

**Because  
I live,  
you also  
will live**

JOHN 14:19



*Sunday, May 10, 2026  
Sixth Sunday of Easter*



**BETHLEHEM**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ [www.blcfairport.org](http://www.blcfairport.org)

## **PRELUDE**

For the Beauty of the Earth

John Rutter

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Jesus does not abandon his followers. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus comes to abide with his disciples of every generation. As Pentecost draws near, we are reminded that the risen Christ dwells in us as the Spirit of truth. We receive this Spirit in baptism and pray that in our gathering around the Lord's table the Spirit will transform us to be the body of the risen Christ in the world.*

## **GATHERING**

### **THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. By our baptism into Jesus' death and resurrection you set us free from the power of sin and death and raise us up to live in you.

**We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life. Stir up in us and in all your people the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence both now and forever. Amen.**



- 1 Shout for joy loud and long, God be praised with a song! To the Lord  
 2 By God's word all was made, heav'n and earth, light and shade, na-ture's won -  
 3 Yet our pride makes us fall; so Christ came for us all— not the righ -  
 4 Now has Christ tru - ly ris'n, and his Spir - it is giv'n to all those



we be - long: chil-dren of our mak - er, God the great life giv - er.  
 ders dis-played, we to rule cre - a - tion from its first foun - da - tion.  
 teous to call— by his cross and pas - sion, bring - ing us sal - va - tion.  
 un - der heav'n who now walk be - side him, though they once de - nied him.

*Refrain*



Shout for joy, joy, joy! Shout for joy, joy, joy!



God is love, God is light, God is ev - er - last - ing!

## 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.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **SPECIAL MUSIC**

Every Time I Feel the Spirit

Benjamin A. Tucker  
tune, African-American spiritual

The Chancel Bells

## **HEARING GOD’S WORD**

### **DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS AND JOY!**

*All kids ages 3 through elementary are welcome to a special time of hearing the Word, conversation and activity! Parents can remain in the sanctuary while the kids gather in designated spaces. **Worship for Kids** (Ages 3 – Grade 2) meets across the hall from the sanctuary and **JOY!** (Grades 3 – 5) meets downstairs. Kids will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion.*

### **READING: ACTS 17:22-31**

*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.*

<sup>22</sup> Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely spiritual you are in every way. <sup>23</sup> For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup> 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, <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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, <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> 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.’

<sup>29</sup> “Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. <sup>30</sup> While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because he has fixed a day on which he will have the

world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



*Njo - o kwe - tu, Ro - ho mwe - ma, M - fa - ri - ji we - tu.*

1 *Gra - cious Spir - it, heed our plead - ing, fash - ion us all a - new.*



*Tu - fu - ndi - she ya mbi - ngu - ni, tu - we wa - tu wa - pya.*

*It's your lead - ing that we're need - ing, help us to fol - low you.*

*Refrain*



*Njo - o, njo - o, njo - o, Ro - ho mwe - ma.*

*Come, come, come, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.*



*Njo - o, njo - o, njo - o, Ro - ho mwe - ma.*

*Come, come, come, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.*

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

### GOSPEL: John 14:15-21

*In final words to his disciples on the night of his arrest, Jesus encourages obedience to his commandments and speaks of the Spirit, who will be with them forever.*

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>15</sup> “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup> This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

<sup>18</sup> “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup> In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will

live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

Loving Spirit

ELW 397

## APOSTLES' CREED

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**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.**

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.*

Trusting in the power of Christ's resurrection to heal and redeem our broken world, let us pray for the needs of all creation.

*A brief silence.*

#1 God of new life, you call us through the waters of baptism to be in relationship with you and one another. We need to be loved as well as to share love. We thank you for our mothers and people who mother and support us in so many ways. May we share love with those who may be new mothers and those who miss their mothers. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

#2 You create this beautiful world and all that is in it. Shelter budding plants and young animals, provide unpolluted habitats and clean water for all. Help us to be and to raise up stewards for the environment. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

#3 You set civil servants in the places where we live. Instill truth and equity among judges and lawyers, gentleness and courage among first responders, and peace among leaders of towns and nations. We especially pray for our school districts as they hold elections this month. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

We pray for mental health professionals and all those who provide care, support and encouragement to people living with mental illness; and for our siblings in faith in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. May our partnerships remind us of your abundance. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

We know that all people matter in your eyes and you know their cares and concerns, their hopes and joys. We pray for those whose needs are known to us.

