

**St. Paul Lutheran Church
of Stillwater, Minnesota**

July 12, 2026

7th Sunday after Pentecost



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.

God's word is like the rain that waters the earth and brings forth vegetation. It is also like the sower who scatters seed indiscriminately. Our lives are like seeds sown in the earth. Even from what appears to be little, dormant, or dead, God promises a harvest. At the Lord's table we are fed with the bread of life, that we may bear fruit in the world.

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.



Invocation

We come to remember.

We come to learn.

We come to offer praise.

**We come to live in God's truth,
to hold fast to God's laws,
and to rejoice in God's word.**

Happy are those who dwell near to God's courts!

**Let us draw near to God,
our source of goodness and joy,
our salvation and our hope.**

We begin in the name we are baptized,
in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the
Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Gathering Song

ELW hymn 574

"Here I Am, Lord"

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, we thank you for planting in us the seed of
your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy,
live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

WORD

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

First Reading

Pew Bible: Old Testament Page 686

Isaiah 55:10-13

God's word to Israel's exiles is as sure and effective as never-failing precipitation. Their return to the Holy Land in a new exodus is cheered on by singing mountains and by trees that clap their hands.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.



Children's and Outreach Message

Jenny Brelje, CYF Director

Gospel Acclamation

Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal -
- le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le -
lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. 3

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

In Matthew's gospel, both Jesus and his disciples "sow the seed" of God's word by proclaiming the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near." Now, in a memorable parable, Jesus explains why this good news produces different results in those who hear.

The gospel is introduced:

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

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 694

"Sing to The Lord of Harvest"

Prayers of Intercession

After each prayer:

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

At the conclusion:

Grateful for your abundant provision and trusting in your goodness, we cast all our cares upon you, through the abundant grace of Christ Jesus.

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 "Where We'll Never Grow Old" Mark Zempel, 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,
for waves of grain and harvesters,
fruitful vines and winepresses,
for our labor and our rest,
for the gifts of your hand in this land.
Transform us and what we offer
into the banquet of your compassion,
serving your love without limits
through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

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:



Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. . .

Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts,
 that we may receive our Lord with a living faith
 as he comes to us in his holy supper.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

In the night in which he was betrayed . . .

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

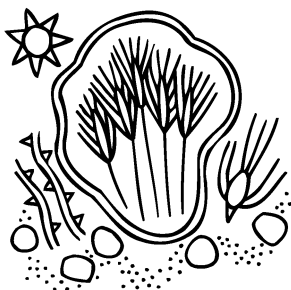


Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**



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 773

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand"

Prayer After Communion

We thank you, God of heaven and earth,
that you fill our deepest need
with the very gift of Jesus Christ,
broken and poured out for us.
Pour us out into a broken world.
Channel our common life
toward the common good,
following the way our Savior leads us
now and forever.

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.

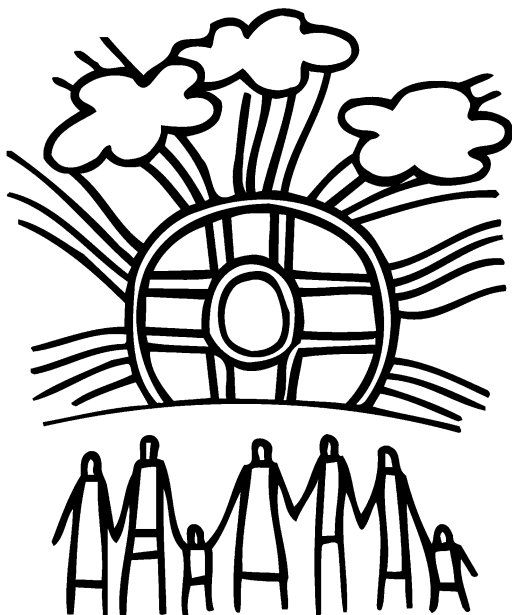
Amen.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

