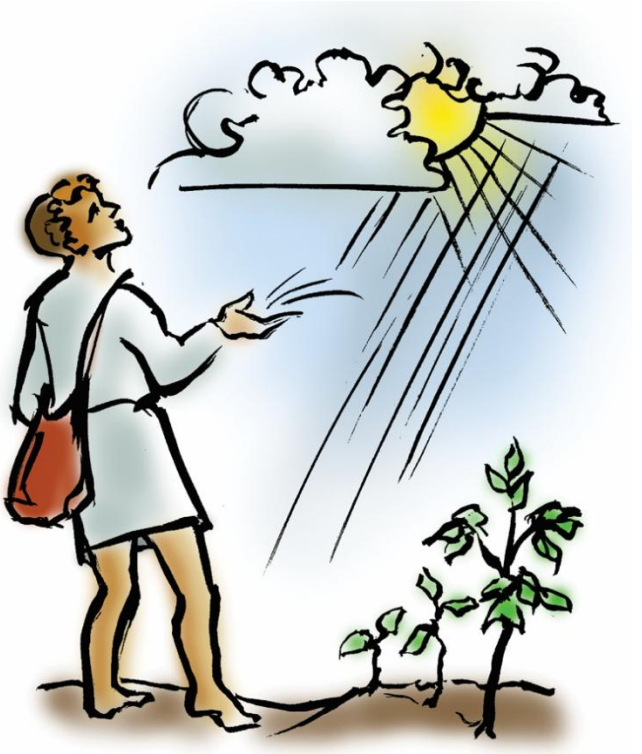
ST PAUL
PINE GROVE MILLS

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

July 12, 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

God's word is like rain that soaks the ground before we see anything growing, and like a sower who scatters seed without checking the soil first. Your life is that seed—even where it feels little, dormant, or dead, God has already promised a harvest. At this table, Christ feeds you with the bread of life, not because you've proven fruitful, but so that you might bear fruit in the world.

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

*Confession and forgiveness

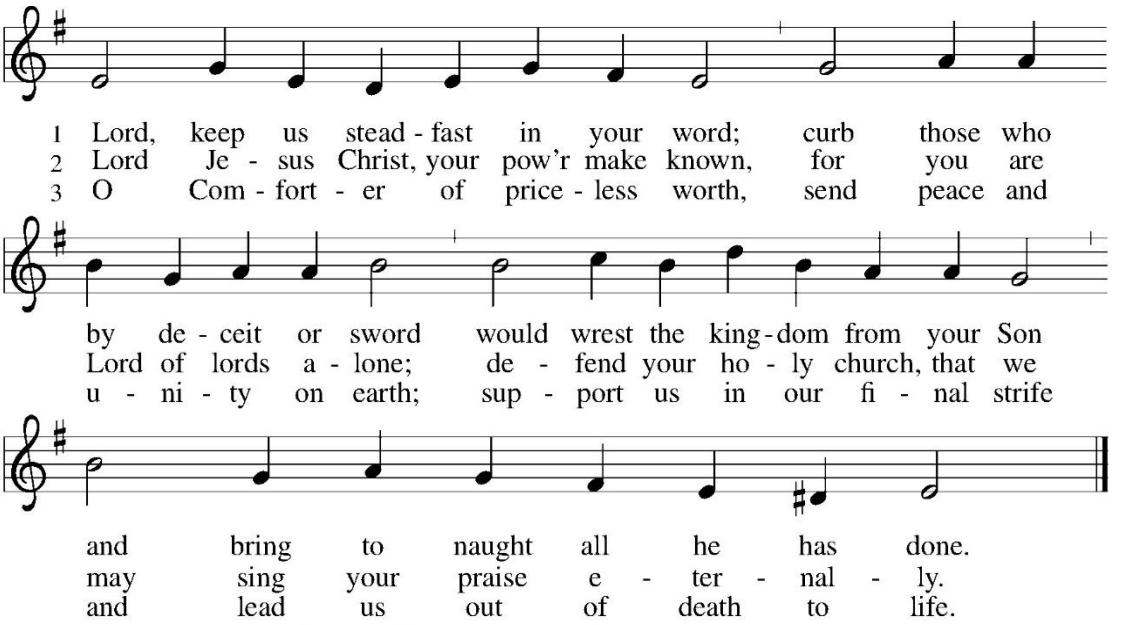
P: In the name of the Father, and of the ☩Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **A: Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sin, in the presence of God and of one another.

