

BETHANIA LUTHERAN CHURCH



Sunday, July 26, 2026

Ninth Sunday After Pentecost

4120 Wright Avenue
Racine, WI 53405
262-632-7267

Rev. Paul Nuechterlein, Pastor

*“As a called people of God and as
members of Bethania,
we will grow in our faith and share it
with others”*

~ Our mission Statement

TODAYS WORSHIP LEADERS:

Worship Leader: Reverend Paul
Nuechterlein

Musician: William Mueller

Lector: Jerod Alderson

Communion Assistants: Kelly
Imhoff & Jerod Alderson

Building Host, Offering Presenter:
Kelly Imhoff

Coffee Hour: OPEN

Altar Flowers: OPEN

Live Stream Tech: A Volunteer

Altar guild: Team A: Sharon Leger
& Jacque Majeed



Welcome to Bethania Lutheran Church.

*Bethania is a community rooted in
faith and strengthened through
generations. Founded by Danish
immigrants, our story begins with a
resilient spirit, a deep commitment
to worship, and a strong sense of
fellowship.*

*Today, we honor that legacy by
growing in faith, service and love –
welcoming all who seek belonging,
purpose and spiritual growth. We
embrace people of every race,
age, culture, socioeconomic
background, sexual and romantic
orientation, gender identity and
expression, ability, neurotype,
relationship status, citizenship or
immigration status and life
experience.*

*Are you weary from the weight of
life's journey? There is a space for
you here. At Bethania, you are
invited to the communion table to
share in the bread and wine, just as
you are invited to the table for
aebleskivers and lingonberry jam –
a sign of our hospitality and joy. This
is a place to be present in His
presence. Welcome home.*



Order of Worship

INTRODUCTION

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

GATHERING

Please rise as you are able

P: From the mustard seed a great and mighty shrub emerges.

C: Good things can come from something that seemed so insignificant!

P: The spore of the yeast can leaven the whole loaf of bread.

C: We can be those people who bring hope and peace to God's world.

P: Come, let us praise the God of great and mighty wonders.

C: Let our spirits soar in gratitude for the opportunities God gives us to serve. AMEN.

OPENING PRAYER

P: Let us pray,

C: Lord, you place before us the images of the small--the tiny mustard seed, the grain of yeast, the small treasure--and remind us that we, though we think of ourselves as small, are not insignificant in your kingdom. Open our hearts and our spirits to you in thankful remembrance of the ways in which we can serve you throughout all our lives. AMEN.

PROCESSIONAL & GATHERING HYMN

“God, Who Stretched The Spangled Heavens” #463

Lutheran Book Of Worship – Green Hymnal

SALUTATION

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray,

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

WORD

THE FIRST LESSON is from the book of First Kings, chapter 3 verses 5 through 10.

Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.

⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶ And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷ And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹ Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern these great people of yours?" ¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ God said to him, "Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you."

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

THE SECOND LESSON is from the book of Romans, chapter 8 verses 26 through 38.

(Beverly Gaventa's translation modified by Pastor Paul)

These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.

²⁶ In the same way, too, the spirit comes alongside and helps us in our weakness. We don't know what to pray for as we ought to; but that same spirit pleads on our behalf, with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And the Searcher of Hearts knows what the spirit is thinking, because the spirit pleads for God's people according to God's will. ²⁸ We know, in fact, that God works all things together for good with those who love him, who are called according to God's purpose. ²⁹ Those whom God foreknew, you see, he also marked out in advance to be shaped according to the model of the image of his son, so that he might be the firstborn of a large family. ³⁰ And those he marked out in advance, he also called; those he called, he also declared in the right; those he declared in the right, he also glorified. ³¹ What then shall we say to all this? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² God, after all, did not spare his own son; he gave him up for us all! How then will he

not, with him, freely give all things to us? ³³ Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who declares them in the right. ³⁴ Who is going to condemn? ³⁴ It is the Messiah, Jesus, who has died, or rather has been raised; who is at God's right hand, and who also prays on our behalf! ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the Messiah's love? Suffering, or hardship, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As the Bible says, 'Because of you we are being killed all daylong; we are regarded as sheep destined for slaughter.' ³⁷ No: in all these things we are completely victorious through the one who loved us. ³⁸ I am persuaded, you see, that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor the present, nor the future, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in the Messiah Jesus our Lord.

