

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 6, 2026 – 10am

Modern Worship, ELW Setting 3



Prelude Music

Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.

C: Amen.

P: Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God,

C: ... we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

P: Hear this good news: We have peace with God through † Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

C: Amen.

Gathering Song:

Will You Come and Follow Me?

ELW 798

Greeting

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all!

C: And also with you!

Kyrie

A: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

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

C: Lord, have mercy.

A: 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.

C: Lord, have mercy.

A: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

A: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. **C: Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray together,

C: O Lord God, enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy. Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

First Reading: Ezekiel 33:7-11

God appointed Ezekiel as a sentinel for the house of Israel. Ezekiel must faithfully convey God's warnings to the people. Remarkably, God—who is about to attack Jerusalem—gives a warning with the hope that repentance will make the attack unnecessary.

7 So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. 8 If I say to the wicked, "O wicked ones, you shall surely die," and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. 9 But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life. 10 Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel: Thus you have said: "Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?" 11 Say to them: As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Psalm: Psalm 119:33-40

33 Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end.

34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep your teaching; I shall keep it with all my heart.

35 Lead me in the path of your commandments, for that is my desire.

36 Incline my heart to your decrees and not to unjust gain.

37 Turn my eyes from beholding falsehood; give me life in your way.

38 Fulfill your promise to your servant, which is for those who fear you.

39 Turn away the reproach that I dread, because your judgments are good.

40 Behold, I long for your commandments; by your righteousness enliven me.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia



Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33

Matthew's gospel typically portrays Jesus' disciples as people of "little faith," who fail despite their best intentions. In this story, Matthew shows how Jesus comes to the disciples when they are in trouble and sustains them in their time of fear and doubt.

P: A reading from... **C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

22 Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and go on ahead to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. 25 And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." 28 Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Paul Busekist

Song of the Day:

My Country 'Tis of Thee

My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing:

Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride from every mountain side let freedom ring!

My native country, thee, land of the noble free, thy name I love:

I love thy rocks and rills, thy woods and templed hills; My heart with rapture thrills like that above.

Let music swell the breeze and ring from all the trees sweet freedom's song:

Let mortal tongues awake, let all that breathe partake; Let rocks their silence break, the sound prolong.

Our fathers' God to Thee, author of liberty, to Thee we sing:

Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light; Protect us by Thy might, Great God, our King!

Apostles Creed

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.

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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 Church / Sign of the Peace

Offering

Offering Song:

Zeke Clemons

Offertory:

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful



Offering Prayer

A: Let us pray together.

C: Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever. Amen.

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy 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 temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Communion (Please note: gluten-free wafers and white grape juice cups are available)

Communion Songs:

Bind Us Together (words below)

WOV 748

Heaven is Singing for Joy

ELW 664

Eat This Bread

ELW 472

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together with cords that cannot be broken.

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together, Lord; bind us together in love.

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There is only one God. There is only one King. There is only one Body; that is why we can sing:

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together with cords that cannot be broken.
Bind us together, Lord, bind us together, Lord; bind us together in love.

You are the family of God. You are the promise divine. You are God's chosen desire, you are the glorious new wine.

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together with cords that cannot be broken.
Bind us together, Lord, bind us together, Lord; bind us together in love.

Final Blessing

P: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, ☩ one God, bless, heal, and hold you today and always.
C: Amen.

Sending Song: *O Beautiful for Spacious Skies (America the Beautiful)* **ELW 888**

Dismissal

A: Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!
C: Thanks be to God.



Bethlehem September 6, 2026
LUTHERAN CHURCH

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

1050 Peninsula Drive
Traverse City, MI 49686
(231) 947-9880
www.bethlehemtc.org

9/6—Linda Hansen
9/8—Carole Luttinen
9/12—Monica Graf

9/12—Jana Rockne
9/13—Shelly Nellist

Worship Servants for September 6

Presiding & Preaching—Pr. Paul Busekist
Assisting Minister—Barbara Wright
Lector—Jan Stretlien
Musicians: David Husser, Zeke Clemons, Phil & Denice Bossardet, Pr. Paul
Today's altar flowers are donated: By Bill & Sue Allen in Honor of the Shepherd Family
Hospitality—Dan & Laura Hahn

A/V—Dale Wentzloff / Barbara Oster
Cookies/Coffee—Diane Cunningham; Mary Ann Tanis
Welcome Table—VOLUNTEER
Bell Ringer—Dave Susalski
Front Door Monitor: Diane & Doug Cunningham
Altar Guild—Kate Holtfreter / Barbara Oster
Tech Support—Brian Acker
Counters—Carl Lehto / John Halstead

Join us next Sunday for our monthly Traditional Worship Service and also God's Work Our Hands Sunday

Bring your backpack, briefcase, or bag to church on Sunday, September 13th for a Blessing of the Bags! Our bags of all types come with us to many things in life, and this is a way to carry a special blessing with us as well. Bring your bag to church with you for a special blessing!