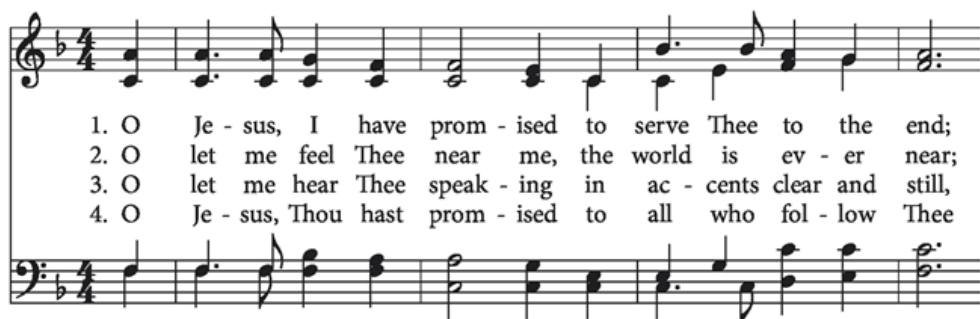
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

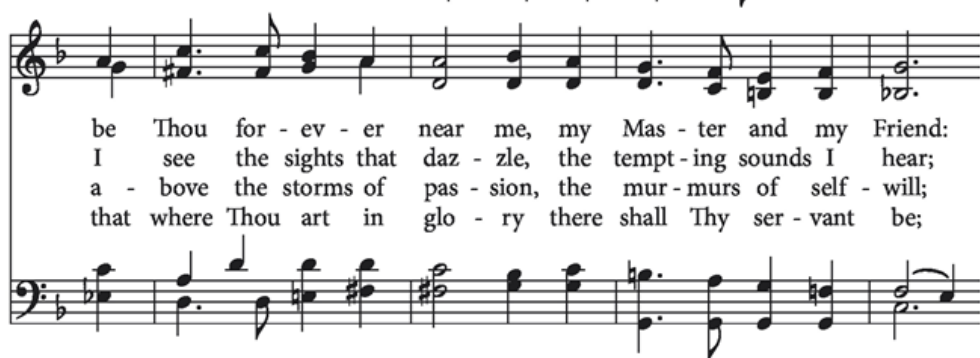


Sending Song

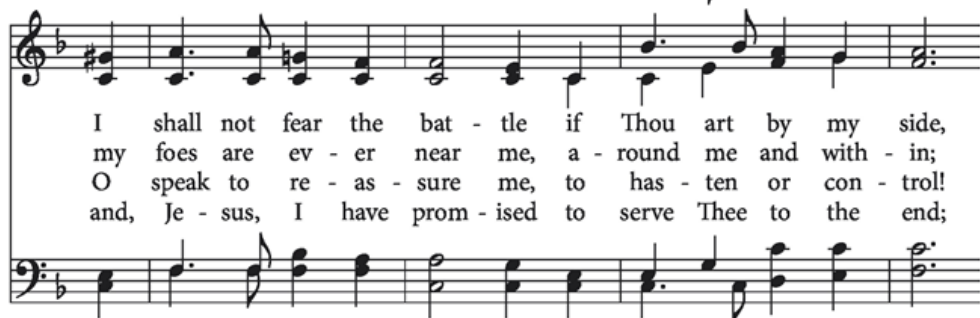
"O Jesus, I Have Promised"



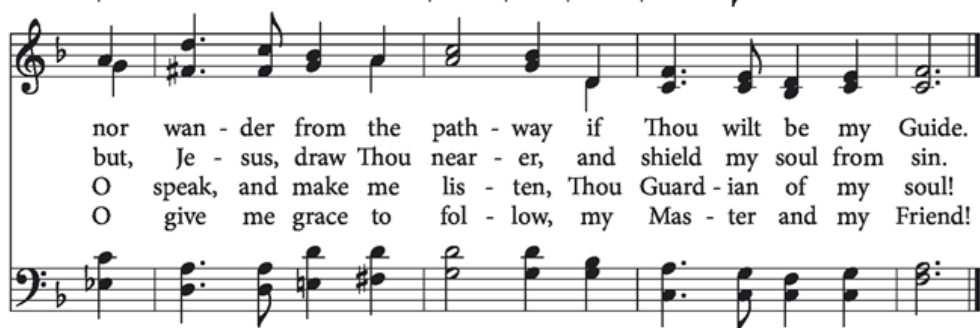
1. O Je - sus, I have prom - ised to serve Thee to the end;
 2. O let me feel Thee near me, the world is ev - er near;
 3. O let me hear Thee speak - ing in ac - cents clear and still,
 4. O Je - sus, Thou hast prom - ised to all who fol - low Thee



be Thou for - ev - er near me, my Mas - ter and my Friend:
 I see the sights that daz - zle, the tempt - ing sounds I hear;
 a - bove the storms of pas - sion, the mur - murs of self - will;
 that where Thou art in glo - ry there shall Thy ser - vant be;



