



September 27, 2026

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
14531 Old Olga Road
Fort Myers, FL**

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14531 Old Olga Road S.E.

Ft Myers, FL 33905

Sunday Worship: 10:30 AM

Sunday School & Bible Class: 11:30 AM

Church Office: **(239) 694-3878**

bethlehemlutheranfortmyers.org

E-Mail: bethlehemlc@gmail.com

Rev. Karl P. Glander, Pastor

Pastor's Cell Phone: **(239) 293-1489**

Pastor's E-Mail Address:

pastorkarlglander@gmail.com

Linda Kirsch, Church Secretary

God instructs, guides, and protects us.

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love.

Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you help someone who is struggling to choose the right thing to do?

Lifting our hands is one way to show praise to God. In the Old Testament there are people (like Leah and Moses) who lift their hands in praise to

God. This is an ancient pose of prayer and a motion used to open a person to receiving God's blessing. Think or talk about when and how you pray (kneeling, folded hands, etc.). Then lift your hands and pray: ***"To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust."*** Amen. (Psalm 25:1-2a)



IT IS GREAT TO HAVE YOU IN WORSHIP WITH US TODAY!

Here at Bethlehem Lutheran, we believe in the teachings of the Bible as taught by Jesus and the apostles and strive to live our lives in accord with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are all fellow sinners who live together in the mercy and grace of Jesus. Jesus is the heart and center of all that we say and do as we serve Him and live in Christian love with one another.

If you would like to learn more about this church, or are looking for a church family, please talk to our pastor or one of the elders. They would be happy to talk with you! Regardless of whether you join or not, we welcome you and your family to worship with us any time! We want to know who you are, so please provide your contact information in the Friendship Book as it is passed

during the Offertory. If you are visiting, honor us by signing the Guest Register in the Narthex.

If you have a prayer request, please fill out a Blue Prayer Card from the pew rack and usher will be collecting them.

Thank you. Come visit us again sometime soon and may the Lord richly bless you!

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 27, 2026

PRELUDE

✙ ORDER OF WORSHIP ✙

HYMN OF INVOCATION

571 GOD LOVED THE WORLD SO THAT HE GAVE

- 1 God loved the world so that He gave
His only Son the lost to save,
That all who would in Him believe
Should everlasting life receive.

2 Christ Jesus is the ground of faith,
Who was made flesh and suffered death;
All then who trust in Him alone
Are built on this chief cornerstone.

3 God would not have the sinner die;
His Son with saving grace is nigh;
His Spirit in the Word declares
How we in Christ are heaven's heirs.

4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son
Forgives all sins which you have done;
And, justified by Jesus' blood,
Your Baptism grants the highest good.

5 If you are sick, if death is near,
This truth your troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus saves your soul from death;
That is the firmest ground of faith.

(Please rise)

△ 6 Glory to God the Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To You, O blessèd Trinity,
Be praise now and eternally!

+ CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION +

INVOCATION

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

C Amen.

EXHORTATION

LSB 151

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.)

CONFESSION OF SINS

LSB 151

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what

we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

ABSOLUTION

LSB 151

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✝ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

(Please be seated)

+ SERVICE OF THE WORD +

RESPONSIVE PSALM

Psalms 25:1-10

Teach Me Your Paths

P To you, O LORD,
I lift up my soul.

C O my God, in you I trust;
let me not be put to shame;
let not my enemies exult over me.

P Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;
they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

C Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.

P Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all the day long.

C Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love,

for they have been from of old.

P Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

C Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

P He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.

C All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love
and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

(Please rise)

KYRIE

LSB152

P In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C **Amen.**

♪ GLORIA IN EXCELSIS ♪

LSB 204

C 1 To God on high be glory
And peace to all the earth;
Goodwill from God in heaven
Proclaimed at Jesus' birth!
We praise and bless You, Father;

**Your holy name, we sing—
Our thanks for Your great glory,
Lord God, our heav'nly King.**

**2 To You, O sole-begotten,
The Father's Son, we pray;
O Lamb of God, our Savior,
You take our sins away.
Have mercy on us, Jesus;
Receive our heartfelt cry,
Where You in pow'r are seated
At God's right hand on high—**

**3 For You alone are holy;
You only are the Lord.
Forever and forever,
Be worshiped and adored;
You with the Holy Spirit
Alone are Lord Most High,
In God the Father's glory.
“Amen!” our glad reply.**

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.
Almighty God, You exalted Your Son to the place of all honor and authority. Enlighten our minds by Your Holy Spirit that, confessing Jesus as Lord, we may be led into all truth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

(Please be seated)

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Ezekiel 18:1–4, 25–32*
The Soul Who Sins Shall Die

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²“What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’? ³As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die. . . .

²⁵“Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? ²⁶When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. ²⁷Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. ²⁸Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?

³⁰“Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE

Philippians 2:1–4, 14–18

Christ's Example of Humility

¹If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. . . .

¹⁴Do all things without grumbling or questioning, ¹⁵that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

¹⁷Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad

and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

(Please rise)

♪ ALLELUIA AND VERSE ♪

LSB 156

C Alleluia.

Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia, alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 21:23–27

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew,
the twenty-first chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

The Authority of Jesus Challenged

²³When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who

gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ²⁶But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” ²⁷So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

SERMON HYMN

655 LORD, KEEP US STEADFAST IN YOUR **WORD**

- 1 Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;
Curb those who by deceit or sword
Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son
And bring to naught all He has done.
- 2 Lord Jesus Christ, Your pow'r make known,
For You are Lord of lords alone;
Defend Your holy Church that we
May sing Your praise eternally.
- 3 O Comforter of priceless worth,
Send peace and unity on earth;
Support us in our final strife
And lead us out of death to life.

