

BETHEL LUTHERAN

E.L.C.A.

G R O V E C I T Y

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT
March 30, 2025

Worship Services 8:30 A.M. & 10:30 A.M.

Welcome to Bethel Lutheran

We extend special greetings to all our guests who are with us today. Your presence, along with our members and friends, is truly valued. Know that all of God's people are always welcome here at Bethel.

Never been to a “Lutheran” or “liturgical” church? It might at first seem strange with all the singing and sitting down and standing up. Know all we do has meaning and function. Pastor Ray is happy to explain any confusing things for you. 🤔

If you would like to know more about Bethel Lutheran, her pastor, the Rev. Peter I. Ray, or any of the parish's programs and activities, please contact the church office (875-0510). You may also check out our website by scanning the QR code below. Again, welcome; and may you have a blessed week!

Worship and young children

All children are welcome in worship. They are a valued part of this faith community.

In addition, Bethel's Nursery (for children up to approximately four years of age) has paid staff at both services. This is available to meet the needs of your family and the worshiping needs of the congregation.

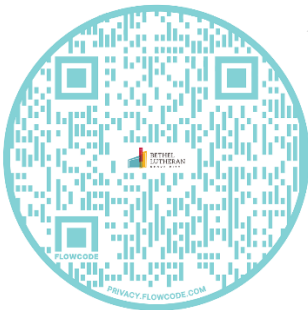
We have a “Parentseeker” paging system for optimal communication between nursery and parents worshiping in the sanctuary.

Children's bulletins are also available in the narthex for younger children to help them make age-appropriate connections with our weekly themes.

Bethel has video monitors in the narthex and hallways if your child gets restless.



The psalm sets the tone this day: "Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!" Happy are those who have "become the righteousness of God" in the merits of Christ Jesus. Happy are those for whom the forgiveness of God has "rolled away . . . the disgrace" of former times. Happy is the father at the return of his prodigal son. Happy are we that our sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake. Rejoice!



Scan to be directed to our website

- ❖ Quiet reverence before the liturgy allows prayer and meditation
- ❖ Please do not bring food or drinks into the Sanctuary during Worship
- ❖ Throughout the service, **C** means the congregation responds as the **bold print** indicates.
- ❖ As a worship courtesy, **please silence or turn off** all cellular phones and other communication devices during the service.

Gathering

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Monte Stevens

PRELUDE

Almighty Father

Gabriel

(please stand and face the baptismal font)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

C Amen..

P Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Compassionate One,

**C you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,
but our lives do not always reflect you
and your love for the world.**

**We do not show others the tender compassion
you have shown to us.**

**We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality
you grant to all people.**

**We oppress others,
even though you have set us free again and again.**

We squander the abundant gifts of the earth.

Transform our lives

and guide us again in the way of the cross.

Amen..

P Beloved in Christ,
 God's arms are always stretched open wide
 to welcome the wandering ones home.
 In + Christ your sins are forgiven.
 You have a place in God's house forever.
C Amen..

PROCESSIONAL HYMN *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing* ELW# 807



1 Come, thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless-ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
 2 Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer: "Hith-er by thy help I've come";
 3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be;



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.
 and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
 let that grace now like a fet - ter bind my wan-d'ring heart to thee.



While the hope of end-less glo - ry fills my heart with joy and love,
 Je - sus sought me when a strang - er, wan-d'ring from the fold of God;
 Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.



teach me ev - er to a - dore thee; may I still thy good-ness prove.
 he, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre - cious blood.
 Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

APOSTOLIC GREETING

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

C And also with you.

KYRIE

The musical score for the Kyrie is written for two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are: "In peace, in peace let us pray to the Lord." followed by a repeat sign and "For the". The second staff continues the melody with the lyrics: "Lord, have mer - cy." followed by a repeat sign. The third staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are: "peace from a - bove, and for our sal - va - tion, let us pray to the". The fourth staff continues the melody with the lyrics: "Lord." followed by a repeat sign and "For the peace of the whole world, the well - be - ing of the". The fifth staff continues the melody with the lyrics: "Lord, have mer - cy." followed by a repeat sign.

