

COME GROW SERVE

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2026

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Welcome to St. Paul's Lutheran Church!

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

*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

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

PRELUDE

Adagio from Trio Sonata in E Minor **Johann Joachim Quantz**

Judith Zunamon Lewis, oboe; Diane Mues, viola; Stefan Westerberg, cello

The assembly is invited to stand.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, whose compassion endures forever.

All: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God,

All: we confess to you all our sins. Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves. In your mercy, call us back to you. Your yoke is easy and your burden is light. Restore us to dwell in your peace. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

P: Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." In the name of God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. Rest in God's love.

All: Amen

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.

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

All: **Amen.**

The assembly is invited to be seated.

WORD**FIRST READING: 1 Kings 3:5-12**

A reading from the First Book of Kings.

⁵ At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶ And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷ And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹ Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?"

¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ God said to him, "Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you."

Word of God. Word of Life.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING: Romans 8:26-39

A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans.

²⁶ The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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

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

GOSPEL: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

³¹ [Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come

and make nests in its branches.”

³³ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵² And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

SERMON

Pr. Mary Anderson

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Be Thou My Vision

ELW 793

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: Trusting in God’s steadfast love for all God has made, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

A: God our wisdom and our song, we pray for bishops, candidacy committees, those preparing for seminary, those awaiting call as deacons or pastors, and all who seek to lead your disciples in any way. We give thanks this day for Pastor Matt and for his ministry with us and with the Evanston community. God of grace,

All: hear our prayer.

A: God our breath and our heartbeat, help us to recognize signs of your presence among us. Protect and support diverse ecosystems, from national parks to family farms, for Lake Michigan and our forest preserve. God of grace,

All: hear our prayer.

A: God our peace and our guide, help civic leaders hear all their peoples' stories with compassion and curiosity, and remind us of your love from which we can never be separated. God of grace,

All: hear our prayer.

A: God our intercessor and our lawgiver, dismantle the barriers to healthcare and support with your mercy all who live with chronic illness, mobility struggles, pain, and uncertainty, including those on our prayer list and those on our hearts this day. God of grace,

All: hear our prayer.

A: God our redeemer, may we trust your love above and beyond all else that distracts, annoys, frightens, exhausts, or divides us. God of grace,

All: hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: God who seeks, finds, and saves, for our community's part in the ongoing gift of creation, and for the riches of faith and hope which came before, we give you thanks. God of grace,

All: hear our prayer.

P: Grateful for your abundant provision and trusting in your goodness, we cast all our cares upon you, through the abundant grace of Christ Jesus.

All: Amen.

PEACE

P: 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

This Little Light

arr. Hale Smith;

arr. Kurt Westerberg

Libby Harrison, soprano; Judith Zunamon Lewis, oboe; Diane Mues, viola; Stefan Westerberg, cello

OFFERING PRAYER

A: 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.

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, the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin, who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life. 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, God of

pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high-est. Blessed 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: Heaven has come near. Come share in the feast!



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.

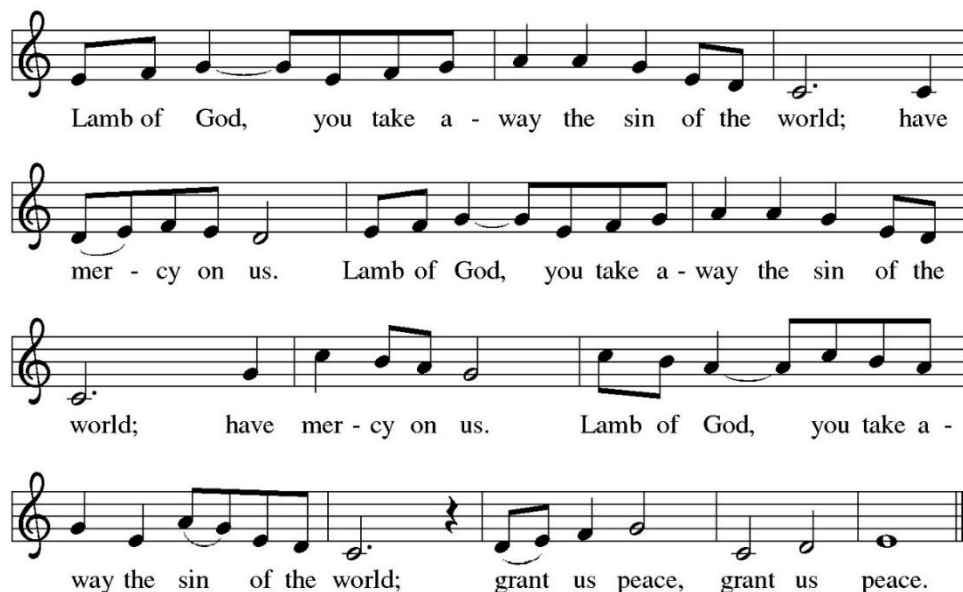
Move to the side eat and drink.