P Compassionate God, **A: we confess to you all our sins. Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves. In your mercy, call us back to you. Your yoke is easy and your burden is light. Restore us to dwell in your peace. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.**

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. 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 *"Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word" (ELW 517)*



Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
Music: ERHALT UNS, HERR, J. Klug, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543

*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. Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **A: Amen.**

Word

First Reading: Isaiah 55:10-13

The Israelites had been defeated, Jerusalem sacked, and the Temple destroyed. For forty years they had been living in exile in Babylon, and it appeared that God's love and promises had come to naught. But faithful prophets had voiced God's promise that, beyond hope, those promises would be kept and God's beloved would be allowed to go home.

10 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower

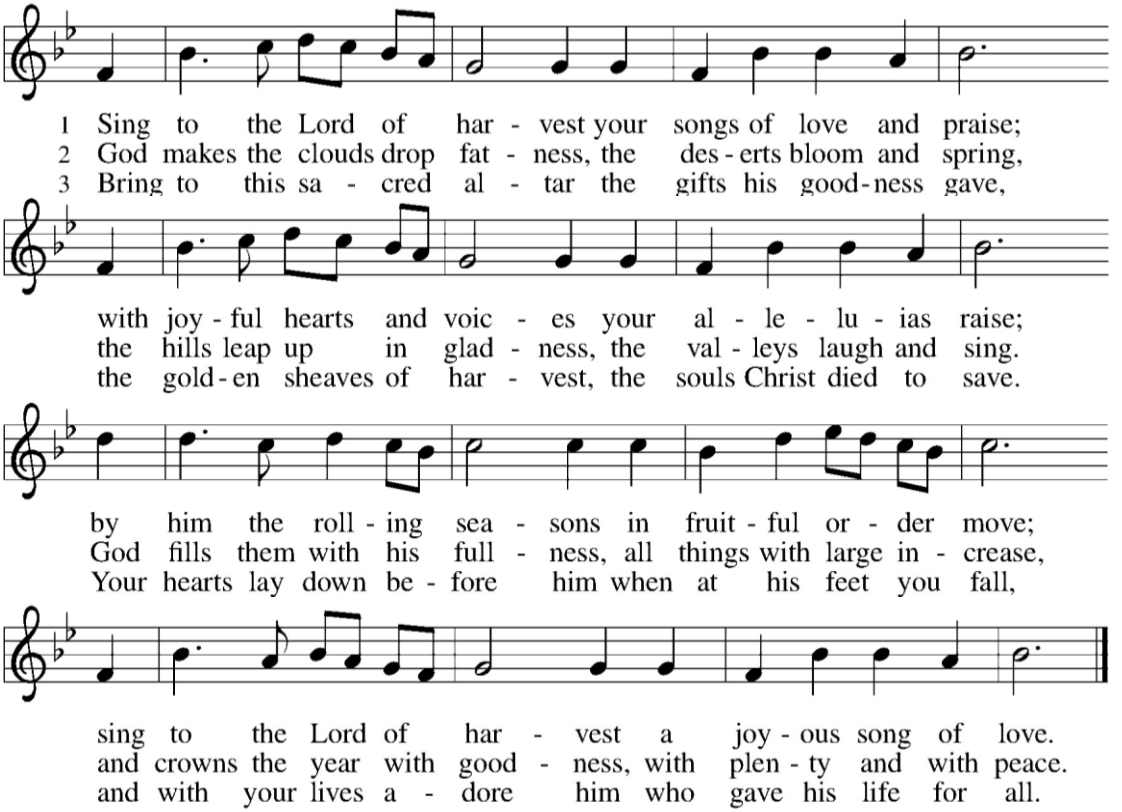
and bread to the eater, [11] so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. [12] For you shall go out in joy and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. [13] Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle, and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

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

Psalm 65:[1-8], 9-13

Sing to the Lord of Harvest (ELW 694)

This psalm praises God for the dependable round of seasons, and the life that round makes possible, echoing Isaiah's declaration of the dependability of God's Word.



