

St. Paul Lutheran Church
of Stillwater, Minnesota
May 17, 2026
Seventh Sunday of Easter



Our Vision

**Love and serve God by walking with, caring for,
and learning from our members, friends, and neighbors.**

Our Values

Welcome. Generosity. Faithfulness.

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.

In these days between Ascension and Pentecost, we gather with the disciples in the upper room, waiting for the Spirit to transform the church around the world. In today's gospel, Jesus prays for his followers and for their mission in his name. Amid religious, social, and economic divisions, we seek the unity that Jesus had with his Father. Made one in baptism, we go forth to live our faith in the world, eager for the unity that God intends for the whole human family.

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



GATHERING

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

Prelude

"Bind Us Together"

Refrain

Bind us to - geth - er, Lord, bind us to - geth - er with cords that
can - not be bro - ken. Bind us to - geth - er, Lord,
bind us to - geth - er, Lord; bind us to - geth - er in love.

1 There . . is on - ly one God. There . . is on - ly one King.
2 You are the fam - ly of God. You are the prom - ise di - vine.

There . . is on - ly one Bod - y; that . . is why we can sing;
You are God's cho - sen de - sire, you are the glo - rious new wine.

Refrain

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 of glory, your Son Jesus Christ suffered for us and ascended to your right hand. Unite us with Christ and each other in suffering and in joy, that all the world may be drawn into your bountiful presence, 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 118

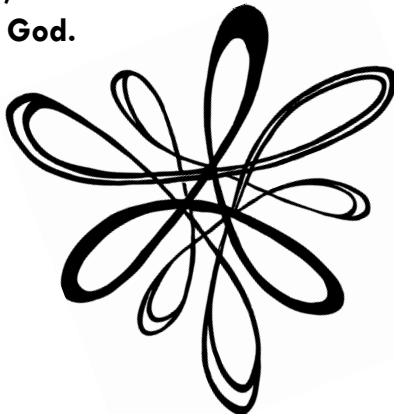
Acts 1:6-14

Today's reading is part of the introduction to the narrative of the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost. These verses tell of the risen Lord's conversation with his disciples on the eve of his ascension, in which he promises that they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

At the conclusion:

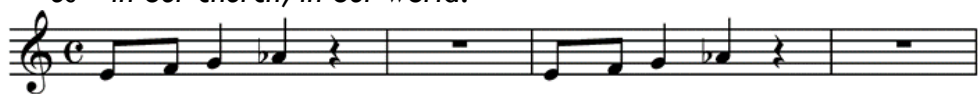
Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.



Psalm 68 (paraphrase)

This psalm sings for people who are lost, missing, hurt, afraid or otherwise vulnerable. We all need help for our lives so we sing for no one to be left out of God's loving reach. Maybe a psalm like this can draw our attention to who is most vulnerable among us—in our church, in our world.



Bring us all back

Bring us all back

*Singers pray the verses.
After Verse 3, the people sing:*



Bring us all back

Oh_____ A - men

Bring us all back

Oh_____ A - men

All sing the refrain as invited by a leader.

Bring our lonely ones home to loving arms

Bring our lost ones home safe from the sea

Free our poor ones from their fearfulness

Bring our captive loves back home safe and sound

Heal our cravings and illusions

Graft our certain death into thriving life

Second Reading

Pew Bible: New Testament Page 235

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

Our faith in Christ does not make us immune from the scorn of others. Nevertheless, we are to resist the designs of evil when we experience disparagement from others because we trust God's grace will strengthen and guide us.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Children's and Outreach Message

Jenny Brelje, CYF Director

Gospel Acclamation

ELW hymn 388

A quartet sings the acclamation first, then all are invited to sing.

“Be Not Afraid”

Gospel Reading

Pew Bible: New Testament Page 111

John 17:1-11

In final words to his disciples on the night of his arrest, Jesus encourages obedience to his commandments and speaks of the Spirit, who will be with them forever.

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 526

“God Is Here”

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.

