

St. Paul Lutheran Church
of Stillwater, Minnesota
May 3, 2026
Fifth 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.

As we continue to celebrate the fifty days of Easter, today's gospel includes Jesus' promise that he goes to prepare a place for his followers in his Father's house. Our baptism commissions us to share Jesus' mission in the world. As 1 Peter reminds us, we are a holy people, called to proclaim the one who called us out of darkness into light. In words and deeds, we bear witness to the risen Christ—our way, our truth, our life.

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

GATHERING

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



Prelude

Confession and Forgiveness

ELW page 94

Gathering Song

ELW Hymn 382

Stanzas 1 and 4.

"Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!"

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, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and
the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the
way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with
all the world, for he 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 126

Acts 7:55-60

*Stephen was one of the seven men chosen by the apostles to
serve tables so that the apostles could be free to serve the word
(Acts 6:1-6). Stephen does more than distribute food, however.
For his preaching of God's word, he becomes the first martyr of
the faith.*

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

As a response to the first reading, we speak the psalm Jesus sang from the cross before he died. Stephen's death mirrors death of Jesus by both forgiving his enemies and commending his spirit to God. "Jesus, remember me," is what the thief on the cross next to Jesus prayed.



Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.



Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

¹ In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.

² **Incline your ear to me;
make haste to deliver me.**

³ Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag and my stronghold;
for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.

⁴ **Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me,
for you are my tower of strength.**

⁵ Into your hands I commend my spirit,
for you have redeemed me, O LORD, God of truth.

¹⁵ **My times are in your hand;
rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me.**

¹⁶ Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love."

Sermon

Pastor Laurel Halvorson Bernard

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

Hymn of the Day

ELW hymn 380

"Hallelujah! Jesus Lives!"

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

"The Call"

Riley MacDonald, soloist

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.

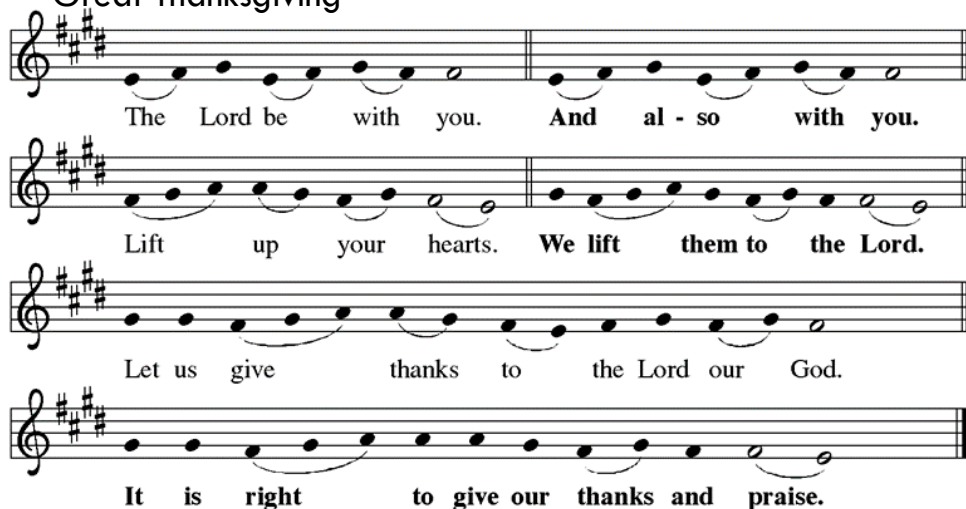


Offering Prayer

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.

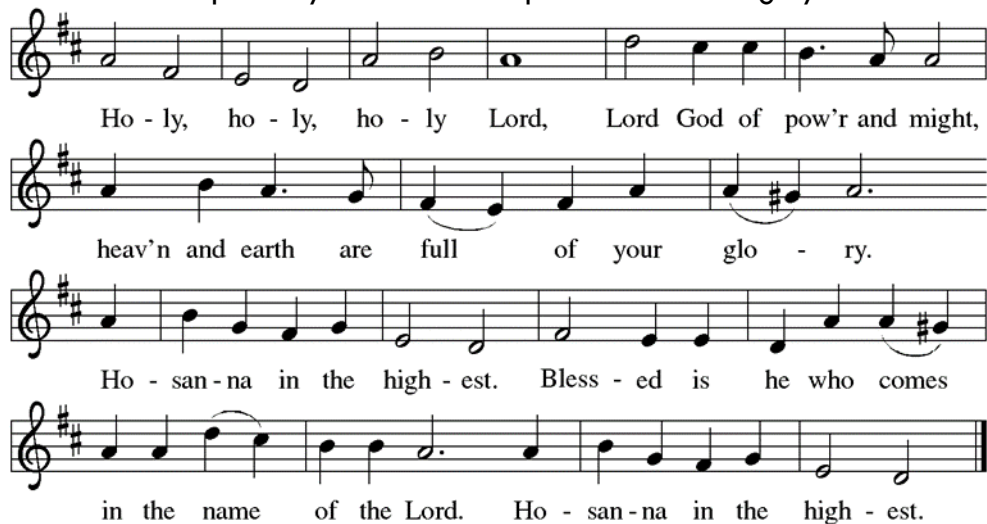
Great Thanksgiving



The Lord be with you. And 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.

