

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."*

14TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 9:00 am Sunday, September 14, 2025

Pastor David Johnson



TODAY'S REFLECTION

The grumbling of the religious leaders in today's gospel is actually our holy hope: This Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them. That our God seeks and saves the lost is not only a holy hope, it is our only hope. As the writer of 1 Timothy reminds us, "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Thanks be to God.

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

THE GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

*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**

"Beautiful Savior", page 9

▲ **Confession & Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
our maker, our helper, and our keeper.

Amen.

Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin
in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence for Reflection

Merciful and loving God,
we are your stiff-necked people.

We trample on the needy.

We grumble about your grace to others.

We turn away from the poor.

Have mercy on us and forgive our sins.

**Rejoice over us as ones who were lost
and have been found.**

Amen.

Even when we are faithless, God remains faithful.
Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

You who were lost have been found.

In the name of † Jesus, your sins are forgiven!

Amen.

▲ **Prayer of the Day**

O God,

overflowing with mercy and compassion, you lead back to yourself all those who go astray. Preserve your people in your loving care, that we may reject whatever is contrary to you and may follow all things that sustain our life in 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 (NRSV)**

The First Reading is from Exodus 32:7-14

The Lord said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' " The Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. Now let me alone so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, and of you I will make a great nation." But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.' " And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

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

Psalms 51:1-10

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

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

The Second Reading is from 1 Timothy 1:12-17

I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he considered me faithful and appointed me to his service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience as an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

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

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

The Holy Gospel according to Luke 15:1-10

Glory to you, O Lord.

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” So he told them this parable: “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. “Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

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

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

▼ **Hymn of the Day**

“Amazing Grace”, 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

Let us pray in the name of Jesus to our heavenly Father for the Church, the world, and one another.

A brief silence

Holy God, thank you for Jesus! Thank you for making him our good Shepherd. Thank you for loving us so much that you give us forgiveness, life, fellowship with you, and love beyond all telling. Thank you most of all for giving us your Son, crucified, raised, and ascended to your right hand for our salvation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, give your Church the grace and desire to faithfully follow Jesus. Give it leaders who rightly proclaim your Word and lift high the Cross of Christ. Give it your Holy Spirit, so it is a place of welcome, forgiveness, and transformation for every sinner who enters it. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give your grace to this congregation. Forgive us when, like unruly sheep, we head-butt and distress your flock. Help us to repent of thoughtless words, self-centered actions, and anything else that hinders one of your dear children from loving and trusting you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give us strength to carry our crosses and follow Jesus wherever he leads us. Give us courage, to bear his love in the dark and ugly places of our world. Give us hope, so we believe that his Light will shine in every darkness, and no darkness can comprehend or overcome it. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Our nation continues to struggle with enemies within and beyond its borders, and with political and ideological divides that threaten to bring out the worst rather than the best in us. Shepherd us through these troubled times. Bring healing to our hearts, homes, and communities. Anoint our eyes to see one another as fellow citizens and as beloved children of the same heavenly Father. And bring a measure of your peace to this weary world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Be merciful to all who are hurting, weak, abused, hungry, or grieving; or who in any way need the abundance of your grace. *Especially we lift before you those we name before you now (either in silence or out loud).* Be their Good Shepherd, and bring them healing and hope. Help us all to be gentle, gracious, compassionate and kind to them, so that together, we may praise your goodness. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Dear heavenly Father, we entrust into your care all our beloved dead. Comfort all who mourn, and fill us with your Holy Spirit's wisdom and grace. Teach us to love each other tenderly and care for one another diligently, and keep us ever in Christ's care. Of your goodness, grant that he should heal us from every sin and infirmity. Keep our eyes fixed on the Cross of our Savior as he leads us into your Kingdom. With one voice, as one flock may we may praise, adore, and glorify our Good Shepherd forever. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the power of the Holy Spirit, we entrust our prayers and petitions into your hands, gracious Father, for the sake of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **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**

July—September Mission Designation ~~ Good Samaritan Fund/Feeding America

▼ **Offering Prayer**

Lord of the harvest,

we return to you a portion of what you have given to us.

