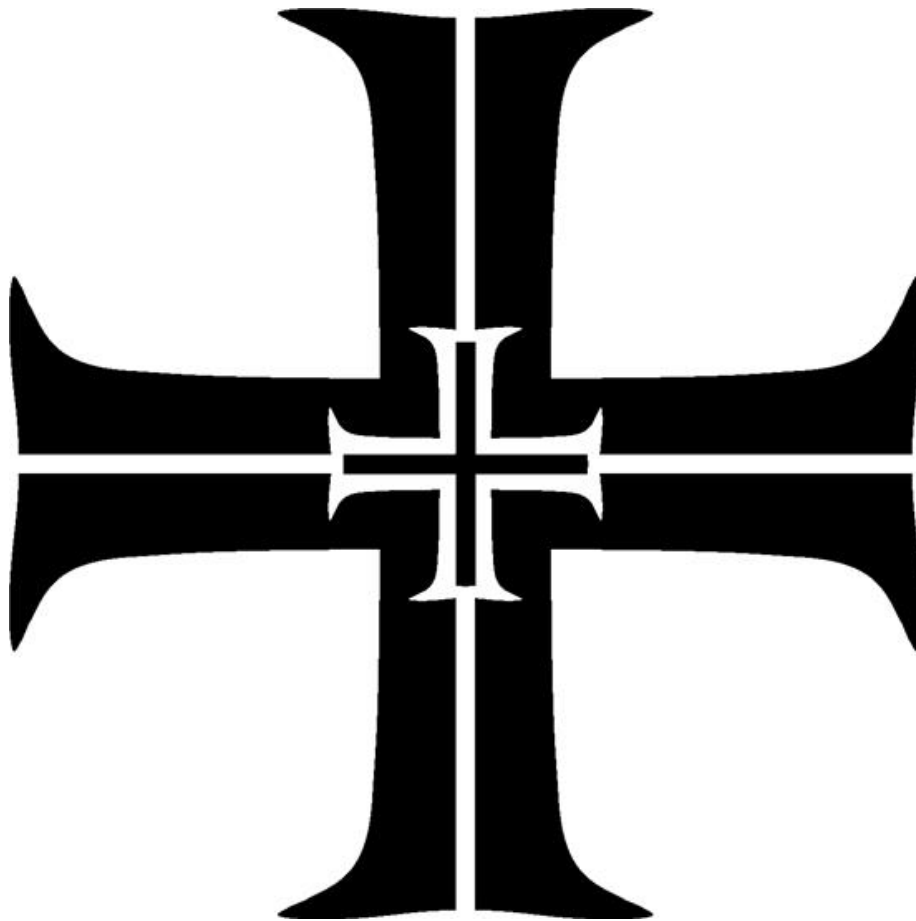


# St. Paul's Lutheran Church

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

**Sunday, September 14, 2025  
Holy Cross Day**



## **Introduction**

This festival, which originated in the fourth century, celebrates the triumph of the cross. Paul reminds us that Christ crucified is the power and wisdom of God. As Moses put a serpent on a pole to be a source of healing for the Israelites, we lift high the cross as the sign of our health and salvation. Each time we make the sign of the cross we remember our baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ.

## **Welcome**

### **Prelude: “A Quiet Blessing” – Vevenger**

## **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.**

Trusting in God’s mercy, let us confess our sin  
in the presence of God and of one another.

Merciful and loving God,

**we are your stiff-necked people.  
We trample on the needy.  
We grumble about your grace to others.  
We turn away from the poor.  
Have mercy on us and forgive our sins.  
Rejoice over us as ones who were lost  
and have been found.  
Amen.**

Even when we are faithless, God remains faithful.  
Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.  
You who were lost have been found.  
In the name of ✠ Jesus, your sins are forgiven!  
**Amen.**

