



ST PAUL PINE GROVE MILLS

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



COMMUNITY SERVICE: US SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
JULY 5, 2026

WELCOME TO SAINT PAUL!

We are happy to have you here!

HOW TO KNOW WHEN TO STAND, SIT, OR SPEAK

Whenever you see an asterisk (*) at a heading, you are invited to stand as you are able. You are not required to stand, so if, for health or emotional reasons you cannot or do not wish to stand, that is okay. You are invited to speak the words printed in **bold type**.

HOW TO SING HYMNS IN HARMONY

To save space in printing the bulletin, we usually limit what is printed to the melody. If you'd like to sing in harmony, the hymn numbers are listed in our bulletin so you can open the red books in the pews (called ELWs).

WE ARE AN OPEN COMMUNION CONGREGATION

This means that any Christian who has received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism is invited to receive Holy Communion.

HOW TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT US



Offerings can be made online at stpaulpgm.org/give, mailed to St. Paul Lutheran Church, PO Box 200, Pine Grove Mills, PA 16868, placed in the mail slot (outside door to Pastor Paul's office), or in the offering plate located in the lobby/narthex near the entrance of the sanctuary.

A NOTE ON COMMUNION WAFERS



To topple barriers that prevent participation in worship, we want to make it possible for individuals with Celiac Disease or gluten intolerance to be able to eat the Body of our Lord. Our default wafers are made by Parish Crossroads and are known as "Low Gluten Wafers" because they contain trace amounts of gluten. However, the wafers are tested at least once a year for how much gluten is in them. Since 2020, the wafers have routinely tested to contain

15ppm gluten or less (The US FDA defines most food products with 20ppm or less as "gluten free"). Use the QR Code and look for the link that gives the most recent test results.

If you still have concerns, we have some truly gluten-free wafers available upon request.

GATHERING

The Gathering for worship began when you started readying yourself for worship

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

As the nation marks two hundred fifty years of freedom, Zechariah's humble king rides in, commanding peace to the nations. God's ways stay hidden from the wise but open to the weary. Like Paul, we feel the bondage of desires we cannot master. Yet Christ, who carried our burden to the cross, welcomes those the world excludes and calls, "Come to me, all you that are weary." Gathered at word, water, and table, we receive rest for our souls, a freedom deeper than any nation's, and a life given in love for our neighbors.

PRELUDE — *Out of consideration for our musicians, please refrain from talking during the prelude.*

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

The Continental Congress called for eight separate days of fasting and repentance. As our national begins another year, it is well worth remembering the importance of self-reflection and repentance played in the Revolutionary War.

P: In the name of the Father, and of the ✙ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **A: Amen.**

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **A: Amen.**

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

A: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

P: For self-centered living, and for failing to walk with humility and gentleness:

A: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

P: For longing to have what is not ours, and for hearts that are not at rest with ourselves:

A: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

P: For misuse of human relationships, and for unwillingness to see the image of God in others: **A: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.**

P: For jealousies that divide families and nations, and for rivalries that create strife and warfare: **A: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.**

P: For reluctance in sharing the gifts of God, and for carelessness with the fruits of creation: **A: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.**

P: For hurtful words that condemn, and for angry deeds that harm:
A: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

P: For idleness in witnessing to Jesus Christ, and for squandering the gifts of love and grace: **A: Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.**

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. Through the Holy Spirit God cleanses us and gives us the power to proclaim the mighty acts of the one who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **A: Amen.**

***GATHERING HYMN** *"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"* (ELW 742)



- 1 What a friend we have in Je - sus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
- 2 Have we tri - als and temp - ta - tions? Is there trou - ble an - y - where?
- 3 Are we weak and heav - y - lad - en, cum - bered with a load of care?



What a priv - i - lege to car - ry ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged—take it to the Lord in prayer.
Pre - cious Sav - ior, still our ref - uge—take it to the Lord in prayer.



Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit; oh, what need - less pain we bear—
Can we find a friend so faith - ful who will all our sor - row share?
Do your friends de - spise, for - sake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.



all be - cause we do not car - ry ev - 'ry-thing to God in prayer!
Je - sus knows our ev - 'ry weak - ness—take it to the Lord in prayer.
In his arms he'll take and shield you; you will find a so - lace there.

