



The Parable of the Persistent Widow



**Sunday, October 19, 2025
9:00 a.m.**

Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church

It is a joy to gather together for worship!

St. Paul Purpose Statement

Living Christ centered lives so we may love all, serve our community, and share the Word.

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. In-person worship with Holy Communion

10:15 a.m. In-person Sunday School – September – May

Communion

We celebrate Jesus' presence each week in Holy Communion. This is the Lord's Supper and Jesus invites us: whether you are a lifelong Lutheran, or just considering Christianity; if you are an infant or elderly; if your family has been in the United States for generations, or has only recently arrived; if you are LGBTQIA+ or straight; if you live with disabilities, chronic illness, or are able-bodied and currently healthy; if you are home-blessed or homeless; ... YOU are welcome at God's meal of grace at St. Paul.

Accessibility

Handicap parking, entrance, wheelchair, and restrooms are available. Sound amplifiers and large print bulletins are available. Please ask an usher for assistance.

Children's Offering

During the month of October, our children's offering at worship is going toward Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) Holiday Hope Chest. LSSI offers children and their families gifts for Christmas through the purchase of gift cards to specific vendors. Thank you for helping young people served by LSSI have gifts for Christmas this year! More information will be coming in regards to purchasing gift cards/gifts on your own.

Pastor Mark Luepke, Part-time Interim

pastormark@stpaulsterling.com

1701 16th Ave. Sterling, IL 61081

815-625-3069

Church email: stpaulsterling@comcast.net

www.stpaulsterling.com

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Prelude

"Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

stg. David Lasky

Welcome/Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

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

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, our maker, our helper, and our keeper.

All: Amen.

P: Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Merciful and loving God,

All: we are your stiff-necked people. We trample on the needy. We grumble about your grace to others. We turn away from the poor. Have mercy on us and forgive our sins. Rejoice over us as ones who were lost and have been found. Amen.

P: Even when we are faithless, God remains faithful. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. You who were lost have been found. In the name of ☩ Jesus, your sins are forgiven!

All: Amen.

Gathering Hymn
“*Rise Up, O Saints of God!*”
ELW # 669



1 Rise up, O saints of God! From vain am - bi - tions turn;
2 Speak out, O saints of God! De - spair en - gulfs earth's frame;
3 Rise up, O saints of God! The king - dom's task em - brace;
4 Give heed, O saints of God! Cre - a - tion cries in pain;
5 Com - mit your hearts to seek the paths which Christ has trod;



Christ rose tri - um - phant that your hearts with no - bler zeal might burn.
as heirs of God's bap - tis - mal grace, the word of hope pro - claim.
re - dress sin's cru - el con - se - quence; give jus - tice larg - er place.
stretch forth your hand of heal - ing now, with love the weak sus - tain.
and, quick - ened by the Spir - it's pow'r, rise up, O saints of God!

Text: Norman O. Forness, b. 1936
Music: FESTAL SONG, William H. Walter, 1825–1893
Text © Norman O. Forness, admin. Augsburg Fortress

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

P: Let us pray together:
All: O Lord God, tireless guardian of your people, you are always ready to hear our cries. Teach us to rely day and night on your care. Inspire us to seek your enduring justice for all this suffering world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

First Reading: Genesis 32:22-31

²² The same night [Jacob] got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³ He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he

had. ²⁴ Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. ²⁵ When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. ²⁶ Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." ²⁷ So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." ²⁸ Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans and have prevailed." ²⁹ Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. ³⁰ So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, yet my life is preserved." ³¹ The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

R: Word of God, Word of Life,
All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 121

R: I lift up my eyes to the hills; from where is my help to come?
All: My help comes from the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth.
R: The LORD will not let your foot be moved nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.
All: Behold, the keeper of Israel will neither slumber nor sleep;
R: the LORD watches over you; the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
All: the sun will not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.
R: The LORD will preserve you from all evil and will keep your life.
All: The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth forevermore.

Second Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14—4:5

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have known sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the person of God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

4:1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: 2 proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage with the utmost patience in teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound teaching, but, having their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. 5 As for you, be sober in everything, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

R: Word of God, Word of Life,
All: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Music: Fintan O'Carroll and Christopher Walker
Music © 1985 Fintan O'Carroll and Christopher Walker, admin. OCP Publications, Inc. 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213.
All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Gospel: Luke 18:1-8

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 18th chapter.
All: Glory to you, O Lord.

1 Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. 2 He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. 3 In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my accuser.' 4 For a while he refused, but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.' " 6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to

him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? 8 I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

P: The Gospel of the Lord,
All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children's Message

Sermon

"Praying Like the Persistent Widow"

Hymn of the Day

"There Is a Longing in Our Hearts"



Refrain
There is a long-ing in our hearts, O Lord, for you to re -
veal your - self to us. There is a long-ing in our
hearts for love we on - ly find in you, our God.
1 For jus - tice, for free - dom, for mer - cy:
2 For wis - dom, for cour - age, for com - fort:
3 For heal - ing, for whole - ness, for new life:
4 Lord, save us, take pit - y, light in our
hear our prayer. In sor - row, in grief:
hear our prayer. In weak - ness, in fear:
hear our prayer. In sick - ness, in death:
deep - est night. We call you; we wait:
be near; hear our prayer, O God.
Refrain

Text: Anne Quigley, b. 1955
Music: LONGING, Anne Quigley
Text and music © 1992 Anne Quigley. Published by OCP, 5536 N. Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213. All rights reserved.

