

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
Nurture with Love, Serve with Hope
FEBRUARY 23, 2025 PASTOR ELAINA SALMON

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

THE GATHERING

(Please stand.)

Confession and Forgiveness

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God,
our creator,
our protector,
our wellspring of life.

C **Amen.**

P Trusting that God receives our words and the meditations of our hearts, let us confess our sin.

(a moment of silence.)

P Merciful God,

C **you speak blessing and compassion into the world.**

**Forgive us for the ways we act
with judgment, cruelty, or indifference.**

We ignore the needs of our neighbors;

we resist your call to oppose injustice;

we give in to scarcity and fear;

we assume the worst about one another.

Cleanse us from our faults

and release us from their grasp.

Show us your lovingkindness.

**Restore our hearts and repair your world,
that we may live in Christ's ways.**

Amen.

P God proclaims these words of assurance:
"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by name. You are mine."

In Christ, you are forgiven.
In the Spirit, you are made free.
Refreshed by the waters of mercy,
live anew as beloved children of God.

C **Amen.**

Gathering Song *“As We Gather at Your Table”*

*As we gather at your table,
as we listen to your word,
help us know, O God, your presence;
let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story
till we claim it as our own;
teach us through this holy banquet
how to make Love's vict'ry known.*

*Turn our worship into witness
in the sacrament of life;
send us forth to love and serve you,
bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion
to forgive as you forgave;
may we still behold your image
in the world you died to save.*

*Gracious Spirit, help us summon
other guests to share that feast
where triumphant Love will welcome
those who had been last and least.*

*There no more will envy blind us
nor will pride our peace destroy,
as we join with saints and angels
to repeat the sounding joy.*

Greeting

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

Hymn of Praise *“Glory to You”*

*Glory to you, God, for yours is the earth;
yours is the promise, the blessing, the birth.
Ours the rejoicing for Word given frame;
ours the thanksgiving to your holy name.*

*Ours be the telling of deeds greatly done;
yours be the glory, O God, yours alone.*

Prayer of the Day

P O Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

(Please be seated.)

THE WORD

The First Reading Genesis 45:3-11, 15

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.'" And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

A The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 37

A Do not be provoked by evildoers; do not be jealous of those who do wrong.

C **For they shall soon wither like the grass, and like the green grass fade away.**

A Put your trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and find safe pasture.

C **Take delight in the Lord, who shall give you your heart's desire.**

A Commit your way to the Lord; put your trust in the Lord,
and see what God will do.

C **The Lord will make your vindication as clear as the light
and the justice of your case like the noonday sun.**

A Be still before the Lord and wait patiently.
Do not be provoked by the one who prospers, the one who succeeds in evil schemes.

C **Refrain from anger, leave rage alone; do not be provoked; it leads only to evil.**

A For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who hope in the Lord shall possess the land.

C **In a little while the wicked shall be no more;
even if you search out their place, they will not be there.**

A But the lowly shall possess the land; they will delight in abundance of peace.

C **But the deliverance of the righteous comes from you, O Lord;
you are their stronghold in time of trouble.**

A You, O Lord, will help them and rescue them;
you will rescue them from the wicked and deliver them, because in you they seek refuge.

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

A The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

(Please stand.)

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel Acclamation *Celtic Alleluia*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Verses may be sung by a leader. Then the alleluia is repeated.

Music: Fintan O'Carroll and Christopher Walker

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Gospel Luke 6:27-38

Jesus said: “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

P The Gospel of the Lord.
C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

(Please be seated.)

Sermon **Rev. Elaina Salmon**

(Please stand.)

Hymn of the Day “*Spirit, Open My Heart*”

Refrain

*Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving.
Spirit, open my heart.*

*God, replace my stony heart
with a heart that's kind and tender.
All my coldness and fear
to your grace I now surrender. Refrain*

*Write your love upon my heart
as my law, my goal, my story.
In each thought, word, and deed,
may my living bring you glory. Refrain*

*May I weep with those who weep;
share the joy of friend and neighbor.
As I live from day to day,
love will be my finest labor. Refrain*

Prayers of the People

A With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

(a moment of silence)

A Surprising God, you call us to love our enemies and to show kindness in the face of cruelty. Let our actions be a shining witness of your overwhelming grace for all. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

A As animals hibernate and fields lay dormant, let them be a reminder that life and faith are not static but always changing and growing. May we, with all creation, trust that the ending of one thing promises life in a new way. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

A We pray for leaders and policymakers who work to reduce violence in our nations, cities, and towns. Give your wisdom and discernment amid heated arguments and differing viewpoints. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

A We pray for the victims of abuse and violence. Provide safe shelter and new beginnings to those experiencing domestic violence and dangerous situations. Enfold with love all who seek your healing care. God of grace,
C **hear our prayer.**

A Empower our faith communities to be signs of your gracious love. Bless the local ministries of parish nursing and caregiving, that they will be a voice for those in need in our communities. God of grace,
C **hear our prayer.**

A We give thanks for the enduring witness of those who have died before us. May their lives in you provide a witness of your everlasting grace. God of grace,
C **hear our prayer.**

A We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people.
C **Amen.**

Sharing of Christ's Peace

P The peace of Christ be with you always.
C **And also with you.**

(Please be seated.)

