



16th Sunday after Pentecost

God's Work Our Hands Sunday

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Pastor Calvin Konop, Presiding

Jessica Christenson, CYF Director

Karina Roth, Musical Director

10:00 AM | September 13, 2026

God's Work
Our Hands

Belonging to Christ, Sharing Christ on the North Shore & Beyond!

INTRODUCTION

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

PRELUDE

Deborah Roach, French Horn & Karina Roth, Piano

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome, friends! On this marvelous Sunday, let us open our spirits to the loving presence of God that we may be spiritually fed and renewed by his grace.

TEMPLE TALK

Kristin Lindholm

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
(Silence is kept for reflection.)

Gracious God, **have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us

alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of  Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG: *Beloved, God's Chosen* ELW 648

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.**

KYRIE ELEISON ELW page 184

CANTICLE OF PRAISE *Glory to God* ELW page 185

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.**

CHILDREN'S TIME Jess Christenson

On the way up the aisles, the children will be collecting "Noisy Change" for the "Holy Cow" fund, which will support ELCA World Hunger.

FIRST READING Genesis 50:15-21

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.

PSALM 103:1-13

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;**

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 children of Israel.

⁸ **LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**

⁹ you will not always accuse us, nor will you keep your anger 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 above 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 transgressions from us.**

¹³ As a father has compassion for his children, so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.

SECOND READING:

Romans 14:1-12

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

Alleluia

ELW page 188

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL

Matthew 18:21-35

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 Calvin Konop

HYMN OF THE DAY

I Come With Joy

ELW 482

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was

conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he

ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. 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. Bless our newly installed Bishop Taryn Montgomery of the NEMN Synod. May she lead with humility, wisdom & compassion. Strengthen the Synod staff in their work of supporting the ministry of the church. 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 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. We pray especially these we name before you now: *for Kent & Janet, Milly, Bonnie, Emily, Linda, Lynn, Luke, Sarah, and Katrina.* We pray now for those we name aloud, or in the silence of our hearts. *(A time of silence).* We lift to You all those dealing with issues of mental health or addiction. Hear us, O God, our healer and heart. **Your mercy is great.**

Ground this congregation in the welcome you show us in forgiving our sin. Teach us to forgive as you forgive. Inspire each of us to welcome others for your honor and glory. 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 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.**

SHARING THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING

Deborah Roach, French Horn & Karina Roth, Piano

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.**

PREFACE

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. You reveal your glory as the glory of the Almighty God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, one Lord, one God, ever to be adored in your eternal glory. 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

ELW page 190

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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! All are welcome!

*Bethlehem Lutheran Church believes in the real presence of Christ in Holy Communion, and we practice eucharistic hospitality. **All persons**, whether visiting or a member, are welcomed to Communion. (Offered in these sacraments are wine or apple juice; and regular or gluten-free wafers.)*

COMMUNION MUSIC

***Lamb of God
Taste and See***

**ELW page 191
ELW 493**

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in grace unto everlasting life. **Amen.**

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.**

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN *Praise, My Soul, the God of Heavens* ELW 864

DISMISSAL

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE



Deborah Roach, French Horn & Karina Roth, Piano

Thank you to Deb Roach who is in town for the week and plays French horn for the Duluth Symphony. **Welcome back Karina!** We are so blessed by your talents.

We pray for healing for these members & friends: Emily Ulhorn, Milly Gestel, Kent & Janet Peterson, Bonnie, Linda Zenk, Stacey Johnson, Lynn Schulte, Clayton & Nancy Koss, Lois Johnson, Butch & Rhonda Schulte, Luke Gulstrand, Sarah Coe, Char Anderson, Phyllis Olson, Paulina Backstrom, Shae Lindholm, Stacey Schulte, Hank Ferland, Margaret Dahl, Katrina Crouse, Karen Shannon, Tom Christiansen, and Loretta Bloomquist

This week we lift up these members: Bill Beckstrand; Char Anderson; Linda Zenk; Mark, Brooke, Rueben, Grete & Barrett Youngdahl; and Becca Jorgenson, Keaton Riley, MaKenzie, MaTaya, MaCoy, MaKai & MaKotah Fairbanks. May God walk with these friends in their journey of peace.



Upcoming Events:

Sept. 27: Confirmation meeting for all students (grades 6-9) with their parents.

October 4: Bethlehem's Homecoming Join us for a special service and kick off Fall programs.

Sunday School begins. Church picnic following worship including walking tacos, art projects, yard games and 2 bounce houses for kids. *We invite all of our friends and members who have called Bethlehem their home to come back and worship together. Spread the word.*

October 7: Wednesday Programs begin!
5:30pm Community Meal; 6:00pm Worship;
6:30pm Confirmation

October 9-10: Care Partners Fall Chore Days. Volunteer at 218-387-3788

October 25: Confirmation of 9th grade students

Oct. 31: Trunk or Treat 4-5:30pm at Community Center (Jess is organizing event—please contact her to help. Candy donations greatly appreciated.)



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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On-line giving is
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This Week at Bethlehem:

Sun Sept 13	8:40 AM Choir Practice
	10:00 AM Worship Service
	11:15 AM Potluck Lunch & GWOH Projects
Mon Sept 14	3:30 PM Girl Scouts
	6:30 PM Executive Committee
Tues Sept 15	8:30 AM Staff meeting
Wed Sept 16	12:30 PM Text Study
	6:30 PM Potluck with WPI International Journalists
Thur Sept 17	8:00 AM Men's Bible Study
	9:00 AM Quilting
Fri Sept 18	----- Clarity Hearing appts.
Sun Sept 20	8:40 AM Choir Practice
	10:00 AM Worship Service
	2:00 PM Worship Service at the Care Center

Council Members: Monthly reports are due to the office by Thursday Sept. 17.

Sunday Morning Volunteers We are always looking for more help with ushers, communion servers, greeters and lectors on Sunday mornings. If you would like to learn more about any of these volunteer positions, ask Pastor Calvin.

Volunteers needed for Care Partners Fall Chore Days, Oct. 9 & 10. To volunteer, contact: minda@carepartnersofcookcounty.org or phone [218-387-3788](tel:218-387-3788)

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Member Challenge—TODAY



God's work. Our hands.



September 13, 2026

Please join us for a quick potluck lunch following worship and spend a couple of hours doing projects around the church.

VARIOUS PROJECTS MAY INCLUDE CLEANING, ORGANIZING, WEEDING...

Is there something that you see needs to be taken care of? If so, it's your turn to Make it happen!

Wear your GWOH t-shirt or get a new one