

Active Grace

Seventeenth Sunday
after Pentecost

September 20, 2026

Casual Blended



Bethany Lutheran Church

4500 Hampden Ave, Cherry Hills Village, CO 80113

bethany-denver.org

+ WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS +

Gathering Music

Prelude, Aria, and Finale

Robert J. Powell

Welcome to Worship

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

Pastor Nate Preisinger



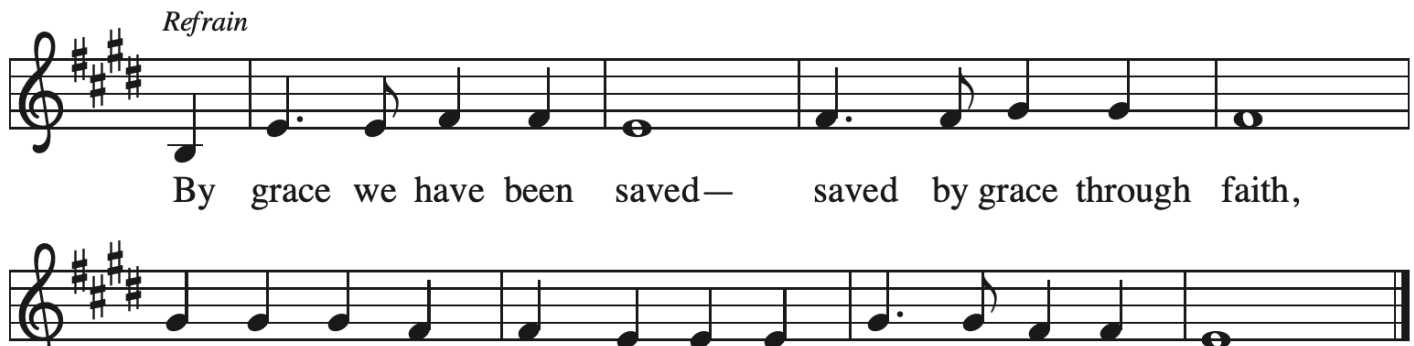
Song of Praise

(sing twice)

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

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 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .

God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the

won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.

You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to

weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the

name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.

Refrain

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.

Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a-bout to turn.

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat
Music: STAR OF COUNTY DOWN, Irish traditional
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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

Almighty and eternal God, **you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on own abilities, grant us your merciful judgement, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.**
Amen

Children's Sermon Children's Worship

We Prepare to Hear God's Word (sing twice)

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:

Philippians 1:21-30

Kaia Weinstein

²¹ For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, ²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵ Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶ so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me. ²⁷ Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, ³⁰ since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

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

Matthew 20:1-16

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

Jesus said to the disciples: ¹ “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ ⁹ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Sept 13.26 Active Grace—Forgiveness

Active Grace –Unfair!

Pastor Gary Sandberg

Sept 27.26 Active Grace—God’s Will

Sermon Notes



1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer - cy, like the wide-ness of the sea;
 2 There is wel - come for the sin - ner, and a prom - ised grace made good;
 3 For the love of God is broad - er than the mea - sures of our mind;
 4 'Tis not all we owe to Je - sus; it is some - thing more than all:



there's a kind - ness in God's jus - tice which is more than lib - er - ty.
 there is mer - cy with the Sav - ior; there is heal - ing in his blood.
 and the heart of the E - ter - nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind.
 great - er good be - cause of e - vil, larg - er mer - cy through the fall.



There is no place where earth's sor - rows are more felt than up in heav'n.
 There is grace e - nough for thou - sands of new worlds as great as this;
 But we make this love too nar - row by false lim - its of our own;
 Make our love, O God, more faith - ful; let us take you at your word,



There is no place where earth's fail - ings have such kind - ly judg - ment giv'n.
 there is room for fresh cre - a - tions in that up - per home of bliss.
 and we mag - ni - fy its strict - ness with a zeal God will not own.
 and our lives will be thanks - giv - ing for the good - ness of the Lord.

Text: Frederick W. Faber, 1814–1863, alt.
 Music: LORD, REVIVE US, North American, 19th cent.

A Statement of Our Faith (Apostles' Creed)

Pastor Nate Preisinger

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 Gary Sandberg

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

- ♦ Rejoicing Spirits
- ♦ Women of Bethany
- ♦ Adult Education 9:45 & 11:35
- ♦ Minding your Balance

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**
- Unlock your phone, hold near **NFC card** (on pew back), and wait for the notification to appear
- **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



Offering Music

You are Worthy of My Praise

David Ruis

Sounds of Praise

*I will worship you with all of my heart; I will praise You with all of my strength.
I will see You all of my days, I will follow all of Your ways.
I will give You all of my worship, I will give You all of my praise.
You alone I long to worship, You alone are worthy of my praise.
I will bow down and hail You as King; I will serve You, give You everything.
I will lift up my eyes to Your throne; I will Trust You alone .*

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

Goodness of God

Jenn Johnson

Sounds of Praise

I love you, Lord. Oh, your mercy never fails me. All my days I've been held in your hands.

