



*Sunday, August 31, 2025
12th Sunday after Pentecost*



BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN CHURCH

48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org

PRELUDE

There Is a Happy Land
(HAPPY LAND)

Dale Wood
tune, Ingall's *Christian Harmony*, 1805

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attention kids: You are welcome to select something from the activity baskets to use during worship! They are located near the entrance to the sanctuary. Ask an usher if you need help!

Parting words offer the highest points and ideals we wish to relay to others. The very best and most important parts of a message often come as part of our final instructions. The end of the book of Hebrews works to summarize the most important aspects, not only of the book itself, but of a life of faith. These exhortations, warnings, and guidelines are a helpful overview of the traits of a faithful Christian, and they also serve as an opportunity for self-reflection.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who looks upon us with compassion, forgives our sins, and heals our lives.

Amen.

We confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another

Silence is kept for reflection.

Have mercy, O God,

against you, you alone, we have sinned. In your compassion, cleanse us from our sin and take away our guilt. Create in us a new heart and give us a steadfast spirit. Do not cast us away, but fill us with your Holy Spirit and restore your joy within us. Amen.

As tender as parent to child, so deep is God's compassion for you. As high as heaven is above earth, so vast is God's love for you. As far as east is from west, so far God removes your sin from you, renewing your life through † Jesus Christ. Blessed be God who crowns us with mercy and love.

Blessed be God forever. Amen.

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. O God, you resist those who are proud and give grace to those who are humble. Give us the humility of your Son, that we may embody the generosity of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

READING: Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

The conclusion of the letter to the Hebrews contains suggestions for the conduct of a holy life, all of which are shaped by God's love toward us in Jesus Christ.

¹ Let mutual affection continue. ² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. ³ Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them, those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. ⁴ Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers. ⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for he himself has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." ⁶ So we can say with confidence,

"The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.

What can anyone do to me?"

⁷ Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. ¹⁵ Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. ¹⁶ Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.



Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.



When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,



The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Luke 14:1, 7-14

Jesus observes guests jockeying for position at the table. He uses the opportunity to teach his hearers to choose humility rather than self-exaltation. Jesus also makes an appeal for hosts to imitate God's gracious hospitality to those in need.

¹ On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely.

⁷ When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. ⁸ "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host, ⁹ and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. ¹¹ For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

¹² He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴ And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love

Cantors: stanza 1 and *Refrain*

All: sts: 2/*Ref.* 3/*Ref.* 4/*Ref.*

They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love

1. We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
we are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
and we pray that all unity may one day be restored:

Refrain:

***And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love;
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.***

2. We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
we will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
and together we'll spread the news that God is in our land: (*Refrain*)
3. We will work with each other, we will work side by side,
we will work with each other, we will work side by side,
and we'll guard human dignity and save human pride: (*Refrain*)
4. All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,
and all praise to Christ Jesus, God's only Son,
and all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one: (*Refrain*)

Text and Music: Peter Scholtes

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 into the embrace of the holy Trinity, we lift our prayers for the wholeness of the church, the world, and all creation.

A brief silence.

#1 For the leaders of the church, we pray. Inspire our newly elected presiding bishop, our bishop, our pastors, Sunday school teachers, and Christian education directors with a passion for speaking the word of God. Equip all the baptized to share your word of grace. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

#2 For the well-being of creation, we pray. Sustain farm workers and all who labor in fields and vineyards to grow the food we eat. Revive plains and pastures and provide for the cattle and creatures who rely on the land for their sustenance. Be with all who are harvesting. We give thanks for our ministry to Evergreen East and those who provide with food or assistance to this program of BLC. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

#3 For the lowly and those who are ignored, we pray. Provide for the needs of vulnerable communities, those who are unemployed, burdened by debt, or struggle to make ends meet. We pray for those in our community, state, country and around the world. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

We pray for all those who will be returning to school in the coming week: learners, teachers, staff, and administrators, including Acton Academy who begins a new year at Bethlehem this week; and for our siblings in faith in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. May our partnerships remind us of your abundance. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Uphold all who suffer, O God. Give refuge to those of us who know rejection, and shelter to those of us who have nowhere to lay our heads. Bring any who are sick into your healing presence. Give all your fullness of joy.

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

- Christel R, mother of Mark L, who died on 8/21

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Andy G, who is recovering from surgery on a broken arm
- Lisa R, who continues to struggle with depression
- Richard B, father of Dave and Marsha G's daughter-in-law, who is recovering from a severe accident
- Pat, mother of Chris M's friend, who is experiencing health challenges

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

Silence for individual prayer.

God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Gather all our prayers in your mercy, O God, through 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 or scan the QR (quick response) code on the right and you'll be brought to BLC's mobile giving page.



