

Bethlehem Lutheran & St. Stephen's Episcopal



Reformation Sunday
October 25, 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.

James, Reindollar, a Lay Ministry Associate, has been authorized by the Bishop of the Montana Synod to provide pastoral services in this congregation this Sunday.

Please remember in your prayers: Paul & Kay, Cara, Brian, Gary, Dennis, Doug & Nick, Laura, Lyle, Lisa & Lindsey, Pastor Kim & Terri, Eva, Josh, 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. 31 – Pie & Chili Fundraiser

Nov. 1 - All Saint's Day

Nov. 8 – Worship & Music Committee

Nov. 12 – Women's Bible Study 1:00

Nov. 15 – Congregational Council Meeting

Special Offerings in October are 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

Billings, MT 59102

Reformation Sunday

October 25, 2026

9:30 Worship

Now the Feast & Celebration

Introduction

Jesus' summary of the law in today's gospel echoes our first reading from Leviticus. We are called not only to love God with heart, soul, and mind, but also to love our neighbor as ourselves. It is out of such deep care that Paul shares the gospel with the Thessalonian community. In the confession of sins, we acknowledge that we have not loved God, neighbor, and self; yet we gather to hear the word of forgiveness and to be strengthened by word and meal to be signs of God's love and mercy in the world.

Confession and Forgiveness *(please stand as you are able)*

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: ELW #504 *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*

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

Assistant: In peace, in peace,

Refrain

Assistant: *Congregation:*

Let us pray to the Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy.

to Verses

Assistant: For the Reign of God, and for peace throughout the world, for the unity of all . . . (to Refrain)

Assistant: For your people here, who have come to give you praise, for the strength to live your Word . . . (to Refrain)

Assistant:

Help, save and de - fend us, O

Congregation:

God. A - men.

NOW THE FEAST

Refrain

Congregation:



Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,
all of cre - a - tion sings for joy
to the God of life and love and
free - dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -
er - more!

Verse 1

Congregation or Congregation 1:



1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once
slain, whose blood has freed and u -
nit-ed us to be one great peo - ple of
God.

to Refrain

Refrain

Congregation:

Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,
all of cre - a - tion sings for joy
to the God of life and love and
free - dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -
er - more!

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Verse 2

Congregation or Congregation 2:

2. Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and
might, all hon - or and glo - ry to Christ
for ev - er.

to Refrain

Refrain

Congregation:

Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,
all of cre - a - tion sings for joy
to the God of life and love and
free - dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -
er - more!

Verse 3

Congregation:

3. For God has come to dwell with us, to
make us peo - ple of God; to make
all things new. *to Refrain*

Refrain

SALUTATION

Presider:

The Lord be with you.

Congregation:

And al - so with you.

Prayer of the Day

**O Lord God, you are the holy lawgiver, you are the salvation of your people.
By your Spirit renew us in your covenant of love, and train us to care tenderly
for all our neighbors, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.**

WORD

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

First Reading: Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

The Holiness Code in Leviticus urges people to be holy because God is holy. Holiness is lived out as God's people exercise justice and love in their dealings with one another. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves.

¹ The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

²“Speak to all the congregation of the Israelites and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

¹⁵ “You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. ¹⁶ You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand idly by when the blood of your neighbor is at stake: I am the LORD.

¹⁷ “You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. ¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.”

R: Word of God, Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 1

Their delight is in the law of the LORD. (Ps. 1:2)

- ¹ Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked,
nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats of the scornful!
- ² **Their delight is in the law of the LORD,
and they meditate on God's teaching day and night.**
- ³ They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season,
with leaves that do not wither;
everything they do shall prosper.
- ⁴ **It is not so with the wicked;
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.**
- ⁵ Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes,
nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.
- ⁶ **For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked shall be destroyed.**

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

Paul uses maternal imagery to depict the caring and nurturing relationship he shares with the Thessalonian Christians. When he first came to their city it was not to benefit himself but to share the gospel with them, which was his responsibility as an apostle of Christ.

