



Family Group

Join us for the Family Group September Meeting!

 Date: September 16

 Time: 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

 Location: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Sterling

Theme: Psalm 23 – "The Lord is my Shepherd"

Enjoy a simple dinner, interactive story time, a themed craft, and friendly fellowship with families of all ages. Older kids, we'd love your help leading the craft and story time!

All are welcome—come as you are and be inspired.



...how often should
I forgive?
"Not **SEVEN** times,
but, I tell you,
**SEVENTY-
SEVEN**
times."

Matthew 18:21-22, NRSV

Sunday, September 13, 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 September Children's offering will go to towards The Buddy Bag program. Be assured that every penny donated goes only to the cost of purchasing the food. All administrative costs are covered separately.

Pastor Mark Luepke, Part-time Interim

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September 13, 2026

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

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.

Prelude

"Music for Children"

arr. Ted Cornell

Children, please listen to this medley! See Mrs. Julie after the service - tell her the name of one of the songs and she will give you a piece of candy!

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, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.

All: Amen.

P: Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God, we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and

reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

P: Hear this good news: We have peace with God through † Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

All: Amen.

Gathering Hymn
“Ten Thousand Reasons”

Musical score for the hymn "Ten Thousand Reasons". The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. It includes a Refrain section and a Coda section. The lyrics are: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul; wor-ship his ho - ly name. Sing like nev - er be-fore, Last time to Coda or (Coda) Last time O my soul; I'll wor-ship your ho - ly name. 1 The sun comes up, it's a new day dawn-ing; 2 You're rich in love, and you're slow to an - ger. Your 3 And on that day when my strength is fail - ing, the ... it's time to sing your song a - gain. What - ev - er may name... is ... great, and your heart is kind. For all ... your end ... draws near, and my time has come; ... still, my pass, and what - ev - er lies be - fore me, let me be good-ness, I will keep ... on ... sing-ing— ten thou-sand soul will sing your praise un - end-ing— ten thou-sand"

Musical score for the hymn "Ten Thousand Reasons". The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. It includes a Refrain section and a Coda section. The lyrics are: "sing - ing when the eve - ning comes. rea - sons for my heart to find. years and then for - ev - er - more! wor - ship your ho - ly name, wor - ship your ho - ly name." Text: Matt Redman, Is. 1974, and Jonas Myrin, b. 1982 Music: Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin Text and music © 2011 Thankyou Music / Atlas Mountain Songs / worshippingtogether.com / stoneys Music, uk. uk. CapitalCMG Publishing.com

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: 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.

First Reading: Genesis 50:15-21

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.

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

Psalm: Psalm 103:1-13

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

All: Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all God’s benefits—

R: who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases;

All: who redeems your life from the grave and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy;

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

All: O Lord, you provide vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.

R: You made known your ways to Moses and your works to the children of Israel.

All: Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;

R: you will not always accuse us, nor will you keep your anger forever.

All: You have not dealt with us according to our sins, nor repaid us according to our iniquities.

R: For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.

All: As far as the east is from the west, so far have you removed our transgressions from us.

R: As a father has compassion for his children, so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.

Second Reading: Romans 14:1-12

¹Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those 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. ⁴Who 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.

⁵Some 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. ⁶Those 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.

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

¹⁰Why 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. ¹¹For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

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

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 18:21-35

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 16th chapter.

All: 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.”

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children’s Message

Sermon

“Forgiven People are to be Forgiving People”

Hymn of the Day

“I Come with Joy”

ELW #482\

with Children instruments



1 I come with joy, a child of God, for - giv - en, loved, and
2 I come with Chris - tians far and near to find, as all are
3 As Christ breaks bread, and bids us share, each proud di - vi - sion
4 The Spir - it of the ris - en Christ, un - seen, but ev - er
5 To - geth - er met, to - geth - er bound by all that God has



free, the life of Je - sus to re - call in
fed, the new com - mu - ni - ty of love in
ends. The love that made us, makes us one, and
near, is in such friend - ship bet - ter known, a -
done, we'll go with joy, to give the world the



love laid down for me, in love laid down for me.
Christ's com - mu - nion bread, in Christ's com - mu - nion bread.
strang - ers now are friends, and strang - ers now are friends.
live a - mong us here, a - live a - mong us here,
love that makes us one, the love that makes us one.

