



Whoever welcomes  
one such child  
in my name  
welcomes me

MARK 9:37

**September 22, 2024**

18th Sunday after Pentecost

Bethany Lutheran Church (ELCA)

**Introduction to the day**

Today we hear James warn against selfish ambition, while the disciples quarrel over which one of them is the greatest. Jesus tells them the way to be great is to serve. Then, to make it concrete, he puts in front of them a flesh-and-blood child. We are called to welcome the children God puts in front of us, to make room for them in daily interaction, and to give them a place of honor in the assembly.

This worship is being streamed live via Facebook and will be posted to our Website and X (formerly Twitter).  
The camera captures anyone in the first few pews of our worship space and beyond extending to the altar.

**PRELUDE**  
**LIGHTING OF CANDLES**  
**RINGING OF BELL**  
**WELCOME**

**GATHERING**

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

The assembly stands.

Please respond with the words printed in bold.

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS (ELW p. 94)**

In the name of the Father,  
and of the ✠ Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG *God Is Here!* (ELW 526)** See next page.



1 God is here! As we your peo - ple meet to of - fer  
 2 Here are sym - bols to re - mind us of our life - long  
 3 Here our chil - dren find a wel - come in the Shep - herd's  
 4 Lord of all, of church and king - dom, in an age of



praise and prayer, may we find in full - er mea - sure  
 need of grace; here are ta - ble, font, and pul - pit;  
 flock and fold; here as bread and wine are tak - en,  
 change and doubt, keep us faith - ful to the gos - pel;



what it is in Christ we share. Here, as in the  
 here the cross has cen - tral place. Here in hon - es -  
 Christ sus - tains us as of old. Here the ser - vants  
 help us work your pur - pose out. Here, in this day's



world a - round us, all our var - ied skills and arts  
 ty of preach - ing, here in si - lence, as in speech,  
 of the Ser - vant seek in wor - ship to ex - plore  
 ded - i - ca - tion, all we have to give, re - ceive;



wait the com - ing of the Spir - it in - to o - pen minds and hearts.  
 here, in new - ness and re - new - al, God the Spir - it comes to each.  
 what it means in dai - ly liv - ing to be - lieve and to a - dore.  
 we, who can - not live with - out you, we a - dore you! We be - lieve!

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000  
 Music: ABBOT'S LEIGH, Cyril V. Taylor, 1907–1991  
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**GREETING (ELW p. 184)**

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 (ELW p. 188)**

Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

O God, our teacher and guide, you draw us to yourself and welcome us as beloved children. Help us to lay aside all envy and selfish ambition, that we may walk in your ways of wisdom and understanding as servants of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

The assembly is seated.

## WORD

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

### FIRST READING: Jeremiah 11:18-20

*Today's reading tells of the suffering of the prophet Jeremiah, who announced God's word to Judah but was met with intense opposition and persecution. Jeremiah continues to trust in God in the midst of his suffering.*

A reading from Jeremiah.

<sup>18</sup>It was the LORD who made it known to me, and I knew; then you showed me their evil deeds.

<sup>19</sup>But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter.

And I did not know it was against me that they devised schemes, saying,

“Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,  
let us cut him off from the land of the living,  
so that his name will no longer be remembered!”

<sup>20</sup>But you, O LORD of hosts, who judge righteously,  
who try the heart and the mind,  
let me see your retribution upon them,  
for to you I have committed my cause.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM 54

<sup>1</sup>Save me, O God, by your name;  
in your might, defend my cause.

<sup>2</sup>**Hear my prayer, O God;  
give ear to the words of my mouth.**

<sup>3</sup>For strangers have risen up against me, and the ruthless have sought my life,  
those who have no regard for God.

<sup>4</sup>**Behold, God is my helper;  
it is the Lord who sustains my life.**

<sup>5</sup>Render evil to those who spy on me;  
in your faithfulness, destroy them.

<sup>6</sup>**I will offer you a freewill sacrifice  
and praise your name, O LORD, for it is good.**

<sup>7</sup>For you have rescued me from every trouble,  
and my eye looks down on my enemies.

### SECOND READING: James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a

*The wisdom God gives unites our hearts and minds. Instead of living to satisfy our own wants and desires, we manifest this wisdom in peace, gentleness, mercy, and impartiality toward others.*

A reading from James.

