



## BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

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*“Connecting People to Jesus”*

**VISITORS:** Welcome!! Please sign our Guest Book and introduce yourself to Pastor Mark Griesse.

**WE CELEBRATE HOLY COMMUNION 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> SUNDAYS:** Please see our Communion Statement on preceding page.

**A NURSERY AND RESTROOM** are located at the front of the sanctuary on the left hand side. Families with small children are welcome to use the nursery as needed.

**ELEVATOR:** We have an elevator for use as needed to get to the social hall. Please see an usher if you wish to use it.

## The Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost

**September 12, 2021**

### As We Gather

In today's Readings, Jesus encounters another person possessed by an unclean spirit. The young man's father is distraught and desperate. The father utters these words: "I believe; help my unbelief!" Jesus does help the man's unbelief by healing his son. Jesus helps our unbelief as well in all that He does. In His miracles and teaching, suffering and death, resurrection and ascension, Jesus calls us to faith. And He calls us to be His witnesses.



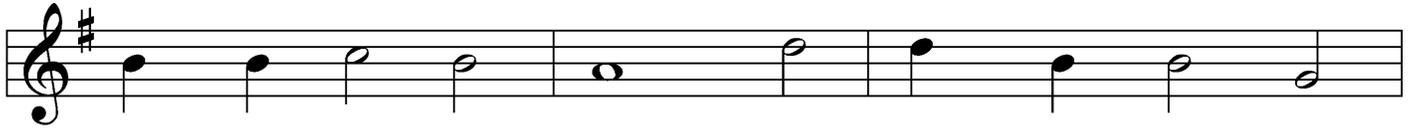
+PREPARATION+

LSB 528

“Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing”



1 Oh, for a thou - sand tongues to sing My  
2 My gra - cious Mas - ter and my God, As -  
3 Je - sus! The name that charms our fears, That  
4 He breaks the pow'r of can - celed sin; He



great Re - deem - er's praise, The glo - ries of my  
sist me to pro - claim, To spread through all the  
bids our sor - rows cease; 'Tis mu - sic in the  
sets the pris - 'ner free. His blood can make the



God and King, The tri - umphs of His grace!  
earth a - broad, The hon - ors of Thy name.  
sin - ner's ears, 'Tis life and health and peace.  
foul - est clean; His blood a - vails for me.

5 Look unto Him, ye nations; own  
Your God, ye fallen race.  
Look and be saved through faith alone,  
Be justified by grace.

6 See all your sins on Jesus laid;  
The Lamb of God was slain.  
His soul was once an off'ring made  
For ev'ry soul of man.

7 To God all glory, praise, and love  
Be now and ever giv'n  
By saints below and saints above,  
The Church in earth and heav'n.

## Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the ✝ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

## Opening Sentences

P I called on the name of the LORD:

C **O LORD, I believe. Help my unbelief!**

P The LORD has dealt bountifully with us.

C **The LORD has opened our ears.**

P The LORD has delivered us from death.

C **He wipes away tears from all faces.**

P He rescues our feet from stumbling

C **and restores our tongues to proclaim His good news.**

## Confession and Absolution

P Despite all of God's actions on our behalf, we still struggle with sin in our lives. Our tongues still curse. Our feet still stumble. Our ears still listen to lies and vicious gossip. But our heavenly Father invites us to come to Him for restoration, renewal, and forgiveness.

*Silence for reflection.*

P Heavenly Father,

C **we have sinned against You and our neighbors in what we have said and what we have left unsaid. We have neglected opportunities to love our neighbors. We have stumbled and fallen again and again. We ask that You restore us, renew us, and forgive us on account of Jesus. Amen.**

P Almighty God, in His boundless love sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die and rise for our forgiveness and eternal life. Because of Jesus, we are restored, body and soul. Therefore, as a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✝ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen. We are forgiven in Christ. We are renewed and restored. Amen.**

+WORD+

**Introit**

*Psalm 31:14–16; antiphon: v. 24*

P Be strong, and let your heart take courage,  
all you who wait for the LORD!

C **But I trust in you, O LORD;  
I say, “You are my God.”**

P My times are in your hand;  
rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors!

C **Make your face shine on your servant;  
save me in your steadfast love!**

All **Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P Be strong, and let your heart take courage,  
all you who wait for the LORD!



