

Active Grace

The Father's Will

Eighteenth Sunday
after Pentecost

September 27, 2026

Casual Blended



Bethany Lutheran Church

4500 Hampden Ave, Cherry Hills Village, CO 80113

bethany-denver.org

+WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS +

GATHERING MUSIC

Prelude in F Major

Heinrich Scheindemann

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

Pastor Nate Presinger



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

TIME OF CONFESSION

Leader:

To you, O God, we lift up our souls.

In you we put our trust.

And so we bring before you now what we have done, what we have left undone, and all that weighs upon us. Let us confess together.

All:

Merciful God,

forgive us when fear makes our world smaller,

when we hold too tightly to what is familiar,

and when we fail to love you and our neighbors well.

Forgive the choices we regret,

the words we cannot take back,

and the ways we have settled for who we have been.

Open us again to your grace.

GOD'S GIFT OF FORGIVENESS

Leader:

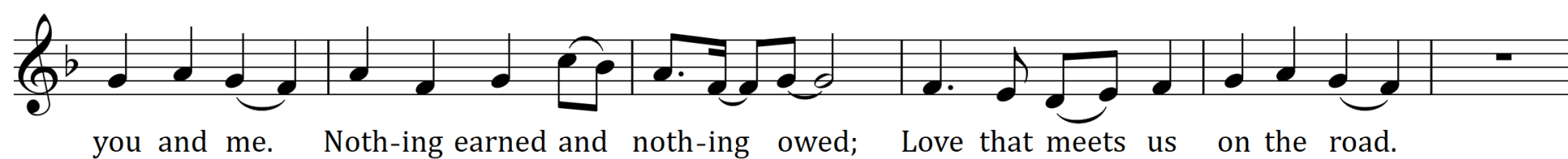
Hear this good news: God meets us with mercy.

Your failures are real, but they do not get the final word.

In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. God's grace is already moving toward you, turning you toward life again. **Amen**

SONG OF PRAISE

Active Grace



GREETING

DEACON DEBRA ALBA

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

Let us Pray together, God of mercy and new life,

you meet us as we are and call us forward in grace.

Free us from fear of what has been.

Give us courage to listen, to change, and to follow where you lead.

Through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

OPENING SONG

Gather us In

ELW 532



1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing, now is the dark-ness
2 We are the young, our lives are a mys-t'ry, we are the old who
3 Here we will take the wine and the wa-ter, here we will take the
4 Not in the dark of build-ings con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,



van-ished a-way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings
yearn for your face; we have been sung through-out all of his-t'ry,
bread of new birth, here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,
light years a-way— here in this place the new light is shin-ing,



brought here to you in the light of this day.
called to be light to the whole hu-man race.
call us a-new to be salt for the earth.
now is the king-dom, and now is the day.



Gath-er us in, the lost and for-sak-en, gath-er us in, the
Gath-er us in, the rich and the haugh-ty, gath-er us in, the
Give us to drink the wine of com-pas-sion, give us to eat the
Gath-er us in and hold us for-ev-er, gath-er us in and



blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a-wak-en,
proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low-ly,
bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash-ion
make us your own; gath-er us in, all peo-ples to-geth-er,



we shall a-rise at the sound of our name.
give us the cour-age to en-ter the song.
lives that are ho-ly and hearts that are true.
fire . . of love in our flesh and our bone.

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP

WE PREAPRE TO HEAR GOD'S WORD

Active Grace



2. Speak, O God, and help us hear

Words that calm our hearts of fear. Turn our list - ening in - to life, Grace that meets a

world of strife. Grace is mov - ing, grace is here, Draw - ing ev - 'ry neigh - bor near;

Giv - en free - ly we em - brace. Come and live this ac - tive grace.

+ WE ENCOUNTER GOD'S WORD +

Today's sermon is based on readings from:

LESSON Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 Gretchen Hack

The word of the Lord came to me: ² What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? ³ As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die.²⁵ Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶ When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no p pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

Worthy are you, our Lord and our God! Glory, honor, power belong to you, who was and is to come.

