

WITNESSES



WAY

MAY 3 & 4, 2026

Welcome to Bethlehem!

We welcome our guests who are worshipping with us today. Thanks for joining us! We are a community of ordinary people who gather to hear the message of God's grace in Jesus. We believe that he is our savior—and yours, too!

We'd love to have you join us again soon. Please take a moment to fill out a connection card (located in the back of the pew in front of you). The blue side is for members to fill out and the yellow side is for visitors.

A lounge for parents needing to quiet small children is located at the rear of church. The room has a clear window for viewing and is equipped with a speaker system.

A hearing loop is available in the worship area and fellowship hall. Set your hearing aid to “t-coil” or ask for headphones at the A/V desk in the back of church.



Today's Worship

Today we celebrate Confirmation. As our confirmands make their promises, we rejoice in the focus of today's readings: Jesus lives, and it makes a difference. He is the only way to heaven. This gospel message is the most inclusive message in the world. The benefits of the resurrection of Jesus are meant for every man, woman, and child who has ever lived.

To Prepare Our Hearts for Worship

See the “Prayers for Worship” on the inside cover of the blue hymnal.

The Lord's Supper Celebrated Today

Bethlehem is a spiritual family. We gather because we believe the same things. Communion is a family thing for us. It's a way God has given us to joyfully express our common beliefs. If you're visiting with us today, please talk to a pastor before joining us for this special meal.

We Gather to Worship

Senior Choir: You Are Mine

Sunday

Invocation

Pastor: Our worship begins with the name in which we were baptized. Since that moment, every moment of our lives we have belonged to our Triune God. In the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

Confession

P: Let's open our hearts and confess our sins to our gracious God:
Heavenly Father, on this confirmation weekend I confess that I have not always been faithful to the promises I have made to you.

C: Contrary to what I have promised, I have not trusted you with my whole heart.

P: Contrary to what I have promised, I have not been faithful to you as you expect of me.

C: Contrary to what I have promised, I have not shown the world my love for you by loving those around me. Jesus, be merciful to me and forgive me!

Silence for Meditation

Absolution

P: Unlike us, God cannot do anything contrary to his promises. When he promises that your sins are truly forgiven, they are truly forgiven. Jesus did everything necessary to save you. He lived a perfect life on your behalf. He suffered and died under God's full punishment in your place. He will always be faithful to you! Because of Jesus, I forgive † your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Father, thank you for forgiving me for Jesus' sake. Send the Holy Spirit to give me a heart that seeks to be faithful to you. Amen.

P: Let's praise the Lord for the peace he's given us with him:

To God be the Glory

Blue Hymnal, p.627

God is Present in His Word

First Reading

Acts 4:8–12

⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, ¹⁰then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹Jesus is

“ ‘the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the cornerstone.’

¹²Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

Hymn: Welcome, Happy Morning

Blue Hymnal, p.469 sts. 1

Second Reading

1 Peter 2:4-10

⁴As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— ⁵you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.”

⁷Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”

⁸and,

“A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Hymn: Welcome, Happy Morning

Blue Hymnal, p.469 st. 2

Gospel Reading

John 14:1–11

¹“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ²My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going.”

⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

⁶Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

⁹Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?

¹⁰Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.

Hymn: Welcome, Happy Morning

Blue Hymnal, p.469 sts. 3–4

Sermon

“You Are Living Stones”

1 Peter 2:4-10

Confirmation Confession of Faith

P: Let’s join to confess the Christian faith into which our confirmands were baptized and about which they will soon make their promises. We confess that our life and everything we need to live it comes from God the Father.

C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

P: We confess that everything we need to live forever has been accomplished by God the Son.

C: I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

P: We confess that the faith we confess is itself a gift from God the Spirit.

C: **I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Offering

Confirmation Promises & Blessings

The Church's Prayer

P: Almighty God, in Baptism you made Jaymison, Leahann, Maryssa, Chloe, Kellan, Gunner, Amelia, and Adam members of the body of your Son, Jesus Christ.

C: **You washed them by his blood, buried them with him in his death, and gave them a new life in his Easter resurrection.**

P: Keep building them up by the Holy Spirit. You've poured him out on them generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: **Let them live out their lives faithfully and joyfully as they look forward to eternal life with you.**

P: Lead them to serve your Church faithfully and rightly all their days.

C: **Keep them faithful to their promises and in fellowship with all who wait for the return of our Savior Jesus Christ.**

Special Prayers

Lord's Prayer

C: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

God is Present in His Supper

P: God the Father, we don't deserve to stand in your presence. But by the blood of Jesus, we come to your table with confidence in your mercy.

C: **God the Son, thank you for our confirmands who will join us at your table for the first time today. In the same way they've prepared their hearts and minds to receive your Supper, prepare our hearts, too. Help us to recognize our sin and believe your promise**

of forgiveness. Help us to recognize that your body and blood are really present in this meal.

P: God the Spirit, you are at work wherever your Word is spoken or your sacraments are administered. Fill our hearts with faith, hope, and love through this supper.

By your power we join to sing with all your holy people on earth and already in heaven:

Holy, Holy, Holy

Service Builder 1025

Tune: AURELIA



1 Sing, "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of hosts on high,
2 Ho - san - na in the high - est! How blest is Christ our King,



your ev - er - last - ing glo - ry fills earth and sea and sky."
who died as our Re - deem - er, e - ter - nal life to bring!



Our voic - es cry, "Ho - san - na!" Lord, hear our hum - ble plea:
How blest are you, Lord Je - sus, now com - ing in God's name!



in mer - cy, come and save us; in love, come set us free.
"Ho - san - na in the high - est!" our grate - ful hearts pro - claim.

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Words of Institution

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

O Lamb of God

Service Builder 1013

Tune: HAMBURG



1 O Lamb of God, once lift - ed high up - on a
2 O Lamb of God, your sac - ri - fice has can - celled



cross to bleed and die, in per - fect love you
sin, has paid its price; your per - fect love will



took our place— be - stow on us your sav - ing grace.
nev - er cease— have mer - cy, Lord, and grant us peace.

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Distribution

Bethlehem practices close communion. Please speak with a pastor before communing. Thank you!

Hymn: I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

Blue Hymnal, p.713

Hymn: Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

Blue Hymnal, p.839

Hymn: Christ Be My Leader

Blue Hymnal, p.518

Blessing

P: Psalm 18:2 says,

**C: "The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."**

P: Go with these words of God on your heart.

The LORD be the rock on which you build your life.

The LORD be the refuge you turn to for forgiveness for your sins.

The LORD be the shield you trust to protect you from every spiritual danger.

C: Amen.

Class Hymn: Hear Us, Father, When We Pray

Blue Hymnal, p.725 sts. 1-3