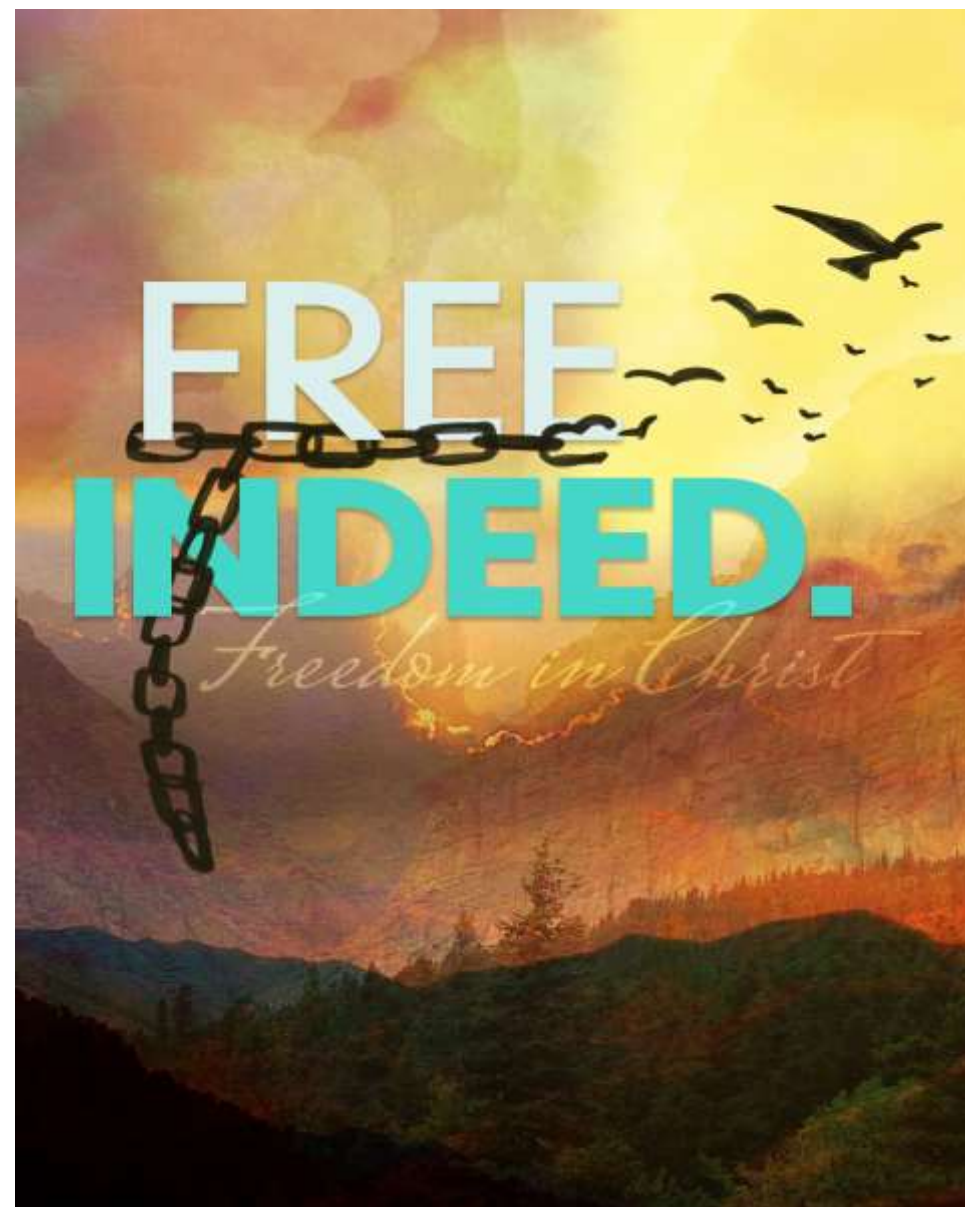




Sunday, October 25, 2026
9:00 a.m.

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

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

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Twenty first Sunday after Pentecost

October 25, 2026

Reformation Sunday

Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reformed in order to live out the love of Christ in an ever-changing world. We celebrate the good news of God's grace, that Jesus Christ sets us free every day to do this life-transforming work. Trusting in the freedom given to us in baptism, we pray for the church, that Christians will unite more fully in worship and mission.

Prelude

"O Lord, We Praise You"

stg. Benjamin Culli

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,

All: 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. 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
“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”
ELW #504



1 A might - y for - tress is our God, a sword and shield vic -
2 No strength of ours can match his might! We would be lost, re -
3 Though hordes of dev - ils fill the land all threat - 'ning to de -
4 God's Word for - ev - er shall a - bide, no thanks to foes, who

to - rious; he breaks the cruel op - pres - sor's rod and
ject - ed. But now a cham - pion comes to fight, whom
vour us, we trem - ble not, un - moved we stand; they
fear it; for God him - self fights by our side with

wins sal - va - tion glo - rious. The old sa - tan - ic foe
God him - self e - lect - ed. You ask who this may be?
can - not o - ver - pow'r us. Let this world's ty - rant rage;
weap - ons of the Spir - it. Were they to take our house,

has sworn to work us woe! With craft and dread - ful might
The Lord of hosts is he! Christ Je - sus, might - y Lord,
in bat - tle we'll en - gage! His might is doomed to fail;
goods, hon - or, child, or spouse, though life be wrenched a - way,

he arms him - self to fight. On earth he has no e - qual.
God's on - ly Son, a - dored. He holds the field vic - to - rious.
God's judg - ment must pre - vail! One lit - tle word sub - dues him.
they can - not win the day. The king - dom's ours for - ev - er!

