



Community of Christ Lutheran Church
Holy Cross Day, Sunday, September 14, 2025
8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.
Pastor Stephen C. Bond



THE GATHERING

Welcome

Pastor Stephen Bond

Musical Prelude

“Bridegroom of Our Soul” by John Blackburn Eric Dickey

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

“Confession and Forgiveness”

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, our maker, our helper, and our keeper.
Amen.

Trusting in God’s mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Merciful and loving God, **we are your stiff-necked people. We trample on the needy. We grumble about your grace to others. We turn away from the poor. Have mercy on us and forgive our sins. Rejoice over us as ones who were lost and have been found. Amen.**

Even when we are faithless, God remains faithful. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. You who were lost have been found. In the name of ☩ Jesus, your sins are forgiven! **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn

“In the Cross of Christ I Glory”

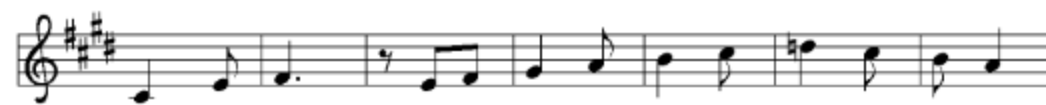
ELW 324

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.**

Refrain

Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion, all of cre - a - tion



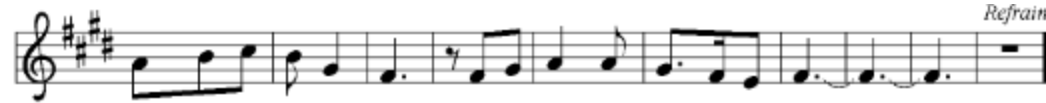
sings for joy to the God of life and love and free-dom;



praise and glo - ry for - ev - er - more!



1 Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain, whose blood has



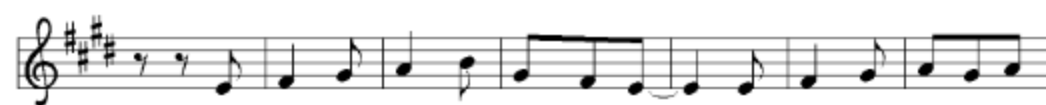
freed and u - nit-ed us to be one great peo-ple of God.



2 Pow - er and rich-es, wis-dom and might, all hon - or and



glo - ry to Christ for - ev - er.



3 For God has come to dwell with us, to make us peo-ple of



God; to make all things new.

Prayer of the Day

P Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ was lifted high upon the cross so that he might draw the whole world to himself. To those who look upon the cross, grant your wisdom, healing, and eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Childrens Sermon

THE READINGS

The First Reading: Numbers 21:4b-9

[From Mount Hor the Israelites set out,] ^{4b} but the people became discouraged on the way. ⁵ The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” ⁶ Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷ The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us.” So, Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” ⁹ So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it upon a pole, and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

L Here ends the Reading **C Thanks be to God!**

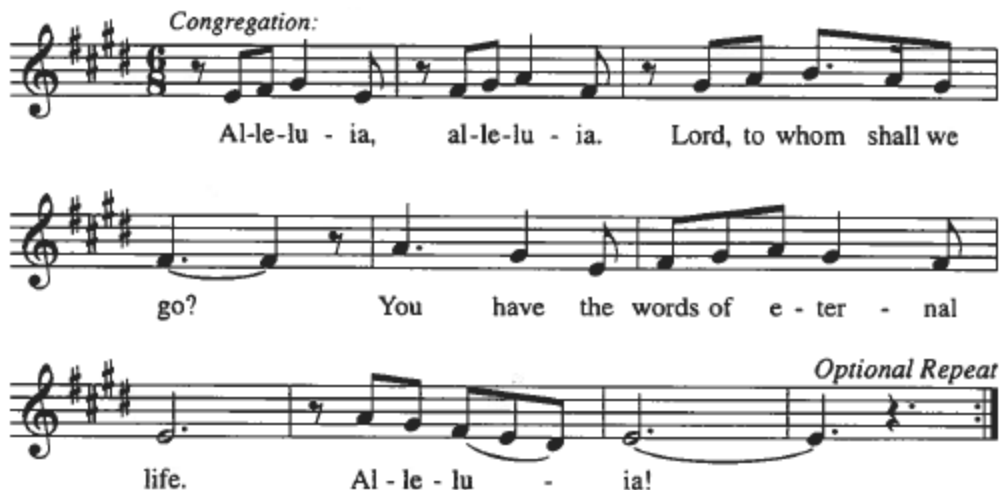
The Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24

¹⁸ The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. ²² For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

L The Word of the Lord **C Thanks be to God!**



The Holy Gospel: John 3:13-17

P The Holy Gospel according....**C Glory to you, O Lord!**

[Jesus said:] ¹³ “No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

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

Sermon

“The Nonsense of God”

Pastor Stephen Bond

Worship

Hymn

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

ELW 803

The Apostles' Creed

C 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.

