

BETHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

You have a place here!

*"Joyfully we profess our faith through God's unconditional love.
Here and now God dwells in all of our lives,
bears our sins on the cross, and forgives us all."*

17TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

9:00 am Sunday, September 20, 2026

Pastor David Johnson

TODAYS REFLECTION

Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables in which Jesus says that the reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. When God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.



All baptized and confessing believers are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

*We hope that your worship experience is spiritually fulfilling
and your day begins with our Lord's gifts of peace and joy*

▼ **Prelude Reflections for Meditation**

▼ **Welcome Greeting—Prayers and Praises**

▲ **Opening Hymn**

“I Will Call Upon the Lord” page 9

▲ **Confession & Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
who pours love into our hearts
and healing upon the earth.

Amen.

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith,
let us confess our sin.

Silence for Reflection

Compassionate God,
**we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world
and in our own hearts.**

**Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness
strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice.**

Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others.

Turn our hearts back to you.

Restore our world and reconcile us to one another.

**Renew us to live as your holy people,
following the way of Jesus Christ.**

Amen.

Hear this good news:

We have peace with God through ✠ Jesus Christ,
in whom there is no condemnation,
but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.
Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

Amen.

▲ *Prayer of the Day*

Almighty and eternal God, **you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen**

THE WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song

▼ *God's Word from the Scriptures (NRSVUE)*

The First Reading is from Jonah 3:10-4:11

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it.

But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." And the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

The Lord God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

▼ *God's Word from the Psalms (NRSVUE)*

Psalms 145:1-8

I will extol you, my God and King, **and bless your name forever and ever.**

Every day I will bless you **and praise your name forever and ever.**

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; **his greatness is unsearchable.**

One generation shall extol your works to another **and shall declare your mighty acts.**

They will recount the glorious ^[a] splendor of your majesty, **and on your wondrous works I will meditate.**

They will proclaim the might of your awesome deeds, **and I will declare your greatness.**

They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness **and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.**

The Lord is gracious and merciful, **slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

▼ **God's Word from the Scriptures (NRSVUE)**

The Second Reading is from Philippians 1:21-30

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

▼ **Children's Sermon**

▲ **God's Word from the Gospel (NRSVUE)**

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 20:1-16

Glory to you, O Lord.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they

thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

▼ **Sermon—God’s Word Applied to Life**

▼ **Hymn of the Day**

“Just As I Am” page 10

▲ **The Apostles’ Creed**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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 the Church**

Reminded of God’s gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence

Hold your church accountable for our unwillingness to share your good news and our anger at your generosity to others. Nourish us by your grace to be witnesses to your love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Guide scientists and researchers studying responses to the climate crisis so that all your creation may inspire us to give thanks for your great goodness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Show employers the benefits of equal pay standards for all their employees. Reconcile conflicts between employees. Fill places of employment with camaraderie, and bring an end to employment disparity. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Encourage any who cannot work or who cannot work a full day with the truth that their value comes from your everlasting love for them. Provide for those who are injured, ill, and for all in any need (*especially those we name before you now*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Strengthen all those in this congregation whose labor serves the needs of others in the community. Inspire all in this congregation to support community endeavors with our time and talents. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Comfort us with the promise of the resurrection as we remember all our loved ones whose desire to be with Jesus is fulfilled. 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 of the Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Greet each other with a sign of Christ's peace.

THE MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

▼ **Offering and Presentation of the Gifts**

Mission Designation July-September—**Feed America-Good Samaritan**

▼ **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.

▼ **The Great Thanksgiving and Words of Institution**

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, 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.

▼ **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 and Distribution of Communion**

Christ invites you to this table.
All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

Let Us Break Bread Together



1 Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees;
2 Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees;
3 Let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees;



let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees.
let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees.
let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees.



When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris - ing



sun, O Lord, have mer - cy on me.