<sup>13</sup>Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. <sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. <sup>15</sup>Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. <sup>16</sup>For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. <sup>18</sup>And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.<sup>4:</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? <sup>2</sup>You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup>You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your

pleasures. <sup>7</sup>Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8a</sup>Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.

**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 - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

**GOSPEL: Mark 9:30-37 (NLT)**

*Jesus' teaching and action in this text are directed to the church whenever it is seduced by the world's definition of greatness: prestige, power, influence, and money. The antidote to such a concern for greatness is servanthood.*

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>30</sup> Leaving that region, they traveled through Galilee. Jesus didn't want anyone to know he was there, <sup>31</sup> for he wanted to spend more time with his disciples and teach them. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. He will be killed, but three days later he will rise from the dead." <sup>32</sup> They didn't understand what he was saying, however, and they were afraid to ask him what he meant.

<sup>33</sup> After they arrived at Capernaum and settled in a house, Jesus asked his disciples, "What were you discussing out on the road?" <sup>34</sup> But they didn't answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. <sup>35</sup> He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."

<sup>36</sup> Then he put a little child among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, <sup>37</sup> "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

The assembly is seated.

**SERMON**

The assembly stands.

## HYMN OF THE DAY *Children of the Heavenly Father* (ELW 781)



Tryg - ga - re kan ing - en va - ra än Guds lil - la bar - na - ska - ra,  
1 Chil - dren of the heav'n-ly Fa - ther safe - ly in his bo - som gath - er;  
2 God his own doth tend and nour-ish, in his ho - ly courts they flour - ish.  
3 Nei - ther life nor death shall ev - er from the Lord his chil - dren sev - er;  
4 Though he giv - eth or he tak - eth, God his chil - dren ne'er for - sak - eth;



stjär - nan ej på him - la - fäs - tet, få - geln ej i kän - da näs - tet.  
nest - ling bird nor star in heav - en such a ref - uge e'er was giv - en.  
From all e - vil things he spares them, in his might - y arms he bears them.  
un - to them his grace he show - eth, and their sor - rows all he know - eth.  
his the lov - ing pur - pose sole - ly to pre - serve them pure and ho - ly.

Text: Carolina Sandell Berg, 1832–1903; tr. Ernst W. Olson, 1870–1958  
Music: TRYGGARE KAN INGEN VARA, Swedish folk tune  
Text © 1925 Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, admin. Augsburg Fortress

## APOSTLES' CREED (ELW p. 189)

**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

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

*Each petition ends with, "Lord, in your mercy." Those worshipping respond with the hymn on the next page, "Hear Our Prayer" (ELW 178).*



Hear our prayer, hear our prayer, Lord, make us whole:



peace to all peo - ple, hope for each soul.



God of grace, in this place, hear now our prayer.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Amen.**

**PEACE (ELW p. 189)**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

The assembly is seated.

**OFFERING (ELW p. 190)**

*We are grateful for your gifts, and they are needed to continue the work of the church. For those worshipping online, options on ways to give are found on our website ([www.wbbethany.org](http://www.wbbethany.org)). Thank you! After the offering is gathered, the people of God stand and sing the hymn below as the gifts are brought forward.*

**OFFERTORY HYMN Lord, Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful (ELW 184)**



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that



we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of



all; u - nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble



with your pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

**OFFERING PRAYER (ELW p. 190)**

Let us pray.

**Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

### **DIALOGUE (ELW p. 190)**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

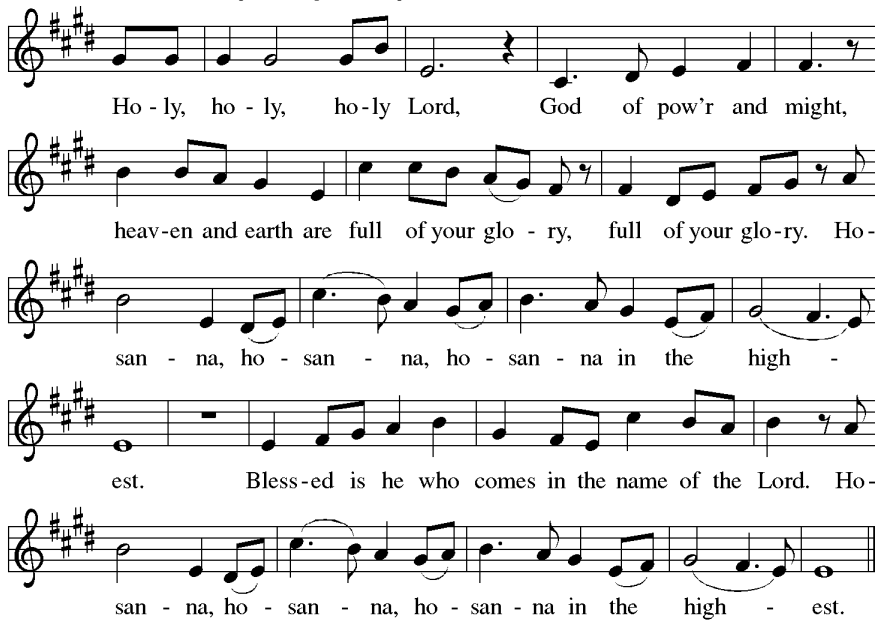
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### **PREFACE (ELW p. 190)**

