Thankoffering Sunday
Strength, Soul, and Spark:
Celebrating the Gifts of Women
November 16, 2025 – 10am

Prelude Music

Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. C: Amen.

P: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord **C: Amen**

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Most merciful God,

C: ... 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.

P: 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. **C: Amen.**

Gathering Song: All Creatures, Worship God Most High! (verses 1 – 4) ELW 835

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!

Hymn of Praise Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises ELW 535

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray together,

C: God of Glory, we are gathered today in your presence to celebrate and give thanks for all of the gifts and talents given to women. While we recognize the abundance we have, we also recognize the struggles of women in our own country and around the world. Sometimes these struggles are voiced or are internal conflicts that only You know about. Lord, bring peace and joy to our hearts today. Allow us to fully absorb the presence of you and of the community of strong women surrounding us. Amen.



First Reading: Naomi and Ruth (soul). Ruth 1:7-16

Ruth is a story of deep faithfulness, empathy, and compassion amid adversity. The story's soul demonstrates the power of love to triumph over hopelessness and to bridge great differences. For women like Ruth and Naomi, whose empathy heals generational wounds, we give thanks.

7 So Naomi set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. 8 But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9 The LORD grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. 10 They said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." 11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me?...No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the LORD has turned against me." 14 Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. 15 So Naomi said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." 16 But Ruth said, "Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge, your people shall be my people, and your God my God

L: Holy Wisdom, Living Word

C: Thanks be to God

Psalm: God's compassionate creativity (spark) Psalm 139:1-14

O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

- 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.
- 3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.
- 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.
- 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.
- 7 Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?
- 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
- 9 If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
- 10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.
- 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and night wraps itself around me,"
- 12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.
- 13 For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.



Gospel: The women who bled for twelve years (strength). Matthew 9:18-25

Through a bold woman, Jesus demonstrates God's mercy and power by accepting the unacceptable and curing the incurable. Even the dead receive new life. For unnamed women who fight to be seen and heard, we give thanks.

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

18 While Jesus was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." 19 And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. 20 Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, 21 for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." 22 Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that moment. 23 When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, 24 he said, "Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. 25 But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up.

P: The Gospel, the Good News made real for you

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Message Bethany Uhl

Song of the Day: Canticle of the Turning

ELW 723

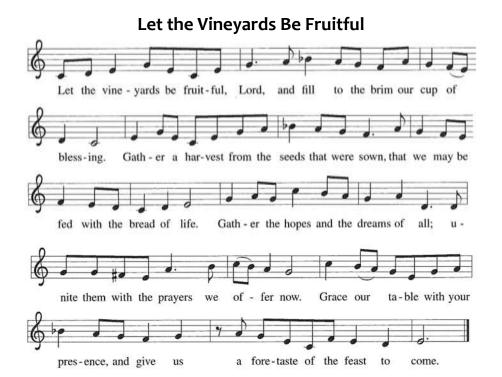
Baptism of Johnathan Benedict Lotan (see insert)

Prayers of the Church / Sign of the Peace

Offering / Offering Song:

Zeke Clemons

Offertory:



Offering Prayer

A: Let us pray together.

C: God of Abundance, You create goodness in everything we offer. Use these gifts to bless the world. Strengthen ministries, empower leaders, and inspire generosity so that all may know your love. Reveal this love to us once again as we gather at your table that we might embody your compassionate care in all we do. Amen

Special Preface / Words of Institution

P: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out your Holy Spirit, that by this Holy Communion we may know the unity we share with all your people in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

C: Amen

Lord's Prayer / Invitation to Communion

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.

P: The kingdom of God is set before you. Come, eat and rejoice, because at God's table, all are welcome.

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

Communion Songs:

I Come with Joy You Satisfy the Hungry Heart ELW 482

ELW 484

Post-Communion Blessing

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

Prayer after Communion

- A: Let us pray. Generous God,
- C: We give thanks!
- A: You've gathered us together across generations and created a place at the table for each of us.
- C: We give thanks!
- A: Strengthen us with this meal of your love poured out, fill us with compassion, and nourish us until we meet again.
- C: We give thanks!
- A: In the name of Jesus Christ.
- C: Amen.

Final Blessing

P: Receive the blessing of God who breathes creativity into every soul and lights up every vision with purpose. Bless the women of the world with the strength that they need, with empathy that brings us together, and with gratitude that moves us all forward. May your love be our guide, and your justice our song that we sing and live out each day. C: Amen.

Sending Song:

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

ELW 858

Dismissal

A: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.



