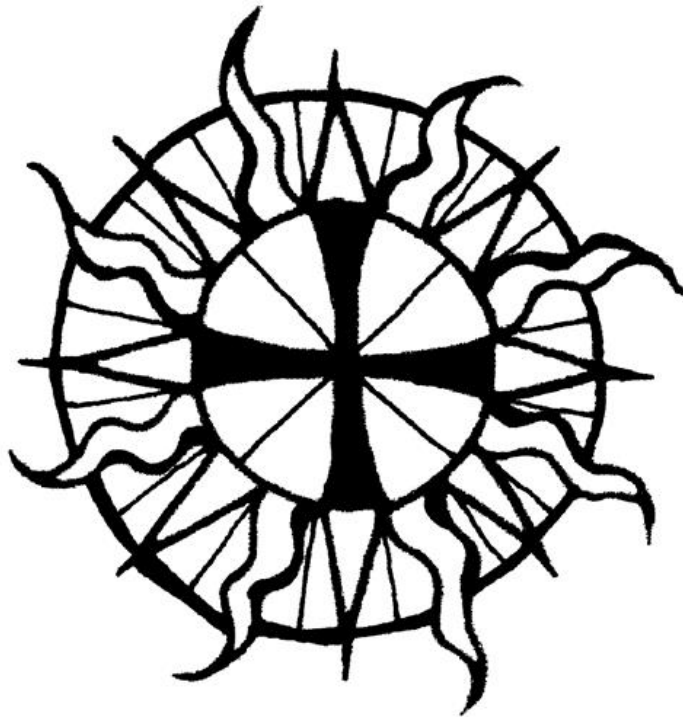


St. Paul's Lutheran Church

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

**Sunday, September 6, 2026
Lectionary 23, Year A
Season of Creation**



Introduction

Conflict is a part of relationships and life in community. Jesus' words in today's gospel are often used in situations having to do with church discipline. The prophet Ezekiel tells of warning the wicked to turn from their ways, and Paul reminds us that love is the fulfilling of the law. We gather in the name of Christ, assured that he is present among us with gifts of peace and reconciliation.

September 1 - October 4 is celebrated as the Season of Creation by many faith groups and congregations around the world. This year, St. Paul's will join in this effort to bring prayerful awareness of the dire need to protect the environment, and seek a more just and peaceful use of God's creation.



Living Water
Season of Creation 2026

Immersion in Living Water
EZEKIEL 47:9, 12

Welcome:

Reader:

As we gather for worship, we join Christians around the world in celebrating the Season of Creation. This sacred time invites us to give thanks for God's gift of the earth, to reflect on our place within creation, and to renew our commitment to care for all that God has made. In a world facing environmental challenges, we remember that creation is not simply a resource to use, but a gift to cherish and a community to which we belong. May this season deepen our gratitude, inspire our stewardship, and draw us closer to the Creator whose love sustains all life. Amen.

Greeting

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

Pastor:

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
who pours love into our hearts
and healing upon the earth.

Amen.

Call to Worship - Ezekiel 47: 9,12

Pastor:

The Lord God, he brought me back to the entrance of the temple; there water was flowing from below the entryway of the temple toward the east.

Reader:

Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish once these waters reach there. It will become fresh, and everything will live where the river goes.

ALL: On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing.”

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Reader:

Water! Water! We praise you, O God, for water—
The Florida Aquifer, The Gulf, Tampa Bay,
Lake Tarpon and Lake Seminole,
the rain that nourishes animals and plants,
the water for drinking and bathing.
We praise you, O God, for water.

We praise you, O God, for water.

We praise you, O God, for our water stories—
a flood that cleansed the earth,
the sea that drowned the enemy,
a river that healed leprosy.
We praise you, O God, for water.

We praise you, O God, for water.

We remember the waters of Jesus—
baptized in the Jordan River,
calming the Sea of Galilee,
drinking from Jacob's Well,
healing at the pool of Bethesda,
washing the disciples' feet.
We praise you, O God, for water.

We praise you, O God, for water.

We praise you, O God, for this font,
for through this water
you have birthed us into the family of Christ,
bathed us in forgiveness,
and enlivened us in the Spirit.
We praise you, O God, for baptism.

We praise you, O God, for baptism.

O God, you are the Ocean, sustaining this earth.
O God, you are the River, saving us from death.
O God, you are the Fountain, granting us health and well-being.
We praise you, O God,
today, tomorrow, forever.
Amen, and amen.

Amen, and amen.