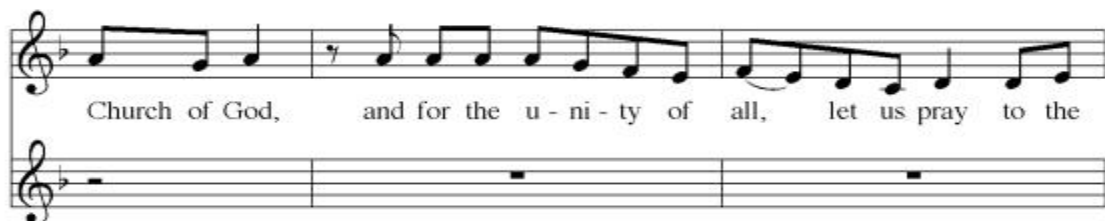
A In peace, in peace let us pray to the Lord. **A** For the

C Lord, have mer - cy.

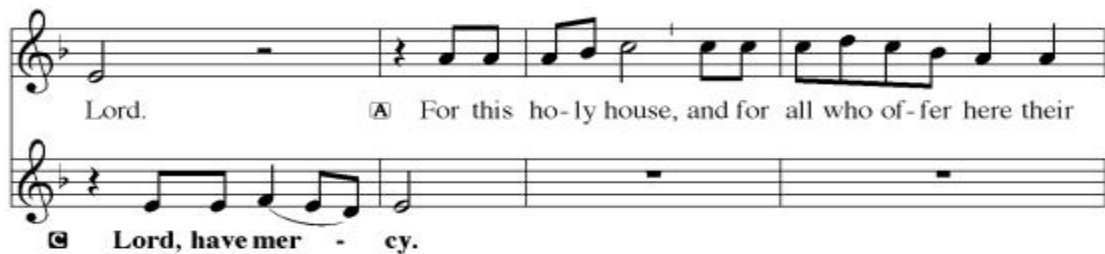
peace from a - bove, and for our sal - va - tion, let us pray to the

Lord. **A** For the peace of the whole world, the well - be - ing of the

C Lord, have mer - cy.



Church of God, and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the



Lord, [A] For this ho-ly house, and for all who of-fer here their
[C] Lord, have mer - cy.



wor - ship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.
[C] Lord, have mer - cy.



[A] Help, save, com-fort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord.
[C] A - men

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen..

(please be seated)

WELCOME THE CHILDREN

Gathering • Word • Meal • Sending

Word

FIRST READING

Joshua 5:9-12

By celebrating the Passover and eating the produce of the promised land instead of the miraculous manna that had sustained them in the desert, the Israelites symbolically bring their forty years of wilderness wandering to an end at Gilgal.

