

Bethlehem Lutheran & St. Stephen's Episcopal



15th Sunday after Pentecost
October 11, 2026

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.

Please remember in your prayers: Cara, Brian, Gary, Cindy, Dennis, Joan Heser, Doug & Nick, Laura, Sylvia & family, Lyle, Lisa & Lindsey, Pastor Kim & Terri, Eva, Josh, Joyce, Barb, Howard & Donna.

If you are in need of pastoral leadership or spiritual counsel, or want to add a name to the prayer list, please email bethlehembillings@gmail.com or office@ststephensbillings.org or call Father Stephen at (304)633-6454

Upcoming Events

Oct 18 – Congregational Council Meeting

Oct. 24 – Lefse Making

Oct. 31 – Pie & Chili

Special Offering for October is for Tumbleweed

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
20th Sunday after Pentecost
9:30 Worship

Billings, MT 59102
October 11, 2026
ELW Setting 8

Introduction

In Isaiah we are given a vision of the great feast to come, when God will wipe away death forever. In Jesus' parable about a great banquet, those invited do not come, so the invitation is extended to others. In our liturgy God spreads a table before us. Even amid anxiety and hardship we rejoice in the peace of God which surpasses all understanding. With great joy we feast at the table of the Lord, and we go forth to share the wonderful invitation with others hungering and thirsting for the abundant life of God.

Gathering

P: The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

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: *ELW #873 Rejoice, Ye Pure of Heart*

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

Refrain



Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, on our world and on our way.



Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, ev-'ry day.



1 For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the
2 That we may live out your im - passionate re - sponse to the
3 For peace in our hearts, . . . for peace in our homes, . . for
4 For your Spir - it to guide; that you cen - ter our lives in the



u - ni - ty of all; for
hun - gry and the poor; that
friends and fam - i - ly; for
wa - ter and the word; that you



this ho - ly house, for all who wor-ship and praise,
we may live out truth and jus - tice and grace,
life and for love, ... for our work and our play,
nour-ish our souls . . . with your bod - y and blood,

Refrain



let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Refrain

This is the feast of vic - t'ry for our God, for the
Lamb who was slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be
peo - ple of God. Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and strength, and
Refrain
hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his. This is the feast of
vic - t'ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain has be - gun his reign. Al -
le - lu - ia. 2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God, and
join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or,
glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Final refrain

This is the feast of vic - t'ry for our God, for the
Lamb who was slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: Lord of the feast, you have prepared a table before all peoples and poured out your life with abundance. Call us again to your banquet. Strengthen us by what is honorable, just, and pure, and transform us into a people of righteousness and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

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

First Reading: Isaiah 25:1-9

After a hymn of praise acknowledging God as a shelter for the poor, the prophet portrays a wonderful victory banquet at which death—which in ancient Canaan was depicted as a monster swallowing up everyone—will be swallowed up forever. The prophet urges celebration of this victory of salvation.

¹ O LORD, you are my God;

I will exalt you; I will praise your name,
for you have done wonderful things,
plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

² For you have made the city a heap,
the fortified city a ruin;
the palace of foreigners is a city no more;
it will never be rebuilt.

³ Therefore strong peoples will glorify you;
cities of ruthless nations will fear you.

⁴ For you have been a refuge to the poor,
a refuge to the needy in their distress,
a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat.

When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm,

⁵ the noise of foreigners like heat in a dry place,
you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds;
the song of the ruthless was stilled.

⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

⁷ And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,

the covering that is spread over all nations;

⁸ he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

⁹ It will be said on that day,
“See, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.
This is the LORD for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

R: Word of God, Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God

Psalm: Psalm 23

You prepare a table before me, and my cup is running over. (Ps. 23:5)

¹ The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.

² **The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

³ You restore my soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

⁴ **Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶ **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

Second Reading: Philippians 4:1-9

Though writing from prison and facing an uncertain future, Paul calls on the Philippians to rejoice and give thanks to God no matter what the circumstance. God's peace is with us and binds together our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ, especially when things around us do not seem peaceful.

