

**St. Paul Lutheran Church
of Stillwater, Minnesota
July 19, 2026
8th 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.

It is an age-old question: why is there evil in the world? In the parable of the wheat and the weeds, Jesus suggests that both grow together until the harvest. Having both weeds and wheat within us, we humbly place our hope in the promises of God, and from the Lord's table we go forth to bear the fruit of justice and mercy.

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.





Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
whose compassion endures forever.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God,

we confess to you all our sins.

Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves.

In your mercy, call us back to you.

Your yoke is easy and your burden is light.

Restore us to dwell in your peace.

In Christ's name we pray,

Amen.

Jesus says, "Come to me,
all you who are weary
and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest."

In the name of God,

Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
your sins are forgiven.

Rest in God's love.

Amen.

Gathering Song

"I Saw the Light"

**I wandered so aimless, life filed with sin.
I wouldn't let my dear Savior in.
Then Jesus came like a stranger in the night.
Praise the Lord, I saw the light.**

***I saw the light, I saw the light.
No more darkness, no more night.
Now I'm so happy, no sorrow in sight.
Praise the Lord, I saw the light.***

**Just like a blind man, I wandered along.
Worries and fears I claimed for my own.
Then like the blind man that God gave back his sight.
Praise the Lord, I saw the light. R.**

**I was a fool to wander and stray.
For straight is the gate and narrow's the way.
Now I have traded the wrong for the right.
Praise the Lord, I saw the light. R.**

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

Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit nurture us who live in your kingdom, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, 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 673

Isaiah 44:6-8

There are no other gods besides God: the word of the LORD does not fail to come to pass. We can trust in God, through whom Israel—and we—are redeemed.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Children's and Outreach Message

Jenny Brelje, CYF Director

Gospel Acclamation

"I Love to Tell the Story"



I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,
of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.
I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know it's true;
it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else would do.
Refrain
I love to tell the sto - ry; 'twill be my theme in glo - ry
to tell the old, old sto - ry of Je - sus and his love.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Jesus tells a parable about the coexistence of good and evil in this world. God's judgment will remove all evildoers and causes of sin, but not until the end of human history.

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 Marla Amborn

Serenity Prayer

**God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.**

**Living one day at a time,
enjoying one moment at a time,
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
taking, as Jesus did,
this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it,
trusting that you will make all things right,
if I surrender to your will,
so that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
and supremely happy with you forever in the next.**

Amen.



"Lead Me, Guide Me"

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

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:

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

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 . . .

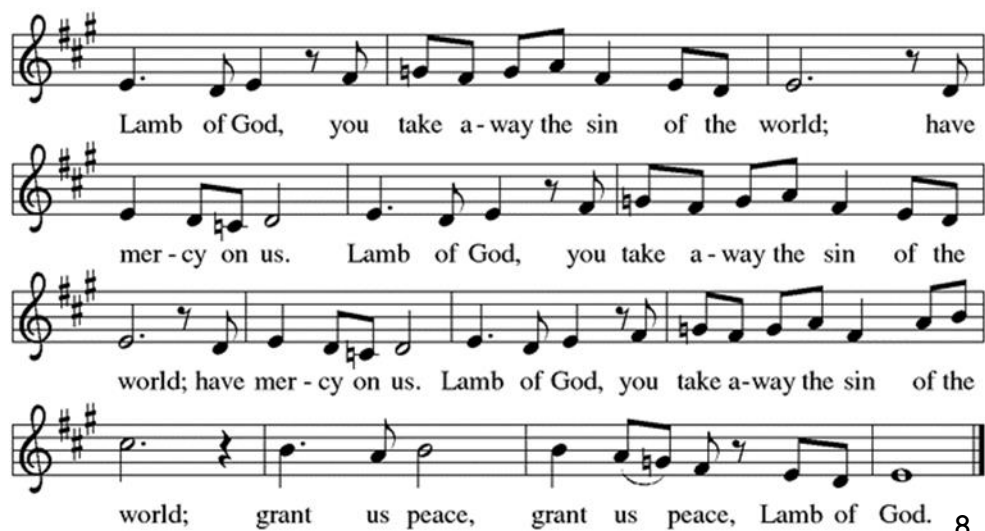
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks . . .

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.**



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, Lamb of God.

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 *"Peace in the Valley"*

**Oh, I'm tired and so weary,
But I must go alone,
'Til the Lord comes and calls me away.
Well, the morning's so bright,
And the lamp is alight,
And night is as black as the sea.**

There will be peace in the valley for me, some day.

There will be peace in the valley for me, I pray.

No sadness, no sorrow.

No trouble, I see.

There will be peace in the valley for me.

