



ST PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2025  
SEASON OF CREATION: FLORA & FAUNA

Welcome to St. Paul's Lutheran Church!

We worship this Sunday with the whole flora and fauna family on Earth. We celebrate with trees, fruits, grains, and vegetables, birds, animals, reptiles and all our living relatives. We listen to their sounds, watch their movements and wonder with them as they praise their Creator. We give thanks for and with all our kin in creation.

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

*Morning Prayer*

Peter I. Tchaikovsky

*The congregation is invited to stand.*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: In the name of the Spirit of God who hovered over the primal waters.  
In the name of the Word of God, who parted the waters for Earth to appear.  
In the name of the Wisdom of God, who filled the deep with amazing designs.

All: **Amen. Holy! Holy! Holy! The heavens and earth are filled with God's presence.**

P: We remember and confess that we have become alienated from creation and viewed this planet as disposable, a source of endless resources, and a mere stopping place in route to heaven. Let us confess our sins in the presence of God, one another, and all of Creation.  
We confess:

All: **We have polluted earth's air and waters with toxins. We have killed millions of species in the ocean, in the air, and on the land. We have turned our greed into global warming. We have helped cause arctic regions to melt. We have devalued human life. We have loved progress more than the planet. We confess.**

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: Christ hears your confession and forgives all of your sins. In the name of the God — the Creator, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, I invite you to celebrate God's holy home and to preserve the waters of life.

All: **Christ, teach us to love your handiwork as a precious part of our planet home. Inspire us to see how we are inextricably linked together through your Creation. 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:

God, our Creator, we celebrate with all living creatures today. Help us to see your presence, not only in human history but also in the stories of our kin in creation, the great flora and fauna families. Teach us to hear the good news of God's loving care ringing through the creatures of the wild. Rejoice with us as we behold the mysteries of your Wisdom implanted in all life. In the name of Christ who fills heaven and Earth.

**All: Amen.**

*The assembly is invited to be seated*

**WORD****FIRST READING: Psalm 104: 14-23**

A reading from Psalms.

<sup>14</sup>You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,  
and plants for people to use,  
to bring forth food from the earth,  
<sup>15</sup>and wine to gladden the human heart,  
oil to make the face shine,  
and bread to strengthen the human heart.  
<sup>16</sup>The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly,  
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.  
<sup>17</sup>In them the birds build their nests;  
the stork has its home in the fir trees.  
<sup>18</sup>The high mountains are for the wild goats;  
the rocks are a refuge for the conies.  
<sup>19</sup>You have made the moon to mark the seasons;  
the sun knows its time for setting.  
<sup>20</sup>You make darkness, and it is night,  
when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.  
<sup>21</sup>The young lions roar for their prey,  
seeking their food from God.  
<sup>22</sup>When the sun rises, they withdraw  
and lie down in their dens.  
<sup>23</sup>People go out to their work  
and to their labor until the evening.

Word of God. Word of Life.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:10-23

A reading from Corinthians.

<sup>10</sup>Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. <sup>11</sup>For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. <sup>12</sup>What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." <sup>13</sup>Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup>I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup>so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. <sup>16</sup>(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) <sup>17</sup>For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

<sup>18</sup>For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

<sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.

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

*Alleluia*

ELW S198a

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: Luke 12:22-31

The holy gospel according to Luke.

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

<sup>22</sup>He said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. <sup>23</sup>For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. <sup>24</sup>Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them.

Of how much more value are you than the birds! <sup>25</sup>And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? <sup>26</sup>If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? <sup>27</sup>Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. <sup>28</sup>But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you — you of little faith! <sup>29</sup>And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. <sup>30</sup>For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup>Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

*The assembly may be seated.*

## SERMON

**Pr. Peter Heide**

*The assembly is invited to stand*

## HYMN OF THE DAY

*Touch the Earth Lightly*

**ELW 739**

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

P: Let us affirm our faith together:

**All: We believe that God creates all things, renews all things and celebrates all things.  
We believe earth is a sanctuary, a sacred planet filled with God's presence,  
a home for us to share with our kin.**

**We believe that God became flesh and blood, became a part of earth, a human being  
called Jesus, who lived and breathed and spoke among us, suffered and died on a cross,  
for all humans and for all creation.**

**We believe that the risen Jesus Christ is at the core of creation, reconciling all things to  
God, renewing all creation and filling the universe.**

**We believe the Spirit renews life in creation, groans in empathy with a suffering creation,  
and waits with us for the rebirth of creation.**

**We believe that in Christ we will rise, and with Christ we will celebrate a new creation.  
Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

PM: As scattered grains of wheat are gathered together into one bread, so let us gather our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of God's good creation.

