



*Sunday, September 8, 2024*  
*16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*



BETHLEHEM  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

## PRELUDE

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring  
(from Cantata BWV 147)

Johann Sebastian Bach

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Jesus seems to show partiality in his first response to the Syrophenician woman in today's gospel. Was he testing her faith in saying Gentiles don't deserve the goods meant for God's children? Or was he speaking out of his human worldview, but transcended those limits when she took him by surprise with her reply? Either way, the story tells us that God shows no partiality. Everyone who brings a need to Jesus is received with equal honor as a child and heir.*

## GATHERING

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENES

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Most merciful God,  
**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.**  
**Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

**Amen.**

**GATHERING HYMN**

**God Is Here!**

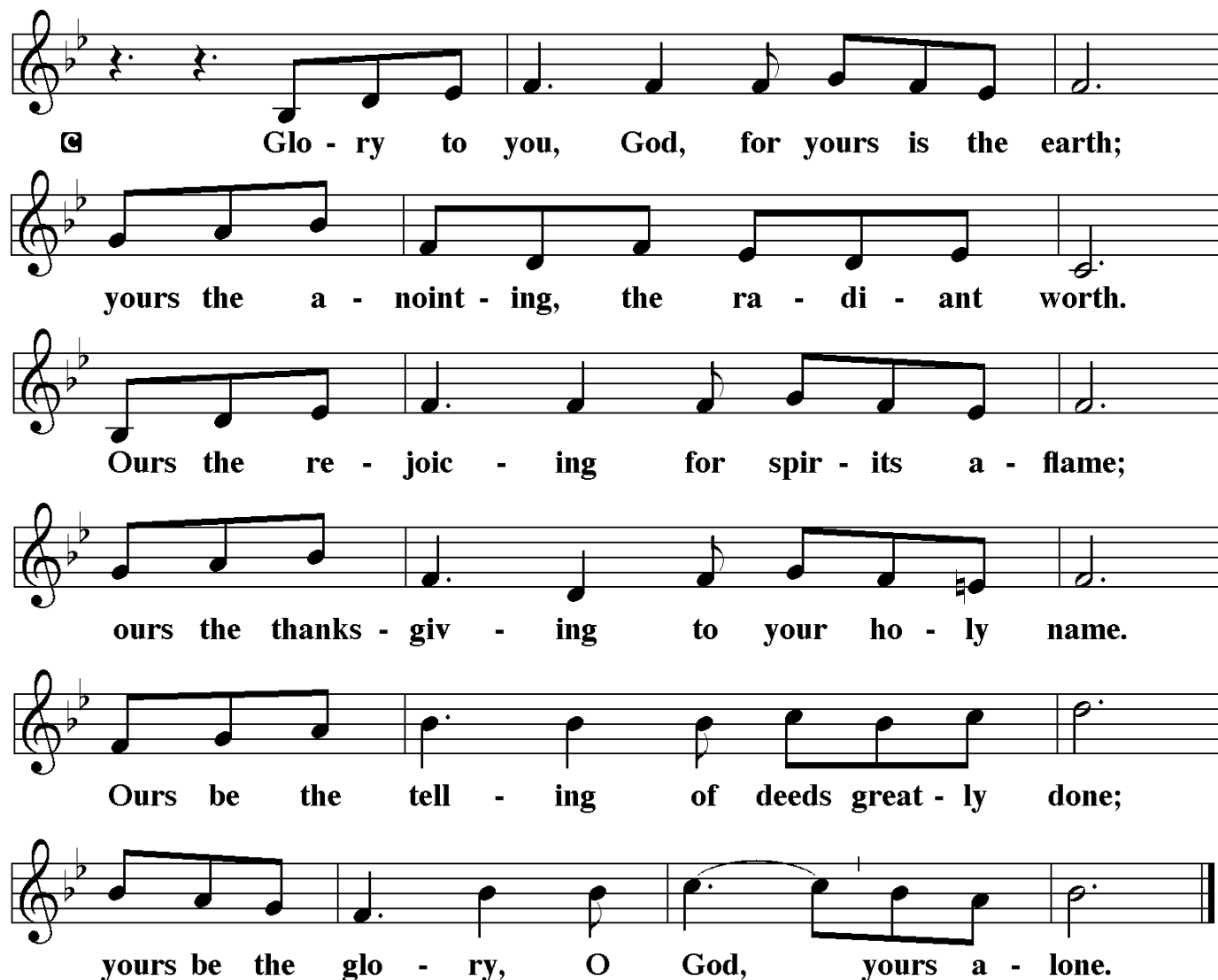
**ELW 526**

### **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**



**G** 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. Jesus, you asked questions as much as you answered them. You never shied away from conversation. You were always sparking curiosity, opening people's minds, and engaging in the art of connection with everyone around you. As we come to your Word and gather in this company of saints, give us the same curiosity, openness, and connection, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **HEARING GOD'S WORD**

### DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS

*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 the room across the hall from the side entrance to the sanctuary. Kids will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion.*

### **READING: Isaiah 35:4-7a**

*These verses are a word of hope to the exiles in Babylon. Isaiah 34 portrays God's vengeance on Edom, Israel's age-old enemy, which makes the path from Babylon to Zion safe for the exiles' return. The desert itself will flow with water to give drink to the returning exiles.*

<sup>4</sup>Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

<sup>6</sup>then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;

<sup>7a</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water.

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 Mark.  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

### **GOSPEL: Mark 7:24-37**

*In Mark's gospel, encounters with women usually signify turning points in Jesus' ministry. Here, a conversation with a Syrophenician woman marks the beginning of his mission to the Gentiles.*

<sup>24</sup>[Jesus] set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice,<sup>25</sup>but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. <sup>26</sup>Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup>He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." <sup>28</sup>But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." <sup>29</sup>Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." <sup>30</sup>So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

<sup>31</sup>Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup>They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. <sup>33</sup>He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup>Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." <sup>35</sup>And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. <sup>36</sup>Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they

proclaimed it. <sup>37</sup>They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

<b>HYMN OF THE DAY</b>	Healer of Our Every Ill	ELW 612
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## 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.*

Drawn together in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray with confidence for the church, God's good creation, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

#1 Awaken in our communities of faith a spirit of radical hospitality. Encourage our churches to celebrate and embrace people of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and abilities. Deepen our commitment to ecumenical and interreligious partnerships. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

#2 Bring forth water to nourish plants and animals in places suffering from drought. Renew our commitments to protect rivers, lakes, and streams, and make us good stewards of water in our homes and communities. Preserve wetland habitats and the creatures that make their homes there. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

#3 Inspire leaders of cities, nations, and tribes to lead with wisdom and humility. Bring peace among peoples in conflict and strengthen global commitments to nonviolent solutions. Guide all who seek refuge from war to a safe haven. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Gracious God, your Son, Jesus, blessed children and called us to be like them. Help us to better know and care for these children, youth and young adults: Aaron, Abby, Abigail, Aderyn, and Aleiah. Strengthen the connections we share with the ministries we serve, especially the ministry of our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Gracious God, you are near to all who call upon you.

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

- Cliff D who died on 8/28

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

- Morey R who has moved to palliative care
- Ros. S who anticipating shoulder surgery
- Mary S, friend of Cathy F, who broke her femur and had surgery on 9/3

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

*Silence for individual prayer.*

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We entrust these and all our prayers to you, holy God, in the name of your beloved child, Jesus Christ, our 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.*



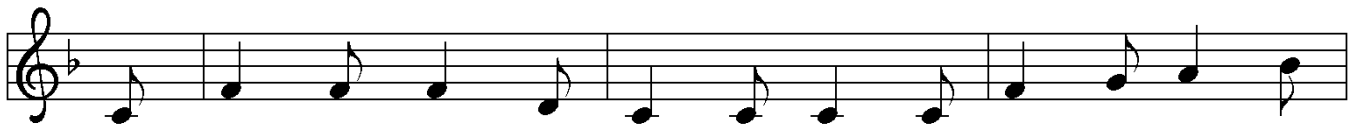
### OFFERING OF MUSIC

Because You Are God's Chosen Ones

adapt. Col. 3:12-17

G. Alan Smith

### OFFERTORY



1 I come with joy, a child of God, for - giv - en, loved, and  
2 I come with Chris - tians far and near to find, as all are



free, the life of Je - sus to re - call in  
fed, the new com - mu - ni - ty of love in



love laid down for me, in love laid down for me.  
Christ's com - mu - nion bread, in Christ's com - mu - nion bread.



## **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray. Blessed are you, O God,  
**source of every gift of your creation. By these gifts and with our lives, help us  
to serve one another and all in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and  
Lord. 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**

Lord Jesus, you are resurrection and life.

**We give thanks that at your table you fill us with good things and feed us  
from your abundance.**

Pour out your Spirit on us and this feast of love.

