

COME GROW SERVE

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026

Ascension of Our Lord

Welcome to St. Paul's Lutheran Church!

In today's readings the risen Christ ascends into heaven and his followers are assured that the Spirit will empower them to be witnesses throughout the earth. The disciples were told to not gaze up into heaven to look for Jesus (Acts 1:11); we find his presence among us as we proclaim the word and share the Easter feast. We too long for the Spirit to enliven our faith and invigorate our mission.

*Words printed in **bold** are spoken by all.*

Visitors are invited to sign the guest registry in the Narthex or fill out a pew card and place it in the offering plate.

THIS SERVICE IS LIVE STREAMED. TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

GATHERING

WELCOME

PM: Welcome to those who are joining us online. Welcome to worship at St. Paul's!

PRELUDE

The Holy Christ is Risen

Johann Walther

The assembly is invited to stand.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Word who spoke life into being, the Wind stirring the waters.

All: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Mighty God, lover of justice,

All: you call us to life in community, but we have served our own interests at the expense of our neighbors. We have sown deceit where honesty was needed. We say the right words, but our hearts are far from you. Turn us to seek your face. Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ, that we may do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.

P: The former things have passed away, and new things God now declares: Like a spring of water that never fails, God covers you in the righteousness of Christ, and forgives your sin in † Jesus' name. May the Spirit give you strength to live for others, and bless you with the gift of peace.

All: Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

God, We Gather As Your People



1 God, we gath - er as your peo - ple to raise our song a -
2 Oh, we sing for all the chil - dren, that one day they be
3 Oh, we pray for all the young lives cut short by fear and
4 God, we're work - ing for the fu - ture when chil - dren far and



bove, and we dare to claim the prom - ise of your love.
free; and we sing for gen - er - a - tions yet to be,
shame, so a - fraid of who they are and whom they love,
wide can . . . live their lives with dig - ni - ty and pride.



Though the day may not yet be here, we
that they nev - er have a rea - son to
May the mes - sage now be ban - ished that your
As they grow in strength and stat - ure, may they



trust it soon will be, when your chil - dren will be free.
doubt that they are blest, May they, in your love, find rest.
love is for the few; may their faith in you re - new.
join us hand in hand, as a - gainst all hate we stand.



Oh, may our hearts and minds be o - pened, fling the church doors o - pen



wide. May there be room e - nough for ev - 'ry - one in - side.



For in God there is a wel - come, in God we all be -



long. May that wel - come be our song.

GREETING

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

All: And also with you.

Refrain
Assisting minister



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.

All



1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and



strength, and hon-or and bless-ing and glo-ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



2 Sing with all the peo-ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing and hon-or and glo-ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be-gun his reign. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A: Let us pray.

Almighty God, your blessed Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things. Mercifully give us faith to trust that, as he promised, he abides with us on earth to the end of time, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

All: Amen.

The assembly is invited to be seated.

WORD

FIRST READING: Acts 1: 1-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

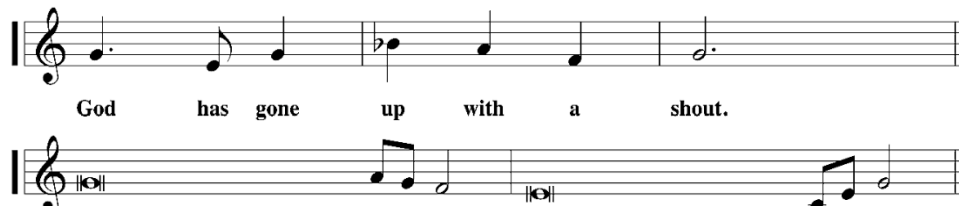
[Luke writes:] ¹ In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach ² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹ They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Word of God. Word of Life.

All: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 47



- ¹ Clap your hands, | all you peoples;
shout to God with a | joyful sound.
- ² **For the Lord Most High is | to be feared:
a great king over | all the earth,**
- ³ who subdues the | peoples under us,
and the nations un- | der our feet;
- ⁴ **who chooses our inheri- | tance for us,
the pride of Jacob, | whom God loves. R**
- ⁵ God has gone up | with a shout,
the Lord with the sound | of the ram's horn.
- ⁶ **Sing praises to | God, sing praises;
sing praises to our | king, sing praises. R**
- ⁷ For God is king of | all the earth;
sing praises | with a song.
- ⁸ **God reigns o- | ver the nations;
God is en- | throned on high.**

⁹The nobles of the peoples have gathered as the people of the | God of Abraham.
The rulers of the earth belong to God, who is high- | ly exalted. **R**

SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:15-23

A reading from the letter to the Ephesians.

¹⁵I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may perceive what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Word of God. Word of Life.

All: Thanks be to God.

The assembly is invited to stand for the reading of the Gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The lyrics are: 'Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.' The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody.

