

Active Grace

The Father's Will

Eighteenth Sunday
after Pentecost

September 27, 2026

Traditional



Bethany Lutheran Church

4500 Hampden Ave, Cherry Hills Village, CO 80113

bethany-denver.org

✠ GATHERING ✠

PRELUDE

Prelude in F Major

Heinrich Scheidemann

WELCOME

Pastor Nate Preisinger

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



CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid:

cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

The assembly kneels or stands. Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

Gather Us In

ELW 532

You are invited to face the cross as it enters.



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.

GREETING

Pastor Gary Sandberg

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.

KYRIE

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. A - men.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Refrain

This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose
2 Sing . . with all the peo - ple of God, and

blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.
join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion:

Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and strength, and
Bless - ing and hon - or, glo - ry and might be to

Refrain

hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.
God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

3 For the Lamb who was slain has be -

Refrain

gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us Pray

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

✠ WORD ✠

LESSON Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Jean L. Scott

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

¹ 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 pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL

Matthew 21:23-32

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

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 he Lord. **Praise to you O Christ.**

SEPT 13.26 ACTIVE GRACE—FORGIVENESS

SEPT. 20.26 ACTIVE GRACE - UNFAIR!

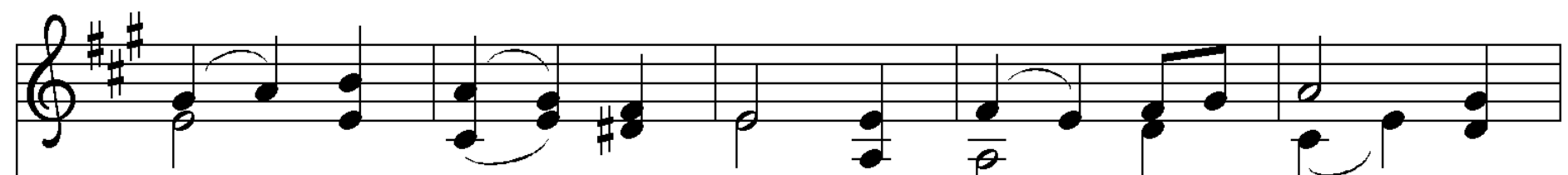
HYMN OF THE DAY

The Church of Christ, in Every Age

ELW 729



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.

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

BLESSING OF 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 ✠

- Adult Education 9:45 & 11:35
- Confirmation Projects
- Middle School Coyote Howl Retreat
- Pet Blessing Sunday

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 plate as it is passed.

OFFERING MUSIC Mein Gläubiges Herze, from Cantata 68

J.S. Bach

Erin Holmes, Soprano

*Mein gläubiges Herze,
Frohlocke, sing scherze,*

Dein Jesus ost da!

Weg Jammer, we Klagen,

ich will euch nur sagen: Mein Jesus ist nah.

*My faithful heart,
delight, sing, play.*

your Jesus is here!

Away with sorrow, away with lamenting,

I will only say to you:

my Jesus is near.