**Salutation**

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day**

P Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, our support and defense in every need, continue to preserve Your Church in safety, govern her by Your goodness, and bless her with Your peace; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

**Old Testament Reading**

*Isaiah 50:4–10*

<sup>4</sup>The Lord GOD has given me  
the tongue of those who are taught,  
that I may know how to sustain with a word  
him who is weary.

Morning by morning he awakens;  
he awakens my ear  
to hear as those who are taught.

<sup>5</sup>The Lord GOD has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious;  
I turned not backward.

<sup>6</sup>I gave my back to those who strike,  
and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard;  
I hid not my face  
from disgrace and spitting.

<sup>7</sup>But the Lord GOD helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like a flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put to shame.

<sup>8</sup>He who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?

Let us stand up together.

Who is my adversary?

Let him come near to me.

<sup>9</sup>Behold, the Lord GOD helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?

Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment;  
the moth will eat them up.

<sup>10</sup>Who among you fears the LORD  
and obeys the voice of his servant?

Let him who walks in darkness  
and has no light

trust in the name of the LORD  
and rely on his God.

R This is the Word of the Lord.

**C Thanks be to God.**

### Psalm

*Psalm 116:1–9; antiphon: v. 5*

R <sup>1</sup>I love the LORD, because he has heard  
my voice and my pleas for mercy.

**C <sup>2</sup>Because he inclined his ear to me,  
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.**

R <sup>3</sup>The snares of death encompassed me;  
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;  
I suffered distress and anguish.

**C <sup>4</sup>Then I called on the name of the LORD:  
“O LORD, I pray, deliver my soul!”**

R <sup>5</sup>Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;  
our God is merciful.

**C <sup>6</sup>The LORD preserves the simple;  
when I was brought low, he saved me.**

R <sup>7</sup>Return, O my soul, to your rest;  
for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.

**C <sup>8</sup>For you have delivered my soul from death,  
my eyes from tears,  
my feet from stumbling;**

R <sup>9</sup>I will walk before the LORD  
in the land of the living.

**Epistle**

*James 3:1–12*

<sup>1</sup>Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. <sup>2</sup>For we all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. <sup>3</sup>If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. <sup>4</sup>Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. <sup>5</sup>So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! <sup>6</sup>And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup>For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup>but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. <sup>10</sup>From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. <sup>11</sup>Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? <sup>12</sup>Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

**C Thanks be to God.**

**Verse**

*Mark 9:23b*

**All Alleluia. All things are possible for one who believes. Alleluia.**

**Holy Gospel**

*Mark 9:14–29*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the ninth chapter.

**C Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>14</sup>When they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. <sup>15</sup>And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to [Jesus] and greeted him. <sup>16</sup>And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?” <sup>17</sup>And someone from

the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. <sup>18</sup>And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” <sup>19</sup>And he answered them, “O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.” <sup>20</sup>And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. <sup>21</sup>And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. <sup>22</sup>And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” <sup>23</sup>And Jesus said to him, “If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.” <sup>24</sup>Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!” <sup>25</sup>And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” <sup>26</sup>And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” <sup>27</sup>But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. <sup>28</sup>And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” <sup>29</sup>And he said to them, “This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”

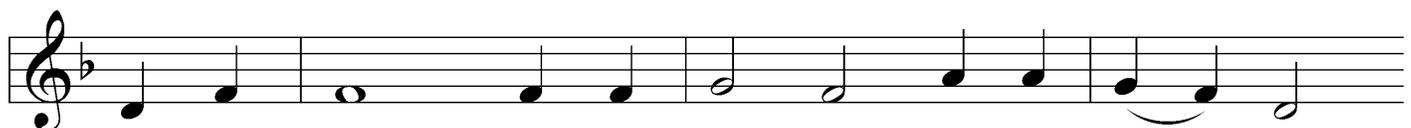
**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C** Praise to You, O Christ.

