup> **Sunday after Pentecost.**

Thank you to **Dave Scholten, LPA** who has been authorized by the Bishop of the Montana Synod to provide pastoral services in this congregation this Sunday.

A huge thank you to all who participated and donated items for **God's Work, Our Hands Sunday.** We had a wonderful time and look forward to next year!

## **THIS WEEK**

### **Tuesday 9/19**

- Electric City Bible Study, Zoom meeting 7:00 am
- Men's Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall 7:00 am

### **Wednesday 9/20**

- Bible Study on Zoom 10:00 am
- LOGOs Youth Ministry 5:30 pm; High School 6:30 pm

### **Thursday 9/21**

- Electric City Chorale rehearsal in the sanctuary 7:00 pm
- Hope Circle meets at LaRae Veitch's home 7:00 pm

### **Friday 9/22**

- Bethel office is closed.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Sunday 9/24**

- Worship led by Jim Carlson, LPA in-person and live stream 9:30 am
- Yom Kippur Service in the sanctuary starting at 6:30 pm

### **Monday 9/25**

- Yom Kippur service continues throughout the day.

### **Tuesday 9/26**

- Electric City Bible Study, Zoom meeting 7:00 am
- Men's Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall 7:00 am

### **Wednesday 9/27**

- Bible Study on Zoom 10:00 am
- LOGOs Youth Ministry 5:30 pm; High School 6:30 pm

### **Thursday 9/28**

- Electric City Chorale rehearsal in the sanctuary 7:00 pm

## **Friday 9/29**

- Bethel office is closed.

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