



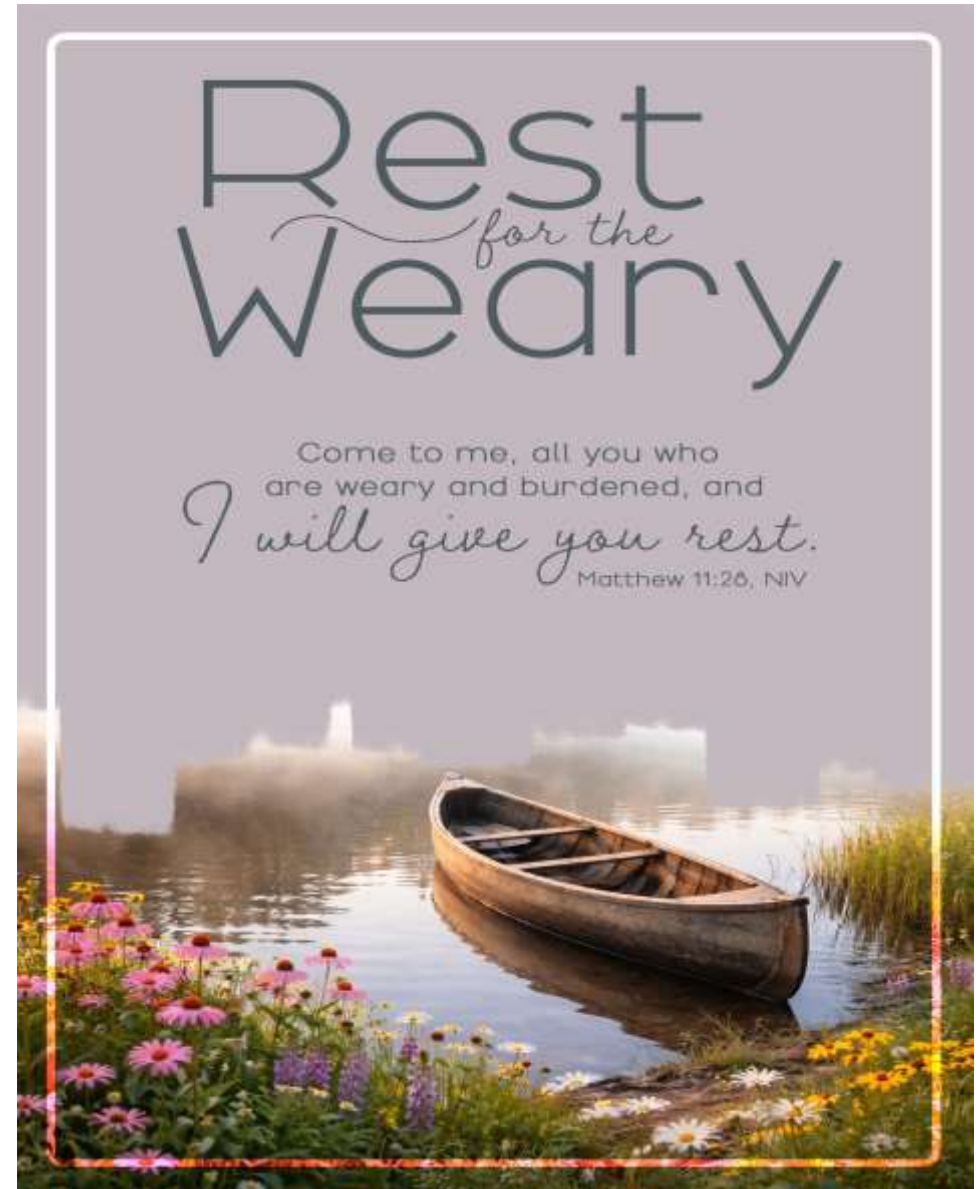
SCAN TO REGISTER
OR VOLUNTEER



CommUNITY VBS invites you to this amazing, **FREE** 5-day event from **Sunday, July 12 to Thursday, July 16** at **Bethel Reformed Church (230 E 23rd St, Sterling, IL)**! We'll start with a free dinner for students and volunteers at **5:30 PM**, then we'll have music, crafts, science experiments, games, and Bible adventures from **6-8 PM**!

Rainforest Falls is for students age 4 to just finished 5th grade. Adults and older students are invited to volunteer!