Text: Brian A. Wren, b. 1936
Music: DOVE OF PEACE, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835
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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: Reminded of God’s gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

P: Hear us, God.

All: Your mercy is great.

P: 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.

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

“From the Inside Out”

Joel Houston

Offering Prayer

P: God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use

our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always.

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 might and mer - cy,

your glo - ry fills all heav-en and earth. . . . You are ho - ly, God.

. . . Bless - ed be the Sav-ior, the one who comes in your name.

Ho - san - na in the high - est. You are ho - ly, God.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy". It consists of four staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff ends with a comma, the second with a period, the third with a period, and the fourth with a double bar line. The lyrics are: "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, Lord God of might and mer - cy," "your glo - ry fills all heav-en and earth. . . . You are ho - ly, God." ". . . Bless - ed be the Sav-ior, the one who comes in your name." "Ho - san - na in the high - est. You are ho - ly, God."

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: Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

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

“His Mercy Is More”
Matt Papa and Matt Boswell

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.
Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

All: Amen.

Blessing

P: The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus.

All: Amen.

P: The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding of the Spirit.

All: Amen.

P: The God of grace ☩ bless you now and forever.
All: Amen.

Sending Song
“Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven”
ELW #864



1 Praise, my soul, the God of heav - en; joy - ful - ly your trib-ute bring.
2 God be praised for grace and fa - vor to our fore-bears in dis-tress.
3 Frail as sum-mer's flow'r we flour - ish, blows the wind and it is gone;
4 An - gels sing in ad - o - ra - tion, in God's pres-ence, face to face.



Ran-somed, healed, re - stored, for - giv - en, ev - er - more God's prais-es sing.
God be praised, the same for - ev - er, slow to chide and swift to bless.
but, as mor - tals rise and per - ish, God en - dures un - chang - ing on.
Sun and moon and all cre - a - tion, all who dwell in time and space.



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Prais - es ev - er - last - ing ring!
Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Glo - rious is God's faith - ful - ness!
Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Praise the great E - ter - nal One!
Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Praise with us the God of grace!

Text: Henry F. Lyte, 1793–1847; alt, Walter R. Bouman, 1927–2005
Music: PRAISE, MY SOUL, John Goss, 1800–1880

Dismissal
P: Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!
All: Thanks be to God.

Postlude
“Mighty to Save”
arr. Carol Tornquist

We Remember in Prayer; those on our Home Visitation list and those on our prayer list: Craig Green, Tricia M., Ken & Stephanie, Richard J., Callahan McCallister, Brock Woessner, Lori Dewey, Michelle Klinger, Matt Friel, Sandy Julifs, Mike, and Phyllis Jacobson.

Worship Assistants:
Opener/Head Usher/Closer – *Volunteer Needed*
Acolytes – Arians family
Greeters – Ann Beswick, Bev Graunke
Ushers – Nancy Beck, Gary Fields
Reader – Ann Beswick
Sound – Bradyn Arians
Communion Assistant – Gary Fields
Altar Guild – Ann Beswick, JoAnn Garcia

Musicians:
Live:
Julie Woessner DeJonge
Recorded:
Dawn Zeigler

Next Week – September 20
Worship Assistants:
Opener/Head Usher/Closer – *Volunteer Needed*
Acolytes – Gale family
Greeters – Janie Billings, Susan Kuehl
Ushers – John Renner, Mel Johnson
Reader – Marilyn Geiger
Sound – David Carrillo
Communion Assistant – John Renner
Altar Guild – Ann Beswick, JoAnn Garcia
Coffee Fellowship – *Volunteer Needed*