¹ You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, ² but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. ³ For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, ⁴ but, just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals but to please God, who tests our hearts. ⁵ As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed, ⁶ nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, ⁷ though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. ⁸ So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

R: Word of God, Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. If you continue in my word, you are truly ¹ my disciples,* and you will know the truth, and the truth will ¹ make you free. *Alleluia.* (John 8:31-32)

GOSPEL VERSE

Congregation:

Al-le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we
go? You have the words of e - ter - nal
life. Al - le - lu - ia! *Optional Repeat*

P. The Gospel according to Matthew, the 22nd Chapter

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 22:34-46

Put on the spot by the Pharisees, Jesus displays wisdom by summarizing the law of God in just two commandments and by demonstrating the Messiah must be more than the son of David.

³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that [Jesus] had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵ and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him.

³⁶ “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷ He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

⁴¹ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ⁴² “What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” ⁴³ He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴ ‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet” ’?
⁴⁵ “If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?” ⁴⁶ No one was able to
give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more
questions.

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

Sermon James Reindollar, LMA

Hymn of the Day: *ELW #517 Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word*

Prayers of Intercession

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

A brief silence.

Gracious God, as we remember the Reformation, we thank you for all those who have worked to hold the church accountable to its mission. Protect them as they speak truth to power.

Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for the beauty of the world’s islands, coastlines, and low-lying places. Keep them and their inhabitants safe from harm.

Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

We thank you for the diversity of humankind, made in your image. We pray for the future of endangered languages and cultures. Preserve them to show forth your glory.

Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

We pray for the healing of all who are sick or injured, especially those who cannot access medical care. We remember those whom we love who are suffering or in pain especially: **Paul & Kay, Cara, Gary, Dennis, Lyle, Lisa & Lindsey, Doug & Nick, Laura, Pastor Kim & Terri, Eva, Josh, Barb, Howard & Donna.**

Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for retired clergy and their honoring their faithful service to your church. Bless them as they find new ways to live into their vocation.

Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

We thank you for all the faithful departed who taught us to love God and our neighbor. By their example, help us to seek after you with heart, soul, and mind.

Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

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 neighbor.

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

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.



THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Presider: *Congregation:*

The Lord be with you. And al-so with you.

Presider: *Congregation:*

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

Presider: *Congregation:*

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

right to give God thanks and praise.

P. It is our duty and delight that we should everywhere and always offer thanks and praise to you, O God, through Jesus Christ who by his death on the cross and glorious resurrection broke the bonds of sin and death and gave life to all creation, and so with the church on earth, all creation and the host of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn...



HOLY

Congregation:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and
might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est!
Bless - ed is the One who comes in your name. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est!

Thanksgiving at the Table

P: You are indeed holy, gracious and merciful God; everything is filled with your glory. We give you thanks for your promise and presence which have sustained the faithful in this and every generation. Above all, we give you thanks for Jesus, born of Mary, who in word and deed announced your gentle rule of justice reconciliation and peace.

On the night of his betrayal our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks; broke it and give it to his disciples saying: Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. After supper he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for al 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 his command to love one another, his life and death, his resurrection and his ascension, we pray for his coming again, even as we cry

C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P: Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, that all of your promises may come to us and your whole creation.

C: Amen. Come Holy Spirit.

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

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: Christ invites you to this table.

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

LAMB OF GOD

Congregation: *Congregation or Assistant:*



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
you break the chains of ha - tred and
you are the way of jus - tice and
you are the way of mer - cy and

Congregation:



world: have mer - cy on us, mer - cy on us,
fear:
peace:
love.

Final Stanza

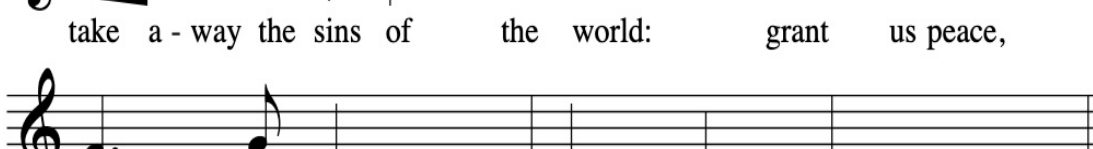
Congregation or Assistant:



mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you



take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace,



grant us peace, grant us peace.

Distribution

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

Communion Hymn: *ELW# 729 The Church of Christ in Every Age*

Prayer after Communion

P: Sustaining God,

C: 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.

C: Amen.

The God of hope

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

C: Amen.

The God of grace

✠ bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn: *ELW #576 We All Are One In Mission*

Dismissal

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 & St. Stephen's Episcopal 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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