Text: John S. B. Monsell, 1811–1875, alt.
Music: WIE LIEBLICH IST DER MAIEN, Johann Steurlein, 1546–1613

Second Reading: Romans 8:1-11

Until mid-September, we'll be reading most of the book of Romans straight through. In his complicated argument, Paul notes that while we admit that God's law is good, just, and holy, our actions all too often spring from our subjection to sin. The only possible escape is also the only sure one: we are reconciled to God not by our obedience to the law, but by God's love in Jesus Christ, which we grasp in faith.

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law
of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For
God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own
Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so
that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to
the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their
minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their
minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the
mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is
hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot, 8 and those who are in
the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the
Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not
belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the
Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the
dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal
bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

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

*Gospel Acclamation

The word is very | near to you;* it is in your mouth and | in your heart.

*Gospel Reading: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

This chapter, from which we'll read for the next several weeks, is made up of several parables. In this week's reading, Jesus tells a story to the crowd, but only explains it to the disciples. As usual, while the images are drawn from familiar, daily life, the stories themselves show how strange the Kingdom of God is. For instance, any prudent sower (especially in a world regularly faced with food shortages) would broadcast seeds much more carefully than the way this story describes – in contrast to the way God scatters the Word!

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

A: Glory to you, O Lord.

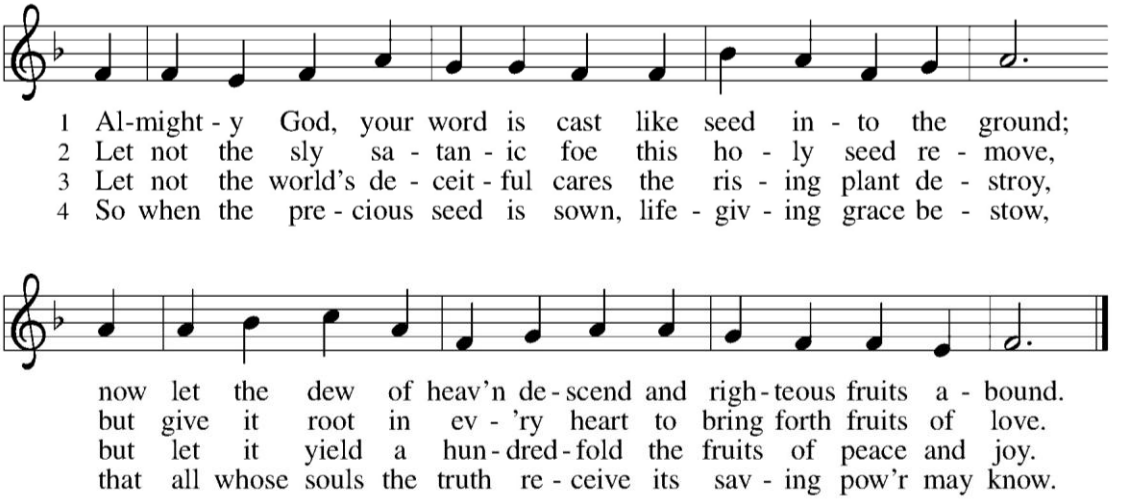
1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 Such great crowds
gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood
on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went
out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate
them up. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and
they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. 6 But when the sun rose, they
were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell
among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil
and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 If you have ears,
hear!"

18 "Hear, then, the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom
and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the
heart; this is what was sown on the path. 20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is
the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, 21 yet such a person
has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on
account of the word, that person immediately falls away. 22 As for what was sown among
thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this age and the lure of
wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. 23 But as for what was sown on good soil,
this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields
in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

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

Sermon

*HYMN OF THE DAY: *"Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast"* (ELW 516)



Text: John Cawood, 1775–1852, alt.
Music: ST. FLAVIAN, J. Day, *Psalter*, 1562

*INVITATION TO BAPTISM

*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.

