

# St. Paul's Lutheran Church

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*Gathering at St. John's Episcopal Church  
1676 S. Belcher Rd., Clearwater, FL 33764*

**Sunday, August 17, 2025  
Lectionary 20, Year C**

## **Introduction**

The word of God is a refining fire. Jesus is the great divide in human history. He invites our undivided attention and devotion. Today in worship we are surrounded by a great "cloud of witnesses." In the word and in holy communion we are invited yet again to look to Jesus, "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

## **Welcome**

**Prelude: "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" – Bach**

## **Confession and Forgiveness**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism,  
as the presiding minister begins.*

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

**Amen.**

Baptized into Christ, let us confess our sin.

Merciful God,

**you free us to love others,  
but we neglect our neighbors and follow our own way.  
You lead us by the Spirit of joy and peace,  
but we turn away from the abundant life you offer.  
You surround us with patience, kindness, and generosity,  
but we grow weary in doing what is right.  
In your mercy, forgive us. Do not give up on us.  
Heal us, break our bonds, and show us the path of life. Amen.**

You belong to Christ Jesus  
 and you are God's children through faith.  
 In the cross of ✠ Christ,  
 and through the power of the Holy Spirit,  
 your sins are forgiven.  
 Clothed with Christ, you are a new creation.  
**Amen.**

### Gathering Hymn: All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!



- 1 All hail the pow'r of Je - sus' name! Let an - gels pros - trate fall;
- 2 O seed of Is - rael's cho - sen race now ran - somed from the fall,
- 3 Hail him, you heirs of Da - vid's line, whom Da - vid Lord did call—
- 4 Sin - ners, whose love can ne'er for - get the worm-wood and the gall,



bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem and crown him Lord of all.  
 hail him who saves you by his grace and crown him Lord of all.  
 the God in - car - nate, man di - vine—and crown him Lord of all.  
 go spread your tro - phies at his feet and crown him Lord of all.



Bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem and crown him Lord of all.  
 Hail him who saves you by his grace and crown him Lord of all.  
 The God in - car - nate, man di - vine—and crown him Lord of all.  
 Go spread your tro - phies at his feet and crown him Lord of all.

Text: Edward Perronet, 1726–1792, sts. 1–4; J. Rippon, A Selection of Hymns, 1787, sts. 5–6  
 Music: CORONATION, Oliver Holden, 1765–1844

## Prayer of the Day

O God, judge eternal, you love justice and hate oppression, and you call us to share your zeal for truth. Give us courage to take our stand with all victims of bloodshed and greed, and, following your servants and prophets, to look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## First Reading: Jeremiah 23:23-29

*Because Jeremiah preaches the unpopular message of God's judgment, he suffers rejection. Today's reading distinguishes between the true prophet, like Jeremiah, who speaks God's word, and the false prophet who misleads the people through dreams. One is like wheat; the other like worthless straw.*

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

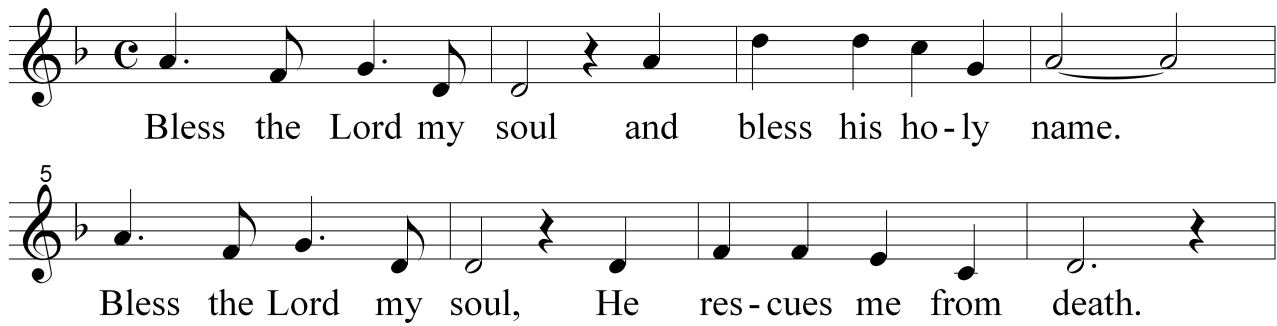
<sup>23</sup> Am I a God nearby, says the LORD, and not a God far off? <sup>24</sup> Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD. <sup>25</sup> I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, "I have dreamed! I have dreamed!" <sup>26</sup> How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophesy lies and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart? <sup>27</sup> They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. <sup>28</sup> Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the LORD. <sup>29</sup> Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