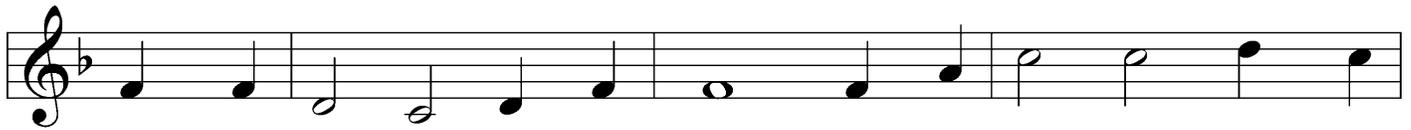
**LSB 849 “Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness”**



1 Praise the One who breaks the dark - ness With a lib - er -  
 2 Praise the One who blessed the chil - dren With a strong, yet  
 3 Let us praise the Word In - car - nate, Christ, who suf - fered



at - ing light; Praise the One who frees the pris - 'ners,  
 gen - tle, word; Praise the One who drove out de - mons  
 in our place. Je - sus died and rose vic - to - rious



Turn - ing blind - ness in - to sight. Praise the One who preached the  
 With the pierc - ing, two - edged sword. Praise the One who brings cool  
 That we may know God by grace. Let us sing for joy and



Gos - pel, Heal - ing ev - 'ry dread dis - ease, Calm - ing  
 wa - ter To the des - ert's burn - ing sand; From this  
 glad - ness, See - ing what our God has done; Let us



storms, and feed - ing thou - sands With the ver - y Bread of peace.  
 Well comes liv - ing wa - ter, Quench - ing thirst in ev - 'ry land.  
 praise the true Re - deem - er, Praise the One who makes us one.

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## Sermon

We have spent most of the Summer month looking at the picture of the church through the eyes of Paul as he tells the Ephesians what the church is. It is a community of believers chosen by God to be his people. He has equipped them with every spiritual blessing possible. He has called them by his grace, and he has urged them to live a life worthy of the calling to which they have been called.

In today's epistle reading we get another picture from another apostle. Picture the Christian church as James would like to see it. Every Christian would act like a Christian, sound like a Christian, and think like a Christian. That would be perfect. Isn't that what our Lord commands of us. **"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mat 5:48).**

Then, whenever the world would look upon a Christian, it would see Christ. In our actions and in our words toward others, we would be accurate reflections of Jesus Christ! The world would look at us and see our Lord. Luther writes, "Man was created to be the image of God, and to be His image for this very purpose: that God should and would be know through him. Therefore God should appear and shine in the entire life and conduct of man as in a mirror; and a Christian should have no higher and greater concern than so to live as not to dishonor God's name." (What Luther Says, #624)

But this is not the case in our lives. We Christians are, to say the least, improper reflections of Christ. At times our actions may even project a negative image of Christ. We need look no further than our own daily activities. Paul says, **"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do."** (Rom 7:15)

In contemporary society Mark Twain the famous author put these words of Paul another way. He said: "Most people are bothered by those passages in Scripture that they cannot understand. The Scripture which troubles me most is the Scripture I do understand." (Mark Twain) Our text is painfully clear. We are not the ideal Christian nor are we the ideal Christian church James, or God, would like us to be.

Often, we are like a former park ranger at Yellowstone National Park who was leading a group of hikers to a fire lookout. He was so intent on telling the hikers about the flowers and animals that he considered the messages on his two-way radio distracting, so he switched it off. Nearing the tower, the ranger was met by a nearly breathless lookout, who asked why he hadn't responded to the messages on his radio. A grizzly bear had been seen stalking the group, and the authorities were trying to warn them of the danger. Any time we tune out the messages God has sent us, we put at peril not only ourselves, but also those around us. How important it is that we never turn off God's saving communication!

Picture yourself as a sponge. Squeeze a dry sponge and nothing comes out. It cannot yield what it does not have. But squeeze a wet sponge and watch the water flow!

In Holy Baptism you and I have been immersed in the water of life. Through the Gospel we participate in Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection (Rom 6:1-10). We have been reborn through the blood of the Lamb and we are now saturated with the righteousness of God. **"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me"** (Gal 2:20).

In many ways our children are like sponges. They soak the knowledge that is around them. If they go to school and everyone is using filthy language, it won't be long before we start hearing that same language in our homes. We are being given the opportunity to bring our children and ourselves to Sunday

School and Bible Class to soak up the blessings and instruction that the Lord has for us.

As the pressures of the world squeeze those drenched in the righteousness of God, they cannot help but overflow with his love and forgiveness. **"I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, says Paul. (Rom 15:14).**

Picture the Christian church as a sponge. We as a congregation are a sponge in need of forgiveness. We have failed and fallen short of what the Lord would have us do. Thanks be to God for the forgiveness earned for us on the cross of Calvary.