From the moment that I wake up, until I lay my head, I will sing of the goodness of God.

All my life you have been faithful. All my life you have been so, so good.

With every breath that I am able, I will sing of the goodness of God.

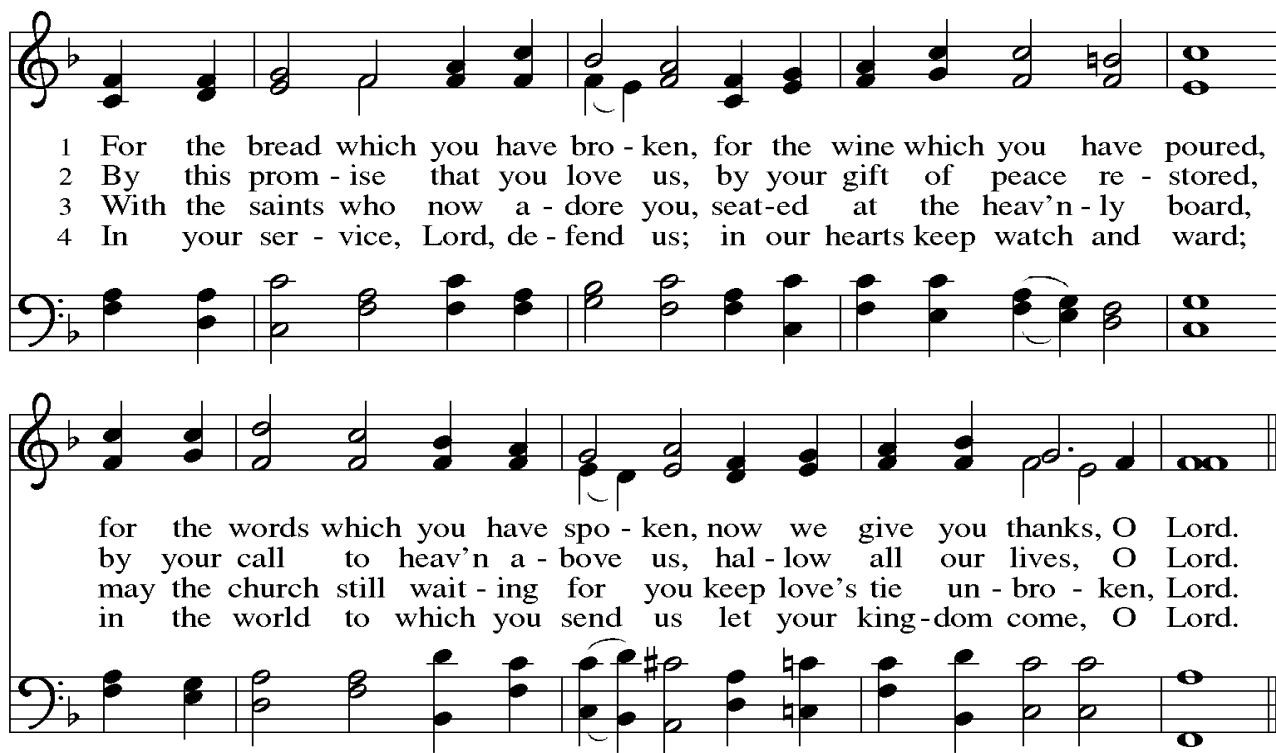
I love your voice. You have led me through the fire. In darkest night you are close like no other.

I've known you as a father, I've known you as a friend. I have lived in the goodness of God.

Your goodness is running after, it's running after me.

With my life laid down, I'm surrendered now; I give you everything.

Your goodness is running after, it's running after me.



1 For the bread which you have bro - ken, for the wine which you have poured,
 2 By this prom - ise that you love us, by your gift of peace re - stored,
 3 With the saints who now a - dore you, seat-ed at the heav'n - ly board,
 4 In your ser - vice, Lord, de - fend us; in our hearts keep watch and ward;

for the words which you have spo - ken, now we give you thanks, O Lord.
 by your call to heav'n a - bove us, hal - low all our lives, O Lord.
 may the church still wait - ing for you keep love's tie un - bro - ken, Lord.
 in the world to which you send us let your king - dom come, O Lord.

Text: Louis F. Benson, 1855–1930, alt.

