

# BETHEL LUTHERAN

E.L.C.A.

G R O V E C I T Y

FIFTH SUNDAY IN EASTER  
May 18, 2025

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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.

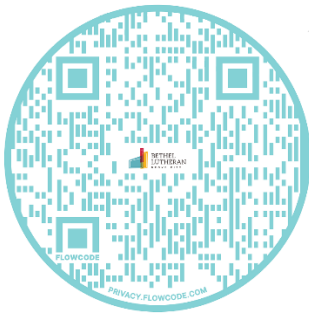
We have a “Parentseeker” paging system for optimal communication between nursery and parents worshiping in the sanctuary.

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.



*Easter initiates a new day. It anticipates a new heaven and a new earth. The risen Christ is making all things new. In the mystery of holy baptism God has made new people of us. Today Jesus invites us to see everyone in a new light—through the lens of love.*



*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. Peter I. Ray

## PRELUDE

*The Gift of Love*

Gabriel

*(please stand and face the baptismal font)*

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**C Christ is risen, indeed. Alleluia!**

P In the name of ✠ the One  
who was, who is, and who is to come.

**C Amen.**

P Baptized into Christ's death and resurrection,  
and called to live the baptized life,  
let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.  
*Water may be poured before or during the thanksgiving.*  
Holy God,  
we give you thanks for the waters of baptism,  
waters that make a people your own,  
that restore to wholeness,  
and empower us to be witnesses in your name.  
Baptized into you, O Living One,

**C make us one as you are one.**

P We give you thanks for the waters of baptism,  
waters that strengthen believers  
and give new life to beloved servants of your church;  
waters that extend your boundless love  
and cross barriers of our own making.  
Baptized into you, O Living One,

**C make us one as you are one.**

P We give you thanks for the waters of baptism,  
waters that open the hearts of believers  
and give a voice in the night to those in captivity;  
waters that set your people on a new path,  
rejoicing in the Spirit's power.  
Baptized into you, O Living One,

**C make us one as you are one.**

P Grant us grace, love, and life, O Living One,  
that our every day is shaped by these waters  
that give us our very lives in you.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Crucified and Risen One.

**C Amen.**

# PROCESSIONAL HYMN

## Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones

ELW#424



1 Ye watch - ers and ye ho - ly ones, bright  
2 O high - er than the cher - u - bim, more  
3 Re - spond, ye souls in end - less rest, ye  
4 O friends, in glad - ness let us sing, su -



ser - apts, cher - u - bim, and thrones, raise the glad strain:  
glo - rious than the ser - a - phim, lead their prais - es:  
pa - tri - archs and proph - ets blest: "Al - le - lu - ia!  
per - nal an - thems ech - o - ing: "Al - le - lu - ia!



"Al - le - lu - ia!" Cry out, do - min - ions, prince - doms,  
"Al - le - lu - ia!" Thou bear - er of the e - ter - nal  
Al - le - lu - ia!" Ye ho - ly twelve, ye mar - tyrs  
Al - le - lu - ia!" To God the Fa - ther, God the



pow'rs, arch - an - gels, vir - tues, an - gel choirs:  
Word, most gra - cious, mag - ni - fy the Lord:  
strong, all saints tri - um - phant, raise the song:  
Son, and God the Spir - it, Three in One:



"Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!" Al - le -



lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

## 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.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**P** O Lord God, you teach us that without love, our actions gain nothing. Pour into our hearts your most excellent gift of love, that, made alive by your Spirit, we may know goodness and peace, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

(please be seated)

## WELCOME THE CHILDREN

Gathering • Word • Meal • Sending

# Word

## FIRST READING

Acts 11:1-18

*In defense of his earlier baptism of non-Jewish believers, Peter demonstrates to the members of the Jerusalem church that God's intention to love Gentiles as well as Jews is revealed in Jesus' testimony. In this way the mission to the Gentiles is officially authorized.*

<sup>1</sup> Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. <sup>2</sup> So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, <sup>3</sup> saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?"

<sup>4</sup> Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, <sup>5</sup> “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. <sup>6</sup> As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. <sup>7</sup> I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat.’ <sup>8</sup> But I replied, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ <sup>9</sup> But a second time the voice answered from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, you must not call profane.’ <sup>10</sup> This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. <sup>11</sup> At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. <sup>12</sup> The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. <sup>13</sup> He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; <sup>14</sup> he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.’ <sup>15</sup> And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. <sup>16</sup> And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>17</sup> If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?” <sup>18</sup> When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, “Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life.”