GOSPEL: Luke 24:44-53

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

⁴⁴ [Jesus said to the eleven and those with them,] “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.”⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

SERMON

Pr. Keith Fry

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Lord Enthroned in Heavenly Splendor

ELW 475, v. 1-3

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

PM: Trusting in the power of Christ’s resurrection to heal and redeem our broken world, let us pray for the needs of all creation.

A brief silence.

PM: Gracious God, your Son Jesus ascended to fill all time and space and is present with all people. By your Holy Spirit, lead your church and its leaders in faith, hope, and love, and in sharing the presence of Christ. Merciful God,

All: **receive our prayer.**

A: Majestic God, your Son Jesus entrusts his ministry to his followers to care for all you have created. Instill in us a commitment to sustainable ecological practices. Merciful God,

All: **receive our prayer.**

PM: Almighty God, your Son Jesus sits at your right hand and rules the cosmos. Inspire national and local politicians to lead with equity and fairness, raise up advocates and activists for those seeking justice, and cultivate peace throughout the world. Merciful God,

All: **receive our prayer.**

A: Merciful God, your Son Jesus carries with him the scars of suffering as our wounded healer. Guide with your wisdom the work of surgeons, pharmacists, midwives, and all medical specialists, and

bring your healing touch to all who are sick, especially to those on our prayer list and those we pray for either silently or aloud (*pause*). Merciful God,

All: receive our prayer.

PM: Caring God, your Son Jesus reveals the depths of your love and gathers all people to himself. Accompany us in our work and play to make your presence known in all that we do. Merciful God,

All: receive our prayer.

A: Life-giving God, by his death and resurrection, your Son Jesus destroyed death forever. With thanksgiving we remember those who rest from the labors, assured of your promise of everlasting life. Merciful God,

All: receive our prayer.

PM: God of resurrection power, use us and these prayers to proclaim the good news of new life to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

All: Amen.

PEACE

PM: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: And also with you.

The assembly is invited to be seated.

MEAL

THE OFFERING

An offering is gathered and the Table is set.

MUSICAL OFFERING

Jesus Died on Calvary's Mountain

arr. K. Lee Scott

Libby Harrison, soprano; Nicholas Marotta, mezzo-soprano

OFFERING PRAYER

A: Let us pray.

Merciful God, accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory. You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day when we will hunger and thirst no more. Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus, that goodness and mercy may follow us and bless the world you love. In the name of Jesus,

All: Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, who enthroned forever at your right hand intercedes for us as our great high priest. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter, and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho-ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, 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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P: We give you thanks, Father, through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, whom you sent in this end of the ages to save and redeem us and to proclaim to us your will.

He is your Word, inseparable from you, through whom you created all things, and in whom you take delight. He is your Word, sent from heaven to a virgin's womb. He there took on our nature and our lot and was shown forth as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin Mary. He, our Lord Jesus, fulfilled all your will and won for you a holy people; he stretched out his hands in suffering in order to free from suffering those who trust you.

He is the one who, handed over to a death he freely accepted, in order to destroy death, to break the bonds of the evil one, to crush hell underfoot, to give light to the righteous, to establish his covenant, and to show forth the resurrection, taking bread and giving thanks to you, said:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

In the same way 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.

Remembering, then, his death and resurrection, we take this bread and cup, giving you thanks that you have made us worthy to stand before you and to serve you as your priestly people.

Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your church; gather into one all who share this bread and wine; fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth, that we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ; through whom all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, both now and forever.

All: Amen.


THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Together as one body, we pray the prayer Jesus taught us.

All: 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, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNE

P: Come to the table of new life. Receive the risen Lord.

