

*I am there
among them*

MATTHEW 18:20

**September 10, 2023
God's Work, Our Hands
Bethany Lutheran Church (ELCA)**

**PRELUDE
RINGING OF BELL
WELCOME**

The people of God stand.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the † triune God, who loves us into being, calls us to community, and inspires us to love.

Amen.

Confronted by the law and called to life in the gospel, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of love and community,

we confess that we have not loved as you have loved us. We look to ourselves to fulfill your law. We seek to satisfy our own desires. We turn away from our neighbors and live for ourselves alone. Teach us again your statutes and help us to love your will, that in and through us your beloved community is made known.

Beloved of God, love is the fulfillment of the law, and in † Jesus, God's love for you is made known. Through Jesus your sins are forgiven, and you are drawn into God's love and life. Live fully, knowing that God loves you.

Amen.

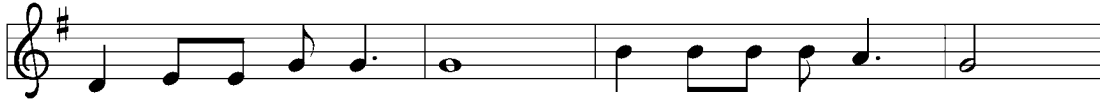
HYMN *This Little Light of Mine (ELW 677) See next page.*



1 This lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 2 Ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 3 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;



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let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
 let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
 let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Text: African American spiritual
 Music: THIS JOY, African American spiritual

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Holy One, you stretch wide your tent that all may be welcome in, and in Jesus you stretched out your hands in expansive love for a weary and wounded world. Help us to reach out with your own wounded hands of love, that through us your life may be known in the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

The people of God are seated.

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 33:7-11

God appointed Ezekiel as a sentinel for the house of Israel. Ezekiel must faithfully convey God's warnings to the people. Remarkably, God—who is about to attack Jerusalem—gives a warning with the hope that repentance will make the attack unnecessary.

A reading from Ezekiel.

⁷So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸If I say to the wicked, “O wicked ones, you shall surely die,” and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. ⁹But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

¹⁰Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: “Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?” ¹¹Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 119:33-40

³³Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes,
and I shall keep it to the end.

³⁴**Give me understanding, and I shall keep your teaching;
I shall keep it with all my heart.**

³⁵Lead me in the path of your commandments,
for that is my desire.

³⁶**Incline my heart to your decrees
and not to unjust gain.**

³⁷Turn my eyes from beholding falsehood;
give me life in your way.

³⁸**Fulfill your promise to your servant,
which is for those who fear you.**

³⁹Turn away the reproach that I dread,
because your judgments are good.

⁴⁰**Behold, I long for your commandments;
by your righteousness enliven me.**

SECOND READING: Romans 13:8-14

The obligation of Christians is to love one another and so fulfill the heart and goal of the law. Clothes make the person as we “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” and live today in light of the future God has in store for us.

A reading from Romans.

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The people of God stand.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *Halle, Halle, Hallelujah* (ELW 172)

Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 18:15-20

Jesus offers practical advice to his disciples on how individuals—and the church as a whole—should go about restoring relationships when one member has sinned against another.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I

tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The people of God are seated.

SERMON

The people of God stand.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Gathered into God’s embrace, let us lift our voices on behalf of a weary and wounded world.

God of love, send us out filled with your love and life. Be known in our daily living, that your love may be known through our proclamation. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

God of creation, remind us to be good stewards of your diverse and beautiful world. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

God of peace, fill the hearts of those who rule, govern and lead. Give them and us compassion to guide the peoples of this world in the ways of truth, justice, equity, and peace. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

God of healing, visit those who yearn for your wholeness, especially those whose names and needs we lift before you now. Encourage all those who bear another’s burdens. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

God of service, give us strength and humility. In our service to those near and far, whose needs are visible or invisible, may we find you in the faces of our neighbors. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

Everlasting God, support us in this life. As we remember those who have gone before as examples of faithful living and honor those whose faith was known only to you, inspire us to follow their example of baptismal life until we join with them in worship. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

Into your wounded hands of love, O God, we place all our prayers, trusting in your mercy through the Crucified and-Risen One Jesus.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people of God are seated.

OFFERING

We are grateful for your gifts, and they are needed to continue the work of the church. For those worshipping online please visit our website (www.wbbethany.org) and click on the blue "Give Now" button on the home page. Thank you!

The people of God stand and sing the hymn below as offerings are brought forward.

OFFERTORY HYMN *Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil (ELW 512)*



Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.



Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.



When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,



warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.



Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Text: Handt Hanson, b. 1950
Music: GOOD SOIL, Handt Hanson
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OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Holy God, giver of all good things, receive the gifts we bring, fruit of the earth and the work of human hands, that they may be used to your purposes for life and love in the world. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

CELEBRATION OF VOCATION AND BLESSING OF HANDS FOR MINISTRY

We are called to proclaim the good news:

God is at work!

This good news is not left in some history long ago or a place far away:

God is at work in the world still today!

In us and through us, God is glorified in our work.

When we offer a helping hand, God is praised.

When we share of our abundance, God is known in the world.

God is at work in us!

In our service today, and in our daily lives,

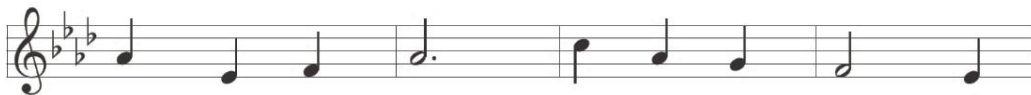
let us live out what God has called us to in baptism.

God is at work through our hands!

The people of God are seated.

Children and youth are invited forward.

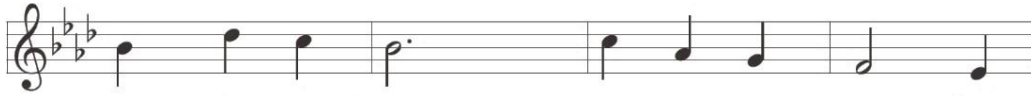
HYMN *God's Work, Our Hands* See next page.



1 God's work, our hands: work - ing to - geth - er,
 2 God's work, our feet: trav - 'ling to - geth - er,
 3 God's work, our voice: sing - ing to - geth - er,
 4 God is at work in and a - round us:



build - ing a fu - ture, re - pair - ing the world,
 fol - low - ing Je - sus to plac - es un - known,
 prais - ing, pro - claim - ing to all who will hear,
 seed - lings are sprout - ing and bread's on the rise!



rais - ing up homes, plant - ing new gar - dens,
 walk - ing as friends, march - ing for free - dom,
 pray - ing for peace, shout - ing for jus - tice,
 Washed and set free, hum - bled and hon - ored,



feed - ing the hun - gry and shelt - 'ring the cold.
 run - ning the race with God's fu - ture the goal.
 claim - ing God's love for the lost and the least.
 gift - ed by grace, we re - spond in God's love.



Bless, God, our hands as we work in your name,
 Bless, God, our feet as we fol - low your way,
 Bless, God, our voice as we speak in your name,
 Bless, God, our lives as we an - swer your call,



shar - ing the good news of your Gos - pel.

Text: Wayne L. Wold
 Music: EARTH AND ALL STARS, David N. Johnson
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BLESSING

God who sets forth the law of love,
 Jesus who fulfills the law for you,

and the Spirit through whom you are called to love, † bless you this day,
 that you may be God's hands and heart and voice at work in the world.

Amen.

SENDING

Go in peace. You are God's hands at work in the world!

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE



OUR WORSHIP ASSISTANTS		
Ministers of:	Today	September 17
Music	Jill Barnhart	Jill Barnhart
Proclamation (Lector)	Alan Beyer	Cheryl Boerjan
Minister of Technology	Dave Poppen	Paula Casper
Worship (Altar Care)	Dave & Kami Poppen	Dave & Kami Poppen
Ministers of Hospitality	Outdoor	Nancy Bruns

Ministry Opportunities This Week

Wednesday, September 13
 7:00 AM — Men’s Bible Study with Breakfast
 9:00 AM — Women’s Circle
Thursday, September 14
 6:00 AM — Women’s Bible Study
 1:00 PM — Quilting Group
Sunday, September 17
 9:30 AM — Worship
 10:30 AM — Fellowship

Thank you for worshipping with us today. Just as Jesus welcomed the stranger, we believe all are welcome here. Please join us again next week. For more information about our life together in Christ, visit: www.wbbethany.org




with Bethany Lutheran Church

Preschool - Grade 3

★ SUNDAY MORNINGS
8:30 - 9:15 AM

September 10	November 12
September 17	November 19
September 24	December 3
October 8	December 10
October 15	December 17
★ October 22	*Last class until Jan.
November 5	No class dates: 10/1, 10/29, 11/26




Attention Singers
 Choir will begin September 6th.

Bethany's choir could use more voices. If you like love to sing, please join us Wednesday evenings upstairs from 6:15 - 7:PM.

Let me know. Thanks!
Linda Black (319)430 0604

OUR
mission

To grow so deep in Christ through worship, education, and fellowship that we celebrate by reaching out to others.



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