I shall not fear the bat - tle if Thou art by my side,
 my foes are ev - er near me, a - round me and with - in;
 O speak to re - as - sure me, to has - ten or con - trol!
 and, Je - sus, I have prom - ised to serve Thee to the end;



nor wan - der from the path - way if Thou wilt be my Guide.
 but, Je - sus, draw Thou near - er, and shield my soul from sin.
 O speak, and make me lis - ten, Thou Guard - ian of my soul!
 O give me grace to fol - low, my Mas - ter and my Friend!

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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DAILY PRAYER

Young Persons



Lord God of our ancestors, we thank you for what you have done and will continue to do with our daughters and sons. Walk with them in life, and keep the evil one from obstructing their path. You see all; you know where the water is deep. Keep them from danger. Order their steps and guide their feet while they run the race of faith. May the good work that you have begun in them be brought to completion at the day of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

CATECHISM CONNECTION

Hearing the Word



For Martin Luther, the gift of the Sabbath is also the gift of hearing the Word. In his teaching on the Third Commandment, "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy," Luther says: "We are to fear and love God, so that we do not despise preaching or God's word, but instead keep that word holy and gladly hear and learn it." Hearing and learning are spiritual disciplines at the heart of our Lutheran expression of faith.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE LITURGY



In each Thanksgiving at Table, we pray with Paul that the Spirit of God come to dwell among us: with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us; Holy God, we long for your Spirit; Come, Holy Spirit; pour out upon us the Spirit of your love; send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, whose breath revives us for life; Come, Spirit of freedom!; we pray for the gift of your Spirit, in our gathering, within this meal, among your people; the life of the Spirit of our risen Savior, to establish our faith in truth; Come, Holy Spirit.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Nathan Söderblom, Bishop of Uppsala, died 1931

Sunday, July 12, 2026

A winner of the Nobel Prize for peace for his efforts to unite peoples after the First World War, Söderblom also called attention to the revival of early church worship principles, and helped to lay the groundwork for the World Council of Churches.

Bartolomé de Las Casas, missionary to the Indies, died 1566

Friday, July 17, 2026

A native of Spain, Las Casas first came to the Western hemisphere while serving in the military. Upon arriving in the West, Las Casas was granted a large estate with Indigenous enslaved people whom he freed after he was ordained a priest. He worked in the Caribbean and Central America to improve the lives of the native peoples

GOSPEL MESSAGE

The Generous Gardener

In this parable, Jesus tells the disciples a story of a gardener. While many people carefully plan where to plant seeds (with some modern farmers using technology to map out, down to the millimeter, where each seed will grow best), the gardener in Jesus' story scatters seed generously, almost carelessly.

As the disciples, familiar with farming and fishing, would have known deep within themselves, things don't come easy in this life. Faith is the same. Like seeds that take their time, when the conditions are right to grow and bear fruit, faith isn't always a steady path. There are seasons of cold isolation—times when prayer and devotions don't warm the heart as they once did. There are seasons of scorching busyness—times when endless distractions overwork the head enough to overheat. Faith might look different at these times, but no matter the season, faith is never gone.

Ultimately, faith isn't measured down to the millimeter. Instead, this haphazardly generous gardener extends faith into the impossible places. And when rocks, sun, or thorns from this world and within choke this faith that God has given us, the impossible becomes possible. In every season, God comes again and again to sprinkle more and more seed and to reach out to us before we can even try to grow on our own. And with time and divine Presence, that seed of faith starts to sprout.

Because of this never-ending abundance, every season is an opportunity to engage with God the generous gardener, whose nearness is always available and who gives the gift of faith, no matter the conditions. Today, let the summer breeze remind you of how close God's Spirit is, always nurturing and providing the abundance that is the essence of faith.