God our gardener, you scatter grace like seed across the world. Continue to cultivate the garden of your church with your abundant Spirit. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God our joy, your bountiful creation reflects your commitment to life despite our actions disregarding its wonder. We look toward Isaiah's vision, when all creation rejoices and the trees clap their hands at your salvation. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God our life, you give us the same Spirit by which you raised Christ from the dead. Set our minds on that Spirit whenever fear or condemnation overwhelm the peoples of the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God our host and table, we pray for children who hunger and rely on school meals, for all who toil under the hot sun without refreshment, and for the chronically ill who have exhausted their resources. We hold before you the concerns of this community (*especially*). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God our source, tend this assembly with your grace throughout this summer season. May those who travel for work or recreation do so safely, and may visitors find refreshment among us. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Eternal God, we remember the faithful departed of this community and of the wider church and world. We give thanks for saints of all times and places, especially Bishop Nathan Söderblom, whom the greater church remembers today. May we follow their example of faith and service. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Grateful for your abundant provision and trusting in your goodness, we cast all our cares upon you, through the abundant grace of Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

*Peace

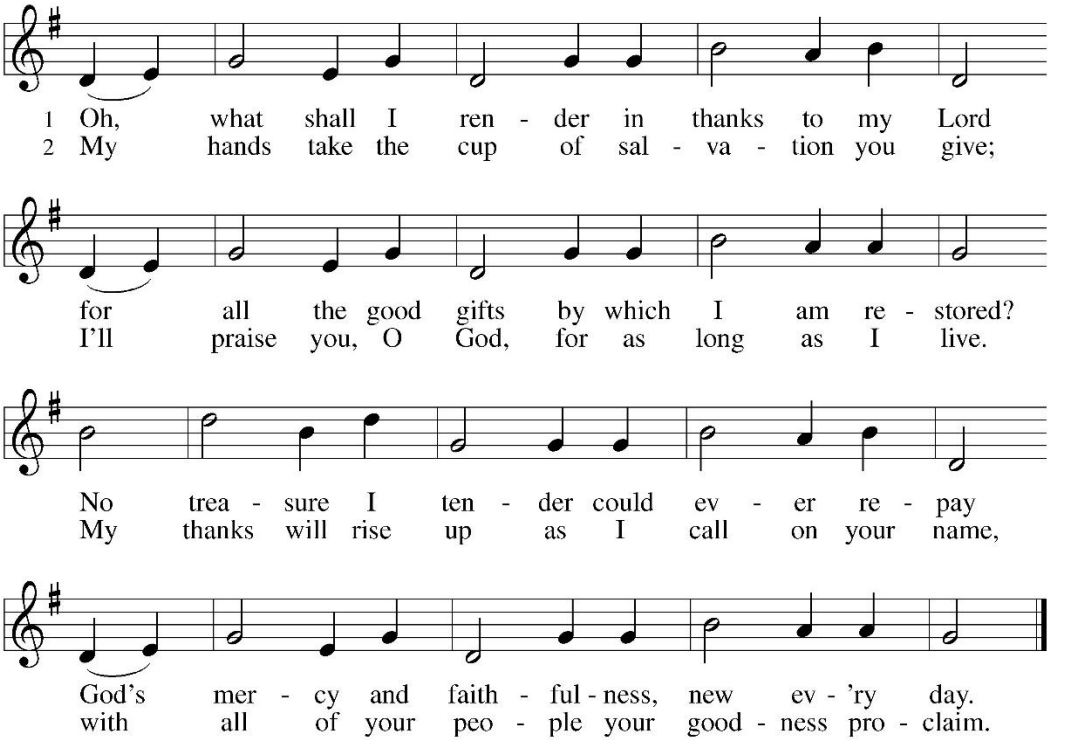
P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **A: And also with you.**