Text: Joseph Scriven, 1820–1886

Music: CONVERSE, Charles C. Converse, 1832–1918

*GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **A: And also with you.**

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray. You are great, O God, and greatly to be praised. You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Grant that we may believe in you, call upon you, know you, and serve you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **A: Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: ZECHARIAH 9:9-12

Zechariah (whose name means "God remembers") was written at the close of the Babylonian captivity, when the exiles, beyond hope, were allowed to return to Jerusalem. It comes from a time when God's promises were unexpectedly fulfilled. Part of that fulfillment is the return of the true ruler, a descendant of David, to David's city and throne.

⁹Rejoice 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. ¹⁰He 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. ¹¹As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. ¹²Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

L: The word of the Lord. **A: Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 145:8-14

(Partial paraphrase, ELW 836)

The psalms constantly reminded Israel that, even when there was a king on the throne, it is the compassionate God who is the true ruler, and whose reign extends over all creation.



1 Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love!
2 All thy works with joy sur - round thee, earth and heav'n re - flect thy rays,
3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blest,



Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore thee, prais - ing thee, their sun a - bove.
stars and an - gels sing a - round thee, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.
well - spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean - depth of hap - py rest!



Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, drive the gloom of doubt a - way.
Field and for - est, vale and moun - tain, flow - 'ry mead - ow, flash - ing sea,
Thou our Fa - ther, Christ our broth - er, all who live in love are thine;



Giv - er of im - mor - tal glad - ness, fill us with the light of day.
chant - ing bird, and flow - ing foun - tain call us to re - joice in thee.
teach us how to love each oth - er, lift us to the joy di - vine!

Text: Henry van Dyke, 1852–1922

Music: HYMN TO JOY, Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770–1827, adapt.

SECOND READING: ROMANS 7:15-25A

Until mid-September, we'll be reading most of the book of Romans straight through. In this complicated argument, Paul notes that while the law is good, just, and holy, it calls forth rebellion rather than submission; sin seems automatically to spring from the knowledge of good and evil, and even our own conscience condemns us.

¹⁵I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷But in fact it

is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸For 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. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. ²¹So I find it to be a law that, when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. ²²For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, ²³but 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. ²⁴Wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ^{25a} Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

L: The word of the Lord. **A: Thanks be to God.**

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Blessed are you, Lord of I heav'n and earth;* you have revealed these I things to infants.

*GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 11:16-19, 25-30

Jesus has sent the disciples on missionary journeys, but continues to preach and teach himself. John the Baptist sends messengers from prison, implying that Jesus' message is too gentle to be faithful.

P: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the eleventh chapter.

A: 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."²⁵ At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise

P: The gospel of the Lord. **A: Praise to you, O Christ.**

***HYMN OF THE DAY:** *"This Is My Song"* (ELW 887)

here are my hopes, my dreams, my ho - ly shrine;
and skies are ev - 'ry - where as blue as mine.
and hearts u - nit - ed learn to live as one.



but oth - er hearts in oth - er lands are beat - ing
 So hear my song, O God of all the na - tions,
 So hear my prayer, O God of all the na - tions;

with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.
 a song of peace for their land and for mine.
 my - self I give you; let your will be done.

Text: Lloyd Stone, 1912–1993, sts. 1–2; Georgia Harkness, 1891–1974, st. 3

Music: FINLANDIA, Jean Sibelius, 1865–1957

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*APOSTLES' CREED

A: 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

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.

Gathering God, send your Spirit on the church you have called out from every nation. Knit us together into one body and heal the divisions we have caused. Overcome our timidity to witness and act in the public square when your purpose is being thwarted.

