

THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Sunday, September 20, 2026

10:30 AM

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Welcome to ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

We are happy you have joined us for worship today. Wherever you are on your journey with or toward God, you are welcome here—you are a blessing to this assembly. We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status.

We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ.

Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that in, with, and under the bread and wine in Holy Communion we receive the true Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation. All who are drawn in faith are welcome to join in this confession and receive the Sacrament.

We invite and encourage your full participation in our worship this morning. With this service bulletin you can follow and participate in this morning's liturgy.

New to St. Paul? If you have questions or want more information, please fill out a newcomer form with the QR code at the right. Questions about transferring membership from another Lutheran church, or for beginning the process for baptism, confirmation, membership, or transferring from one of the other Christian traditions, may be directed to the Church Office at 781-646-7773 or parishadmin@stpaularlington.org.



SUNDAY SERVICE

8:15 AM | Holy Communion
9:00 AM | Choir Practice
9:30 AM | Education Hour with
Sunday School, Adult Forum
10:30 AM | Holy Communion &
livestreamed

LIVESTREAMING

Worship is streamed on our Facebook page StPaulArlingtonMA. A Facebook account is not necessary to stream, but without a Facebook account the stream works on a computer browser only and not on a phone.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY TODAY

Lydia Zuehsow and Taryn Walsh,
Altar Guild
Bev Hjorth, *Cantor*
Mark Olson, *Lector*
Sandy Walker, *Assisting Minister*
Mat Carter, *Livestream Broadcast Team*
Peter Schmidt and Lisa Chiulli Lay,
Coffee Guild



*When the instruction for standing * appears, please stand as you are able and as seems comfortable. At the ☩, you may make the sign of the cross, which reminds us of our baptism. The congregational responses are printed in **bold**.*

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Jan Pieterszoon Sweenlick (1526-1621): Toccata in A minor, SwWV 298

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, whose compassion endures forever. **Amen.**
Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your lovingkindness. In your great mercy, wash away our iniquity and cleanse us from our sin.

Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within us. Do not remove us from your presence; do not take your Spirit away.

Restore to us the joy of your salvation, and sustain us with your Spirit. Amen.

God is merciful and gracious, granting forgiveness through Jesus Christ to all who confess their sin. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sin, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

* GATHERING HYMN

"Gracious Spirit, Heed our Pleading"

ELW 401

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of staves. The first system contains the first verse of the hymn. The second system contains the second verse. The third system is the refrain, marked 'Refrain' above the first staff. The fourth system is a second iteration of the refrain. The lyrics are written below the staves, with some words in italics. The score includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The music is written in a standard four-part setting style.

Njo - o kwe - tu, Ro - ho mwe - ma, M - fa - ri - ji we - tu.
1 Gra - cious Spir - it, heed our plead - ing, fash - ion us all a - new.
2 Come to teach us, come to nour - ish those who be - lieve in Christ.
3 Guide our think - ing and our speak - ing done in your ho - ly name.

Tu - fu - ndi - she ya mbi - ngu - ni, tu - we wa - tu wa - pya.
It's your lead - ing that we're need - ing, help us to fol - low you.
Bless the faith - ful, may they flour - ish, strength - ened by grace un - priced.
Mo - ti - vate all in their seek - ing, free - ing from guilt and shame.

Refrain
Njo - o, njo - o, njo - o, Ro - ho mwe - ma.
Come, come, come, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.

Njo - o, njo - o, njo - o, Ro - ho mwe - ma.
Come, come, come, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.

4 Not mere knowledge, but discernment,
nor rootless liberty;
turn disquiet to contentment,
doubt into certainty.

5 Keep us fervent in our witness,
unswayed by earth's allure.
Ever grant us zealous fitness,
which you alone assure.

* 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.**

* KYRIE

Refrain

Assistant: *Congregation:*

In peace, in peace, let us pray to the Lord, have mer-cy,
Christ, have mer-cy, Lord, have mer-cy. *to Verses*

Assistant: For the Reign of God, and for peace throughout the world, for the unity of all . . . (to Refrain)

Assistant: For your people here, who have come to give you praise, for the strength to live your Word . . . (to Refrain)

Assistant: *Congregation:*

Help, save and de-fend us, O
God. A-men.