Meal

Offering

Musical Offering

*Offertory



Text: Martin A. Seltz, based on Ps. 116
Music: FOUNDATION, early North American

Text © 1998 Augsburg Fortress

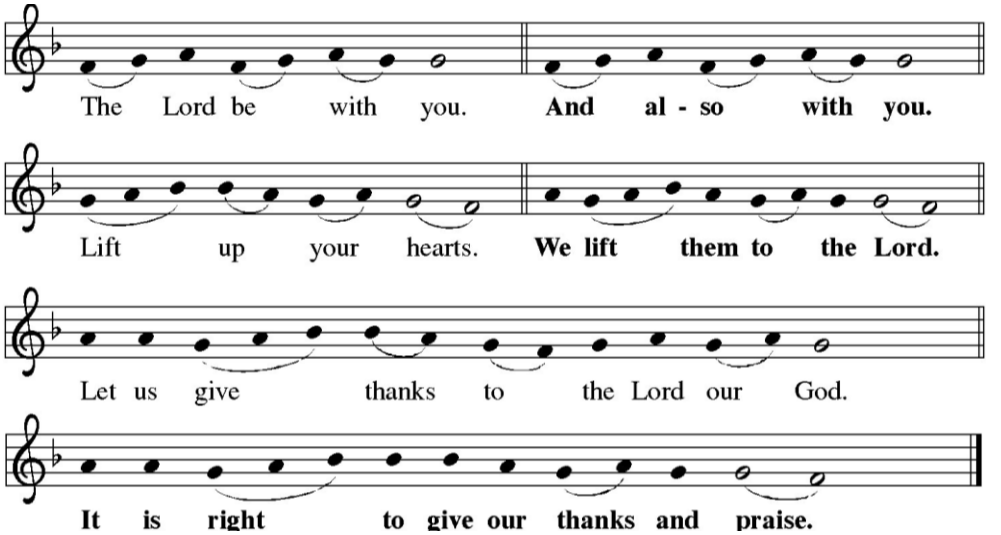
*Offering Prayer

L: Let us pray: Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever.

. **A: Amen.**

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

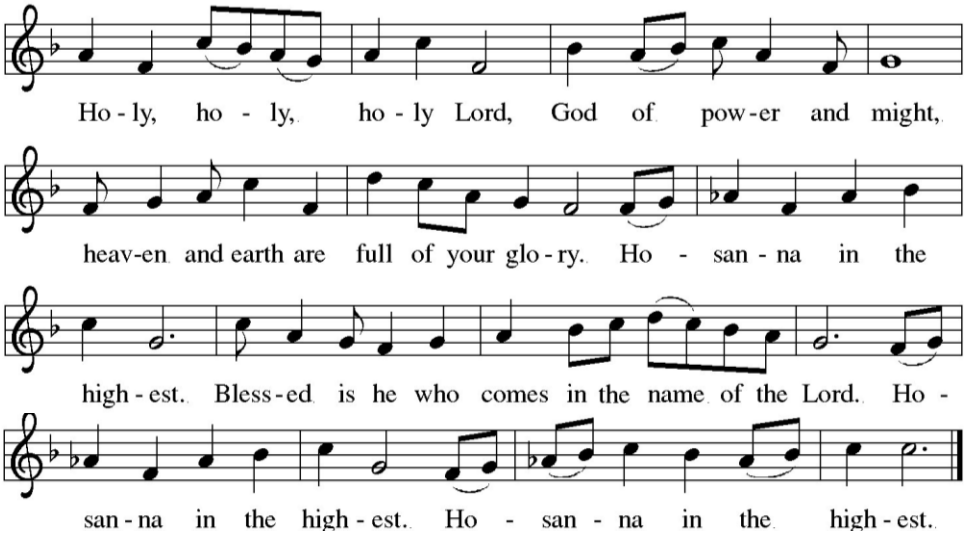
* DIALOGUE



*PREFACE

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:

*SANCTUS



*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P: Holy God, our Maker, Redeemer, and Healer,
in the world of your creation,
you wove all things together in life and praise.
When sin had broke what you had made,
you sent your Son to heal our wounds
and gather us again into one.
In the night in which he was handed over,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
We proclaim the mystery of our faith:

A: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore, his acts of healing,
his body given up, and his victory over death,
we await that day when all the peoples of the earth
will come to the river to enjoy the tree of life.

A: Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.

Send your Spirit upon us and this meal:
as grains scattered on the hillside become one bread,
so let your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth,
that all may be fed with the Bread of life, your Son.

A: Amen! Come, Holy Spirit!

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church, both now and forever.