✠ Meal ✠

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

Pastor Gary Sandberg

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

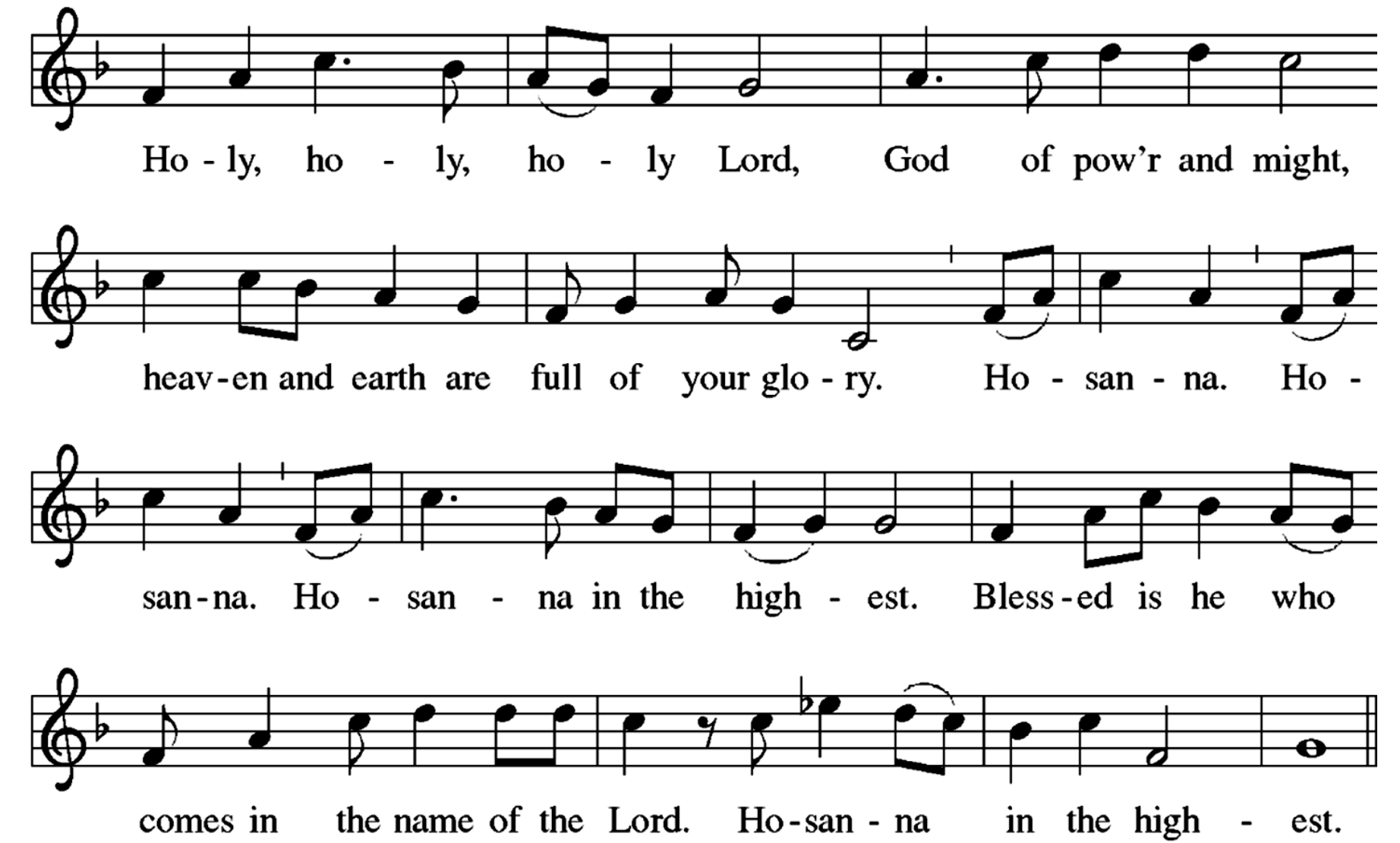
PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...

...we praise your name and join in their unending hymn:



SANCTUS



BLESSING OF THE BREAD AND THE WINE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name.

thy kingdom come, they will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptaion, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.