# Bless The Lord

TAIZE



## Psalm: Psalm 82

Reader: <sup>1</sup>God stands to charge the divine council assembled,  
giving judgment in the midst of the gods:

**All: <sup>2</sup>“How long will you judge unjustly,  
and show favor to the wicked?”**

Reader: <sup>3</sup>Save the weak and the orphan;  
defend the humble and needy;

**All: <sup>4</sup>rescue the weak and the poor;  
deliver them from the power of the wicked.**

**Sung: Bless the Lord, my soul....**

Reader: <sup>5</sup>They do not know, neither do they understand;  
they wander about in darkness;  
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

**All: <sup>6</sup>Now I say to you, ‘You are gods,  
and all of you children of the Most High;**

Reader: <sup>7</sup>nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,  
and fall like any prince.’”

**All: <sup>8</sup>Arise, O God, and rule the earth,  
for you shall take all nations for your own.**

**Sung: Bless the Lord, my soul....**

## Second Reading: Hebrews 11:29—12:2

*The author of Hebrews presents us with rich stories of faith. In a long list of biblical heroes, we find examples of trust in God that enabled them to face the trials of life faithfully. In addition to this “cloud of witnesses,” we have Jesus, the perfect model of faithful endurance.*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Hebrews.

<sup>29</sup> By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. <sup>30</sup> By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. <sup>31</sup> By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

<sup>32</sup> And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup> who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. <sup>35</sup> Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. <sup>36</sup> Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were stoned to death; they were sawn in two; they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented <sup>38</sup> of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and holes in the ground.

<sup>39</sup> Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, <sup>40</sup> since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

<sup>12:1</sup> Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Halle, Halle, Hallelujah



Music: Caribbean traditional

## Gospel: Luke 12:49-56

*Jesus delivers harsh words about the purifying and potentially divisive effects of obedience to God's call. The way of the cross often leads followers to encounter hostility and rejection, even from those they love.*

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] <sup>49</sup>“I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already ablaze! <sup>50</sup>I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! <sup>51</sup>Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! <sup>52</sup>From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; <sup>53</sup>they will be divided:

father against son  
and son against father,  
mother against daughter  
and daughter against mother,  
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law  
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

<sup>54</sup>He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, ‘It is going to rain,’ and so it happens. <sup>55</sup>And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. <sup>56</sup>You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ.**

## Sermon: Pr. Anne Harman

### Hymn of the Day: God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me – ACS 1084



1 God, be the love to search and keep me; God, be the prayer to  
2 Bind to my-self the name of Ho - ly, great cloud of wit - ness -  
3 Bright-ness of sun and glow of moon-light, flash - ing of light - ning,  
4 Walk - ing be-hind to hem my jour - ney, go - ing a - head to  
5 Christ in the eyes of all who see me, Christ in the ears that



move my voice; God, be the strength to now up - hold me:  
es en - fold; proph - ets, a - pos - tles, an - gels wit - ness:  
strength of wind, depth of the sea to soil of plan - et:  
light my way, and from be - neath, a - bove, and all ways:  
hear my voice, Christ in the hearts of all who know me:



O Christ, sur - round me; O Christ, sur - round me.

Text: Richard Bruxvoort Colligan, b. 1967

Music: GREEN TYLER, Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

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### Apostle's Creed

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**

*Please respond to each invocation:* God of grace, **your mercy is great.**

## **A Sign of Peace and Reconciliation**

**Pastor:**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## **THE LORD'S SUPPER**

### **Offering**

All that we have, physically and spiritually comes from God.  
Our offering, of time, talent and treasure is a response to our awareness  
that God is the creator of all things and that we are redeemed  
through life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.  
Your support of this ministry and the faith life of this community is appreciated.

### **Hymn: Faith Begins by Letting Go**

Faith begins by letting go,  
giving up what had seemed sure,  
taking risks and pressing on,  
though the way feels less secure:  
pilgrimage both right and odd,  
trusting all our life to God.

Faith endures by holding on,  
keeping mem'ry's roots alive  
so that hope may bear its fruit;  
promise-fed, our souls will thrive,  
not through merit we possess  
but by God's great faithfulness.

Faith matures by reaching out,  
stretching minds, enlarging hearts,  
sharing struggles, living prayer,  
binding up the broken parts;  
till we find the commonplace  
ripe with witness to God's grace.



