

St. Paul Lutheran Church
of Stillwater, Minnesota
September 27, 2026
18th 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.

In today's second reading, Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy 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.



Confession and Forgiveness

ELW page 94

Gathering Song

ELW hymn 618

"Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer"

Greeting

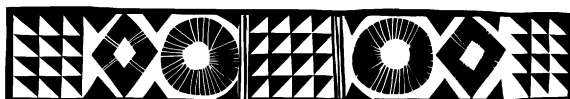
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings.
Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those
things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.



WORD

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

Children's Word

First Reading

Pew Bible: Old Testament Page 785

Ezekiel 18:25-29

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 25:1-9

Sung to the tune of ELW hymn 347

“Lord, I Gladly Trust”

**Lord, I gladly trust in You:
let me not be put to shame.
As I look up toward Your throne,
make Your gracious promise known;
God, my refuge and my hope,
Your protective care I claim.**

**In Your hands I place my past:
all my sins You know so well.
Your forgiveness, Lord, I need,
for my guilt is great indeed;
even greater is Your love—
mercy more than I can tell.**

**Teach me what is true and good;
let me hear and understand!
In the choices I must make,
show my heart the way to take,
so that I may always tread
on the path which You have planned.**

Second Reading

Pew Bible: New Testament Page 197

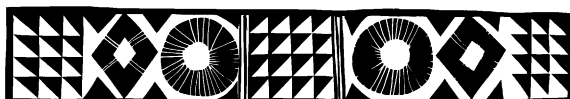
Philippians 2:1-13

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ’s selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.



Gospel Acclamation

Al - le - lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.

Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.

Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

Gospel Reading

Pew Bible: New Testament Pages 23-24
Matthew 21:23-32

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

The gospel is introduced:

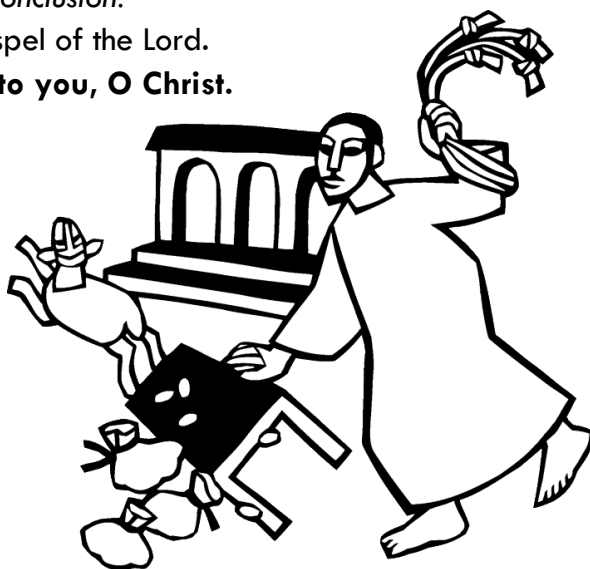
The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the conclusion:

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.



Sermon

Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

Hymn of the Day

ELW hymn 806

"O God, My Faithful God"

Apostles' Creed

ELW page 105

Prayers of Intercession

After each prayer:

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

At the conclusion:

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

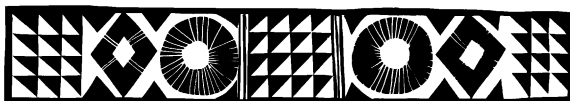
Amen.

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 Hymn

"I Will Offer Up My Life"

**I will offer up my life
In spirit and truth
Pouring out the oil of love
As my worship to You
In surrender I must give my ev'ry part
Lord receive the sacrifice
Of a broken heart**

*Jesus what can I give what can I bring
To so faithful a friend to so loving a King
Savior what can be said what can be sung
As a praise of Your name
For the things You have done
Oh my words could not tell not even in part
Of the debt of love that is owed
By this thankful heart*

**You deserve my every breath
For You've paid the great cost
Giving up Your life to death
Even death on a cross
You took all my shame away
There defeated my sin
Opened up the gates of heaven
And have beckoned me in R**

Offering Prayer

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, 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. . .

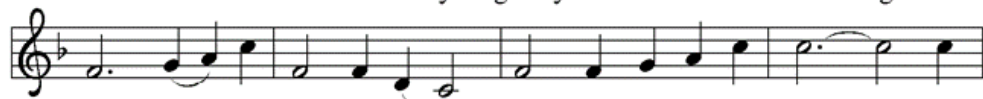
. . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er 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, 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 . . .

Remembering, therefore . . .

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.

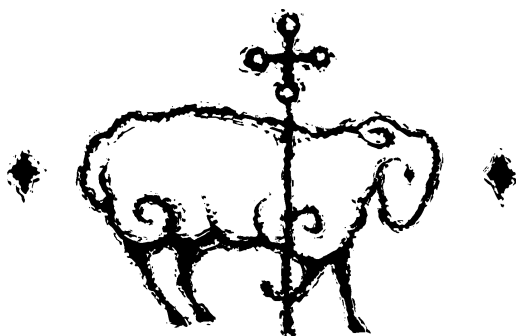
Amen.

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.**



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

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

"We Come to the Hungry Feast"

ELW hymn 479

"Here Is Bread"

ELW hymn 483

Prayer After Communion

We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

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

Announcements

Blessing

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.

“How Great Thou Art”

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Michael and All Angels

Tuesday, September 29, 2026

Michael the archangel, captain of the heavenly hosts, is remembered on this day along with the other angels and archangels. The word "angel" means messenger, and in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, these beings have a fully spiritual nature and no physical body.

Jerome, translator, teacher, died 420

Wednesday, September 30, 2026

Jerome was a biblical scholar and translator, but rather than translating the original Hebrew and Greek scriptures into classical Latin, he worked in the commonly-spoken Latin of the day, creating a version called the Vulgate.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

Marching Orders

Members of the string quartet look around at each other, nod, and begin tuning up to play. The basketball team huddles around the coach as she draws up the play on a dry-erase board. The volunteer teams go over their assignments one last time before heading off to their positions for the charity run. In each instance, before beginning their mission, the group takes a moment to get on the same page, to get their marching orders. In our lives as disciples of Christ, that moment is baptism.

Our marching orders, our mission guidelines, are marked on our hearts in baptism. The good news of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in Jesus Christ that is poured over us spills out in our lives, and we are called to be agents of restoration: to bind up the brokenhearted, to care for all people and all creation. Just as the coach draws up the play or someone makes a list of the things that need to get done, we are imbued with a way of life in baptism's waters. Our motivation for this way of life is the love that has also been shown to us in Jesus: the love that feeds us each week as we gather around our Savior's table.

Even if we are sometimes reluctant, like the son in Jesus' parable who initially says he will not go to the vineyard but eventually goes, we are motivated to carry out the work to which God has called us because of the baptismal grace we have received. And whenever we pause to collect ourselves—whether it's tuning up before the performance, getting the play in the huddle, or just taking a deep breath before beginning the next item on the to-do list—we think of baptism, when our marching orders and our motivations are indelibly marked on us by Jesus.