



AUGUST 17, 2025
EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Welcome to St. Paul's Lutheran Church

The word of God is a refining fire. Jesus is the great divide in human history. He invites our undivided attention and devotion. Today in worship we are surrounded by a great “cloud of witnesses.” In the word and in holy communion we are invited yet again to look to Jesus, “the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”

If you are visiting, please sign the guest registry in the Narthex or fill out a pew card and place it in the offering plate.

This worship service is recorded and live-streamed on St. Paul's YouTube channel. Tell your friends!

GATHERING

WELCOME

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

PRELUDE *Minuet from Duet for Viola and Cello ("with two Obligato Eyeglasses"), WoO 32*

Diane Mues, viola; Stefan Westerberg, cello

Ludwig van Beethoven

The assembly is invited to stand.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: In the name of the Father, and of the ✙ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

P: Baptized into Christ, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Merciful God,

All: you free us to love others, but we neglect our neighbors and follow our own way. You lead us by the Spirit of joy and peace, but we turn away from the abundant life you offer. You surround us with patience, kindness, and generosity, but we grow weary in doing what is right. In your mercy, forgive us. Do not give up on us. Heal us, break our bonds, and show us the path of life. Amen.

P: You belong to Christ Jesus and you are God's children through faith. In the cross of ✙ Christ, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. Clothed with Christ, you are a new creation.

All: Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

How Firm A Foundation

ELW 796, v. 1-3

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A: Let us pray:

O God, judge eternal, you love justice and hate oppression, and you call us to share your zeal for truth. Give us courage to take our stand with all victims of bloodshed and greed, and, following your servants and prophets, to look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

All: Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 23:23-29

A reading from Jeremiah.

²³Am I a God near by, says the LORD, and not a God far off? ²⁴Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD. ²⁵I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, "I have dreamed! I have dreamed!" ²⁶How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophesy lies and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart? ²⁷They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. ²⁸Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the LORD. ²⁹Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

Word of God. Word of Life.

All: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: Hebrews 11:29—12:2

A reading from Hebrews.

²⁹By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. ³⁰By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

³²And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, ³³who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷They were stoned to death; they were sawn in two; they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented ³⁸of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

^{12:1}Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ^{2:2}looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

Word of God. Word of Life.

All: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW 174

GOSPEL: Luke 12:49-56

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] ⁴⁹“I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already ablaze! ⁵⁰I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! ⁵¹Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! ⁵²From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; ⁵³they will be divided:

father against son
and son against father,
mother against daughter
and daughter against mother,
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

⁵⁴He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, ‘It is going to rain,’ and so it happens. ⁵⁵And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. ⁵⁶You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

The gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

SERMON

Pr. Robin Brown

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

When Pain of the World Surrounds Us

ELW 704, v. 1-3

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: Let us pray for the church, the creation, and the whole people of God, for God is near.

A brief silence.

A: Raise up faithful leaders for your church around the world. Inspire global missionaries with a spirit of accompaniment, as they walk alongside our partners in the gospel in solidarity, interdependence, and mutuality. Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

PM: Safeguard rivers and lakes from pollution. Sustain the work of conservationists, policy makers, and advocacy groups seeking to protect fresh water sources. Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

A: Bridge divisions across partisan lines. Strengthen cooperative efforts among lawmakers who enact policies that protect our neighbors who are most vulnerable. Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

PM: Embrace all who suffer in isolation: for those who are incarcerated or detained, those who are fleeing from unsafe environments, and those who are sick or homebound, especially) those on our prayer list and those we pray for either silently or aloud (*pause*). Reassure them of your care in all times and places. Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

A: Guide the leaders of this congregation. In these late summer weeks, inspire their planning for a new program year ahead. Kindle in us a spirit of collaboration and support for their work. Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

PM: Confident in God's presence and promise, we entrust our prayers to the one who always receives them; through Jesus Christ, our wisdom and companion.

All: Amen.

PEACE

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

All: And also with you.

The assembly may be seated.

THE OFFERING

An offering is gathered and the Table is set.

MUSICAL OFFERING

Come, Let Us Eat

**Billema Kwillia,
arr. Craig Carnahan**

Rachel Blaustein, soprano

THE OFFERING PRAYER

A: Let us pray.

Creator God, in your wisdom you bring forth all that is good and the harvest is plentiful. Strengthen us at your table with these gifts of the earth and our labor, that we may work for the good of all; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

All: Amen.

Please stand.

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.

PREFACE

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, through our Savior Jesus Christ;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (YOU ARE HOLY)

ELW 525

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Together as one body, we pray the prayer that 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, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: The kingdom of God is set before you.
Eat and rejoice.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

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.