* HYMN OF PRAISE

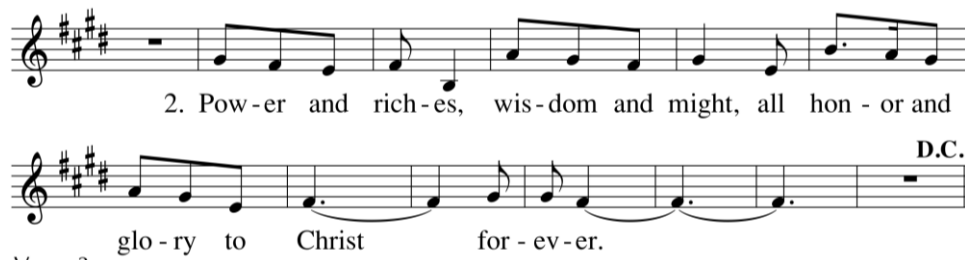
Refrain

Now the feast and cel-e-bra-tion, all of cre-a-tion
sings for joy, to the God of life and love and free-dom;
praise and glo-ry for-ev-er-more!

Verse 1

1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain,
whose blood has freed and u-nit-ed us
to be one great peo-ple of God. *D.C.*

Verse 2



Verse 3



*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Jonah 3:10—4:11

A reading from the book of Jonah.

When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it.

But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” And the Lord said, “Is it right for you to be angry?” Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

The Lord God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?” And he said, “Yes, angry enough to die.” Then the Lord said, “You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also many animals?”

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Psalm 145:1-8

I will exalt you, my ¹ God and king,
and bless your name forev- ¹ er and ever.

**Every day ¹ will I bless you
and praise your name forev- ¹ er and ever.**

Great is the Lord and greatly ¹ to be praised!
There is no end ¹ to your greatness.

**One generation shall praise your works ¹ to another
and shall de- ¹ clare your power.**

I will speak of the glorious splendor ¹ of your majesty
and all your ¹ marvelous works.

**They shall tell of the might of your ¹ wondrous acts,
and I will re- ¹ count your greatness.**

They shall publish the remembrance of ¹ your great goodness;
they shall sing joyfully ¹ of your righteousness.

**The Lord is gracious and full ¹ of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in ¹ steadfast love.**

SECOND READING

Philippians 1:21-30

A reading from Philippians.

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

* GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Congregation:

Al-le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we
go? You have the words of e - ter - nal
life. Al - le - lu - ia! *Optional Repeat*

* GOSPEL

Matthew 20:1-16

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, the 20th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

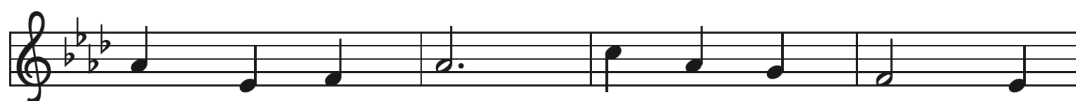
SERMON

Pastor Don Larsen

* HYMN OF THE DAY

"God's Work, Our Hands"

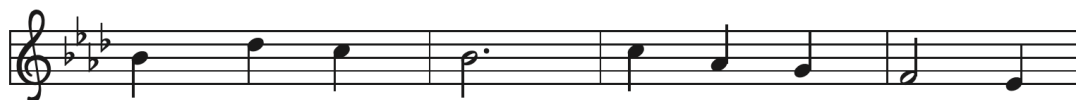
ACS 1000



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.

APOSTLES CREED

With praise and gratitude, we confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

* PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As is our custom, please face one another across the center aisle. The deacon invites us to prayer and offers the first intercession. As you are moved to pray, you are invited to pray any of the following intercessions aloud.

Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

Hold your church accountable for our unwillingness to share your good news and our anger at your generosity to others. Nourish us by your grace to be witnesses to your love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Guide scientists and researchers studying responses to the climate crisis so that all your creation may inspire us to give thanks for your great goodness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Show employers the benefits of equal pay standards for all their employees.

Reconcile conflicts between employees. Fill places of employment with camaraderie, and bring an end to employment disparity. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Encourage any who cannot work or who cannot work a full day with the truth that their value comes from your everlasting love for them. Provide for those who are injured, ill, and for all in any need, especially Bobby, Dan, Heather, Hollie, Jim, Kate, Lynn, Mark, Meredith, Naomi, Paul, Roberta, and Susan. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Strengthen all those in this congregation whose labor serves the needs of others in the community. Inspire all in this congregation to support community endeavors with our time and talents. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

For what else do we pray? *Other prayers, silent or aloud, are invited.*

Comfort us with the promise of the resurrection as we remember all our loved ones whose desire to be with Jesus is

fulfilled. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

* PEACE

Keep your hands together or make the peace sign if you'd rather not pass the peace with touch.

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

ANTHEM

Bob Moore: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

MEAL

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE AND OFFERING

You may give an offering through the Givelify app by scanning this QR code:



* OFFERING SONG

Refrain

Congregation:

As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were
gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread;
so may all your peo-ple from all the ends of earth be
gath-ered in - to one in you.

Verses

1. As this cup of bless - ing is shared with-in our midst
 2. Let this be a fore-taste of all that is to come when

to Refrain

may we share the pres - ence of your love.
 all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

***OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever. **Amen.**

*** GREAT THANKSGIVING**

Presider: *Congregation:*

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 God thanks and praise.

It is our duty and delight, that we should everywhere and always offer thanks and praise to you, O God, through Jesus Christ; who calls us to follow his way of humble service and love, And so, with the church on earth, all creation and the host of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Congregation:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and
 might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your
 glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est!
 Bless - ed is the One who comes in your name. Ho -
 san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est!

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

*** LORD'S PRAYER**

**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

All are welcome to receive the bread and the wine. Gluten free wafers are available on request. Both wine (red) and grape juice (white) are available in each tray. Come forward in the center aisle starting at the front of the church. The pastors will motion the first people forward.



1. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
2. Lamb of God, you break the chains of ha - tred and fear;
3. Lamb of God, you are the way of jus - tice and peace:
4. Lamb of God, you are the way of mer - cy and love:



have mer-cy on us, mer-cy on us, mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world:



grant us peace, grant us peace, grant us peace.

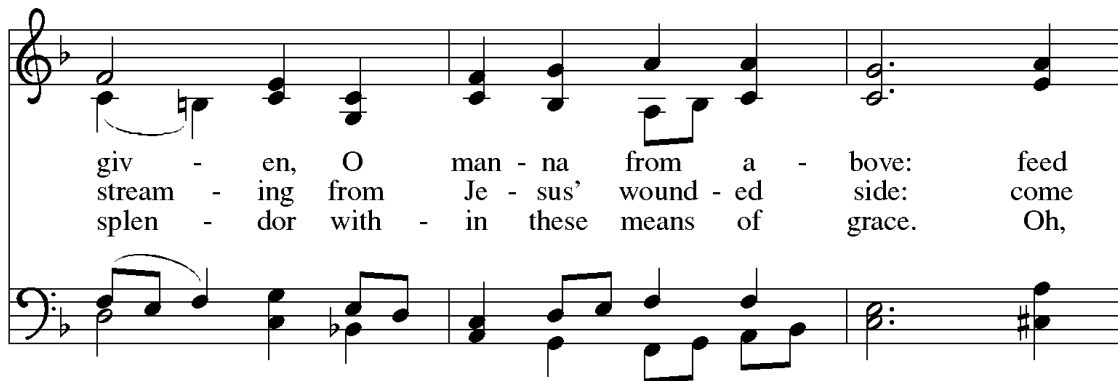
COMMUNION HYMN

"O Bread of Life from Heaven"