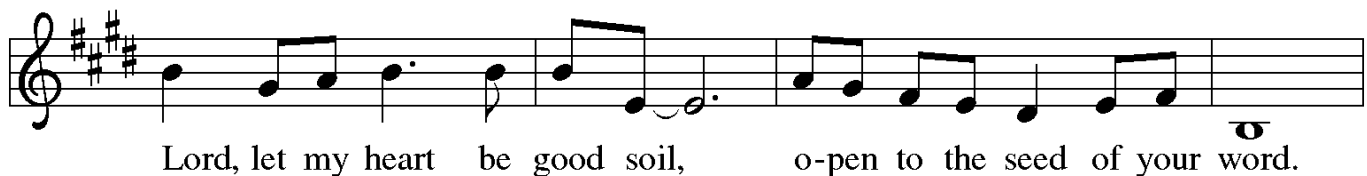
L: TL: Words of Wisdom, Words of Life.

C: Thanks be to God!

(Please rise as you are able.)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

(LBW#486)





Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.



When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,



warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.



Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Text: Handt Hanson, b. 1950

Music: GOOD SOIL, Handt Hanson

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P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 13th Chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.

31 Jesus put before the crowds another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took

and sowed in his field; 32 it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

33 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; 46 on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; 48 when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50 and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51 "Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." 52 And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you O Christ.

(Please be seated)

MESSAGE

Reverend Paul Nuechterlein

(Please rise as you are able)

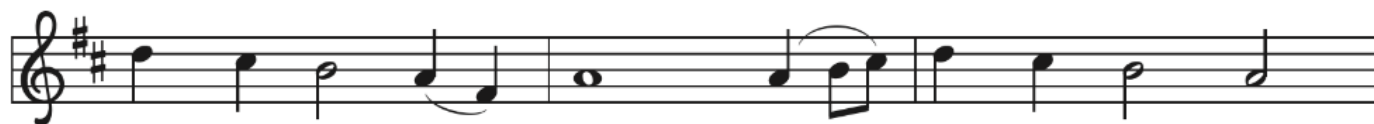
HYMN OF THE DAY

(ACS #952 vs 2, 4 & 5)

The Reign of God Like Farmer's Field



1 The reign of God, like farm - er's field, bears
2 The reign of God is like a pearl on
3 Though hid - den now, the reign of God may,
4 Like mus - tard tree, the reign of God from
5 The reign of God is come in Christ; the



weeds a - long with wheat; the good and bad are
bar - ren land con - cealed. If once you find that
yet un - no - ticed, grow; from deep with - in it
ti - ny seed will spread, till birds of ev - 'ry
reign of God is near. A - blaze a - mong us,



in - ter - twined till har - vest is com - plete.
pre - cious pearl, go out and buy that field.
ris - es up, like yeast in swell - ing dough.
feath - er come to nest, and there be fed.
kin - dling hearts, the reign of God is here!

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939

Music: DUNLAP'S CREEK, Samuel McFarland, fl. 1816

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P: Let Us join our hearts together in prayer.

PRAYER SONG



PRAYERS

P: Trusting in God's steadfast love for all God has made, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

P: God our wisdom and our song, we pray for bishops, candidacy committees, those preparing for seminary, those awaiting call as deacons or pastors, and all who seek to lead your disciples in any way. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

P: God our breath and our heartbeat, help us to recognize signs of your presence among us. Protect and support diverse ecosystems, from national parks to family farms, from ranches

to wild places. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

P: God our peace and our guide, help civic leaders hear all their peoples' stories with compassion and curiosity, and remind us of your love from which we can never be separated. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

P: God our intercessor and our lawgiver, dismantle the barriers to care and recognition of all who live with chronic illness, mobility struggles, pain, and uncertainty. We pray especially for Jeff O., Bonnie, Anita, Grete L., Bettie, Tom N., Jim & Sharon L., Pat, Heather, Wesley, Jim D., Kim D. Parker, Lee, Kim and all those we name in our hearts. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

P: God our redeemer, may we trust your love above and beyond all else that distracts, annoys, frightens, exhausts, or divides us. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

P: God who seeks, finds, and saves, for our community's part in the ongoing gift of creation, and for the riches of faith and hope which came before, we give you thanks. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Grateful for your abundant provision and trusting in your goodness, we cast all our cares upon you, through the abundant grace of Christ Jesus.

C: Amen.

PRAYER SONG



Ev - 'ry time I feel the spir - it mov - ing
in my heart, I will pray. Ev - 'ry time I feel the
spir - it mov - ing in my heart, I will pray.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

P: May the peace of the Lord be with you always.

