

St. Paul Lutheran Church
of Stillwater, Minnesota
September 7, 2025
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost



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.

Called to contemplate the cost of discipleship, we follow
the example of Paul's letter to Philemon by committing our lives to
Christ not on the basis of fear, but of love. Strengthened
by the company and forgiveness of Christ in holy communion
and recalling God's grace in remembrance of baptism, we can be
strengthened in this hour to "choose life"—to choose
life in God as our own.

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.

Prelude

Gathering Song

ELW Hymn 660

"Lift High the Cross"

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

Direct us, O Lord God, in all our doings with your continual help, that in all our works, begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life, 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 186

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Moses speaks to the Israelites, who are about to enter the land promised to their ancestors. In this passage, he lays out the stark choice before them: choose life by loving and obeying the LORD; or choose death by following other gods.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Anthem

“All Things New”

Elaine Hagenberg

Second Reading

Pew Bible: New Testament Page 216

Philemon 9b-10, 12-17

Onesimus, a new Christian and a man enslaved by Philemon, has helped Paul, who is in prison. Paul writes this letter to his friend Philemon to encourage him to receive Onesimus, upon his return, as a sibling in Christ.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Blessing of the Backpacks



Jenny Brelje

Gospel Acclamation

"Alleluia"



Gospel Reading

Pew Bible: New Testament Page 78

Luke 14:25-33

Jesus speaks frankly about the costs of discipleship. Those who follow him should know from the outset that completing the course of discipleship will finally mean renouncing all other allegiances.

The gospel is introduced:

The holy gospel according to Luke.

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

Hymn of the Day

"God's Work, Our Hands"

1 God's work, our hands: work - ing to - geth - er,
2 God's work, our feet: trav - 'ling to - geth - er,
3 God's work, our voice: sing - ing to - geth - er,
4 God is at work in and a - round us:

build - ing a fu - ture, re - pair - ing the world,
fol - low - ing Je - sus to plac - es un - known,
prais - ing, pro - claim - ing to all who will hear,
seed - lings are sprout - ing and bread's on the rise!

rais - ing up homes, plant - ing new gar - dens,
walk - ing as friends, march - ing for free - dom,
pray - ing for peace, shout - ing for jus - tice,
Washed and set free, hum - bled and hon - ored,

feed - ing the hun - gry and shelt - 'ring the cold.
run - ning the race with God's fu - ture the goal.
claim - ing God's love for the lost and the least.
gift - ed by grace, we re - spond in God's love.

Bless, God, our hands as we work in your name,
Bless, God, our feet as we fol - low your way,
Bless, God, our voice as we speak in your name,
Bless, God, our lives as we an - swer your call,

shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954

Music: EARTH AND ALL STARS, David N. Johnson, 1922–1987

Text © 2019 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Music © 1968 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Prayers of Intercession

After each prayer:

God of grace,

receive our prayer.

At the conclusion:

We entrust these prayers to you, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend.

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.

Youth Mission Trip Presentation

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering

"Sanctuary"

**Lord prepare me
To be a sanctuary
Pure and holy
Tried and true
With thanksgiving
I'll be a living
Sanctuary for You**

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

Lord of the harvest, we return to you a portion of what you have given to us. Turn us to set our hope not on the uncertainty of riches, but on you, who richly provides for us. Multiply what we have gathered to bless all who are suffering and in need, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts,

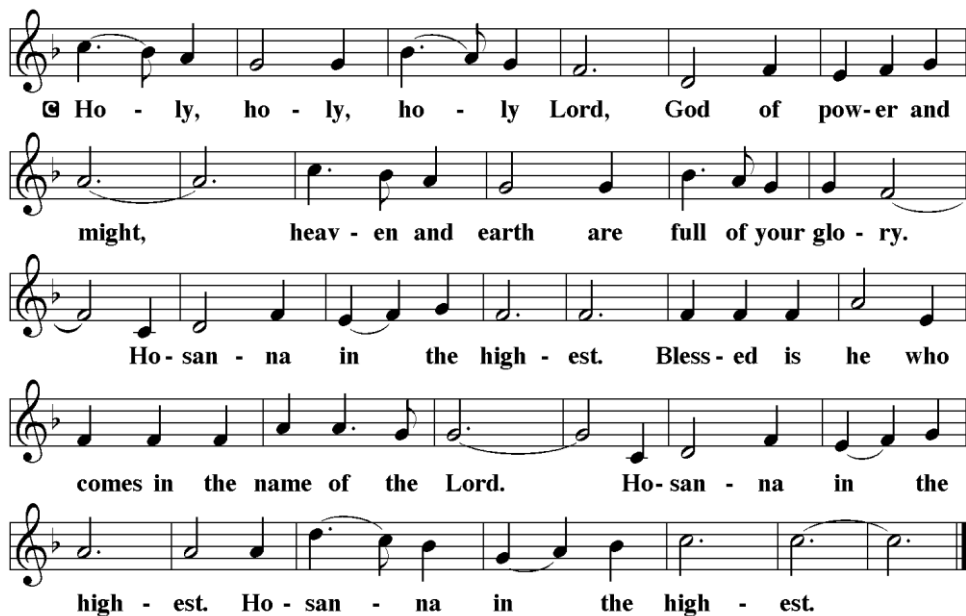
We lift them to the Lord

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 - en 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.

(Continued on the next page.) 6

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed . . .

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

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Amen.