After Rainforest Falls, join us on **Sunday, July 19** at **9:30 AM** at **Grandon Civic Center** for a CommUNITY VBS Worship Service!



Sunday, July 5, 2026
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

The July Children's offering will go to towards the purchase of supplies needed for LWR School Kits. Families are also invited to shop for the needed supplies or contribute monetary donations to be used to purchase the items. Grab an empty bag from the coat rack at the back of the sanctuary to take with you. The list of items is attached to the bags.

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

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

The mystery of God's ways is sometimes hidden from the wise and intelligent. The prophet describes an everlasting realm that contrasts with earthly nations, one marked by peace, humility, and freedom. Jesus associates with those excluded from the religious community. Like Paul, we struggle with selfish desires; we lament flawed systems; and we seek God's mercy and forgiveness. We gather around word, water, and meal by Christ's invitation: "Come to me, all you that are weary." Here we find rest for our souls and hope for life in beloved community.

Prelude

"Prayer of St. Francis

Allen Pote, arr. Laurel Hunt Pedersen

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, source of hope in every nation, rest for the weary, glory and peace to the ends of the earth.

Amen.

Let us bring every burden to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: God of all mercy,

All: we have sinned against you, our neighbors, and your creation. Within ourselves and our communities, our desire to do what is good is at war with the evil that dwells in us. We lament the evil that holds us captive. We repent of the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Rescue us, forgive us, and restore us for lives of compassion and courage through our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

P: All-merciful, Almighty God forgive you all your sins through the grace of † Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit's power strengthen you in doing what is good.

All: Amen.

Gathering Hymn "The King of Glory"

Refrain



The King of glo - ry comes, the na - tion re - joic - es.
O - pen the gates be - fore him, lift up your voic - es.

1 Who is the King of glo - ry; how shall we call him?
2 In all of Gal - i - lee, in cit - y or vil - lage,
3 Sing then of Da - vid's Son, our Sav - ior and broth - er;
4 He gave his life for us, the pledge of sal - va - tion;
5 He con - quered sin and death; he tru - ly has ris - en,



Refrain

He is Em - man - u - el, the prom - ised of ag - es.
he goes a - mong his peo - ple, cur - ing their ill - ness.
in all of Gal - i - lee was nev - er an - oth - er.
he took up - on him - self the sins of the na - tion.
and he will share with us his heav - en - ly vi - sion.

Text: Willard F. Jabusch

Music: THE KING OF GLORY, Israeli traditional

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GREETING

P: The grace of our risen 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: Lord of all the worlds, guide this nation by your Spirit to go forward in justice and freedom. Give to all living in these lands the

blessings of well-being and harmony, but above all things, give us faith in you, that our nation may bring glory to your name and blessings to all peoples, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

First Reading: Zechariah 9:9-12

⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰ He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹ As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

¹² Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

R: Word of God, Word of Life,

All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 145:8-14

R: The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

All: LORD, you are good to all, and your compassion is over all your works.

R: All your works shall praise you, O LORD, and your faithful ones shall bless you.

All: They shall tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your power,

R: that all people may know of your power and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

All: Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your dominion endures throughout all ages. You, LORD, are faithful in all your words, and loving in all your works.

R: The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up those who are bowed down.

Second Reading: Romans 7:15-25a

¹⁵ I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ But in fact it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸ For I know that the good does not dwell within me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do the good lies close at hand, but not the ability. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me.

²¹ So I find it to be a law that, when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, ²³ but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ^{25a} Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

R: Word of God, Word of Life,

All: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

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

Gospel: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 11th chapter.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus spoke to the crowd saying:] ¹⁶“To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

¹⁷ ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’

¹⁸“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; ¹⁹the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

²⁰ Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done because they did not repent. ²¹“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades. “For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴ But I tell you that on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for you.”

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶ yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷ All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for

I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord,

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children’s Message

Sermon

“True Freedom

Hymn of the Day

“Rise, Shine, You People!”

ELW #665



1 Rise, shine, you peo - ple! Christ the Lord has en - tered
2 See how he sends the pow'rs of e - vil reel - ing;
3 Come, cel - e - brate; your ban - ners high un - furl - ing,
4 Tell how the Fa - ther sent the Son to save us.



our hu - man sto - ry; God in him is cen - tered. He comes to
he brings us free - dom, light and life and heal - ing. All men and
your songs and prayers a - gainst the dark-ness hurl - ing. To all the
Tell of the Son, who life and free-dom gave us. Tell how the



us, by death and sin sur-round-ed, with grace un - bound-ed,
wom - en, who by guilt are driv - en, now are for - giv - en.
world go out and tell the sto - ry of Je - sus' glo - ry.
Spir - it calls from ev - 'ry na - tion God's new cre - a - tion.

