

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 20, 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:

Take My Life, That I May Be

ELW 583

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

First Reading: Jonah 3:10 – 4:11

After Jonah's short sermon in 3:4, the Ninevites all repented and God decided to spare the city. Jonah objected to this and became even more angry when God ordered a worm to destroy a plant that was providing shade. The book ends with a question that challenges any who are not ready to forgive: You, Jonah, are all worked up about a bush, but shouldn't I be concerned about a hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites?

10 When God saw what the people of Ninevah did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it. 4:1 But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. 2 He prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. 3 And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." 4 And the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" 5 Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city. 6 The Lord God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the bush. 7 But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live." 9 But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." 10 Then the Lord said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. 11 And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also many animals?"

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Psalm: Psalm 145:1-8

1 I will exalt you, my God and king, and bless your name forever and ever.

2 Every day will I bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

3 Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised! There is no end to your greatness.

4 One generation shall praise your works to another and shall declare your power.

5 I will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty and all your marvelous works.

6 They shall tell of the might of your wondrous acts, and I will recount your greatness.

7 They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness; they shall sing joyfully of your righteousness.

8 The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia



Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve.

P: A reading from... **C: 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."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Peggy Burns, S.A.M.

Song of the Day:

I Danced in the Morning

Gather 297

I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
And I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
And I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth;
At Bethlehem I had my birth.

Dance then wherever you may be: I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

I danced for the scribe and the pharisee,
But they wouldn't dance, and they wouldn't follow me;
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John;
They came with me and the dance went on.

(continued on next page)

Dance then wherever you may be: I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame:
The holy people said it was a shame.
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me high,
And left me there on a cross to die.

Dance then wherever you may be: I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black;
It's hard to dance with the devil on your back.
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone;
But I am the dance and I still go on.

Dance then wherever you may be: I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

They cut me down and I leap up high;
I am the life that'll never, never die;
I'll live in you if you'll live in me:
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.

Dance then wherever you may be: I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

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.

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.

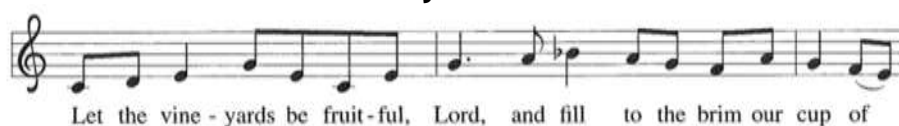
Prayers of the Church / Sign of the Peace

Offering / Offering Song:

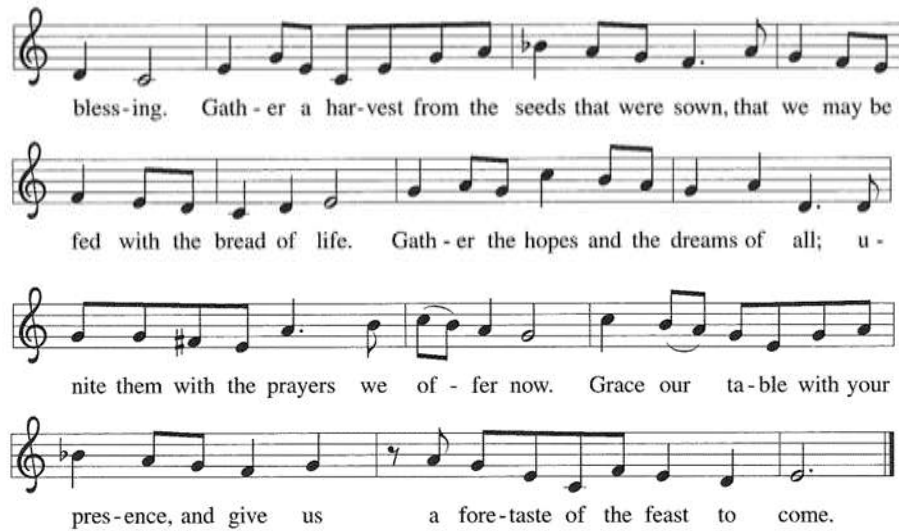
Zeke Clemons

Offertory:

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful



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Offering Prayer

A: Let us pray together.

C: God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. Amen.

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.

Final Blessing

P: The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus.

C: Amen.

P: The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding of the Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: The God of grace ☩ bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Sending Song:

Rise Up, O Saints of God

ELW 669

Dismissal

A: Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

C: Thanks be to God.



Bethlehem September 20, 2026
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

9/21—Makena Dohm

9/26—Margaret Burns

Worship Servants for September 20

Preaching & Presiding – Peggy Burns S.A.M.