Holy, holy, holy, mighty God! How great and wonderful are your deeds. Just and true, O God, are all your ways.

Who shall not fear and glorify you? Nations all shall come and praise your name! Thanks be to God who gave to us victory through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Let us rejoice, the Lord Our God reigns. Turn, then, and live! Amen

GOSPEL Matthew 21:23-32

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

²³ When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’” ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’” ²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.”

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



1 The church of Christ, in ev - 'ry age be - set by
2 A - cross the world, a - cross the street, the vic - tims
3 Then let the ser - vant church a - rise, a car - ing
4 For he a - lone, whose blood was shed, can cure the
5 We have no mis - sion but to serve in full o -



change, but Spir - it - led, must claim and test its
of in - jus - tice cry for shel - ter and for
church that longs to be a part - ner in Christ's
fe - ver in our blood, and teach us how to
be - dience to our Lord; to care for all, with -



her - i - tage and keep on ris - ing from the dead.
bread to eat, and nev - er live be - fore they die.
sac - ri - fice, and clothed in Christ's hu - man - i - ty.
share our bread and feed the starv - ing mul - ti - tude.
out re - serve, and spread his lib - er - at - ing word.

A STATEMENT OF OUR FAITH

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, Bord 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 inot 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 the saints, forgivenss 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.

+ OFFERING +

ABUNDANTLY BETHANY

Pastor Gary Sandberg

- Adult Education11:35 in the Chapel
- Election Security Information Room 210
- Confirmation Projects
- Middle School Coyote Howl Retreat
- Blessing of the Animals Oct. 4 10:00am worship

OFFERING

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

- On our **website**, fine 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 notificaiton to appear
- **Mail** in your check to the office (4500 E Hampden Ave. Cherry Hills Village, CO 80113
- Sunday morning, drop your offering in the plate as it is passed.

MUISCAL OFFERING Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above S. Drummond Wolff
Chancel Choir Dir. Kirk Schjodt

Sing praise to God, who reigns above, the God of all creation.
The God of power, the God of love, the God of our salvation;
with healing balm my soul he fills and every faithless murmer stills:
To God all praise and glory.
The Lord is never far away, but, through all grief distressing,
An ever-present help and stay, our peace and joy and blessing;
as with a mother's tender hand, he leads his own, his chosen band:
To God all praise and glory.
Thus all my gladsome way along I sing aloud thy praises.
That all may hear the grateful song my voice unwearied raises.
Be joyful in the Lord, my heart; both soul and body, bear your part:
To God all praise and glory.

CHILDREN RETURN TO SANCTUARY

+ THE COUMMUNITY MEAL +

Invitation to The Communion Table

Pastor Gary Sandberg

We Come to this table carrying all that has been the choices we are proud of, things we regret, and the parts of our lives still unfinished.

Christ meets us here.

We come not because we have gotten everything right, but because Jesus welcomes us with mercy.

Christ feeds us here.

We come trusting that God's grace is still active and at work forgiving, renewing, and calling us into life.

Christ gives us a future.

So come to this table as you are. Come, receive the gifts of God.

We come with open hands. Amen

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.