**Build us into a lasting community that embodies your love. Strengthen us to  
serve you in all we do. Amen**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

One in body, one in spirit, we pray as Jesus taught:

**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

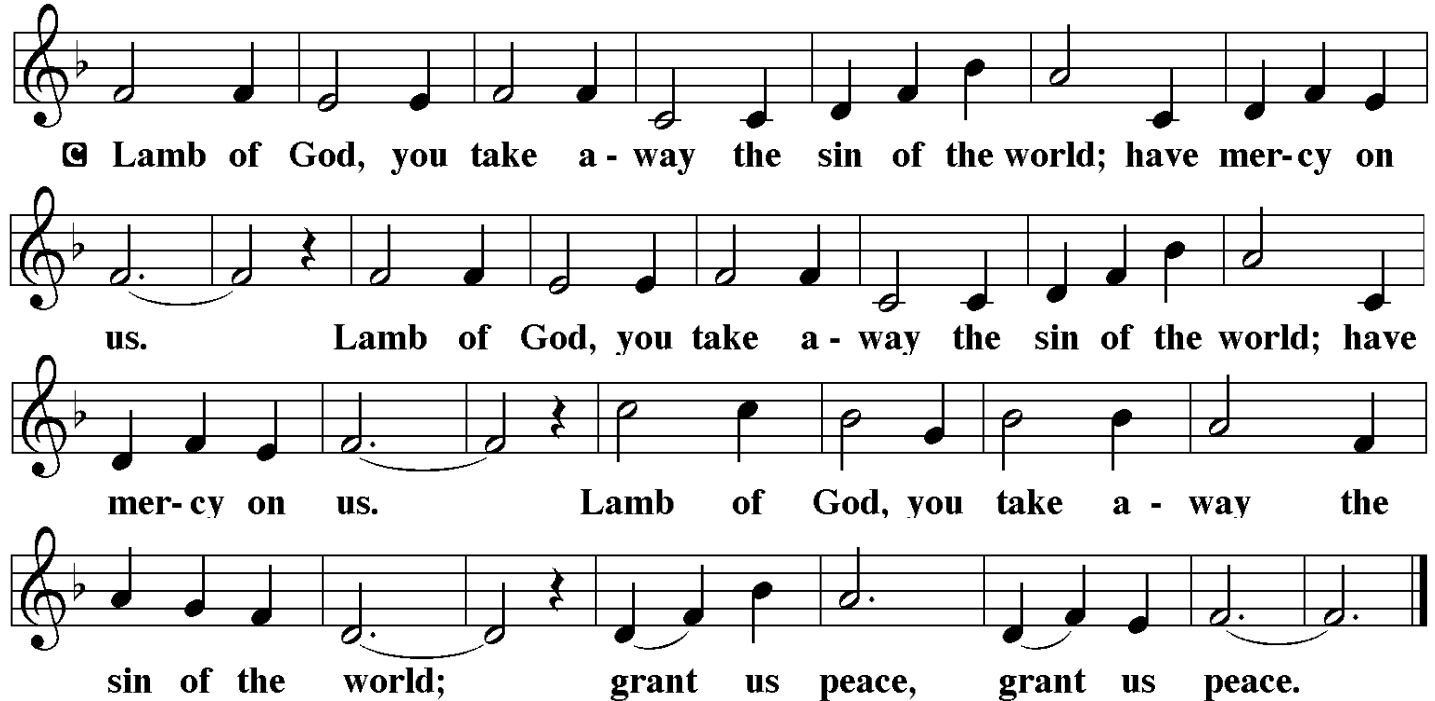
Jesus welcomes you to this table. Come, eat and live.

**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 HYMN

Spirit, Open My Heart

ACS 1043

Choir: Refrain - stanza 1

All: Refrain - st. 2/Ref. - st.3/Ref.

# Spirit, Open My Heart

*Refrain*



Spir-it, o - pen my heart to the joy and pain of



liv-ing. As you love may I love, in re - ceiv - ing



and in giv - ing. Spir - it, o - pen my heart.



1 God, re - place my ston - y heart with a heart that's  
2 Write your love up - on my heart as my law, my  
3 May I weep with those who weep; share the joy of



kind and ten - der. All my cold - ness and  
goal, my sto - ry. In each thought, word, and  
friend and neigh - bor. As I live from day to

*Refrain*



fear to your grace I now sur - ren - der.  
deed, may my liv - ing bring you glo - ry.  
day, love will be my fin - est la - bor.

