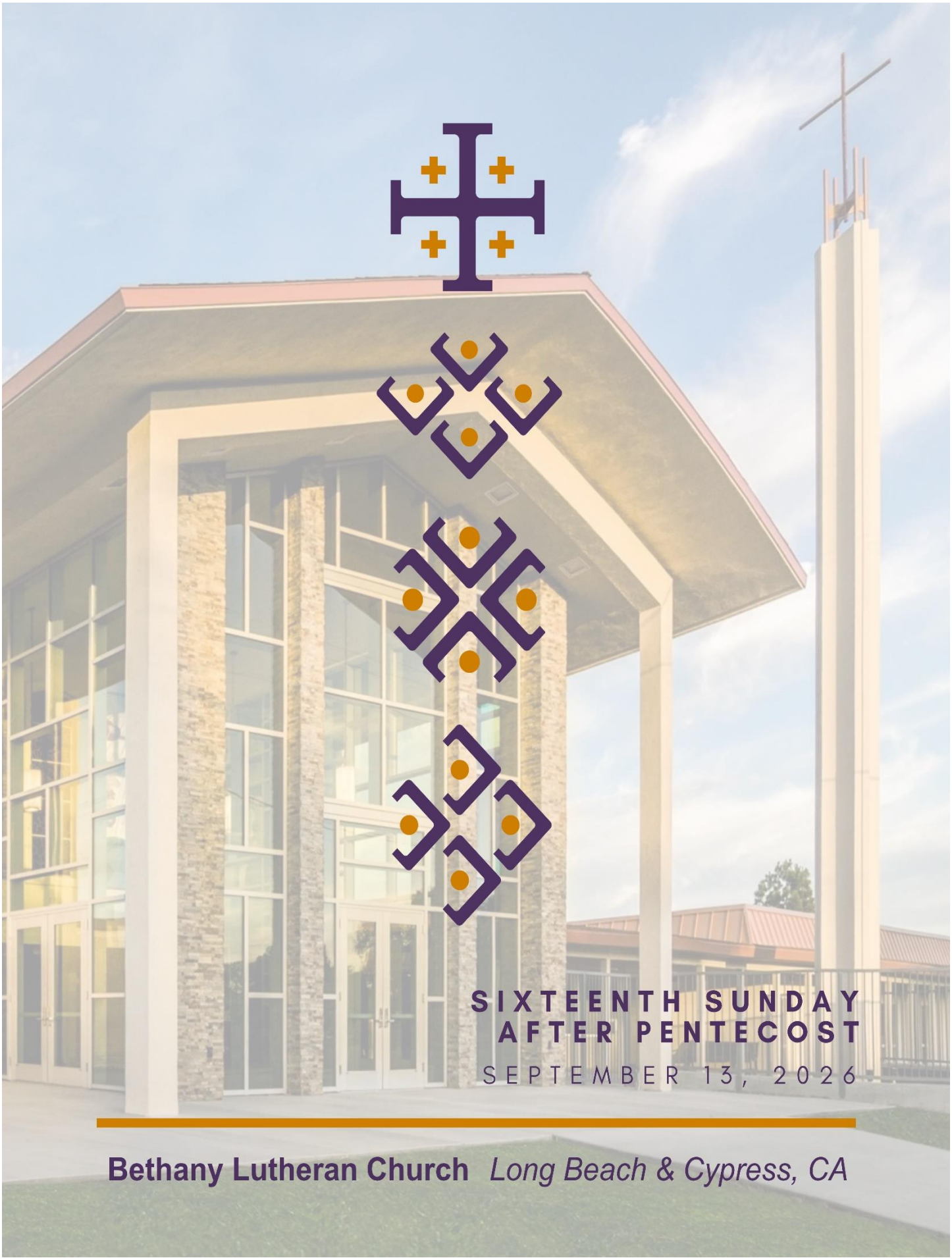


SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

Bethany Lutheran Church *Long Beach & Cypress, CA*

PRELUDE: **"Rondo Festivo"** Jubilate Handbell Choir
~ Cynthia Dobrinski

WELCOME

OPENING SONG: "United in Christ"

Verse 1
People of the Lord come now and sing
Every nation and tongue to Christ our King
With empty hands His gifts receive

Verse 2
Whether young or old you're a child of God
Whether rich or poor no matter what you got
He gathers all at the foot of the cross

Chorus
His body broken makes this body whole
His resurrection it assures us all
No darkness nor doubting nor pain in this life
Could keep us from being united in Christ