WE DEDICATE OUR HEARTS IN PRAYER

P Gracious God, we come to you in prayer for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

AM Sustaining God, guide your church on the way. Give us patience in our journey and protect us from division and doubt. May we look to the cross and live. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM Creator God, renew the earth. Heal our planet from the venom of greed and exploitation and direct us to respect all life as a gift from you. May we look to the cross and live. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM God of wisdom, grant discernment to those in authority. Thwart the plans of the proud, bring low the mighty, and uphold those who work for peace. May they seek the way of the cross and live. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM God of grace, alleviate suffering. Comfort the sick and the grieving; **Tom Jennings, Sue & Jim Enk, Christal & Chad Pritchard, Frank O'Konski, Luke Holtz, Ron Hetherwick, Jake Cope, Virginia Dillon, Staci, Martina Benton, Amy Meagher, Dorothy Petrell, Kian Schumaker, Laura Reimer, Greg Urbanski, Matt Jurrus, Sam, Sally, John Jaskolski, Tom Druschel, Paul Ladd, Hollie Roark, Miles McGinnis, Jeff Bucher, Doug Ackerman, Cindy Hartbarger....** and all others whom we remember in silence. Come to the aid of those who are hungry or need shelter. May they find hope in the cross and live. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM Good Shepherd, guide your flock. Protect us from the world's lies and lead us in the way of truth. Strengthen us in our faith and inspire us to serve others. May we follow you to the cross and live. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM Merciful God, you receive into your loving embrace those who have died. Giving thanks for them, may we find comfort in the cross and live in the hope of resurrection. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

P We entrust these prayers to you, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend. **Amen.**

THE MEAL

All Christians are welcome to commune at our Altar. You do not have to be a member of this congregation to receive Communion. Grape juice is available in the inner ring of glasses for those desiring it.

Sharing of the Peace

P The Peace of the Lord be with you all! **C And also with you!**

Share an expression of peace with your neighbor, please.

Our Tithes and Offering *Bring your gifts to the Altar or you may offer gifts in the tray located at the rear of the sanctuary. Thank you.*

Offering Prayer

AM Lord of the harvest, we return to you a portion of what you have given to us. Turn us to set our hope not on the uncertainty of riches, but on you, who richly provides for us. Multiply what we have gathered to bless all who are suffering and in need, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The musical notation is written on two staves. The first staff is for the President and the Congregation. The second staff is for the President and the Congregation. The lyrics are: The Lord be with you. And al - so with you. Lift up your hearts. We

President: Congregation:

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 God thanks and praise.

****Eucharistic Prayer Continues**

HOLY

Congregation:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and

might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est!

Bless - ed is the One who comes in your name. Ho -

san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est!

The Words of Institution

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. Jesus said, 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. Jesus said, Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

P Lord, 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, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Communion Hymns

"Lamb of God"

Congregation: *Congregation or Assistant:*



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
you break the chains of ha - tred and
you are the way of jus - tice and
you are the way of mer - cy and


Congregation:



world: have mer - cy on us, mer - cy on us,
fear:
peace:
love.

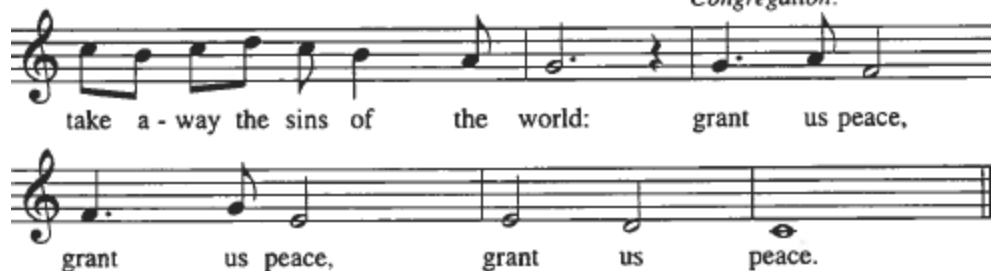
Final Stanza

Congregation or Assistant:



mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you

Congregation:



Hymn

“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”

ELW 335

“There in God’s Garden”

ELW 342

Post Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

AM O God, through this meal you have strengthened us and appointed us to be your servants. Send us to do good and to share our possessions with all in need.