The assembly is sprinkled with the water of life

Hymn: Crashing Waters at Creation - ELW 455



- 1 Crash - ing wa - ters at cre - a - tion, or - dered by the Spir - it's breath,
- 2 Part - ing wa - ter stood and trem - bled as the cap - tives passed on through,
- 3 Cleans - ing wa - ter once at Jor - dan closed a - round the one fore - told,
- 4 Liv - ing wa - ter, nev - er end - ing, quench the thirst and flood the soul.



first to wit - ness day's be - gin - ning from the bright - ness of night's death.
wash - ing off the chains of bond - age— chan - nel to a life made new.
o - pened to re - veal the glo - ry ev - er new and ev - er old.
Well - spring, source of life e - ter - nal, drench our dry - ness, make us whole.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993

Music: STUTTGART, attr. Christian F. Witt, 1660–1716; adapt. Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805–1876

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Prayer of the Day

Pastor:

O Lord God, enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy. Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Ezekiel 33:7-11

God appointed Ezekiel as a sentinel for the house of Israel. Ezekiel must faithfully convey God's warnings to the people. Remarkably, God—who is about to attack Jerusalem—gives a warning with the hope that repentance will make the attack unnecessary.

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel.

⁷ So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸ If I say to the wicked, “O wicked ones, you shall surely die,” and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. ⁹ But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

¹⁰ Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel: Thus you have said: “Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?” ¹¹ Say to them: As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 119:33-40

Reader: Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes,
and I shall keep it to the end.

**ALL: Give me understanding, and I shall keep your teaching;
I shall keep it with all my heart.**

Reader: Lead me in the path of your commandments,
for that is my desire.

**ALL: Incline my heart to your decrees
and not to unjust gain.**

Reader: Turn my eyes from beholding falsehood;
give me life in your way.

**ALL: Fulfill your promise to your servant,
which is for those who fear you.**

Reader: Turn away the reproach that I dread,
because your judgments are good.

**ALL: Behold, I long for your commandments;
by your righteousness enliven me.**

Second Reading: Romans 13:8-14

The obligation of Christians is to love one another and so fulfill the heart and goal of the law.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

¹¹ Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹² the night is far gone; the day is near. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³ let us walk decently as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in illicit sex and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Listen to the Word That God Has Spoken



Lis-ten to the word that God has spo-ken; lis-ten to the One who is



close at hand; lis - ten to the voice that be - gan cre - a - tion;



lis - ten e - ven if you don't un - der - stand.

Text: Anonymous, Canada

Music: LISTEN TO THE WORD, Anonymous, Canada; adapt. *Church Hymnary*, 4th Edition, 2005

Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

Jesus offers practical advice to his disciples on how individuals—and the church as a whole—should go about restoring relationships when one member has sinned against another.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵ “If your brother or sister sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If you are listened to, you have regained that one. ¹⁶ But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If that person refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon: Pr. Anne Harman

Hymn of the Day: Come to the Water of Life - ACS 955

1 All who are thirst - y for mer - cy, all who are thirst - y for
2 All who are thirst - y for heal - ing, all who are thirst - y for
3 All who are thirst - y for beau - ty, all who are thirst - y for
4 All who are thirst - y for jus - tice, all who are thirst - y for

love; all who are thirst - y for love, for mer - cy,
touch; all who are thirst - y for touch, for heal - ing,
truth; all who are thirst - y for truth, for beau - ty,
peace; all who are thirst - y for peace, for jus - tice,

come: come to the Wa - ter of life.
come: come to the Wa - ter of life.
come: come to the Wa - ter of life.
come: come to the Wa - ter of life.

Text: Ray Makeever, b. 1943

Music: WATER OF LIFE, Ray Makeever

Text and music © 1999 Ray Makeever, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Prayers of Intercession

Please respond to each petition with the words, “Your mercy is great.”