Verse 3
Sinners and saints you have a place
With the Spirit's gifts proclaim His grace
There's nothing too small
To be used by the Living God

Bridge
We are the body Christ is the head
Sealed with the promise through blood He shed
We are the body Christ is the head
His grace the heartbeat our confidence
We are the body Christ is the head
Sealed with the promise through blood He shed
We are the body Christ is the head
His grace the heartbeat our confidence
Our confidence

Tag
No darkness nor doubting nor pain in this life
Could keep us from being united in Christ

INVOCATION:

L: Grace and peace to you from God our Father, from the Lord Jesus Christ and from the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from both. *(Romans 1:7)*

P: **Amen.**

CALL TO WORSHIP:

L: All of you who were baptized into Christ Jesus have been united with Him in His death and resurrection. *(Romans 6:3)*

P: **That we might live a new life.** *(Romans 6:4)*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:

L: Let us confess our sins to God, for all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. *(Romans 3:23)*

P: **I confess Lord, that I am no better than anyone else. No one really understands You as they should. No one truly seeks You in a way that is pure. At some point, all of us have turned away from You, Lord. No one constantly does the right thing. In fact, oftentimes when I have done the right thing, it has been with a hidden agenda, rather than from a pure heart.**

L: I confess Lord, that my talk has been foul, my speech has contained cursing and bitterness; I've opened my mouth and polluted the air.

P: **I have sought revenge, tried to get even, and have been quick to defend myself or my cause to get my way - regardless of who is hurt in the process.**

L: Heartbreak and ruin have littered the lives of many as a result of my actions.

P: **For the sake of Jesus Christ, who was delivered over to death for my sins and raised to life for my justification, forgive me and restore me. Amen.** *(Romans 3:10-17 & 4:25)*

L: God has demonstrated His love for you in this: while yet a sinner, Christ died for you! Now that you have been set right with God by the sacrificial death of Christ, there is no longer a question of being at odds with God in any way. If you were restored to friendship with God by the death of His Son while you were His enemy, you will certainly be delivered from eternal punishment by His life. *(Romans 12)*

RESPONSIVE SONG: "His Mercy is More"

Verse 1
What love could remember no wrongs we have done
Omniscient all knowing He counts not their sum
Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore
Our sins they are many His mercy is more

Verse 2
What patience would wait as we constantly roam
What Father so tender is calling us home
He welcomes the weakest the vilest the poor
Our sins they are many His mercy is more

Verse 3
What riches of kindness He lavished on us
His blood was the payment His life was the cost
We stood 'neath a debt we could never afford
Our sins they are many His mercy is more

Chorus
Praise the Lord His mercy is more
Stronger than darkness new every morn
Our sins they are many His mercy is more

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

L: In mercy, God, send us Your Spirit that we might offer You ourselves as living sacrifices, Holy and pleasing to You.

P: **Transform us by the Spirit's presence, that we no longer conform to the pattern of this world, but are renewed into Your image, O Lord, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.** *(Romans 12)*

FIRST READING: *Genesis 50:15-21*

Joseph's brothers realized what their father's death could mean. So they thought, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us? What if he decides to pay us back for all the evil we did to him?" They sent a messenger to Joseph to say, "Before your father died, he commanded us, 'This is what you should say to Joseph, "I'm begging you to forgive the crime and the sin your brothers committed against you. What they did to you was very evil." ' So now, please forgive our crime, because we are servants of your father's God." Joseph cried when he got their message.

Then his brothers also came and immediately bowed down in front of him. "We are your slaves!" they said.

Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid! I can’t take God’s place. Even though you planned evil against me, God planned good to come out of it. This was to keep many people alive, as He is doing now. Don’t be afraid! I will provide for you and your children.” In this way he reassured them, setting their minds at ease. —GW®

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: “Make a Joyful Noise” Bethany Choir
~John A. Behnke

SECOND READING: *Romans 14:1-14*

Welcome people who are weak in faith, but don’t get into an argument over differences of opinion. Some people believe that they can eat all kinds of food. Other people with weak faith believe that they can eat only vegetables. People who eat all foods should not despise people who eat only vegetables. In the same way, the vegetarians should not criticize people who eat all foods, because God has accepted those people. Who are you to criticize someone else’s servant? The Lord will determine whether His servant has been successful. The servant will be successful because the Lord makes him successful.

