

Active Grace

Forgiveness

16th Sunday
after Pentecost

September 13, 2026

Casual Blended



Bethany Lutheran Church

4500 Hampden Ave, Cherry Hills Village, CO 80113

bethany-denver.org

+ WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS +

Gathering Music

Es ist das Heil uns kommen her

attr. J. S. Bach

Welcome to Worship

To fill out your digital connection card, go to www.tinyurl.com/BethanyConnect.

Pastor Gary Sandberg

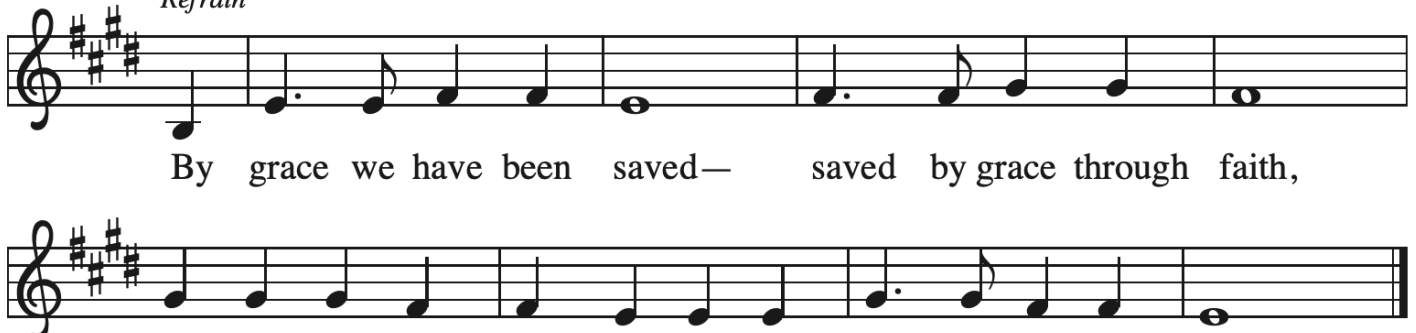


Song of Praise

By Grace We Have Been Saved

ACS 1006

Refrain



By grace we have been saved— saved by grace through faith,
not be-cause of what we do; it is the gift of God.

A Time of Confession

Pastor Gary Sandberg

Gracious God,

We admit that we have fallen short. In what we have said and done, and in what we have left undone, we have not loved you or our neighbors as we should. We have carried worries, guilt, and burdens that we struggle to release. We confess these to you now, trusting in your mercy. Forgive us, God. Lighten our load and guide us into a new way of living. Amen.

God's Gift of Forgiveness

Friends in Christ, hear this good news. God is merciful and full of love. Through Jesus, your sins are forgiven and your burdens are lifted. You are set free to walk in God's grace and to live in the joy of the resurrection. **Amen.**

1 Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love!
 2 All thy works with joy sur - round thee, earth and heav'n re - flect thy rays,
 3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blest,

Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore thee, prais - ing thee, their sun a - bove.
 stars and an - gels sing a - round thee, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.
 well - spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean - depth of hap - py rest!

Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, drive the gloom of doubt a - way.
 Field and for - est, vale and moun - tain, flow - 'ry mead - ow, flash - ing sea,
 Thou our Fa - ther, Christ our broth - er, all who live in love are thine;

Giv - er of im - mor - tal glad - ness, fill us with the light of day.
 chant - ing bird, and flow - ing foun - tain, call us to re - joice in thee.
 teach us how to love each oth - er, lift us to the joy di - vine!

Text: Henry van Dyke, 1852–1922

Music: HYMN TO JOY, Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770–1827, adapt.

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.

Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, Merciful judge, **you are the inexhaustible foundation 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

