

St. Paul Lutheran Church
of Stillwater, Minnesota
October 26, 2025
Reformation Sunday after Pentecost



Your presence at worship is important to God and to us! Whether you are a first-time visitor, frequent participant, neighbor, member, or friend, please take a moment as you prepare for worship to share some information on the "Welcome to Worship" card included with your bulletin. Place it in the offering plate at the time the offering is received.

Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reformed in order to live out the love of Christ in an ever-changing world. We celebrate the good news of God's grace, that Jesus Christ sets us free every day to do this life-transforming work. Trusting in the freedom given to us in baptism, we pray for the church, that Christians will unite more fully in worship and mission.

Many of our worship materials are taken from the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW). Page numbers are located in the front half of the book and hymn numbers are located in the back half of the book.

The assembly **speaks** or **sings** the bold responses.



GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Prelude

Gathering Song

ELW Hymn 575

"In Christ Called to Baptize"

Holy Baptism

ELW page 227



Baptismal Acclamation

ELW Hymn 215

"Blessed Be God, Who Chose You"

Greeting

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.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

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

First Reading

Pew Bible: Old Testament Page 735

Jeremiah 31:31-34

The renewed covenant will not be breakable, but like the old covenant, it will expect the people to live upright lives. To know the LORD means that one will defend the cause of the poor and needy (Jer. 22:16). The renewed covenant is possible only because the LORD will forgive iniquity and not remember sin. Our hope lies in a God who forgets.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 46

"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"
(paraphrase)

ELW Hymn 504

All Sing: Verses 1, 2, and 4.

Organ Only: Verse 3



Second Reading

Pew Bible: New Testament Page 154

Romans 3:19-28

Paul's words stand at the heart of the preaching of Martin Luther and other Reformation leaders. No human beings make themselves right with God through works of the law. We are brought into a right relationship with God through the divine activity centered in Christ's death. This act is a gift of grace that liberates us from sin and empowers our faith in Jesus Christ.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Children's and Outreach Message

Gospel Acclamation

"Alleluia"



Gospel Reading

Pew Bible: New Testament Page 101

John 8:31-36

Jesus speaks of truth and freedom as spiritual realities known through his word. He reveals the truth that sets people free from sin.

The gospel is introduced:

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the conclusion:

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.



Sermon

Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

Hymn of the Day

ELW Hymn Page 510

"Word of God, Come Down on Earth"

Prayers of Intercession

After each prayer:

God of grace,

receive our prayer.

At the conclusion:

We offer our prayers, O God, trusting in your everlasting grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

All are invited to greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering

"In His Love"

Chancel Choir

Our offering is a collection of money for the church's mission, including the care of those in need, as a sign of the giving of our whole selves in grateful response for all God's gifts. Your offering and "Welcome to Worship" card may be placed in the offering plate. The QR code on the right may be used if you wish to give electronically.



Offering Prayer

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.



Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts,

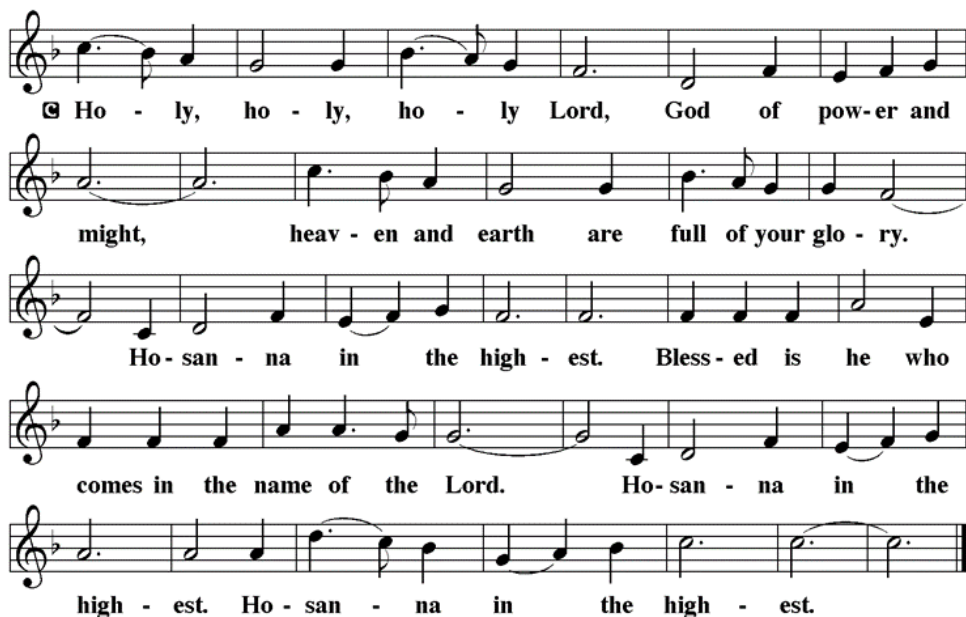
We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy . . .

. . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and
might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the
high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

We praise you, all-holy God . . .

We praise you for your covenant people . . .

We praise you, O God, for Jesus Christ . . .

And so we remember your Word . . .

. . . and we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

(Continued on the next page.) 6

We pray, O God, for your Spirit . . .

We praise you, all-holy God . . .

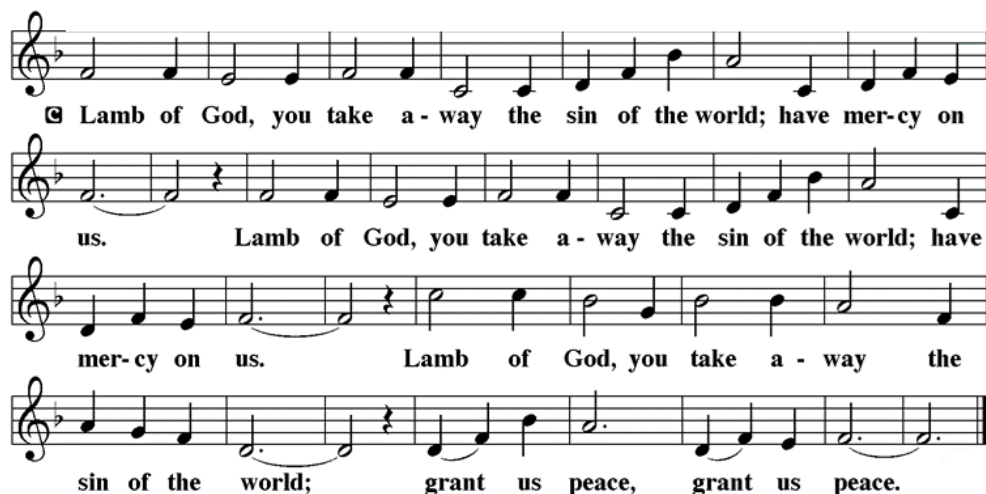
. . . today, tomorrow, and forever.

Amen!

**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.**



☐ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.



Communion

We celebrate at an open communion table. All who hear our Lord's invitation are welcome to participate. Receive the bread first with an open hand and eat immediately, followed by the juice (white) or wine (red). Gluten-free bread is available at the front end of the center aisle. Please indicate to an usher if you need to receive communion from your pew. Children who have received age-appropriate instruction are welcome to commune. If you prefer instead to receive a blessing, please indicate by crossing your arms over your shoulders.

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say:
The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.*

and each person may respond:

Amen.