*We pray for those in need of healing, especially:*

- Brian K who will undergo hip replacement surgery on 5/14

Hear the names of those we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

*Silence for individual prayer.*

Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

God of resurrection power, use us and these prayers to proclaim the good news of new life to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

**Amen.**

## SHARING GOD'S MEAL

### THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor. If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.*

### OFFERING

*Thank you for your offerings that support the ongoing ministry that we share. Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting [blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry](http://blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry) or scan the QR (quick response) code on the right and you'll be brought to BLC's mobile giving page.*



### OFFERING OF MUSIC

Send Forth a Dove

text, Genesis 6:8, adapt.  
music, Joseph M. Martin

The Chancel Choir

### OFFERTORY



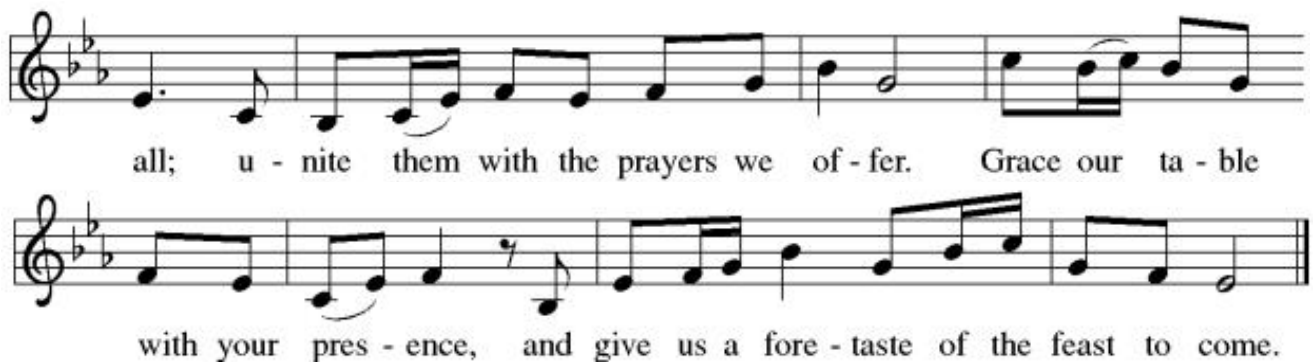
Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles-sing. 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



### OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Generous God,

**in this meal you offer your very self. We give thanks for these gifts of the earth. In the breaking of this bread reveal to us the Risen One. In the pouring of this wine pour us out in service to the world; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### GREAT THANKSGIVING

We thank you, God, for in the beginning you brought light out of darkness.

**From the dust of the earth you made us, lifted us, and breathed life into us.**

You make us your people, and promise to be our God.

**You walk with us through the valley of the shadow of death.**

You condemn the forces of injustice and oppression, and set free the imprisoned.

**You set us free from what binds us and go with us toward your new world.**

You raise up what is dead and lift up those who are without hope.

**Light out of darkness! Hope from despair! Life out of death!**

**This is your way. We give thanks, and with all Creation we praise you.**

### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and cup, that they may be for us the body and blood of Christ.

**Pour out your Holy Spirit on us, that we may be the Body of Christ, who have died and have been raised to new life, to serve you in love without fear, in the power of your Holy Spirit and the strength of eternal life. Amen**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

United in baptism, we pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who  
sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the table of new life. Receive the risen Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

## DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

*Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant.*

## THE COMMUNION



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

**HYMN FOR COMMUNION**

Come, Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove

ELW 404

Stanzas — 1: Choir

2, 3, 4 : All

**HYMN FOR COMMUNION**

Thy Holy Wings

ELW 613

**TABLE BLESSING**

**POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE**

Thank-ful hearts and voic-es raise; tell ev-'ry-one what God has done. Let  
 ev - 'ry-one who seeks the Lord re - joice and bear the name of Christ.  
 Send us with your prom - is - es and lead your peo - ple forth in joy with  
 shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le-lu - ia, al - le-lu - ia.

**LEAVING TO SERVE**

**BENEDICTION**

May the triune God, who has put a new song in your mouth and tuned your heart for praise † bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**DISMISSAL**

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

**Christ is Risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Go in peace. Serve the Risen One.

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

Come Away to the Skies

(MIDDLEBURY)

Wilbur Held  
tune, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

## **BLC Pastors**

The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

## **BLC Musicians**

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Chrisanne Gates, Chancel Choir Director

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

### **Additional musical leadership provided by:**

Dave Wideman, percussion

**Special Thanks** to Jane Morale for assisting us with today's worship as the director of the Chancel Choir.

**Thank you** to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Talk with one of the pastors following worship or send an email to [volunteersupport@blcfairport.org](mailto:volunteersupport@blcfairport.org) and we'll follow up!