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 (ELW p. 190)**



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry, full of your glo-ry. Ho -  
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high -  
est. 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.

### **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE (ELW p. 190)**

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.



## LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 191)

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 (ELW p. 191)

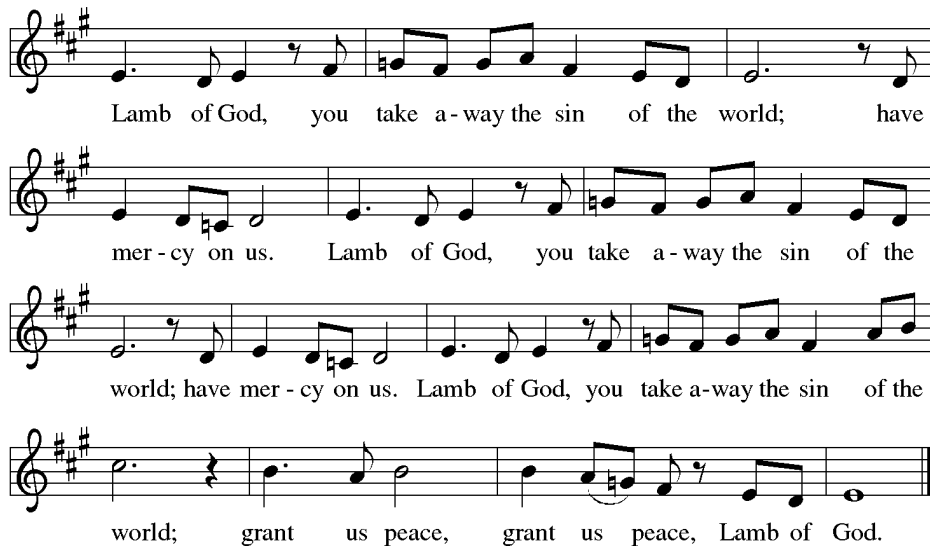
Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

The assembly is seated.

## COMMUNION

*Communion today will be distributed in a continuous line. The cups in the center of the tray contain white grape juice. All other cups are wine. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. All gathered who believe Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior are invited to come to Holy Communion with repentant hearts believing that Christ forgives our sins and guides our lives. Strengthened, forgiven, and nourished through this meal the Spirit sends us forth in service and to proclaim the good news of Christ's love. Children and adults who do not take communion may come forward for a blessing.*

## COMMUNION SONG (ELW p. 191)



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the  
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the  
world; grant us peace, grant us peace, Lamb of God.

**What Feast of Love (ELW 487)** See next page.



1 What feast of love is of - fered here, what ban-quet come from heav - en?  
 2 What light of truth is of - fered here, what cov - e - nant from heav - en?  
 3 What wine of love is of - fered here, what crim-son drink from heav - en?



What food of ev - er - last-ing life, what gra - cious gift is giv - en?  
 What hope of ev - er - last-ing life, what won-drous word is giv - en?  
 What stream of ev - er - last-ing life, what pre - cious blood is giv - en?



This, this is Christ the king, the bread come down from heav - en.  
 This, this is Christ the king, the sun come down from heav - en.  
 This, this is Christ the king, the sweet - est wine of heav - en.



Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet the man - na giv - en!  
 Oh, see and hear and sing! The Word of God is giv - en!  
 Oh, taste and see and sing! The Son of God is giv - en!