OFFERING OF MUSIC

Peace Round

text, Jean Ritchie
music, English folk tune

The Folk Group

OFFERTORY

1 God of the fer - tile fields, sha - per of
2 We would be stew - ards true, hold - ing in

earth that yields our dai - ly bread: forth from your
trust from you all that you give; help us in

boun - teous hand come gifts your love has planned,
love to share, teach us like you to care

that all in ev - 'ry land be clothed and fed.
for peo - ple ev - 'ry - where, that all may live.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Creator God,

in your wisdom you bring forth all that is good and the harvest is plentiful.

Strengthen us at your table with these gifts of the earth and our labor, that we may work for the good of all; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. 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

Cantor



1. Gath - er us in - to one through bread and wine,

2. Pour out up - on us now your Spir - it, Lord,

ALL



gath - er us in - to one through bread and wine.

pour out up - on us now your Spir - it, Lord.

Cantor



Fill us up to be your liv - ing pres - ence,

Breathe new life and send us to your peo - ple,

ALL



fill us up to be your liv - ing pres - ence.

breathe new life and send us to your peo - ple.

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

The kingdom of God is set before you. Eat and rejoice!
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

HYMN FOR COMMUNION

Spirit, Open My Heart

ACS 1043

TABLE BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. 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.**

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

The love of God abound in you; the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ fill your hearts; and the life of the Spirit † bless you and give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

God Be with You Till We Meet Again

ELW 536

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Live by the Spirit.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

The Kingsfold Trumpet

Alfred Fedak
tune, English folk / R. Vaughan Williams

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:

The Folk Group

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 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. 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 or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

Church office hours: Molly Vasey is in the office from 9am - 1pm Tuesday - Thursday and can be reached by calling (585) 223-0634 or emailing 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 or pastor.amy@blcfairport.org



Evergreen East Food Distribution

Sundays, July 20 thru September 21

We'll begin packing food in the parking lot at 10:30 AM (after worship) and then distribute food at 11:15 AM. Extra produce from your garden or any non-perishable items to add to the food cupboard are welcome!

Contact Julie Owen
(jowen@heritagechristianservices.org) to get involved!



***Join BLC's email list
to receive our weekly
STAR e-newsletter
and other
announcements!***



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“God of the Fertile Fields” – stanza 1&2 Music: ITALIAN HYMN, Felice de Giardini, 1716-1796

Text © 1955, ren. 1983 The Hymn Society, admin Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188

“Glory to you, God” Music: J. Bert Carlson © 2020 Holy Communion, Setting 12 (adm. Augsburg Fortress)

“Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil” Text: Handt Hanson; Music: Handt Hanson

© 1985 Prince of Peace Publishing, Changing Church, Inc.

“Come, Let Us Eat” Music: Billema Kwillia, adapt. © Lutheran World Federation

“There Is a Happy Land” – happy land Tune: Ingall’s *Christian Harmony*, 1805; Music: Dale Wood © 1991 The Sacred Music Press

“They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love” Text and Music: Peter Scholtes

© 1966 F.E.L. Publications; 1991 Lorenz Publishing Co. (adm. Lorenz Corp.)

“Peace Round” Music: English folk tune; Text: Jean Ritchie

© 2004 The Sing Out Corporation; 1971 Geordie Music Publishing Co.

“The Kingsfold Trumpet” Tune: English folk / Ralph Vaughan Williams; Music: Alfred Fedak

© 1987 Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp.

Radical Love Triumphs

For most of human history wisdom was largely part of an oral tradition. From one generation to the next, wisdom was passed down. These days it sometimes seems that technology has replaced that tradition of shared wisdom. Rather than ask a trusted elder the temptation is to pull out a smartphone and do a quick Internet search. Next thing you know, there it is, wisdom at your fingertips—maybe. Could it be that something is lost in the process? We can find facts online, but virtues like humility, respect of elders, hospitality, servanthood, and peacemaking do not seem to translate as easily in the electronic age. In the gospel reading Jesus takes the time to pass on some ancient–yet–prudent wisdom from the proverbs of Solomon to a crowd of social climbers who obviously were not familiar with such prudence or wisdom.

More significantly Jesus lifts up the mysteriously gracious and life–transforming values of the kingdom of God. Jesus lifts up the humility required to take the lowest seat at the table, never hoping to be invited to a place of greater honor or status. Jesus invites his followers to practice the hospitality that offers a banquet of the finest of foods for people who cannot repay. Jesus invites his followers to embody the kind of radical–yet–relational love of Jesus himself. This radical love is taught by both individuals and congregations. Communities of faith by their practices of generosity and compassion embody the love of Jesus in their communities.