

SUNDAY WORSHIP | LECTIONARY 24

SEPTEMBER 13, 2026



ST. PAUL'S

Evangelical Lutheran Church

WELCOME

Welcome! We are glad you are joining our community of faith for worship today. Whether you are a long-time Lutheran, or you come from another Christian tradition, or you're wandering or wondering about faith and the church, you are welcome to participate in worship in whatever ways are comfortable for you. If you are new to St. Paul's you can request more information on our web site contact page here:

www.stpaulsbrenham.org/contact

Our worship liturgy is rooted in the ancient church's practice of gathering on Sundays to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus through hearing God's Word and sharing the communion meal in the presence of Christ. We welcome all baptized Christians to receive communion. Children who are communing in other churches are invited to commune here. All who are not receiving are invited to come forward for a blessing—you may indicate you want a blessing by holding your hands together or crossing your arms in front of you.

This bulletin is a helpful guide to our worship liturgy, as are ushers and friendly people gathered here with you to worship God together.

ST. PAUL'S STAFF

Michael Coffey	Lead Pastor
Donna Krueger	Pastor of Care Ministry
Diane Garrett	Organist
Larry Smith	Choir Director
Dr. Sarah Burke	Director of Contemporary Music
Lisa Eben	Financial Director
Thomas Johnson	Communications Coordinator
Anne Briggs	Membership Coordinator
Sarah Zwahr	Director of Youth and Family
Julie Guiberteau	Media Technician
Dr. Kay Domel	Director of Christian Day School

CONTACT US

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*St. Paul's is a congregation of
the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
Learn more at www.elca.org*

LECTIONARY 24 A

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

OFFERING

Offering plates are on the welcome table in the narthex. Feel free to leave your offering there. The offering will be presented during the worship liturgy. You can also make an offering online at www.stpaulsbrenham.org/give

FIRST AID

A First Aid Kit and AED (defibrillator) are located in the closet of the usher room in the Narthex.

OUR MISSION

Together in Jesus Christ, we are freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly, and serve joyfully.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Marie McElroy, flute

Sonata IV: Andante, Polonaise

J. S. Bach

SOUNDING OF THE BELL

WELCOME

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

People of God, in the baptismal waters
you traveled with Christ from death to life.
Your past, your sin, your failure, your doubt,
are drowned and gone here.
Your fear, your confusion, your self-righteousness, your despair,
are washed away by grace.
Your pride, your hypocrisy, and other people's opinions of you
no longer define you.

The Spirit lives and moves through you now,
a great and joyful mystery,
so you may bring love and mercy into the world
as the body of Christ.
Rejoice that God has claimed you
in this baptismal grace,
not by your own doing or believing
but by God's mercy alone.

**We give thanks to God for the gracious gift of baptism
that joins us together in Christ by the Spirit's power.
Amen.**

GATHERING SONG

ELW 855 *Crown Him with Many Crowns*

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

ELW 154

For peace in the church, peace in the world, peace in our hearts, let us pray.

Lord have mercy...

For healing in this place, healing among nations, healing in our bodies and minds, let us pray.

Lord have mercy...

For the love of Christ in the whole church, love between all peoples,
love that makes us whole again, let us pray.

Lord have mercy...

Lord, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy; have mer - cy, O Lord.

HYMN OF PRAISE

ELW Setting Three, page 139 *Glory to God*

Assisting minister

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All

Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,

we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.

Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,
 you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us;
 you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer.
 For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,
 you a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it,
 in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther. A-men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Please be seated.

WORD

FIRST READING

Genesis 50:15-21

After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.

¹⁵ Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?"

¹⁶ So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷ 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong

they did in harming you.’ Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, “We are here as your slaves.” ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ Even though

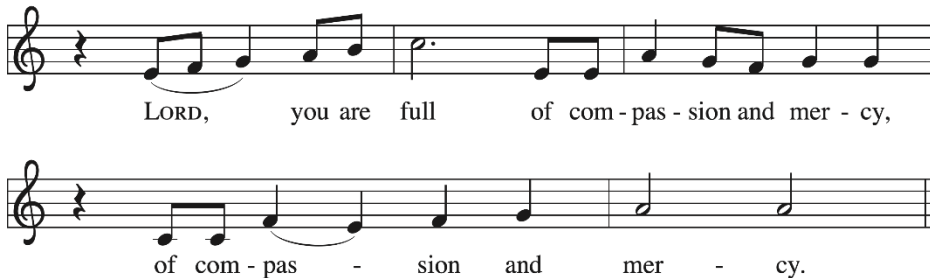
you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹ So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.” In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Psalm 103:1-13

*The cantor sings the refrain and the congregation repeats it.
The psalm is sung responsively.*



¹ Bless the LORD, | O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God’s | holy name.