Text: Delores Dufner, oss, b. 1939  
 Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.  
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### In The Singing (ELW 466)



1 In the sing - ing, in the si - lence, in the hands ex - pect - ant, o - pen,  
 2 In the ques - tion, in the an - swer, in the mo - ment of ac - cept - ance,



in the bless - ing, in the break - ing, in your pres - ence at this ta - ble,  
 in the heart's cry, in the heal - ing, in the cir - cle of your peo - ple,



Je - sus Christ, Je - sus Christ, be the wine of grace;



Je - sus Christ, Je - sus Christ, be the bread of peace.

Text: Shirley Erena Murray, b. 1931  
 Music: BREAD OF PEACE, Carlton R. Young, b. 1926  
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The assembly stands.

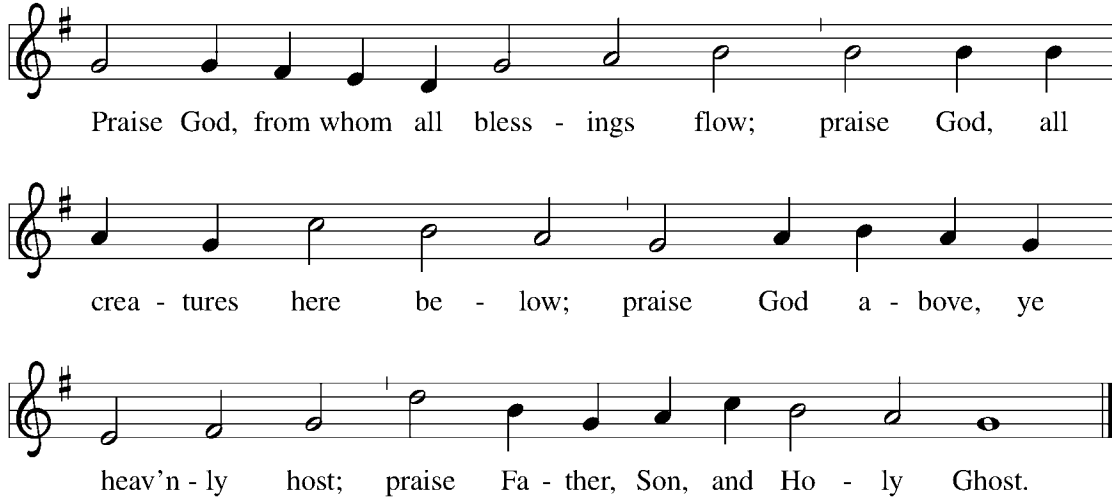
### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (ELW p. 191)

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* (ELW 885)**



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise God, all  
crea - tures here be - low; praise God a - bove, ye  
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

**BLESSING (ELW p. 192)**

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**DISMISSAL (ELW p. 192)**

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the Great Hall following worship.*

OUR WORSHIP ASSISTANTS		
Ministers of:	Today	September 29
Music	Jill Barnhart	Jill Barnhart
Proclamation (Lector)	Alan Beyer	Heidi Christensen
Hospitality (Greeter)	Kant & Beth Kaufman	Dave & Kami Poppen
Technology	Paula Casper	Jill Taylor
Worship (Altar Care)	Dave & Kami Poppen	Dave & Kami Poppen



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](http://www.wbbethany.org)

**ATTENTION PLEASE!**

## HIGH SCHOOL NIGHT

Sunday, September 29  
6-7:00 PM

Pizza, Faith, Fellowship, Fun

Bring a friend!  
All are welcome!

**RSVP Appreciated**



Parents, grandparents,  
mentors, children & youth



RSVP  
Appreciated

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9**

## FAITH FORWARD FAMILY OPEN HOUSE

6-7:30 PM  
FELLOWSHIP HALL

Walking tacos and Faith Forward family activity stations.

Please bring a pair of new, packaged socks for Socktober that will go to Shelter House.



<https://faithforwardnow.org/church/bethanywestbranch/>

## Five Faith Promises

### #1 Prayer

We promise to pray together every day.

### #2 Bible Reading

We promise to read the Bible together regularly.

### #3 Faith Conversations

We promise to talk together often about Jesus and our faith.

### #4 Acts of Service

We promise to perform acts of service together in our community, our congregation, and our homes.

### #5 Shared Mealtimes

We promise to share five or more meals together each week, and to engage in other rituals and traditions together.



<https://faithforwardnow.org/church/BethanyWestBranch/>



**Southeastern Iowa Synod**

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

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## Land Acknowledgement

Bethany Lutheran is located in the original and ancestral homelands of the Iowa, Sauk, Fox, Kickapoo and Oceti Sakowin peoples, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

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