

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 27, 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:

God Is Here

ELW 526

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: 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.

Children's Message

Pr. Paul

First Reading: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

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.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia



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.

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

(continued on next page)

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."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Paul Busekist

Song of the Day: *Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways*

ELW 772

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.

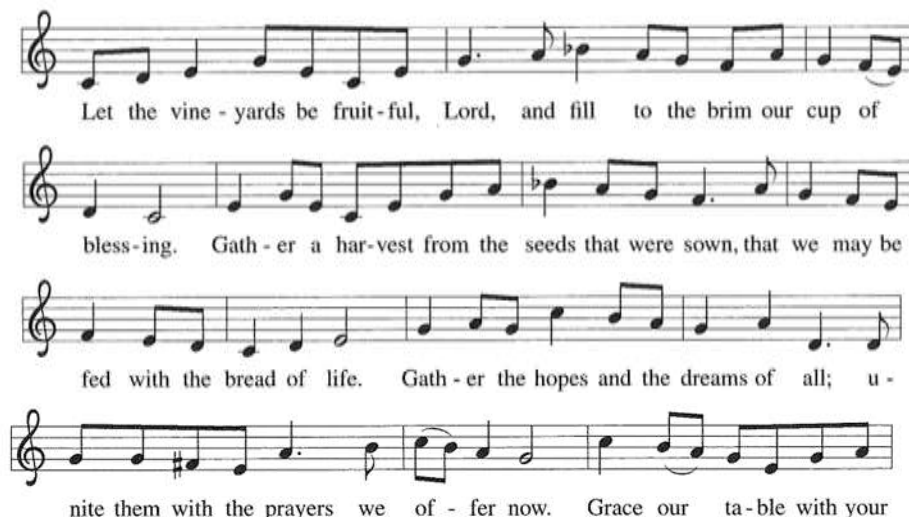
Prayers of the Church / Sign of the Peace

Offering / Offering Song:

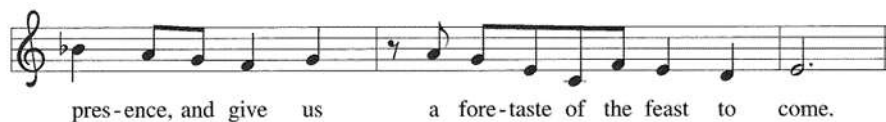
David Husser

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.

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:

O Blessed Spring
Now the Silence
Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am

ELW 447
ELW 460
ELW 814

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:

The Lord Now Sends Us Forth

ELW 538

Dismissal

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

C: Thanks be to God.



Bethlehem September 27, 2026
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

9/28—Kathy Blume
9/28—Aleah Graf
9/29—Bella Gaston

9/29—Austin Leatherman
9/30—Jan Schmidt

Worship Servants for September 27

Preaching & Presiding – Pastor Paul Busekist
Assisting Minister—Steve Kramer
Lector—Peg Pepler
Musicians: David Husser, Phil & Denise Bossardet, Pr. Paul
Today's altar flowers are donated: *By Inga Nyquist in
Memory of Tom Woodworth*
Hospitality—Susie Burton

A/V—Jim Hinds / Barbara Oster
Cookies/Coffee—Diane Cunningham; Mary Ann Tanis
Welcome Table—VOLUNTEER
Bell Ringer—Tim Goebel
Front Door Monitor: Tina Dohm
Altar Guild—Barbara Oster / Erin Word
Tech Support—Brian Acker
Counters—Carl Lehto / Forest Bowling

Yes, if you have friends who have told you what they heard on social media, our church was hit by a car and damaged on Wednesday night. Fortunately, the senior citizen who drove the vehicle was not significantly injured. The damage is significant, but it was limited to the northeast corner storage room closest to the intersection of Peninsula and Garfield. Our sanctuary is still 100% intact and very usable. Special thanks to Jana and Tom Rockne who took charge of the situation with the assistance of the Monroes, Lehtos, Paul Ton, Pastor Paul and Traverse City's very helpful policemen and firemen.

Renewing Our Foundation Join us after worship **TODAY 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.

Our Monthly Food Pantry collection: is TODAY. 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. Our next collection is Sunday, October 25th. 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 October XYZ Potluck & Presentation has been rescheduled to October 2nd due to other church activities! We hope you can still join us on that date! We will have updated information about the presentation (Tom Rockne will present for us in November instead) so keep an eye on your emails for that updated information! The potluck lunch will begin at 12pm as usual. Remember, XYZ is predominantly geared toward seniors but is open to adults of all ages - please join us!

Bethlehem's Blessing of the Animals will be held during our October 4th worship service. This will be done virtually so please email a photo(s) to paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org

The Worship and Music annual pecan sale has begun. If you need an order sheet, please see the Hospitality team on your out. The deadline for ordering will be next Sunday, October 4th.

