

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 27, 2026 10:30 a.m.



*“Touched by the Gospel, we seek to be instruments of God’s Peace,
for the sake of the World.”*

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
1747 W. Milham Avenue ♦ Portage, MI 49024
Pastor Rachel Laughlin
Church phone: 269/343-3453 ♦ fax: 269/343-2025
Website: popportage.org
Prayer-mail: prayer@popportage.org
Find us on Facebook: *Prince of Peace, Portage, MI-ELCA*

WELCOME IN THE NAME OF CHRIST!



Entering Worship

- Fully accessible restrooms (men's, women's, single-stall) are located behind you as you face the altar. The women's room and nursery have changing tables.
- People of all ages and stages are encouraged to worship together. A staffed nursery is available 9 AM – Noon.
- Many people enjoy prayerful quiet in the Sanctuary before worship begins to help center themselves. By keeping conversation in the Gathering Space before worship, you are giving the gift of this peace to your neighbors.
- All are welcome to share Christ's communion regardless of age or faith tradition. The bread is gluten, nut, and dairy free. Wine and grape juice are available.

Embodying Praise

- Postures are a way in which we engage the body in worship. These movements (sitting, standing, making the sign of the cross) are optional; please engage in them only as you are comfortable or able.
- Some brains need a quiet activity to help them learn. Feel free to borrow a worship bag or a fidget toy to help your brain and body stay engaged. Ask an usher for assistance.
- If your body would benefit from extra motion during worship, you are welcome to get up and move about during the service. The Playground in front of the left pews is equipped with quiet activities and soft toys for little ones. Parents are invited to sit nearby to assist children in engaging in worship in an age-appropriate manner. The service is audible in the Gathering Space, if you need to step out for a time. For children who need a louder place to play, the staffed nursery is available to the left as you exit the sanctuary.
- Hearing assistance devices direct clearer sound directly to your ears. They are available from the ushers. If you use Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids, see the back of the bulletin for instructions on connecting to the assistive listening system in our sanctuary.

Engaging in Community

- Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we strive to be an open, welcoming place for all people. Please join us in the Gathering Space after worship for snacks, coffee, and fellowship.
- This bulletin may be recycled in the basket on the floor near the glass door to the front parking lot. We invite you to take home the *Peace Proclamations* page with announcements and upcoming events.
- If you'd like to learn more about our community you can: greet Pastor Rachel at the door by the baptismal font after worship, visit the welcome table to pick up informational brochures or staff business cards, or visit our website: www.popportage.org.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

MUSIC FOR THE BEGINNING OF WORSHIP

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ arr. Anne Krentz, Organ

WELCOME

Stand

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Pastor: Beloved of God, creation sings of God's goodness. The rivers clap their hands. The trees rejoice. The birds greet each new morning with praise. Yet we do not always join creation's song. We forget that we are creatures, beloved and dependent upon God. We wound one another. We misuse the gifts entrusted to us. We turn from the Creator's love. Still, God calls us—not away in shame, but toward abundant mercy. Let us tell the truth before God and one another.

CONFESSION

P: Creator God,

C: We confess that we have forgotten who we are.

P: You made us from the dust of the earth and breathed into us the breath of life.

C: Yet we have lived as though everything belongs to us instead of remembering that everything belongs to you.

P: You have surrounded us with beauty, wonder, and abundance.

C: Too often we hurry past your gifts, take them for granted, or use them without gratitude.

P: You have called us to love our neighbors, and to care for your good creation.

C: Forgive us when our choices bring harm, when we value convenience over compassion, consumption over contentment, or fear over faithful stewardship.

P: When the world is broken, when creation groans, when hearts are weary—

P: Teach us again to listen, to wonder, to love, and to live as your beloved people.

ALL: Renew us by your Holy Spirit, that our lives may join the song of all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

FORGIVENESS

P: Listen! Even now, creation proclaims God's mercy. Morning follows night. Spring follows winter. Life rises from the earth. In Jesus Christ, God has entered this world in love, borne its sorrow, healed its brokenness, and opened the way to new life. Therefore, as a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

GATHERING SONG

The Trumpets Sound, The Angels Sing

ELW 531

GREETING

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

All: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray,

All: God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings.

Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Sit

THE CHILDREN'S SERMON

WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

FIRST READING Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

The word of the Lord came to me: What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die.

Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

R: Word of God. Word of Life.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM Psalm 25:1-9

R: To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.