² **Bless the LORD, | O my soul,
and forget not | all God’s benefits—**

³ who forgives | all your sins and heals all | your diseases;

⁴ **who redeems your life | from the grave
and crowns you with steadfast | love and mercy; Refrain**

⁵ who satisfies your desires | with good things so that your youth is renewed | like an eagle’s.

⁶ **O LORD, you provide | vindication
and justice for all who | are oppressed.**

⁷ You made known your | ways to Moses and your works to the chil- | dren of Israel.

⁸ **LORD, you are full of compas- | sion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love; Refrain**

⁹ you will not al- | ways accuse us, nor will you keep your an- | ger forever.

¹⁰ **You have not dealt with us according | to our sins,
nor repaid us according to | our iniquities.**

¹¹ For as the heavens are high a- | bove the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for | those who fear you.

¹² **As far as the east is | from the west,
so far have you removed our transgres- | sions from us.**

¹³ As a father has compassion | for his children,
so you have compassion for those who fear | you, O LORD. **Refrain**

SECOND READING

Romans 14:1-12

This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.

¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has welcomed them. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who

abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷ For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

¹¹ For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand as you are able for the Gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW 168

The cantor sings the Alleluia, then the congregation repeats it.



The cantor sings the Gospel verse:

We have an advocate, Jesus | Christ the righteous;*
your sins are forgiven on account | of his name. (1 John 2:1, 12)

The congregation sings the Alleluia again.

GOSPEL

Matthew 18:21-35

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

²¹ Peter came and said to [Jesus,] “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³ “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who

owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him,

²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon

one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.'²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.'³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt.³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place.

³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.'³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?'³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt.³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

SERMON

Pastor Michael Coffey

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

ELW 656 *Blest Be the Tie That Binds*

APOSTLES' CREED

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 to the dead.**

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

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

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Greet one another with the peace of Christ. After the Peace, please be seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEAL

OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

Offering plates are on the welcome table in the narthex before and after the service.