Assisting Minister—Cindy Monroe

Lector—Pam Reid

Musicians: David Husser, Zeke Clemons, Phil & Denice Bossardet

Today's altar flowers are donated: *By Bill & Sue Allen in*

Honor of the Shepherd Family

Hospitality—Tim & Peggy Goebel

A/V—Jim Monroe / Jim Hinds

Cookies/Coffee—Diane Cunningham; Mary Ann Tanis

Welcome Table—VOLUNTEER

Bell Ringer—Tim Goebel

Front Door Monitor: Craig & Maureen Bauer

Altar Guild—**NO COMMUNION**

Tech Support—Brian Acker

Counters—Carl Lehto / John Halstead

Renewing Our Foundation Join us after worship **TODAY** September 20 or next Sunday September 27 to learn more about Renewing Our Foundation, Bethlehem Lutheran Church's upcoming capital campaign. We'll share the projects ahead, why these improvements are important, and our vision for strengthening BLC for generations to come. We encourage all members to attend one session and learn how you can be part of Renewing Our Foundation.

Sunday School has resumed class today at 9:15am.

Sunday Adult Education has resumed class today at 9:15am in the Youth Room.

Chair Yoga meets at 3:00pm on Mondays. It is \$5 per class. The group will meet tomorrow, September 21st. 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 tomorrow, September 21st. 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 at 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.

The Wednesday Zoom Book/Bible Study We will complete the discussion of *Theo of Golden* on September 23rd from 1:30pm-3:00pm in the Youth Room. The next study will be on the Book of Hebrews. See Pr. Paul or Barbara if you have any questions

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.

The Worship and Music annual pecan sale has begun. If you did not get an order sheet on your way in, please see the Hospitality team on your out. The deadline for ordering will be Sunday, October 4th.

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.**

COMMUNION KITS We are missing one of our communion kits used for taking communion to our homebound. Please return it to the sacristy. If any questions please contact Peggy Burns 231-392-6913

♪ **Bethlehem is currently posting a part-time job for a new Choir Director.** The position requires some of the following: 1.) Plan the choir music for regularly planned worship services 2.) Demonstrate piano proficiency 3.) With the choir, coordinate music themes, dates, and conduct practices and performances. 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:

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

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

NEW MEMBERS: If you are interested in membership, please contact the office or membership co-chairs Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net or John Halstead at marilynjohnstc@hotmail.com

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. Phil will work these days until next summer.

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.

Please consider signing up for Altar Flowers for a Sunday service. Please use the sign-up poster in the Narthex by signing on the date you request. Then fill out a pink slip with the necessary information and place it and a check for \$45 (This is a new amount.) The check should be payable to Bethlehem Lutheran Church or BLC) in the offering plate on Sunday morning (Preferable) or during the week, in the Administrative Assistant's mailbox near the church office entrance. You may select either "in honor" or "in memory" or "to celebrate". If someone has already signed on the date you would like, feel free to add your name – we welcome more than one on a Sunday.

Celebrate a new child in your life with a rose on the baptismal font! Cost \$10.00 per rose. Contact Barbara Oster at beo6475@yahoo.com or 231.668.7038.

Norm Fred has helped a previously homeless couple for a few years. They are proud people and do not like to be given charity but they will accept help in the form of donated cans that they can recycle for money. Please bring in your recyclables in for them. **Leave them in plastic bags by the garage.** These are nice people. There, but for the Grace of our God, go we.

LOST AND FOUND: If you lose something in the church building, please check our Lost and Found box located in the Coat Room. Also, if you find something, please put it in the box.

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,
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 20

9:15am—Sunday School
9:15am—Adult Education (YR)
10:00am—Worship Service (S)
11:15am—Renewing Our Foundation (FH)

Monday, September 21

2:30pm—Choir Rehearsal (S)
3:00pm—Chair Yoga (FH)
3:30pm—Grief Group (GS)
6:00pm—New Life Together (GS)

Tuesday, September 22

Bulletin articles due today

9:00am—Property Work Group
9:00am—LWR Quilters (FH)
11:00am—Prayer in the Sanctuary (S)
5:30pm—Book Club (Offsite)

Wednesday, September 23

11:30am—Music Rehearsal (S)
1:30pm—Zoom Book & Bible Study (Zoom/YR)

Thursday, September 24

5:30pm—ACA (FH)

Saturday, September 26

8:00pm—AA (FH)

Sunday, September 27

9:15am—Sunday School
9:15am—Adult Education (YR)
10:00am—Worship Service (S)
11:30am—Renewing Our Foundation (FH)
1:00pm—Community Meal at Grace Episcopal (Offsite)