A: Amen

*Lord's Prayer

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

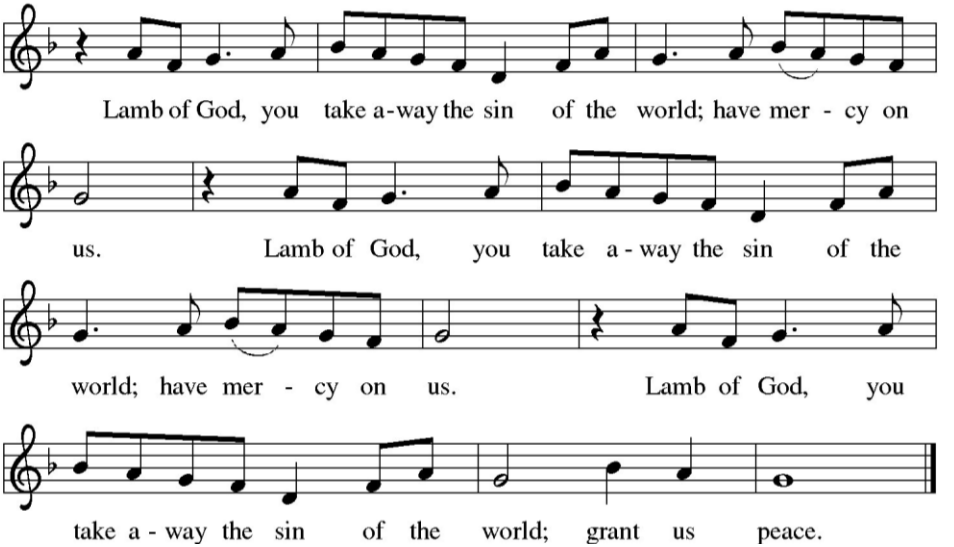
Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the 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.

*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Heaven has come near. Come, share in the feast!

*Lamb of God



Communion

P: The body of Christ, given for you. L: The blood of Christ, shed for you. **A: Amen.**

Communion Hymn: *"Bringing in the Sheaves"*

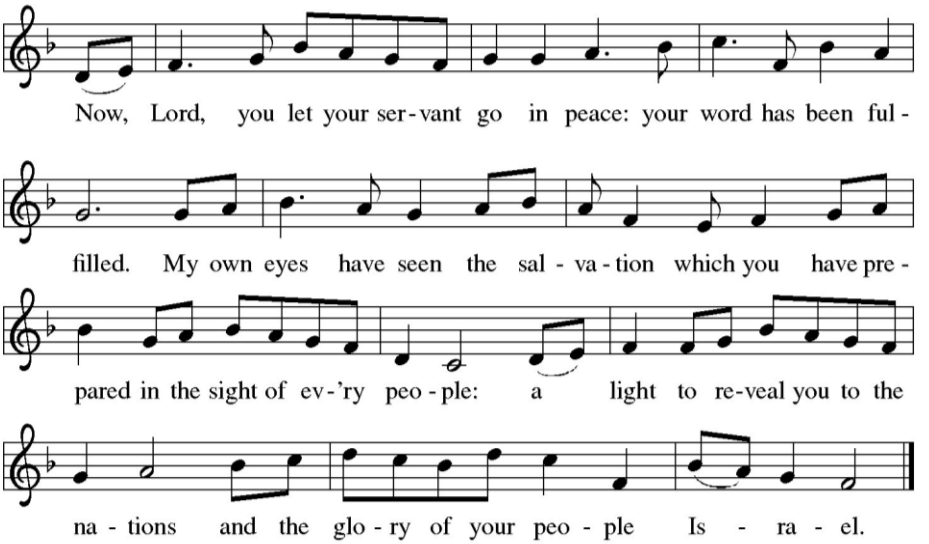
WORDS: Knowles Shaw, 1874
MUSIC: George A. Minor, 1880

SHEAVES
12.11.12.11 with Refrain

*Post-Communion Blessing

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you, body, mind, and soul, now, and unto eternal life**. A: Amen.**

*Post-Communion Canticle – *Nunc Dimittis* (*Now, Lord)*



*Post-Communion Prayer

L: Let us pray. Compassionate God, through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever. . **A: Amen.**

Sending

*Sending of communion

P: Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are *sick, homebound, and imprisoned*. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **A: Amen.**

