Bethlehem Lutheran Church
October 25, 2026

We Gather

Call to Worship

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism

Call to Worship *(Inspired by Psalm 96 & Isaiah 45)*

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with you.
God places the law within us; it is written deeply upon our hearts.
No longer will we live as slaves to sin or fear, for we are called into the household of God forever.
We are God's people, and the Lord is our God.
Jesus says, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples".
We come to hear the truth, and the truth will make us free!
So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.
Come, let us rejoice in our freedom and worship the God of grace!

Gathering Hymn ***A Mighty Fortress*** **Hymn 504**

1 A mighty fortress is our God
a sword and shield victorious
he breaks the cruel oppressor's rod
and wins salvation glorious
The old satanic foe
has sworn to work us woe
With craft and dreadful might
he arms himself to fight
On earth he has no equal

2 No strength of ours can match his might!
We would be lost, rejected.
But now a champion comes to fight,
whom God himself elected.
You ask who this may be?
The Lord of hosts is he!
Christ Jesus, mighty Lord,
God's only Son, adored.
He holds the field victorious.

3 Though hordes of devils fill the land
all threat'ning to devour us,
we tremble not, unmoved we stand;
they cannot overpow'r us.
Let this world's tyrant rage;
in battle we'll engage!
His might is doomed to fail;
God's judgment must prevail!
One little word subdues him.

4 God's Word forever shall abide
no thanks to foes, who fear it
for God himself fights by our side
with weapons of the Spirit
Were they to take our house
goods, honor, child, or spouse
through life be wrenched away
they cannot win the day
The kingdom's ours forever.

Greeting & Prayer of the Day

The Grace of our Lord Jesus, the Love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.
And also with you.

Let us pray,….. Gracious Father, **we pray for your holy catholic church. Fill it with all truth and peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in need, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

We Proclaim

First Reading **Romans 3:19-28** **Living Bible**

19 So the judgment of God lies very heavily upon the Jews, for they are responsible to keep God's laws instead of doing all these evil things; not one of them has any excuse; in fact, all the world stands hushed and guilty before Almighty God.
20 Now do you see it? No one can ever be made right in God's sight by doing what the law commands. For the more we know of God's laws, the clearer it becomes that we aren't obeying them; his laws serve only to make us see that we are sinners.
21-22 But now God has shown us a different way to heaven—not by "being good enough" and trying to keep his laws, but by a new way (though not new, really, for the Scriptures told about it long ago). Now God says he will accept and acquit us—declare us "not guilty"—if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, by coming to Christ, no matter who we are or what we have been like. **23** Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious ideal; **24** yet now God declares us "not guilty" of offending him if we trust in Jesus Christ, who in his kindness freely takes away our sins.
25 For God sent Christ Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to end all God's anger against us. He used Christ's blood and our faith as the means of saving us from his wrath. In this way he was being entirely fair, even though he did not punish those who sinned in former times. For he was looking forward to the time when Christ would come and take away those sins. **26** And now in these days also he can receive sinners in this same way because Jesus took away their sins. But isn't this unfair for God to let criminals go free, and say that they are innocent? No, for he does it on the basis of their trust in Jesus who took away their sins.
27 Then what can we boast about doing to earn our salvation? Nothing at all. Why? Because our acquittal is not based on our good deeds; it is based on what Christ has done and our faith in him. **28** So it is that we are saved by faith in Christ and not by the good things we do.
Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God**

Gospel Verse ***Alleluia*** **Hymnal page 151**
Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

The Holy Gospel **John 8:31-36**

Jesus speaks of truth and freedom as spiritual realities known through his word. He reveals the truth that sets people free from sin.

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 8th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

31 Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my
disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." 33 They answered him, "We
are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying,
'You will be made free'?"
34 Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. 35 The
slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. 36 So if
the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."
This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you O Christ.**

Gospel in Spanish …….. Gloria a ti, O Señor ..... ¡Alabamos a ti O Cristo!

Message for the Day ***Aways Being Reformed*** **A visit from Katie Luther**
Pastor Dawn Roucka

Song of the Day ***Founded on Faith***

1 Founded on faith, the church alive by grace
proclaims the gospel here and ev'ry place.
The word of God resounds through time and space: Alleluia!

2 Your cross, O Christ, renews our life each day.
Baptized in you, we learn and teach and pray.
Fed by your love, with thankful hearts, we say: Alleluia!

3 Equipped by prayer, we live the Spirit's call.
Empow'red to serve with gifts, both great and small,
we bring the living hope of God to all.
Alleluia!

4 Growing in grace for God's created earth,
we yearn for justice, peace, and human worth;
a world restored; a faithful, caring church.
Alleluia!

5 Founded on faith, called forth, empow'red to serve,
we share God's endless love without reserve.
Then let us shout aloud the living Word!
Alleluia!

Nicene Creed *inside back cover of hymnal*

Prayers of the People…… Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The Peace

May the peace of the Lord be with you, now and always. **And also with you.**
(You are invited to share the Peace of the Lord with those around you, then be seated.)

We Give Back

Offering Music ***Reformation Song*** **Bethlehem Voices**

Offering Response ***Let the Vineyards be Fruitful*** **Hymn 182**

Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,
and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.
Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,
that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gather the hopes and the dreams of all;
unite them with the prayers we offer now.
Grace our table with your presence,
and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.

Offering Prayer ……..and in love to our neighbors, today and always. **Amen.**

We Are Fed

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord God be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Words of Institution for God's Table of Grace……and join their unending hymn (*sing)*: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

……Remembering, therefore, his life-giving truth, his death that sets us free, and his resurrection that welcomes us home, we preach this mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

……Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, and living in the freedom of the children of God, let us pray as Jesus taught us: **The Lord's Prayer**

Invitation to Communion Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

Communion Distribution Notes

All are welcome to receive Jesus' invitation and gift of grace through the sacrament.
Communion will be distributed in a continuous fashion.
Start by center aisle. Please use outside aisle to return to seat.
Feel free to pray at the communion rail following consumption of elements.
Gluten free available, just ask.

Communion Music

(Congregation stays seated)

Post Communion Blessing

May this body and blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Prayer Almighty God, we thank you for this holy meal. You have nourished us with the body and blood of your Son, and you have sealed the promise of your new covenant deeply within our hearts. As we leave this table, send us out into the streets of our community in the power of your Holy Spirit. Keep us abiding in your liberating truth, that we may live not for ourselves, but in joyful, courageous service to our neighbors. Through Jesus Christ, the Son who sets us free indeed. **Amen.**

We Are Sent

Announcements

Blessing and Commission *(Inspired by John 8:31 and Jeremiah 31:34)*

Go out into the world in the freedom of Christ. Abide in His word, …….. **Amen.**

Sending Song ***Make A Difference***

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You gave Your life
To make a difference
You gave Your life to make a change

You welcomed all to your table
You're calling us to do the same

I want my life to make a diff'rence
I want my life to make a change
I want my life to do some good here
I want my life to make a change

Working side by side
No out or inside
Together we can make that change

With a few or many
With a lot or not any
Together we can make that change

I want my life to make a diff'rence
I want my life to make a change
I want my life to do some good here
I want my life to make a change

Crossing great divide
Joy and peace will abide
Together we can make that change

Jesus is our peace
All fighting will cease
Together we can make that change

I want my life to make a diff'rence
I want my life to make a change
I want my life to do some good here

I want my life to make a change

Dismissal Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace. **Thanks be to God.**