Blessed are you, O God of the universe . . .
Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth . . .
In the night in which he was betrayed . . .
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks . . .
With this bread and cup
we remember our Lord's passover from death to life
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

O God of resurrection and new life . . .

. . . Grace our table with your presence.

Come, Holy Spirit.

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread . . .

. . . Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

Come, Holy Spirit.

With your holy ones of all times and places,
with the earth and all its creatures,
with sun and moon and stars,
we praise you, O God,
blessed and holy Trinity,
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 Songs

"One Bread, One Body"

ELW hymn 496

"Here Is Bread"

ELW hymn 483

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.

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 596

"My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less"

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

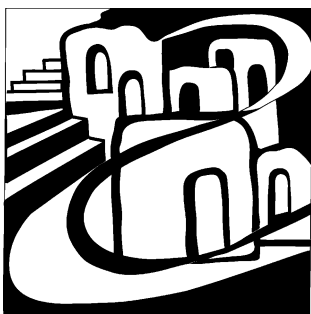
Prayer of Julian of Norwich



In you, Father all-mighty, we have our preservation and our bliss. In you, Christ, we have our restoring and our saving. You are our mother, brother, and savior. In you, our Lord the Holy Spirit, is marvelous and plenteous grace. You are our clothing; for love you wrap us and embrace us. You are our maker, our lover, our keeper. Teach us to believe that by your grace all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well. Amen.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE LITURGY

Jesus Our Home and Way



As we gather for worship, we enter God's sanctuary, a house with many rooms. Here we are free to lament, praise, and abide in God's presence. As we are dismissed from worship, we go in peace, since Christ is with us. Christ dwells not only in the sanctuary, but is with us on the way (the word in Greek can also mean "road": Christ is our Way who meets on the road and accompanies all our journeys.

LIFE ON EARTH

God's Mighty Acts on Earth



The letter of First Peter calls us to be a chosen race, a holy nation, a people who proclaim the mighty acts of God. Among these mighty acts are God's creation and preservation of this earth. Daily, God continues to create life on this earth. We rejoice on this earth, and join with God's mighty acts to preserve it.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Monica, mother of Augustine, died 387

Monday, May 4, 2026

Monica was married to a pagan husband who was ill-tempered and unfaithful, but whom she helped bring into the Christian faith. She repeated the influence on her son Augustine, who went on to become one of the greatest church teachers.

Julian of Norwich, renewer of the church, died around 1416

Friday, May 8, 2026

When she was about thirty years old, Julian (or Juliana) reported visions that she later compiled into a book, *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*, now a classic of medieval mysticism. The visions declared that love was the meaning of religious experience, provided by Christ who is love, for the purpose of love.

Victor the Moor, martyr, died 303 (TFF)

Friday, May 8, 2026

Also known as Victor Maurus, this native of the northwest African nation of Mauritania was a soldier in the Roman Praetorian Guard. Under the persecution of Maximian, Victor died for his faith at Milan.

Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, renewer of the church, hymnwriter, died 1760

Saturday, May 9, 2026

When he was 22, a group of Moravians asked permission to live on Zinzendorf's land. He agreed, and eventually worldwide Moravian missions emanated from this community. Zinzendorf participated in these missions, and is also remembered for writing hymns characteristic of his Pietistic faith.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

Love, Love, Love

That's what it's all about! Jesus loves.

Jesus' love is a constant in scripture. From his humble birth to his teachings, parables, healing miracles, feeding of the multitudes, power over creation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus loves.

Some people wanted the Messiah to take a much different approach. They thought their savior would come as a strong military leader, but Jesus did not start a violent overthrow of the Roman Empire. He just could not and would not do anything in conflict with love. He gave himself up and loved until the very end. In his last breath on the cross, he forgave everyone involved in crucifying him. This is the depth of the amazing love of God shown to us in Christ Jesus.

Stephen, "a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5), strove to live as Jesus lived and to love as Jesus loved. As he was being stoned to death, Stephen shouted, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (7:60).

Following Jesus was not easy for Stephen and other early Christians. It is not easy today. But in today's gospel reading, Jesus assures his followers—then and now—of three things. First, the great doors to a place with God will be open to us, in a house with many rooms. Second, he is the way, truth, and life, and by knowing him, we come to know God the Father. Third, we can ask him for anything. These are promises of Jesus' continuing care for us, for people of every time and place, and for all creation.

Jesus loves.

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

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Vice President	Pam Seekel
Secretary	Chris Shivers

2026 Committee Chairpersons

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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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