**Well the bear will be gentle,
And the wolves will be tame,
And the lion shall lay down by the lamb,
And the beasts from the wild,
Shall be lit by a child.
And I'll be changed from this creature that I am. R.**

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 *"Will the Circle Be Unbroken"*

**There are loved ones in the glory,
whose dear forms you often miss.
When you close your earthly story,
will you join them in their bliss?**

*Will the circle be unbroken?
By and by Lord, by and by.
There's a better home awaiting
in the sky Lord, in the sky.*

**In the joyous days of childhood,
oft they told of wondrous love;
pointed to a dying Savior;
now they dwell with Him above. R.**

**You remember songs of heaven which
you sang with childish voice.
Do you love the hymns they taught you,
or are songs of earth your choice? R.**

Dismissal

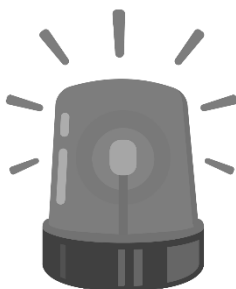
**Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

Portions of the liturgy, service music, and hymns not otherwise noted below are from sundaysandseasons.com. Reprinted by permission through Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License number SAS028225. Copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

For "Lead Me, Guide Me" Author: Contributors: Doris Akers. All rights reserved. Used with permission. Reprinted and streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-714175. All rights reserved.

DAILY PRAYER

Emergency Workers



God of earth and air, water and fire, height and depth, we pray for those who work in danger, who rush in to bring hope and help and comfort when others flee to safety, whose mission is to seek and save, serve and protect, and whose presence embodies the protection of the Good Shepherd. Give them caution and concern for one another, so that in safety they may do what must be done, under your watchful eye. Support them in their courage and dedication that they may continue to save lives, ease pain, and mend the torn fabric of lives and social order; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CATECHISM CONNECTION

Trusting the Promise



Hearing today's gospel, we might worry, "Am I saved?" Martin Luther speaks decisively and assures us that we can trust the promise of Christ that we are saved. "He has redeemed me He has purchased me . . . He has freed me . . . He has done all this in order that I may belong to him." (Second Article of the Creed, Small Catechism). Faith is not trusting in our sincere efforts, but trusting in Christ's promises already made to us in our baptism.

ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN

God's Patience



In previous centuries, many children would have been assigned the tedious chore of weeding the vegetable garden, a task necessary were the family to have enough food to eat. Today some children have the chore of taking out the garbage. Yet in today's gospel, the land owner, who reminds us of our patient and loving God, tells the servants not to weed the field, not to throw away things that seem bad. In the story God protects everything that is growing, which is good news for us, since we are sometimes wheat, sometimes weeds.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Mary Magdalene, Apostle

Wednesday, July 22, 2026

Sometimes called "the apostle to the apostles" because she told them of her encounter with the risen Lord, Mary was a woman of Galilee who followed Jesus throughout his ministry. She was present at Jesus' crucifixion and his burial. An icon of Mary is painted within the chancel at St. Mary's Church in Stillwater.

Birgitta of Sweden, renewer of the church, died 1373

Thursday, July 23, 2026

Birgitta married at age thirteen and had four daughters. Widowed at age thirty-eight, she gave all that she owned to the poor, and founded a community of monks and nuns led by a woman. Her work is continued today by the Society of St. Birgitta.

James, Apostle

Saturday, July 25, 2026

James and his brother John were the sons of Zebedee, fishermen by trade before their call from Jesus. He was the first of the twelve apostles to be martyred, and his death is the only one recorded in scripture (Acts 12:1-2).

GOSPEL MESSAGE

Deep-Seated Grace

The things we learn early on in life matter. Maybe the first time you rode a bike taught you about a deep sense of fulfillment. The first time your heart swooned with romance taught you about a whole new dimension of love. Painfully, we find out the stove is hot by that first, uninformed touch, and we learn to watch for the flame. That first heartbreak sows some mistrust in future relationships.

These core memories inform how we see and interact with the world, shaping our expectations and actions. They are like seeds planted deep that grow and grow within. As Jesus speaks in this parable of weeds among the wheat, we are reminded that within us are both good seeds and invasive plants that get in the way. As our early memories remind us, people can sow both good and evil. There is fulfillment and romance, and there is pain and mistrust—good seeds and pesky weeds.

In a radical move, God the gardener has planted the deepest seed, a seed of grace. And herein lies the promise of this story from Jesus: Though we may try to uproot the sin—the weeds—separating us from God and each other, only God can make this grace come to life. With dusty overalls and a warm smile, God, the greatest gardener, removes the weeds of pain and mistrust. In Jesus, all that separates us from one another and from God is no more. The earliest seed planted deep within (even before we can remember) is the seed of grace that cultivates the deepest connection to God.

How have you seen God's grace at work in you, and how has the Spirit sown trust and connection in your life?