¹ My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

² I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me

in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my coworkers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

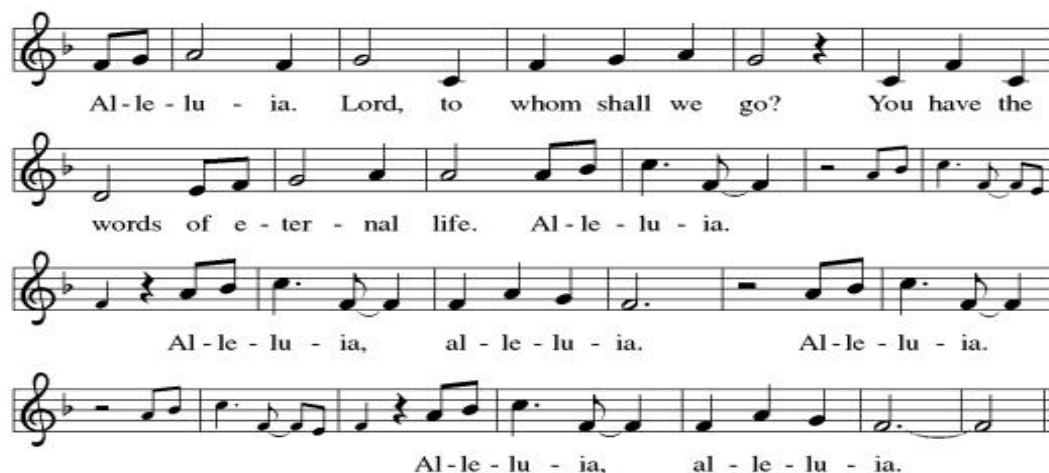
⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ As for the things that you have learned and received and heard and noticed in me, do them, and the God of peace will be with you.

R: Word of God, Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. This is the LORD for whom ¹ we have waited;* let us be glad and rejoice in ¹ God's salvation. *Alleluia.* (Isa. 25:9)



P: The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 22nd chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

Jesus tells a parable indicating that the blessings of God's kingdom are available to all, but the invitation is not to be taken lightly.

¹ Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ² “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴ Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ ⁵ But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶ while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸ Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ ¹⁰ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad, so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹² and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon

Hymn of the Day Let Us Go Now ELW #523

Prayers of Intercession

R: Seeking the Spirit of God who makes all things new, we pray for the church and the world.

A brief silence.

R: Holy God, we remember your promise of unity on your holy mountain. Empower the World Council of Churches and all those working across religious difference, that the world may know your undivided love. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

R: We remember your promise of green pastures and quiet waters. Preserve all places of natural beauty and restore our relationship with the land. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

R: We remember your promise to not abandon us amid storm and disaster. Renew all communities facing disasters and give your courage to those leading relief efforts. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

R: We remember your promise to wipe away every tear. Heal and console all who are sick or suffering especially **Cara, Cindy, Doug and Nick; Dennis; Barb; Howard and Donna; Joyce's family; Laura; Lyle, Lisa, and Lindsey; and Pastor Kim and Terri, Eva, and Josh; and Joan Heser.**

Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

R: We remember your promise of a banquet open to all people. Challenge this congregation to open wide our doors and welcome everyone to the table. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

R: We remember your promise to swallow up death forever. We give thanks for those who have gone before us. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

R: Trusting in your boundless grace, O God, we lift up these spoken prayers and those in our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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. Online viewers can mail an offering to: Bethlehem Lutheran Church or St. Stephen's Church - 40 10th Street West, Billings, MT. 59102. Thank you for your support in our ministries!

Offering Prayer

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.

Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also 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, 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,

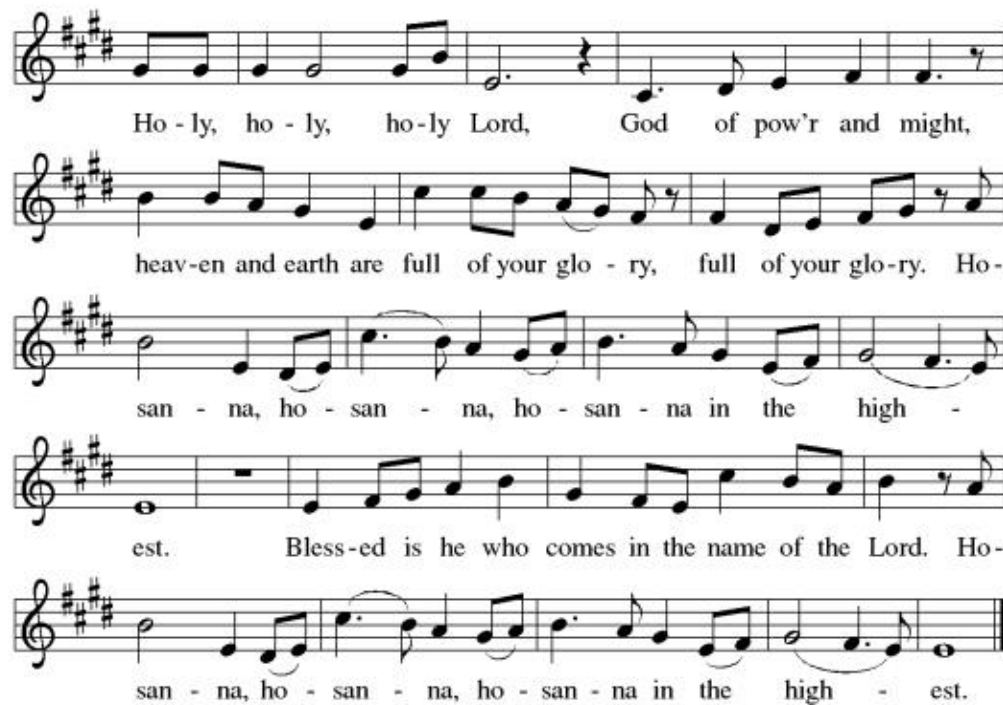
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.