⁹ The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

¹⁰ While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

P The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

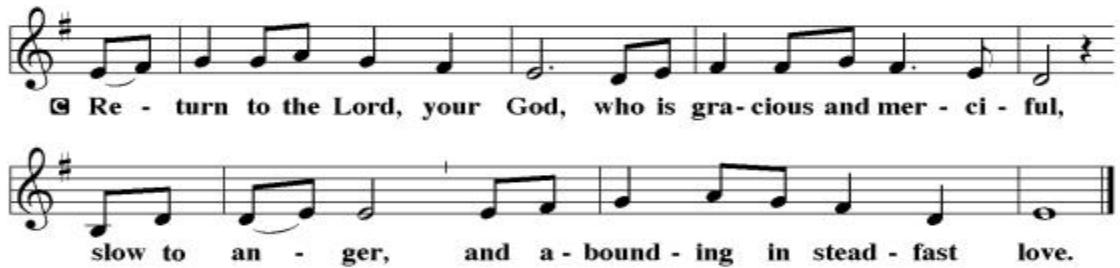
PSALM

Psalm 32

- ¹ Happy are they whose transgressions | are forgiven,
and whose sin is | put away!
- ² Happy are they to whom the Lord im- | putes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there | is no guile!
- ³ While I held my tongue, my bones with- | ered away,
because of my groaning | all day long.
- ⁴ For your hand was heavy upon me | day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the | heat of summer.
- ⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not con- | ceal my guilt.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." Then you forgave me
the guilt | of my sin.
- ⁶ Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in | time of trouble;
when the great waters overflow, they | shall not reach them.
- ⁷ You are my hiding-place; you preserve | me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts | of deliverance.
- ⁸ "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that | you should go;
I will guide you | with my eye.
- ⁹ Do not be like horse or mule, which have no | understanding;
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will | not stay near you."
- ¹⁰ Great are the tribulations | of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust | in the Lord.
- ¹¹ Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice | in the Lord;
shout for joy, all who are | true of heart.

(please stand, as able)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



P The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL

Luke 15:1-3,11b-32

Jesus tells a parable about a son who ponders his father's love only after he has spurned it. The grace he receives is beyond his hopes. That same grace is a crisis for an older brother who believes it is his obedience that has earned his place in the father's home.

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³ So he told them this parable: ^{11b} "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger!

¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ ³¹ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

(please be seated)

SERMON

Rev. Monte Stevens

(please stand, as able)

HYMN OF THE DAY

What Is The World Like

ACS#1047



1 What is the world like when God's will is
2 What is the world like when God's will is
3 What is the world like when God's will is
4 What is the world like when God's will is
5 These are the sto - ries that Je - sus im -



done? Mus - tard seeds grow more than
done? Wit - ness the wan - der - ing
done? No more is neigh - bor just
done? Read - y for feast - ing, we
parts, filled with the Spir - it who



we can con - ceive: roots thread the
child com - ing home; watch as the
al - ly or friend; peace thrives in
watch through the night, tend - ing our
joins us as one. Born through our



soil; branch - es reach for the sun.
par - ent breaks in - to a run.
plac - es where once there was none.
lamps till the new day's be - gun.
voic - es, our hands, and our hearts,



This is how God moves us each to be - lieve.
This is how God longs for us when we roam.
This is how God works when ri - val - ries end.
This is how God read - ies us for the light.
this is a new world where God's will is done.

APOSTLES CREED (10:30 A.M.)

**C 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 INTERCESSION

P Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

God of faithful promise, make your church a new creation in Christ. As you reconcile us to yourself, guide us also in your way of reconciliation, that through confession and forgiveness, repentance and reparations, your church may bear witness to your love. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

God of new beginnings, restore balance to the earth. Send rain to places of drought and sunshine to places of flooding, that the produce of the land may again support life. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

God of prodigal grace, unite the nations as fellow members of the human family. Give leaders the courage to put aside pride and ego, to cease squandering lives and time, and to work for the well-being of all. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

God of boundless love, receive with open arms any in need of compassion (*especially*). Embrace all who are far from home or estranged from loved ones, and all who live with regret. Embolden your people to offer and to seek forgiveness. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

God of radical inclusion, widen human circles to welcome all who are excluded. Bless the work of disability ministries, ministries by and with neurodivergent people, and multicultural and ethnic-specific ministries; that the welcome of Jesus be extended to all. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of resurrection life, welcome home all who have died (*especially*). We thank you for their lives and entrust them into your keeping, where true reconciliation and eternal peace are found. God, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

P We pray for this assembly, called to welcome its neighbors to the table of your grace. Bless food pantries, community gardens and kitchens, clean water projects, and all ministries that address human hunger and thirst. God, in your mercy,

C receive our prayer.

P We give thanks for the faithful lives of those who proclaimed your gospel in times of challenge and strife, and for all those whose lives of love and service have ended (*especially*). May their witness inspire our own. God, in your mercy,

C receive our prayer.

P Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

C Amen.

Gathering • Word • Meal • Sending

Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

(You may share a sign of God's peace such as a handshake, wave, hug or other appropriate greeting.)