We ask this in Jesus’ name. **Amen.**

THE SENDING

Milestones & Announcements:

The Blessing

P The God of righteousness, who gives justice to the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry, who sets the prisoners free, ☩ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn

“Lift High the Cross”

ELW 660

Dismissal

AM Go in peace. Do not lose heart. **Thanks be to God.**

AM And next week, **C Bring a friend!**

Postlude

Making Jesus Known”

This is the Day the Lord has made! We will rejoice in it! We are glad that you have joined us for worship this weekend! May the Lord bless His Word and Sacrament and draw us near to Him! Welcome to Community of Christ!

We WELCOME YOU to worship with us at one of our TWO worship services. Join us at 8:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. in person or on Facebook Live. We look forward to seeing you, and as always, **BRING A FRIEND!!!!**

New for Fall Adult Forum: Who Is My Neighbor?

Our Adult Forum starts the fall season off with a new series we are calling, “Who Is My Neighbor?”, which is inspired, as you can imagine, from the question in the gospel that prompts the story we call the Good Samaritan, where Jesus shows us that anyone God sends across our path is a neighbor, and therefore someone for us to love and be loved by. During the weeks of this series, starting September 14 during the 9:00 a.m. hour (between services) we will get the chance to hear from voices who can speak to the experience of neighbors near and far whose stories and needs might be quite similar to our own, or very different. We’ll get to hear from folks like Pastor Mike Hanck about the community being built by the “Norf-End Neighbors” in the Vistula neighborhood of Toledo, Synod Staff member Calla Gilson, who has spent time doing Young Adult Global Mission work in Israel and Palestine, and others who can share about different communities of neighbors around us in the world that God loves. Join us for these conversations throughout September and into October, beginning with our first Sunday back with two services, September 14!

New Bible Study Series, Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. in September: “Faithful Rebels—Case Studies in Devout Defiance” This month, our Thursday Afternoon Bible Study begins a new series we’re calling “Faithful Rebels” that will look at stories of holy troublemakers who went against the flow, spoke up against the powers of the day, or witnesses in countercultural ways in their own times and places. From the Hebrew midwives in Pharaoh’s Egypt who saved the babies that the king ordered to be killed to prophets like Elijah challenging their own leaders, to the men in the fiery furnace refusing to bow down to a golden statue of an arrogant king, the Bible is full of stories in which God worked through people who bravely stood up against the expectations (or official decrees!) of the day as part of their way of living out their faith, caring for those in danger, or pointing to the presence of God in the world. If you have been looking for a good jumping-on point to join a Bible study, this is a great chance to join us! We’ll gather around the table in the Bible study/council room

on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. starting on Sept. 11, and we'll be sharing video summaries each week on the church Facebook page and on YouTube in case you can't be with us in person. Join us this fall to explore stories of devout defiance from faithful rebels!

Sunday School Year Kicks Off for Kids TODAY, September 14!

We are excited for the return of a new Sunday School year for kids of all ages on Sundays, and we invite you to join us on Sundays in the 9:00 a.m. hour to learn about Jesus, explore stories from the Bible, and grow in faith together with friends! With the work of our Christian Education committee and Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Facilitator, Bryce Hinegardner, to select an exciting new curriculum to use this year called "WonderInk" that will open up some of the BIG stories of the Bible, we have a team of teachers who will be a real blessing for our kids! Our primary class (our preschool, kindergarten, and primary-aged kids) will be in the long classroom (also called the Library) once again this year for class, and the upper grades will be in our youth room (the room with the couches and comfy furniture and the uniquely painted walls). And no matter what, there's a place for you!



Support Salem Lutheran's Meal Ministry and Tree Planting This Fall! As part of our partnership with Salem Lutheran in the Vistula neighborhood of Toledo, we have two projects this fall for which we invite your support! Back in August, we created these stickers with the theme (drawn from Jesus in the

Gospels) that says, "Abundance is meant to be shared", and we'd invite any who want a sticker to give a 5.00 donation for one, and all those proceeds will go to help the weekly meal ministry at Salem, which gives away between 250-300 meals every Tuesday at a time when many of their other sources of funding have been slashed. You can also help us with a long-term project of neighborhood improvement at Salem by helping us raise money for planting additional fruit trees in the growing arboretum Pastor Mike is creating adjacent to the church. Social Action Committee has taken the same "Abundance is meant to be shared" logo and made it into a canvas tote bag--great for wrapping gifts instead of using paper, grocery bags, or carrying your personal items through the day. For a \$5.00 donation for each bag, you can also help us partner with Salem to get these additional trees, which we'll help to plant later this fall. Our goal is to raise \$1,000.00 for trees if possible, and we'd love your help to make it happen--because, as Jesus says, "To whom much is given, much is required," or in other words, *abundance is meant to be shared!*