One person decides that one day is holier than another. Another person decides that all days are the same. Every person must make his own decision. When people observe a special day, they observe it to honor the Lord. When people eat all kinds of foods, they honor the Lord as they eat, since they give thanks to God. Vegetarians also honor the Lord when they eat, and they, too, give thanks to God. It’s clear that we don’t live to honor ourselves, and we don’t die to honor ourselves. If we live, we honor the Lord, and if we die, we honor the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this reason, Christ died and came back to life so that he would be the Lord of both the living and the dead.

Why do you criticize or despise other Christians? Everyone will stand in front of God to be judged. Scripture says,

> “As certainly as I live, says the Lord,
> everyone will worship me,
> and everyone will praise God.”

All of us will have to give an account of ourselves to God.

So, let’s stop criticizing each other. Instead, you should decide never to do anything that would make other Christians have doubts or lose their faith.

The Lord Jesus has given me the knowledge and conviction that no food is unacceptable in and of itself. But it is unacceptable to a person who thinks it is. —GW®

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: “Sing Hosanna” Bethany Choir
~John Leavitt

FIRST BIBLE BLESSING 9:30 am

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

HOLY GOSPEL: *Matthew 18:21-35*

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked Him, "Lord, how often do I have to forgive a believer who wrongs me? Seven times?"

Jesus answered him, "I tell you, not just seven times, but seventy times seven.

"That is why the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to do this, a servant who owed him millions of dollars was brought to him. Because he could not pay off the debt, the master ordered him, his wife, his children, and all that he had to be sold to pay off the account. Then the servant fell at his master's feet and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will repay everything!'

"The master felt sorry for his servant, freed him, and canceled his debt. But when that servant went away, he found a servant who owed him hundreds of dollars. He grabbed the servant he found and began to choke him. 'Pay what you owe!' he said.

"Then that other servant fell at his feet and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will repay you.' But he refused. Instead, he turned away and had that servant put into prison until he would repay what he owed.

"The other servants who worked with him saw what had happened and felt very sad. They told their master the whole story.

"Then his master sent for him and said to him, 'You evil servant! I canceled your entire debt, because you begged me. Shouldn't you have treated the other servant as mercifully as I treated you?'

"His master was so angry that he handed him over to the torturers until he would repay everything that he owed. That is what my Father in heaven will do to you if each of you does not sincerely forgive other believers."–GW®

SERMON SONG: "Yet Not I but Through Christ in Me"

Verse 1
What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer
There is no more for heaven now to give
He is my joy my righteousness and freedom
My steadfast love my deep and boundless peace
To this I hold my hope is only Jesus
For my life is wholly bound to his
Oh how strange and divine I can sing all is mine
Yet not I but through Christ in me

Verse 2
The night is dark but I am not forsaken
For by my side the Saviour he will stay
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing
For in my need his power is displayed
To this I hold my Shepherd will defend me
Through the deepest valley he will lead
Oh the night has been won and I shall overcome
Yet not I but through Christ in me

Verse 3
No fate I dread I know I am forgiven
The future sure the price it has been paid
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon
And he was raised to overthrow the grave
To this I hold my sin has been defeated
Jesus now and ever is my plea
Oh the chains are released I can sing I am free
Yet not I but through Christ in me

Verse 4
With every breath I long to follow Jesus
For he has said that he will bring me home
And day by day I know he will renew me
Until I stand with joy before the throne
To this I hold my hope is only Jesus
All the glory evermore to him
When the race is complete still my lips shall repeat
Yet not I but through Christ in me

Ending
When the race is complete still my lips shall repeat
Yet not I but through Christ in me
Yet not I but through Christ in me

MESSAGE: *Romans 14:1-14*

SONG/HYMN OF THE DAY: "He will Hold Me Fast"

Verse 1
When I fear my faith will fail
Christ will hold me fast
When the tempter would prevail
He will hold me fast
I could never keep my hold
Through life's fearful path
For my love is often cold
He must hold me fast

Chorus
He will hold me fast
He will hold me fast
For my Savior loves me so
He will hold me fast

Verse 2
Those He saves are His delight
Christ will hold me fast
Precious in His holy sight
He will hold me fast
He'll not let my soul be lost
His Promises shall last
Bought by Him at such a cost
He will hold me fast

Verse 3
For my life He bled and died
Christ will hold me fast
Justice has been satisfied
He will hold me fast
Raised with Him to endless life
He will hold me fast
Till our faith is turned to sight
When He comes at last

CONFESSION OF FAITH: THE NICENE CREED: *(*catholic means the universal Christian Church)*

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through Him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
He came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
He became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.
For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day He rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son, He is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy *catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life ✢ of the world to come. Amen.