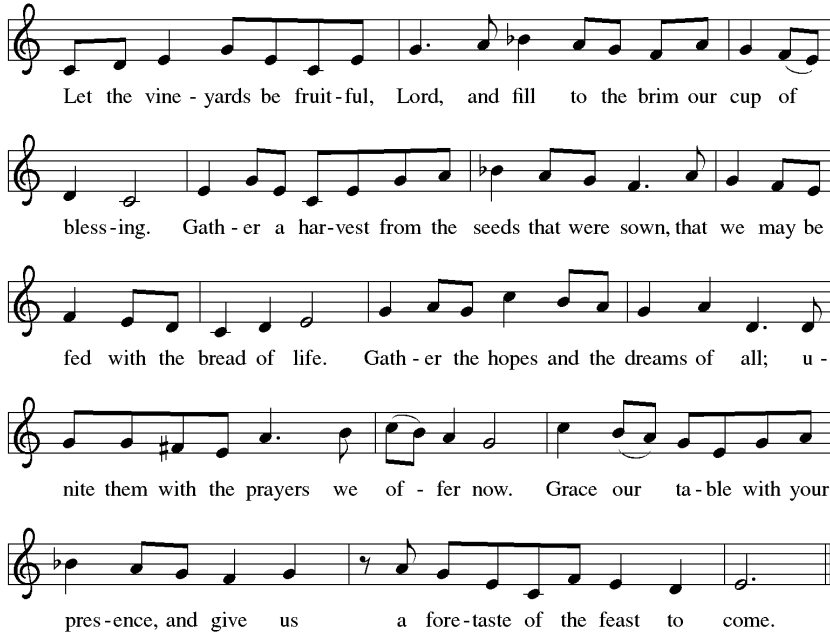
MUSICAL OFFERING

Duane Dippel, soloist

Lift Up a Song

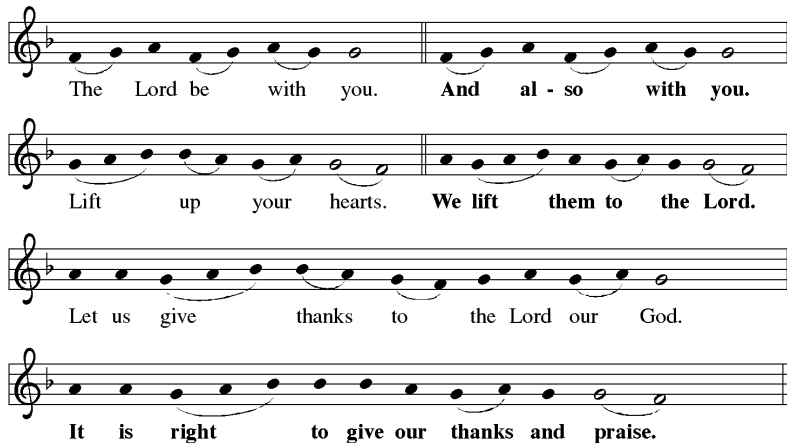
OFFERING SONG

ELW 182 *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*



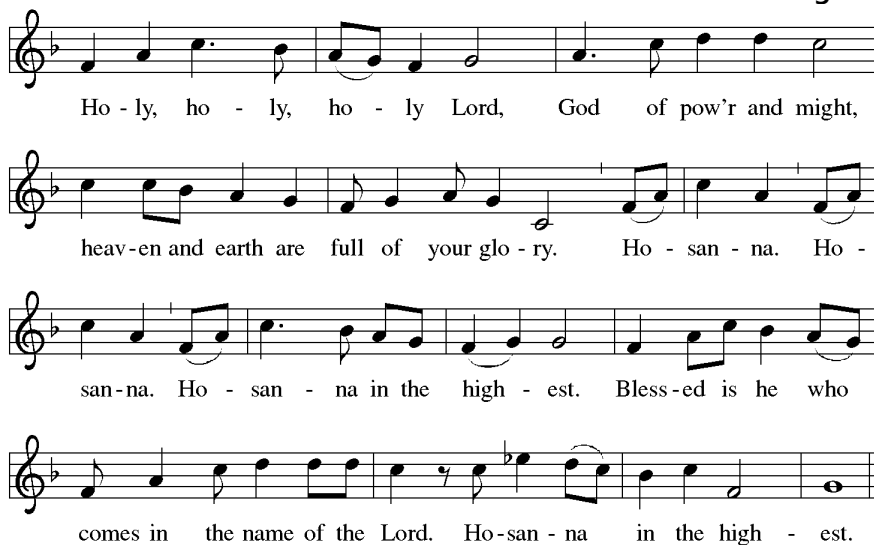
Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

DIALOGUE AND PREFACE



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 our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
 heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
 san-na. 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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God,
 our Bread of life, our Table, and our Food,
 you created a world in which all might be
 satisfied by your abundance.

You dined with Abraham and Sarah,
 promising them life,
 and fed your people Israel
 with manna from heaven.

You sent your Son to eat with sinners
 and to feed the world with your love.

In the night in which he was betrayed...

Together we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

By your Spirit nurture and sustain us
 with this meal:
 strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want,
 and by this bread and cup form us into
 the body of Christ for the world.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
 Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
 in your holy Church, both now and forever.

Amen

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.