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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

11/16—Patty Leibenguth 11/18—Renna' Walter

11/19—Art Newhouse 11/19—James Pflasterer 11/22—Mary Lou Deutsch 11/23—Carmen Svalstad

Worship Servants for November 16

Presiding—Pastor Paul Busekist WELCA Message: Bethany Uhl WELCA Temple Talk: Ann Rundhaug

WELCA Communion Assistants: Jana Rockne, Karen Feahr, Tracey Moyer

Assisting Minister-Cindy Monroe

Lector—Pam Reid

Musicians: David Husser, Zeke Clemons, Phil & Denice Bossardet, Pr. Paul

Today's altar flowers are donated: In appreciation of all who took part in WELCA's Thankoffering Service today

By Barbara Wright in Memory of Agnes & Don Wright

Hospitality—Peggy Goebel / Laura Hahn

A/V-Jim Monroe / Julia Acker Sound Board—Acker Family Cookies/Coffee—Diane Cunningham / Mary Ann Tanis Welcome Table — Suzanne Lehto Bell Ringer—Betty Rutila Front Door Monitor - Mark & Kathie Bair

Altar Guild—Mary Ann Tanis / Gail Goldsmith

Counters—Laura Hahn / John Halstead

<u>Today we welcome by Baptism:</u> Johnathan Benedict Lotan, son of Benjamin and Cecilia Lotan, grandson of Kevin and April Kurkowski

<u>Join us tonight for Verse O.N.T.A.P. from 5:30pm – 7:00pm</u>. Bethlehem and the Presbyterian Church of Traverse City will perform at The Workshop located at 221 Garland St. Come for a good time and great discussion!

The Grief Group will meet tomorrow at 3:30pm

<u>HANDBELLS FOR CHRISTMAS:</u> The first rehearsal will be tomorrow, November 17th at 3:30pm. The song(s) will be taped in advance so you do not have to be present on Christmas Eve. Please contact Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net if you have not already done so. We need to know the number of participants so we can select music for the right amount of ringers.

BOOK CLUB NEWS: We are meeting for a pizza dinner at BLC on Wednesday, November 19 at 5:30. We will be reading *Wild* by Kristin Hannah. This is a reissue of one of her earlier books, The Magic Hour. If you are not currently on the email list and would like to receive information please contact Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net.

<u>New Life</u> will be having an event called <u>Wine Down on Wednesday Nov 19th at 6:00 at Nocturnal Bloom Brewery 3344 Cass Rd.</u>
Sign up sheets are in the Gathering Space. If you have any questions call Amy Haara or Tim Goebel

<u>Third Thursday</u>: Join us for the next Third Thursday service, <u>Taize 1</u>, on <u>November 20th at 7:00pm</u>. Peg Peppler will be making the Third Thursday meal of some hearty soups and sandwiches. There will be a dessert and beverages. <u>The meal starts at 5:45 before</u> the service.

Native Plant Seed Sowing Workshop Sunday, November 23, after the service. Starting a native plant garden can be simple and cost-effective when you know how to sow your own seeds! Join us for a hands-on workshop hosted by the Creation Care Committee and learn how to grow native plants from seed. We'll sow seeds in containers to set outside for the winter season. Once spring arrives, the seeds will germinate naturally with very little maintenance— perfect for transplanting to your new or existing gardens. Containers will be provided. Sign up in the hallway to RSVP and help us prepare. We'd love to see you there!

<u>CHRISTMAS TEA!</u> December 7th - 2PM - "Old Fashioned Christmas". Please bring an ornament that holds special memories for you and your family and share those memories with us. Please also bring a half dozen cookies along with a wrapped gift for gift exchange (\$10 limit). We are also filling 2 baskets for the baby pantry families. Could you bring something to help fill it? WELCA will provide 2 turkeys. There is a signup sheet in the Narthex. Please sign up by November 30th. Bring a friend!

<u>Creation Care Team update:</u> our next Creation Care core team meeting will be Monday, January 12th at 6pm in the Youth Room. Subcommittee members may be meeting before as needed. Contact Paul Wiemerslage, Tina Dohm or Pastor Paul for any updates.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! The bake sale fundraiser for the youth of Bethlehem was a HUGE success - thanks to all of YOU! The baked goods just kept coming in and at the end of the day we had received \$900 - which was almost \$200 more than last year! The Bakers of Bethlehem are the best ever! Words will never be able to express our gratitude for your generosity but just know you are all appreciated so very much. Blessings Always! The Christian Education Committee

<u>Thank you to all who participated in donations for the food pantry</u>. Your generosity will go a long way to serve the needs of our community.