Communion Songs

"We Come to the Hungry Feast" ELW Hymn 479

"Eat This Bread" ELW Hymn 472

Prayer After Communion

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.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Announcements

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

Sending Song

ELW Hymn 823

"Praise The Lord! O Heavens"

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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DAILY PRAYER

For Those Who Do Not Believe in God

Almighty and eternal God, you created humanity so that all may long to know you and find peace in you. Grant that all may recognize the signs of your love and grace in the world and in the lives of Christians, and gladly acknowledge you as the one true God. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE LITURGY

The Covenant of Baptism

In the opening confession and forgiveness in Evangelical Lutheran Worship's Holy Communion (ELW p. 95), we confess that "we are captive to sin." This language recalls Jesus' words in today's gospel that we are slaves to sin. The rite of Holy Baptism within Evangelical Lutheran Worship (p. 231) announces that the newly baptized are now daughters and sons of God. We now have a place in God's house forever. The baptismal sponsors promise to help the newly baptized live "in the covenant of baptism," recalling the imagery from Jeremiah. The new covenant is sealed by Christ's blood, poured out for us in the weekly meal of grace (pp. 108, 109).

CATECHISM CONNECTION

It Takes a Village

"I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe. . . ." So begins Martin Luther's teaching on the Third Article of the Creed: The Holy Spirit. The source of the Holy Spirit is our baptism, through which we are not only individually saved, but are welcomed into a community of believers, the communion of saints, through which the Holy Spirit speaks and sustains us. The hard truth is that we cannot believe on our own. The good news is that we are given a baptized community that inspires and encourages us to believe.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

**Philipp Nicolai, died 1608; Johann Heermann, died 1647;
Paul Gerhardt, died 1676; hymnwriters**

Sunday, October 26, 2025

These great hymnwriters all worked in seventeenth-century Germany in times of war and plague. Nicolai, a pastor, lost 1,300 parishioners to plague, 170 in one week. He wrote "O Morning Star, how fair and bright" and "Wake, awake, for night is flying." Heermann's hymns, including "Ah, holy Jesus," often express the emotions of faith. Gerhardt, perhaps the greatest Lutheran hymnwriter, was a pastor in Berlin.

Simon and Jude, Apostles

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

We know little about these apostles. Simon is listed as "the zealot" or Cananean in New Testament lists. Jude, also called Thaddeus, asked Jesus at the last supper why he had revealed himself to the disciples but not to the world.

Reformation Day

Friday, October 31, 2025

By the end of the seventeenth century, many Lutheran churches celebrated a festival commemorating Martin Luther's posting of the Ninety-five Theses, a summary of abuses in the church of his time. At the heart of the reform movement was the gospel, the good news that it is by grace through faith that we are justified and set free.

All Saints Day

Saturday, November 1, 2025

The custom of commemorating all of the saints of the church on a single day goes back at least to the third century. All Saints Day celebrates the baptized people of God, living and dead, who make up the body of Christ. On this day or the following Sunday, many congregations will remember the faithful who have died during the past year.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

Home, Sweet Home

Whether you have lived in several places or very few, you probably have a method for transforming a space to live into a home. Maybe you put family photos on the walls, set out mementos, or spread a favorite quilt on the bed. These touches are important if we want to feel like we belong in a new space.

Jesus offered the gift of belonging to people who newly believed in him, but they had a hard time accepting it. He said if they would continue, or abide, in his word, they would be his disciples, know his truth, and be set free. They would receive the gift of belonging to his household forever.

To us the listeners' response is surprising, as if the new believers had shut their ears as soon as they heard Jesus say, "The truth will make you free." They didn't want to accept that there was anything they needed to be set free from. On a deeper level, they didn't want to believe that someone else would need to set them free. Jesus' words invite us to reflect on where our freedom comes from, and where we belong, as his disciples.

On Reformation Sunday, we celebrate how the Holy Spirit is constantly reforming the church, the community of Jesus' disciples. We give thanks for the gospel message that Jesus saves us from sin and death through his cross and resurrection. We don't have to earn our salvation; we can simply trust that Jesus is the one who makes it possible. That's how we receive genuine freedom—as a gift of God's grace. Thanks to Jesus, we have a permanent home. No matter how many times we move, we abide with Jesus forever. This festival day encourages us to keep listening to Jesus' word, growing in faith as his disciples, and giving thanks that with him, we are always at home.