## Offering Prayer

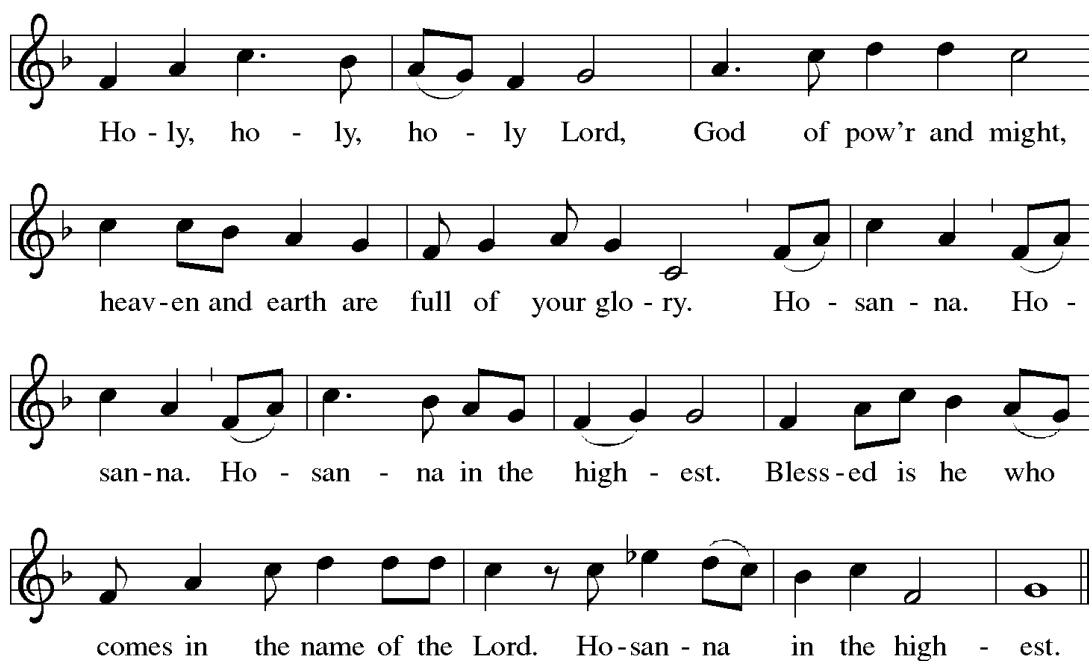
Creator God,  
in your wisdom you bring forth all that is good  
and the harvest is plentiful.  
Strengthen us at your table with these gifts of the earth  
and our labor,  
that we may work for the good of all;  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior.  
**Amen.**

## Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.  
**And also 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.**



The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san-na. 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 - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san-na. 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.



Christ has died. Christ is ris - en. Christ will come a - gain.



A - men, a - men, a - men.

## LORD'S PRAYER

**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

*We believe that Holy Communion is the body and blood of Jesus. In this sacrament we are invited to have a personal experience of Christ's presence. This is the Lord's table. All who desire to be in relationship with Christ are welcome to receive.*

We receive communion using bread and wine. If you need to receive a gluten free host, please ask the communion minister. For those who prefer to receive grape juice rather than wine you will find white grape juice in the center of the trays as communion is given. If you have a question, please ask the minister as you receive. The bread and wine should be consumed here in the church before you return to your seat. If for some reason, you are unable to consume either the bread or wine please bring what was not consumed to the ushers or the pastor as soon as the service is completed.

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.

## Communion: In The Singing ELW 466

1 In the sing - ing, in the si - lence, in the hands ex - spect - ant, o - pen,  
2 In the ques - tion, in the an - swer, in the mo - ment of ac - cept - ance,  
in the bless - ing, in the break - ing, in your pres - ence at this ta - ble,  
in the heart's cry, in the heal - ing, in the cir - cle of your peo - ple,  
*Refrain*  
Je - sus Christ, Je - sus Christ, be the wine of grace;  
Je - sus Christ, Je - sus Christ, be the bread of peace.

Text: Shirley Erena Murray, b. 1931

Music: BREAD OF PEACE, Carlton R. Young, b. 1926

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## What is the World Like – ACS 1047



1 What is the world like when God's will is  
 2 What is the world like when God's will is  
 3 What is the world like when God's will is  
 4 What is the world like when God's will is  
 5 These are the sto - ries that Je - sus im -



done? Mus - tard seeds grow more than  
 done? Wit - ness the wan - der - ing  
 done? No more is neigh - bor just  
 done? Read - y for feast - ing, we  
 parts, filled with the Spir - it who



we can con - ceive: roots thread the  
 child com - ing home; watch as the  
 al - ly or friend; peace thrives in  
 watch through the night, tend - ing our  
 joins us as one. Born through our



soil; branch - es reach for the sun.  
 par - ent breaks in - to a run.  
 plac - es where once there was none.  
 lamps till the new day's be - gun.  
 voic - es, our hands, and our hearts,



This is how God moves us each to be - lieve.  
 This is how God longs for us when we roam.  
 This is how God works when ri - val - ries end.  
 This is how God read - ies us for the light.  
 this is a new world where God's will is done.