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 October 5th. Any questions contact Peggy Burns 232-392-6913.

Creation Care Opportunity: The Community Garden, at Faith Reformed, is hosting a Fall Worker Bee in order to "put the garden to bed" for the season. This is taking place on Saturday, October 10 from 9a-12p. If you are interested in joining, please contact Tina Dohm 231-218-1915 so we can provide a head count. This is an incredible ministry. As of September 17, 2026 we have provided 1074 pounds of produce for people in need, in our community!! Hope to see you there.

Bethlehem is hosting a Trunk or Treat for community families on Sunday, October 25th from 3:00-4:30pm! We are looking for people to sign up to hand out treats from the trunk of their car. Decorating is optional but very welcomed - as simple or elaborate as you like, just nothing scary! The type of treats you hand out is up to you as well. Sign up in the narthex if you are able to participate, and even if you can't, we hope you'll come just to join in the fun! Reach out to Alanna at alanna.steffunick@bethlehemtc.org if you have any questions!

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 October 27th. If any questions, please contact Peggy Burns at 231-392-6913 or cobaltblues2003@yahoo.com

Book Club: We have moved to Tues! We will meet at 5:30 on Oct 27 to discuss *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah. Watch the bulletin for location. If offsite many of us car pool from BLC.

The Wednesday Zoom Book/Bible Study meets from 1:30pm-3:00pm in the Youth Room. This week we will begin the study of the Book of Hebrews using the book *Hebrews* by N.T.Wright. Pr. Paul or Barbara if you have any questions

Habitat for Humanity opportunity. 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 Nov 8-14. (Help with BLC craft fair on 11/7). No carpentry skills needed; only a love for our less fortunate neighbors. Trip cost is approximately \$1200 which includes airfare, hotel, meals, transportation and fun! Contact Fred Reyelts: **text 616-560-2861** or reyeltsf@gmail.com

Sunday School and Sunday's Adult Education hold their classes at 9:15am on Sunday.

Chair Yoga meets at 3:00pm on Mondays. It is \$5 per class. If anyone has questions or need more info regarding chair yoga they can email betsymorley@charter.net.

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

Handbell rehearsals will return in November: Practice for ringing handbells will resume on Mon, Nov 16 at 3:30 and continue through Dec. If you have thought this is something you want to try please contact Cindy Monroe at cmunroe@chartermi.net

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 9/30, 10/7, 10/14, 10/21, 10/28 —The Pub TC, Traverse City, 7:00pm

Social Ministry/Outreach update It has been decided that this group is choosing an approach like the "no-huddle offense" in football. We will have "**no-meeting service projects**", meaning NO EXTRA MEETINGS other than the area(s) you are serving. Everything has been running smoothly, so, if you feel called to help in one of these areas, please contact the leader of these groups listed alphabetically: **Baby pantry (2nd Thurs)**-Patty Leibenguth **Food pantry**-Diane Cunningham **Freedom Builders (July)**-Carl Lehto or Jim Hutchison **Grace Community meals (4th Sunday)** -Cindy Monroe or Jim Hutchison **Habitat for Humanity**-Fred Reyelts **Safe Harbor**-Tom Rockne **Salvation Army Bell Ringing (Dec.)**- Carl Lehto or Jim Hutchison **Super Saturday (Feb)**- Nancy Ammann

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

A big thank you to all who have turned in Olesons' slips. On June 18, 2026, we received a check from Olesons for \$211.15 for a total so far this year of \$505.39. Thank you so much to everyone who turned in their Olesons receipts. Also, the area for the Olesons' receipts is in the lower cabinets below the mailboxes (under the last names beginning A-C). The cabinet door is marked with the receptacle inside. Unfortunately, we are no longer collecting the receipts from Family Fair or any other grocery store. We just collect for Olesons

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

Our dear friend, Norm Fred, had 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.

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.



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,
Lynn,
Steve,
Sherry,
Bob,
John Stretlien,

Judy Fenton,
Cindy Hitesman,
Richard Fernholz,
Julie Lapeer,
Lee,
Chris,
Cheryl,
Julie Barrett,
Pat & Bob
Patti,

Ron & Marilyn Dork
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 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)

Monday, September 28

2:30pm—Choir Rehearsal (S)
3:00pm—Chair Yoga (FH)
5:30pm—Worship & Music Meeting (GS)

Tuesday, September 29

Bulletin articles due today

9:00am—Property Work Group
9:00am—LWR Quilters (FH)

Wednesday, September 30

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

Thursday, October 1

5:30pm—ACA (FH)

Saturday, October 3

8:00pm—AA (FH)

Sunday, October 4

9:15am—Sunday School
9:15am—Adult Education (YR)
10:00am—Worship Service (S)
11:15am—Craft Show Meeting (Library)
1:00pm—CROP Walk to End Hunger (Offsite)
2:30pm—Youth Discipleship Retreat (YR)

