

Morning Worship

Bethesda Lutheran Church - 8:30 AM

Immanuel Lutheran Church - 11:00 AM

September 13, 2026

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Before we begin our worship this morning, I acknowledge that Bethesda Lutheran Church/Immanuel Lutheran Church stands on the traditional grounds of the Anishinaabe People, and we honor their elders both past and present. Their presence is imbued in the lands and waters surrounding us. We nurture our relationships with our indigenous neighbors, and the shared responsibilities to their homeland where we all reside today.

HOLY COMMUNION

Prelude

GATHERING

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God,

**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.

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.

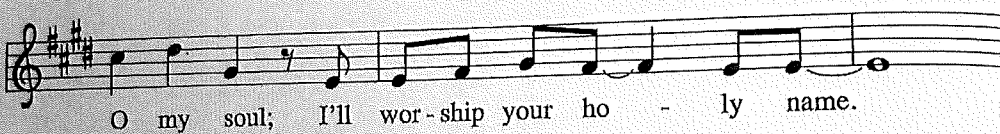
Amen.

**Gathering Hymn: ACS #1097 (see next page) “Ten Thousand
Reasons”**

PRAISE, THANKSGIVING

1097

Ten Thousand Reasons Bless the Lord, O My Soul



- 1 The sun comes up, it's a new day dawn-ing;
- 2 You're rich in love, and you're slow to an - ger. Your
- 3 And on that day when my strength is fail - ing, the



... it's time to sing your song a - gain. What - ev - er may
name... is ... great, and your heart is kind. For all ... your
end ... draws near, and my time has come; ... still, my



pass, and what - ev - er lies be - fore me, let me be
good-ness, I will keep ... on ... sing-ing— ten thou-sand
soul will sing your praise un - end-ing— ten thou-sand



sing - ing when the eve - ning comes.
rea - sons for my heart to find.
years and then for - ev - er - more!

Refrain

Greeting

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

And also with you.

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord have mercy.

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

Lord have mercy.

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.

Lord have mercy.

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

Lord have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen

Hymn of Praise ELW (red hymnal) #556 *“Morning Has Broken”*

Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

First Reading: Genesis 50:15-21

After Jacob’s death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.

¹⁵ Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph’s brothers said, “What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the

wrong that we did to him?” ¹⁶ So they approached Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷ ‘Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.’ Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, “We are here as your slaves.” ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹ So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.” In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 103:[1-7] 8-13

Refrain: Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy. (Ps. 103:8)

[¹ Bless the Lord, | O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless God’s | holy name.
² **Bless the Lord, | O my soul,**
and forget not | all God’s benefits—
³ who forgives | all your sins
and heals all | your diseases;
⁴ **who redeems your life | from the grave**
and crowns you with steadfast | love and mercy; R
⁵ who satisfies your desires | with good things
so that your youth is renewed | like an eagle’s.
⁶ **O Lord, you provide | vindication**
and justice for all who | are oppressed.
⁷ You made known your | ways to Moses
and your works to the chil- | dren of Israel.
] ⁸ **Lord, you are full of compas- | sion and mercy,**
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love; R
⁹ you will not al- | ways accuse us,
nor will you keep your an- | ger forever.

- ¹⁰ You have not dealt with us according [|] to our sins,
nor repaid us according to [|] our iniquities.
- ¹¹ For as the heavens are high a- [|] bove the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for [|] those who fear you.
- ¹² As far as the east is [|] from the west,
so far have you removed our transgres- [|] sions from us.
- ¹³ As a father has compassion [|] for his children,
so you have compassion for those who fear [|] you, O Lord. **R**

Second Reading: Romans 14:1-12

This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.

¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has welcomed them. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷ For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,

and every tongue shall give praise to God.”
¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel acclamation:

ELW (red hymnal) #512 “Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil”

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the eighteenth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

²¹ Peter came and said to [Jesus,] “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³ “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ But he refused; then he

went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon – Pastor Connie Monson

Hymn of the Day: ELW (red hymnal) #482 “*I Come with Joy*”

Affirmation of Faith

**We believe in God above us, maker and sustainer of all life,
of sun and moon, of water and earth, of male and female,
of other possibilities.**

**We believe in God beside us, Jesus Christ, the word made flesh,
born of a woman, servant of the poor, tortured and nailed to a tree.
A man of sorrows, he died forsaken.
He descended into the earth to the place of death.
On the third day he rose from the tomb.
He ascended into heaven, to be everywhere present,
and His kingdom will come on earth.**

**We believe in God within us, the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire,
life- giving breath of the Church, Spirit of healing and forgiveness,
source of resurrection and of eternal life.
Amen**

Prayers of Intercession

Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

Move your church throughout the world away from judging and despising others. Lead us to embody the forgiveness you have given us in Jesus. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

The endless beauty of your creation reminds us of your mercy. Protect those who care for farms and ranches. Guide those who lead us to wonder at your creation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Raise up leaders (*like John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, whom we remember today*) to hold all in authority accountable for any misuse of the power entrusted to them. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Calm the fears of all in need with your promises. Compassionately free the lives of any who feel bound by their failures. Remember your children in need (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Ground this congregation in the welcome you show us in forgiving our sin. Inspire each of us to welcome others for your honor and glory. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Other intercession: Lord, you know the need for healing, comfort, help or resolution for those we name before you today: Myrna & Richard, Kermit, Ed, Lorayne, Lois, Courtney, Bill, Chuck & Marcia, Colleen, Rhiannon, Holly, Bennett, Jennifer, Casey, Donnie, Jeanna, Jaycee, Gary & Janet, Britni, Luke, Jarrett, Darlene, Melinda, John, Sandy, Jane, Clyde, and those whose names we hold in our heart. Hear us, O God,

Your mercy is great.

We pray for our migrant neighbors who, like most of us and our ancestors, came to this country for a better life. You who freed the captives, protect them from harm. Help us guard their rights to representation and due process. Hear us, O God,

Your mercy is great.

With you is found the joy and promise of eternal life. Keep us in that joy as we remember (*name/s, and*) all those who have gone before us. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you. (Share a sign of God's peace with one another.)

Offering

We receive two kinds of offerings in gratitude for all that God has done and is doing: a monetary offering for the work of the church in our community and the world, and a food offering for our friends at local food pantries. If you have brought food or supplies this morning, you can place them in the basket at the front of the sanctuary at any time. The offering plate is located in the narthex at the beginning of the service; if you missed it, you are welcome to approach the altar after the service with your gift, or catch us next time!

