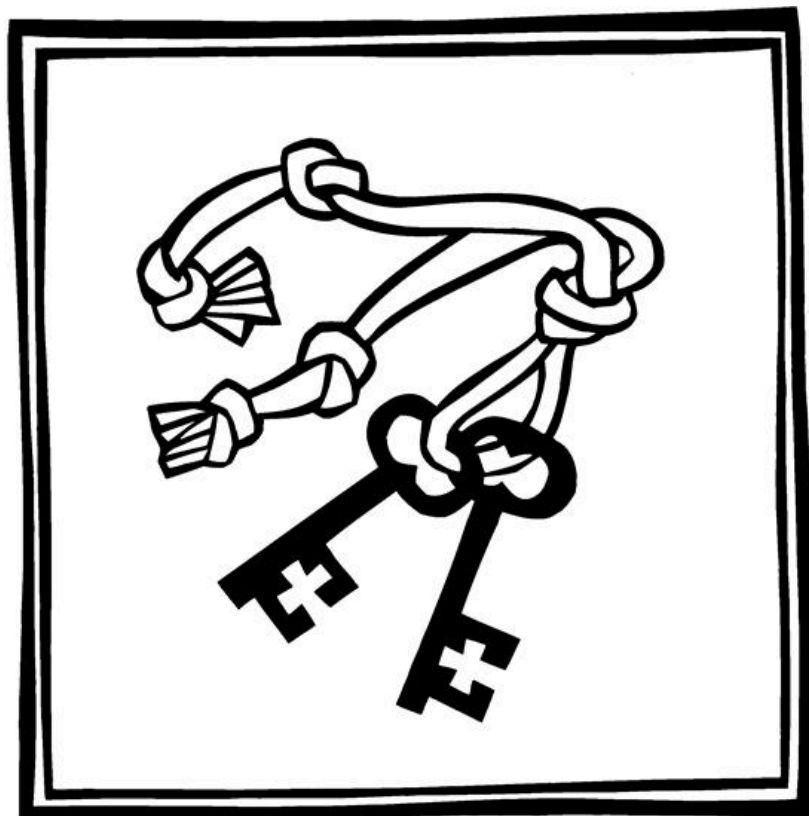




St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Highspire
Pentecost 13
August 23, 2026

Introduction

In Isaiah the people are advised to look to their spiritual ancestors as the rock from which they were hewn. Jesus declares that the church will be built on the rock of Peter's bold confession of faith. God's word of reconciliation and God's mercy are keys to the church's mission. Paul urges us to not be conformed to this world but to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, using our individual gifts to build up the body of Christ. From the table we go forth to offer our spiritual worship through word and deed.

Overview

Confessing Christ, Formed in Faith

In late August, students are preparing to go back to school, and many churches gear up for a new year of Christian education. It is a good time to be reminded of the heart of Christian formation: conformation and transformation (Rom. 12:2). Disciples are formed over time—shaped by learning, worship, and all aspects of Christian life in community. As it was for Peter, part of our formation is learning to confess Jesus as the Messiah, not only with the right words but also through an experience of the living God in Christ. And along with Peter, through such formation we also discover who we are in relation to God: After Peter “confesses” Jesus’ identity of Messiah, Jesus “confesses” Peter’s identity by calling out his name and vocation.

Traditionally, Lutheran worship contains two confessions which keep forming us: a confession of sin and a confession of faith. In the first, we acknowledge who we are as sinner and saint, and in the second, we acknowledge who God is in the mystery of the Trinity. Like Peter’s, our own identity is revealed in those truths. And, we might say, we are continually formed by and through them.

Peter’s confession is not a precondition for following Jesus; it comes in the middle of his journey of discipleship. Our formation too is a long process—lifelong, in fact—which begins at baptism (and even before!) and is guided by those who travel before and with us. At this time of year, as we explore our own formation, identity, and vocation as disciples of Jesus, Isaiah entreats us, “Look to the rock from which you were hewn” (51:1). Envisioning Peter the “rock” (Matt. 16:18), we might also consider how we are “chips off the old block” of our forebears in faith.

WORDS OF WELCOME

PRELUDE

Juliet Mitton

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 "My Hope is Built on Nothing Less" ELW #596

*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, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

The Word

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

First Reading: Isaiah 56: 1-6

Just as God had called Abraham and Sarah and given them many descendants, so now God offers comfort to Zion. God's deliverance will come soon and will never end.

