

Praise the Lord from the heavens
Praise the Lord from the earth!

PSALM 148:1,7

September 20, 2026

Creation in Christ Sunday

Bethany Lutheran Church (ELCA)

Introduction

Since the seventh century, September 1 has symbolized the day of the creation of the world in the Byzantine tradition and has been the opening feast of its liturgical year (known as the Feast of the Indiction), in a parallel with the feast of Rosh Hashanah marking the Jewish New Year. Creation in Christ celebrates the ongoing creation of the world in and through Christ, who sustains, unites, and holds all created things. We hear today of the triune God who creates all things: sun and moon, shining stars, sea monsters, creeping things and flying birds—and, yes, even human beings. God-in-Christ still takes care of all things and invites us to join in as caretakers of God's good creation.

This worship is being streamed live via Facebook and posted to our YouTube channel.

PRELUDE
RINGING OF BELL
WELCOME

GATHERING

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

The assembly stands and responds with the words printed in bold.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, our hope, our heart, our home.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God, the Alpha and the Omega,
the beginning and the end,

**we confess that we participate in systems
that perpetuate oppression and injustice.**

**We are often numb to the pain of the world around us,
resistant to change that costs us something,
and reluctant to love our neighbors as ourselves.**

**We sin against your good creation,
failing to be faithful stewards
of the land, the sea, and all their creatures.**

**Make your home among us once more, O God,
naming us beloved and opening our hearts
to do your will. Amen.**

All you saints and sinners, this good news is for you:

God knows you, forgives you by the self-giving of ✠ Jesus Christ,
and frees you to love the world as you have been loved.

Creation's story will not end
until mourning, crying, and pain are no more.

When everything else changes, God's love is steadfast and sure.

Nothing can ever separate you from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen

GATHERING HYMN *Morning Has Broken* (ELW 556) See next page.



1 Morn - ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing;
2 Sweet the rain's new fall, sun - lit from heav - en,
3 Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing,



black-bird has spo - ken like the first bird.
like the first dew - fall on the first grass.
born of the one light E - den saw play!



Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the morn - ing!
Praise for the sweet - ness of the wet gar - den,
Praise with e - la - tion, praise ev - 'ry morn - ing,



Praise for them, spring - ing fresh from the Word!
sprung in com - plete - ness where God's feet pass.
God's re - cre - a - tion of the new day!

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.

LITANY OF PRAISE FOR CREATION

Glory to you, O God:

you speak a word of power,

and so you create the world.

We praise you, O God:

We praise you, O God.

For the Spirit hovering to bring forth life,

for the earth ordered from chaos,

and for light and dark,

we bless you, O God:

We bless you, O God.

For the cosmos beyond our earth,

for the sky above our heads,

and for the cycle of evening and morning,

we exalt you, O God:

We exalt you, O God.

For the seas, the lakes, and the rivers,

for the land with its mountains and plains,

and for the trees, the plants, and their fruits,

we magnify you, O God:

We magnify you, O God.

For the sun to rule the day,
for the moon to brighten the night,
and for the shining stars,
we extol you, O God:

We extol you, O God.

For the fish in the sea,
for the birds of the air,
and for the monsters in the deep,
we glorify you, O God:

We glorify you, O God.

For wild animals and creatures of all kinds,
for cattle and all livestock,
and for everything that creeps on the earth,
we adore you, O God:

We adore you, O God.

For humankind made in your image,
for setting us on your good earth,
and for providing us food to eat,
we worship you, O God:

We worship you, O God.

Bless us, your creatures.
Accept our praise,
and make us worthy of your marvelous creation.
We praise you, O God:

We praise you, O God.

Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving
and honor and power and might
be to you, our God, forever and ever.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, in whom we live and move and have our being,
in Christ you created the worlds, and your Spirit breathes life into the universe.
We praise you for your wondrous creation.

Bless us and all your handiwork with your infinite light,
and direct our lives to the care of this good earth,
through 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: Genesis 1:1-2:4a

At the beginning of time, God the Creator, God the powerful Word, and God the life-giving Spirit form the earth and all its inhabitants. God sees that all this created work is good and then rests on the seventh day.

