

Bethlehem Lutheran & St. Stephen's Episcopal



Seventh Sunday of Easter

Announcements

Welcome to all who came to Bethlehem & St. Stephen's today!

Holy Communion may be received at the altar with individual cups of wine/juice and bread; or if you choose to remain seated, individual cups of wine/juice and wafer are available in the narthex. Those at home, we welcome you to the table with your own bread and wine/juice.

Our service today is led by Father Stephen Day.

Thank you to Oscar Sutton for canting for us today.

Please remember in your prayers: Laura, Barb, Kay, Lyle, Lisa & Lindsey, Pastor Kim & Terri, Eva, Josh, Joyce, Howard & Donna.
Please email bethlehembillings@gmail.com to be added to the list.

If you are in need of pastoral leadership or spiritual counsel, please leave a message at the church (406)248-6427 or email bethlehembillings@gmail.com.

Flowers today are given by Sharon U. in honor of her granddaughter's college graduation. Flowers on May 24 & 31 will be given by Kevin and Joan in honor of the birthdays of their twins, Ben and Robyn's, birthdays.

Special Offering for May is 406 Pride

Upcoming Date to Remember:
17th - Congregational Council Meeting

A big thank you to everyone who came out to help on our Outside Cleanup Day!
Thank you to Oscar Sutton for canting for us today.

The online service is available at <https://www.youtube.com/@saintstephensbillings>

Showers for our unhoused neighbors – We at Bethlehem and St. Stephen's, in cooperation with St Vincent DePaul and the Salvation Army, provide showers for our unhoused neighbors on Mondays and Wednesdays. If you are willing to help, call Chelsea Meisner at 360-915-2762 or Terri Wilker at 406-425-3713

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church
St Stephen's Episcopal Church

40 10th Street West
7th Sunday of Easter
9:30 Worship

Billings, MT 59102
May 17, 2026
Tree of Life

Introduction

In these days between Ascension and Pentecost, we gather with the disciples in the upper room, waiting for the Spirit to transform the church around the world. In today's gospel Jesus prays for his followers and for their mission in his name. Amid religious, social, and economic divisions, we seek the unity that Jesus had with his Father. Made one in baptism, we go forth to live our faith in the world, eager for the unity that God intends for the whole human family.

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

C: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb!

C: Amen.

Let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

Merciful God, you are the one who was, who is, and who is to come. You lead us beside still waters. We thank you for the waters of creation: morning dew, gentle rain, roaring waves. We thank you for the waters that nourish us.

Blessed are you.

C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

Jesus Christ, you are the faithful witness who accompanies us on our journeys.

We give you thanks for your life-giving death and resurrection. We praise you for joining us in joy and sorrow.

Blessed are you.

C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

Holy Spirit, you anoint our head with oil and our cup overflows. Break down barriers that divide us. Fill us with the breath of peace.

Blessed are you.

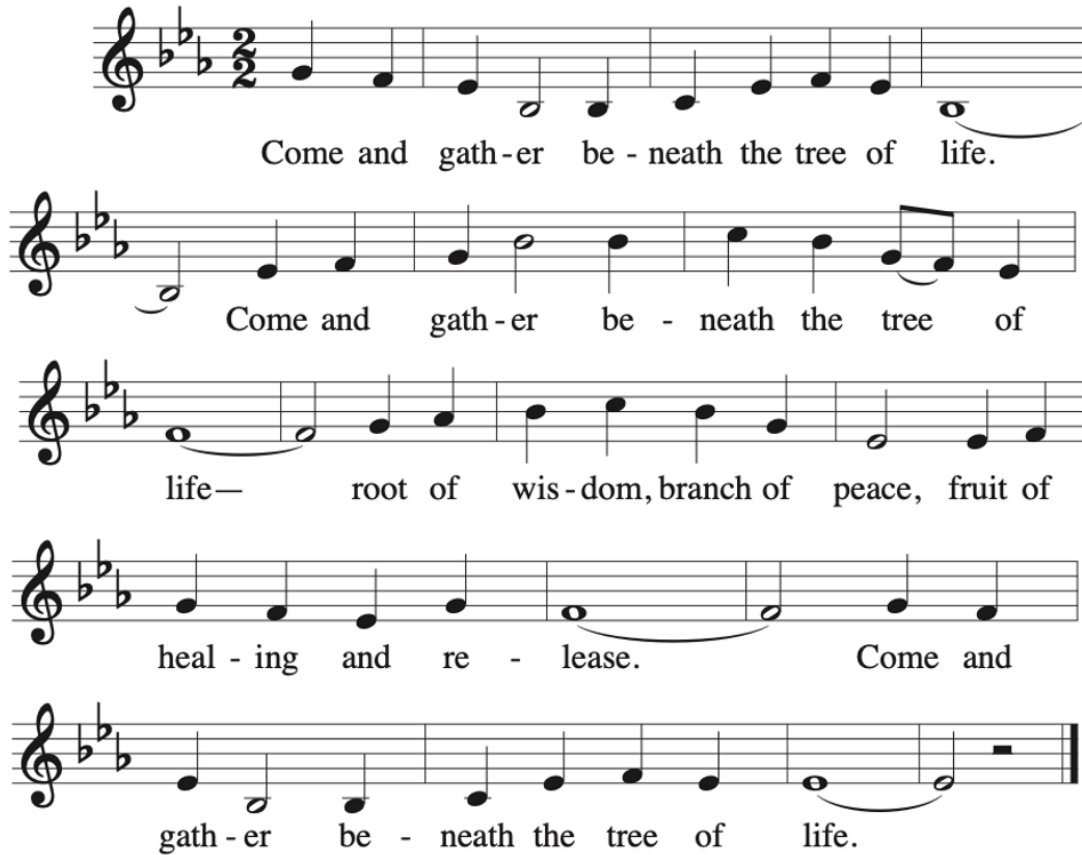
C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