OFFERING: *The Offering Box is located in the center aisle. If you so desire, Text Giving is now available by texting GIVE to 562-210-0463. For On-line Giving information, contact Andria at arosas@bethanylutheran.org or call 562-421-4711, ext. 21. Thank you!*

CONSECRATING THE GIFTS:

L: We praise You, O God, our Redeemer, Creator; in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.

P: **We lay it before You, we kneel and adore You; we bless Your holy name, glad praises we sing.** *(LSB 785 stz. 1)*

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

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 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.

****** At our 8:00 a.m. service, we will continue on page 10 with Announcements.***

****** At our 9:30 a.m. service, we continue with the Celebration of Holy Communion:***

✢ Service of Holy Communion ✢

The Lord's Supper is celebrated at Bethany in the joyful confession that our Lord gives us His very Body and Blood for the forgiveness of sins in this sacrament. God intends this gift for His children who recognize their sin, trust in Christ as their Savior, desire to live for Him alone and join in this joyful confession.

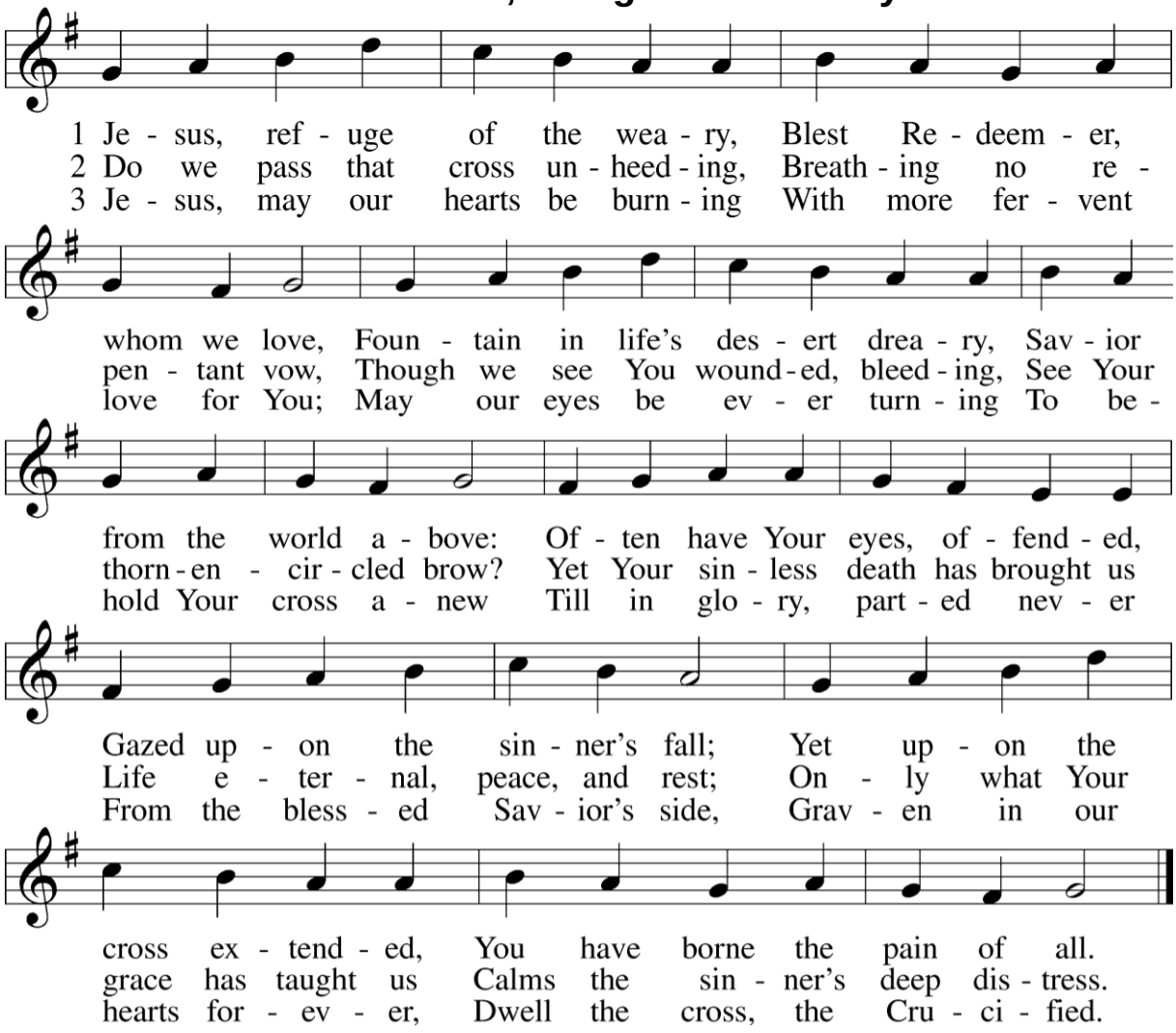
To prepare for communion you can find prayer prompts on the front page of the Lutheran Service Book. Or simply pray: "Dear Lord Jesus, at Your gracious invitation, You invite me to come to You; to eat and drink Your holy body and blood as You Yourself have promised to give in this sacred meal. Forgive me of my sin, through this Your meal of Forgiveness. Let me experience the fullness of Your love, through this Your meal of love. Strengthen my faith, through this meal of Yours that calls for and bestows faith. Empower me to live for You, through this Your meal that promises life everlasting and equips me for daily living as one who has received You and Your gifts. Amen."