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
Music: EIN FESTE BURG, Martin Luther
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, 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.

Kyrie



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well - being of the church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord. A - men.

Hymn of Praise

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and

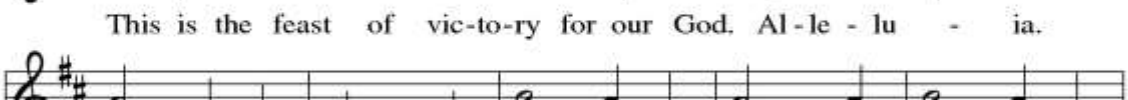


strength, and hon-or and bless-ing and glo-ry are his.

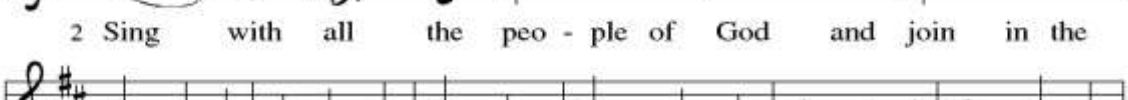
Refrain



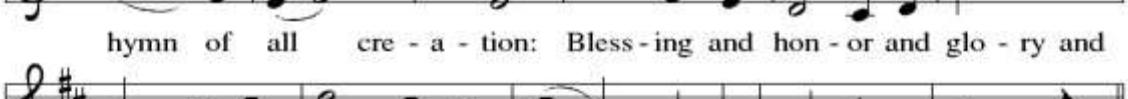
This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



2 Sing with all the peo-ple of God and join in the

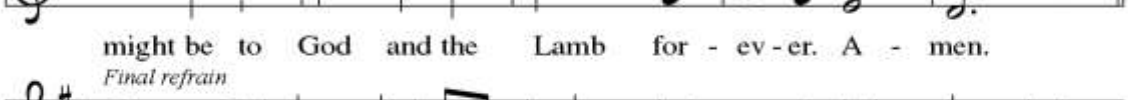


hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing and hon-or and glo-ry and

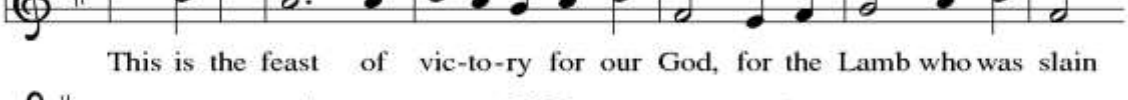


might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be-gun his reign. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray together:
All: Gracious Father, we pray for your holy catholic church. Fill it with all truth and peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in need, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

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

Psalm: Psalm 46

R: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
All: Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea;
R: though its waters rage and foam, and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
All: There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.
R: God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken; God shall help it at the break of day.

All: The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake; God speaks, and the earth melts away.

R: The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

All: Come now, regard the works of the LORD, what desolations God has brought upon the earth;

R: behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world; who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.

All: “Be still, then, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”

R: The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Second Reading: Romans 3:19-28

¹⁹ Now we know that, whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For no human will be justified before him by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed and is attested by the Law and the Prophets, ²² the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³ since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴ they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶ it was to demonstrate at the present time his own righteousness, so that he is righteous and he justifies the one who has the faith of Jesus.

²⁷ Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. Through what kind of law? That of works? No, rather through the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

R: Word of God, Word of Life,

All: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel: John 8:31-26

P: The Holy Gospel according to John the 8th chapter.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

³¹ Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” ³³ They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free’?”

³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. ³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord,

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children’s Message

Sermon

“A Celebration of Freeing Truth”

Hymn of the Day
“Wonderful, Merciful Savior”

1. Won - der - ful, mer - ci - ful Sav - ior, pre - cious Re - deem - er and Friend;
2. Coun - se - lor, Com - fort - er, Keep - er, Spir - it we long to em - brace;
3. Al - might - y, in - fi - nite Fa - ther, faith - ful - ly lov - ing Your own;

Who would have thought that a Lamb could res - cue the souls of men?
You of - fer hope when our hearts have hope - less - ly lost the way.
Here in our weak - ness You find us fall - ing be - fore Your throne.

CHORUS

Oh, You res - cue the souls of men. You are the One that we praise,
Oh, we hope - less - ly lost the way.
Oh, we're fall - ing be - fore Your throne.

You are the One we a - dore. You give the heal - ing and grace our

TURNAROUND

1,2

hearts al - ways hun - ger for, oh, our hearts al - ways hun - ger for.

OUTRO

(1,2) | 3

hun - ger for.