Holy One, we thank you for the gifts and grace of baptism, and for making us a new creation. We join with saints and angels, giving you honor and praise, now and forever.

C: Amen.

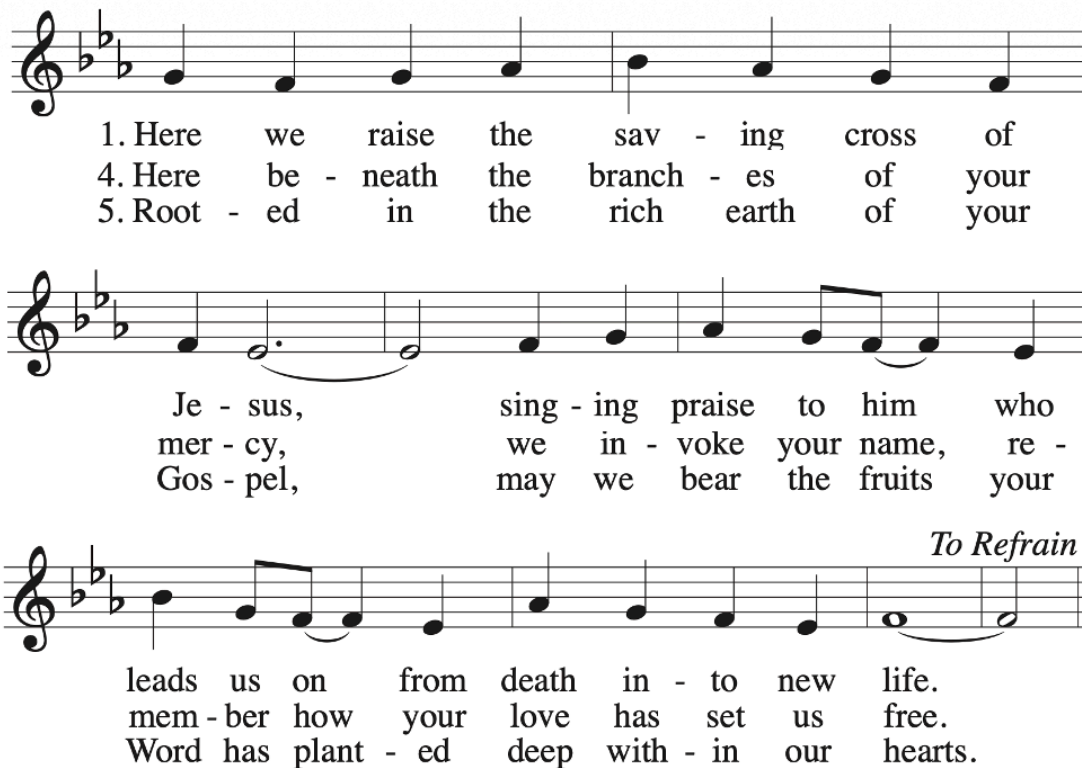
Gathering Hymn: Come and Gather

Refrain



Come and gath-er be - neath the tree of life.
Come and gath-er be - neath the tree of
life— root of wis - dom, branch of peace, fruit of
heal - ing and re - lease. Come and
gath - er be - neath the tree of life.

Verses



1. Here we raise the sav - ing cross of
4. Here be - neath the branch - es of your
5. Root - ed in the rich earth of your
Je - sus, sing - ing praise to him who
mer - cy, we in - voke your name, re -
Gos - pel, may we bear the fruits your
To Refrain
leads us on from death in - to new life.
mem - ber how your love has set us free.
Word has plant - ed deep with - in our hearts.

