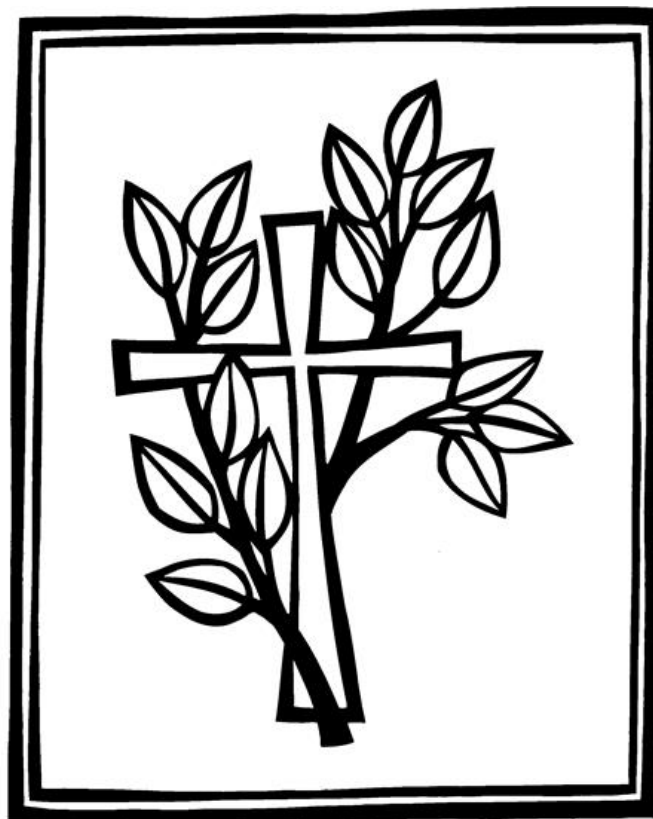




St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Highspire
Pentecost 14
August 30, 2026

Introduction

The prophet Jeremiah speaks of the incurable wound of his suffering yet finds in God's words the delight of his heart. When Peter doesn't grasp Jesus' words about suffering, Jesus tells the disciples they will find their lives in losing them. Such sacrificial love is described by Paul when he urges us to associate with the lowly and not repay evil with evil. In worship we gather as a community that we might offer ourselves for the sake of our suffering world.

Overview

There Must Be Another Way

Peter may be the "rock" on which Christ will build the church (Matt. 16:18), but when Jesus reveals the suffering that will come first, Peter becomes a tempter and stumbling block. Assuming God must have a different way to save the world, Peter protests Jesus' suffering and death. Jesus explains to Peter and all his disciples that, in fact, this is the way to life—losing one's life in order to find it. By tempting Jesus to an easier way than his journey through suffering to resurrection, Peter personifies a temptation common to all generations of Jesus' disciples: seeking a way to avoid "losing oneself" instead of surrendering all to and with the one we follow. Rather than losing our lives—our selves, possessions, and time—we hold on more tightly, afraid of what will happen to our comfort, success, and identity if we let go. Those things we hold onto then become, like Peter, stumbling blocks along the way of self-giving love. But while "saving one's life" sounds sensible, those things also stand in the way of the new life into which Jesus beckons us to follow him. Perhaps Peter's problem is that he sees only the suffering and death, without grasping the new life that comes through it. In times when we too are tempted by worldly ways of comfort and success, convinced that surely God must have an easier way than the way of self-giving love, this gospel reminds us that resurrection and life await on the other side of suffering and death. This is the way of our God who becomes human in Jesus: emptying himself of power and dignity, losing his very own life for the sake of the world's life. Seen through the lens of resurrection just ahead on the journey, what other way could there be?

WORDS OF WELCOME

PRELUDE

Grady Daub

The Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

ELW p. 94

P In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

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

C we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. 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.

C Amen.

*GATHERING HYMN "For the Beauty of the Earth"***

ELW #879

*GREETING

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

C And also with you.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

The Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading: Jeremiah 15 15-21

Jeremiah's delight in the word of the Lord is contradicted by the heaviness of God's hand upon him and God's seeming unfaithfulness. God's tough love to Jeremiah says that if he repents, he will be allowed to continue in his strenuous ministry. Jeremiah is strengthened by the simple words, "I am with you."