*For those communing, who so desire, center cups in each tray are **alcohol free.***
*For those with dietary restrictions, the wafers next to the Christ candle are **gluten free**;*

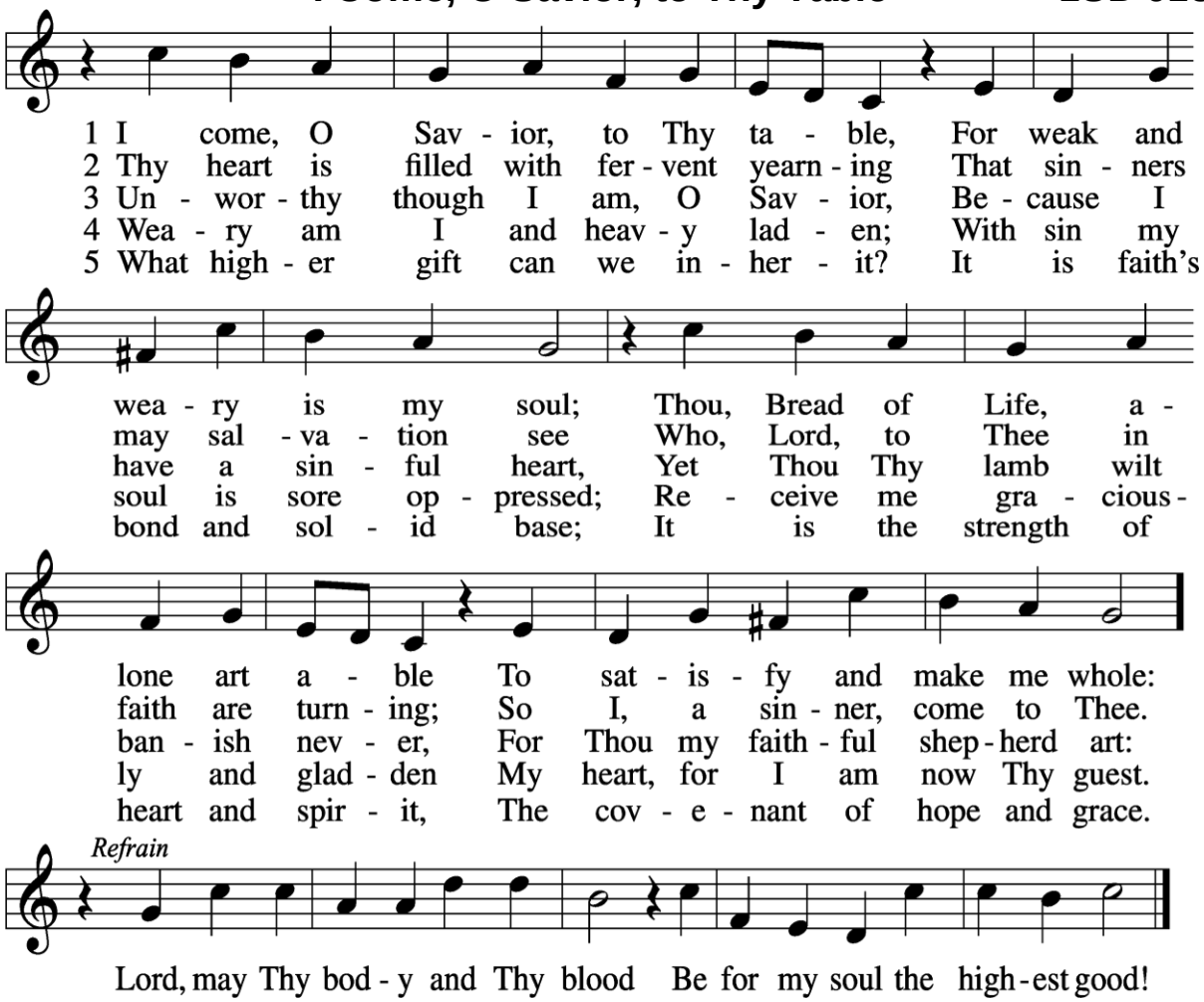
We will practice the Easter tradition of continuous communion. We will not kneel at the altar, rather we come forward and remain standing as we receive the bread and wine. After receiving the elements, you are invited to return to your seat and continue in meditation, prayer and song.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