NEEDED! WELCA is collecting 48 of the quart size jars with lids (like mayo, spaghetti, etc). They may be plastic or glass. Please be sure they are clean and label free. You may put them in the box in the gathering space. Thank You!

<u>December's XYZ potluck & presentation will be on Friday, December 12th</u>. After a delicious potluck lunch at noon, we will have a presentation by Mike Tusan of Mad Mike's Computer Services. 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!

<u>Sunday School and Sunday's Adult Education</u> hold their classes at 9:15am on Sunday. <u>The Wednesday Zoom Bible Study</u> meets at 1:30pm with a study of the book *Life of Pi*. You may attend either on Zoom or in person in the Youth Room.

<u>LWR Quilters News</u>: We sent 279 quilts to Lutheran World Relief in October. Please help us to do more by joining us on Tuesday mornings. If you can tie, pin or run a sewing machine, you are qualified. For questions, contact Betty Rutila 231-947-1013.

Choir News: The choir has resumed its practice schedule on Mondays at 2:30. Come and join in the musical fun!

Chair Yoga: now meets on Mondays and Wednesdays at Bethlehem at 3:00. It will continue to be \$5 per class.

<u>Garden News</u>: Thanks to all who have been involved in the garden in any way. There are a few things left to harvest in our garden beds. Be ready for next year! A request has been made for the Creation Care group to take on this endeavor.

We have been extremely fortunate to have received many generous donations for the Food Pantry. With your continued support we will be able to continue this vital outreach ministry to our community. We also provide food to parents who come to the Baby Pantry at BLC each month and they are extremely appreciative. If you haven't yet donated to the Food Pantry, please consider doing so. If you have donated in the past, I encourage you to continue doing so...and THANK YOU VERY MUCH. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Suzanne Lehto for all of her years of hard work to keep the Food Pantry going. She will continue to stock the cart of items we offer to Baby Pantry parents but will no longer serve as a committee co-chair for the Food Pantry. Again, thank you so much Suzanne. If you'd like to help to stock the kiosk or shop for the Food Pantry, you can contact me. Kathie Bair

"The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor." – Proverbs 22:9

Social Ministry/Outreach update: We had our follow-up meeting on Sunday Oct 19. We have a very motivated group of volunteers filled with a passion for service and there is always room for more. Please step forward to volunteer when a call is put out for assistance. We have one new activity that we feel we can manage...helping with the Northwest Michigan Action Agency Super Saturday event at the Career Tech Center on Parsons Rd on Feb 7, 2026. More details to come on that. Also, some members of the group are visiting Jubilee House as the first step to determine if they would be good volunteers in that location. The first step is to schedule a visit with Father Derek Quinn. There was hope that we could field a group of 6 volunteers to prepare a community meal one time per month in the Grace Episcopal location but there does not seem to be enough volunteers for that at this time. We are hoping that some of us can shadow/help with their meal preparation and this can be a goal for the future. Anyone interested in any of these activities can contact Cindy Monroe or Jim Hutchison. The next meeting for the full group will be scheduled in late Feb or early March.

<u>NEW INSERT IN YOUR MAILBOX FOR YOUR DIRECTORY</u>: If you haven't already retrieved it from your church mailbox, please stop there and get it. Please tuck it in the back cover of your directory in case you want/need to contact any of these new members. For those of you who cannot stop by church please contact the office so a copy can be sent by email or snail mail.

<u>SAVE YOUR PAPER SACKS</u>: Please check the nooks and crannies of your home for paper sacks. The Baby Pantry fills requests from preschool teachers for their students whose parents cannot make it to the pantry. Paper sacks are the perfect size to place the needed items for each child. Just place your bags on the Care table in the coat room. Thank you!!

<u>Coffee and Cookies</u>: Our wonderful volunteers Mary Ann Tanis and Diane Cunningham have indicated a willingness to continue offering this after the Sunday service as long as there are volunteers who bring the goodies and help with clean-up after. Our thanks to these two women for their wonderful display of the goodies and the clean-up after. Thanks to all of you who have shared goodies, and please feel free to continue to do so.

