

St. Paul Lutheran Church
of Stillwater, Minnesota
April 26, 2026
Fourth Sunday of Easter



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.

Today is sometimes called "Good Shepherd Sunday." Jesus is called the "gate" of the sheep in today's gospel. The risen Christ opens the way to abundant life. He anoints our heads with oil and guides us beside the still waters of our baptism. Each Sunday, he spreads a feast before us amid the world's violence and war. We go forth to be signs of the resurrection and extend God's tender care to all creation.

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

GATHERING

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



Prelude

Thanksgiving for Baptism

ELW page 97

Gathering Song

ELW Hymn 807

"Come, thou Fount of Every Blessing"

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

O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, 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: New Testament Page 120

Acts 2:42-47

Today's reading is a description of life in the community following Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out on God's people. The new community is sustained in worship and fellowship, shares what they have, and ensures that everyone has enough.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 23

All sing the refrain before and after the psalm.



1 The Lord's my shep-herd; I'll not want. He makes me down to lie
in pas-tures green; he lead-eth me the qui-et wa-ters by.
He lead-eth me, he lead-eth me the qui-et wa-ters by.

The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.

**The Lord makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

You restore my soul, O Lord,
and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil.**

**for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

**Surely goodness and mercy
shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**



1 Peter 2:19-25

Doing the right things does not guarantee that one will not experience difficulties, hardships, rejection, or even suffering. Here Christ is presented as the model for our path of endurance and loyalty to God, particularly amid adversity.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

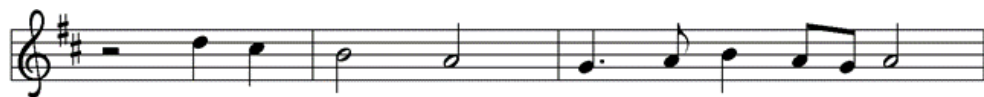
Thanks be to God.



Children's and Outreach Message

Jenny Brelje, CYF Director

Gospel Acclamation



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

John 10:1-10

Jesus uses an image familiar to the people of his day to make a point about spiritual leadership. Those who listen to Jesus are led to abundant life.

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 Laurel Halvorson Bernard

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

Hymn of the Day

ELW hymn 764

"Have No Fear, Little Flock"

Prayers of Intercession

After each prayer:

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

At the conclusion:

God of resurrection power, use us and these prayers to proclaim the good news of new life to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

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.

Announcements

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering

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

Blessed are you, O God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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 . . .

(Continued on the next page.) 6

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



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n 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.

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.
In the night in which he was betrayed . . .

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks . . .
Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Amen.



Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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 Song

ELW hymn 789

"Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us"

Prayer After Communion

Life-giving God, in the mystery of Christ's resurrection, you send light to conquer darkness, water to give new life, and the bread of life to nourish your people. Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection, that we may show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

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

Charge and Blessing

Go out into the world in peace;
have courage;
hold on to what is good;
return no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak, and help the suffering;
honor all people;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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 774

"What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine"

Dismissal

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!
Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

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DAILY PRAYER

Prayer of Catherine of Siena



Power of the eternal Father, help me. Wisdom of the Son, enlighten the eye of my understanding. Tender mercy of the Holy Spirit, unite my heart to yourself. Eternal God, restore health to the sick and life to the dead. Give us a voice, your own voice, to cry out to you for mercy for the world. You, light, give us light. You, wisdom, give us wisdom. You, supreme strength, strengthen us. Amen.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE LITURGY

The Baptized Life



The most beloved psalm in Christian use, Psalm 23, was seen in the fourth century as a description of the baptized life. The green pastures are the time of baptismal catechesis; the still waters are the font; the soul is restored by the infusion of the Spirit; the right pathways are the moral life of the transformed believer; God's rod and staff are our guidance for Christian living; the table is the eucharist, with a cup overflowing with mercy; the house of the Lord is the community of the church, within which we enjoy God's goodness.

LIFE ON EARTH

Land and Possessions



The reading from Acts says that this particular primitive Christian community maintained a kind of idyllic communitarian lifestyle. How would our baptism and our life as the body of Christ assist us in a life in which personal possessions mean very little? Much of the despoiling of the earth has come about as people, many of whom were Christian, acquired for themselves more land and goods that were needed. Into what future are we called, that we might help sustain life on this earth?

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Catherine of Siena, theologian, died 1380

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

This theologian was the first woman among Roman Catholics to receive the title "Doctor [teacher] of the Church." Catherine was a Dominican sister known for her mystical visions as well as her work on behalf of people who were poor and imprisoned.

Philip and James, Apostles

Friday, May 1, 2026

Philip was one of the first disciples of Jesus, and called Nathanael to "come and see." Little is known of James, the son of Alphaeus, called "the Less" to distinguish him from another apostle named James.

Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, died 373

Saturday, May 2, 2026

Best remembered for defending the teaching that Christ was fully God against those who taught otherwise, Athanasius was an influential church leader around the time of the Council of Nicea. He was banished from Alexandria five times for his forthright views.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

Our Good Shepherd

The images in today's texts provide us with much food for thought and action. Psalm 23 tells of a shepherd who leads us to green pastures and refreshing waters, walks alongside us as we face challenging times, takes us to a table already set, and anoints us with oil to mark each of us as chosen. We are heard, seen, known, valued, and loved, and remain in the Shepherd's presence for all time.

Jesus' words in the gospel reading add to the image of a loving and caring shepherd. The shepherd calls each sheep by name, while the sheep follow because they recognize that voice. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, knows us well and calls each of us by name. Jesus also serves as the gate for the sheep, guarding and protecting us in the sheepfold, while also providing access to pastureland. This protection and access give us the space to be who we are, with no need to play games or pretend to be someone we are not. And when it comes right down to it, the Good Shepherd comes to give us abundant life—new life in relationship with God, others, and all creation.

The reading from Acts 2 provides an image of abundant life among the early Christians, a life with an extravagance of worship, fellowship, prayer, generosity, service to others, and thankfulness.

How does the image of the Good Shepherd sit with you? How do you picture the relationship between you and Jesus—with shepherd and sheep imagery, or something else? Where and how do you recognize the Good Shepherd's voice? Do you know someone who has abundant life in Christ—a life of faith, joy, and love? What would such a life look like for you, and for your faith community?

Church Staff

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Sr. Pastor | Rev. Nathan Baker-Trinity |
| Visitation Pastor | Rev. Laurel Halvorson Bernard |
| Director of Music | Andy Peterson |
| Casual Worship Leader | Karen Hillmann |
| Office Coordinator | Kristin Nelson |
| CYF & Outreach Director | Jenny Brelje |
| Accountant | Michael Benson |
| Maintenance | Jeff Thomsen |
| Audio-Video Engineer | Tim Schingen |

2026 Church Council Officers

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| President | Shelley Jokinen |
| Vice President | Pam Seekel |
| Secretary | Chris Shivers |

2026 Committee Chairpersons

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Financial Operations | (Open Seat) |
| CYF | Sabrina Bell Kristie Mack |
| Evangelism & Membership | (Open Seat) |
| Fellowship | Janine Siverson |
| Memorial & Grants | Diane Podratz Barb LaCosse |
| Mission Outreach | Ann Kriesel |
| Property & Grounds | (Open Seat) |
| Seniors | Jenny Powell |
| Worship | Jennifer Braun |

St. Paul Lutheran Church

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