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



COMMUNION HYMN

God Extends an Invitation

ELW 486

Please stand as you are able.

TABLE BLESSING

P: Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into your heart, your mind, and your body to heal your wounds and, through your healing to all the earth. In Jesus' name,

All: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A: Let us pray.

Compassionate God, through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever.

All: Amen.

SENDING

Please be seated for the announcements.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly is invited to stand.

SENDING BLESSING

P: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, ☩ one God, bless, heal, and hold you today and always.

All: Amen.

SENDING HYMN

When in Our Music God Is Glorified

ELW 851
v. 1, 3, 4, 5

DISMISSAL

A: Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!

All: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Gavotta from Trio Sonata in F Major

Joseph Bodin
de Boismortier

Judith Zunamon Lewis, oboe; Diane Mues, viola; Stefan Westerberg, cello

Coffee Hour Conversation with Pastor Mary

For the next four weeks, grab a beverage and a treat and linger with Pastor Mary for a 30-minute conversation about various topics. Here is a blurb about this Sunday's topic.

Seeds and Bird Guts

This conversation is a follow up to the sermon from July 19 on the Parable of the Sower and on her story of the prototype project her church in Lexington, SC, is doing called Navigating the Pressure: Helping Kids Thrive in a Stressed-Out World. Hear about how they are doing a new thing without spending any of their congregation's funds, how they are failing, tweaking, and seeing seedlings of impact in addressing one of the greatest crises of our current culture – the epidemic amounts of stress and anxiety among our children and teens.

THANK YOU

To our musicians: Libby Harrison, soprano; Judith Zunamon Lewis, oboe; Diane Mues, viola; Stefan Westerberg, cello.

To the Altar Guild for donating flowers to the Glory of God to beautify the sanctuary.

To Linda Nagatani for hosting coffee fellowship.

PRAYER REQUESTS

For Joan Brandt.

For Jan Rock, as she recovers from stenoses.

For Bill Kastilahn, recovering from eye interaction with medication.

For the Bondrow family, as they mourn the death of David Bondrow

For the family of Harvey Wolf, as they mourn the death of Harvey's mother, Iris Mae.



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."



Welcome Back Pastor Mary Anderson

We are thrilled that Pr. Mary is making a return visit to her old stomping grounds at St. Paul's. This is the 2nd time Pr. Mary has served as our Pastoral Fellow – she was with us for June 2024, and she'll be back with us now for July 12th through August 16th.

Here's a bit of background on this extraordinarily talented worship leader:

Pastor Mary Anderson (PMA) led St. Paul's as pastor from January 1992—December 2001, and greatly enjoyed this congregation and the Evanston community. She received her M.Div. from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and her Doctorate in Ministry from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. She has served as a pastor for 44 years in rural and urban settings in the South Carolina Synod and the Metro Chicago Synod. She is now back home in Columbia, SC, living on the land that's been in her family since 1752. She is now serving as a called interim pastor and is currently placed among the people at Pilgrim Lutheran in Lexington, SC, which is her fifth interim site. She volunteers in Columbia as a reading tutor to elementary school students and as the Chaplain at Transitions, a homeless recovery center. She has a strong on-line presence on her website mypocketpreacher.com, as well as a blog ("Ponder Anew") www.ponderanewpma.com and a podcast ("You're on Mute") on Spotify + Apple + Google.

Her husband, Frank, is pastor at her home congregation, St. Michael's in Columbia. Daughter Colleen (42) is a geriatric nurse in Hickory, NC, and daughter Elise (37) is Pastor at St. John's in Abingdon, VA. PMA is excited and grateful to be back at St. Paul's among many friendly faces and many faithful folk.



ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN

COME ~ GROW ~ SERVE