

**Blest be the Tie
that Binds:**
Our Life Together
in Christ



*Forgiven
Together*

September 13 & 14, 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

Our worship series theme is “Blest be the Tie That Binds: Our Life Together in Christ.” When the Holy Spirit works faith in Christ in a human heart, he makes that person a child of God. He also ties that person to a family. He gives them many brothers and sisters in Christ. This series examines the blessings of our life together as a congregation. This weekend, it's the blessing of forgiveness.

The heart of our faith is a God who shows mercy to sinners in Christ. It shouldn't surprise us that a gathering of sinners forgiven by God would be a place where we offer forgiveness to each other, freely and eagerly.

To Prepare Our Hearts for Worship

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

Gathering Rite on the Word of God

Christian Worship Supplement

Invocation

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the Son ✚ and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

♪ **Blessed Jesus, at your Word We are gathered all to hear you. Let our hearts and souls be stirred Now to seek and love and fear you, By your teachings, sweet and holy, Drawn from earth to love you solely.**

P: Oh, how I love your law!

C: I meditate on it all day long.

P: Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,

C: for they are ever with me.

P: I have more insight than all my teachers,

C: for I meditate on your statutes.

P: How sweet are your words to my taste,

C: sweeter than honey to my mouth!

♪ **All our knowledge, sense, and sight Lie in deepest darkness shrouded Till your Spirit breaks our night With the beams of truth unclouded. You alone to God can win us; You must work all good within us.**

Confession

P: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

C: so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

P: Yet so often we have despised God's Word and failed to gladly hear and learn it. For this and all our sins, we bow before God and humbly ask his forgiveness.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

♪ **Gracious Savior, good and kind, Light from Light, from God proceeding, Open now our heart and mind; Help us by your Spirit's pleading. Hear the cry your people raises; Hear and bless our prayers and praises.**

Absolution

P: God gave his Word so “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name”. The Scriptures testify about Jesus, who lived a perfect life for you, died on the cross to pay for all your sins, and rose again to assure you of your salvation. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

♪ **Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Praise to you and adoration! Grant that we your Word may trust, Confident of our salvation, While we here below must wander, Till we sing your praises yonder.**

The Word

Today's Prayer

P: Lord God, heavenly Father, in mercy, you forgive us all our sins and abundantly provide for all our needs of body and soul. Confident in your mercy, teach us also to be merciful to our neighbors, that we willingly forgive all people and live to your glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

First Reading

Genesis 50:15–21

¹⁵When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?” ¹⁶So they sent word to Joseph, saying, “Your father left these instructions before he died: ¹⁷‘This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.’ Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father.” When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

¹⁸His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. “We are your slaves,” they said.

¹⁹But Joseph said to them, “Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ²⁰You intended to harm

me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ²¹So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Today's Psalm: Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

Psalms 103B Sts. 1-3



1 Praise, my soul, the King of heav - en; to his feet your
2 Praise him for his grace and fa - vor to his peo - ple
3 Fa - ther - like he tends and spares us; well our fee - ble



trib - ute bring. Ran - somed, healed, re - stored, for - giv - en,
in dis - tress. Praise him, still the same as ev - er,
frame he knows. In his hand he gent - ly bears us,



ev - er - more his prais - es sing; Al - le - lu - ia,
slow to chide, and swift to bless, Al - le - lu - ia,
res - cues us from all our foes; Al - le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia! praise the ev - er - last - ing King!
al - le - lu - ia! glo - rious in his faith - ful - ness!
al - le - lu - ia! wide - ly yet his mer - cy flows!

Second Reading

Ephesians 4:29—5:2

²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

¹Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Children's Message

Gospel Reading

Matthew 18:21–35

²¹Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

²²Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. ²⁵Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ ²⁷The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

²⁹“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

³⁰“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³²“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ ³⁴In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

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.

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.

Hymn: Come Down, O Love Divine

Blue Hymnal, p.587 sts. 1-3

Sermon

“A Christian Needs to Forgive”

Matthew 18:21-35

Create in Me

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

Offering

Your offerings are just one way you support the gospel ministry we do, and we thank God for them! Guests are welcome to give but need not feel obligated. If you'd like to give online, scan the QR code on the right side of the page or go to bethlehem-wels.com/giving.