Text: African American spiritual

Music: BREAK BREAD TOGETHER, African American spiritual

▼ **Post Communion Blessing**

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you
and keep you in His grace until He comes again. In the name of the Father,
and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

▼ **Post Communion Prayer**

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.

THE SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

▼ **Closing Hymn**

“Standing on the Promises” page 11

▼ **Announcements**

Anyone is welcome to make announcements at this time

▲ **Blessing and Dismissal**

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.
In the name of the Father and the † Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

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

I Will Call Upon the Lord 2x



I will call up-on the Lord who is wor-thy to be
praised. So shall I be saved from my en - e - mies.
I will call up - on the Lord. The
Lord liv-eth, and bless-ed be the Rock, and let the God of my sal -
va - tion be ex - alt - ed. The Lord liv - eth, and bless - ed be the Rock,
and let the God of my sal - va - tion be ex - alt - ed.

Text: Michael O'Shields

Music: O'SHIELDS, Michael O'Shields

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Just As I Am, without One Plea



- 1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me,
- 2 Just as I am, and wait - ing not to rid my soul of one dark blot,
- 3 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y_a con - flict, man - y_a doubt,
- 4 Just as I am, poor, wretch - ed, blind; sight, rich - es, heal - ing of the mind,



and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
 to thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
 fight-ings and fears with - in, with - out, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 yea, all I need in thee to find,

- 5 Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
 wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
 because thy promise I believe,
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 6 Just as I am; thy love unknown
 has broken ev'ry barrier down;
 now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789–1871

Music: WOODWORTH, William B. Bradbury, 1816–1868

Standing On The Promises

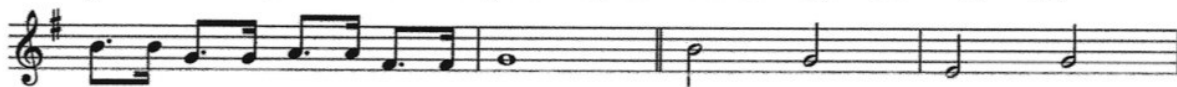
Words and Music by
Russell Kelso Carter



- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Stand-ing on | the prom-is-es | of Christ, my King! | Through e-ter-nal a-ges let His |
| 2. Stand-ing on | the prom-is-es | that can-not fail, | when the howl-ing storms of doubt and |
| 3. Stand-ing on | the prom-is-es, | I now can see | per-fect, pres-ent cleans-ing in the |
| 4. Stand-ing on | the prom-is-es | of Christ, the Lord, | bound to Him e-ter-nal-ly by |
| 5. Stand-ing on | the prom-is-es, | I can-not fall, | lis-t'ning ev-'ry mo-ment to the |



prais-es ring;	"Glo-ry in the high-est!" I will shout and sing,
fear as-sail,	by the liv-ing Word of God I shall pre-vail,
blood for me;	Stand-ing in the lib-er-ty where Christ makes free,
love's strong cord;	O-ver-com-ing dai-ly with the Spir-it's Sword,
Spir-it's call,	rest-ing in my Sav-ior as my All in All,



stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God.	Stand-ing,	stand-ing,
stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God.		
stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God.		
stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God.		
stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God.		



stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God, my Sav-ior; Stand-ing,



stand-ing, I'm stand-ing on the prom-is-es of God.

CCLI Song # 31803

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are available following these easy steps from our secure Website or Facebook Page

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MORE SPECIAL WAYS TO GIVE THROUGH YOUR TIME AND TALENTS

Sunday Worship Lectors and Communion Assistants are needed

Maintenance chores around the facility

Christian Education Volunteers

BETHANY WEEKLY EVENTS CALENDAR

Sunday	9:00 am Worship, in the Great Room and Facebook Live-Stream/Video
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Tuesday	9:00 am Community Coffee in Great Room
	9:00 am Cover Girls in Classroom

Wednesday	10:30 am Women's Bible Study via ZOOM
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Thursday	7:00 am Men's Breakfast and Bible Study in Great Room
	11:00 am Women's Bible Study in Conference Room
	6:30 Pub Theology

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