## Hymn: Lord, Whose Love In Humble Service – ELW 712



1 Lord, whose love in hum-ble ser-vice bore the weight of hu-man need,  
2 Still your chil-dren wan-der home-less; still the hun-gry cry for bread;  
3 As we wor-ship, grant us vi-sion, till your love's re-veal-ing light  
4 Called by wor-ship to your ser-vice, forth in your dear name we go,



who up-on the cross, for-sak-en, worked your mer-cy's per-fect deed:  
still the cap-tives long for free-dom; still in grief we mourn our dead.  
in its height and depth and great-ness dawns up-on our quick-ened sight,  
to the child, the youth, the a-ged, love in liv-ing deeds to show;



we, your ser-vants, bring the wor-ship not of voice a-lone, but heart;  
As you, Lord, in deep com-pas-sion healed the sick and freed the soul,  
mak-ing known the needs and bur-dens your com-pas-sion bids us bear,  
hope and health, good-will and com-fort, coun-sel, aid, and peace we give,



con-se-crat-ing to your pur-pose ev-'ry gift which you im-part.  
by your Spir-it send your pow-er to our world to make it whole.  
stir-ring us to ar-dent ser-vice, your a-bun-dant life to share.  
that your ser-vants, Lord, in free-dom may your mer-cy know and live.

Text: Albert F. Bayly, 1901–1984

Music: BEACH SPRING, *The Sacred Harp*, Philadelphia, 1844

Text © Oxford University Press

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ was lifted high upon the cross so that he might draw the whole world to himself. To those who look upon the cross, grant your wisdom, healing, and eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **First Reading: Numbers 21:4b-9**

*When the people spoke against God and Moses, the Lord sent poisonous snakes against them. Moses interceded for the people, and the Lord ordered him to erect a serpent of bronze on a pole. All who looked at it after having been bitten by a serpent were healed.*

A reading from the book of Numbers.

[From Mount Hor the Israelites set out,] <sup>4b</sup> but the people became discouraged on the way. <sup>5</sup> The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. <sup>7</sup> The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." <sup>9</sup> So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it upon a pole, and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm 78:1-2, 34-38

*God was their rock and the Most High God their redeemer.*

(Ps. 78:35)

**Lord God, You Love Us** Taize

Lord God, you love us, source of com - pas - sion.

The musical score is written for a Taize choir in 4/4 time, key of D major. The melody is on a treble clef staff, and the accompaniment is on a bass clef staff. The lyrics are: 'Lord God, you love us, source of com - pas - sion.'

Women: Hear my teaching, O my people;  
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

Men: I will open my mouth in a parable;  
I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.

Women: Whenever God slew them, they would seek God,  
and repent, and diligently search for God.

Men: They would remember that God was their rock,  
and the Most High God their redeemer.

Women: But they flattered God with their mouths  
and lied to God with their tongues.

Men: Yet God, being merciful,  
forgave their sins and did not destroy them;  
holding back anger many times  
and not giving way to wrath.

**Lord God, You Love Us** Taize

Lord God, you love us, source of com - pas - sion.

This is an identical copy of the musical score block above, featuring the same title, Taize attribution, musical notation, and lyrics.

## Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24

*At the heart of the Christian message is the word of the cross. This proclamation seems foolish to many because it reveals true divine power in the absolute weakness of Christ's crucifixion. True wisdom understands how ours is a God who suffers for and with humankind in the cross.*

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

<sup>18</sup> The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

<sup>20</sup> Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

<sup>21</sup> For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### Halle, Halle, Hallelujah



Music: Caribbean traditional

## **Gospel: John 3:13-17**

*After explaining to Nicodemus that one must be born of water and Spirit, Jesus speaks of being lifted up on the cross, with reference to the bronze serpent lifted up by Moses in the desert. Here the Son of God is revealed as the source of healing.*

The Holy Gospel according to John.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] <sup>13</sup>“No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup>“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup>“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ.**

**Sermon: Pr. Anne Harman**

# Hymn of the Day: Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song – ELW 808



1 *Jé - sus, je vou - drais te chan - ter sur ma rou - te;*  
 1 Lord Je - sus, you shall be my song as I jour - ney;  
 2 Lord Je - sus, I'll praise you as long as I jour - ney.  
 3 As long as I live, Je - sus, make me your ser - vant,  
 4 I fear in the dark and the doubt of my jour - ney;



*Jé - sus, je vou - drais t'an-non-cer à mes voi - sins par - tout,*  
 I'll tell ev - 'ry - bod - y a - bout you wher - ev - er I go:  
 May all of my joy be a faith - ful re - flec - tion of you.  
 to car - ry your cross and to share all your bur - dens and tears.  
 but cour - age will come with the sound of your steps by my side.