THE MEAL

Invitation to the Offering

P Through Jesus, we have come to know the abundance of God. Let us give generously, as has been given to us.

Offering

(Please stand.)

Offertory Song *“In the Singing”*

*In the singing, in the silence,
in the hands expectant, open,
in the blessing, in the breaking,
in your presence at this table,*

Refrain
Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ,
be the wine of grace;
Jesus, Christ, Jesus Christ,
be the bread of peace.

In the question, in the answer,
in the moment of acceptance,
in the heart's cry, in the healing,
in the circle of your people, Refrain

Offertory Prayer

- A God of grace, your love reaches to the heavens,
and your abundance to the depths of the seas.
Bless what we offer to your service:
our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts.
Let us overflow with gratitude and generosity,
now and always.
- C **Amen.**

Eucharistic Prayer

- P The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**
P Lift up your hearts.
C **We lift them to the Lord.**
P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**
- P Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.
- In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.
- Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.
- For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
- C **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**
- P Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,

and unite the will of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

P Remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray,

C 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, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

P The joy of the Lord is our strength.

Come, eat this meal of gladness.

(Please be seated.)

Communion Distribution

Communion Songs

“Lamb of God”

LAMB OF GOD

Mass of a Joyful Heart
Steve Angrisano

Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sins of the world: have mer - cy on us.
sins of the world: grant us peace.

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“Blest Be the Tie that Binds”

*Blest be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love;
the unity of heart and mind
is like to that above.*

*Before our Father's throne
we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
our comforts and our cares.*

*We share our mutual woes,
our mutual burdens bear,
and often for each other flows
the sympathizing tear.*

*From sorrow, toil, and pain,
and sin we shall be free;
and perfect love and friendship reign
through all eternity.*

(Please stand.)

Communion Blessing

- P May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
C **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

- A Nourishing God,
at this table you have refreshed us
with holy gifts of food and drink.
Strengthen us for service,
and send us out to embody your good news
of liberation and healing for the sake of the world.
In the name of Christ we pray,
C **Amen.**

SENDING

Blessing

- P The Spirit of the triune God
bless you with joy,
anoint you with compassion,
and send you in love.
C **Amen.**

Sending Song “*Make Me a Channel of Your Peace*”

*Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.*

*Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, only light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy.*

*O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love with all my soul.*

*Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving of ourselves that we receive,*

and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Dismissal

P Go in peace to nurture with love and serve with hope.

C **Thanks be to God!**

PRAYERS FOR THE COMMUNITY

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| MariLynn Bergmark | Pat Johnson | Brilee Robbins |
| Sharon Bolerjack | Caty K | Ken Rose |
| Hazel Brant | Zepplyn Killmer | Frank Roy |
| Scott Browne | Lenny Kobilca | Ben Sabourin |
| Anthony Campagna | Carrie Koon | George Scheel |
| Gary Cobbett | Rev. John Lang | Bernie Schroeder |
| Sidney Colburn | Nancy Lang | Tim Schroeder |
| Jim Connelly | Sue Lucheon | Virginia Schroeder |
| Beau Dowling | Scott Lundgren | Josh Shaw |
| Maggie Driscoll | Dede Machowski | Sharon Skopec |
| Finley Engnell | Hanna Mau | Gene Sobba |
| Elwood Faulhaber | Jim McKeever | Gary Sperka |
| Judy Faulhaber | Ruth Ann Miller | Burt Swartz |
| Abby Galvin | Omni Rook Myers | Dom Thielmann |
| David Gilchrist | Linda Nelson | Kayley Koter Taddeo |
| Chriss Hassel | Jane Nilles | Chuck Vlcek |
| Marie Heeren | Dave Nommenson | Cindy Vorel |
| Mike Hoffman | Dick Pierce | Kyle Williams |
| Bob Hoster | Charlotte Pohlman | |
| Monica Johnson | Misty Pounder | |

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For those we name in our hearts, and for those who have not yet found Jesus.

Acknowledgements

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVING TODAY — Glenda Anderson

ACOLYTES — Edith Boyle and Ella White

MUSICIAN — Sue Gray

TECH CREW — Gary Gray, Sue Gray and Zach Howell

NEW MEMBER MIXER

Come join us at our New Member Mixer on Sunday, March 2 at 9:15am. Over light refreshments, we'll mix it up, learn new names, and get to know our new members! All are welcome!

ASH WEDNESDAY

The holy season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on March 5. Worship will be at 7pm.

FOR THE BEAUTY OF THE EARTH: PLANTING PARTY!

Our theme for Lent is "For the Beauty of the Earth," based on the hymn of the same name. We're invited to spend the season marveling in and caring for creation. One of creation's marvels is watching plants grow. So Sunday, March 9, following worship, join us in the Community Room to plant a seed to take home, nurture, and watch grow over the season. We'll also plant some extras for our pantry guests.

A DONATION TO THE NURSERY PROGRAM was given in memory of Archie Patterson by Dave & Mary Staudt.

DONATIONS TO THE OPEN PANTRY were given in memory of Nancy Iwan by Ed & Glenda Anderson, Sheila Reiter, Theresa Swiercek, Mary Zimmermann, Dave & Mary Staudt, Pam Zukoski and Julie Rhodes.

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