Bethlehem is looking to expand its Native Species Garden on God's Work Our Hands (GWOH) Sunday! Because our current garden near the electronic sign may be affected by a future drainage field, we will be planting new native plants (and possibly "migrating" others from the current garden) on Sunday, September 13th, directly after worship. Bring a shovel, working gloves and a cheerful spirit!

We have kicked-off our Good Samaritan Fundraiser with a pick a duck activity. Each duck is labeled with the monetary value between \$5-\$60 and will stand for a value which shows your donation amount. Once you've chosen a duck, (yes, you can replace your duck with another if you're not comfortable with the amount) take a fundraiser envelope, enclose the donation of your choice, and return it to the church by putting it into the Sunday service collection plate or mail it back to the church.

The Wednesday Zoom Book/Bible Study will meet on Wednesday, September 9th from 1:30pm-3:00pm with a study of the book, *Theo of Golden*. See Pr. Paul or Barbara if you have any questions

XYZ potluck & presentations will resume on Friday, September 11th! After a delicious potluck lunch at noon, we will hear a presentation by Kristina Schnepf, the director of Green Door Folk School. Green Door is a recently opened nonprofit that is rooted in the folk school tradition, offering hands-on workshops that connect people to passions, new or old, the land, and each other. Remember, XYZ is predominantly geared toward seniors but the time spent together and the wonderful presentations are enjoyable for adults of any age - we hope you can join us!

Third Thursday Service resumes on September 17th starting at 7:00pm. The service will be Holden Evening Prayer with guest Pr. Scott Turkko. We have picked the theme of Taco Bar for the Third Thursday meal starting at 5:45pm. Please sign up to bring a contribution to the meal. The service begins at 7:00pm. We hope to see you there.

Sunday School resumes class on September 20th at 9:15am. Please note that Sunday School will not meet on September 6th and September 13th.

Sunday Adult Education will resume on Sunday, September 20th – at 9:15am in the Youth Room.

Chair Yoga meets at 3:00pm on Mondays. It is \$5 per class. The group will not meet on Labor Day, September 7th or September 14th. If anyone has questions or need more info regarding chair yoga they can email betsymorley@charter.net.

Grief Group meets the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month from 3:30-4:30 in the gathering space. The next meeting will be September 21st – there will be no meeting on Labor Day, September 7th. Any questions contact Peggy Burns 232-392-6913.

New Life Together The team will be meeting on September 21 at 6:00 in the gathering space for a planning meeting. We are looking for more member for the team and would love to have anyone join us!

Where 2 or more are gathered in my name. (Matt 18:20) In our world today there are a lot of things that we need prayer for. Every 4th Tues. starting at 11:00, we will be offering a time and place in church to pray. Please join us. The next date is September 22nd. If any questions, please contact Peggy Burns at 231-392-6913 or cobaltblues2003@yahoo.com

Update for Book Club: We are moving to Tuesday! We will meet 5:30 at Betsy Morley's house on September 22 to discuss *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans. Contact will be made so you can choose your item for the potluck.

Habitat for Humanity opportunity. We're looking for 4-6 members of BLC to join with St. Luke's Lutheran in Grand Rapids on a trip to Sebring Florida to build houses. Dates are November 7-14. No carpentry skills needed; only a love for our less fortunate neighbors. Trip cost is approximately \$1200 which includes airfare, hotel, meals, transportation and lots of fun! Contact Fred Reyelts for more information. email reyeltsf@gmail.com or text 616-560-2861.

Our Monthly Food Pantry collection: The next date is September 27th. If everyone could bring one item, it would go a long way to help us fill the closet to stock the pantry for the month. Donations are accepted anytime during the month and can be placed on the table by the bulletin board in the narthex. Thank you for your support of the outdoor food pantry. Your generosity in the form of money and food donations has been helpful to keep the pantry stocked during these busy summer months. We continue to receive notes of gratitude from some of the recipients of the pantry. Please see the bulletin board in the narthex for some of these notes.

Bethlehem is currently posting a job for a new part-time Music Coordinator. Our friend, Tony Bero, will be leaving as soon as we can hire someone to take over his position. The position requires some of the following: 1.) Plan the music for regularly planned worship services, special services, and guest special musicians 2.) With the choir and handbell choir, coordinate music themes, dates and conduct practices, and performances (Hand Bell choir currently led by volunteer) 3.) Have knowledge of ELCA liturgy and Bethlehem worship practices to aid with worship planning. For a complete job description and application, contact Barbara in the church office during normal office hours or Maureen Bauer at personnel.committee@bethlehem.org

Nature / Animal Photos Needed! Alanna needs your pretty pictures to create videos for the Gathering Space TV! Nature photos, animal photos, anything pretty and pleasing to look at! Photos must be in JPEG or similar format, preferably horizontal orientation, and must be good quality. The more photos submitted, the better! Credit will be given for the photos unless you wish to remain anonymous. Please email photos to Alanna at alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org Thank you!