Sign of Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

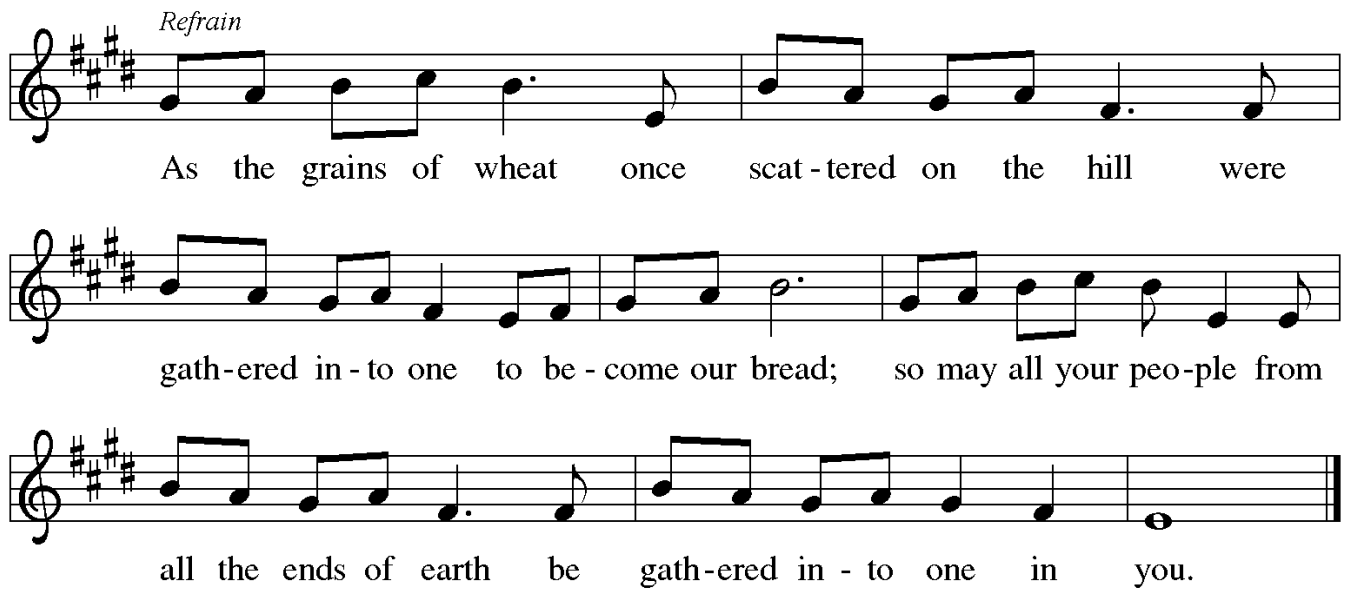
Please be seated.

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: As the Grains of Wheat - ELW 465

Refrain



As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were
gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread; so may all your peo-ple from
all the ends of earth be gath-ered in - to one in you.

1 As this cup of bless-ing is shared with-in our midst,
2 Let this be a fore-taste of all that is to come when

Refrain



may we share the pres-ence of your love.
all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

Text: Didache, 2nd cent.; Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: AS THE GRAINS, Marty Haugen

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Offering Prayer

God of creation,
you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly.
All blessings are from you;
make us generous with what we have.
Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts
in service to you and in love to our neighbors,
today and always.
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.



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and
might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high-est, 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.



THE 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

Come to the banquet that makes us one!

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, grant us peace.

Hymn: Come Now, O Prince of Peace - ELW 247

O - so - sŏ o - so - sŏ, pyong - hwa - ŭi - im - gŭm
1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.
u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sŏ.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope
Music: OSOSŎ, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947
Text and music © Geonyong Lee

Teach Us To Love, To Till and Keep

Anne M. Harman



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Prayer after Communion

Sustaining God,
with this bread and cup,
you nourish us with mercy and abundant life.
By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world.
Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love,
following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.
Amen.

Announcements

Litany of Creation & Blessing

This litany is inspired by the poem in Genesis 1.

Glory to you, O God:
you speak a word of power,
and so you create the world.
We praise you, O God:
We praise you, O God.

For the Spirit hovering to bring forth life,
for the earth ordered from chaos,
and for light and dark,
we bless you, O God:
We bless you, O God.

For the cosmos beyond our earth,
for the sky above our heads,
and for the cycle of evening and morning,
we exalt you, O God:

We exalt you, O God.

For the seas, the lakes, and the rivers,
for the land with its mountains and plains,
and for the trees, the plants, and their fruits,
we magnify you, O God:

We magnify you, O God.

For the sun to rule the day,
for the moon to brighten the night,
and for the shining stars,
we extol you, O God:

We extol you, O God.

For the fish in the sea,
for the birds of the air,
and for the monsters in the deep,
we glorify you, O God:

We glorify you, O God.

For wild animals and creatures of all kinds,
for cattle and all livestock,
and for everything that creeps on the earth,
we adore you, O God:

We adore you, O God.

For humankind made in your image,
for setting us on your good earth,
and for providing us food to eat,
we worship you, O God:

We worship you, O God.

Bless us, your creatures.
Accept our praise,
and make us worthy of your marvelous creation.
We praise you, O God:

We praise you, O God.

Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving
and honor and power and might
be to you, our God, forever and ever.
Amen.

Amen.

Reprinted from *Pray, Praise, and Give Thanks: A Collection of Litanies, Laments, and Thanksgivings at Font and Table*
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The God of love
draw you into full accord and one mind,
in the body of Christ Jesus.

Amen.

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

Amen.