Offering Prayer

**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,**

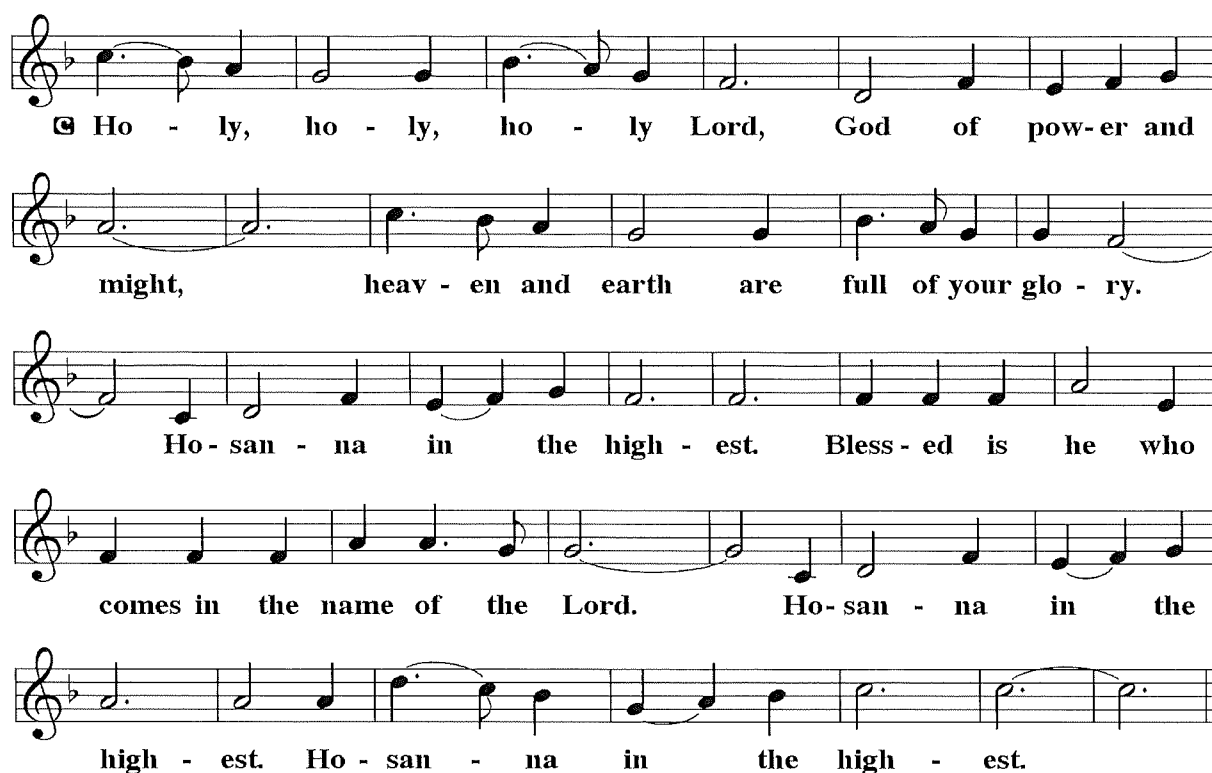
today and always.
Amen.

Great Thanksgiving
The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Words of Institution

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.

The 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.

Invitation to Communion

Christ invites you to this table.

All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

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

Prayer after Communion

Sustaining God,

with this bread and cup,

you nourish us with mercy and abundant life.

By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world.

Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love,

following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

Amen.

Communion Hymn ELW (red hymnal) #721 *“Goodness Is Stronger than Evil”*

Announcements:

Sunday: AA, 7 pm, Immanuel

Monday: South Shore Quilters, 9 am; Book Study on Zoom, 1 pm

Tuesday: Brunch Bunch, 10 am, Bethesda; Bible Study Immanuel and Zoom, 2 pm; Monday Night at the Movies, Bethesda, 7 pm, Ojibwe

Waasa-Inaabidaa; John Higney's birthday

Wednesday: South Shore Quilters, 9 am; Council Meetings, Immanuel 5:45 pm, Joint 6 pm, Bethesda 7 pm at Immanuel; Dianne Judd's birthday

Friday: ROMEO, 9 am, Farmhouse; Knit Wits, 1 pm, Coffee Shop;

Benediction

The God of love

draw you into full accord and one mind,

in the body of Christ Jesus.

Amen.

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

Amen.

The God of grace
✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Hymn: ELW #838 (red hymnal) “Beautiful Savior”

Dismissal

Go in peace; serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Postlude

Reconciling in Christ Statement

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

We welcome YOU to Bethesda and Immanuel to participate fully in our congregational life. You who may have experienced exclusion, injustice or racial inequity; You who are young, old, rich, poor; You of all abilities; You from all nations and ethnic backgrounds; You of all sexual orientations, gender identities or gender expression.

We are committed to racial equity, economic equity, gender equity, sexual equity. We are committed to learn, celebrate, advocate and welcome everyone through a series of forums and educational opportunities. May we grow in acceptance and become a voice for inclusion, equity and justice.

No matter where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.