(please be seated)

OFFERING

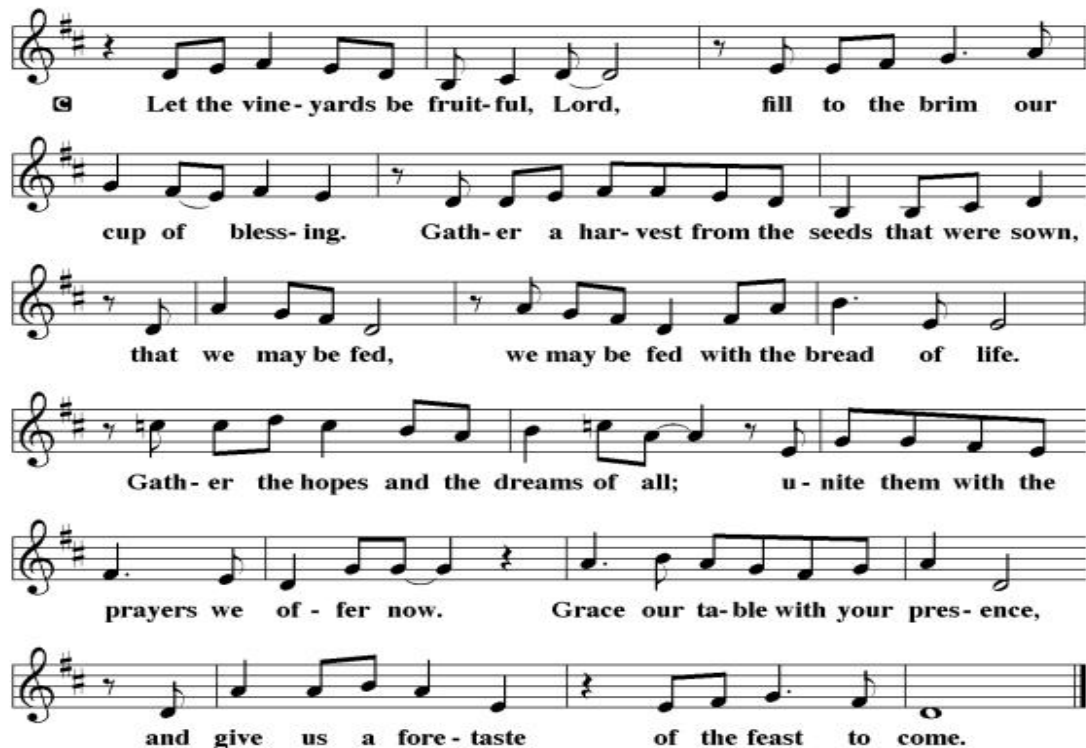
An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, and the care of those in need. If you are a first-time visitor, it is our privilege to have you worship with us. Please do not feel the need or obligation to give a financial offering. Your presence is gift enough to God and to us.

Our members and friends have the privilege to participate in faithful financial stewardship. They share their gifts by envelope, direct deposit and other electronic means. Scan the QR Code below where you can give a gift electronically.



(please stand, as able)

OFFERTORY MUSIC



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, fill to the brim our
cup of bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown,
that we may be fed, we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gath-er the hopes and the dreams of all; u-nite them with the
prayers we of-fer now. Grace our ta-ble with your pres-ence,
and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A Gracious Provider,
you set your immense treasures among us,
opening your heart to the world.
As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love,
deepen our commitment to sharing those
treasures with others,
through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

C Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

THE PREFACE

P It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. You bid your people cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast. Renew our zeal in faith and life, and bring us to the fullness of grace that belongs to the children of God. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS *Holy, Holy, Holy*

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,
Lord God of pow'r and might, heav-en and earth are
full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed, bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P You are indeed holy, O God, the fountain of all holiness;
you bring light from darkness, life from death, speech from silence.
We worship you for our lives and for the world you give us.
We thank you for the new world to come
and for the love that will rule all in all.