1 Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness,
you who seek the Lord.

Look to the rock from which you were hewn
and to the quarry from which you were dug.

2 Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah, who bore you,
for he was but one when I called him,
but I blessed him and made him many.

3 For the Lord will comfort Zion;
he will comfort all her waste places
and will make her wilderness like Eden,

her desert like the garden of the Lord;
joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.

4 Listen to me, my people,
and give heed to me, my nation,
for a teaching will go out from me
and my justice for a light to the peoples.

5 I will bring near my deliverance swiftly;
my salvation has gone out,
and my arms will rule the peoples;
the coastlands wait for me,
and for my arm they hope.

6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens
and look at the earth beneath,
for the heavens will vanish like smoke,
the earth will wear out like a garment,
and those who live on it will die like gnats,
but my salvation will be forever,
and my deliverance will never be ended.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 138 (read responsively)

O Lord, your steadfast love endures forever. (Ps. 138:8)

1 I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods I will sing your praise.

**2 I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name,
because of your steadfast love and faithfulness;
for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.**

3 When I called, you answered me;
you increased my strength within me.

**4 All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O Lord,
when they have heard the words of your mouth.**

5 They will sing of the ways of the Lord,
that great is the glory of the Lord.

**6 The Lord is high, yet cares for the lowly,
perceiving the haughty from afar.**

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; you stretch
forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall
save me.

**8 You will make good your purpose for me; O Lord, your steadfast
love endures forever; do not abandon the works of your hands.**

Second Reading: Romans 12:1-8

In response to God's merciful activity, we are to worship by living holistic, God-pleasing lives. Our values and viewpoints are not molded by the time in which we live but are transformed by the Spirit's renewing work. God's grace empowers different forms of service among Christians, but all forms of ministry function to build up the body of Christ.

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, on the basis of God's mercy, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

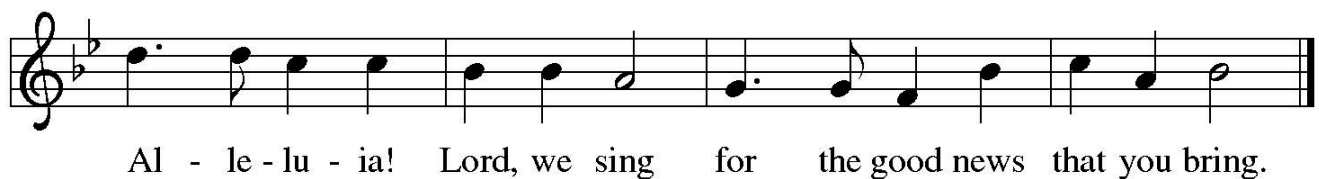
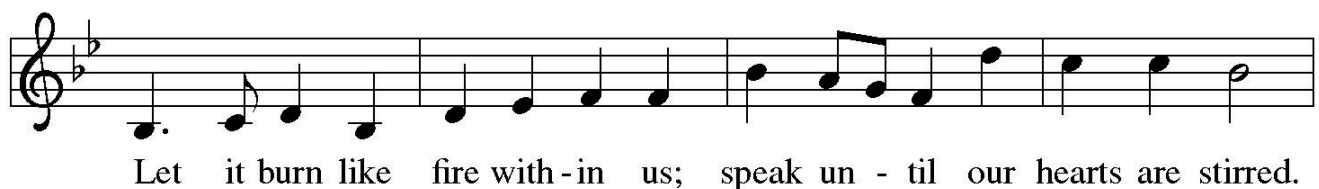
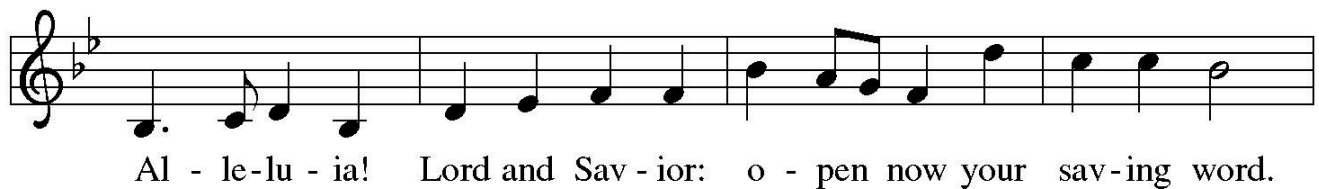
3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body

in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. 6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7 ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8 the encourager, in encouragement; the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

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



***GOSPEL** **Matthew 16:13-20**

At a climactic point in Jesus' ministry, God reveals to Peter that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God," and Jesus responds with the promise of a church that will overcome the very gates of Hades.