DISTRIBUTION: **“Jesus, Refuge of the Weary”** LSB 423



“I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table” LSB 618



ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION:

L: May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity. So that with one heart and one mouth you may give God glory as you follow the Lord Jesus Christ. *(Romans 15:5-6)*

CLOSING SONG: “Be Thou My Vision”

Verse 1
Be Thou my Vision O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me save that Thou art
Thou my best thought by day or by night
Waking or sleeping Thy presence my light

Verse 2
Be Thou my Wisdom and Thou my true Word
I ever with Thee and Thou with me Lord
Thou my great Father I Thy true son
Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one

Verse 3
High King of heaven my victory won
May I reach heaven's joys bright heaven's Sun
Heart of my own heart whatever befall
Still be my Vision O Ruler of all

Ending
Be Thou my Vision

POSTLUDE

✢ ✢ ✢

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"United in Christ"
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"His Mercy is More"
CCLI Song #7065053 Matt Boswell | Matt Papas.
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"Yet Not I but Through Christ In Me"
CCLI Song# 7121852
Jonny Robinson, Michael Farren, Rich Thompson
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"He will Hold Me Fast"
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"Jesus, Refuge of the Weary" LSB 423
Text: Girolamo Savonarola, 1452-98; tr. Jane F. Wilde, 1826-96, alt.
Tune: *Erbaulicher Musicalischer Christen-Schatz*, Basel, 1745; setting: *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941. Text and music: Public domain.

"I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table" LSB 618
Text: Friedrich Christian Heyder, 1677-1754; tr. *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941, abr.
Tune: *Emskirchner Choral-Buch*, Leipzig, 1756. Public domain
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"Be Thou My Vision" WOV 776
Text: Irish 8th-10th cent.; tr. Mary El Byrne, 1880-1931; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860-1935, alt.
Music: Irish tune; arr. Frank Ferko, b. 1950. Text and music: Public domain.
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SERVING GOD'S HOUSE TODAY:

Crucifer 9:30…Henry Cerulle
Lector 8:00…Nola Seaman 9:30…David Akins
Liturgist…Karl Fink Preacher...Pastor Kevin Kritzer
Director of Music Ministry and Worship Arts…Noah Freeman Accompanist…Kevin Bowers
Artist in Residence…Blake Flattley Children's Message…Shannon Morgensen
Sound/Production…Felix Rivera, Jon Widmann

✢ ✢ ✢

If You're a Visitor, WELCOME! We are so glad you have joined us for worship today. If you would like more information about Bethany and its ministries, please scan the QR code to the right. You will be directed to Bethany's fillable information form.