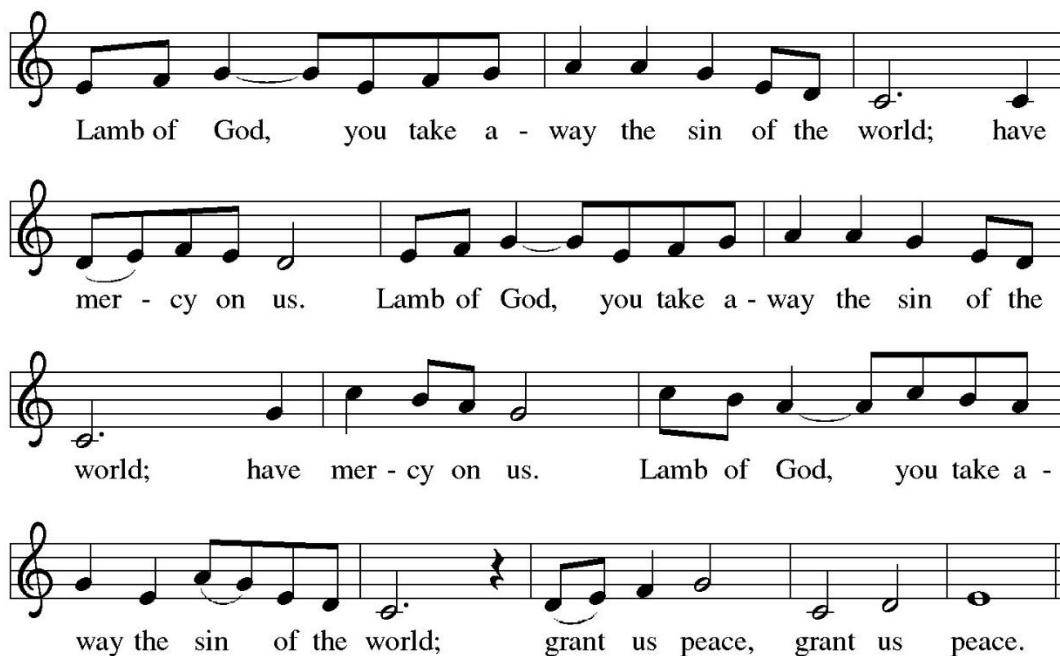


DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION
We will commune one side of the church at a time. Please come forward to receive the bread first. Gluten free wafers are available. You may choose a cup of red wine or white grape juice. Move to the side eat and drink. Place your empty cup in the tray provided.

All are welcome at Christ's Table. We believe Jesus is the host and the gifts of God are for everyone. Children will be offered communion unless otherwise indicated by parents. The wine is red and grape juice is white.

Please be seated.

LAMB OF GOD



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
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Please stand as you are able.

TABLE BLESSING

P: And now may the body and blood of our + Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you, and keep you in his grace.

All: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A: Let us pray.

Holy One, through this meal you have made your home among us and are making all things new. Send us now to speak peace to anxious hearts, to love our enemies, and to bring your healing to the nations. In the name of Jesus,

All: Amen.

SENDING

Please be seated for the announcements.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly is invited to stand.

SENDING BLESSING

P: God Almighty, who is the beginning and the end, Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead, and the Spirit, our advocate and peace, ✠ bless you now and forever.

All: Amen.

SENDING HYMN

A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing

ELW 393, v. 1-4

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Praise the Lord. Alleluia!

All: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

Toccata in F Major

Dietrich Buxtehu

God's Spring Time 2026 Party

Per the Green Team:

Today is Pastor Keith Fry's last Sunday – **for now**. We will be thanking him for walking with us through this post Easter tide with love and warmth, and amazing scriptural insights!

Life is returning to the gardens! Help us celebrate our stewardship of the Circle of Creation in our native and veggie gardens. Learn a few practical ways in which we can all protect the Earth.

In true St. Paul's style, we will be gathering around a crackling fire. Pastor Matt Holmes will set the stage with one of his vintage fire-side homilies to bring hearts and minds together on this joyous occasion. With drinks in hand and plates piled high with yummy refreshments, and brats, we will celebrate God's Spring Time, 2026!

THANK YOU

To our musicians: Libby Harrison, soprano; Nicholas Marotta, mezzo-soprano.

To the Green Team for donating altar flowers to beautify our sanctuary.

To the Green Team for God's Springtime Celebration after service, including food and entertainment.

To Marilyn Starenko for organizing the kitchen and cleaning out the fridge.

PRAYER REQUESTS

For Jan Rock, as she recovers from stenoses.

For David Perkovic, friend of LuAnne Origer, as he recovers from eye surgery.

For Bill Kastilahn, recovering from eye interaction with medication.

For Eileen Walsh, DD's lawyer, who donated a kidney last week.

For the Bondrow family, as they mourn the death of David Bondrow (relative of DD).



To donate via Zelle, aim your device's camera at the code on the left, click on the link and follow the instructions. Or you can go to your bank's website, go to Zelle payments and look for "office@stpaulevanston.org."



We were thrilled to welcome back Pr. Keith Fry as our Pastoral Fellow for the Easter season (April 12th - May 17th). Pr. Keith has been a good friend of St. Paul's for many years. He served his Ministry in Context internship year with us back in 2006-2007, and was pastor a couple of blocks away at Immanuel from 2015-2020, where he shared in joint Confirmation classes and joint worship services with us over the years. Pr. Keith has been a regular Pastoral Fellow, leading us in worship during Advent/Christmas 2023 and during Lent/Easter 2024 and Easter 2025. It is a great joy to have him returning to us this year.

Currently, Pastor Keith serves as the Executive for Office of the Secretary Administration for the ELCA churchwide organization, where he's responsible for the rosters of ELCA ministers and congregations, congregation statistics, official documentation for the Churchwide Assembly, Church Council, and Conference of Bishops, and the Archives of the ELCA.

Pastor Keith lives in the Beverly neighborhood on the far southwest side of Chicago with his spouse, Tom Rowan, Archie the yellow Labrador, and Edith the Cornish Rex cat.

He is a graduate of Northwestern University and of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

Please join us after worship for a God's Springtime Celebration where we thank Pr. Keith for walking with us through this post-Easter season and learn practical ways to protect the Earth. Thanks to the Green Team!