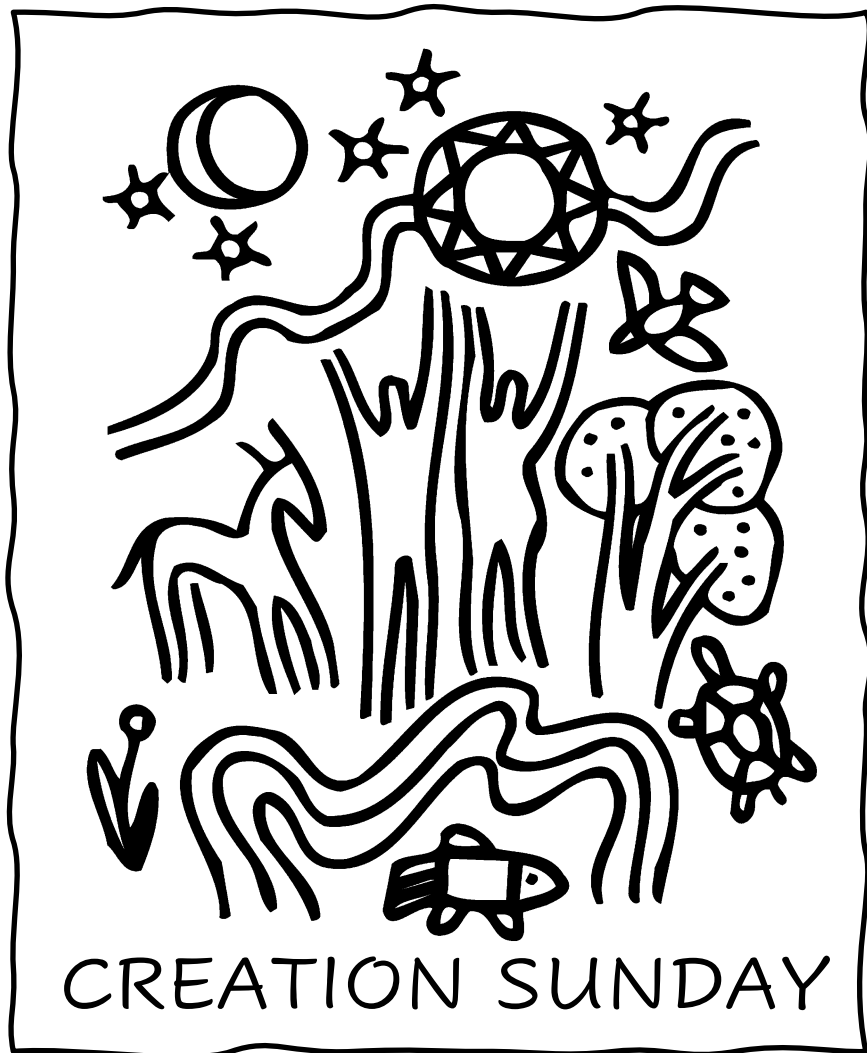


BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
Member of "One in Christ Lutheran Parish"
Joice, Iowa



CREATION SUNDAY

Pentecost 15

September 6, 2026

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

“A Member of One in Christ Lutheran Parish”

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Creation Sunday

September 6, 2026

COME, HOLY SPIRIT!

We joyfully welcome all guests who are worshipping with us this morning. We celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit, who has called, gathered, enlightened, and sanctified the whole Christians Church. It is this Spirit of God who empowers us to be forgiven and to forgive, and unites the Church as one body in Christ.

SPIRIT, SET OUR HEARTS ON FIRE!

ORDER OF WORSHIP

*(*Stand as you are able)*

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

✠ GATHERING ✠

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the People of God

***Confession**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, our hope, our heart, our home. Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, we are often numb to the pain of the world around us, resistant to change, and reluctant to love our neighbors as ourselves.

We sin against your good creation, failing to be faithful stewards of the land, the sea, and all their creatures. Make your home among us once more, O God, naming us beloved and opening our hearts to do your will. Amen.

***Experiencing God's Grace – The Good News**

Hear the good news is for us all: God knows us, forgives us by †
Jesus Christ, freeing us to love the world as we have been loved.

Amen.

***Gathering Song** “*My God, How Wonderful Thou Art*” #863

***Apostolic Greeting** p. 120

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

And also with you.