15 O Lord, you know;
 remember me and visit me,
 and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors.
In your forbearance do not take me away;
 know that on your account I suffer insult.
16 Your words were found, and I ate them,
 and your words became to me a joy
 and the delight of my heart,
for I am called by your name,

O Lord, God of hosts.

17 I did not sit in the company of merrymakers,
nor did I rejoice;
under the weight of your hand I sat alone,
for you had filled me with indignation.

18 Why is my pain unceasing,
my wound incurable,
refusing to be healed?

Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook,
like waters that fail.

19 Therefore thus says the Lord:

If you turn back, I will take you back,
and you shall stand before me.

If you utter what is precious and not what is worthless,
you shall serve as my mouth.

It is they who will turn to you,
not you who will turn to them.

20 And I will make you to this people
a fortified wall of bronze;

they will fight against you,
but they shall not prevail over you,
for I am with you

to save you and deliver you,
says the Lord.

21 I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked
and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: Psalm 26:1-8 (read responsively)

Your love is before my eyes; I have walked faithfully with you. (Ps. 26:3)

1 Give judgment for me, O Lord, for I have lived with integrity;
I have trusted in the Lord and have not faltered.

**2 Test me, O Lord, and try me;
examine my heart and my mind.**

3 For your steadfast love is before my eyes;
I have walked faithfully with you.

**4 I have not sat with the worthless,
nor do I consort with the deceitful.**

5 I have hated the company of evildoers;
I will not sit down with the wicked.

**6 I will wash my hands in innocence, O Lord,
that I may go in procession round your altar,**

7 singing aloud a song of thanksgiving
and recounting all your wonderful deeds.

**8 Lord, I love the house in which you dwell
and the place where your glory abides.**

Second Reading: Romans 12:9-21

Paul presents benchmarks for faithful relationships with Christians and non-Christians. Love is the unflagging standard of our behavior. When we encounter evil, we do not resort to its tactics but seek to overcome it with good. While Christians cannot control the actions and attitudes of others, we seek to live at peace with all people.

9 Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; 10 love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord.

12 Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer.

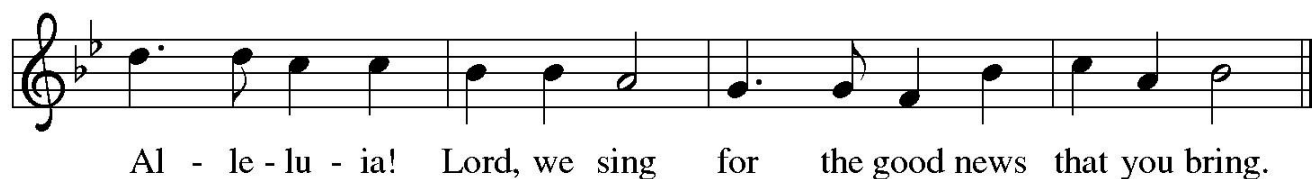
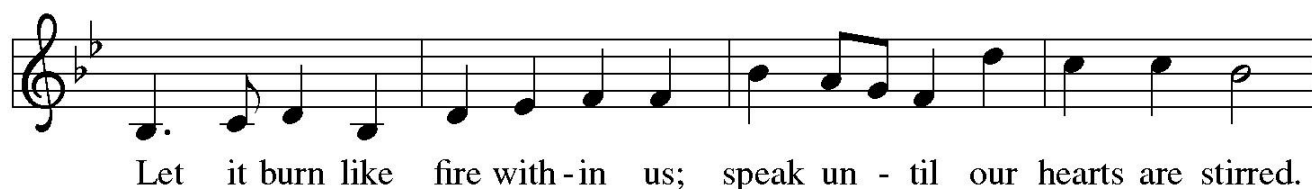
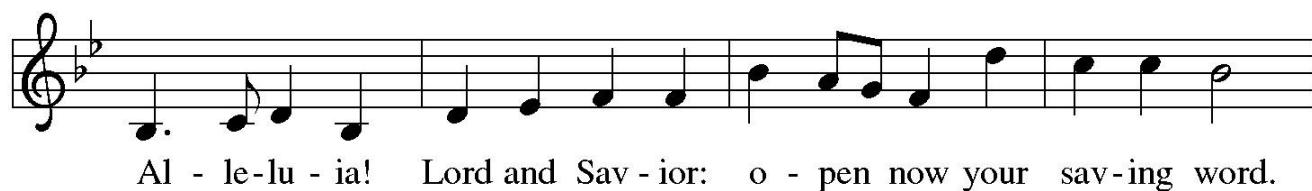
13 Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.
15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another; do not be arrogant, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. 18 If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.
19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord."
20 Instead, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink, for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION "Alleluia! Lord and Savior" ELW p. 205