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 Anthem

Chancel Choir

"I Will Rise"



Offering Prayer

Merciful God,
accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory.
You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day
when we will hunger and thirst no more.
Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus,
that goodness and mercy may follow us
and bless the world you love.
In the name of Jesus,
Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

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 our thanks and praise.

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

. . . 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 . . .

In the night in which he was betrayed . . .

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks . . . 7

(Continued on the next page.) 7

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O 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 821

"Shout to the Lord"



Prayer After Communion

Holy One,
through this meal you have made your home among us
and are making all things new.
Send us now to speak peace to anxious hearts,
to love our enemies,
and to bring your healing to the nations.
In the name of Jesus,

Amen.

SENDING

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

Announcements

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 824

"This Is My Father's World"

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
For Easter Hope in Times of Sorrow



Lord God,
The promise of resurrection comes to me hard right now,
since I am feeling sorrow and loss.
Keep me connected to your promise,
so that as my feelings waver and change,
I trust your faithfulness.
Let me be aware of others' joy without envy.
Hold me with your powerful and loving hand.
For the sake of Jesus.
Amen.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE LITURGY
Blessings for All



The prayer of the day, new to Evangelical Lutheran Worship in 2006, stresses the unity of Christ with his people in both suffering and joy, in hope that all the world will come to the blessing of the presence of God. Every Sunday we embody Christ's blessings, not only for ourselves, but for the whole world.

LIFE ON EARTH Look Down



A great deal of Christian practice has been dedicated to “looking up toward heaven” where the ancients believed God dwelled. But where are we to see Christ? In line with John and Matthew's gospel, the church has long taught that we see Jesus in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, in the community of the faithful, and in the needy. Now we know also to look for Christ in the earth that God has made, in which God continuously brings life out of death.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Erik, King of Sweden, martyr, died 1160

Monday, May 18, 2026

Erik is considered the patron saint of Sweden. As king of that nation, he tried to bring peace in the region, and to spread Christianity in Scandinavia. He was also known for his attempts to make fair laws and to protect those who were poor or sick.

Helena, mother of Constantine, died around 330

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Influenced by her son to become Christian, Helena (or Helen) lived an exemplary life of faith. She is also remembered for traveling through Palestine building churches on the sites she believed to be associated with Christ's life.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

The Perspective of Love

The prayers of Jesus in today's reading come at the conclusion of what is called the "Farewell Discourse" in John's gospel, which takes place prior to Jesus' arrest in the garden. In this discourse Jesus repeatedly emphasizes themes of relationship, mutual love, and service as he teaches, gives final instructions, and prays for the disciples.

In John, more than in the other three gospels, relationship is the ultimate focus of the life of faith. Jesus' mission on earth is to bring people into knowledge of and relationship with God the Father. Jesus exemplifies perfect relationship with the Father and wants all people to know this same intimacy with God. He also prays that his disciples might live in such a loving and mutual relationship with one another. Moreover, he prays that we might be one, so that our unity reflects the unity of the Father and the Son.

Our relationship with God is strengthened and refreshed in faith communities that worship together, attend to each other's needs, and serve others and creation in acts of love and compassion. In the Bantu languages and philosophy of Africa, ubuntu refers to the moral conviction that "I am because you are," or "I am because we are." Ubuntu recognizes that our well-being and our futures are bound up in the well-being and the future of others. Christianity is a religion of relationship, not of self-efficacy. In an increasingly individualistic and fragmented world, our faith in Christ demonstrates a bold witness to the power and beauty of community. How might Jesus be leading us and the church in this subversive work? How might mutual love and interdependence be signs of our faith, forging a path of healing for our broken world?

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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
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Evangelism & Membership	(Open Seat)
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Memorial & Grants	Diane Podratz Barb LaCosse
Mission Outreach	Ann Kriesel
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Seniors	Jenny Powell
Worship	Jennifer Braun

St. Paul Lutheran Church

609 S. 5th Street, Stillwater, MN 55082
(651) 439-5970

Office Hours Monday - Friday, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Email: spkc@stpaulc.org Website: stpaulc.org

Facebook: [@stpaulstillwater](https://www.facebook.com/stpaulstillwater)