*We hold a moment of silence.*

PM: Your people receive mercy and your grace overflows in our lives. Fill your church with faith and love, and give understanding hearts to those who work to strengthen our ecumenical and interreligious commitments. God of grace,

**All: hear our prayer.**

A: Your creation groans as it suffers the impacts of pollution and lack of care. As the seasons change, renew in us the will to protect plants, animals, and habitats. Bless us with bountiful harvests that all may share. God of grace,

**All: hear our prayer.**

PM: Teach wisdom to our elected leaders so that we know peace in our world, peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts. We remember all those who lost their lives or suffered harm on 9-11. God of grace,

**All: hear our prayer.**

A: Seek out those who are lost or lonely, anxious or depressed, or struggling with addiction or illness. Provide for those in any need, especially those we name either silently or aloud. God of grace,

**All: hear our prayer.**

PM: Gathered together in the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit, gracious God, we offer these and all our prayers to you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**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**

*I Sing the Love That Dreamed Creation*

**John Carter**

Libby Harrison, soprano

Nicholas Marotta, mezzo-soprano

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

A: God, our Creator, through your love you have given us these gifts to share. Accept our offerings as an expression of our deep thanks and our concern for all in need, including our fellow creatures on planet Earth. With all creation, we bless our Creator.

**All: Amen.**

*Please stand*

## **MEAL**

P: God, our Creator be with you and with all creation.

**All: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to our Creator.

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

Holy God, you alone are holy, you alone are God.

The universe declares your praise:

beyond the stars; beneath the sea; within each cell; with every breath.

In the beginning you reached your hands into the earth and formed humanity in your own image. You breathed into us your own breath of life and love. You gave us hearts and hands and voices to live your loving purpose for all the world.

Seeing the lonely creature of earth, you created a partner that we would know the joy of community. At no time do you ever abandon us but bring us into community with one another and with you. By your promise you bind yourself to earth and all its creatures, granting them life and calling them to flourish, showing the colors of your love and faithfulness by setting the sign of your bow in the clouds. With endless patience and love, you call us time and again to enter life with you. Your mercy endures forever.

In the fulfillment of all things, you came to us in Jesus, born into a human family, raised in a hometown; he gathered around himself a community formed by your love and yearned to gather all people to himself as a mother hen gathers her brood under her loving wings.

Sitting at dinner with friends, knowing one  
among them would break the bonds of love,  
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 all people for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Send your Holy Spirit upon us and these gifts of bread and wine.  
Bless us to be a blessing.  
Make us a sign of your faithfulness.  
Send us to tend and cherish the earth and to serve the world with mercy and love.

With earth and sea and all its creatures,  
with sun and moon and stars,  
we praise you, O God, through Jesus Christ,  
in your Spirit, now and forever.

**All: Amen**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**P:** Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we pray as 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 today 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:** Jesus Christ gives everyone, everyone, everyone a place at the table.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