A reading from Genesis.

¹ When God began to create the heavens and the earth, ² the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶ And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷ So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸ God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” ²¹ So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. ²⁵ God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind and the cattle of every kind and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

²⁷ So God created humans in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” ²⁹ God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

^{2:1} Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their multitude. ² On the sixth day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

^{4a} These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 148

¹ Hallelujah! Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise God in the heights.

² **Praise the Lord, all you angels;
sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

³ Praise the Lord, sun and moon;
sing praise, all you shining stars.

⁴ **Praise the Lord, heaven of heavens,
and you waters above the heavens.**

⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
who commanded, and they were created,

⁶ **who made them stand fast forever and ever,
giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

⁷ Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps;

⁸ **fire and hail, snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

⁹ mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars;

¹⁰ **wild beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds;**

¹¹ sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the world;

¹² **young men and maidens,
old and young together.**

¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

¹⁴ **The Lord has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the Lord. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING: Acts 17:22a, 24-28

In Athens, Paul faces the challenge of proclaiming the gospel to Greeks who know nothing of either Jewish or Christian tradition. He proclaims that the “unknown god” whom they worship is the true Lord of heaven and earth who will judge the world with justice through Jesus, whom God has raised from the dead.

A read from Acts.

^{22a} Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, ²⁴ “The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶ From one ancestor he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷ so that they would search for God and perhaps fumble about for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we, too, are his offspring.’

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *Celtic Alleluia* (ELW 174)



GOSPEL READING: John 1:1-5

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

The holy gospel according to John .

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

The gospel of the Lord.

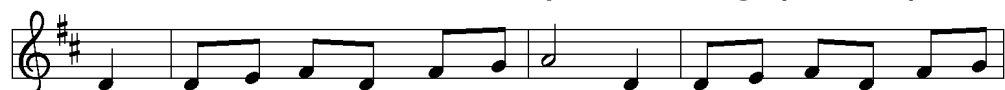
Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY *All Creatures, Worship God Most High* (ELW 835)



- 1 All crea-tures, wor-ship God most high! Sound ev-'ry voice in earth and
- 2 Sing, broth-er wind; with clouds and rain you grow the gifts of fruit and
- 3 Sing, broth-er fire, so mirth-ful, strong; drive far the shad-ows, join the
- 4 All who for love of God for-give, all who in pain or sor-row



sky: Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Sing, broth-er sun, in splen-dor
grain: Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Dear sis-ter wa-ter, use-ful,
throng: Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Dear moth-er earth, so rich in
grieve: Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Christ bears your bur-dens and your



bright; sing, sis-ter moon and stars of night:
clear, make mu-sic for your Lord to hear: Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-
care, praise God in col-ors bright and rare:
fears; still make your song a-mid the tears:



lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia!

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

We join with Christians far and near to worship God the Creator, praying for the earth and for all in need.

A brief silence.

O God of mystery, mercy, and might, for the church we pray:
that churches around the globe collaborate in care for the earth,
and that all the baptized nurture a zeal for the wellbeing of creation.

Hear us, O God, source of life:

Your mercy is great.

For the earth we pray:
that this bounteous creation receive continued divine blessing,
that the air be wholesome, that the waters be plentiful and clean,
that the land be treasured, and that animals be protected.
Grant that what on earth has been despoiled will be healed.

Hear us, O God, our creator:

Your mercy is great.

For the nations we pray:
that farmers, herders, foragers, fishers, and grocers provide the food humans need,
that legislators strive in all things for the common good,
and that science and technology lead us toward more responsible ways to live.

Hear us, O God, our stronghold:

Your mercy is great.

For our country we pray:
that national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges be safeguarded,
that all natural resources benefit the whole population,
and that our children learn respect for nature.

Hear us, O God, our guardian:

Your mercy is great.

For those in need we pray:
that humankind be sheltered from pandemic and from extreme weather,
and that all who are sick or suffering receive medical attention and communal support.
Give heed to those whose names we call out to you.

Hear us, O God, our healer:

Your mercy is great.

We praise you for all believers who have lived and died in communion with the earth.
Grant that in your good time we join with all your creatures in your presence forever.