***GOSPEL Matthew 16:21-28**

After Peter confesses that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (16:16), Jesus reveals the ultimate purpose of his ministry. These words prove hard to accept, even for a disciple whom Jesus has called a “rock.”

P The holy gospel according to Matthew

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

21 From that time on, [after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah,] Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised.

22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” 23 But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

27 “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.

28 Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

P The gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Pastor Alex

*HYMN OF THE DAY "Will You Come and Follow Me"*** ELW #798

*APOSTLES CREED ELW p.105

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

A With bold trust in God's unfailing provision, we pray for the church,
those in need, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

For the church in every land, that its mission and ministry is anchored in
the love of Christ. When threats or challenges arise, teach us to take up
our cross and follow you in faith. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the well-being of your creation, that all that lives and grows on the earth may thrive. Bring relief to areas ravaged by droughts, floods, fires, storms, and other disasters. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the nations and all in authority, that they seek to live in peace with one another. Bless the work of international and diplomatic organizations and all who work to bring peace to a world scarred by violence. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For all those in need, that they be satisfied. Ensure all your children have safe access to food, water, shelter, and medical care. Bring healing to all who bear wounds in body, mind, and spirit especially *Don Alsedek, Connie Barner, Rachel Benkovic, Rose Hoover, Samson Kennedy, Bernie Kunz, and Rob Lipsitt.* Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the congregation gathered here to serve you, that they remain strong in faith and united in purpose. Guide our committees, study groups, and other meetings toward honesty and humility, always seeking genuine love. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

For the faithful departed, that their witness continues to strengthen and guide the church. Renew our hope in your promises in this life and the life to come. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

P Receive our prayers and answer, O God, as you have promised. All this we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

*PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

SPECIAL MUSIC (first and last verses)

"All Are Welcome" ***

"Christ, Be Our Light" ***

"Shine Jesus Shine" ***

HYMN SING

ELW #641

ELW #715

ELW #671

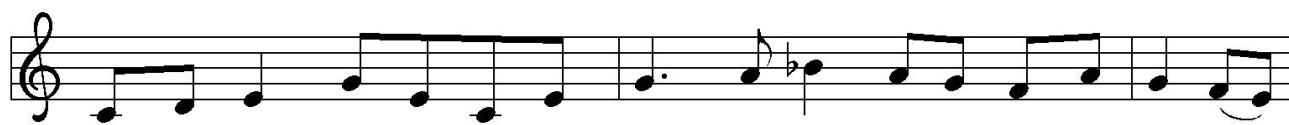
The Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

*OFFERTORY HYMN

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful

ELW #182



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles - sing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be



fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -



nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your



pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

A 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.

C Amen.

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW p.206

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*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:

*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW p.207



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er 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, ho - san - na in the high - est.

*EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

*In the night in which he was betrayed,
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.*

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever.

C Amen.

*THE LORD'S PRAYER

ELW p.208

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

*SHARING THE MEAL

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

COMMUNION HYMNS:

"Lamb of God"

ELW p.208

"Bind Us Together"

WOV #748

"Blessed Assurance"

ELW #638

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A 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.

C Amen.

The Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

*BLESSING

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

C Amen.