A big thank you to all who have turned in Olesons' slips. We received a check from Oleson's for \$207.55 for a total of \$1031.80 so far this year. Olesons' slips never expire. Please continue to turn in your Olesons receipts to Bethlehem. Thanks so much!!! Also, the area for the Oleson receipts is in the lower cabinets below the mailboxes (under the A-B-Cs...). 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

<u>Volunteers for Watching the Front Door During Worship</u>: The Safety and Security Committee has the new sign up sheets available. We need volunteers who can be available to stay in the Gathering Space to lock the doors and let in late comers for Sundays. We appreciate all of the volunteers. If you have any questions, the committee members are Gail Goldsmith, Maureen Bauer, Jana Rockne and Dave Peppler.

The November issue of the STAR is available. If you receive the weekly email, your November issue was emailed on November 1st. The shut-ins will 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.

<u>Spotlight on Zeke</u>: 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:

<u>Wed 11/19—The Pub, Traverse City, 7:00pm</u> Fri 11/21—Hotel Indigo, Traverse City, 6:00-9:00pm

<u>Offerings</u>: Even though the offering plates are passed during the service, you may use the vase in the back of the Sanctuary if you prefer not to touch the offering plate.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: We often find the front door and/or the kitchen door unlocked when there is no one in the building. Please be sure that the doors are locked when you leave.

Please Note:

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

<u>Phil Anderson/Bookkeeper</u> works 8:30am-12:30pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Please note that Phil will work these days until next summer

Alanna Steffunick-Boomer/Ministry Coordinator is on maternity leave. She will return on early January.

<u>Looking for a link to last month's full Council minutes</u>? Type this address/url into your web browser to get the latest approved minutes from Council: bethlehemtc.org/Council-Minutes OR you may call the office to request a copy.

Prayer Requests:

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

<u>Celebrate a new child in your life with a rose on the baptismal font!</u> 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. <u>Leave them in plastic bags by the garage</u>. These are nice people. There, but for the Grace of our God, go we.

<u>Are you looking for the Caring Table for your donations</u>? It is now located inside the coat room to the right. Your donations are very much appreciated.

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.

<u>Yarn Available</u>: There is yarn available free for the taking located in the cabinets located under the mailboxes in the Narthex. Take what you need.

<u>Name tags</u>: Your name tags are in your mailboxes. Please retrieve them so you can proudly wear them on Sunday mornings. We often have visitors and with so many recent new members it helps them if they can see a friendly face and attach a name to it.

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 admin@bethlehemtc.org until Alanna returns from maternity leave. If you are not getting the weekly emails for any reason, please contact Barbara at the admin 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.

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

Ron Hellenga, Julie Barrett, Harper Wiemerslage, Jerry Hill, Jim Rumbach, Patti, John Block, John Stretlien, Sharon, Roy DuMond, Judy Fenton, Kyle, Mary Woodring, Cindy Hitesman, Ben, Norm Fred, Richard Fernholz, Marianne, Julie Lapeer. Christine. Lvnn. Steve, Lee, Janet, Sherry, Chris, Cheryl

Bob, Dale and Cheryl,

Carol Bowes, Leroy,

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 of the calendar.

Sunday, November 16 THANKOFFERING SUNDAY

9:15am—Adult Education (YR)

9:15am—Sunday School

10:00am—WELCA Thankoffering Worship Service (S)

5:30pm-Verse O.N.T.A.P.

Monday, November 17

2:30pm-Choir (S)

3:00pm—Chair Yoga (FH)

3:30pm—Bell Choir (S)

3:30pm-Grief Group

Tuesday, November 18 Bulletin articles due today

9:00am— Property Work Group

9:00am—LWR Quilters (FH)

12:00pm—Sarah Circle (Library)

6:30pm—Council Meeting (FH)

Wednesday, November 19

11:30am-Music Rehearsal (S)

1:30pm—Zoom Bible Study (Zoom & YR)

3:00pm—Chair Yoga (FH)

5:30pm—Book//Supper Club (FH)

6:00pm-Wine Down (Offsite)

WEDNESDAY WEDNESDAY November 19th, 6:00 pm Nocturnal Bloom Brewery 3344 Cass Rd. Sign up sheets are in the Gathering Space.

Thursday, November 20

5:30pm—ACA (FH)

5:45pm—Third Thursday Meal (FH)

7:00pm—Third Thursday/Taize 1 service (S)

Friday, November 21

STAR articles due

10:00am—Sew Pieceful (FH)

1:00pm—Lehto SG (Library)

6:00pm—LifeRing Recovery Group (Library)

Saturday, November 22

8:00pm-AA (FH)

Sunday, November 23

9:15am—Adult Education (YR)

9:15am—Sunday School

10:00am—Worship Service (S)

11:30am—Native Plant Seed Sowing Workshop

12:30pm—Youth Discipleship Class (YR)