CCLI Song # 00079
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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: Seeking the Spirit of God who makes all things new, we pray for the church and the world.
A brief silence.
P: Hear us, God.
All: Your mercy is great.
P: Trusting in your boundless grace, O God, we lift up these spoken prayers and those in our hearts; 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.

Offering

“Rock of Ages”

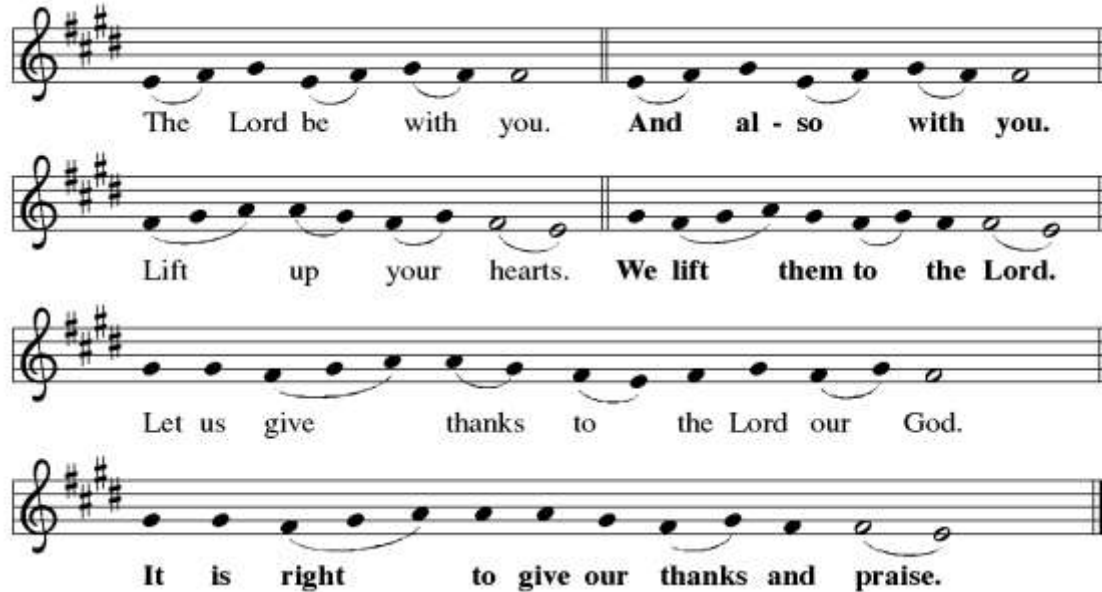
arr. By Daniel Burton

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



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.

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, Lord God of pow'r and might,

heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.

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.

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.

Communion Hymn

“Grace Alone”

arr. by Mark Hayes

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
“Soli Deo Gloria”
ELW #878



1 O God of bless - ings, all praise to you! Your love sur -
2 All praise for proph - ets, through grace in - spired to preach and
3 All praise for mu - sic, deep gift pro - found, through hands and
4 All praise for Je - sus, best gift di - vine through word and
5 A bil - lion voic - es in one great song, now soft and

rounds us our whole life through. You are the
wit - ness with hearts on fire. Your Spir - it
voic - es in ho - ly sound; the psalms of
wit - ness, in bread and wine; in - car - nate
gen - tle, now deep and strong, in ev - 'ry

free - dom of those op - pressed; you are the com - fort of all dis -
choos - es the weak and small to sing the new reign where might - y
Da - vid, and Mar - y's praise, in word - less splen - dor and lyr - ic
love song of bound - less grace, priest, teach - er, proph - et in time and
cul - ture and style and key, from hill and val - ley, with sky and

tressed. Come now, O ho - ly and wel - come guest:
fall; with them may we live your gos - pel call:
phrase, with all cre - a - tion one song we raise:
space, your stead - fast kind - ness with hu - man face:
sea, with Christ we praise you e - ter - nal - ly:

So - li De - o glo - ri - a! So - li De - o glo - ri - a!

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: SOLI DEO GLORIA, Marty Haugen

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Dismissal

P: Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

“Sing to the King with I Sing the Mighty Power of God”

arr. by Carol Tornquist

Coffee Fellowship will be served following worship this morning, hosted by Nancy Eilers and Nancy Beck. All are welcome!

We Remember in Prayer; those on our Home Visitation list and those on our prayer list: Gary Fields, Mary Ann DeJonge, 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 – Janie Billings, Susan Kuehl

Ushers – Ann Beswick, Mel Johnson

Reader – Ann Beswick

Sound – Bradyn Arians

Communion Assistant – Janie Billings

Altar Guild – Ann Beswick, JoAnn Garcia

Musicians:

Julie Woessner DeJonge

Dawn Zeigler

Next Week – November 1

Worship Assistants:

Opener/Head Usher/Closer – Mary Ordean

Acolytes – Bartel family

Greeters – Dan Bartel family

Ushers – Bill & Carolyn Duncan

Reader – Bill Duncan

Sound – David Carrillo

Communion Assistant – Ann Beswick

Altar Guild – Judy Bartel, Donna Kendall

Coffee Fellowship – Diane Yoeckel, Nancy Eilers