**High: Let none who look to you be put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.
Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.**

Low: Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.
Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.

**All: Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.
You are gracious and upright, O Lord; therefore you teach sinners in your way.
You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way. and I will recount your greatness.**

SECOND READING Philippians 2:1-13

If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

R: Word of God. Word of Life.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

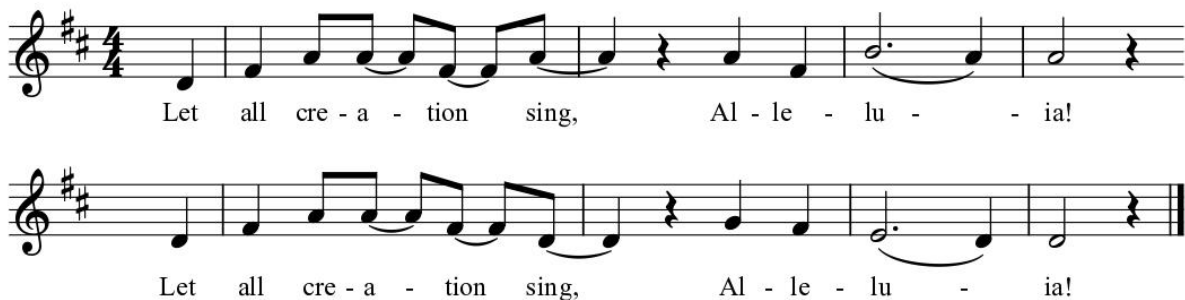
Stand

GOSPEL ACCLIMATION

Sung first by Choir; then by All

Let All Creation Sing
Gospel Acclamation

Hans Peterson
Carol Meier



GOSPEL READING Matthew 21:23-32

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 21st chapter.

All: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sit

SERMON Pastor Rachel Laughlin

Stand

HYMN OF THE DAY

Lead Me, Guide Me

ELW 768

APOSTLES' CREED

Asst: Joining with the saints of every time and place, we confess our faith:

**All: 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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION



*After "Generous God" worshipers respond "**pour out your love.**"
Repeat "**Hope of all creation**" after the completion of the intercessory prayers.*

WE SHARE IN HIS MEAL:

SHARING OF THE PEACE

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: And also with you.

Worshippers share a sign of God's peace with one another, greeting each other with words like "Peace be with you... And also with you."

Sit

TEMPLE TALK

OFFERING Please date and complete the fellowship registration pad.

For members of the Prince of Peace community, an offering is our expression of gratitude to God and a way we share God's love with the world. If you are visiting with us today, your presence is already a great gift.

OFFERING RESPONSE

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ ELW 674
Stand for last verse

LITURGICAL HAND WASHING

I wash my hands in innocence, and go around your altar, O Lord, singing aloud a song of thanksgiving, and telling all your wondrous deeds. Psalm 26:6-7

OFFERING PRAYER

Asst: Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever.

All: Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING - Grace Before the Meal

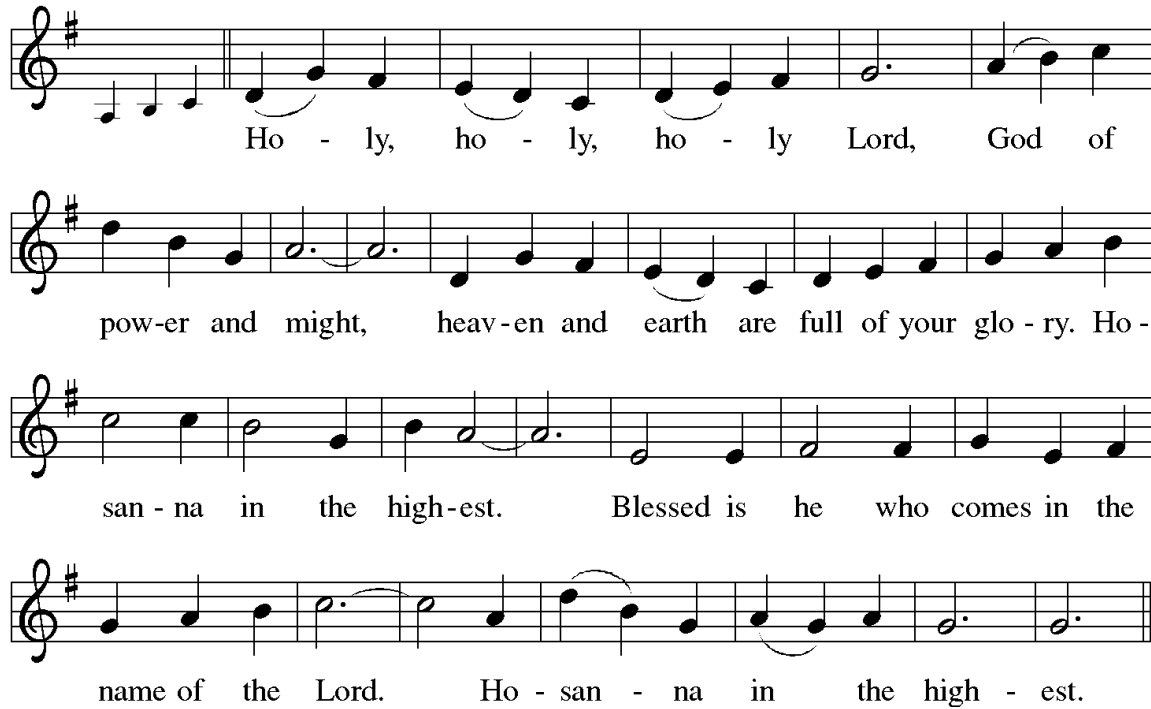
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