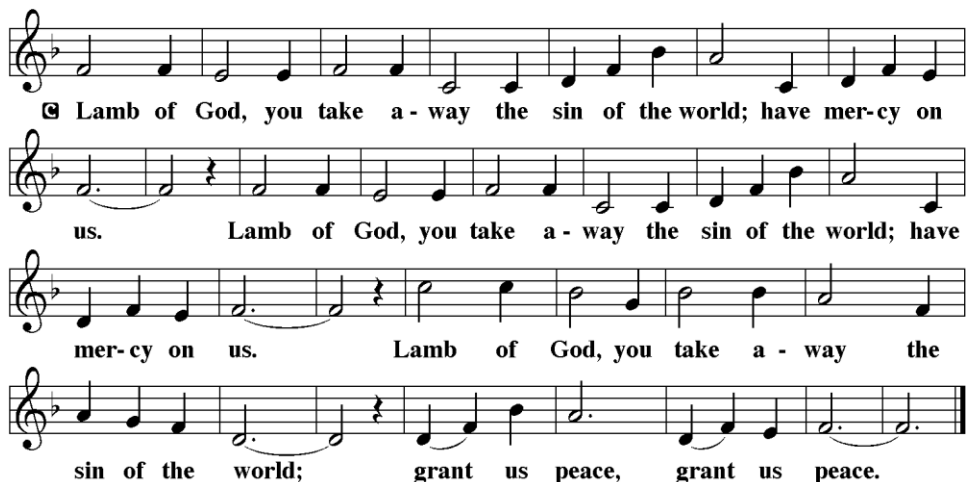
Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit,
let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**





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.

Post Communion Song

ELW Hymn 595

(The Congregation Will Sing After Communion)

"Jesus Loves Me!"



Prayer After Communion

O God, through this meal you have strengthened us and appointed us to be your servants. Send us to do good and to share our possessions with all in need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

SENDING

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

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.



Sending Song

"My Lighthouse"

*In my wrestling and in my doubts
In my failures You won't walk out
Your great love will lead me through
You are the peace in my troubled sea whoa oh
You are the peace in my troubled sea*

My Lighthouse my Lighthouse

Shining in the darkness

I will follow You oh

My Lighthouse my Lighthouse

I will trust the promise

You will carry me safe to shore

Safe to shore safe to shore safe to shore

*In the silence You won't let go
In the questions Your truth will hold
Your great love will lead me through
You are the peace in my troubled sea whoa oh
You are the peace in my troubled sea*

*I won't fear what tomorrow brings
With each morning I'll rise and sing
My God's love will lead me through
You are the peace in my troubled sea whoa oh
You are the peace in my troubled sea*

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

DAILY PRAYER

A Prayer to Begin the School Day

Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths. (Psalm 25:4)

A prayer based on the Prayer of St. Patrick:

Christ be with me: in you I am never alone.

Christ within me: your Spirit is at work in me.

Christ behind me: reassure me when I struggle.

Christ before me: lead me when I am uncertain.

Christ beneath me: support me when I am weak.

Christ above me: encourage me to do my best.

Christ in quiet: I listen for the sound of your voice.

Christ in danger: I will not fear, for you are with me.

You may make the sign of the cross.

In all things, O God, you are our way, our truth, and our life.

Teach me to love you and my neighbors as myself.

I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE LITURGY

At every baptism and confirmation, we support those being baptized or affirming their faith by saying No to sin and Yes to God's promises. We speak the Apostles' Creed together because none of us can have faith on our own. We need each other to have faith. We see this pattern in our first reading from Deuteronomy, where Moses calls the assembly to reject sin and put their trust in God's life-giving ways. Affirming our baptism is a demonstration of our choosing the life of Christ.

CATECHISM CONNECTION

Martin Luther wrote the Small Catechism as a brief and helpful summary of the Christian faith for household members of all ages.

Hearing Jesus' call in the gospel today for us to give up all our possessions is a hard pill to swallow. In his Small Catechism, however, Luther alludes to the freedom and joy of being generous through his teaching on the Seventh Commandment, "You shall not steal." We love God whenever we "help [our neighbors] to improve and protect their property and income." "Giving up" isn't just losing something but creating a space for something far more rich: neighborly love and care for one another.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

What Is Most Important

When someone comes to be baptized, they are often joined by family and friends who gather around the font and promise to love and support them as they grow in the faith. In the baptismal waters, God does something wonderful and profound: God connects us with Christ's saving grace. In this moment we are made part of a new community that flows from God's incredible love.

How dissonant it is to read Jesus' words from Luke's gospel today with this sort of an occasion in mind. "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple" (14:26). How can hating family be a faithful response to God's divine grace and love? How can this be the way to live into the baptismal promises of love and care?

We know that Jesus loves the whole world: every person, creature, and molecule reverberates with God's own heart. Scripture and sermons and songs of the faith proclaim time and again: we all are recipients of God's love! And when we are baptized, we are unapologetically claimed as God's beloved. Such belovedness is the very foundation of our identity in faith.

Perhaps we can take Jesus' words here seriously without taking them literally: Christ's love for us is more important than even our closest ties to friends, family, or chosen family. Christ's love is more important than any paycheck we receive or how much cash we keep in our pockets. Jesus prioritizes life-changing love over all other loyalties we might have. When we are baptized, our lives are grounded in this countercultural compassion, justice, and care. Our relationship with God may indeed strain some of our other relationships, but perhaps it