

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

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

**Sunday, September 7, 2025
Lectionary 23, Year C**

Introduction

Called to contemplate the cost of discipleship, we might be helped by translating Paul's request to Philemon into our prayer of the day: Refresh my heart in Christ. Strengthened by the company and forgiveness of Christ in holy communion and recalling God's grace in remembrance of baptism, we can be strengthened in this hour to "choose life"—to choose life in God as our own.

Welcome:

Prelude: Instrumental on Take O, Take Me As I Am

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, 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.

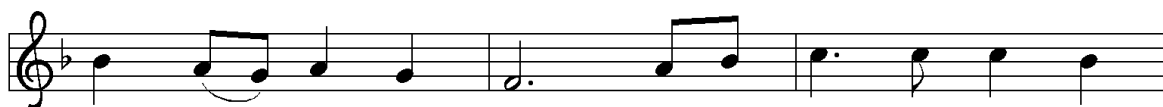
Hymn: All Are Welcome



1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe - ly
 2 Let us build a house where proph-ets speak, and words are strong and
 3 Let us build a house where love is found in wa - ter, wine and
 4 Let us build a house where hands will reach be - yond the wood and
 5 Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and vi - sions



live, a place where saints and chil - dren tell how
 true, where all God's chil - dren dare to seek to
 wheat: a ban - quet hall on ho - ly ground where
 stone to heal and strength - en, serve and teach, and
 heard and loved and trea - sured, taught and claimed as



hearts learn to for - give. Built of hopes and dreams and
 dream God's reign a - new. Here the cross shall stand as
 peace and jus - tice meet. Here the love of God, through
 live the Word they've known. Here the out - cast and the
 words with - in the Word. Built of tears and cries and



vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of
 wit - ness and as sym - bol of God's grace; here as one we
 Je - sus, is re - vealed in time and space; as we share in
 strang-er bear the im - age of God's face; let us bring an
 laugh-ter, prayers of faith and songs of grace, let this house pro -



Christ shall end di - vi - sions:
 claim the faith of Je - sus:
 Christ the feast that frees us: All are wel - come,
 end to fear and dan - ger:
 claim from floor to raf - ter:



all are wel - come, all are wel - come in this place.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
 Music: TWO OAKS, Marty Haugen
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Prayer of the Day

Direct us, O Lord God, in all our doings with your continual help, that in all our works, begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

¹⁵“See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. ¹⁶If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. ¹⁷But if your heart turns away and you do not hear but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, ¹⁸I declare to you today that you shall certainly perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him, for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 1

Take, O Take Me As I Am

John Bell

Key of D

D A/D G/D D Emin7/DD Em7/D A/D D A/D G/B Bmin Emin/GG/B Em7/D

Take, o take me as I am. Sum - mon out what I shall be.

5 G G A7/G G A7/G D/F# Bm Emin D/F# Asus4 A

Set your seal up - on my heart, and live in me.

Women: Happy are they who have not walked in the council of the wicked,
nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats of the scornful!
Their delight is in the law of the LORD,
and they meditate on God's teaching day and night.

Men: They are like trees planted by streams of water,
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither;
everything they do shall prosper.
It is not so with the wicked;
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.

Sung: Take, o take me as I am.... (Sung 1x)

ALL: Therefore, the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes,
nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.
For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked shall be destroyed.

Sung: Take, o take me as I am.... (Sung 1x)

Second Reading: Philemon 1-21

A reading from the letter of Paul to Philemon.

¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,
To our beloved coworker Philemon, ² to our sister Apphia, to our fellow soldier Archippus, and to the church in your house:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I thank my God always when I mention you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. ⁶ I pray that the partnership of your faith may become effective as you comprehend all the good that we share in Christ. ⁷ I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

⁸ For this reason, though I am more than bold enough in Christ to command you to do the right thing, ⁹ yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. ¹⁰ I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment.

¹¹ Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me. ¹² I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. ¹³ I wanted to keep him with me so that he might minister to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel, ¹⁴ but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. ¹⁵ Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for the long term, ¹⁶ no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to me. ¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. ²⁰ Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹ Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah



Music: Caribbean traditional

Gospel: Luke 14:25-33

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to You, O Lord.