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.

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



P: 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 to you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it 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.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

All: 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 THE MEAL

P: If you desire to receive what God offers, come to this Table. Come with your faith and your doubt. Come with your questions and your hopes. Come with your grief and your love. Come taste the Lord's goodness. There is room for you here because this is Christ's table. You are welcome.

Sit

HOLY COMMUNION - The Lord's Supper

All are welcome at Christ's table regardless of age or membership status. All communion servers will have sanitized their hands before handling the communion elements. Ushers will direct you to come forward. The pastor and assisting minister will distribute the bread (gluten-free) and the other servers will distribute the wine (red) or grape juice (white). Individually packaged gluten free wafers and sets of completely sealed elements (wheat wafer and grape juice) are available on the stands near the bread distributors. You may pick one of those up yourself, if you prefer. You may place your empty cup in the baskets on the tables as you return to your seat. If you would prefer not to receive communion, you are invited to come forward for a blessing. Please cross your arms over your chest to indicate your preference to the servers.

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 HYMNS:

ELW 814 Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am

Congregation first hums the tune, then sings the hymn, then hums again.

ACS 1084

God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me

1 God, be the love to search and keep me; God, be the prayer to
2 Bind to my-self the name of Ho - ly, great cloud of wit - ness -
3 Bright-ness of sun and glow of moon-light, flash - ing of light - ning,
4 Walk - ing be-hind to hem my jour - ney, go - ing a - head to
5 Christ in the eyes of all who see me, Christ in the ears that

move my voice; God, be the strength to now up - hold me:
es en - fold; proph - ets, a - pos - tles, an - gels wit - ness:
strength of wind, depth of the sea to soil of plan - et:
light my way, and from be - neath, a - bove, and all ways:
hear my voice, Christ in the hearts of all who know me:

Refrain
O Christ, sur - round me; O Christ, sur - round me.

TABLE BLESSING

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Asst.: God of plenty, you have nourished our bodies with the fruits of the earth, our minds with the assurance that there is enough, and our spirits with the promise of Christ's true presence. Send us from this table to welcome as we have been welcomed, to feed as we have been fed and to forgive as we have been forgiven, for the sake of the world you love.

All: Amen.

SENDING OF COMMUNION

Communion ministers may be sent to take the sacrament to those who are absent.

Pastor: God of Love, as Jesus called disciples to follow him, bless those who go forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick/homebound/imprisoned. May these gifts be signs of our love and prayers, that through the sharing of the body and blood of Christ, all may know your grace and healing revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

WE ARE SENT OUT TO SERVE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Worshipers are invited to briefly share announcements not listed in the weekly Peace Proclamations - Blessings (anniversaries, birthdays, births or new jobs), Prayer Concerns, or Answered Prayers.

So that all present on person and live-streaming can see and hear you, come up the ramp to the chancel then go to the pulpit to give your announcement.

Stand

FINAL BLESSING

P: God the Creator made the tiny goldfish and elegant sharks, looked at them and said,

All: You are GOOD!

P: God the Creator made the croaky frogs, looked at them and said,

All: You are GOOD!

P: God the Creator made the birds of the sky, looked at them and said,

All: You are GOOD!