*car toi seul es la vie et la paix et l'a - mour:*  
 you a - lone are our life and our peace and our love.  
 May the earth and the sea and the sky join my song.  
 For you saved me by giv - ing your bod - y and blood.  
 And with all of the fam - 'ly you saved by your love,



*Jé - sus, je vou - drais te chan - ter sur ma rou - te.*  
 Lord Je - sus, you shall be my song as I jour - ney.  
 Lord Je - sus, I'll praise you as long as I jour - ney.  
 As long as I live, Je - sus, make me your ser - vant.  
 we'll sing to your dawn at the end of our jour - ney.

Text: Les Petites Soeurs de Jésus and L'Arche Community; tr. Stephen Somerville, b. 1931  
 Music: LES PETITES SOEURS, Les Petites Soeurs de Jésus and L'Arche Community  
 Text and music © 1987 Les Petites Soeurs de Jésus  
 Tr. © 1970 Stephen Somerville



## **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.

## Hymn: We Place upon Your Table, Lord – ELW 467



1 We place up - on your ta - ble, Lord, where you by  
2 With - in these sim - ple things there lie the height and  
3 Ac - cept them, Lord; they come from you; we take them



grace have bid us dine, these to - kens of our dai - ly  
depth of hu - man life: our pain and tears, our thoughts and  
hum - bly from your hand; put these your gifts to high - er



work, the food of life, the bread and wine.  
toils, our hopes and fears, our joy and strife.  
use: the ho - ly meal that you com - mand.

Text: M. F. C. Wilson, 1884–1944, alt.

Music: DISTRESS, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

## 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,  
or the security of our own work,  
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.

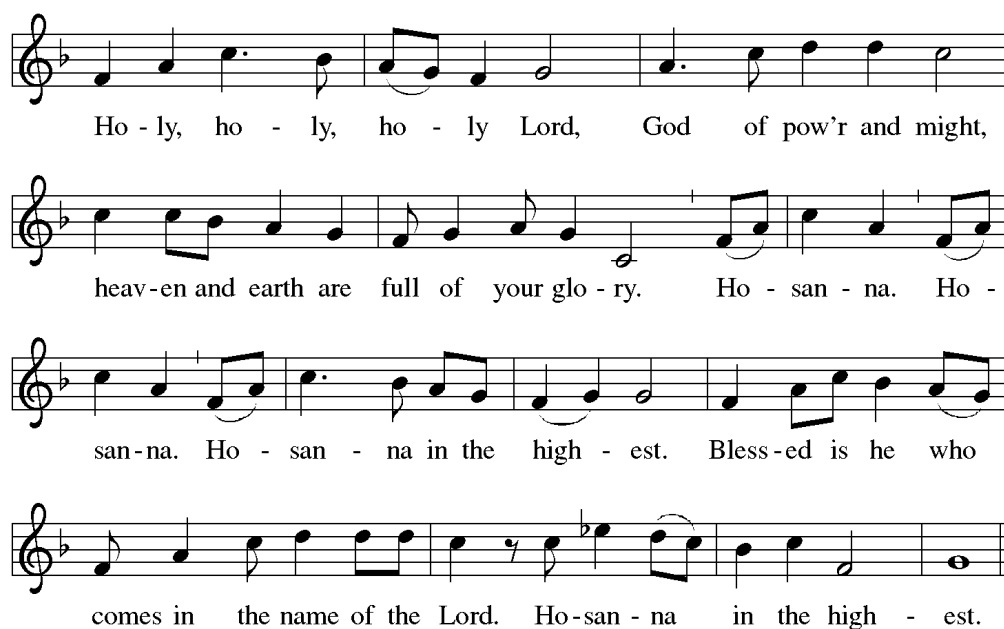
**ALL: And also with you.**

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.**



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.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

*Setting 12: OPTION A: Form C*

Response:

The earth is full of your glory.