²⁵ Now large crowds were traveling with [Jesus], and he turned and said to them,
²⁶ “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹ Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he cannot, then while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. ³³ So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon: Pr. Anne Harman

Hymn of the Day: Will You Come and Follow Me - ELW 798



1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call
 2 "Will you leave your - self be - hind if I but call
 3 "Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call
 4 "Will you love the you you hide if I but call
 5 Lord, your sum - mons ech - oes true when you but call



your name? Will you go where you don't
 your name? Will you care for cruel and
 your name? Will you set the pris - 'ners
 your name? Will you quell the fear in -
 my name. Let me turn and fol - low



know and nev - er be the same?
 kind and nev - er be the same?
 free and nev - er be the same?
 side and nev - er be the same?
 you and nev - er be the same.



Will you let my love be shown, will you let my
 Will you risk the hos - tile stare, should your life at -
 Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as -
 Will you use the faith you've found to re - shape the
 In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and



name be known, will you let my life be
 tract or scare? Will you let me an - swer
 this un - seen, and ad - mit to what I
 world a - round, through my sight and touch and
 foot - steps show. Thus I'll move and live and



grown in you and you in me?"
 pray'r in you and you in me?"
 mean in you and you in me?"
 sound in you and you in me?"
 grow in you and you in me.

Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949

Music: KELVINGROVE, Scottish traditional

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Apostles' 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 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, **receive our prayer***

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.

Be known to us, Lord Je - sus, in the break - ing of the bread.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Be known to us, Lord Je - sus, in the break - ing of the bread.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Offering Prayer

Lord of the harvest,

we return to you a portion of what you have given to us.

**Turn us to set our hope not on the uncertainty of riches,
but on you, who richly provides for us.**

**Multiply what we have gathered
to bless all who are suffering and in need,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Amen.

Dialogue

The Lord be with you.

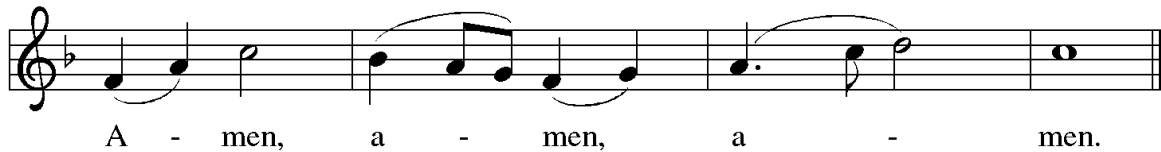
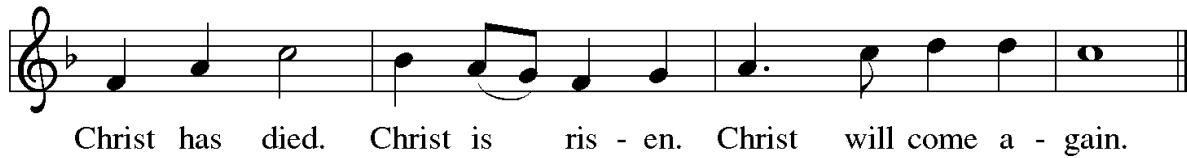
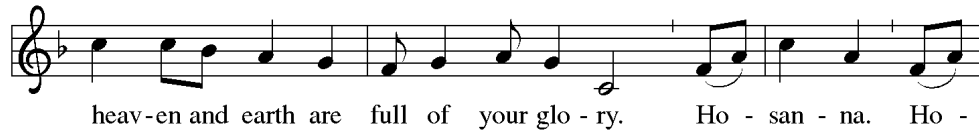
ALL: And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

ALL: We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

ALL: It is right to give our thanks and praise.