P The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**



## PSALM

Psalm 148

1 Hallelujah! Praise the Lord | from the heavens;  
praise God | in the heights.  
2 Praise the Lord, | all you angels;  
sing praise, all you | hosts of heaven.  
3 Praise the Lord, | sun and moon;  
sing praise, all you | shining stars.  
4 Praise the Lord, heav- | en of heavens,  
and you waters a- | bove the heavens.  
5 Let them praise the name | of the Lord,  
who commanded, and they | were created,  
6 who made them stand fast forev- | er and ever,  
giving them a law that shall not | pass away.  
7 Praise the Lord | from the earth,  
you sea monsters | and all deeps;  
8 fire and hail, | snow and fog,  
tempestuous wind, do- | ing God's will;  
9 mountains | and all hills,  
fruit trees | and all cedars;  
10 wild beasts | and all cattle,  
creeping things and | flying birds;  
11 sovereigns of the earth | and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers | of the world;  
12 young | men and maidens,  
old and | young together.  
13 Let them praise the name | of the Lord,  
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over | earth and heaven.  
14 The Lord has raised up strength for the people and praise for all | faithful  
servants,  
the children of Israel, a people who are near the Lord. | Hallelujah!

(please stand, as able)

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



**P** The Holy Gospel according to John.

**C** Glory to you, O Lord.

## GOSPEL

John 13:31-35

*After washing the disciples' feet, predicting his betrayal, and then revealing his betrayer, Jesus speaks of his glorification on the cross. This deep complicated love of Jesus, even to death on the cross, will be the distinctive mark of Jesus' community.*

<sup>31</sup> When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. <sup>32</sup> If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. <sup>33</sup> Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' <sup>34</sup> I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

**P** The Gospel of the Lord.

**C** Praise to you, O Christ.

*(please be seated)*

(please stand, as able)

HYMN OF THE DAY

God, We Gather as Your People

ACS#1038



1 God, we gath - er as your peo - ple to raise our song a -  
 2 Oh, we sing for all the chil - dren, that one day they be  
 3 Oh, we pray for all the young lives cut short by fear and  
 4 God, we're work - ing for the fu - ture when chil - dren far and



bove, and we dare to claim the prom - ise of your love.  
 free; and we sing for gen - er - a - tions yet to be,  
 shame, so a - fraid of who they are and whom they love.  
 wide can . . . live their lives with dig - ni - ty and pride.



Though the day may not yet be here, we  
 that they nev - er have a rea - son to  
 May the mes - sage now be ban - ished that your  
 As they grow in strength and stat - ure, may they



trust it soon will be, when your chil - dren will be free.  
 doubt that they are blest. May they, in your love, find rest.  
 love is for the few; may their faith in you re - new.  
 join us hand in hand, as a - gainst all hate we stand.

*Refrain*



Oh, may our hearts and minds be o-pened, fling the church doors o-pen  
 wide. May there be room e-nough for ev-'ry-one in - side.  
 For in God there is a wel - come, in God we all be -  
 long. May that wel - come be our song.

## 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 God of resurrection and new life, we come before you in prayer for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

Fill the church with the spirit of your redeeming love. Make us steadfast in our proclamation of your grace for all people without exceptions, especially those often overlooked in our communities. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Awaken joy in the beauty and abundance of your creation. Show us the wonder of your presence from the smallest flower to the tallest tree. Recommit us to preservation of wild places (*local or regional places may be named*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Instruct all world leaders to protect the most vulnerable among us. Guide those in power toward equitable and just economic policies, so that all might have sufficient resources to live safely and with dignity. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Pour out your love on all in need of care: those mourning losses, enduring trauma, experiencing broken relationships, yearning for companionship, or facing illness (*especially*). Wipe away every tear. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Abide with all who are victims of racism, especially people who are doubly marginalized because of gender, sexuality, or ability. Destroy all forms of systemic oppression, and renew our commitment to healing the wounds of our collective body in this community and beyond. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for all the saints whose lives bear witness to your redeeming love (*especially Erik, King of Sweden*). Guide us by their example, until we join them in your eternal home. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

P We commend these and all our prayers to you, O God, trusting that you are always with us; in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

**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

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right  
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take  
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of  
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

A Risen One,  
you have gathered us around your table of grace  
along with these gifts we bring.  
Come among us again,  
breathe your life into us,  
and enliven us with this meal,

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.