Music: OMNI DIE, *Gross Catolisch Gesangbuch*, Nürnberg, 1631; arr. William Smith Rockstro, 1823–1895

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Table Blessing

+ GOD SENDS US TO SERVE +

Benediction

Pastor Gary Sandberg

Song of Sending

All Depends on Our Possessing

ELW 589

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

1 All de - pends on our pos - sess - ing God's free grace and
2 God, who hith - er - to has fed me and to man - y
3 When with sor - row I am strick - en, hope my heart a -
4 Well you know what best to grant me; all the long - ing
5 If on earth my days should length - en, God, my wea - ry

con - stant bless - ing, though all earth - ly wealth de - part.
joys has led me, is and ev - er shall be mine.
new will quick - en, all my long - ing shall be stilled.
hopes that haunt me, joy and sor - row, have their day.
soul still strength - en; all my trust in you I place.

They who trust with faith un - shak - en by their God are
God, who did so gent - ly school me and who dai - ly
To your lov - ing - kind - ness ten - der all my be - ing
I shall doubt your wis - dom nev - er; as you will, so
Earth - ly wealth is not a - bid - ing; like a stream a -

not for - sak - en and will keep a daunt - less heart.
guides and rules me, will re - main my help di - vine.
I sur - ren - der; Lord, on you a - lone I build.
be it ev - er; I com - mit to you my way.
way it's glid - ing; safe I an - chor in your grace.

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

Trumpet Tune In G Major

David N. Johnson

New to Bethany Lutheran Church? Stop by the Mission Center for a free gift.

Things To Know About News & Events

- ◆ **Adult Education:** Today in the chapel 9:45 room 210 & 11:35 in the chapel.
- ◆ **Rejoicing Spirits:** Join us **today** 4- 6pm for dinner and worship. Rejoicing Spirits is an inclusive worship space for people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, their caregivers, families and anyone who seeks an open, joyful and creative worship experience. We will gather at Lord of the Hills Lutheran Church 21755 E Smoky Hill Rd. Aurora, CO 80015 For more information regarding the Rejoicing Spirits experience or volunteering, please contact: Pastor Margot pastor@lordofthehills.org
- ◆ **Women of Bethany!** Today 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 been before.
- ◆ **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 through today on the Bethany events page.
- ◆ **Minding Your Balance classes: Tuesdays, Sep 29-Oct 27, 1:30pm-2:45pm, Room 412.** Good balance is necessary for daily activities which is essential to maintaining independence. Losing balance and fear of falling are two commonly voiced concerns. Susan Chandler, from Denver Ki-Aikido, will offer a 5 week "Minding Your Balance" series. The cost for this series is \$75. Space is limited so please sign up online at www.bethany-denver.org at the Bethany News Link by **Sep 22**. For questions, please contact Janet Mortensen. At Janet@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.
- ◆ **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!
- ◆ **Bethany Social Justice Group: Voting Security and Election Processes** Curious how your vote will be processed and secured in the upcoming Nov. 3 election? Meet Sun., **Sept. 27, 11:35** to learn about voting security from Denver Clerk & Recorder Paul D. López. Tues., **Oct. 6, 4-5 pm**, tour the Denver Elections Division (100 W. 14th St.) where we will see the processes used to record a vote.
- ◆ **Family Promise** is an organization that provides housing to homeless families in the Denver Metro area. Christ the Savior Lutheran Church in Aurora is hosting Family Promise families the week of **Oct. 4-11**. We need volunteers. for more information, please contact Jean Scott at 303 756-2106.
- ◆ **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: Sat Oct 17** Join us for a morning hike and lunch enjoying the beauty of nature, fresh air and fellowship! Location: Alderfer/Three Sisters Jeffco Open Space Park, West Trailhead, 31537 Buffalo Park Road, Evergreen.
- ◆ **Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains** is hosting our Home for the Holidays Donation Drive on **Nov 4**. This donation drive supports newcomer families in the Denver Metro Area as they build community and traditions. Donation drop-off will be from 9-4pm at 1035 Osage St. Denver, CO 80204 in the First-Floor Community Room **LFSMS Youth Empowerment Program Needs SUPPLIES!** Our amazing school based YEP program supports refugee middle and high school youth in finding belonging in their communities and social, emotional safety. Check the Bethany events and news page for a link to our Amazon wish list
- ◆ **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
- ◆ **Thank you Bethany:** for your steady commitment this summer in providing essential resources to support the IFCS no-cost food market. Over 15 Sundays, we collected 2,251 grocery items, including dozens of crates of macaroni and cheese, cereal and canned chicken and tuna!

Flowers provided by Michelle & Art Stone Kraus in celebration of their 45 anniversary
married by Pastor Keith Swenson on Sept. 19, 1981

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.

For more information and to see other announcements, please sign up for the email blasts by contacting the office - 303.758.2820, or visit www.Bethany-Denver.org/Bethany-news/