In the Nicene Creed our whole congregation confesses with all other Christian congregations throughout church history that we "acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins." The church as a whole has received the washing of water with the word. (Eph 5:26). But baptism is not magic. In the Baptismal vows you made as parents you promised to teach your child the Ten Commandment, the Creed, the Lord's prayer, and when they grew in years you would put into their hand the scriptures and teach them all that God in his grace and mercy has done for you and for them. It means you need to be involved. The church, the community of saints, is gathered here to help you in your duty to teach your children the word of God.

We all have busy lives. There are so many things to do and so little time. It seems that when the church asks us to do something, it is just one more thing in a pile of things that needs to get done. I suppose we could complain about all the things that make us so busy. Or we could Rejoice in the squeeze. (Phil 4:4). Be thankful for the times when we are put under pressure to bring glory to our Lord and Savior. Stress is no fun and no one likes being in high pressure crisis situations, yet this is often the best time for the living water of God's grace to flow out from us and nourish the lives of others. Think of some times our congregation or perhaps in your own personal lives when we have been under pressure. Now consider some of the good that may have resulted from it.

A man was out walking in the desert when a voice said to him, "Pick up some pebbles, put them in your pocket, and tomorrow you will be both sorry and glad." The man obeyed. He stooped down, picked up a handful of pebbles, and put them in his pocket. The next morning, he reached into his pocket and found diamonds and rubies and emeralds. And he was both glad and sorry. Glad that he had taken some, sorry that he hadn't taken more.

So it is with God's Word, and the Sacrament offered in his church. It makes us glad when we see how the Holy Spirit works through the Word and Sacraments to strengthen us in our faith toward God and in our love toward one another. Yet, there is also an element of sadness when we recognize that our response to that word is so hesitant and incomplete. We could do much more.

Here is the turning point. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we turn from the pride of self-assertive speech, and the anger that resents God's judgments on our sin, filthiness, and wickedness, speaking without listening, and the anger that will not listen to God. By God's grace we turn to him when we receive from his word the righteousness that only he can give. We receive it with repentant hearts that confess our sin and receive from him the salvation of our souls.

With God's power in our life, we turn from self-deception that says we don't have time for the church or the study of God's word, or the idea that God's word is only to be contemplated and realize that the blessings really begin in our lives when we put his word and instruction to practice in our lives. We turn from a forgetful hearing of his Word to a doing of his word.

James urges us to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. He wants us to water the word that has been planted in our lives that it may grow and become a strong plant of faith. He is not trying to pit faith and works against each other. Rather he is saying that our faith is a demonstrated faith. He uses the example of widows and orphans to get his point across. God's people are a caring people that put their faith into action by helping, teaching, admonishing, and helping each other to grow in spiritual maturity.

As we begin a new educational year, I urge you to take advantage of the opportunities before you. God's blessing come through his word and through the sacraments that are given for your forgiveness and for your new life in his name. Take the gifts that God gives and rejoice in his blessings. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Apostles' Creed**

**All I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at**

the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

## Offering to the Lord's Work is Gathered

### Offertory

LSB 956

### "Create in Me"

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new  
a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way  
from Thy pres - ence; and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it  
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va - tion;  
and up - hold me with Thy free spir - it. A - men.

The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics printed below each staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Text and tune: Public domain

### Prayer of the Church

P Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

For pastors, missionaries, teachers, and all who proclaim Your Word, O Lord, that the sinfulness of their tongues may not hinder Your message of grace, let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P For all those who celebrate the good news of births and birthdays, weddings, and anniversaries, let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P For all those who grieve, that they find hope in the resurrection, which brings us eternal life and defeats the enemy of death, let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P For all those who govern in this nation and throughout the world, that their tongues would be kept from lying and slander, let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P For all those who struggle with spiritual oppression, that God would deliver them from evil and restore them body and soul, let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P For all those who have wandered from the Church, that the Holy Spirit would call them by the Gospel and gather them back to Your flock, let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P For all who are sick, injured, and recovering, [*especially . . .*], that God would grant them healing according to His good and gracious will, let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P Lord, we offer all these prayers, knowing that You hear us and bless us with what we need.

