FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM

Summer Worship Service
The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 6, 2026

WE GATHER

PRELUDE II. "Adagio" from *Sonata No. 1* Felix Mendelssohn

WELCOME AND COMMUNITY LIFE

*CALL TO WORSHIP

In a world where powerful people make decisions to lift themselves up and cast others aside, how does God teach us to use our power?
God teaches us to protect the vulnerable, resist the oppressors, and persist in doing good.
In a world where power means might, how does God show us what power means?
God shows us through the midwives' daring, Peter's truth-telling, and Jesus' humility.
In a world where power is held over people's heads, how does God exercise power?
God exercises power with—with the oppressed, with the outcasts, with the poor and downtrodden.
Beloved, we gather to recognize our world as it is and to grow as disciples and imitators of Christ. So, how will you use your power today?
We will side with the vulnerable, build community in the margins, and love all of our neighbors with the exuberant and all-encompassing love of Christ. Amen.
Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, May 2026.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*GATHERING HYMN #421
The Church of Christ in Every Age WAREHAM

WE CONFESS

*EMBODIED CONFESSION

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (from *Glory to God* – see addendum)
Let Us Build a House – Verse 1 only TWO OAKS

*Please stand as you are able.

CHILDREN'S SERMON Virginia Smith

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE Virginia Smith

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20
Hebrew Scriptures: Exodus 1:8-2:10

Leader: The word of the Lord;
People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON Rev. Karen Kinney

"Power Redeemed"

WE RESPOND

MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

God used the quiet resistance of ordinary women to thwart an empire. Whose quiet, marginalized voices in our community or workplace is God calling us to listen to and stand alongside? The "Gates of Hades" represent the strongholds of death, injustice, and oppression. In what ways is our faith community actively storming these gates to liberate those trapped by systemic brokenness?

*SERMON HYMN #339

Be Thou My Vision SLANE

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (From the *PCUSA Brief Statement of Faith*, 1983)

The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the church. In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

MINUTE FOR MISSION AND OFFERING

Call to Give
Offertory Chanson Edward Elgar/ arr. Herbert Brewer

*DOXOLOGY #592

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Invitation to the Table

The Great Thanksgiving

The 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.

Words of Institution

Communion

Music during Communion: Meditation Betty Jackson King

Prayer after Communion (unison): **We thank you, O God, that through your Holy Spirit you have gathered us together and fed us with Jesus Christ. Send us now into the world in peace and loving service, bearing Christ's love in ministry through our words and actions, knowing that there is nothing in heaven or earth that can separate us from your love in Jesus Christ. Even so, Lord Jesus, quickly come. Amen.**

*SENDING HYMN (from *Glory to God* – see addendum)

Let Us Build a House - Verses 2-5 TWO OAKS

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Trumpet Tune on "Gaudeamus Pariter" arr. David Lasky