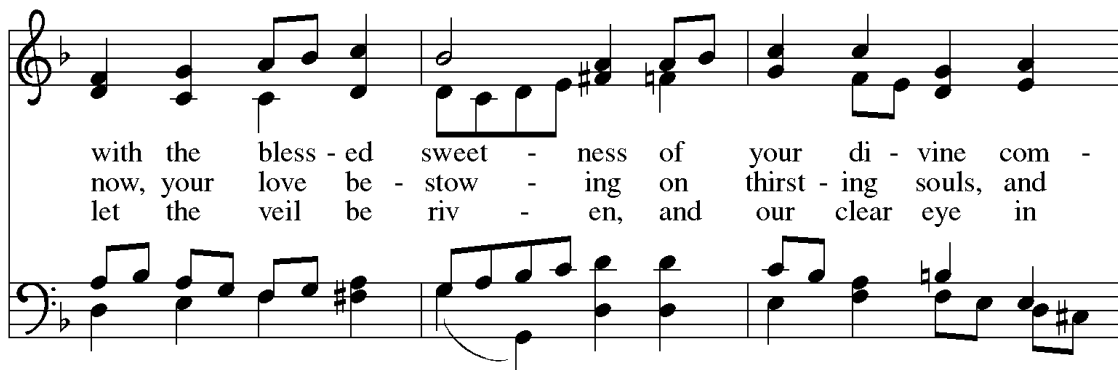
ELW 480



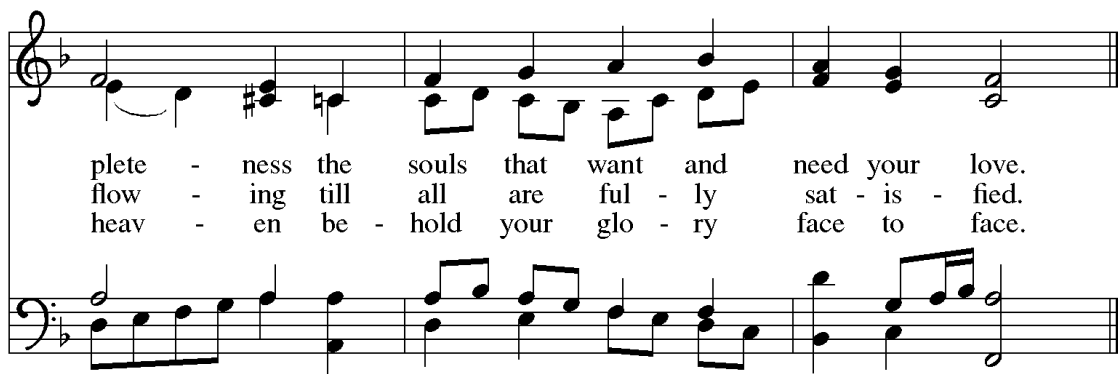
1 O bread of life from heav - en, O food to pil - grims
 2 O fount of grace re - deem - ing, O riv - er ev - er
 3 We love you, Je - sus, ten - der, in all your hid - den



giv - en, O man - na from a - bove: feed
 stream - ing from Je - sus' wound - ed side: come
 splen - dor with - in these means of grace. Oh,



with the bless - ed sweet - ness of your di - vine com -
 now, your love be - stow - ing on thirst - ing souls, and
 let the veil be riv - en, and our clear eye in



plete - ness the souls that want and need your love.
 flow - ing till all are ful - ly sat - is - fied.
 heav - en be - hold your glo - ry face to face.

* TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

* PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would 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

* BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor ☩ and grant you peace. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

* SENDING HYMN

"God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me"

ACS 1084



1 God, be the love to search and keep me; God, be the prayer to
2 Bind to my-self the name of Ho - ly, great cloud of wit - ness -
3 Bright-ness of sun and glow of moon-light, flash - ing of light - ning,
4 Walk - ing be-hind to hem my jour - ney, go - ing a - head to
5 Christ in the eyes of all who see me, Christ in the ears that



move my voice; God, be the strength to now up - hold me:
es en - fold; proph - ets, a - pos - tles, an - gels wit - ness:
strength of wind, depth of the sea to soil of plan - et:
light my way, and from be - neath, a - bove, and all ways:
hear my voice, Christ in the hearts of all who know me:



O Christ, sur - round me; O Christ, sur - round me.

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE

Jan Pieterszoon Sweenlick (1526-1621): Dorian Echo Fantasy

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING HAPPENINGS at ST. PAUL

PASTORAL CALL PROCESS UPDATE FROM CHURCH COUNCIL | September 17, 2026

On Monday, September 14, 2026 St. Paul Church Council unanimously accepted a pastoral candidate recommendation from the Call Committee and will be moving forward to schedule a Council interview with the recommended candidate. We are striving to hold that interview in the next two weeks. We extend our thanks and appreciation to the Call Committee for their prayerful approach and diligence in reaching this recommendation.

Thanks for continuing to join us in ongoing prayers for our congregation, our work in this discernment, and for all candidates and congregations engaged in a call process.

Kerri Frick, President
St. Paul Lutheran Church

CONFIRMATION MEETING NEXT SUNDAY | September 27th at 9:30

Confirmands and their parents are invited to meet with Pastor Don and Sarah Carter next Sunday September 27th at 9:30 AM to discuss the shape of this year's confirmation ministry.

STEWARDSHIP TEAM

The new stewardship team met for the second time last week. The team is excited about sharing the good news of Christ's generosity and working together with the whole congregation to get ready for Pledge Sunday, November 15th. The team members are Josh Davis, Darby Hering, Lisa Hynes, Keven Kreutter and Norma Ofsthun.

ADULT FORUMS COMING UP

Pastor Don will lead off the year on Sept. 20th with an introduction to Paul's letter to the Philippians. Don will invite us to remember that Paul was incarcerated when he wrote the letter, asking what that might mean in understanding Paul's message. Allison Van Deventer will lead the forum next Sunday (Sept. 27th). She will discuss the works of the LUCE Immigrant Justice Network of MA and how to participate in it.

LUTHERAN BASICS

Ever wonder what makes Lutheranism tick? What its contribution is to the Christian story and our witness? You are invited to participate in a conversation about Lutheran basics over four Wednesdays in September, beginning September 9, at 7 PM. We'll meet at church.

continued

INVITATION FOR MARK AND DELFINE OLSEN WEDDING RECEPTION

From Mark: Del and I would like to thank everyone who has congratulated us on our August wedding. There are so many friends that could not make the trip to North Dakota and we wanted to celebrate the event. We would like to extend an invitation to you all to join us on Sept. 26 at St. Paul for a reception from 4:00-7:00. We will not have a program but will have African food, music and a chance to visit. Please RSVP via this link

https://www.evite.com/event/0046IIAE4SKDAAELMEPRVTDZNASIA?utm_campaign=send_sharable_link&utm_source=evitelink&utm_medium=sharable_invite

MEALS FOR THE JOURNEY

St Paul is re-establishing a meal ministry to support members of our congregation who are navigating grief, recovery, or life transitions. If you'd like to help by cooking a meal or delivering one, we'd love to have you.

We want to have a system to respond when there is a need so if you are open to even occasionally participating, please sign up to be included on the distribution list where we'll arrange specific needs. Please fill in this [St. Paul Meal Information Form](#) if you'd like to help by either making a meal, delivering a meal, or buying a gift card to help someone.