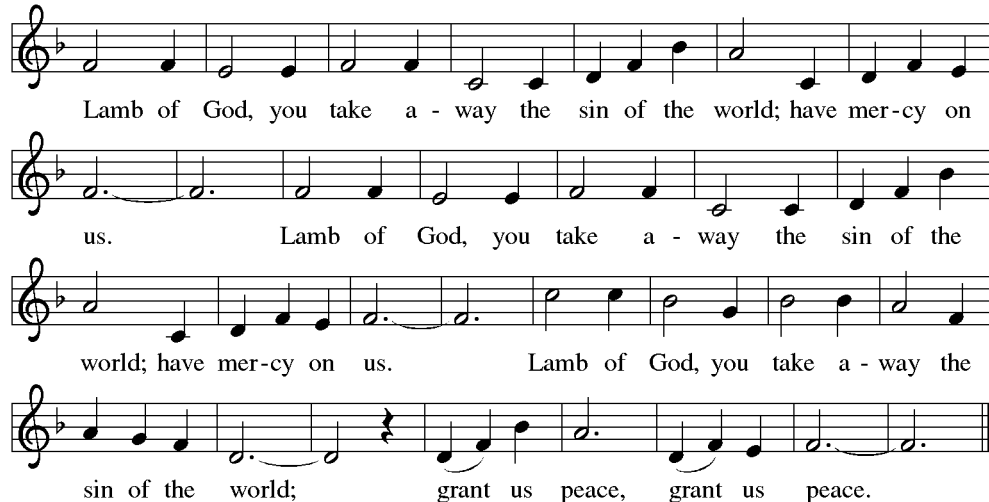
## DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*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 basket 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.  
**All are welcome at Christ's Table.***

## LAMB OF GOD

ELW 195



## COMMUNION HYMN

*As the Grains of Wheat*

ELW 465

## 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 you bring healing to all the earth. In Jesus' name,

All: Amen.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A: We thank you Christ, for the meal we have celebrated with you and we pray that through your body and blood we may be healed and become agents of healing for earth and sea.

All: Amen

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*The assembly is invited to stand.*

## SENDING BLESSING

P: Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us. Almighty God, Creator, Son ✠, and Holy Spirit bless you with grace, mercy, and peace, now and forever.

All: Amen.

## SENDING HYMN

*For the Fruit of All Creation*

ELW 679

## DISMISSAL

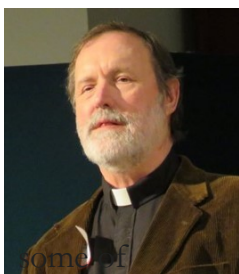
A: Go in peace! Serving Christ and loving creation!

All: Thanks be to God.

## POSTLUDE

*Postlude*

**Composer Unknown**



Pastor Peter Heide grew up just north of Evanston in Kenosha, Wisconsin. After developing eye problems in 1960, he has been sighted and blind four times. After graduation from high school, he had experimental surgery that resulted in his sight being mostly restored in one eye. This surgical procedure made Peter highly aware of the difficulties in modern understanding of miracles.

For 16 years he tuned pianos in the Madison, Wisconsin, area, taught catechism and was both assistant youth director and then director at Luther Memorial Church. Following graduation from Wartburg Seminary in 1996, Peter's eyesight deteriorated requiring surgery. The eye collapsed, and he was blind again for the second time. Further surgery restored the eye's structure, and he regained the vision that he had had.

In 2006, (now) Pr. Peter's eyesight again deteriorated to the point of being blind for the third time. After successful surgery, he temporarily regained much of his eyesight. In 2010, he was blind again and temporarily took a leave-from-call. In 2011, the eye was removed, and, today, he is blind for the fourth and last time. Pr. Peter has served congregations in Kansas, Illinois, and Wisconsin. He has taught Systematic Theology, New Testament, and Biblical Images of the Life of the Church in the diakonia programs of Metro Chicago, central Florida, and South-Central Wisconsin. He serves on the ELCA Disability Ministries Advisory Team and the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin Racial Equity and Stewardship Teams. He is a prolific writer, having published with the ELCA, both hard-copy and digital. You can find him at Blind Faith, Dumb Cluck ([blindfaithdumbcluck.blogspot.com](http://blindfaithdumbcluck.blogspot.com)). His current writing focus is on reading the Bible from a blind perspective.

Pr. Peter and his wife Susan live in Baraboo, WI.

### THANK YOU

- ♦ To LuAnne Origer for donating flowers in memory of her father, Robert P. Origer's heavenly 95th birthday.
- ♦ To our musicians, Trudy Nelson, piano; Libby Harrison, soprano; Nicholas Marotta, mezzo-soprano.
- ♦ To Paula Ketcham for hosting coffee fellowship.

### PRAYER REQUESTS

For the family of Roger Nordstrom, as they mourn his passing.

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](mailto:office@stpaulvanston.org)), voice mail (847-475-3403).