Children's Sermon

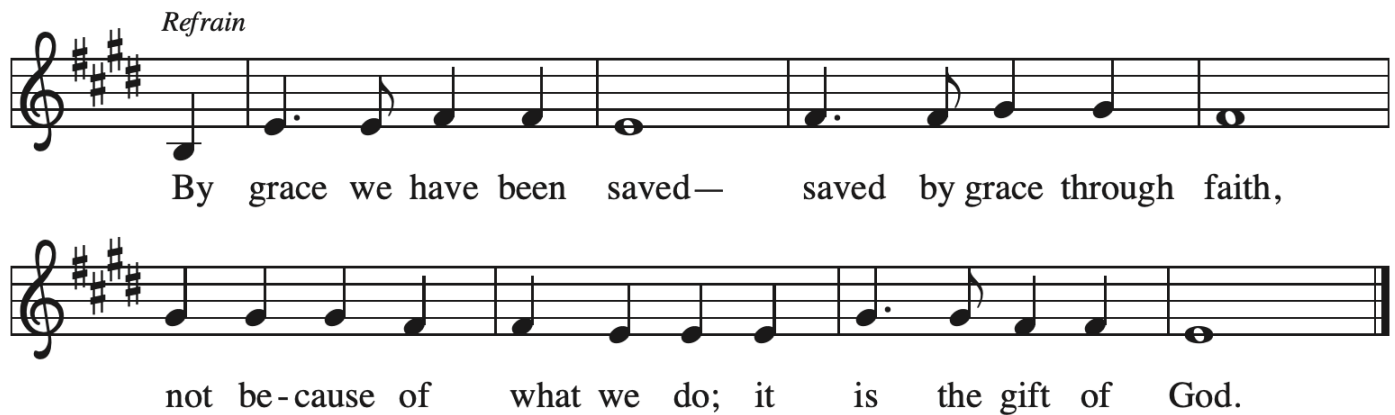
Children's Worship

We Prepare to Hear God's Word

By Grace We Have Been Saved

ACS 1006

Refrain



By grace we have been saved— saved by grace through faith,
 not be-cause of what we do; it is the gift of God.

+ WE ENCOUNTER GOD'S WORD +

Today's Sermon is based on readings from:

Genesis 50:15-21

Wesley Pomeroy

¹⁵ 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?" ¹⁶ So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷ '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. ¹⁸ Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ 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. ²¹ So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Matthew 18: 21-35

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

²¹ Peter came and said to Jesus, “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³ “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ 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.’ ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ 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. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ 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.**

Sermon

Pastor Gary Sandberg

Sermon Notes



1 Sal - va - tion un - to us has come by God's free grace and fa - vor;
 2 What God did in the law de - mand no one could keep un - fail - ing;
 3 Since Christ has full a - tone-ment made and brought to us sal - va - tion,



good works can - not a - vert our doom, they help and save us
 great woe a - rose on ev - 'ry hand, and sin grew all - pre -
 we will re - joice, we will be glad and build on this foun -



nev - er. Faith looks to Je - sus Christ a - lone, who did for
 vail - ing. Be - cause the law must be ful - filled, Christ came as
 da - tion. Your grace a - lone, dear Lord, I plead; bap - tized in -



all the world a - tone, our on - ly me - di - a - tor.
 God in mer - cy willed, for us the law o - bey - ing.
 to your death, I'm freed; your life is mine for - ev - er.

Text: Paul Speratus, 1484–1551; tr. hymnal version

Music: ES IST DAS HEIL, *Etlich christlich Lieder*, Wittenberg, 1524

Text © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

A Statement of Our Faith (Apostles' Creed)

Pastor Gary Sandberg

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 People

We Share God's Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Please share a blessing of peace with others around you. After sharing the Peace, please be seated.

+ WE WORSHIP GOD WITH OUR OFFERINGS +

Abundantly Bethany

Pastor Nate Preisinger

To fill out your digital connection card, go to www.tinyurl.com/BethanyConnect.

- ♦ **Foundation Grant Application**
- ♦ **Dinner Club!** Registration is open until Sept. 20.
- ♦ **Middle School Event Tonight**
- ♦ **Ministry Council Conversations**

OFFERING

You can give in the following ways; Thank you for your gifts!

- On our **website**, find the GIVE button in the header or under the Get Involved tab at **Bethany-Denver.org**
- Through **SubSplash** - Use your phone's camera to scan this **QR Code**
- **Mail** in your check to the office (4500 E. Hampden Ave. Cherry Hills Village, CO 80113)
- Sunday mornings, drop your offering in the silver plate at the doors as you exit



YTD Financial Update (July – August)

August receipts exceeded budget by \$30k. Our YTD income results reflect a positive variance compared to an anticipated shortfall of \$161k as reflected in the table below.

	YTD Actuals	YTD Budget	Variance
Receipts	\$244,767	\$233,705	\$11,062
Expenses	\$381,254	\$394,874	(13,619)
Income/(Loss)	(136,311)	(161,169)	24,858

Offering Music

God of Grace and God of Glory

arr. Dan Forrest

Chancel Choir

*God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your power.
Crown you ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour.
Lo! The host of evil round us scorn our Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days.
Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
Let the gift of your salvation be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving you whom we adore.
God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your power.
Crown you ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour*

Children Return to the Sanctuary

+ THE COMMUNITY MEAL +

Invitation to The Communion Table

Pastor Nate Preisinger

Celebration of Holy Communion

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Blessing of the Bread and Wine

The Lord's Prayer *(Ecumenical translation)*

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.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Communion Instruction

Receive communion by dipping the bread into the wine. Pre-packaged communion sets are alcohol free; gluten-free options are available. Groups are welcome to visit a communion station together. Those who are not receiving communion are invited to cross their arms across their chest to receive a blessing.

Communion Distribution

Communion Music

Amazing Grace

arr. Mark Hayers

Chancel Choir, Dir. Kirk Schjodt

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound; that saved a wretch, a wretch like me;

I once was lost, but now am found, I once was blind, but now I see.

Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and that same grace my fears relieved;

How precious did that grace appear, the hour when I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already safely come;

This grace hath brought me safe this far, and surely, grace will lead me home, I shall go home.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, the glorious sun,

We've no less days to sing God's praise than the day we first begun.

Communion Song

Just As I Am Without One Plea

ELW 592

1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was
2 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y_a con - flict,
3 Just as I am, thou wilt re - ceive, wilt wel - come, par - don,
4 Just as I am; thy love un - known has bro - ken ev - 'ry

shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
man - y_a doubt, fight - ings and fears with - in, with - out,
cleanse, re - lieve; be - cause thy prom - ise I be - lieve,
bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone,

O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789–1871
Music: WOODWORTH, William B. Bradbury, 1816–1868

Table Blessing

+ GOD SENDS US TO SERVE +

Benediction

Pastor Gary Sandberg

Song of Sending

Praise the Lord! O Heavens, Adore Him

ELW 823

You are invited to face the cross as it recesses to the center.



- 1 Praise the Lord! O heav'ns, a - dore him; praise him, an - gels, in the height;
- 2 Praise the Lord, for he is gra - cious; nev - er shall his prom-ise fail.



sun and moon, re - jice be - fore him; praise him, gleam-ing stars and light.
God has made his saints vic - to - rious; sin and death shall not pre - vail.



Praise the Lord, for he has spo - ken; worlds his might-y voice o - beyed;
Praise the God of our sal - va - tion; hosts on high, his pow'r pro - claim;



laws which nev - er shall be bro - ken for their guid-ance he has made.
heav'n and earth, and all cre-a - tion, laud and mag-ni - fy his name!

Text: *Foundling Hospital Collection*, London, 1796

Music: AUSTRIA, Franz Joseph Haydn, 1732–1809

Dismissal

As we go forth into the week ahead we remember our calling as the people of Bethany.

Together we will:

Worship and encounter a God who loves us;

Embrace healthy dialogue that promotes unity over division;

Respond to the needs of the world through generosity and action.

With this as our mission, go in peace, serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Toccata on “Amazing Grace”

J Christopher Pardini

Things To Know About News & Events

- ♦ **Summer 2027 trip! Today Room 412 11:30-12:15pm** Students currently in grades 8–12 during the 2026–2027 school year, along with their parents, are invited to join us after the second service in Room 412 to learn about our trip.! Questions? Contact Addison at addison@bethany-denver.org.
- ♦ **Dinner Club!** Get to know fellow Bethany members while sharing a meal. Groups of 6-8 adults gather to enjoy dinner in a home, brunch out or any meal in any location. The goal is fellowship! Our Fall into Winter groups will begin in October! Registration is open until **Sept. 20**. Simply sign up here. Email Bethanybreakingbread@gmail.com
- ♦ **Middle School Sunday Night Live:** Tonight at, 5:00pm–6:30pm in the Great Hall. Registration: Sign up on the Bethany website or app. Questions? Contact Addison at addison@bethany-denver.org
- ♦ **Habitat for Humanity Metro Denver volunteers needed: Sat, Sep 26**, 7:50am–3:30pm, Griffith Station Homes. Register to volunteer at <https://vhub.at/HolyHammers>. Contact Kevin Dempsey for questions at kmdmpsy@aol.com.
- ♦ **The Bethany Foundation:** is currently accepting grant applications for 2026. The applications must be submitted by **Sept 15** for consideration. Grant applications are available on the website under Foundation. Please encourage any organizations that you support to submit a grant application.
- ♦ **Deborah Circle** will be starting on **Wed Sept 16** in the library at 5:15. Feel free to stop by and join in the conversation. Contact Maren at Marenjdiercks@gmail.com if you have questions.
- ♦ **Women of Bethany!** On Sun **Sept. 20**, let's gather at Kris Carr's house for food and fellowship! Please sign up on the Hospitality and Events section of the website to RSVP so further details can be sent! Come even if you've never before!
- ♦ **Walk To End Alzheimer's:** Please join the Bethany Walkers Group at this year's Walk on **Saturday Sept 19** to raise research funds to wipe out this horrible disease. Either meet at 8:30am at Denver City Park behind the Museum of Natural History on the lawn across from the Check-in booth or in the Bethany Church East parking lot to carpool at 8:00am. Please register and donate to our Bethany Walkers team page at <http://tinyurl.com/AlzheimersWalk26>
- ♦ **High School Backpacking Retreat: Friday, Sep 25 – Sunday, Sep 26.** High school students (9th–12th grade) are invited to a backpacking retreat to Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp! We will meet at Bethany on Friday, Sep 25 at 4:15pm to drive to camp together. Registration Deadline: Midnight on Wed Sep 16. Support the Trip: To help make this trip accessible to all students, consider donating to the Children's Ministry Fund at www.bethany-denver.org/giving. Questions? Contact Addison at addison@bethany-denver.org.
- ♦ **The Fourth Chapter** The book group meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 1 pm, beginning **Sept 22**, in the library. Our first book is "Becoming Madam Secretary" by Stephanie Dray. For more information, please contact Judi Burchfield at judburch60@gmail.com.
- ♦ **Confirmation Service Project:** Sun, **Sept 27** and Sun, **Oct 4**, 9-11:30 am in the fellowship hall. Hope Jones, a ninth-grade Confirmation student here at Bethany, will be collecting donations for the Ronald McDonald House Charities in Denver and Aurora for her Confirmation service project. The wish list can be viewed on their website. <https://rmhc-denver.org/wishlist/>. Thank you for your support!
- ♦ **Middle School Coyote Howl Retreat: Friday, Oct 2 – Sunday, Oct 4.** Middle school students are invited to Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp for a fall confirmation retreat. We will meet at Bethany on Friday, Oct 2 at 4:00pm and return around 3:30pm on Sunday, Oct 4. Registration: Sign up directly through the Sky Ranch website.
- ♦ **Bethany Outdoor Adventures** Mark your calendars for the morning of **Sat, Oct 17** for a fall hike in nearby Evergreen! More details and registration will be available by mid September.
- ♦ **Global Mission:** Bethany's Global Mission Ministry is now accepting letters of proposal from Christ-centered international organizations seeking support for their ministries and programs. Letters of proposal for the upcoming grant cycle are due **Nov 17**. For more information check the Bethany website.
- ♦ **ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) @ Bethany!** We are looking to build a team of people who are interested in serving our neighbors. Our hope is to offer a weekly Wednesday evening Adult ESOL and American culture class. If you would like to learn more, please contact Beckie Jones at beint@comcast.net