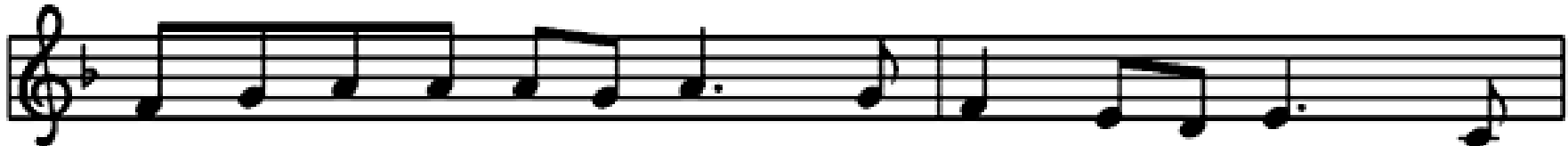
Amen

COMMUNION INSTRUCTION

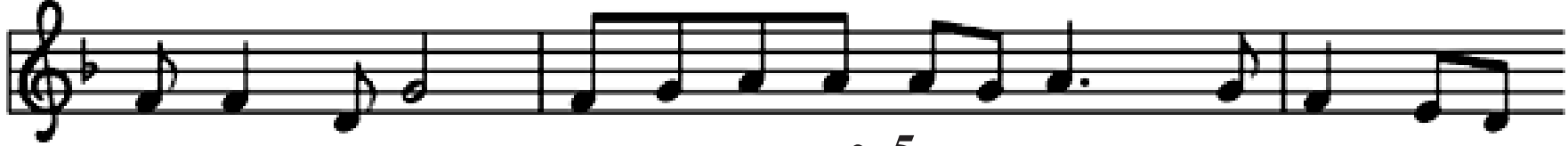
Receive communion by dipping the bread into the wine. Pre-packaged communion sets are alcohol free; gluten-free options are available. Groups are welcome to visit a communion station together. Those who are not receiving communion are invited to cross their arms across their chest to receive a blessing.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

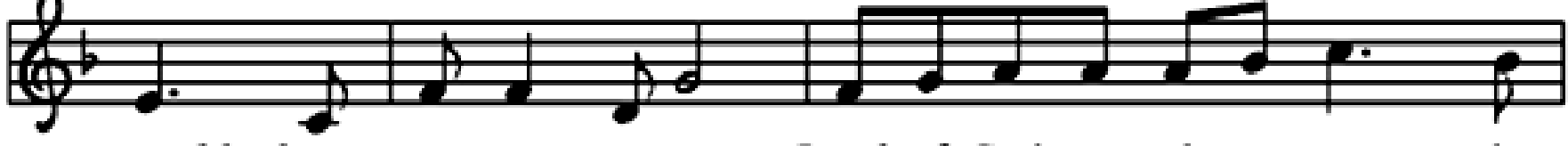
LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the



world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



sin of the world; grant us peace.

COMMUNION MUSIC

PIE JESUS

Gabriel Fauré

Erin Holmes, Soprano

Pie Jesu, Domine, dona eis requiem

Pie Jesu, Domine, dona eis sempiternam requiem

Blessed Jesus, Lord give them rest.

Blessed Jesus, Lord, give them eternal rest.

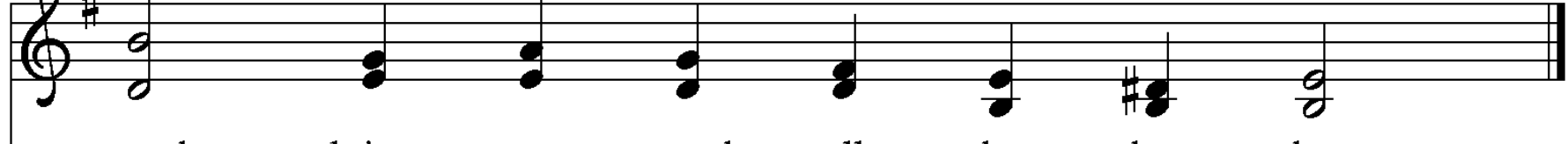
COMMUNION HYMN



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

TABLE BLESSING

✠ SENDING ✠

BENEDICTION

Pastor Nate Preisinger

SENDING HYMN

The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve

ELW 551

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

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 to 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.

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939
Music: CHESTERFIELD, attr. Thomas Haweis, 1734–1820
Text © 1993 Delores Dufner. Published by OCP Publications, 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213.

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

Things to Know About News & Events

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 from 11:15 – 12:45

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](https://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.

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