Hear us, O God, the beginning and the end:

Your mercy is great.

Into your hands, O God, our maker and keeper, we commend ourselves and your whole creation,
trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

PEACE

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 below, as the gifts are brought forward.

OFFERTORY HYMN *Lord, I Lift Your Name on High* (ELW 857)



Lord, I lift your name on high; Lord, I love to sing your prais-es.
I'm so glad you're in my life, I'm so glad you came to save us.
You came from heav-en to earth to show the way, from the earth
to the cross, my debt to pay, from the cross to the grave,
from the grave to the sky; Lord, I lift your name on high.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

**O God, maker of heaven and earth,
your steadfast love embraces all creation.
You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth
and bring forth its bounty.
Through these gifts of bread and wine,
draw us into the death and life of your Son,
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.
We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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.**

BLESSING

Creator God bless you and keep you.
Creating Christ shine through you with grace and mercy.
Creative Spirit nourish you and give you peace.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN *For the Beauty of the Earth* (ELW 879)



1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the beau - ty of the skies,
2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,
3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,
4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
5 For each per - fect gift of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n;



for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:
hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:
for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:
friends on earth and friends a - bove; for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:
for thy - self, best gift di - vine, to our world so free - ly giv'n:



Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sac - ri - fice of praise.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Flourish with creation.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE



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

OUR MINISTRY ASSISTANTS		
Ministers of:	Today	Sep 27th
Music	Jill Barnhart	Jill Barnhart
Proclamation (Lector)	Al Beyer	Del Hughes
Hospitality (Greeter)	Jon & Laura Twing	Wayne Frauenholtz
Technology	Kent Kaufman	Dave Poppen
Worship (Altar Care)	Kent & Beth Kaufman	Kent & Beth Kaufman
Food & Fellowship	Potluck	Opportunity to assist!

Land Acknowledgement

Bethany Lutheran is located on 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 our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.



Faith Forward Text Ministry

Twice each month, beginning soon, you will receive a short text with a simple practice you can share together as a family, with grandchildren, or individually.

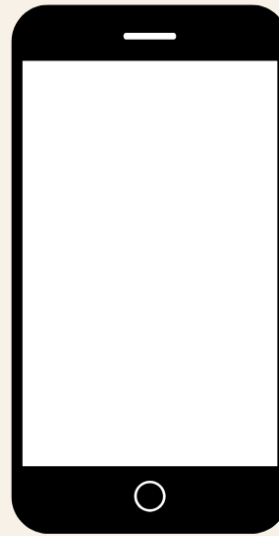
Short. Simple. Just small moments that help faith grow in Christ.

Sign up today! Use the QR Code.

Or use this link: <https://tinyurl.com/rs8r7kv>



You are loved!



ff faith forward
families passing faith on

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Lutheran
Disaster Response

Today, we will take a special offering to be directed toward our ministry partner, Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR), and their relief efforts following recent devastating flooding in Nepal. You may make a check payable to Bethany Lutheran. Please make a note it is for LDR. Or, if you prefer, you may donate directly to LDR via this link (or the QR code):

<https://give.elca.org/page/88370/donate/1>



Scan Here

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE NEPAL FLOODING

SUMMER 2026

ELCA.org/disaster

Communities in Nepal are facing catastrophic loss after deadly, devastating floodwaters swept through the Himalayas. Many have died, homes have been destroyed, and entire communities are struggling to access basic necessities.

Lutheran Disaster Response has long-standing relationships with trusted partners throughout Nepal. With your help, we stand ready to support emergency relief and long-term recovery through these established partners who know their communities best.

Your gifts enable this church to provide fast and effective support to communities in need and to remain for as long as recovery takes.

Gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response equip us to respond to this and other disasters, whenever and wherever they strike.

Will you give today to provide critical aid in these early days and, crucially, in the months and years to come?

.....

Yes, I want to help!

☐ Lutheran Disaster Response \$_____DDG0060

☐ Lutheran Disaster Response: International \$_____IDG0016

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP code _____

Email address _____

Give through your congregation or make your check out to the ELCA, write "Lutheran Disaster Response" on your check's memo line and send to:

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA Gifts Processing Center,
P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009**



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