Text: Ronald A. Klug, b. 1939, alt.
Music: WOJTKIEWIECZ, Dale Wood, 1934–2003
Text and music © 1974 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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: 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.

P: God of grace,

All: hear our prayer.

P: Grateful for the gift of freedom, for your abundant provision, and for your steadfast love that lasts forever, we cast all our cares upon you, through the abundant grace of Christ Jesus, our Savior.

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.

Offering

"Aria da Chiesa"

David Paxton

Offering Prayer

P: Blessed are you, O God, for the gifts of your hand in this land. Transform us and what we offer into the banquet of your compassion, serving in your love without limits through Jesus Christ, our Savior, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

The 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, through our Savior Jesus Christ. 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"

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

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: Citizens of the commonwealth of heaven: Taste and know that God is good to all.

Communion

“Lamb of God”

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, grant us peace, Lamb of God.

Communion Music

“Come Just as You Are”

VERSE

1. Come just as you are, hear the Spir-it call. Come just as you
2. Come just as you are, hear the Spir-it call. Come just as you
are. Come and see, (Come and see,) come re-ceive (Come re-ceive),
are. Come re-ceive, (Come re-ceive,) Christ the King (Christ the King);

2nd time to Coda **CHORUS**

come and live (come and live) for ev-er. Life ev-er-last-ing, and strength for to-
Come and live (Come and live) for

Coda
D.C. al Coda

- day; Taste the Liv-ing Wa-ter, and nev-er thirst a-gain. ev-er -
- more.

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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.

We thank you, God of heaven and earth, that you fill our deepest need with the very gift of Jesus Christ, broken and poured out for us. Pour us

out into a broken world. Channel our common life toward the common good, following the way our Savior leads us, now and forever.

All: Amen.

Blessing

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

All: Amen.

Sending Song

“To Be Your Presence”

ELW #546



1 To be your pres - ence is our mis - sion here, to show com -
2 To be your pres - ence is our mis - sion bold, to feed the
3 To be your pres - ence is our mis - sion blest, to speak for
4 We are your heart, O Christ, your hands and voice, to serve your



pas - sion's face and lis - t'ning ear, to be your heart of mer - cy
poor and shel - ter home - less cold, to be your hands of jus - tice,
all the bro - ken and op - pressed, to be your voice of hope, your
peo - ple is our call and choice, and in this mis - sion we, the



ev - er near,
right up - hold, al - le - lu - ia!
love ex - pressed,
church, re - joice,

Text: Delores Dufner, o.s.b., b. 1939
Music: ENGELBERG, Charles V. Stanford, 1852-1924
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Dismissal

P: Heaven has come near. In God's gift of freedom, share the good news!

All: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

“Psalm XIX”

Benedetto Marcello, arr. Walter E. Buszin

We Remember in Prayer; those on our Home Visitation list and those on our prayer list: Maggie Villafuerto, Richard J., Melinda, Callahan McCallister, Brock Woessner, Lori Dewey, the Woodworth family, Michelle Klinger, Matt Friel, Sandy Julifs, Mike, Dylan Wescott, and Phyllis Jacobson.

Coffee Fellowship will be served following worship this morning in the Social Hall by Nancy Eilers. All are welcome!

Worship Assistants:

Opener/Head Usher/Closer – Mary Ordean

Acolytes – Ordean family

Greeters – Audrey & Cathy Cox

Ushers – Donna Kendall, Ruben Garcia

Reader – JoAnn Garcia

Sound – Bradyn Arians

Communion Assistant – Nancy Beck

Altar Guild – Audrey & Cathy Cox

Musicians:

Julie Woessner DeJonge

Michael Rivera

Next Week – July 12– Worship Assistants

Opener/Head Usher/Closer – Dawn Waite

Acolytes – Altar Guild

Greeters – Dan Dir, Bev Graunke

Ushers – Ann Beswick, Gary Fields

Reader – Ann Beswick

Sound – David Carrillo

Communion Assistant – Ann Beswick

Altar Guild – Audrey & Cathy Cox

Coffee Fellowship – *Volunteer needed*