SERMON

....

. . . Pastor Karl

(Please rise)

APOSTLES' CREED

**☐ 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.**

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

[P] Lord, in Your mercy

C Hear our prayer.

(Please be seated)

OFFERING

♪OFFERTORY RESPONSE♪

(Please rise)

956 CREATE IN ME

- 1 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence;
and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;
and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.

♪LORD'S PRAYER♪

**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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
Forever. Amen.

(Please be seated)

CLOSING HYMN

722 LORD, TAKE MY HAND AND LEAD ME

- 1 Lord, take my hand and lead me
Upon life's way;
Direct, protect, and feed me
From day to day.
Without Your grace and favor
I go astray;
So take my hand, O Savior,
And lead the way.

2 Lord, when the tempest rages,
I need not fear,
For You, the Rock of Ages,
Are always near.
Close by Your side abiding,
I fear no foe,
For when Your hand is guiding,
In peace I go.

3 Lord, when the shadows lengthen
And night has come,
I know that You will strengthen
My steps toward home.
Then nothing can impede me,
O blessed Friend;
So take my hand and lead me
Unto the end.

BENEDICTION

LSB 166

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POSTLUDE



SERVING IN THE LORD'S HOUSE TODAY

Preacher: Rev. Karl P. Glander

Organist: Holly Bell

Flutist: Nancy Rybak

Bells: Debbie Jackow

The Sound System: Jeff Kirsch

Elder: Klaus Naumann

Altar Guild: Emmy Larson, Betty Willis

Ushers: Greg and Yvonne Murray

Reader: Greg Murray

**Signup Sheets in the Fellowship Hall. This is
your chance to get involved in worship.**

Introducing "**GIFTS OF THANKSGIVING**"

For many years, our congregation has beautifully adorned the sanctuary with flowers to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, and the lives of loved ones. As our traditions evolve, we are introducing

a new way to honor these special milestones: **The Gifts of Thanksgiving Program.**

Instead of altar flowers, you are invited to make a commemorative financial gift on your special day. These gifts directly sustain our church home and care for our church family. When you give, you can choose to direct your offering to one of four traditional areas of need:

Where would you like your gift used?

The Church Home: Supporting our mortgage and debt reduction.

The Church Grounds: Maintaining our lawn, trees, and outdoor spaces.

The Church Structure: Funding building maintenance, roofing, and structural repairs.

The Church Family: Providing direct benevolence to members in financial need.

Just like our traditional flower calendar, your milestone and dedication will be printed right here in the Sunday bulletin so the congregation can celebrate and pray with you.

Our Response to God's Love

Worship Service – 47

Adult Bible Class – 13

COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Join us in the Fellowship Hall after the 10:30 service for coffee and goodies. The refreshments this week are from The Murray's. Thank you!

ADULT SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY and SUNDAY SCHOOL

Pastor Glander leads a Bible study in the Fellowship Hall after the 10:30 service and Sunday school for the children is in the classroom.

MONDAY MORNING GATHERINGS!

Join us on Monday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall for a time of health, fun, and fellowship. We will start each gathering with a gentle session of **Chair Exercises** to stretch and relax. Afterward, we will transition ourselves into other group activities. Everyone is invited to attend! **Bring a Friend:** Neighbors, family, and friends are always welcome! Please bring your own ideas of what activities, crafts, or games we might do together at these future gatherings. We hope to see you there!

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

10:30 A.M. This gathering offers an opportunity to study God's Word together in the Fellowship Hall.

PRAYERS FOR HEALTH AND HEALING

For good test results, treatment, positive thinking, healing, and comfort during cancer treatments, for those suffering from addiction, mental illness and for healing, strength, comfort, and peace for family we pray for:

Nancy, McGee family, Christine, Sonia, Chelsie, Kyle and family, Jack, Melinda, Sandi, Pam, Paul, Debbie, Amy, Jennifer, Bill, Denny, Guatemala, David, Holly, Matt, Maggie, Doug, Johanna, Kerry, Addison, Dustin, Peggy, Andrea, Jackson, Sue, Pat, Tim, Phil S., Tina, Thomas, Nick, Felix, Cindy, Klaus, Linda, Gail, Johnny, Wendy, Les Dreischerf, Sharon, Will, Melissa Johnson, Barb, Kayla, Katie, John, Jim Rode, Becky, Johnny, Catherine, Kim, Kayla, Rose, Helen, Tasha, Yvonne, Cody, Dan, Carl, Holly, Rose, Diane Pfaff, Ken Zanto, Gary, Chris Tobeck, Keith Tobeck, Paul, James and his family, John and Judy Wittenberg, And those in our hearts

For Those Who have recently lost loved ones:
The family and friends of John Wittenberg, The
family and friends of Meme

**PRAYERS for Homebound, Assisted Living,
Nursing Home**

**Those who can't attend common worship that
they would find comfort knowing that the Lord
is with them.**

Pam, Edison and Karen Johnson, Chester and
Linda Rust

PRAYERS FOR PROTECTION

For our full-time troops and public servants, for
travel, missionaries, and for peace and protection
for families.

missionaries in Guatemala, Son-in-law (being
deployed for a year in the Coast Guard), Smiths
(missionaries)

**Dear Lord, we come to You today with heavy
hearts, as we lift up those who are in need of
prayer. We ask that You would bring healing
and restoration to their body, mind, and spirit
Amen.**