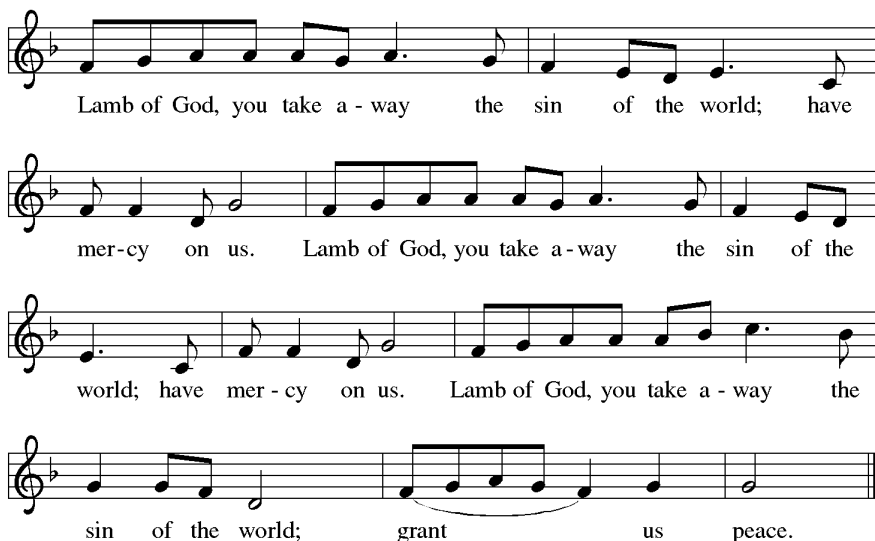
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION

We welcome all baptized Christians to receive communion. Children who are communing in other churches are invited to commune here. All who are not receiving are invited to come forward for a blessing—you may indicate you want a blessing by holding your hands together or crossing your arms in front of you. Please follow the guidance from the ushers. Gluten-free wafers are available on request.
Wine is red; grape juice is white. Those unable to come forward, remain seated and communion will be brought to you.

LAMB OF GOD

ELW Setting Three, page 146



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

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

MUSIC

(8:00) *Love Divine* M. Burkhardt

(10:30) Marie McElroy, flute *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need*

SONG

ELW 658 *O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts*

Please stand as you are able.

TABLE BLESSING

Response: **Amen.**

SONG AFTER COMMUNION

ELW 885 *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

SENDING

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG

ELW 544 *Praise the Lord, Rise Up Rejoicing*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Trumpet March in D Wm. Rowan

GOSPEL MESSAGE

FORGIVEN AND FREED

Today's gospel reading is all about forgiveness. In the complex web of human relationships, forgiveness often feels messy. We may not understand it, and it may at times feel entirely out of reach. Yet, as Christians, we are called to wrestle with the promise that even when forgiveness feels impossible, there is room for us and for others in the wideness of God's mercy. How do we make sense of this?

We might begin by experiencing God's forgiveness ourselves. Many worshiping communities begin the service with a time of confession and forgiveness. Together we name out loud the ways we have failed to love God and neighbor, the ways we have failed to recognize ourselves or one another as beloved children of God. We name how we have been complacent in systems of injustice, how we have harmed one another directly, and the hurtful things we don't even know we've done.

This practice may seem deeply unsettling; after all, where else do we greet each other with a list of all the things we've done wrong? But confession is also freeing. It gives us permission to stop pretending we have it all together. It allows us to shed the weight of our mistakes and lay down our burdens so our hands and hearts are ready to receive God's mercy.

And then, week after week, we hear God's words of forgiveness for us and for our neighbors. We are reminded that there is always and forever enough of God's grace and forgiveness to go around. The public declaration of our forgiveness frees us to enter into the rest of our worship service with open and grateful hearts. And then God's forgiveness sends us out in the world to practice the hard work of forgiving others and receiving their forgiveness in turn, knowing that God will meet us again and again with mercy and grace.

COMMEMORATIONS

John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, died 407

Sunday, September 13, 2026

John was a priest in Antioch and an outstanding preacher. His eloquence earned him the nickname "Chrysostom" ("golden mouth"). Appointed bishop of Constantinople, seat of the empire, he criticized corruption in the court. As a result, he was exiled by the empress.

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, martyr, died around 258

Wednesday, September 16, 2026

Cyprian served as a bishop during a time of great persecution of Christians. He insisted on receiving back those who had left the faith under duress. He also provided medical care during a severe epidemic.

Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, died 1179

Thursday, September 17, 2026

A mystic who was widely influential within the church, Hildegard advised and reproved kings and popes, wrote poems and hymns, and produced treatises in medicine, theology, and natural history. She was also a musician and artist.

Dag Hammarskjöld, renewer of society, died 1961

Friday, September 18, 2026

A Swedish diplomat, Hammarskjöld served as the second Secretary General of the United Nations until his death in a plane crash while trying to negotiate peace in present-day Zambia. His journal, published as *Markings*, revealed the depth of his Christian faith.