

CREATED

TO

BE

# ***DISCIPLES***

*Sunday, July 14, 2024*  
*8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*





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

**Sunday, July 14, 2024 ~ 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

## PRELUDE

“Beach Spring”

(Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service)

Early American hymn  
setting, Wilbur Held

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*We have been created to be ourselves. Created by the Holy One. In July, ELCA youth and young adults, including five youth and two adult leaders from Bethlehem, will gather in New Orleans for the National Youth Gathering. We celebrate their opportunity to be in relationship with others from across the ELCA. In solidarity with their journey, our Created to Be sermon series draws on the daily themes that will shape this year’s gathering. We are created to be:*

- ***brave**, to show up with an open mind and heart, willing to be challenged.*
- ***authentic**, to bring our whole selves and know that we are loved by our Creator.*
- ***free**, to be transformed by the gospel.*
- ***disruptive**, to work for justice for all our siblings.*
- ***disciples**, to be sent out into the world to love our neighbor just as we are loved by God.*

**Attention kids:** You are welcome to an activity bag or clipboard with paper and crayons to use during worship! They are located near the entrance to the sanctuary.  
Ask an usher if you need help!

## GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God.

**Amen.**

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God, our provider,  
**help us. It is hard to believe there is enough to share. We question your ways when they differ from the ways of the world in which we live. We turn to our own understanding rather than trusting in you. We take offense at your teachings and your ways. Turn us again to you. Where else can we turn? Share with us the words of eternal life and feed us for life in the world. Amen.**

Beloved people of God: in Jesus, the manna from heaven, you are fed and nourished. By Jesus, the worker of miracles, there is always more than enough. Through Jesus, ✠ the bread of life, you are shown God's mercy: you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.  
**Amen. Blessed be God forever.**

GATHERING HYMN	Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee	ELW 836
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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.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;  
yours the a - noint - ing, the ra - di - ant worth.  
Ours the re - joic - ing for spir - its a - flame;

ours the thanks - giv - ing to your ho - ly name.

Ours be the tell - ing of deeds great - ly done;

yours be the glo - ry, O God, yours a - lone.

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. O Lord, you call us to follow you wherever you lead. We know we do not always follow without questions if we follow at all. Help us to listen for your call and to prepare for action. Stir your Spirit inside us that we might long to follow you and that you will recognize us as your disciples by the love we share. We pray this in the name of the One who was love, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

### HEARING GOD'S WORD

READING: Ephesians 1:3-14

*In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.*

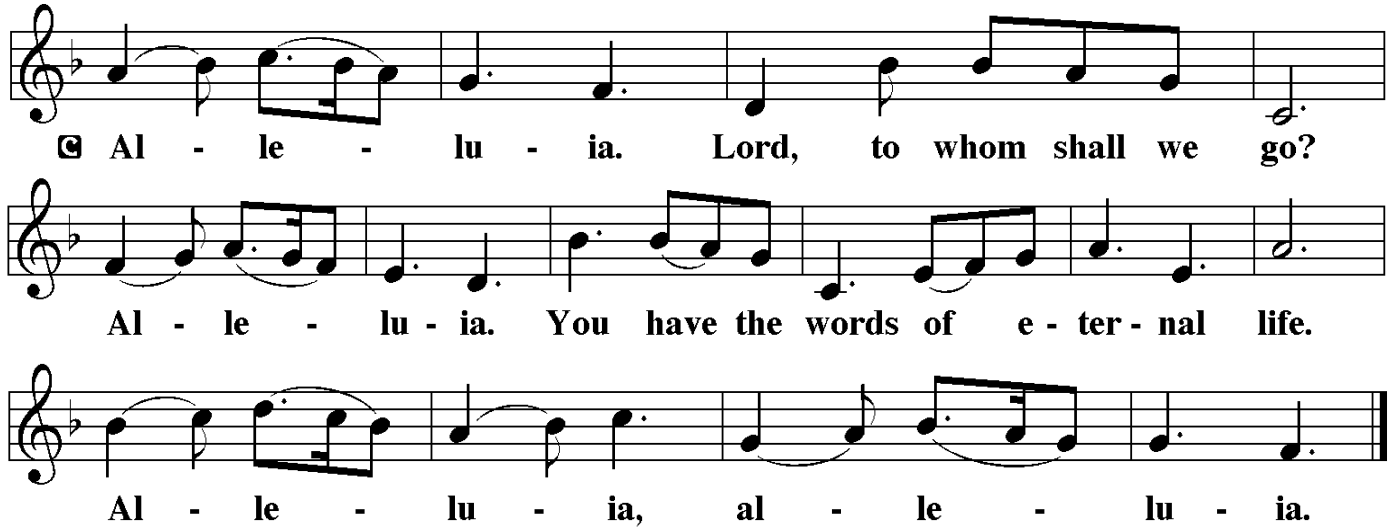
<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup> He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup> In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup> so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might

live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup> this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?  
Al - le - lu - ia. You have the words of e - ter - nal life.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 22:36-40

<sup>36</sup>Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest? <sup>37</sup>He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup>This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup>And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM

*Today we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and welcome Zainab (Zai) Ali Muyo as a sibling in Christ! The portions of the liturgy that include congregational responses are printed here.*

Affirmation of Faith:

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**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.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**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.**

Welcome to the Newly Baptized:

As the body of Christ, we welcome the newly baptized.

**Zai, we welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share.  
We rejoice in your baptism and promise to help you remember today. Faith  
can get hard and heavy, so we carry it together. We are still and always  
becoming, strengthened by your presence. Thank God for you!**

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

We come before the triune God to pray for our communities, ourselves, and our world.