We praise you for the grace shown to Israel, your chosen,
the people of your promise:
the rescue from Egypt, the gift of the promised land,
the memory of the ancestors, the homecoming from exile,
and the prophets' words that will not be in vain.
In all this we bless you for your only-begotten Son,
who fulfilled and will fulfill all your promises.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's
death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup
we remember the incarnation of your Son:
his human birth and the covenant he made with us.
We remember the sacrifice of his life:
his eating with outcasts and sinners,
and his acceptance of death.
But chiefly we remember his rising from the tomb,
his ascension to the seat of power,
and his sending of the holy and life-giving Spirit.
We cry out for the resurrection of our lives,
when Christ will come again in beauty and power
to share with us the great and promised feast.
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit,
that we and all who share in this bread and cup
may be united in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
may enter the fullness of the kingdom of heaven,
and may receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.
Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Join our prayers with those of your servants
of every time and every place, and unite them
with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest
until he comes as victorious Lord of all.
Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.
Amen.

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C 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

P All who are hungry, come!
The feast of grace is spread.

C Amen.

(please be seated)

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

Bethel welcomes to the Lord's table all baptized Christians who believe that Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of this meal. Children and adults who want to receive a blessing instead of bread and wine may cross their arms over their chest as they come forward. All are welcome!

AGNUS DEI (Lamb of God)



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;



have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us, have mer - cy.



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;



have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us, have mer - cy.



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION*On My Heart Imprint Your Image*

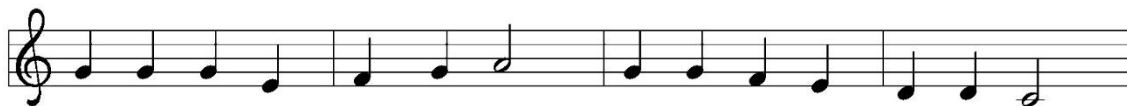
ELW#811



On my heart im - print your im - age, bless - ed Je - sus, king of grace,



that life's trou - bles nor its plea - sures ev - er may your work e - rase.



Let the clear in - scrip - tion be: Je - sus, cru - ci - fied for me,



is my life, my hope's foun - da - tion, all my glo - ry and sal - va - tion!

(please stand, as able)

PASTORAL COMMENDATION

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

C Amen.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

A Generous Host,
you have shared your feast with us and made us new.
Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities,
that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom,
in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

Gathering • Word • Meal • Sending

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission out into the world.

BLESSING

P God our tender parent,
God the crucified one,
God the reconciling Spirit,
✠ bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN*My Life Flows On in Endless Song*

ELW #763



- 1 My life flows on in end - less song; a - bove earth's lam-en - ta - tion,
- 2 Through all the tu - mult and the strife, I hear that mu-sic ring - ing.
- 3 What though my joys and com-forts die? The Lord my Sav-ior liv - eth.
- 4 The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a foun - tain ev - er spring-ing!



I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn that hails a new cre - a - tion.
It finds an ech - o in my soul. How can I keep from sing-ing?
What though the dark - ness gath-er round? Songs in the night he giv - eth.
All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from sing-ing?

Refrain

No storm can shake my in-most calm while to that Rock I'm cling-ing.



Since Christ is Lord of heav-en and earth, how can I keep from sing-ing?

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Bethel's Staff

Lead Pastor: The Rev. Peter I. Ray

Organist/Director of Music: Ward Matthias

Pianist/Associate Musician: Ruth Hiles

Director of Choirs: Bree Johnson

Youth Coordinator: Jennifer Bueter

Nursery Director: Crystal Smith

Pre-School Directors: Kelley Valentine & Cathy Tallman

Church Administrator: Cathy Tallman

Custodian: Jennifer Horvath

Care & Visitation Pastor: The Rev. Jeffrey N. Wise

Retired Visitation Pastor: The Rev. Wil Hallman

Retired/Resource Pastors:

The Rev. Andrew Mazak

The Rev. Joe Stark

The Rev. Joy Miller

A Land Statement

"We acknowledge that we gather as Bethel Lutheran Church on the traditional land of the Shawnee and Ofo and Kaskaskia Peoples past and present, including the Adena/Hopewell Cultures, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit as well."

LENTEN SCHEDULE

Mid-Week Lenten Simple Supper
6-7 p.m.

Mid-Week Lenten Worship (Night Prayer)
7 p.m.



PRAYER TIMES IN THE SANCTUARY/OPEN CHURCH

Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.