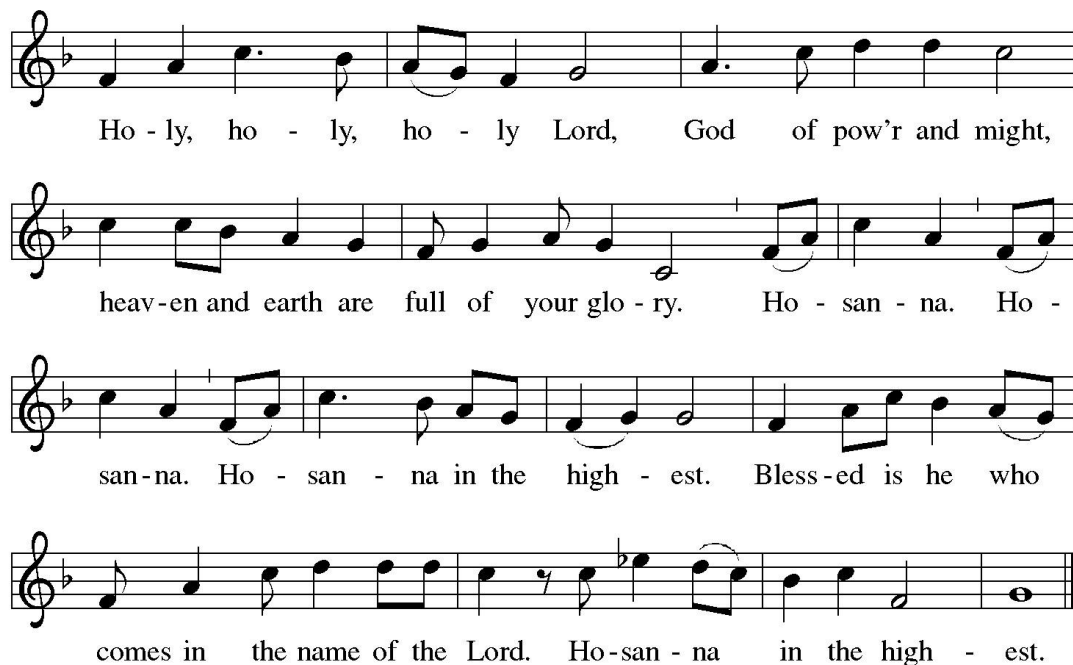




## THE PREFACE

It is indeed right, our du - ty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,  
al - mighty and merciful God, for the glorious resurrection  
of our Sav - ior Je - sus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself  
to take a - way our sin, who in dying has destroyed death,  
and in ris - ing has brought us to e - ter - nal life.  
And so, with Mary Magdalene and Pe - ter and all the witnesses of the  
res - ur - rec - tion, with earth and sea and all their crea - tures,  
and with angels and archangels, cheru - bim and ser - a - phim,  
we praise your name and join their un - end - ing hymn:

## SANCTUS *Holy, Holy, Holy*



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

## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
you have brought us this far along the way.

In times of bitterness you did not abandon us,  
but guided us into the path of love and light.  
In every age you sent prophets  
to make known your loving will for all humanity.  
The cry of the poor has become your own cry;  
our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire.  
In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant  
to preach good news to the afflicted,  
to break bread with the outcast and despised,  
and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

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 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.**

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection,  
we await the day when Jesus shall return  
to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.  
Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen.

**Amen.**

Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate,  
to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup  
with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world.  
Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen.

**Amen.**

Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age,  
that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection,  
we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son.  
Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honor 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 Come to the table of grace. Receive the gift of new life.

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. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the

sin of the world; grant us peace.

**DISTRIBUTION***Now The Green Blade Rises*

ELW#379



1 Now the green blade ris - es from the bur - ied grain,  
2 In the grave they laid him, love by ha - tred slain,  
3 Forth he came at Eas - ter like the ris - en grain,  
4 When our hearts are win - try, griev - ing, or in pain,



wheat that in dark earth man - y days has lain;  
think - ing that he would nev - er wake a - gain,  
he that for three days in the grave had lain;  
your touch can call us back to life a - gain,



love lives a - gain, that with the dead has been;  
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps un - seen;  
raised from the dead, my liv - ing Lord is seen;  
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;



love is come a - gain like wheat a - ris - ing green.

*(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 Living One,  
in this feast you have made yourself known to us.  
Send us now to tell of your wonders,  
sing of your glory,  
and proclaim your risen life  
to a wounded and weary world.

C Amen.

Gathering • Word • Meal • Sending

# Sending

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

## BLESSING

P The triune God,  
who was, who is, and who is to come,  
Sovereign, † Savior, and Spirit,  
light your way with resurrection dawn,  
now and always.

C Amen.

# CLOSING HYMN

## Alleluia, Voices Raised

ELW#828



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Voic - es raise, sound - ing God Al -  
 2 Now come all be - fore God's face, in this cho - rus  
 3 Let, in praise of Christ, the sound run a nev - er -  
 4 So this huge wide orb we see shall one choir, one  
 5 Thus our song shall o - ver - climb all the bounds of



might - y's praise. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
 take your place. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
 end - ing round, Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
 tem - ple be. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
 space and time. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!



Hith - er bring in one con - sent heart and voice and in - stru -  
 And a - mid the mor - tal throng, be you mas - ters of the  
 that our songs of praise may be ev - er - last - ing, as is  
 In the Ho - ly Spir - it one, we will sing what God has  
 Al - le - lu - ia! Voic - es raise, sound - ing God Al - might - y's



ment. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
 song. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
 he. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
 done. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
 praise. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!



## DISMISSAL

A Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Go in peace. In Christ you are made new. Alleluia! Alleluia!

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

## 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."*

**ONE SERVICE STARTS**

***NEXT WEEK***

***MAY 25<sup>TH</sup>***

***10:00 A.M.***

***(MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND)***