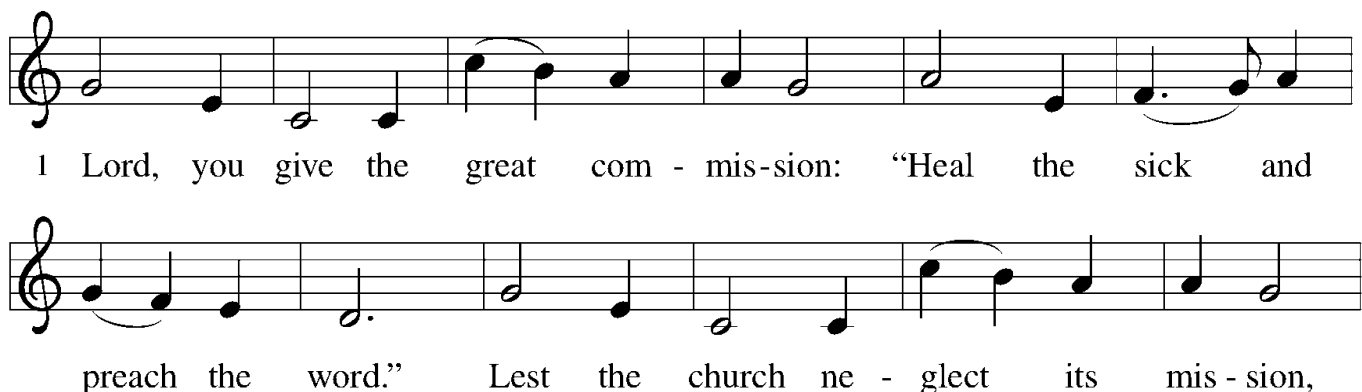
C: **“And also with you.”**

(Shaking of hands and sharing the peace with others around you.)

(Please rise as you are able.)

OFFERTORY

(WOV #756)



1 Lord, you give the great com - mis-sion: “Heal the sick and
preach the word.” Lest the church ne - glect its mis - sion,

and the gos - pel go un - heard, help us wit - ness

to your pur - pose with re - newed in - teg - ri - ty:

Refrain

With the Spir - it's gifts em - pow'r us for the work of min - is - try.

OFFERING PRAYER

A: 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.

C: Amen.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MEAL

P: Christ be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to God.

P: Let us give our thanks to the Holy One.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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

P: Reaching out to one another let us join our hands and
hearts together in the prayer that our Lord taught us to pray:

LORD'S PRAYER

**C: 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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Heaven is coming near. Come, share in the feast!

Everyone is Welcome.

(Please be seated)

SHARING THE MEAL

For in person, come up the center aisle, receive your communion wafer, carefully dip your wafer into the wine. If grape juice/covid safe is preferred let the assistant know.

For at home using plain bread/crackers and wine/grape juice.

COMMUNION HYMN -

“Jesus, Priceless Treasure” #458
Lutheran Book Of Worship – Green Hymnal

(Please rise as you are able.)

COMMUNION BLESSING

P: May the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: Compassionate God,
through the gifts of bread and wine
our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love.
Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal,
may share your love freely, as you have shared with us.
We ask this in the name of Jesus,
through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever.

C: Amen.

BLESSING

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

C: AMEN.

SENDING HYMN

“Joyful Joyful We Adore Thee” #551
Lutheran Book Of Worship – Green Hymnal

RECESSIONAL

A: We follow the cross of Christ into the world.
(Congregation turns as the cross passes them—so they are facing the back of
the church)

DISMISSAL

P: Heaven is coming near. Go, share the good news!

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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Jeff O., Bonnie, Anita, Grete
L., Bettie, Tom N., Jim &
Sharon L., Pat, Heather,
Wesley, Brad, Jim D.

If you have anyone you would like to have added to the **prayer chain** please contact the church office, Kelly Imhoff at 262-554-1558 or by email: bethaniapraychain@wi.twc.bc.com

WORSHIP LEADERS FOR SUNDAY 8/2 :

Lector: Anne Woodward

Communion Assistants: Vicki Thiery & Brianna Larsen

Building Host, Offering Presenter: Ed Young

Coffee Hour: Open

Altar Flowers: OPEN

Altar guild: Team B: Brianna Larsen

Holy Communion Food Pantry August donation request:

Tuna, cereal. Jiffy corn muffin mix, cake mixes, frosting

The pantry can always use clean, lightly used plastic shopping bags, brown paper shopping bags, cookbooks, children's Bibles and Bible storybooks, and inspirational adult books.



Cans FOR K-9's

We are collecting aluminum cans to help the
Racine County K-9 Program.

THIS WEEK AT BETHANIA

Sunday, July 26, 2026

9:30 a.m. - Worship / 10:30 a.m. - Coffee Hour

Sunday, August 2, 2026

9:30 a.m. - Worship / 10:30 a.m. - Coffee Hour