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:

Holy, Holy, Holy



Thanksgiving at the Table

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God.

You are most holy,

and great is the majesty of your glory.

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish
but have eternal life.

We give you thanks for his coming into the world
to fulfill for us your holy will
and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command,
his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension,
and the promise of his coming again,
we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty,
not as we ought but as we are able;
we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving
and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants,
and these your own gifts of bread and wine,
so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ
may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace,
and, receiving the forgiveness of sin,
may be formed to live as your holy people
and be given our inheritance with all your saints.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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

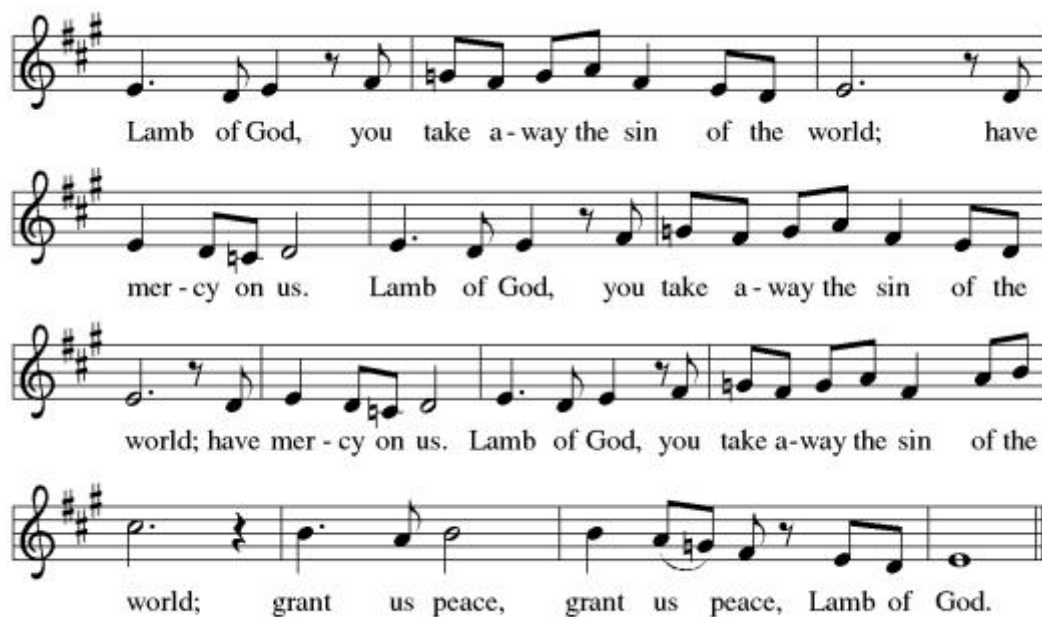
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

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!

Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)



Distribution

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

Communion Hymn: Come Let Us Eat *ELW* #491

Prayer after Communion

**C: 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.

Blessing

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

TRUST

I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy

257

1 I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy,
2 I've got the peace that pass - es un - der - stand - ing,
3 I've got the love of Je - sus, love of Je - sus,

down in my heart, down in my heart, down in my heart;
down in my heart, down in my heart, down in my heart;
down in my heart, down in my heart, down in my heart;

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy,
I've got the peace that pass - es un - der - stand - ing,
I've got the love of Je - sus, love of Je - sus,

down in my heart, down in my heart to stay.
down in my heart, down in my heart to stay.
down in my heart, down in my heart to stay.

Text: George W. Cooke
Music: George W. Cooke

Dismissal

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

C: Thanks be to God.

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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