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.**

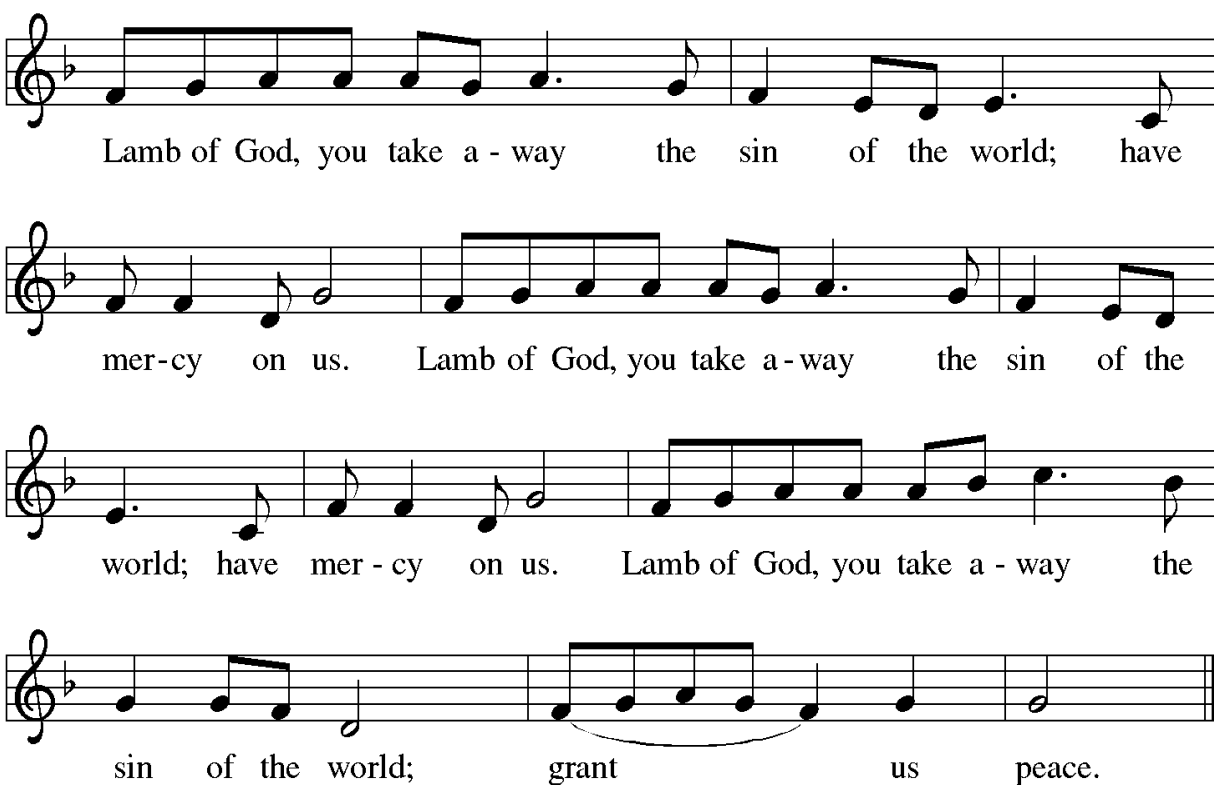
**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**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.



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: "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." The score ends with a double bar line.

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 Hymn: Bread of Life, Our Host and Meal - ELW 464



1 Bread of life, our host and meal, Je - sus, feed us.
 2 Bread now break and wine now pour, Je - sus, feed us.
 3 Grant for - give - ness in the feast— Je - sus, feed us—
 4 Thank you for this gift we share. Je - sus, feed us.



Christ, by faith, to see and feel, feed us with your love.
 Make us one, our hope re - store; feed us with your love.
 for the great - est and the least; feed us with your love.
 Save God's chil - dren ev - 'ry - where; feed us with your love.

Text: Ray Makeever, b. 1943; Rusty Edwards, b. 1955

Music: JESUS, FEED US, Ray Makeever

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**After the choir has gone to communion
until Pr. Anne is seated.**

Take, O Take Me As I Am

John Bell

Key of D

D A/D G/D D Emin7/DD Em7/D A/D D A/D G/B Bmin Emin/GG/B Em7/D

Take, o take me as I am. Sum - mon out what I shall be.