Dismissal

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn: Earth Is Full of Wit and Wisdom - ACS 1064



1 Earth is full of wit and wis - dom, sound-ing God's de - light-ed laugh,
2 Earth is full of wit and wis - dom, wo - ven in - to har - mo - ny.
3 Earth is full of wit and wis - dom: pen - guin, pla - ty - pus, and snail,



from the ti - ny ro - ly - po - ly to the tree - top - tall gi - raffe.
Ev - 'ry crea-ture has a pur - pose, ev - 'ry flow'r and bum - ble - bee.
cac - tus, sea slug, oak, and al - gae, from the mi - crobe to the whale.



All cre - a - tion sings in won - der; e - ven rocks and trees re - joice
Spi - der, hu - man, red - wood, geck - o, mon - key, chick - en, mouse, and snake
In this great and strange cre - a - tion, with a breath God gives us birth:



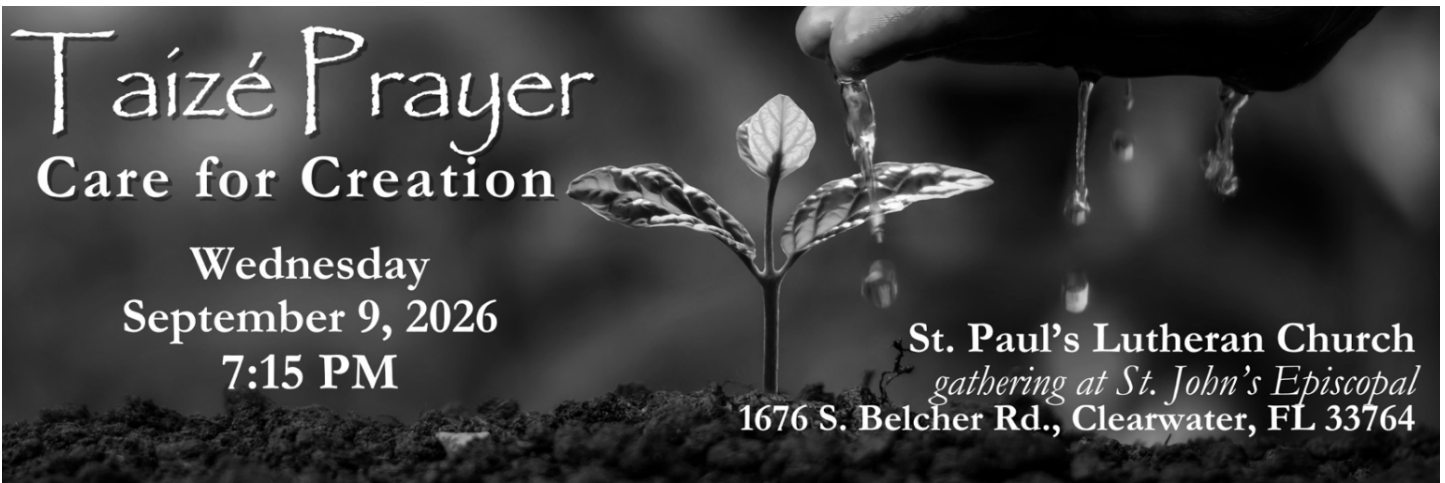
as they join the ring-ing cho - rus: ech - oes of our Mak - er's voice.
live with-in a sin - gle fab - ric: cloth that on - ly God could make.
born of soil to live as stew - ards, called to love and serve the earth.

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

Music: HOLY MANNA, W. Moore, *Columbian Harmony*, 1825; arr. hymnal version

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Arr. © 2003 Augsburg Fortress



Taizé Prayer

Care for Creation

Wednesday
September 9, 2026
7:15 PM

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



ELCA

God's work.
Our hands.



Living Water
Season of Creation 2026

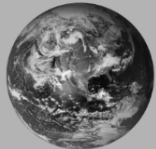
Immersion in Living Water
EZEKIEL 47:9, 12

Worship and Picnic at Eagle Lake Park

Liturgy Celebration of Creation in Christ
in recognition of the Season of Creation

Sunday, September 13 - 10:30 AM
Shelter #3

Chicken and drinks
will be provided.
Please bring a dish
to share.



Suncoast Conference Annual Meeting

Saturday, September 19

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

(Refreshments served at 8:30)

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

455 Missouri Ave., Largo, FL 33770

David Meeks is graduating from the School of Lay Ministry
on Saturday, September 19 - 4:00 PM

Hope Lutheran Church

250 Avenida Los Angeles

The Villages, FL 32162

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

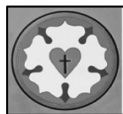
Email: office@stpaulsclearwater.org

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

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



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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