**Turn us to set our hope not on the uncertainty of riches,
but on you, who richly provides for us.**

**Multiply what we have gathered to bless all who are suffering and in need,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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**

Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them.
Come to this meal of mercy.

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: BREAL 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**

Mothering God,
**you gathered us to your table
and we drank deeply of your grace.
Send us out by your Spirit
to love our neighbors as ourselves
and proclaim your love in Jesus' name.
Amen.**

THE SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

▼ **Closing Hymn**

"What A Fellowship, What A Joy Divine", 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 in peace. Do not lose heart.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Beautiful Savior



1 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of cre - a - tion,
 2 Fair are the mead - ows, fair are the wood - lands,
 3 Fair is the sun - shine, fair is the moon - light,
 4 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, Lord of the na - tions,



Son of God and Son of Man!
 robed in flow'rs of bloom - ing spring;
 bright the spar - kling stars on high;
 Son of God and Son of Man!



Tru - ly I'd love thee, tru - ly I'd serve thee,
 Je - sus is fair - er, Je - sus is pur - er,
 Je - sus shines bright - er, Je - sus shines pur - er
 Glo - ry and hon - or, praise, ad - o - ra - tion,

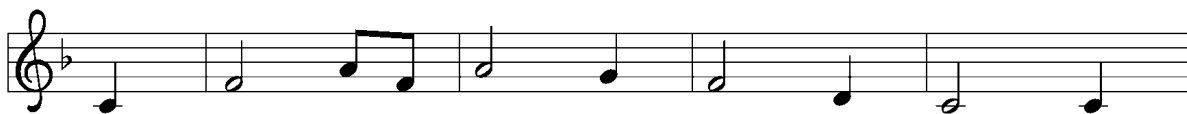


light of my soul, my joy, my crown.
 he makes our sor - rowing spir - it sing.
 than all the an - gels in the sky.
 now and for - ev - er - more be thine!

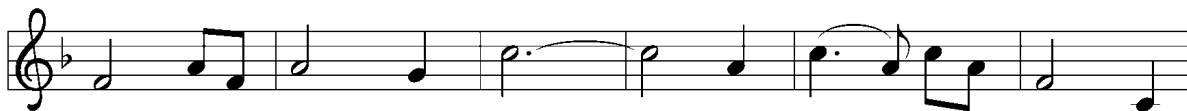
Text: *Gesangbuch*, Münster, 1677; tr. Joseph A. Seiss, 1823–1904

Music: SCHÖNSTER HERR JESU, Silesian folk tune, 19th cent.

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound



1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
 have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to



now am found; was blind, but now I see.
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt., sts. 1–4; anonymous, st. 5

Music: NEW BRITAIN, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms



- 1 What a fel - low-ship, what a joy di - vine, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms;
- 2 Oh, how sweet to walk in this pil-grim way, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms;
- 3 What have I to dread, what have I to fear, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms?



what a bless-ed-ness, what a peace is mine, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms,
 oh, how bright the path grows from day to day, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms,
 I have bless-ed peace with my Lord so near, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms.

Refrain



Lean - ing, lean - ing, safe and se-cure from all a - larms;



lean - ing, lean - ing, lean-ing on the ev - er - last-ing arms.

Text: Blisha A. Hoffman, 1839-1919
 Music: Anthony J. Showalter, 1858-1924

SHOWALTER
 10 9 10 9 and refrain

Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church

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ONLINE BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH OFFERING DONATIONS

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

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[facebook.com/BethanyLutheranChurchElca](https://www.facebook.com/BethanyLutheranChurchElca): Click the "Shop Now" button on the upper right corner to directly access Bethany's secure PayPal Account.

MORE SPECIAL WAYS TO GIVE THROUGH YOUR TIME AND TALENTS

Sunday Worship Lectors and Communion Assistants are needed

Service Assistant to advance projected bulletin slides

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

Tuesday 9:00 am Community Coffee in Great Room
 9:00 am Cover Girls in Classroom

Wednesday 10:00 am Women's Bible Study via ZOOM

Thursday 7:00 am Men's Breakfast and Bible Study in Great Room
 10:00 am Bible Study in Conference Room

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