Lisa Hynes (lmhynes@gmail.com) and Jan Sniffen (JSniffen.js@gmail.com) will organize volunteers and liaise with members as they accept this form of support. We're honored to walk alongside our church family in trying times. Please reach out directly to Lisa or Jan.

INVITATION FROM ARLINGTON EATS

September is Hunger Action Month. Arlington Eats is co-hosting an event with True Story Theater, Food Link, and the Robbins Library exploring Stories of Hunger Awareness and Action. True Story Theater brings together the delight of improvisation with the courageous vulnerability of people sharing their personal truth.

This is our second year collaborating on this event, and we really hope you can join us. Every year is different, and it is such a great way to see stories and experiences come to life. Please help represent Arlington EATS and put Thursday, September 24th, from 6:30-8:00 on your calendar. The event will take place in the Community Room of the Robbins Library.

September Spotlight Items:

- Gluten Free items - cereal, pasta, crackers, granola bars
- Quinoa
- Farro
- Pasta sauce
- Coconut milk
- Laundry detergent
- Dish soap

continued

From the Weekly Update:

OFFERING PLATES AND STEWARDSHIP

We will pass the plate again during both services this Sunday! Let me explain why. The newly formed Stewardship Team held a couple of meetings over the last month. They're a great group, excited about what lies ahead for St. Paul, and eager to invite the congregation into pledged support of the mission and ministry you will share with your next pastor.

We've had great discussions as a team. At our last meeting, we reflected on the impact the offering plate had on us as children in worship. I shared that when I was a child (before the invention of the wheel), my dad used to give me a quarter to put in the plate as it passed. Then, when I was paid for the first time as a paperboy around age 10, he sat me down on Saturday for a talk. He told me that now that I was earning my own money, he would no longer give me money for the offering on Sunday. Now I could give freely from my own resource, and he talked to me about a way to calculate how much to give. He also talked to me about what my contribution would do to support the church. (He was on the finance committee for years.) That conversation made a deep impression on me as a kid. My dad helped me realize that my offering was part of worship; that my offering was an act of worship. The team realized that many of St. Paul's children have never experienced this act as a part of the service. How are they to learn the joy of making an explicit offering to God if they never experience it?

The stewardship team enthusiastically endorses the return of the ritual of giving represented by the act of collecting an offering each Sunday. And as part of reintroducing it, I will invite the children present in worship to help pass the plate during the offering this Sunday. The children's message will occur while we're ushering the plate through the pews.

Most St. Paul givers make contributions electronically nowadays. That's very helpful in so many ways. My wife and I give electronically at Faith in Cambridge. But I can tell you: I miss the physical act of putting a financial offering in the plate. I miss the tactile experience, I miss the opportunity to mutter a brief "thank you, Jesus" under my breath as I drop my envelope into the plate, I miss the embodied experience of it. So, we will also make those little wooden coins available each Sunday in the narthex. All you electronic givers can grab one along with the bulletin as you arrive for worship, drop the token in the plate, offer your own word of thanks.

Of course, you can also use the plate to make other financial gifts above and beyond your pledge.

Pastor Don

oh, a couple more stewardship bits

In conversation with the Congregation Council, the stewardship team has **identified Sunday, November 15, as Pledge Sunday.**

The stewardship team is reading and discussing Giving to God by Mark Allan Powell right now. **Copies are available in the narthex for you to borrow and read.** Kevin Kreutter will lead a conversation about the book in the Adult Forum on **Sunday, October 18.**

Wait, there's more! Of course, you will receive a pledge card in the mail in mid-October. Your pledge of financial support is even more exciting this year because of the new chapter St. Paul will enter! And the team is also discussing how to **invite everyone to pledge** time as well as money. That will come as a separate invitation to pledge. Yes, there will be stewardship temple talks. Even better, watch for an opportunity to attend **Stewardship on Tap** at Mighty Squirrel Taproom in Waltham.

The stewardship team members are Josh Davis, Darby Hering, Lisa Hynes, Kevin Kreutter, and Norma Ofsthun.



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