**Communicate with us:** Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

**What's happening at BLC this week?** Visit the Calendar of Events at [www.blcfairport.org](http://www.blcfairport.org). Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at [office@blcfairport.org](mailto:office@blcfairport.org) or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

**Church office hours:** Sandy Squires holds office hours on Wednesdays from 9-1 and is responsive to phone and email Monday through Friday during usual business hours. Please communicate your needs through the church office by phone (585) 223-0634 or by email [office@blcfairport.org](mailto:office@blcfairport.org). Our co-Pastors are available Sunday – Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling the church office or emailing [pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org) or [pastor.amy@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.amy@blcfairport.org)



# BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

**B**ETHLEHEM  
*Building*  
**L**UTHERAN  
*Lasting*  
**C**HURCH  
*Community*



*that follows Jesus*

## *Special Congregational Meeting*

**Sunday, May 17th 10:15 am**

*The purpose of the meeting will be to  
vote on a proposal to update the  
narthex and sanctuary space.*

# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS)

**PRE-REGISTER NOW!**

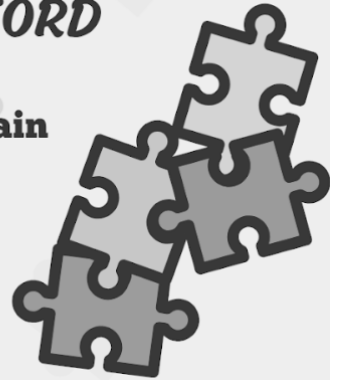
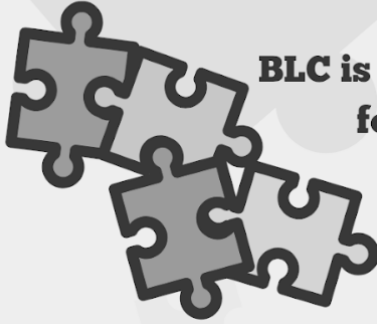
**JULY 20-23, 2026**



**AT ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN IN PITTSFORD**

**BLC is partnering with St. Paul's, Pittsford again  
for this FREE summer's VBS program!**

**Ages Pre-K-5<sup>th</sup> Grade**



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Portions of the Communion liturgy written by Steve Garnaas-Holmes, [www.unfoldinglight.net](http://www.unfoldinglight.net), used by permission

Holy Communion - Setting Four, Music: Ronald A. Nelson, © 1978, 2006 Ronald A. Nelson

Gospel Acclamation: Text: Wilson Niwagila; tr. Howard S. Olson, Music: Wilson Niwagila, Arranger: Egil Hovland

"Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful", Lutheran Book of Worship, Text and music © 1978 Augsburg Fortress

"Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise", Music: Ronald A. Nelson, Text and music © 1978, 1995 Augsburg Music

"For the Beauty of the Earth" Music: John Rutter © 1980, 2020 Oxford University Press

"Shout for Joy Loud and Long" Text: David Mowbray; Music: Piae cantiones, 1582

Arranger: Paul Manz Arr. © 1995 Augsburg Fortress

"Every Time I Feel the Spirit" Tune: African-American spiritual; Arranger: Benjamin A. Tucker

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"Send Forth a Dove" Text: Inspired by Genesis 6:8; Music: Joseph M. Martin

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"Come Away to the Skies" Tune: *Southern Harmony*, 1835; Music: Wilbur Held

© 1994 MorningStar Music Publishers

## Not Orphaned

“I will not leave you orphaned,” Jesus promises us in today’s gospel. God is not some ruthless heavenly spectator judging us as on reality television, relishing our failures, wishing to exchange us for a better or more attractive child, no curmudgeonly “Daddy Warbucks” in the sky. Rather, God comes to love us in Jesus, singularly loving and accepting, seeking our trust, promising to be ever-present with us in the Holy Spirit. This Holy Advocate moves us even when we don’t recognize its power, even when it seems “an unknown God” (Acts 17:23). Though we might battle an elemental loneliness, we have not been abandoned.

Many life experiences can leave us feeling orphaned or abandoned. Family can ease that feeling but also magnify it if our family relationships are strained or if our families live far away. Think of those in your congregation who count deployed soldiers among their loved ones in recent years, or construction workers and tradesmen who need to live in hotels far away from their families to keep making money for their families in the recent difficult economy. The Internet, webcams, Skype, and social networking can link people across the miles but can further aggravate loneliness and isolation when these substitute for real intimacy in our highly connected world. How do we experience this loneliness and this longing for home and belonging? How does Jesus’ promise that he will not leave us orphaned speak to these real-life concerns?

When Jesus makes this string of promises in John 14, saying that he will remain with us in the Holy Spirit as our Advocate, it’s hard to envision how this support comes to us sometimes. When we do not get to see or hear those we love, the simple gifts Jesus offers in body and blood, bread and wine shared with real warm neighbors have great power. Even when life keeps delivering bad news about how far apart we are from another, how broken our relationships are, “I will not leave you orphaned” is the godly reassurance that we are not alone.