P The holy gospel according to Matthew

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

3 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Pastor Alex

SERMON

Pastor Alex

*HYMN OF THE DAY "Built on a Rock"

ELW #652

*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.

God, our rock, you are the foundation on which the church is built.
Strengthen and encourage your faithful people everywhere they gather,
that they boldly proclaim your word of life to all the world.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You spoke and all creation came into being. Field and forest, wetland
and wilderness—all reveal your glory. Sustain and nourish your creation
especially Burd Run, Swatara Creek, and the Susquehanna River. Teach
us to be wise stewards of all you have made.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You bring deliverance to nations and peoples. Come to the aid of
nations experiencing war, conflict, disease, famine, and disaster
especially Iran, Lebanon, Ukraine, and those places in the United States

impacted by wildfires, and floods. Guide the work of relief agencies and peacemaking organizations. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You regard the lowly and hear us when we cry out to you. Be present among all who struggle with addiction, housing insecurity, incarceration, and mental illness, that they know they are not alone. Hear our prayers for all in need this day, especially *Don Alsedek, Connie Barner, Rachel Benkovic, Rose Hoover, Samson Kennedy, Bernie Kunz, and Rob Lipsitt.* Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You draw together people with differing gifts. Lift up the many and varied gifts and talents of this congregation and strengthen the bonds of fellowship that all may be united as the body of Christ.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Your steadfast love endures forever. We give thanks for the faithful who died in the hope of this promise. Strengthen us in faith until the day we join them at your eternal banquet. 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

"Jesus Messiah"

Caity Hawkins

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
bless - ing. 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.

The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

*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

"Give Me Jesus" ***

ELW #770

"Rock of Ages" ***

ELW #623

*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 “We All Are One in Mission”

ELW #576

*DISMISSAL

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

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Juliet Mitton

We appreciate Juliet Mitton and Caity Hawkins for sharing their 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 - "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less" ELW #596 words - Edward Mote music - William B. Bradbury THE SOLID ROCK PUBLIC DOMAIN

Gospel Acclamation - "Alleluia! Lord and Savior" p. 205, setting 10
Hymn of the Day - "Built on a Rock" ELW #652 words - N. Grundtvig, tr. Carl Doving @1958 SBH Augsburg Fortress music - Ludvig Lindeman PUBLIC DOMAIN ***

Special Music - "Jesus Messiah" words & music - Daniel Carson, Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash & Jesse Reeves @2008 Rising Springs Music, Capitol CMG Publishing CCLI Songs #5183443 Caity Hawkins, solo

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

"Give Me Jesus" ELW #770 words & music - African American Spiritual arr. @2006 Augsburg Fortress PUBLIC DOMAIN ***

"Rock of Ages" ELW #623 words - Augustus Toplady music - Thomas Hastings TOPLADY PUBLIC DOMAIN ***

Sending hymn - "We All Are One in Mission" ELW #576 words - Rusty Edwards music - Finnish folk tune @1986 Hope Publishing Co., arr.@2006 Augsburg Fortress

*** 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 August and September

8/30/26 - Pentecost 14 - Hymn sing

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

Worship Participants for August 23, 2026

Presiding Minister	Pastor Alex Sheppard-Witt
Music Director	Stephen Strauss
Worship Assistant	Brian Keyser
Musician	Juliet Mitton
Lector	Doris Reynolds

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

ALTAR VASES and CENTERPIECE: Presented to the Glory of God by Don and Carol Dell and Frank and Sheryl Keyser to honor Bethany and Brady Keyser on their 25th birthday, the birthday anniversary of Don's brother Neil Dell, and the twin's Great Grandma, Ruth Keyser who all share a birthday on August 26th.

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.