Apostles Creed

P: Trusting in Christ's life, death, and resurrection, let us profess our faith through the words of the Apostles Creed:

All: 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 power of 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

P: Renewed in God's everlasting grace, let us pray for the church, the world, and all creation.

A brief silence.

P: God of grace,

All: receive our prayer.

P: We offer our prayers, O God, trusting in your everlasting grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

All: And also with you!

P: Let us share a sign of Christ's peace in whatever way you are comfortable.

MEAL

Offering

"Israel"

Jim Brickman

Offering Prayer

P: Lord of the harvest, we return to you a portion of what you have given to us. Turn us to set our hope not on the uncertainty of riches, but on you, who richly provides for us. Multiply what we have gathered to bless all who are suffering and in need, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

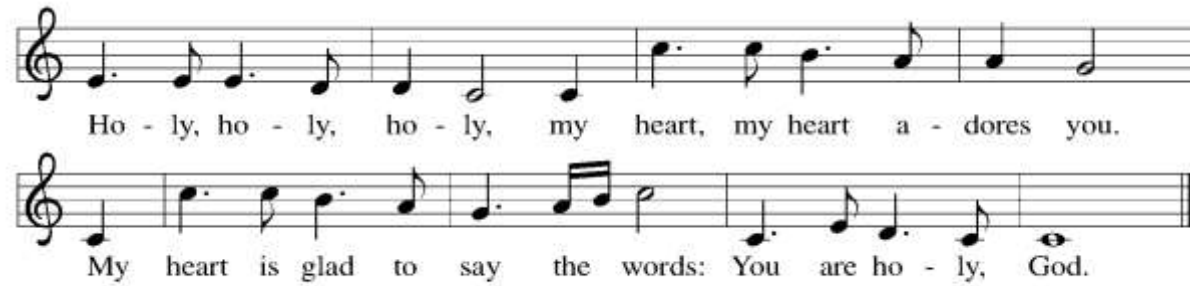
All: Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving



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, 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”



Text: Argentine traditional
Music: ARGENTINE SANTO, Argentine traditional

The Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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: Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them.
Come to this meal of mercy.

Communion

Communion Music

“Lamb of God”



Music: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
Music © 1992 CPH Publishing

“Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

ELW # 773

1 Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,
2 When my way grows . . drear, pre-cious Lord, lin - ger near,
3 When the dark - ness ap - pears and the night draws . . near,

I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.
when my life is . . . al - most . . gone,
and the day is . . . past and . . . gone,

Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light.
hear my cry, hear my call, hold my hand lest I fall.
at the riv - er I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand.

Take my hand, pre-cious Lord, lead me home.

Text: Thomas A. Dorsey, 1899–1993
Music: George N. Allen, 1812–1877, adapt. Thomas A. Dorsey
Text and music © 1938, 1968 Unichappell Music Inc., admin. Hal Leonard Corp.

“Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying”

ELW # 752

Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, Lord, send your Spir-it in this place;

Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

Text: Ken Medema, b. 1943
Music: CHILDREN PRAYING, Ken Medema
Text and music © 1973 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Prayer after Communion

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

All: Amen.

P: Let us pray.

O God, through this meal you have strengthened us and appointed us to be your servants. Send us to do good and to share our possessions with all in need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

All: Amen

Blessing

P: The God of righteousness, who gives justice to the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry, who sets the prisoners free, ☩ bless you now and forever.

All: Amen.

Sending Song
“He Will Keep You (Psalm 121)”

Words and Music by
Bob Kauflin
and David Zimmer

INTRO

1. 1

VERSE 1

lift my eyes and see I need not be a - fraid. All my help comes from the

CHORUS

Lord, who the earth and sky has made. He will keep you from all e - vils be -
hind you and be - fore. He will sus - tain you through this jour - ney from

TURNAROUND

VERSE 2

now and ev - er more. 2. The Lord will nev - er sleep. My

steps, He has or - dained. For the One who holds the night is the Sov - 'reign of my

CHORUS

days. He will keep you from all e - vils be - hind you and be - fore. He will sus -
tain you through this jour - ney from now and ev - er - more. He will now and ev - er

CHORUS

more. He will keep you from all e - vils be - hind you and be -
fore. He will sus - tain you through this jour - ney from now and ev - er

OUTRO

more.

Dismissal
P: Go in peace. Do not lose heart.
All: Thanks be to God.

Postlude
“Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word”
stg. Anne Krentz Organ

We Remember in Prayer; those on our Home Visitation list and those on our prayer list: Michelle Klinger, Raymond Graftaas, Matt Friel, Sandy Julifs, Mike, Lori Dewey, Dylan Wescott, Ken & Sharon Mager, Phyllis Jacobson, Betty Steinke, and Larry Wahler.

Worship Assistants:
Opener/Head Usher/Closer – Rayce Gale
Acolytes – Altar Guild
Greeters – Audrey & Cathy Cox
Ushers – Dan Dir, Carolyn Duncan
Reader – Greg Zeigler
Sound – Greg Zeigler
Communion Assistant – Greg Zeigler
Altar Guild – Audrey & Cathy Cox

Musicians:
Julie Woessner DeJonge
Dawn Zeigler

Next Week – October 26
Worship Assistants
Opener/Head Usher/Closer – Dan Bartel
Acolytes – Bartel family
Greeters – Bartel family
Ushers – Gary Fields, Janie Billings
Reader – Marilyn Geiger
Sound – Bradyn Arians
Communion Assistant – Janie Billings
Altar Guild – Audrey & Cathy Cox
Coffee Fellowship – *Volunteer Needed*