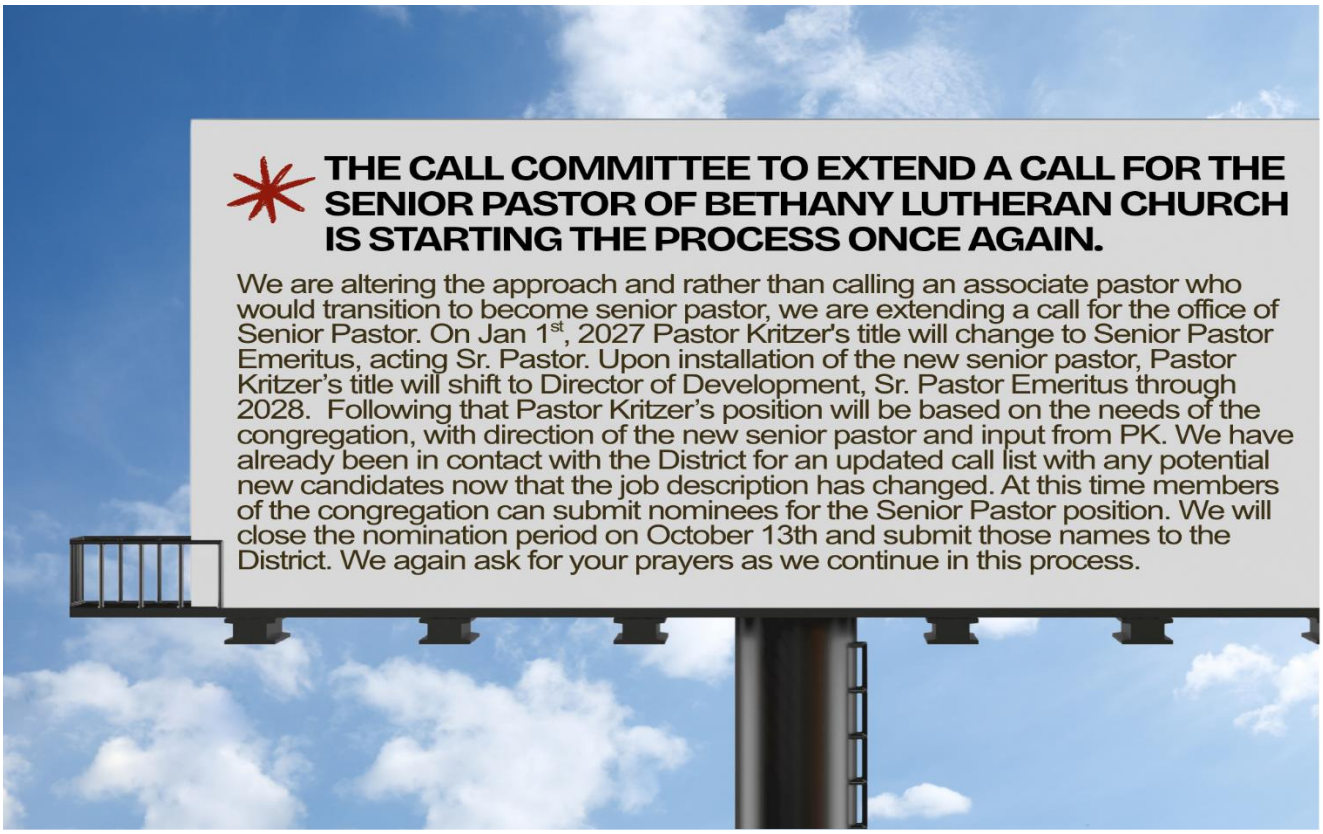
✢ ✢ ✢

Parents of Young Children: We are so glad you and your children are here! Children are a joyful part of worship—after all, God created them with curiosity, energy, and yes, a few wiggles. Please don't feel pressure to keep them perfectly still in God's house. Their presence is truly a gift to our church family.

Worship is where we learn, together, how to listen and speak to God alongside our brothers and sisters in faith. You are welcome to quietly explain parts of the service and what our worship leaders are doing—children learn how to worship by watching and imitating you.

If it would be helpful, "worship bags" are available in the Narthex with items designed to support children and families during worship. Childcare is also available in our Nursery for children from birth through age five. Our caring and qualified staff look forward to welcoming your little one into a safe and loving environment.

Bethany's Nursery is located across the courtyard. Please feel free to ask an usher if you need directions—we're happy to help.



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS
AND CONTACT INFO!



LONG BEACH OFFICE:
Monday - Thursday: 8 am - 12 pm
longbeachoffice@bethanylutheran.org
562.421.4711

CYPRESS OFFICE:
Monday - Friday: 9 am - 1 pm
cypressoffice@bethanylutheran.org
714.942.1793