Announcements

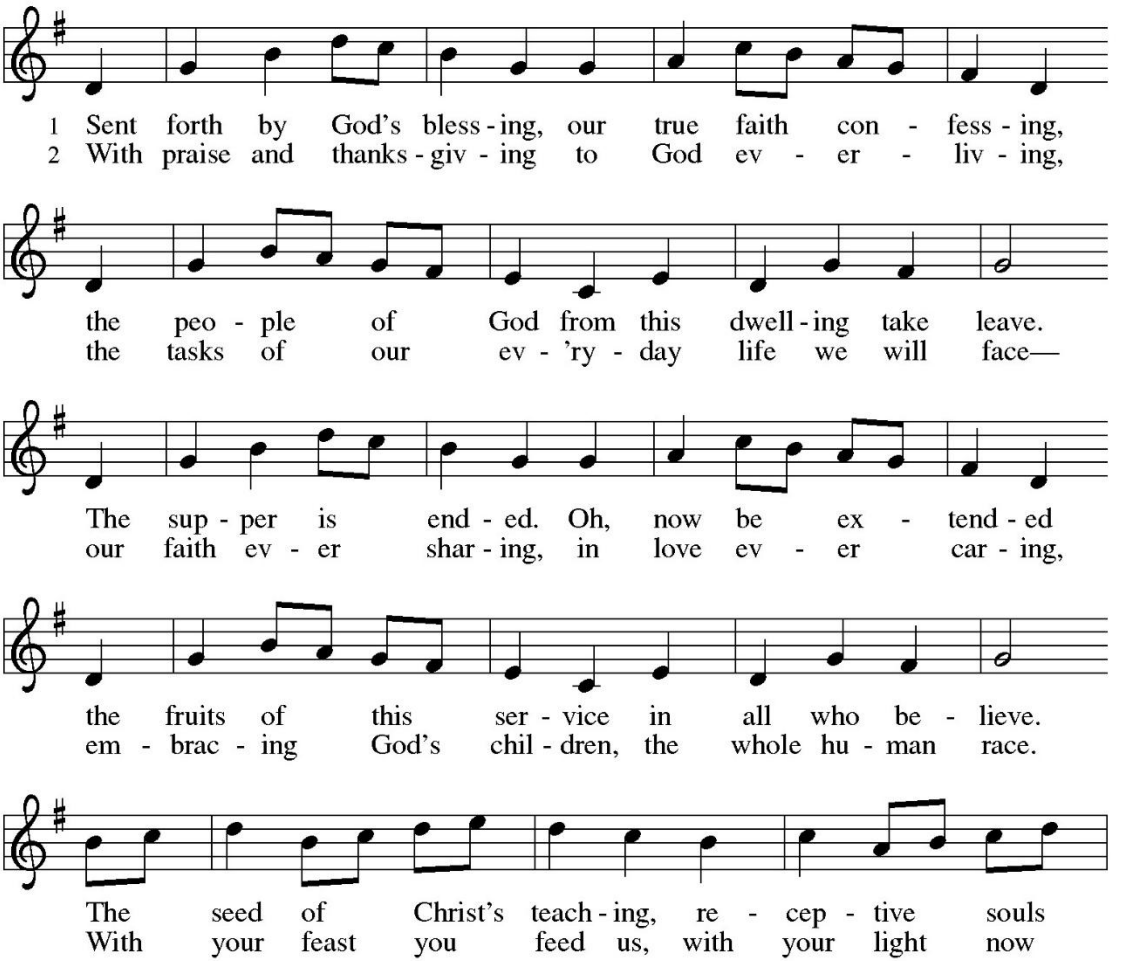
You may be seated.