**The earth is full of your glory.**



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**

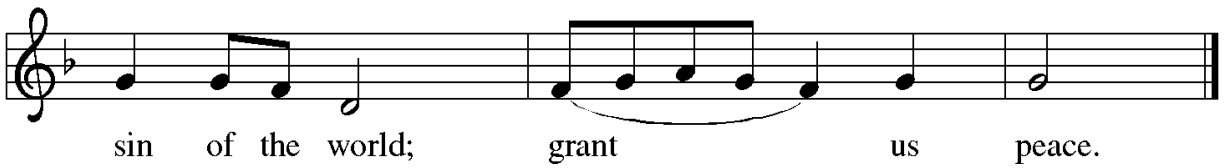
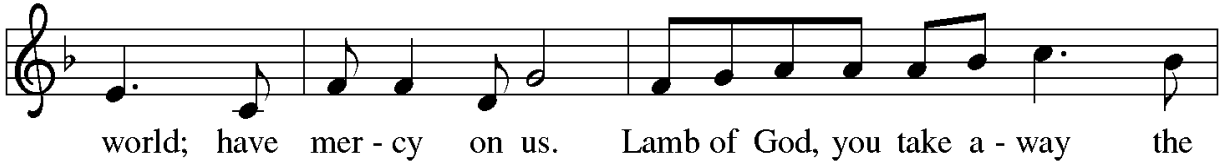
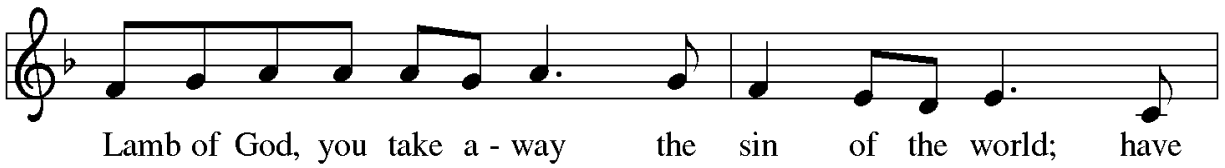
### **Invitation to Communion**

Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them.  
Come to this meal of mercy.

### **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.*

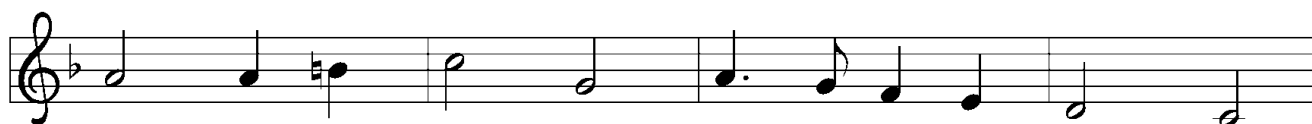
We receive communion using bread and wine. If you need to receive a gluten free host, please ask the communion minister. For those who prefer to receive grape juice rather than wine you will find white grape juice in the center of the trays as communion is given. If you have a question, please ask the 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.



## Hymn: There in God's Garden – ELW 342



1 There in God's gar - den stands the Tree of Wis - dom,  
 2 Its name is Je - sus, name that says, "Our Sav - ior!"  
 3 Thorns not its own are tan - gled in its fo - liage;  
 4 See how its branch - es reach to us in wel - come;



whose leaves hold forth the heal - ing of the na - tions:  
 There on its branch - es see the scars of suf - f'ring;  
 our greed has starved it, our de - spite has choked it.  
 hear what the Voice says, "Come to me, ye wea - ry!



Tree of all knowl - edge, Tree of all com -  
 see there the ten - drils of our hu - man  
 Yet, look! it lives! its grief has not de -  
 Give me your sick - ness, give me all your



pas - sion, Tree of all beau - ty.  
 self - hood feed on its life - blood.  
 stroyed it nor fire con - sumed it.  
 sor - row, I will give bless - ing."

5 This is my ending  
 this my resurrection;  
 into your hands, Lord,  
 I commit my spirit.  
 This have I searched for;  
 now I can possess it.  
 This ground is holy.

6 All heav'n is singing,  
 "Thanks to Christ whose passion  
 offers in mercy  
 healing, strength, and pardon.  
 Peoples and nations,  
 take it, take it freely!"  
 Amen! My Master!