Flowers proved by Linda Ducnuigeen in memory of Dean

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT WORSHIP

- ♦ **Welcome to Bethany!** If you have questions or would like to consider making Bethany your church home, visit our website, Bethany-Denver.org, or stop by the Newcomer Nook after worship. The pastoral team, consisting of Pastor Gary Sandberg (he/him), Pastor Nate Preisinger (he/him), Deacon Debra Alba (she/her) and Director of Pastoral Care Janet Mortinsen (she/her), is available to speak with you.
- ♦ **Bethany Lutheran Church values people of diverse race, sexual identity, ethnicity, and political affiliation.** All are welcome at Bethany Lutheran Church and this community is enriched because you are here. We are together for good!
- ♦ **Sunday Worship services:** (8:30am Traditional)- worship follows traditional Lutheran liturgy. (10:00am Casual Blended) – a flow of worship that includes the elements of Lutheran worship with music that spans multiple genres and brings some creative ways to engage the theme of the day. Worship leaders are generally dressed more casually.
- ♦ **Participating in Worship:** There will be times during worship when you are invited to stand, but if it is more comfortable or more meaningful for you to remain seated, please feel free to do so.
- ♦ **Communion Statement:** Everyone gathered for worship is invited to take part in Communion. Jesus did not place any barriers around who received communion and neither does Bethany.
- ♦ **Safety:** Bethany Lutheran Church is committed to maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for everyone. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or have concerns, please speak with one of our staff or designated leaders. We are here to listen and to support you.
- ♦ **Hearing Assistance Device:** Please see the Sound Tech in the A/V booth at the rear of the Sanctuary if you need a hearing assistance device.
- ♦ **Worship Servants:** Thank you to all the A/V team, Ushers, Communion Servers, Altar Guild, Musicians, Embrace Volunteers and Sacristans for your work to greet people and make worship happen. We always welcome Worship Servants - go to www.signupschedule.com/Bethany to sign up!
- ♦ You are welcome to bring beverages into the Sanctuary but please use a covered container. And enjoy your food outside the Sanctuary (although we understand small children may need snacks!).
- ♦ **Children at Bethany:** Children and youth are a blessing from God and we love having children in the Sanctuary! Additionally, we offer several options for children and families to feel comfortable in a variety of spaces on Sunday mornings:
 - ⇒ **Fidget Station:** We know that all of God's children (young and old) are wonderfully and fearfully made in the image of God. And, at Bethany, ALL are welcome to worship. Available outside the Sanctuary's north doors is a Fidget Station. Children and adults are invited to use these fidgets and art supplies to aid in your spiritual growth and presence in worship. Please return items to the station when you are finished.
 - ⇒ **Busy Bags:** Near the Sanctuary doors you will find premade bags perfect for littles. Pick one up on the way in and return it on the way out.
 - ⇒ **Nursery:** For directions to our staffed Nursery, please speak with an usher.