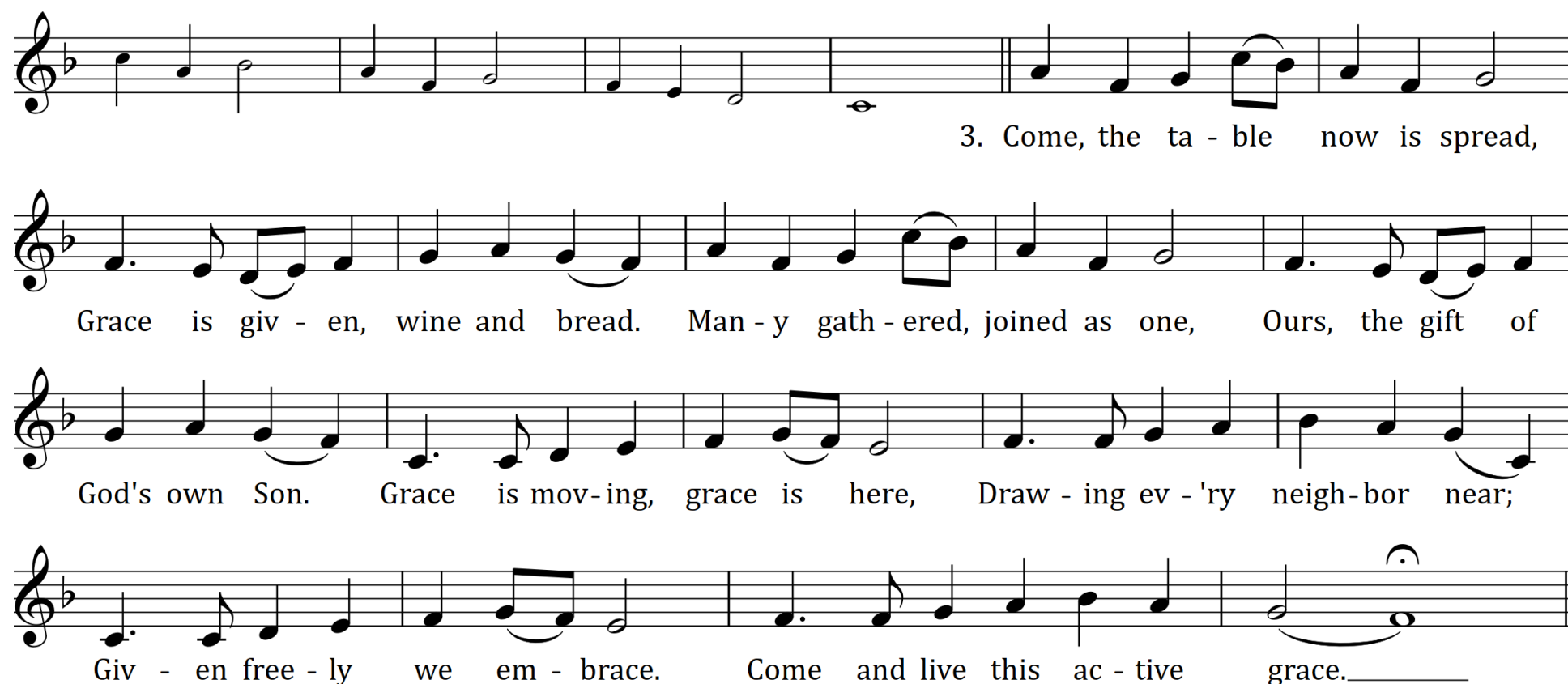
Communion Instruction

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 whoare not receiving communion are invited to cross their arms across their chest to receive a blessing.

Communion Distribution

COMMUNION SONG

ACTIVE GRACE



3. Come, the ta - ble now is spread,
Grace is giv - en, wine and bread. Man - y gath - ered, joined as one, Ours, the gift of
God's own Son. Grace is mov - ing, grace is here, Draw - ing ev - 'ry neigh - bor near;
Giv - en free - ly we em - brace. Come and live this ac - tive grace.