*SENDING HYMN "Let Streams of Living Justice"

ELW #710

*DISMISSAL

A Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Grady Daub

We appreciate Grady Daub for sharing his musical talent with us this morning. Thank-you.

Permission to podcast/ stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE, License #736549-A and CCLI License #CSPL 19029 except where notated, All Rights Reserved. From sundayandseasons.com. Copyright @2026 Augsburg Fortress. All Rights Reserved. License #SB179760.

Gathering Hymn - "For the Beauty of the Earth" ELW #879 words - Folliott S. Pierpoint music - Conrad Kocher DIX PUBLIC DOMAIN ***

Gospel Acclamation - "Alleluia! Lord and Savior" p. 205, setting 10

Hymn of the Day - "Will You Come and Follow Me" ELW #798 words - John L. Bell music - Scottish Traditional KELVINGROVE @1987 Iona Community, Admin. GIA Publications ***

Special Music - HYMN SING (3 Congregational Favorites - 1st & last verses)

"All Are Welcome" ELW #641 words & music - Marty Haugen @1994

GIA Publications, Inc. ***

"Christ, Be Our Light" ELW #715 words & music - Bernadette Farrell

@1993 Bernadette Farrell, admin OCP Publications ***

"Shine Jesus Shine" ELW #671 words & music - Graham Kendrick

@1987 Make Way Music, admin. Music Servicesm***

Offertory Hymn - "Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful " ELW #182 words - John W.

Arthur music - Richard Hillert @1978 Augsburg Fortress Publishers

"Holy, Holy, Holy" p.207, setting 10 ELW

Distribution of Communion - Lamb of God, p. 208 ELW

"Bind Us Together" WOV #748 words & music Bob Gillman @1977

Kingsway, Capitol CMG Publishing CCLI Songs # 1228

"Blessed Assurance" ELW #638 words - Fanny J. Crosby music -

Phoebe P. Knapp PUBLIC DOMAIN ***

Sending hymn - "Let Streams of Living Justice" ELW #710 words - William

Whitla music - Gustave Holst THAXTED @1989 William Whitla ***

*** CONGREGATION FAVORITES

St. Peter's Lutheran Church Highspire Contact Information:

Saint Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

240 Broad St., P.O. Box 97

Highspire, Pennsylvania 17034-0097

Office Phone: 717-939-3492

E-mail: stpetershighspire240@gmail.com

If you are in need of Pastoral care, please reach out to our church office at 717-939-3492 or by email at stpetershighspire240@gmail.com . You can also reach out to Pastor Alex, at 717-434-5037.

Special Music for September

9/6/26 - Pentecost 15 - Deb Dillane, Organ solo

Worship Participants for August 30, 2026

Presiding Minister	Pastor Alex Sheppard-Witt
Music Director	Stephen Strauss
Worship Assistant	Matt Hunt
Musician	Grady Daub
Lector	Randy Hoover

Worship Participants for September 6, 2026

Presiding Minister	Pastor Alex Sheppard-Witt
Music Director	Stephen Strauss
Worship Assistant	Patrick Hawkins
Musician	Deb Dillane
Lector	Matthew Hunt

CENTERPIECE: Presented to the Glory of God by Kane and Donna High in honor of Donna's mother, Bety Demers 90th birthday on August 23rd.

All are Welcome Bible Study

The All are Welcome Bible Study meets on Tuesday nights at 6:30pm. We are currently reading Isaiah.

We send out a weekly email with the Zoom link, as well as a brief summary of what we covered the previous week. To get the link for attending the Zoom session, or just to get on the weekly email list, please contact Matt and Mary Hunt at allarewelcomebiblestudy@gmail.com .

A Friendly reminder from Sally:

Please remember to take 1 or more Samaritan Bags to hand out to those who may be in need of this outreach .They are located in a basket in the back of the sanctuary to grab and keep available in your travels.

Come to church and stay for Fellowship every Sunday in the Parlor. Enjoy coffee and snacks and friendly conversation! If you would be interested in "Hosting a Sunday" please check the sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board located in the hallway outside the Music Room/Church Office.