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

In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy, mer - cy on us all. 1. For the
2. For your

reign of God, and for peace through-out the
peo - ple here who have come to give you

world, for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the
thanks, for the strength to live your word, let us pray to the

Lord:
Lord: Lord, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

Help, save, and de -

Lord, have mer - cy, mer - cy on us all.

fend us, O God: A -

men. _____

38
Come and gath-er be - neath the tree of

life. _____ Come and gath-er be - neath the tree- of

life; _____ Root of wis - dom, branch of

47
peace, fruit of heal-ing and re - lease. _____ Come and

53
slower
gath-er be - neath the tree of life. _____

Prayer of the Day

C: O God of glory, your Son Jesus Christ suffered for us and ascended to your right hand. Unite us with Christ and each other in suffering and in joy, that all the world may be drawn into your bountiful presence, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

(Congregation may be seated)

Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading: Acts 1:6-14

Today's reading is part of the introduction to the narrative of the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost. These verses tell of the risen Lord's conversation with his disciples on the eve of his ascension, in which he promises that they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

⁶ When [the apostles] had come together, they asked [Jesus], "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹ They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴ All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Word of God, Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

Sing to God, who rides upon the clouds. (Ps. 68:4)

¹ Let God arise, and let God's ene- | mies be scattered;
let those who | hate God flee.

² **As smoke is driven away, so you should drive | them away;**
as the wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the pres- | ence of
God.

³ But let the righteous be glad and rejoice | before God;
let them also be mer- | ry and joyful.

⁴ **Sing to God, sing praises to God's name; exalt the one who | rides the clouds;**

I AM is that name, rejoice | before God! R

⁵ In your holy habita- | tion, O God,

you are a father to orphans, defend- | er of widows;

⁶ **you give the solitary a home and bring forth prisoners | into freedom;
but the rebels shall live in | desert places.**

⁷ O God, when you went forth be- | fore your people,
when you marched | through the wilderness,

⁸ **the earth quaked, and the skies poured down rain, at the presence of God,
the | God of Sinai,**

at the presence of God, the | God of Israel.

⁹ You sent a bountiful | rain, O God;

you restored your inheritance | when it languished.

¹⁰ **Your people found their | home in it;**

in your goodness, O God, you have made provision | for the poor. R

³² Sing to God, O kingdoms | of the earth;

sing praises | to the Lord.

³³ **You ride in the heavens, O God, in the | ancient heavens;**

you send forth your voice, your | mighty voice.

³⁴ Ascribe pow- | er to God,

whose majesty is over Israel; whose strength is | in the skies.

³⁵ **How wonderful you are in your holy places, O | God of Israel,**

giving strength and power to your people! | Blessed be God! R

Second Reading: 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

Our faith in Christ does not make us immune from the scorn of others. Nevertheless, we are to resist the designs of evil when we experience disparagement from others because we trust God's grace will strengthen and guide us.

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

^{5:6} Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Word of God, Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God.

(please stand as you are able)

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. I will not leave you orphaned,¹ says the Lord.* I am com-¹ing to you. *Alleluia.* (John 14:18)

Al - le - lu - ia,
Al - le - lu - ia, Lord, to whom shall we go? For
you have the words, you have the words, the words of e -
ter - nal life, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia.

P. The Gospel according to John, the 17th Chapter

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: John 17:1-11

On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus prays to his heavenly Father, asking that those who continue his work in this world will live in unity.

¹ After Jesus had spoken these words [to his disciples,] he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

⁶ “I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me is from you, ⁸ for the words that you gave to me I

have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: *ELW #855 Crown Him with Many Crowns*

Prayers of Intercession

Trusting in the power of Christ’s resurrection to heal and redeem our broken world, let us pray for the needs of all creation.

A brief silence.

O God, your people sing praises throughout the church. By your Holy Spirit, inspire musicians, deacons, pastors, and bishops to proclaim the gospel of Jesus. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

Your creative power fills the universe. Bring favorable weather, nurture plants and animals, protect us from natural disasters, and guide us to care for all you have made.

Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

Your justice is exercised in society by those in authority. Instill in political leaders, business leaders, school administrators, and all who care for others a desire for peace and equity.

Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

Your compassion and care come through the gifts of medicine and relationships. Soothe the anxious, protect widows and orphans, comfort those living with memory loss and their families, and heal the sick, especially: **Laura, Barb, Kay, Lyle, Lisa & Lindsey, Pastor Kim & Terri, Eva, Josh, Joyce, Howard & Donna.**

Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

Your love radiates from communities gathered in your name. Bless those experiencing significant transitions in life such as graduation, retirement, new employment, and accompany us in our prayers during these times.

Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

O God, your promise of eternal life is certain and sure. Inspire us by the steadfast faith of those who have gone before us, so that we may be confident in the assurances you give.

Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

God of resurrection power, use us and these prayers to proclaim the good news of new life to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

C: Amen.

Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Share a sign of peace with your neighbors.

Offering

The collection globes are available at the rear of the church. Donations can be sent to Bethlehem Lutheran Church at 40 10th St. West, Billings, MT 59102. Thank you for your support of our ministries.

Offering Prayer

P: Merciful God,

C: accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory. You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day when we will hunger and thirst no more.

Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus, that goodness and mercy may follow us and bless the world you love.

In the name of Jesus,

Amen.

The GREAT THANKSGIVING



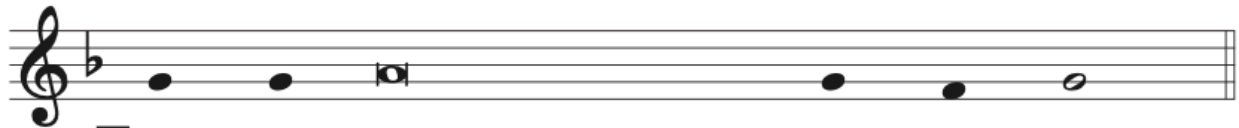
P The Lord be with you. **C** And al - so with you.



P Lift up your hearts. **C** We lift them to the Lord.

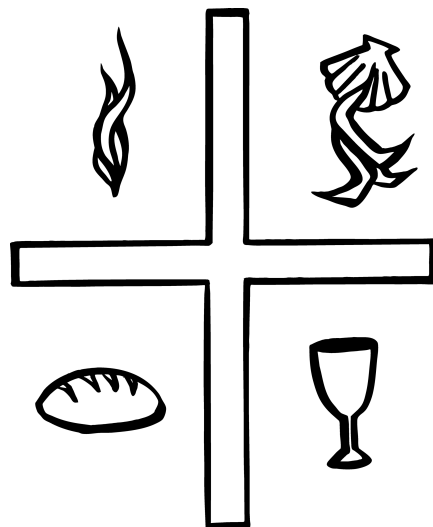


P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right and good that we should everywhere and always offer thanks and praise to you, Holy God, mighty and immortal, through Christ, our Lord. The day of your final Jubilee dawned in your Son, Jesus, your Anointed One who announced good news to the poor, bound up the broken-hearted, and set the captives free. And, so with earth, sky, and sea and all their creatures, with angels and archangels and the whole company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



HOLY



© Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, Lord,
God of power and might, heav-en and earth are full of your
glo-ry. Ho-san-na, ho - san-na, ho - san - na in the
high - est. Bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na, ho - san-na, ho -
san-na in the high - est, ho - san-na in the high - est.

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 to all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Thanksgiving at the Table

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

The 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

Come to the table of new life.

Receive the risen Lord.

(congregation may be seated)

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sins of the



world: have mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sins of the



world: grant us your peace, grant us your peace.

Distribution

The Body of Christ given for you
The Blood of Christ shed for you

Communion Hymn *ELW 496 One Bread, One Body*

Prayer after Communion

P: Holy One,

**C: through this meal you have made your home among us
and are making all things new.**

**Send us now to speak peace to anxious hearts,
to love our enemies,
and to bring your healing to the nations.**

In the name of Jesus,

Amen.

Blessing

God Almighty, who is the beginning and the end,
Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead,
and the Spirit, our advocate and peace,
✠ bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn: *ELW #377 Alleluia, Jesus is Risen*

Dismissal

Go in peace. Praise the Lord. Alleluia!

C: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

All Are Welcome

Christian community should be a place of absolute welcome. Christ has welcomed us, whoever we are. Because of this, we at Bethlehem Lutheran Church are glad to welcome you. None of the distinctions that seem to divide our world apply here!

We welcome you if you are:

- * young, old or in between;
- * white, black, native, Hispanic, or whatever your ancestry;
- * married, single, divorced, a single parent, or whatever your family of choice;
- * rich, poor, middle class, employed or unemployed;
- * a lifelong Christian, just now seeking faith, or not really sure;
- * straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, questioning, or any other identity;
- * healthy of mind and body, living with mental illness, disabled or sick;
- * struggling with addiction, in recovery, or if you love those who are;
- * liberal, conservative, or ambivalent;
- * homeless, a former convict, or in any way someone longing for acceptance.

At Bethlehem, we offer safety, love and the ministry of Word and Sacrament to everyone who seeks it. Come and be part of this welcome, as an equal, as a free and beloved child of God!

ALL ARE WELCOME!

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