Spotlight on Zeke: So many of us enjoy Zeke's talents with religious music, but did you know that he plays other kinds of music at various locations in the Traverse City area? Here is a list of his engagements in the next month that are close to TC:

Wed 9/9, 9/16, 9/23, 9/30 —The Pub TC, Traverse City, 7:00pm

Tues 9/15 — Bel Lago. Cedar, 3:30pm

Fri 9/18 —MiddleCoast, Traverse City, 6:00pm

Tues. 9/22 —Grand Traverse Resort Patio Grille, Acme, 6:00pm

The September issue of the STAR will be available this week. If you receive the weekly email, your September STAR was emailed on September 1st. The shut-ins receive an issue by mail. There will also be a few copies available on the counter by the mailboxes. You may also contact the office at 947-9880 to request that mail delivery continues. For current issues of the Star, feel free to check online at www.bethlehemtc.org < About Us > "The Online Bethlehem Star" or type this URL to get these directly: <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/the-bethlehem-star-newsletter>.

Please Note:

Barbara Oster/Administrative Assistant works 9:00am-2:30pm on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

Phil Anderson/Bookkeeper works 8:30am-12:30pm on Monday, Tuesday and **Wednesday. Beginning with Wednesday, September 9th, Phil will work these days.**

Alanna Steffunick-Boomer/Ministry Coordinator working in the office on first Tuesday of each month from 9:30am - 12:30pm, and on Wednesdays from 11:30am - 2:30pm on all other weeks. I will also work from home throughout the week.

Have something important going on at Bethlehem that you'd like others to know about? Maybe a Small Group? A Club Event? Feature it on the Screen Announcements, weekly emails and on our Facebook Events Page! If there is something you'd like featured or included in any of these, please reach out to Alanna.Steffunick@bethlehemtc.org Also, if you would like to have your announcement in the Sunday bulletin, the deadline is Tuesday. Please email Barbara at admin@bethlehemtc.org. If you are not getting the weekly emails for any reason, please contact Alanna at her email above.

Today's Prayer Recipients: Please send any changes or additions by email to admin@bethlehemtc.org

Harper Wiemerslage,
Jerry Hill,
John Block,
Roy DuMond,
Mary Woodring,
Norm Fred,
Lynn,
Steve,
Sherry,
Bob,

John Stretlien,
Judy Fenton,
Cindy Hitesman,
Richard Fernholz,
Julie Lapeer,
Lee,
Chris,
Cheryl,
Julie Barrett,
Patti,

Sharon,
Kyle,
Christine,
Janet,
Cheryl
Pat,
Dolly
Jacque
Carmen Svalstad

Prayer Requests:

- Prayer Chain: Please contact Jan Stretlien at jstretlien@gmail.com or 231-947-3265
- Prayers read from the altar: Please call or email the Administrative Assistant in the church office 231-947-9880 or admin@bethlehemtc.org

The church calendar is below. Please be sure to notify the office (admin@bethlehemtc.org or 231.947.9880) to be sure that your group is on the calendar.

Sunday, September 6

9:15am—Adult Education (YR)
10:00am—Worship Service (S)

Monday, September 7

HAPPY LABOR DAY
CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

Tuesday, September 8

Bulletin articles due today

9:00am—Property Work Group
9:00am—LWR Quilters (FH)
6:00pm—Y2A/Christian Ed Meeting (YR)
6:30pm—Executive Committee (Zoom)

Wednesday, September 9

9:00am—Baby Pantry changeover (FH)
11:30am—Music Rehearsal (S)
1:30pm—Zoom Book & Bible Study (YR&Zoom)

Thursday, September 10

9:00am—Baby Pantry Set-up (FH)
10:00am—Baby Pantry (FH)
1:00pm—Rebecca Anna/Sarah Circle (Library)
5:30pm—ACA (FH)

Friday, September 11

12:00pm—XYZ (FH)
7:30pm—Synod Connect Holden Evening Prayer (S)

Saturday, September 12

8:30am—Synod Connect Breakfast (FH)
10:00am—AAUW Set-up (FH)
11:00am—AAUW (FH)
8:00pm—AA (FH)

Sunday, September 13

GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS DAY

10:00am—Traditional Worship Service (S)
12:30pm—Youth Discipleship Class (YR)