***Sharing of the Peace**

***Kyrie** p. 120

***Canticle of Praise** “*Glory to God in the Highest*” p. 122

***Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray.

**O God, in whom we live and move and have our being,
in Christ you created the worlds, and your Spirit
breathes life into the universe. We praise you for your
wondrous creation. Bless us and all your handiwork with
your infinite light, and direct our lives to the care of this
good earth, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior
and Lord. Amen.**

✠ **WORD** ✠

God speaks to us in scripture, reading, preaching, and song.

Congregation participates in the reading by speaking the bolded sections

SCRIPTURE READING (Participatory) Genesis 1:1—2:4a

At the beginning of time, God the Creator, God the powerful Word, and God the life-giving Spirit form the earth and all its inhabitants. God sees that all this created work is good and then rests on the seventh day.

¹ When God began to create the heavens and the earth, ² the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³

Then God said,

“Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. ⁶ And God said,

“Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷ So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome.

And it was so.

⁸ God called the dome Sky.

And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. ⁹ And God said,

“Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.”

And it was so.

¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas.

And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said,

“Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.”

And it was so.

¹² The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it.

And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ **And God said,**

“Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.”

And it was so.

¹⁶ God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness.

And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰ **And God said,**

“Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” ²¹ So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm and every winged bird of every kind.

And God saw that it was good.

²² God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”

²³ **And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. ²⁴ And God said,**

“Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And

it was so. ²⁵ God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind and the cattle of every kind and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind.

And God saw that it was good. ²⁶ Then God said,

“Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

²⁷ So God created humans in God’s own image, created them in the image of God; created them male and female.²⁸

God blessed them, and God said to them,

“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

²⁹ **God said,**

“See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.”

And it was so. ³¹ God saw everything God had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their multitude. ² On the sixth day God finished the work God had done, and rested on the seventh day from all the work God had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that God had done in creation.

⁴ These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Scripture Reading

Acts 17:22a, 24-28

In Athens, Paul faces the challenge of proclaiming the gospel to Greeks who know nothing of either Jewish or Christian tradition. He proclaims that the “unknown god” whom they worship is the true Lord of heaven and earth who will judge the world with justice through Jesus, whom God has raised from the dead.

^{22a} Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, ²⁴ “The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶ From one ancestor he made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷ so that they would search for God and perhaps fumble about for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we, too, are his offspring.’

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Gospel Acclamation

“Alleluia”

p. 124

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

*GOSPEL READING:

John 1:1-5

The holy gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

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

Sermon

Pastor Burton Everist

Song of the Day “*Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*” #834

***Nicene Creed** p. 126

***Prayers of the Community**

We join with Christians far and near to worship God the Creator, praying for the earth and for all in need.

...Hear us, O God, **Your mercy is great.**

✠ **MEAL** ✠

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

Offering

***Offertory Song** “*Create in Me*” #186

***Great Thanksgiving**

Dialog and Preface p. 129

“Holy, Holy, Holy” p. 130

***Words of Institution** p. 130

***Lord’s Prayer** p. 134

Communion Distribution

Communion Blessing

✠ **SENDING** ✠

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

***Blessing** p. 136

***Three-Fold Amen**

***Sending Song** “Earth and All Stars!” #731

***Dismissal** p. 137

Go in peace. You are empowered by the Spirit.

Thanks be to God

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Jayne Shaffer

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Becky Martinson

Organist

Kris Gerdes

Community Is Complicated

Navigating life with other humans is not always easy. We who call ourselves the church likely know this all too well. Perhaps you've witnessed church council meetings gone awry, frustrating conversations about the budget, or intense disagreements over worship styles. Maybe your faith community has had to navigate conflicting visions for mission and outreach, welcome and hospitality, or diversity and justice. Maybe the generational or political divides in your community feel like rifts too big to cross. As the church, we are called to wrestle with difficult questions about faith and life, but at times, even with the best of intentions, we leave one another feeling hurt, overlooked, or misunderstood.

Jesus knew a thing or two about life in community. He knew what it was like to be betrayed by the ones he loved. He shared meals with people of different backgrounds, people whose identities at times put them at odds with one another. Even his disciples never quite seemed to be on the same page! Yet Jesus knew that despite the complexity of these situations, faith is best practiced in community. Accompanying one another, sharing one another's burdens, encouraging one another, forgiving one another, and holding each other accountable are vital to the Christian life.

Therefore, managing conflict is not something to be taken lightly. Disagreements are not to be just swept under the rug, ignored until the next issue emerges. We are instead called to embrace truth-telling, courage, accountability, and compassion in our dealings with one another. The work of conflict resolution is not easy or glamorous. In fact, it can be awkward and downright painful. But it is holy work. And by God's grace, it can be an invitation to build a community that more truly reflects God's love poured out for the whole world.