Confirmation Class Kicks Off for the Fall! Our new year of Confirmation Classes will kick off on Sunday, September 21, and once again, we are looking ahead to a great year in renewed partnership with neighbors at Zion Lutheran in Waterville! This year, our confirmation students will be exploring the sweep of the whole Bible and how we find our place in the wider story of God's "unfolding promise to mend the entire universe," as author Daniel Erlander puts it. This year will be a great experience for our young people to grow in faith and deepen their relationship with Christ, while learning to think theologically and live as witnesses! Our first confirmation class session will be September 21 at 12:30 p.m. at Zion Lutheran in Waterville, with the rest of the year's classes rotating location between Zion and Community of Christ. Stay tuned for more news and moments from our year in faith together!

Book Club! Our first book will be *The Women* by Kristin Hannah. Vietnam has haunted many of us through the years. This book follows one woman who served as a nurse, making lifelong friendships and coming home with many of the same problems experienced by her male counterparts...PTSD, addictions, and a sense that she no longer knows who she is or is supposed to be. This is a tale of friendship, adversity, and eventually growth. We meet on the third Tuesday of the month at 1:00 p.m. Come if you loved or hated the book, if you finished it or not, it all makes for great discussions! Bookmarks with the upcoming dates and book titles are available on the information table in the gathering space

The Ladies' lunch will be held on Friday, September 26, at 11:30 a.m. at MaMa Theresa's Italian Restaurant, located at 24099 Front Street in Grand Rapids. They offer wood-fired pizzas along with traditional Italian dishes. Please register at the kiosk and let us know if you need a ride. For questions, call Becky at 419-349-7319.

JOIN US for our Youth Group Kickoff – TONIGHT at 7:00 p.m.! All students in **grades 7–12** are invited to join us for the **Youth Group Kickoff**. This is the start of an exciting year of fun, friendship, faith, and Kingdom living with youth from both **Community of Christ** and **Providence**. Come meet Bryce, make new friends, play some games, hear what we're all about, and help shape what's next. You won't want to miss it!

The Material Girls Quilt Ministry would like to thank all our volunteers either in cutting squares, organizing fabric, assembling squares, ironing lots of fabric, sewing tops, cutting batting, quilting, and binding, and your friendship. We are blessed to have a lot of quilt tops that need sewn together. If you are unable to attend our gatherings on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in

the gathering space, and you're able to sew together some tops or bind quilts back from our quilters, we need your help! Please contact Rose Ackerman at 419-308-6808 or Joan Bierley at 419-575-3419 and leave a voice message. Also, if you're donating fabric to be used in our quilts, please leave it in the bin marked "donations" in the Sunday school room near our shelves. Thank you again!

****Lutheran World Relief School Kits**** Thank you to everyone who has donated school supplies to help fill the backpacks! We have received more than 70 items for every category—except for 30-centimeter rulers (or rulers with centimeters on one side and inches on the other). **At this time, we have 45 rulers and are still in need of 25 more.** If you are able to contribute, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your continued support!

Offering Our Time, Talent, and Treasure for 2026 If you're given a gift—say, for your birthday or at Christmas—it's a terrible thing to leave it wrapped in the paper. It's a shame if someone has gone to the trouble of choosing something for you that they hope you will enjoy, and you leave it in the packaging forever unopened. On the flip side, when you receive a thoughtful gift and use it, everyone's lives are enriched. Your relationship with the giver is deepened, your joy is increased, and the same is probably true of the people around you whose lives are made better because you are using your gift well. It's the same, really, in our relationships with God and with one another: when we use the gifts God has given us, our relationship with God is deepened, our joy is increased, and we make the world a better place for the people around us, too! That's why this fall, we are inviting everyone at Community of Christ to prayerfully consider how **YOU** will use your time, *talent*, and treasure—all gifts from God—in the year ahead, with our Time and Talent forms, and our invitations to Financial Commitment for the year 2026! You've already been given incredible gifts by God: the hours in each day, the abilities and interests that make us unique, and the resources we live on. Those are already in your hands, like a present waiting to be unwrapped and taken out of the box. This September, when you and your household receive the Time and Talent forms and Invitation to Financial Commitment forms for our church family, you have the opportunity to use those gifts with joy and gratitude! We're asking for you to complete those and return them to the church by October 12, so that we can get new volunteers connected with the ways they are being led to serve, and so that we can make our proposed 2026 budget grounded in realistic expectations of our planned giving.