COMMUNION MUSIC

HOSANNA TO THE SON OF DAVID

Thomas Weelkes

Hosanna to the Son of David,

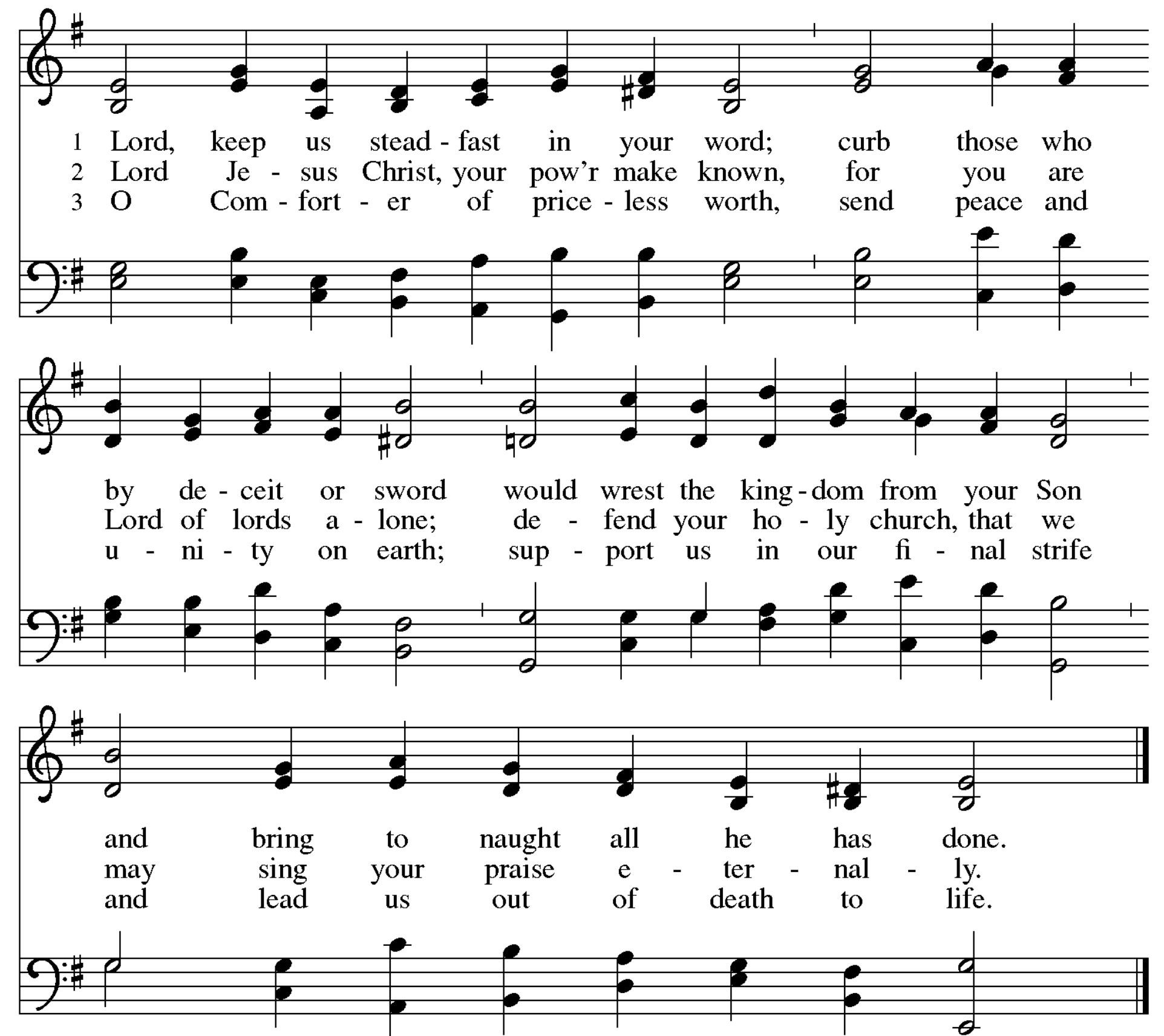
Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Thou that sittest in the highest heavens, hosanna in excelsis Deo.