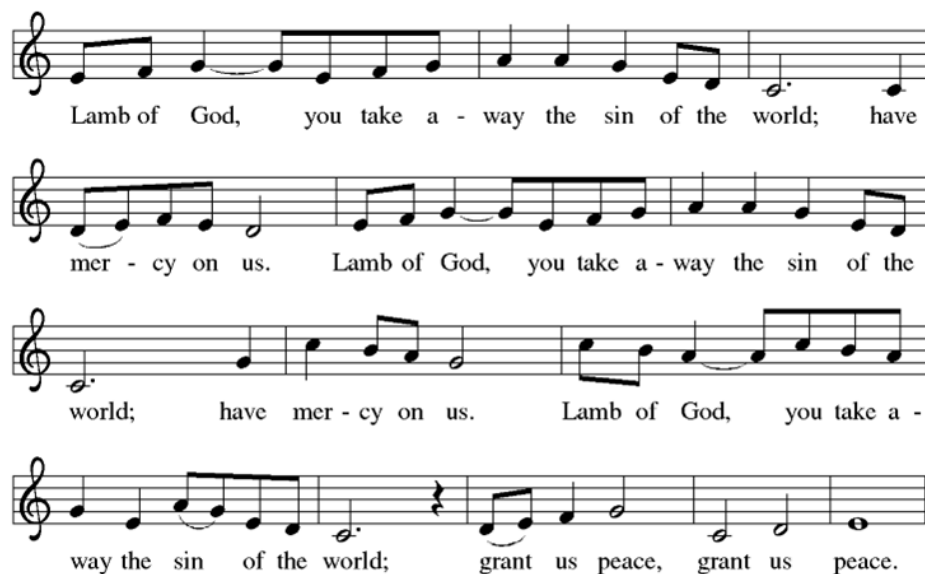
Move to the side eat and drink. Place your empty cup in the tray provided.

We believe Jesus is the host and the gifts of God are for everyone.

Children will be offered communion unless otherwise indicated by parents.



LAMB OF GOD



COMMUNION HYMN

United At The Table

ELW 498

Please stand as you are able.

TABLE BLESSING

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

All: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A: Let us pray.

Mothering God, you gathered us to your table and we drank deeply of your grace.

Send us out by your Spirit to love our neighbors as ourselves and proclaim your love in Jesus' name.

All: Amen.

SENDING

Please be seated for the announcements.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly is invited to stand.

SENDING BLESSING

P: The love of God abound in you; the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ fill your hearts; and the life of the Spirit ✠ bless you and give you peace.

All: Amen.

SENDING SONG

Soli Deo Gloria

ELW 878, v. 1, 2, 4

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Live by the Spirit.

All: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Allegro Moderato from Sonata No. 1 in G Major

J. S. Bach

Diane Mues, viola; Stefan Westerberg, cello

Shine the Light

Come be a Beacon of Light!
Thursdays, 7:00 pm - 7:30 pm (through August)

Inspired by the Beacons of Light national movement, there is a growing chorus of resistance, hope, and solidarity right here in Evanston. The interfaith clergy invite the community to gather in solidarity at one of these locations in Evanston (there will be people gathering at all 3 locations each Thursday):

- **Dempster & Ridge**
- **Chicago & Main**
- **Central & Lincolnwood Drive**

All are welcome. Bring a colorful sign with a positive message of solidarity and hope, or include The Beacon's QR code to spread the light even further.



The Beacon

THANK YOU

To our musicians: Diane Mues, viola; Stephan Westerberg, cello; and Rachel Blaustein, soprano

To Marilyn Starenko for donating altar flowers to beautify the sanctuary.

To Diane Mues for hosting coffee fellowship.

PRAYER REQUESTS

For Roger Nordstrom, as he undergoes cancer treatment.

For the family of Diane Mues, as they mourn the loss of Diane's mother.

For the family of Teresa Pangan, as they mourn the loss of her nephew, Riley Rashka.

Send your prayer requests to Debbie via email (office@stpaulvanston.org), voice mail (847-475-3403). Send your prayer requests to Debbie via email (office@stpaulvanston.org), voice mail (847-475-3403).



PASTORAL FELLOW THROUGH AUGUST:
PR. ROBIN BROWN

Pastor Robin was baptized at St. Luke's in Park Ridge and confirmed at St. Timothy's in Skokie. After a first career as a sales and marketing VP, she earned her M.Div at LSTC. Then, while serving as a full-time called pastor to congregations in the Northeastern Iowa and Metropolitan Chicago synods, she earned her D.Min in Preaching. In 2014 Pastor Robin was invited to join the ELCA World Hunger Team, then served as ELCA Director of Congregational Generosity. Since "retiring" in June of 2022, Pastor Robin has served as an Interim Pastor for Holy Trinity in Lombard, written two seasons of sermon starters for ELCA World Hunger, and in the last few months alone, led 11 congregations in worship on 15 Sundays.

Last year, Pastor Robin led worship at St. Paul's during part of Pentecost as well as the Season of Creation.

In her spare time Pr. Robin serves on Metro Chicago's Candidacy Committee and loves puzzles, books, needlepoint and planting gardens.

BURNING/WONDERING QUESTIONS

Only 2 more weeks to submit a question you've been wondering about to Pastor Robin to explore in her sermon.

Doubts, wanderings, or wonderings are all welcome! Do you have questions about faith or the Bible? Is anything "burning" at the back of your mind or deep in your soul?

Please email your questions to office@stpaulvanston.org. If you would rather be more anonymous, you can write your question on a slip of paper and drop it under the door to the office. I will compile the questions and give them to Pastor Robin.



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@stpaulvanston.org."