G G A7/G G A7/G D/F# Bm Emin D/F# Asus4 A

Set your seal up - on my heart, and live in me.

Prayer after Communion

O God,
through this meal you have strengthened us
and appointed us to be your servants.
Send us to do good and to share our possessions
with all in need.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Announcements

Blessing

The God of righteousness,
who gives justice to the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry,
who sets the prisoners free,
✠ bless you now and forever.
Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Choose life for yourself and others!
Thanks be to God.

Recessional Hymn: Light Dawns on a Weary World – ELW 726



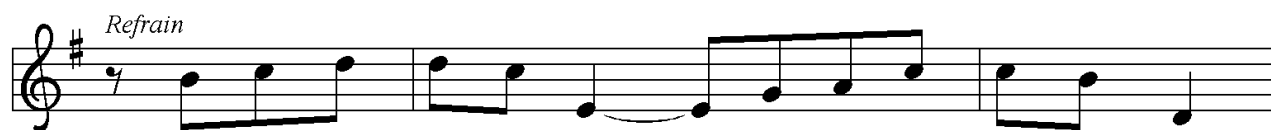
1 Light dawns on a wea - ry world when eyes be - gin to
 2 Love grows in a wea - ry world when hun - gry hearts find
 3 Hope blooms in a wea - ry world when crea-tures, once for -



see all peo - ple's dig - ni - ty. Light dawns on a
 bread and chil - dren's dreams are fed. Love grows in a
 lorn, find wil - der - ness re - born. Hope blooms in a



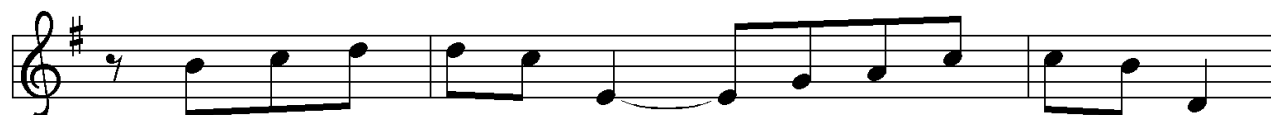
wea - ry world: the prom-ised day of jus - tice comes.
 wea - ry world: the prom-ised feast of plen - ty comes.
 wea - ry world: the prom-ised green of E - den comes.



The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs;



the hills and moun-tains shall break forth with sing - ing!



We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace,



as all the world in won - der ech - oes sha - lom.

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

Music: TEMPLE OF PEACE, William P. Rowan, b. 1951

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Announcements:

Newsletters will be distributed on the way out of church today!


Taizé Prayer – Wednesday at 7:15

Silver Foxes and WELCA Bible Study – Wednesday, September 17

“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, September 4 & September 18 at 9:00AM . All are welcome to participate. For more information, reach out to Rhona Diamond.

A poster for a Taizé Prayer service. At the top left is a circular logo with a heart and cross. To its right, the text reads "St. Paul's Spirituality Center" and "an outreach ministry of St. Paul's Lutheran Church". The main title "Taizé Prayer" is in a large, white, serif font against a dark background. Below it, the quote "Ours Were the Grievs He Bore" is written in a cursive script. The date and time "Wednesday, September 10 - 7:15 PM" are in a bold, sans-serif font. The background features a silhouette of a person carrying a cross over their shoulders, set against a landscape with a horizon line. At the bottom right, the text "St. Paul's Lutheran Church" is followed by "gathering at St. John's Episcopal Church" and the address "1676 S. Belcher Rd. Clearwater, FL 33764".

 **St. Paul's Spirituality Center**
an outreach ministry of St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Taizé Prayer

"Ours Were the Grievs He Bore"

Wednesday, September 10 - 7:15 PM

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
gathering at St. John's Episcopal Church
1676 S. Belcher Rd. Clearwater, FL 33764

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

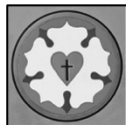
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To reach Pastor Anne
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St. Paul's Spirituality Center
an outreach ministry of St. Paul's Lutheran Church



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



From sundaysandseasons.com.

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