**COMMUNION HYMN**

Light Dawns on a Weary World

ELW 726

## **TABLE BLESSING**

### **LEAVING TO SERVE**

#### **BLESSING FOR THE START OF A NEW SCHOOL YEAR**

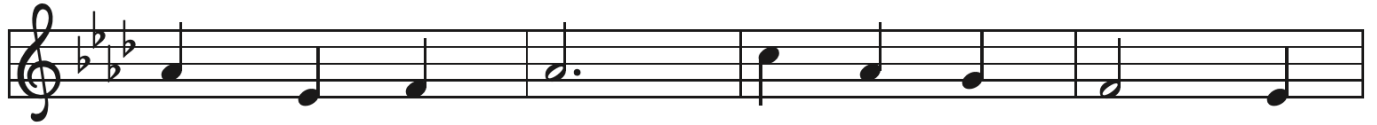
#### **BENEDICTION**

Children, families, and all who love them, go out into the beautiful world that God has made! Go and play! Go and learn! Go and love others! May you be filled with lovingkindness for yourself and everyone around you. May the prayers of your faith community keep you safe, healthy, and full of joy; and may God † go with you today and always.

**Amen.**

<b>SENDING HYMN</b>	God's Work, Our Hands	ACS 1000
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# God's Work, Our Hands



1 God's work, our hands: work - ing to - geth - er,  
2 God's work, our feet: trav - 'ling to - geth - er,  
3 God's work, our voice: sing - ing to - geth - er,  
4 God is at work in and a - round us:



build - ing a fu - ture, re - pair - ing the world,  
fol - low - ing Je - sus to plac - es un - known,  
prais - ing, pro - claim - ing to all who will hear,  
seed - lings are sprout - ing and bread's on the rise!



rais - ing up homes, plant - ing new gar - dens,  
walk - ing as friends, march - ing for free - dom,  
pray - ing for peace, shout - ing for jus - tice,  
Washed and set free, hum - bled and hon - ored,



feed - ing the hun - gry and shelt - 'ring the cold.  
run - ning the race with God's fu - ture the goal.  
claim - ing God's love for the lost and the least.  
gift - ed by grace, we re - spond in God's love.



Bless, God, our hands as we work in your name,  
Bless, God, our feet as we fol - low your way,  
Bless, God, our voice as we speak in your name,  
Bless, God, our lives as we an - swer your call,



shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.  
shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.  
shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.  
shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Follow Jesus.

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

Nun danket alle Gott

(Now Thank We All Our God)

Johann Crüger  
setting, Johann Christoph Kellner

## **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:

Sue Cardinal, flute

**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).

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Portions of the liturgy adapted from prayers by Rev. Sarah Are, A Sanctified Art LLC, [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

"Spirit, Open My Heart" Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947; Music: WILD MOUNTAIN THYME, Irish melody; adapt. Alfred V. Fedak, b. 1953

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"God's Work, Our Hands" Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954; Music: EARTH AND ALL STARS, David N. Johnson, 1922-1987

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Music ©1968 Augsburg Publishing House, admin, Augsburg Fortress

"Because You Are God's Chosen Ones" Text: adapt. from Col. 3:12-17; Music: G. Alan Smith © 1978 Hope Publishing Company

## God Is Partial

Again and again throughout biblical history, God is partial to caring for the poor, the weak, and the outcast. Which is why, perhaps, Jesus' response to the Syrophenician woman takes us by surprise: "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs" (Mark 7:27).

The Syrophenician woman acts in faith. She engages Jesus with what she believes to be true about him: that through him God's mercy will extend even to her. Despite the distinctions that separate them (including race, gender, and religion), she believes Jesus is a Savior who has the power to heal all people and that she, although not a Jew, is a member of the household of God.

The book of James (2:1–17), reminds hearers then and now that the Christian community's actions are to be shaped by God's partiality. God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith. While the world values the rich, the poor are God's own treasure, made honored guests and royal heirs through baptism. The community is called to a partiality based on God's values, not the world's.

The waters of baptism wash away all distinctions. Like streams breaking forth in the desert, these waters surprise us with mercy in unexpected places. These waters open our eyes, unstop our ears, and loose our tongues to see, hear, and speak God's partiality for the poor, the weak, and the outcast. Baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, the Spirit fills us with faith—a faith active in showing mercy that knows no limits.

Around the table, rich and poor, haughty and humble, all who gather receive a feast fit for the family of God. All are honored and all are fed, because the Lord is the maker of them all.