Give Online

The Church's Prayer

- P: Heavenly Father, as the seasons change and our routines adjust, we are reminded that you, Lord, never change.
- C: Your Word and your promises stand firm forever.**
- P: Today we thank you for the opportunities you have given us to grow in faith by studying your Word together.
- C: Bless our Sunday morning Bible study. As we study the book of Esther, comfort us as we see your hand in every corner of our lives and embolden us to take our place in your plans to save people through the Gospel message.**
- P: Bless our Sunday School. Through the Bible stories they learn, form our children to be your lifelong disciples, learning to trust and treasure you above all things.
- C: Give wisdom, faithfulness, and love to our coordinator, Mrs. Linda Lambie, and our teachers and helpers as they share these precious truths with our children.**
- P: Bless our Catechism and Bible Basics classes. Through faithful teaching of your Word, give confidence and joy to those who are learning or refreshing the foundations of faith.
- C: Give believers young and old the desire to build on this foundation after these classes are done.**
- P: May we be a church that supports Christian homes, reinforcing the faith passed down from parents to children.
- C: May these lessons prepare young hearts to walk with you all their days.**
- P: Bless also our personal time in your Word.
- C: Move us to seek first your kingdom and your righteousness.**
- P: Help us to see that time with you is never wasted, but always for our blessing.
- C: Form in us healthy spiritual habits, and restore them when they falter.**
- P: Hear us, Lord, as we bring to you our silent prayers.

Silent Prayer

Special Prayers

Lord's Prayer

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.

Hymn: O Bless the Lord, My Soul

Blue Hymnal, p.623

- P: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.
- C: And his mercy endures forever.**

P: Lord, you've given us your Holy Word to teach us. May we hear, read, learn, and take it to heart. May it strengthen and comfort us, so that we hold onto our hope of everlasting life in Jesus Christ, our Savior. In his name we pray.

C: Amen.

Blessing

Romans 15:5-6

P: May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

Hymn: May We Your Precepts, Lord, Fulfill

Blue Hymnal, p.697

Acknowledgments

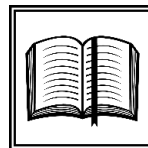
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Sermon Notes

Use this space to take notes on today's message. Use the questions below to help!



What *Bible reading* was today's message about?

What *effect of sin* did God's Word point out (Law)?

What *good news* did God's Word give to you (Gospel)?

If you explained to a friend with one sentence what today's message was about, what would you say?

How did today's message *relate* to me and my life?

What *picture* would you use to remember the main point of today's message (Draw it in the box below)?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing a picture to represent the main point of the sermon.

Worship Notes

Use this space to take notes on today's worship. Use the questions below to help!

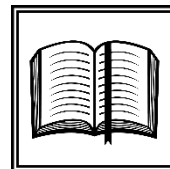
What is the theme for today's worship service?

Favorite hymn today

Favorite Bible Reading

How did the Hymn of the Day fit the worship theme?

What Bible reading was the sermon based on?



What was the main point of the sermon?

What *sin* or *problem* did the sermon point out (Law)?

What *good news* did God's Word give to you (Gospel)?

Did we have a Sacrament today?



Baptism?

☐ Yes

☐ No



Communion?

☐ Yes

☐ No

To Do This Week:

How did today's message relate to me and my life?

What did today's message encourage me to do in my Christian life?

Bethlehem's Mission

There is no more important message than the one about Jesus. He's the world's savior. That's Good News (1 Corinthians 1:23)!

Because of our love for that message, we make it our goal to reflect God's love by:

- **Gathering** · *Enjoying fellowship with God and our fellow believers (1 John 1:1-3).*
- **Growing** · *Strengthening and maturing in our faith through daily contact with God's Word (Isaiah 55:10-11).*
- **Going**
 1. *Sharing the good news of God's forgiving love with our family, friends, community, and co-workers (Mark 16:15).*
 2. *Using our unique gifts to serve God and our neighbors in our callings inside and outside of this congregation (1 Corinthians 12:1).*

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Weekly Services

Sundays at 8:00am & 10:00am
Mondays at 6:30pm

Streamed at 8:00 and 10:00am on **YouTube**.