Bless rostered and lay leaders with clarity and courage as they center your people in the gospel. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

All your works praise you, O God. From the Arctic to the Caribbean, from the Atlantic to the western islands, these lands and waters have sustained their peoples over many centuries. Closer to home, we give thanks for Tussey and Nittany, Rothrock Forest, the Scotia Barrens, and Slab Cabin Run. As we take our part in creation's praise, revive our wonder at what you have fashioned, and enliven our will to ensure its health for future generations. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Holy Trinity, you show us the splendor of diversity and the beauty of unity in your own divine life. We come from many nations with many languages; make us a united people that delights in our many different gifts. As the United States of America marks its declaration of independence, give those whom we have entrusted with authority the spirit of wisdom, and curb every abuse of that trust, so that both here and abroad, justice, humility, and peace may flourish. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You are the Mother of exiles, O God. Extend your arms to all who are tired, who live with poverty, the tempest-tossed, all who yearn to breathe free. Embrace people seeking refuge; those incarcerated, detained, or disappeared; and neighbors fearing those they once trusted. Give healing and hope to people in any oppression and need, especially these we name before you now (*a brief silence*). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We remember before you those who have died in every generation: Jan Hus, executed for protesting the ecclesial system; Benedict, teacher of a prayerful life; and those who have died ensuring the freedoms of this country: people in the armed services, peace officers, advocates, and activists. Gather us, together with those who have gone before us especially Kate Shoemaker, Marcella Harner, Betty Walker, John Schueltz, and with saints of every tribe and nation, into the holy city you have prepared. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Into your mercy, O God, we entrust our restless hearts and all our cares, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

***PEACE**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **A: And also with you.**

THANKSGIVING

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING

*OFFERTORY



1 Oh, what shall I ren - der in thanks to my Lord
2 My hands take the cup of sal - va - tion you give;



for all the good gifts by which I am re - stored?
I'll praise you, O God, for as long as I live.



No trea - sure I ten - der could ev - er re - pay
My thanks will rise up as I call on your name,



God's mer - cy and faith - ful - ness, new ev - 'ry day.
with all of your peo - ple your good - ness pro - claim.

Text: Martin A. Seltz, based on Ps. 116

Music: FOUNDATION, early North American

Text © 1998 Augsburg Fortress

*OFFERING PRAYER

L: Let us pray: Blessed are you, O God, for waves of grain and harvesters, fruitful vines and vinepresses, for our labor and our rest, for the gifts of your hand in this land. Transform us and what we offer into the banquet of your compassion, serving your love without limits through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

. **A: Amen.**

*** THANKSGIVING CANTICLE:** *"Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast"* (ELW 516)



- 1 Al-might - y God, your word is cast like seed in - to the ground;
- 2 Let not the sly sa - tan - ic foe this ho - ly seed re - move,
- 3 Let not the world's de - ceit - ful cares the ris - ing plant de - stroy,
- 4 So when the pre - cious seed is sown, life - giv - ing grace be - stow,



now let the dew of heav'n de - scend and righ - teous fruits a - bound.
but give it root in ev - 'ry heart to bring forth fruits of love.
but let it yield a hun - dred - fold the fruits of peace and joy.
that all whose souls the truth re - ceive its sav - ing pow'r may know.

Text: John Cawood, 1775–1852, alt.

Music: ST. FLAVIAN, J. Day, *Psalter*, 1562

***THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

P: Let us pray.

Holy God, our Maker, our Judge, our Deliverer, your Word spoke rivers and mountains, prairies and shorelines into being long before any flag was planted upon them. For your Word that holds every nation in your hand,

We thank you, O God.

Two hundred fifty years ago this people dared to name liberty and justice not as a possession, but as a promise: a promise still outrunning our practice, still calling us further than we have gone. For your Word that judges the nations, including our own,

We praise you, O God.

You sent us Jesus, your Word made flesh, who claims no flag and no border, who feeds the hungry across every line we draw, and teaches us a commonwealth wider than any republic. For your Word that widens our love past every boundary,

We entreat you, O God.

Accept our thanksgiving and receive our prayer, for the freedom we have been given and the freedom we still owe our neighbor, for the sake of your living Word, Jesus our Savior. **Amen.**

***LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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.**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into time of trial,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
forever and ever. Amen.**

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

You may be seated.

***CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE**

***BLESSING**

P: 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. In the name of the Father, and the Son, ✚ and the Holy Spirit. **A: Amen.**

***SENDING HYMN: "Just a Closer Walk with Thee"** (ELW 697)

Refrain



Just a clos-er walk with thee, grant it, Je-sus, is my plea;



dai - ly walk-ing close to thee, let it be, dear Lord, let it be.



- 1 I am weak but thou art strong: Je - sus, keep me from all wrong;
- 2 Through this world of toil and snares, if I fal - ter, Lord, who cares?
- 3 When my fee - ble life is o'er, time for me will be no more;

Refrain



I'll be sat - is - fied as long as I walk, let me walk close to thee.
Who with me my bur - den shares? None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee.
guide me gent - ly, safe - ly o'er to thy king - dom shore, to thy shore.

Text: North American traditional

Music: CLOSER WALK, North American traditional

***DISMISSAL**

L: Go in peace. Seek liberty and justice for all.

A: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

REFLECTIONS FOR AFTER WORSHIP

When a Yoke Means Freedom

Today's gospel reading contains iconic words from Jesus: "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). Jesus offers a yoke to tired listeners and tells them that a yoke will give them rest. The yoke as a means to rest

was a strange idea for the disciples, and it ought to sound strange to us as well. The early hearers of this biblical passage would have known a yoke to be a means of engaging the energy of oxen as heavy lifters in the enterprise of farming. Yokes are still employed in our world and they are still a burden and a way of harnessing animals' hard work. The first ancient readers or hearers of Matthew also viewed a yoke as a symbol of obedience to God's law and wisdom. Generally, our instinct is to resist yokes and laws, or at least not immediately connect them with the idea of freedom. Through the image of the yoke, however, Jesus invites us to think of God's law and wisdom as a means to surrender, give way, and accept something graceful and positive—rest, ease, lightness. Jesus reframes the idea of a yoke by telling us that a yoke will help us grow as disciples. The gospel links humility to freedom.

COMMENT FROM THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you, where there is wondrous gifts, and joy without compare, rest unchanging, happiness without end, unceasing melody, perpetual glory, unwearied giving of thanks, loving absorption in divine things, infinite riches, a kingdom without end, through all ages and ages, deeps of compassion, an ocean of mercy and kindness—which the human tongue cannot describe but makes known only through figures. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and you shall find rest for your souls, where the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge shall be revealed. Come to me, all you that hunger and thirst after justice, and I will fill you with all that you desire. Come to me, for whoever comes to me I shall not cast forth. —*Ephraem* [in *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, III, 310-311.]

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

JULY 6: KATE SHOEMAKER, † 2005;

JAN HUS, MARTYR, † 1415

Hus was a Bohemian (present-day Czech Republic) priest who spoke against abuses in the church, and was seen by Martin Luther as his predecessor in the reforming movement. He was found guilty of heresy by a council of the church, and burned at the stake.

JULY 9: MARCELLA HARNER, † 2019

JULY 11: BETTY WALKER, † 2004; JOHN SCHUELZ, † 2018;

BENEDICT OF NURSIA, ABBOT OF MONTE CASSINO, † 540

Benedict is known as the father of the Western monastic movement. Educated in Rome, he went to live as a hermit, and eventually gathered a community of monks around him. He wrote a rule for living in monasteries that is used by Benedictines and adapted by others.



SERVING TODAY

Worship Leader Pastor Paul Tomkiel
Assisting Minister.....
Musician Michelle McMullen
Sacristan.....
Reader.....

ABOUT ST. PAUL

PURPOSE

We are a beacon, boldly sharing the light of Jesus' grace and love.

MISSION

Guided by Jesus, we strengthen faith, deepen compassion, extend generosity,
and serve community.

CORE VALUES

Faith ♡ Compassion ♡ Generosity ♡ Community

OUR BIBLE VERSES

As Paul was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. [Jesus said,] 'Paul is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before the nations.'— Acts 9:3,15

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

St. Paul is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Conestoga-Susquehannock people, where we gather. We also acknowledge the Seneca, Cayuga, Lenne Lenape, as well as all of our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to care for this place – this land – and call it their home.

Find out more about the Conestoga-Susquehannock at www.conestogasusquehannocktribe.com

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