COMMUNION SONG

Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word

ELW 517



1 Lord, keep us stead - fast in your word; curb those who
2 Lord Je - sus Christ, your pow'r make known, for you are
3 O Com - fort - er of price - less worth, send peace and
by de - ceit or sword would wrest the king - dom from your Son
Lord of lords a - lone; de - fend your ho - ly church, that we
u - ni - ty on earth; sup - port us in our fi - nal strife
and bring to naught all he has done.
may sing your praise e - ter - nal - ly.
and lead us out of death to life.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
Music: ERHALT UNS, HERR, J. Klug, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543

+ GOD SENDS US TO SERVE +

BENEDICTION

Pastor Nate Presinger

SONG OF SENDING

The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve

ELW 551

1 The Spir - it sends us forth to serve; we go in
2 We go to com - fort those who mourn and set the
3 We go to be the hands of Christ, to scat - ter
4 Then let us go to serve in peace, the gos - pel

Je - sus' name to bring glad tid - ings
bur - dened free; where hope is dim, to
joy like seed and, all our days, to
to pro - claim. God's Spir - it has em -

to the poor, God's fa - vor to pro - claim.
share a dream and help the blind to see.
cher - ish life, to do the lov - ing deed.
pow - ered us; we go in Je - sus' name.

DISMISSAL

Pastor Nate Preisinger

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

Processional for a Joyful Day

Dale Wood

NEW TO BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH? STOP BY THE MISSION CENTER FOR A FREE GIFT.

Worship:

- Choir for middle & high school students: Beginning TODAY Spiritus rehearsals on Sundays from 11:20-12:00 on 9/27, 10/25, 11/15, 12/13, and 12/20
- Pet Blessing Oct 4 10am service

Education/Faith Formation:

- Sunday Adult Education - TODAY: 9:45 in room 210, 11:35 in Chapel
- High School Students TODAY, from 5:15 to 7:15pm free bowling and pizza
- Middle School Coyote Howl Retreat: Fri Oct 2 – Sun Oct 4
- Summer 2027 trip! Info Meeting -Oct 11, Room 412, 11:30-12:15

Hospitality:

- Bethany Outdoor Adventures: Sat Oct 17
- Understanding Your Grief Support Group: on Sundays 10/18 – 11/22 and 12/6 – 12/13

Outreach:

- Habitat for Humanity Metro Denver: Sat Sep 26, 7:50am–3:30pm
- Bethany Social Justice Group: Voting Security and Election Processes. Today 11:35 room 210 & Oct. 6, 4-5pm
- Family Promise: Oct. 4-11
- Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains – Nov 4
- Global Mission: Bethany's Global Mission Ministry proposals- Nov 17
- Integrated Family Community Services (IFCS) Fresh Thanks - Sat, Nov 21
- Outreach Team: Project Angel Heart delivering meals on Oct 24

Other:

- Confirmation Service Project: Hope Jones Sun, Sept 27 and Sun, Oct 4,
- ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) @ Bethany – Wed evenings
- Confirmation Service Project: Liz Catt-Rubald, Sept 27, Oct. 4, & Oct 11

**Look for full details for all our news and events on the Bethany website:
Bethany-denver.org/news**

United in Faith Update

- With Executive Council approval, the Facility Operations Team has engaged a full site conditions assessment of Bethany's campus. Two engineering firms and an architectural firm will work through October to provide direction on known critical conditions, identify other material near-term deficiencies and generate a 10 year capital maintenance/replacement outline with accompanying cost estimates.
- Over the next 3 months, we are endeavoring to replace the flat roof over the fellowship hall and main corridor, replace the northeast parking lot and address critical technology infrastructure upgrades, several of which have already been completed.
- We continue to hold small groups' conversations with all program areas that serve Bethany in its mission – from within the church as well as outside organizations.
- We welcome and encourage YOUR input - please share via facilities@bethany-denver.org any specific items about Bethany's facilities that you would like to see improved, that you value highly and hope to see maintained, or ideas where you see that facilities could be better-utilized.

Thank you all for your cards, gifts, thoughts, and prayers as I navigate the loss of my sister, Caycie O'Brien, your support means the world to me. – Gayle Newell

FLOWERS GIVEN IN MEMORY OF AIDAN HAMILTON

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 Nursery, please speak with an usher.