



September 8, 2024

God's Work Our Hands

Bethany Lutheran Church (ELCA)

Introduction to the day

James tells us to stop showing favoritism in the assembly, treating the rich visitor with more honor than the poor one. Jesus himself seems to show partiality in his first response to the Syrophenician woman in today's gospel. Was he testing her faith in saying Gentiles don't deserve the goods meant for God's children? Or was he speaking out of his human worldview, but transcended those limits when she took him by surprise with her reply? Either way, the story tells us that God shows no partiality. Everyone who brings a need to Jesus is received with equal honor as a child and heir.

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

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.

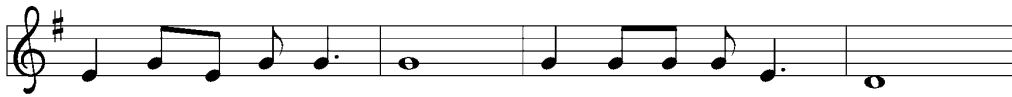
Beloved of God, love is the fulfillment of the law, and in † Jesus, God's love for you is made known. Through Jesus your sins are forgiven, and you are drawn into God's love and life. Live fully, knowing that God loves you.

Amen.

HYMN *This Little Light of Mine* (ELW 677)



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;



this lit - tle light of mine, 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 (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.

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 assembly is seated.

WORD

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

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:4-7a

These verses are a word of hope to the exiles in Babylon. Isaiah 34 portrays God's vengeance on Edom, Israel's age-old enemy, which makes the path from Babylon to Zion safe for the exiles' return. The desert itself will flow with water to give drink to the returning exiles.

A reading from Isaiah.

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

^{7a}the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 146

¹Hallelujah!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

²**I will praise the LORD as long as I live;**

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

³Put not your trust in rulers,
in mortals in whom there is no help.

⁴**When they breathe their last, they return to earth,
and in that day their thoughts perish.**

⁵Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the LORD their God;

⁶**who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps promises forever;**

⁷who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.
The LORD sets the captive free.

**⁸The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.**

⁹The LORD cares ^l for the stranger;
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow but frustrates the way of the wicked.

**¹⁰The LORD shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING: James 2:1-10 [11-13] 14-17

Faithful Christians do not show partiality to the rich and powerful of the world, especially at the expense of the poor and weak. Likewise, faith does not pay mere lip service to God's will. Instead, a living Christian faith expresses itself in acts of compassion and mercy for those in need.

A reading from James.

¹My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? ²For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, ³and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," ⁴have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? ⁶But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? ⁷Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

⁸You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ⁹But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? ¹⁷So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Celtic Alleluia (ELW 174)

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the Celtic Alleluia. Both staves are in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, consisting of a series of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics 'Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.' are written below the notes on both staves.

GOSPEL: Mark 7:24-37

In Mark's gospel, encounters with women usually signify turning points in Jesus' ministry. Here, a conversation with a Syrophenician woman marks the beginning of his mission to the Gentiles.

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁴[Jesus] set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, ²⁵but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. ²⁶Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁸But she answered him, "Sir,

even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." ²⁹Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." ³⁰So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

³¹Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. ³²They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. ³³He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. ³⁴Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." ³⁵And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

The assembly stands

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 (ELW p. 189)

The peace of Christ be with you always.

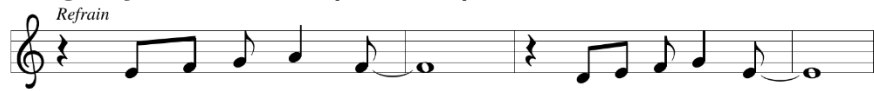
And also with you.

The assembly is seated.

OFFERING

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). Thank you! After the offering is gathered, the people of God stand and sing the hymn on the next page as the gifts are brought forward.

Change My Heart, O God (ELW 801)



Change my heart, O God; make it ev - er true.



Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.



You are the pot - ter; I am the clay.



Mold me and make me; this is what I pray.

OFFERING PRAYER (ELW p. 190)

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 (ELW p. 191)

**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!

HYMN *God's Work, Our Hands*



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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SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

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.

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

OUR WORSHIP ASSISTANTS		
Ministers of:	Today	September 15
Music	Jill Barnhart	Jill Barnhart
Proclamation (Lector)	Deb Anderson	Kami Poppen
Technology	Dale Swenson	Dave Poppen
Hospitality	Wayne Frauenholtz	Del & Sue Hughes
Worship (Altar Care)	Kami & Dave Poppen	Kami & Dave 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

Outdoor Worship and Fellowship

September 15
9:30 AM

Please bring a lawn chair.
Following worship, a meal will be provided.

Celebration of God's work!

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work.
Our hands.

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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