*A brief silence.*

#1 You gather your people into the body of Christ. Where your church is wounded, heal it. Where it is right, strengthen it. Where it is divided, reunite it. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

#2 From before the foundation of the world, you are God. Revive ecosystems destroyed by human greed. Curb our desire to put wealth ahead of the health of all who call this planet home. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

#3 You establish equity and make justice. Within every nation, tribe, and land, cause laws to be written and customs to be observed that protect the most vulnerable. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

By the power of your Spirit, you nurture and bring growth. We give thanks for Zai's baptism and pray for her growth as a disciple of Jesus. Strengthen the connections we share with these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Alexander, Becky & Kevin, Jillian, Sandy, and Jane. Bring new life and growth to this congregation and to the ministry of our siblings in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**



Breathe new life into those struggling in body, mind, or spirit.

*We pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of:*

- John P, grandfather of Sarah M, who died on 6/30

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

- Timothy J, son of Sandy and Mike J, who will have surgery on 7/18
- Morey R, who has moved to a rehabilitation placement
- Katy H who was bitten by a dog and is now home recovering after surgery on 6/29

Hear these prayers we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

*Silence for individual prayer.*

Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Receive our prayers, O God, and come quickly to our aid, through the power of the Spirit and the love of Jesus Christ.

**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

*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).*

OFFERING OF MUSIC

Go in Peace

(TRAVELERS' REST)

Traditional American

arr. Tull Glazener

BLC Dulcimers

## 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 all; u - nite them with the prayers we



of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence,



Lord, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Jesus, bread of life,

**you have set this table with your very self, and called us to the feast of plenty.**

**Gather what has been sown among us, and strengthen us in this meal. Make**

**us to be what we receive here, your body for the life of the world. Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

God, you open wide your hands and feed all creation with your goodness.  
**Open us to receive all that you give us – your mercy, your grace, your love,  
your very self. Amen**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Spirit, 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

Christ has set the table with more than enough for all. Come!  
**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



**♩** Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



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

## COMMUNION HYMNS

Here I Am, Lord

ELW 574

Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love

ELW 708

## TABLE BLESSING

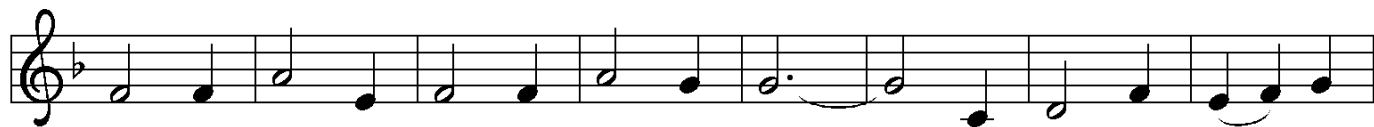
## POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



Thank-ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev - 'ry - one what God has



done. Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.



Send us with your prom - is - es, O God, and lead us forth in



joy with shouts of thanks-giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia.

## LEAVING TO SERVE

SENDING FOR THOSE ATTENDING THE ELCA YOUTH GATHERING IN NEW ORLEANS

### BENEDICTION

Beloved siblings, followers of † Christ, you been equipped with the knowledge of God and the word of God. Created to be disciples, you are sent into the world as a blessing, to love God and love our neighbor. Go now and share your blessedness with the world.

**Amen.**

SENDING HYMN	Sent Forth by God's Blessing	ELW 547
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### DISMISSAL

Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

### POSTLUDE

A Mighty Fortress

(EIN FESTE BURG)

Martin Luther  
setting, Calvin Hampton

## **BLC Musicians**

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

**We celebrate today** as Zai Ali Mooya is baptized in the body of Christ!

Marcy Adams and the entire Bethlehem congregation serve as Zai's sponsors today.

**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:** Our co-Pastors are available Sunday-Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling (585) 223-0634 or emailing [pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org) or [pastor.amy@blcfairport.org](mailto:pastor.amy@blcfairport.org).

Prayer of the Day and Sending and Benediction are adapted from the Getting Ready Resources for the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering.

Baptismal Liturgy adapted from Speak It Plain: Words for Worship and Life Together, Meta Herrick Carlson.

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## Speaking Truth to Power

Few of us want to hear a hard truth, and perhaps fewer of us want to be the ones called to deliver one. Bearing God's word is risky business. In Amos 7:7–15, King Jereboam exiles the prophet Amos for calling him to account. In Mark 6:14–29, Herod delivers John the baptizer's head on a platter to his wife, Herodias, to fulfill a promise he never should have made. Speaking truth to power can cost us our lives.

Yet this is exactly what God calls us to do. God's prophets are ordinary people called to deliver an extraordinary message. Listen to the praise Paul heaps on the Ephesians, naming them as God's blessed, God's chosen, and God's adopted children (Eph. 1:3–5). It is the kind of pep talk coaches give their players just before sending them back into the game against a seemingly unbeatable team. Like Amos, who freely confesses his humble background and unlikely credentials, we are sent from worship each week to proclaim God's in-breaking reign to all the powers that profess to rule this world.

Still, beneath the apparent victory of power over truth, there is a hidden story bursting through the seams of this tale. Yes, John the Baptist dies, but the integrity of his witness outshines all of Herod's corrupt court intrigues. Herod himself was drawn to John's preaching, and in the end it is Herod's character that seems most tragic.

Like Herod, we are each challenged to really listen to the challenging voice of God in our day and age, and to turn away from the lures and temptations that attempt to seduce us away from fidelity to God. Through us, God speaks words of peace, love, and faithfulness that challenge the world's violence, hatred, and treachery.