**C Amen.**

### **Prayer of Remembrance**

P Gracious God, You are the source of every lasting security. We bless You for the continuance of stability in a time of great national trial and ask that our nation be spared from any such act of terrorism and destruction in times to come. We remember those innocent victims of terrorism whose earthly lives ended on September 11th, 2001. Grant that their memories

among us remain and their lives not be forgotten. We also remember the rescue workers who gave their lives that day seeking to assist the victims of the tragedy. Grant that their examples of bravery and sacrificial concern for others serve to inspire each of us as we live out our lives in these times.

Almighty God, You have given us this good land as our heritage. Grant that we remember Your generosity and constantly do Your will. Bless our land with honest industry, truthful education, and an honorable way of life. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil course of action. Grant that we, who came from many nations with many different languages, may become a united people. Support us in defending our liberties, and give those to whom we have entrusted the authority of government the spirit of wisdom, that there may be justice and peace in our land. When times are prosperous, may our hearts be thankful, and in troubled times do not let our trust in You fail, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

**All Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen**

### **Benediction**

**P The Lord bless you and keep you.**

**The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.**

**The Lord look upon you with favor and ✚ give you peace.**

**C Amen.**

**LSB 783****“Take My Life and Let It Be”**

1 Take my life and let it be Con-se - crat - ed, Lord, to Thee;  
 2 Take my hands and let them move At the im - pulse of Thy love;  
 3 Take my voice and let me sing Al-ways, on - ly for my King;  
 4 Take my sil - ver and my gold, Not a mite would I with - hold;



Take my mo - ments and my days, Let them flow in cease - less praise.  
 Take my feet and let them be Swift and beau - ti - ful for Thee.  
 Take my lips and let them be Filled with mes - sag - es from Thee.  
 Take my in - tel - lect and use Ev - 'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it Thine,  
 It shall be no longer mine;  
 Take my heart, it is Thine own,  
 It shall be Thy royal throne.

6 Take my love, my Lord, I pour  
 At Thy feet its treasure store;  
 Take myself, and I will be  
 Ever, only, all for Thee.

Tune and text: Public domain

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**News and Notes for September 12, 2021****Events this week**

Monday	9/13	Stephen Ministry Meeting	6:30pm
Wednesday	9/15	Men's Bible Study @ Gateway Hotel	7:00am
		Pastor's Bible Study @ BLC	11:00am
Sunday	9/19	Sunday Worship	11:00am

**The calendar and newsletter are here!** You can find them in your mailbox.

**Intentional Interim Pastor** – The Call Committee at their last meeting recommended that we apply for an intentional interim pastor to serve Peace and Bethlehem. David Reinke is the NW District Intentional Interim Ministry Coordinator. He has agreed to meet with our congregations to explain the program. He will be at our **joint worship service at 10 am on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at Peace.** Please note the time change for the service. A brochure is being distributed that explains it briefly. Please familiarize yourself with this and bring any questions you might have to that meeting that will be immediately following the service.

**The Human Care Committee is asking for donations for Love INC's pantry.** In September we are asking for Peanut Butter and Cereal. It can be oatmeal or boxed cereal. You can put your donations in the shopping cart in the Narthex. Thank you!

**Fellowship Coffee Hour** – Congregation members are invited to host a special event during this time! Contact the office to let us know.

**Today's Reader:** Yvonne Griesse

**Today's Organist:** Joan Stocker

**Next Week's Info (9/19):** *Preacher:* Pastor Jack, *Elder:* Bob Wurl, *Reader:* Dave Roth, *Ushers:* Bob & Mary Couchman

**In Our Prayers we pray especially for:**

- **Norma's brother, Eugene, whose cancer is spreading.**
- **Pastor Mike Von Behren recovering from a mild COVID case.**
- **Ruby who fell and broke a bone in her hand and has two black eyes.**
- **For our loved ones with cancer:** Karianna, Rudy, Becky, Scott, Debbie, Chris, Leah and Bob Van Dyke, Jim and Thresa Spurlock, Jan Pendleton, Lora, Shirley, Eugene

**Birthdays** 16 Yvonne Griesse

**Anniversaries** 16 Bob & Doris Wurl

17 Kathy Pemberton

Lorraine Mahoney