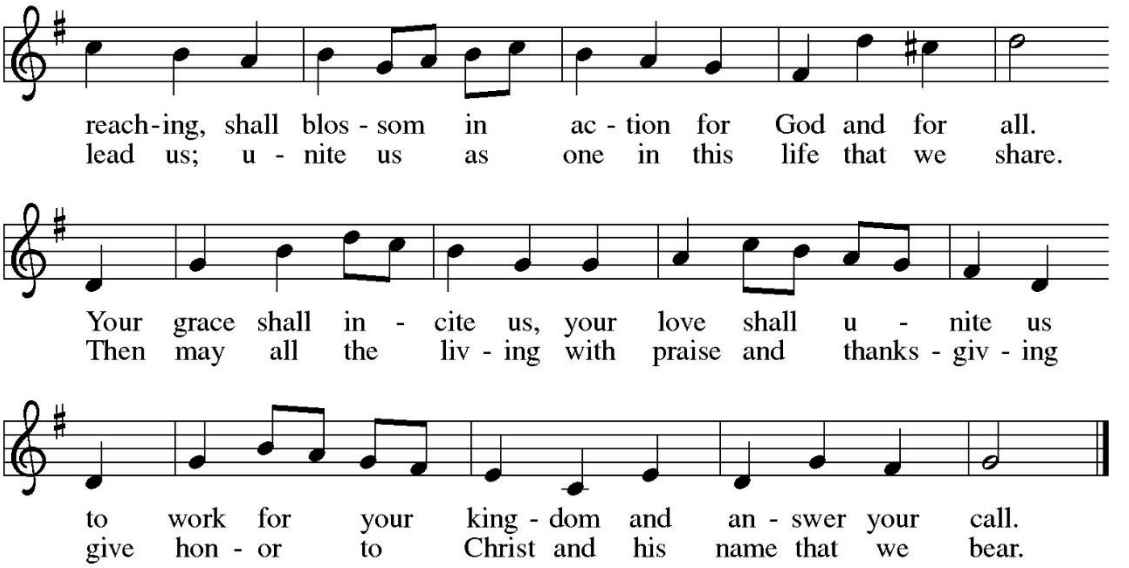
*Charge to the People

*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: *"Sent Forth by God's Blessing"* *(ELW 547)*





Text: Omer Westendorf, 1916–1997, alt.
Music: THE ASH GROVE, Welsh folk tune
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*Dismissal

L: Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!
A: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Reflections for After Worship

Life in Every Direction

We can identify death in every direction. We see war, hunger, addiction, poverty, a dying planet, and broken hearts. This is not a new story. The children of Israel surely saw death in every direction, wandering in the desert and at least occasionally wondering about their next meal. Paul looks at his own life and, at first, sees nothing beyond spiritual death. He reminds us that death is not just physical, but also spiritual. Then, in

the parable of the sower, three-fourths of the seeds die and three-fourths of the sections of the field are inhospitable to flourishing life. Sometimes, life isn't even given a chance. We might look at the world and ourselves and only see the places that are inhospitable to God's love.

Today's texts all go a step further, however, to articulate or reveal God bringing forth life where there is only death in every direction. Cypress and myrtle trees rise up in the place of thorns and briars (Isa. 55:13). "Christ Jesus has set [us] free from the law of sin and of death," and the life-giving Spirit dwells in us (Rom. 8:2, 10).The parable of the sower elicits reflection, repentance, and, ultimately, new life from its readers and hearers in considering the sort of spiritual life they practice. Are we hospitable or inhospitable to God's word? This parable is a vivid reminder of all God has overcome—rocks, scorching sun, thorns, and snatching—to bring life to the world. God brings forth life in places where people see only death.

Comment from the Cloud of Witnesses

Beginners in prayer are those who draw the water from the well. This is very hard work, for it will fatigue them to keep their sense recollected, which is extremely difficult because they have been accustomed to a life of distraction. God grant that there may be water in the well! But that, at least, does not depend on us: our task is to draw it and to do what we can to water the flowers. What, then, will a person do who finds for many days nothing but aridity, dislike, and distaste? The gardener will rejoice and take new heart and consider it the greatest of favors to work in the garden of so great an Emperor. Let not the gardener wish to have God's kingdom on earth or ever cease from prayer, but rather resolve, even if this aridity should persist a whole life long, not to let Christ fall with his cross.

—*Teresa of Ávila* [in *The Mystics of Spain*, ed. Allison Peers (London: Allen and Unwin, 1951), 81-83.]

Upcoming Commemorations

July 12: Nathan Söderblom, Bishop of Uppsala, † 1931

A Swedish theologian and archbishop of the Church of Sweden, Söderblom was a leading figure in the modern ecumenical movement. He organized the 1925 Life and Work conference in Stockholm, worked tirelessly for unity and peace among the churches, and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1930.

July 17: Bartolomé de las Casas, missionary to the Indies, † 1566

A Spanish priest and later bishop, las Casas was among the first to condemn the enslavement and abuse of Indigenous peoples in the Americas. He devoted his life to their defense, insisting that all people are created free and worthy of dignity and the gospel.

ST PAUL
PINE GROVE MILLS
A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Serving Today

Worship Leader ..... Pastor Paul Tomkiel
Assisting Minister..... Morgen Hummel
Musician .....Jacob Heller
Sacristan.....Ann Reede
Reader.....Nate Clinert

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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