Text: Adam M. L. Tice, b. 1979

Music: NEW WORLD, Sally Ann Morris, b. 1952

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## **Prayer after Communion**

Mothering God,  
you gathered us to your table  
and we drank deeply of your grace.  
Send us out by your Spirit  
to love our neighbors as ourselves  
and proclaim your love in Jesus' name.  
**Amen.**

## **Announcements:**

### **Blessing**

The love of God abound in you;  
the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ fill your hearts;  
and the life of the Spirit  
✠ bless you and give you peace.  
**Amen.**

### **Dismissal**

Go in peace. Live by the Spirit.  
**Thanks be to God.**

# Hymn: Here On Jesus Christ I Will Stand – ACS 1024

*Refrain*

*Kwa - ke* *Ye - su na - si - ma - ma,* *ndi - ye*  
 Here on Je - sus Christ I will stand. He's the

*mwam - ba ni sa - la - ma.* *Ndi - ye mwam - ba ni sa - la -*  
 sol - id rock of my life. He's the sol - id rock of my

*ma, ndi - ye mwam - ba ni sa - la - ma.*  
 life. He's the sol - id rock of my life.

1 There's no oth - er place I can hide till the  
 2 It is not the work of my hands that has  
 3 When my days on this earth are done, and I

storm that rag - es sub - sides. My voice cries to God from the  
 washed a - way all my sins. I'm re - deemed, and all of my  
 stand at God's ho - ly throne, my heart will not have an - y

*Refrain*

flood, and I'm saved be - cause of his blood.  
 days, Je - sus Christ will be my heart's praise.  
 fear; in Christ's righ - teous - ness I am here.

Text: Kenyan hymn; adapt. Greg Scheer, b. 1966

Music: KWAKE YESU NASIMAMA, Kenyan melody; adapt. Greg Scheer

Text © 2007 East African Annual Conference, admin. General Board of Global Ministries, GBGMusik

English adapt. and arr. © 2007 Greg Scheer, admin. General Board of Global Ministries, GBGMusik

## **Announcements:**

**If you have not received an August Newsletter,  
please pick up one on our table in the Narthex.**

Some upcoming events to highlight:

We are updating the printed congregation directory. Please check your entry after worship today or call Katie in the office with changes.

August 20 – Silver Foxes – Rumba Island Grill

Wednesday, August 27 – Book Club – The Jackel’s Mistress

Wednesday, August 27 – Service of Healing & Holy Communion

Sunday, August 31 – Potluck – Just because!

“Pop-Up” Food Giveaway at St. Paul’s Property – 407 S. Saturn – Every Thursday from 11:00 – 12:45. Please reach out to Sandy Weaver or Mary Pheasant for more information.

Quilt Ministry meets at St. John’s Hall on Thursday, August 7 & August 21 at 9:00AM . All are welcome to participate. For more information, reach out to Rhona Diamond.

Grief Forum – A new group will begin in September. Contact Becca Bass for more information.

# St. Paul's Lutheran Church

*Gathering at St. John's Episcopal 1676 S. Belcher Rd., Clearwater, FL*

A Reconciling in Christ Congregation

*St. Paul's Lutheran Church, a Reconciling in Christ congregation, embodies God's love, and promise of salvation through faith in Christ by extending inclusion and welcome to all.*

We welcome the full, active participation of all who worship and minister with us. If you are interested in learning more about Jesus, God's life and action in the world and our lives, the Lutheran faith, or this congregation and how you can be more involved, please reach out to Pastor Anne.

Phone Number: 727- 446-7718

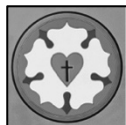
Email: [office@stpaulsclearwater.org](mailto:office@stpaulsclearwater.org)

Website: <https://www.stpaulsclearwater.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/st.paulslutheranchurch.clearwater.fl>



To reach Pastor Anne  
[pastoranneharman@gmail.com](mailto:pastoranneharman@gmail.com)



## St. Paul's Spirituality Center

an outreach ministry of St. Paul's Lutheran Church



Florida-Bahamas Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.



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