P: God the Creator made the rainbows that shine, looked at them and said,

All: You are GOOD!

P: God the Creator made you and me, and all of humanity, looked at us and said,

All: You are GOOD!

P: God the Creator bless you and keep you, today and every day in love, peace, and joy,

All: Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus

ELW 802

DISMISSAL

Asst: Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!

All: Thanks be to God.

MUSIC FOR THE CLOSE OF WORSHIP

Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus arr. Paul Manz

This Week's Servers

September 27, 2026

Worship Asst: Duran Cooper
Reader: Melissa Ottesen
Ushers: Greg Guthrie, Kay Kincaid
Technology: Mike Whately, Mark Clyne,
Paul Swodzinski
Prayer Station: Lynne Wathen
Sacristy Asst.: Kathy Eklov
Communion Asst.: Cam Hart
Altar Guild: Diane Snyder
Fellowship Host:
Fellowship Treats: Alex Baas-Peterson
Church Lockup: Steve Pendziszewski

Next Week's Servers

October 4, 2026

Worship Asst: Stephenie Logan
Reader: Gary Bischof
Ushers: Ron and Erin Leverage
Technology: Mike Whately, Paul Swodzinski,
Mark Clyne
Prayer Station:
Sacristy Asst.: Laila Poisson
Communion Asst.: Sandy Rosker, Pam Timm,
Cam Hart, Annika Eklov
Altar Guild: Gail MacNellis
Fellowship Host:
Fellowship Treats:
Church Lockup: Dennis Stalker

pop_listen2



Hearing Aid Compatible Assistive Listening System

1. Use the left QR code to connect to the *pop_listen2* Wi-Fi network.
 2. Use the right QR code to download the *ListenWIFI* app, either from the Apple Store or the Google Play Store.
 3. Open the *ListenWIFI* app and select "POP Service."
 4. You should now be receiving audio in your hearing aids.
- If you need assistance, see an usher.

ListenWIFI app



Living Voice of Creation: A Liturgy for the Feast of Creation in Christ, Provided by Nourishing Vocation with Children through the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community St. Olaf College Northfield, MN

Music by Carol Meier and Hans Peterson ©2026 Carol Meier Music & Dakota Road Music

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ELW Holy Communion Setting 1 and hymns: Permission under Augsburg Fortress Annual License SAS006200.

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Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Staff

Church phone: 269-343-3453

Pastor: Rachel Laughlin ext 11
Music Director: Janet Hill ext 16
Engagement Coordinator: Em Witteveen ext 12
Admin. Asst.: Ashley Wineland ext 10
Tech Manager: Mike Whately ext 13
Accountant: Marilyn Storch ext 14
Nursery: Melissa Copeland
& Megan Zimmerman ext 17
Custodian: Charles Boyd ext 20
Care Team Email: prayer@popportage.org

Use the QR code below to donate online to
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
and its ministries. See the Peace
Proclamations announcement
page for more details.



When announcements are memorable, everyone benefits! People are better able to remember the important information you are sharing when they aren't overwhelmed with too much of it at once. Please use these templates as a guide for making an effective and engaging announcement during worship.

To get your information included in the Peace Proclamations, bulletin, announcement slides, or newsletter please e-mail Ashley at secretary@popportage.org by Wednesdays for weekly publications and by the third Thursday of the month for the monthly newsletter.

POP Announcement-Making Tips

Memorable announcements are engaging, to the point, and apply to most of the people present. Please include the following:

Your Name: _____

Your role or group: _____

Event/News/Update: _____

Date and time of event: _____

What you want people to do:

☐ Sign up ☐ Attend/Participate ☐ Read ☐ Look online

☐ Other: _____

Where to find more information:

☐ Website ☐ Peace Procs/Bulletin insert ☐ Newsletter

☐ Other: _____

☐ By contacting a person: _____

☐ e-mail them ☐ call them ☐ talk after worship

Please do not share personal contact information on the livestream.

POP God Moment/Life Event Sharing Tips

Sharing glimpses of God at work in our lives brings our community joy and helps us connect faith to our daily lives. As you prepare to share, take a moment to organize your thoughts so your story will be clear and impactful. Thank you for your willingness to share your story!

Your Name: _____

Life Event: _____

☐ Requesting prayers ☐ Saying thank you

☐ Celebrating a joy ☐ Update after a prayer request

☐ Announce a birthday (*please let the musician know in advance*)