Now, maybe you're wondering, "How do my gifts and talents fit in our church family, and where do we need volunteers here at Community of Christ?" Well, good news there, too! At our October 11-12 Festival of Talents weekend, we'll have

displays representing each of the areas of ministry in our congregation so you can learn more about what we do and how you can be a part of it. Think of it like a career fair or college expo, but for serving God and God's people—check out the displays for each ministry at Community of Christ and let that help guide where you might serve in the year ahead! It's all about opening up the gifts God has already given us!

Calling All Talented Saints (That's You!)—2025 Festival of Talents on Oct. 11 at 7:00 p.m. We need YOU! OR better yet, we want to celebrate and honor *your* talents and abilities together with our whole church family! We are thrilled to invite you to our second annual Festival of Talents on October 11-12! This special event will showcase the incredible talents and creativity of our church family, spanning all ages and interests. **Event Highlights - Talent Showcase:** Do you sing, play an instrument, or have a special talent to share? We welcome performances of all kinds! - **Art and Handcrafts:** Display your artwork, quilts, afghans, handcrafts, and woodworking projects in our gallery-style exhibition. - **Community Engagement:** Learn more about our congregational committees and ministries. Discover how you can get involved and make a difference. - **Stories of Impact:** Share how you used the dollar bill received last October to benefit others. Whether it was through acts of kindness, donations, or community projects, your stories inspire us all.

Schedule: - Saturday, October 11: Talent showcase and exhibition in the fellowship hall. - Sunday, October 12: Special worship service celebrating our talents and stories of impact.

Get Involved: Whether you want to perform, display your creations, or simply enjoy the festivities, there's something for everyone at the Festival of Talents. Come, celebrate with us as we recognize and cherish the gifts bestowed upon us!

Conversations and More: Please join us on Tuesday, September 23, at 1:00 p.m. for our next Conversations and More! This is a wonderful opportunity to share stories, enjoy fellowship, play games, and explore thoughtful topics together in a warm, welcoming environment. If you have questions or if you need a ride, please call either Cheryl Fischer at 419-345-3033 or Cinda Pontsler at 419-356-9290.

Coming NEXT Sunday (Sept. 21) -- Worship Bingo!

Sometimes you don't recognize what is right in front of you until you start looking for it--but once you make the effort to notice, more and more jumps out to your eyes--sort of like a *Where's Waldo?* book. The same is true in worship, too--you might not realize all the things that happen here, all the BIG IDEAS that are raised, or all the actions that unfold on any given Sunday. So, we're trying a new occasional activity to accompany Sunday services every so often this fall, which we're calling "Worship

Bingo." Like a regular bingo game, there will be a card with boxes on it, except instead of random numbers, our worship bingo cards will have different words or phrases that you might just hear or read in the course of our Sunday service. We're hoping this will be one more way to help young people (or those who are children-at-heart!) make connections to see all that really goes on in the course of a Sunday morning! See if you can get five in a row--horizontal, vertical, or diagonal--or try to get them all in a single service! Maybe when our eyes and ears are attuned to know what to listen for, we'll discover how much more has really been going on in worship all along! See Pastor Steve or Bryce Hinegardner to claim a "prize" if you get a "Bingo" with your card on Sunday!

Worship **SERVICES**

**Join us on Sunday mornings at
8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.**

***(Facebook Live @ 10:00 a.m.) ***



6th Edition Concert
Today, September 14, 3:00 p.m.
Youth Group Kick-off
Today, September 14, 7:00 p.m.
LWR Quilt Ministry
Tuesday, September 16, 10:00 a.m.
Book Club
Tuesday, September 16, 1:00 p.m.
Choir Practice
Wednesday, September 17, 7:00 p.m.
Thursday Bible Study
Thursday, September 18, 1:00 p.m.
Bell Choir
Thursday, September 18, 7:00 p.m.



**Altar Flowers given by Tim and Julie Holliker in celebration of
39 years of marriage! 😊💕**

2025 Building Loan Fund			
	Income	Expense	Diff.
Aug	\$11,509	\$12,563	(\$1,054)
YTD	\$111,541	\$105,004	\$6,537
2025 General Fund			
	Income	Expense	Diff.
Aug	\$30,660	\$33,870	(\$3,210)
YTD	\$271,757	\$285,624	(\$13,867)