OUR NEW TWO-CAMPUS WORSHIP & BIBLE STUDY SCHEDULE



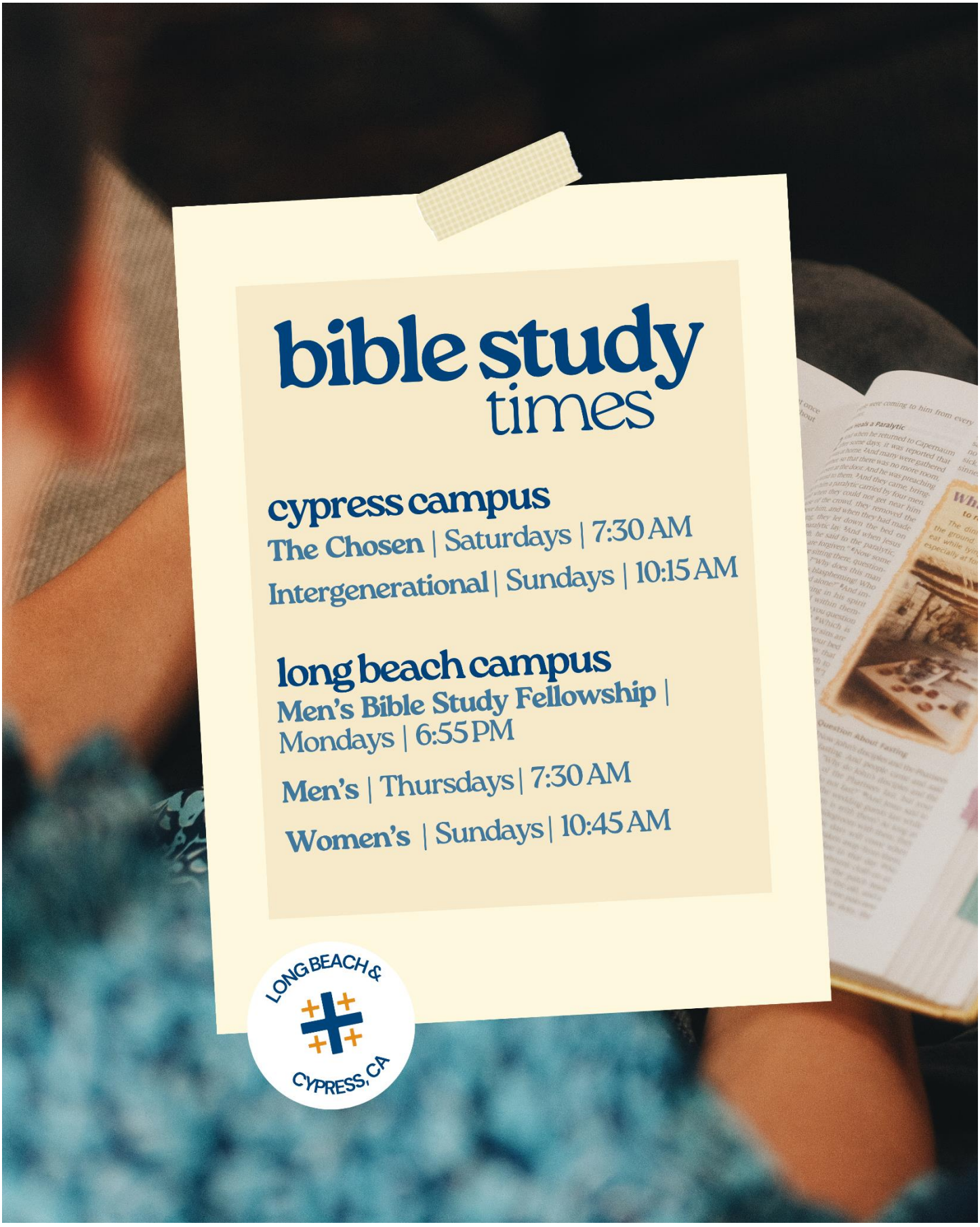
LONG BEACH CAMPUS
SUNDAYS 8 & 9:30 AM*



CYPRESS CAMPUS
SUNDAYS 11:10 AM
WEDNESDAYS 6:30 PM

COMMUNION
1ST SUNDAY *ALL SERVICES*
2ND SUNDAY *9:30 AM ONLY*
3RD SUNDAY *ALL SERVICES*
4TH SUNDAY *9:30 AM ONLY*

***OUR 9:30 AM SERVICE IS LIVESTREAMED ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL.**


bible study
times
cypress campus
The Chosen | Saturdays | 7:30 AM
Intergenerational | Sundays | 10:15 AM
long beach campus
Men's Bible Study Fellowship |
Mondays | 6:55 PM
Men's | Thursdays | 7:30 AM
Women's | Sundays | 10:45 AM
LONG BEACH &
CYPRESS, CA