Text: Király Imre von Pécselyi, c. 1590–c. 1641; tr. Erik Routley, 1917–1982

Music: SHADES MOUNTAIN, K. Lee Scott, b. 1950

Text © 1976 Hinshaw Music, Inc.

Music © 1987 Birnamwood Publications, a div. of MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc.

# Hymn: Spirit, Open My Heart – ACS 1043

*After the choir has received communion*

*Refrain*



Spir-it, o - pen my heart to the joy and pain of  
 liv-ing. As you love may I love, in re - ceiv - ing  
 and in giv - ing. Spir - it, o - pen my heart.  
 1 God, re - place my ston - y heart with a heart that's  
 2 Write your love up - on my heart as my law, my  
 3 May I weep with those who weep; share the joy of  
 kind and ten - der. All my cold - ness and  
 goal, my sto - ry. In each thought, word, and  
 friend and neigh - bor. As I live from day to  
*Refrain*  
 fear to your grace I now sur - ren - der.  
 deed, may my liv - ing bring you glo - ry.  
 day, love will be my fin - est la - bor.

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947

Music: WILD MOUNTAIN THYME, Irish melody; adapt. Alfred V. Fedak, b. 1953

Text © 1996 Pilgrim Press. All rights reserved.

Music © 2011 Alfred V. Fedak

## **Prayer after Communion**

Living God,  
as the disciples ate and drank with their risen Lord,  
we have been nourished with the very presence of Christ.  
Through this meal may we be strengthened  
to keep your word and to proclaim  
the power of your love in Jesus Christ our Savior.  
**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**

United to the cross of Christ,  
go in peace  
to bring God's love and mercy to all.  
**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 the September Newsletter, please pick one up on the table to the left, just past the double door, as you leave the sanctuary.**

**God's Work, Our Hands Sunday – Food Return today!**

New Directory – Please pick one up on the way out of church today.

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.

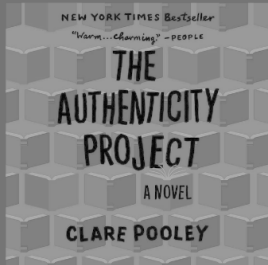
Quilt Ministry meets at St. John’s Hall on Thursday, September 4 & September 18 at 9:00AM . All are welcome to participate. For more information, reach out to Rhona Diamond.

### St. Paul's Book Club

Our next meeting is  
**September 24, 2025 - 11:00 AM**

LOCATION:

**Our Place Clearwater**  
1101 S. Missouri Ave.,  
Clearwater, FL 33756



This novel tells the story of a group of random strangers, brought together by a green notebook left in a local cafe. Each person adds some truths about the deepest part of themselves. It is quirky, funny, at times heartbreaking. J

Please sign up on the bulletin board by  
Sunday, September 21  
if you will be attending.  
We have to make a reservation at the  
restaurant.

ALL ARE WELCOME -  
Even if you don't read the book!

**St. Paul's**  
Silver Foxes Luncheon



**Sages Bistro**  
**883 W. Bay Drive, Largo**

**Wednesday**  
**September 17- 1:00 PM**

Invite a friend. All are welcome.  
Please sign up by September 14  
A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

**WELCA**

Women of the ELCA

**Bible Study**

**Wednesday, September 17**

**11:00 AM - in the conference room**

The lesson will be "Money, Stewardship and Generosity"  
in the September/October Gather Magazine.

Please bring your copy.

A magazine is not required to attend or participate.

Please bring your bible and an offering.

We will join Silver Foxes for lunch after our meeting.

All women are welcome.



Please reach out to  
Phyllis Berlage  
for more information.



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

**Prayer Around the Globe**  
**September 24 - 7:15 PM**

*Prayer for the  
Healing of Nations  
and the Earth*

Join us for an hour of prayer for peace,  
unity and justice in our world.  
Community is the first building block of peace!



**St. Paul's Lutheran Church**  
*gathering at St. John's Episcopal*

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

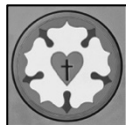
Email: [office@stpaulsclearwater.org](mailto:office@stpaulsclearwater.org)

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.



From sundaysandseasons.com.

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