Flowers are donated by Glenn and Darla Rossetti in memory of their parents
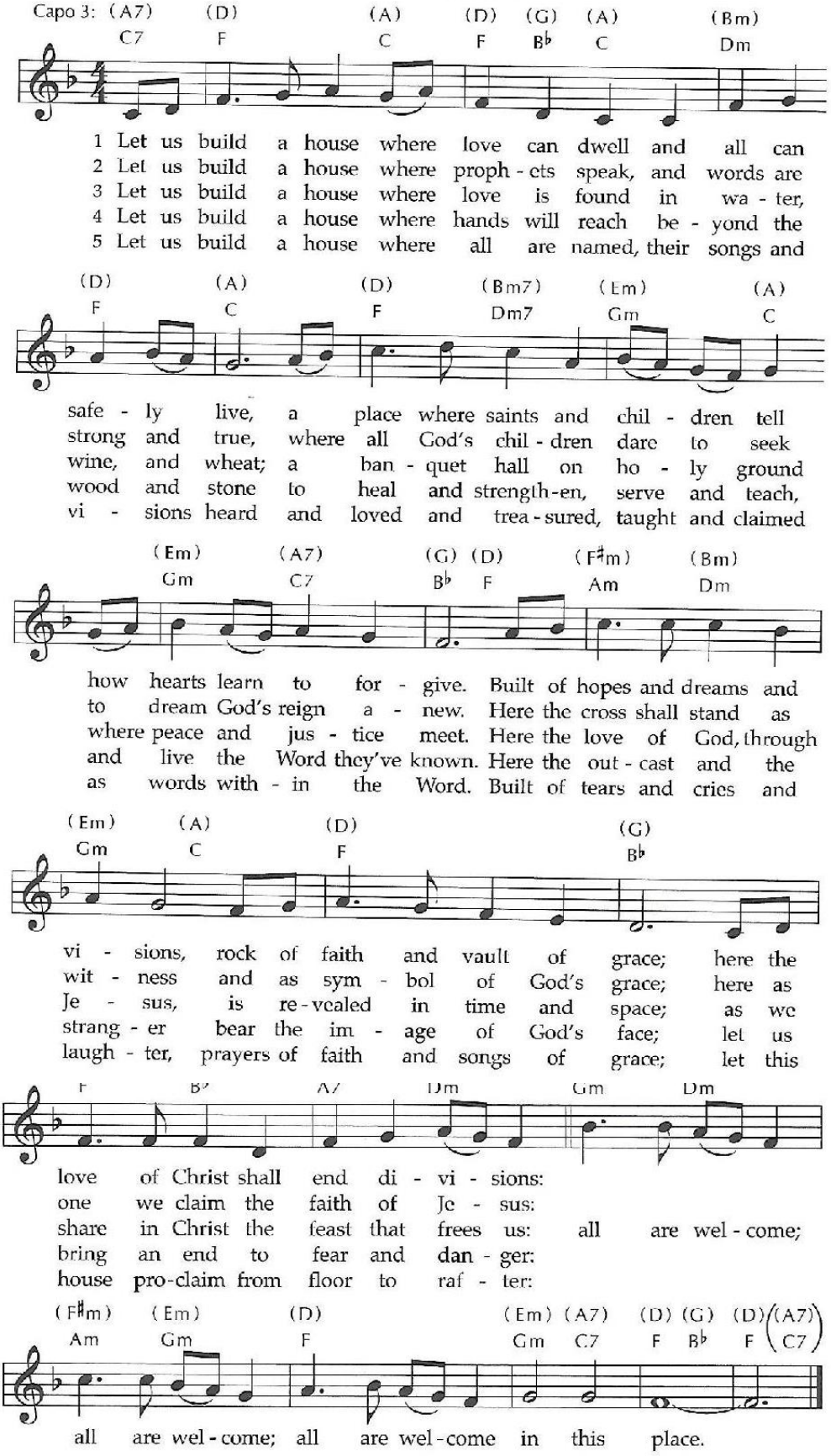
You're welcome to stay and enjoy the Postlude or to depart while the music is played.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE - VERSE 1 ONLY

SENDING HYMN - VERSES 2-5

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All Are Welcome



COMMUNITY LIFE – ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SEPT. 6, 2026

If you are new to our church, welcome! Please complete a **"Connect Card,"** available in the Narthex.

For today: Following our service you have two opportunities to connect. We have tables set up in the Narthex for anyone who would like to **discuss the morning's sermon** and service. We also offer the **Lemonade on the Lawn** social time on the West Lawn (otherwise in the North Link). Thanks to Body N Soul for hosting today!

Today is the last day to **submit nominations** for elders, deacons, and Nominating Committee members. There are ballots in the Narthex for your use.

We have confirmed that we will **resume our two Sunday services schedule** on **Sunday, Sept. 20**. So for next week, Sunday, Sept. 13 we will worship at 10 a.m. and will need a host for Lemonade on the Lawn.

For September, we will be collecting food and personal care items for a small program, the **West Bethlehem Emergency Food Pantry**. A list of items that are most needed is in the newsletter, and printed lists are in the Narthex. Thanks for considering how you can help!

LEADING WORSHIP TODAY

Rev. Karen Kinney, Transitional Pastor; kkinney@fpc-bethlehem.org
Rev. Lindsey Altvater Clifton, Associate Pastor for Justice and Community Impact; lclifton@fpc-bethlehem.org
David Macbeth, Director of Music Ministries; dmacbeth@fpc-bethlehem.org

CARE CONCERNS

IF YOU ARE HOSPITALIZED: Please tell the hospital our church code is 724. Also, please call the church office at 610-867-5865 to let us know as the hospitals do not always collect this information. After hours, leave a message or call our answering service at 610-778-7003.

PRAYER REQUESTS: Send to prayer@fpc-bethlehem.org or call 610-867-5865 and leave a message.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

The church building (including the Preschool) will be closed on Monday, Sept. 7 in observance of Labor Day, reopening on Tuesday. Regular Church Office hours are Monday – Thursday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Urgent pastoral need? Please call our answering service at 610-778-7003.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER – STAY CONNECTED!

We send an email newsletter each Friday morning; it will be emailed to those who request it: contact us at info@fpc-bethlehem.org or 610-867-5865. You can also request a printed copy be mailed to you.

First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem
2344 Center Street, Bethlehem, PA 18017
610-867-5865 · fpc-bethlehem.org

Check our online calendar for all events and activities.
Your attendance at church events constitutes permission to use your image (photos and video) in church communications.
Questions about our policy: info@fpc-bethlehem.org

Use this code to donate through our secure website.