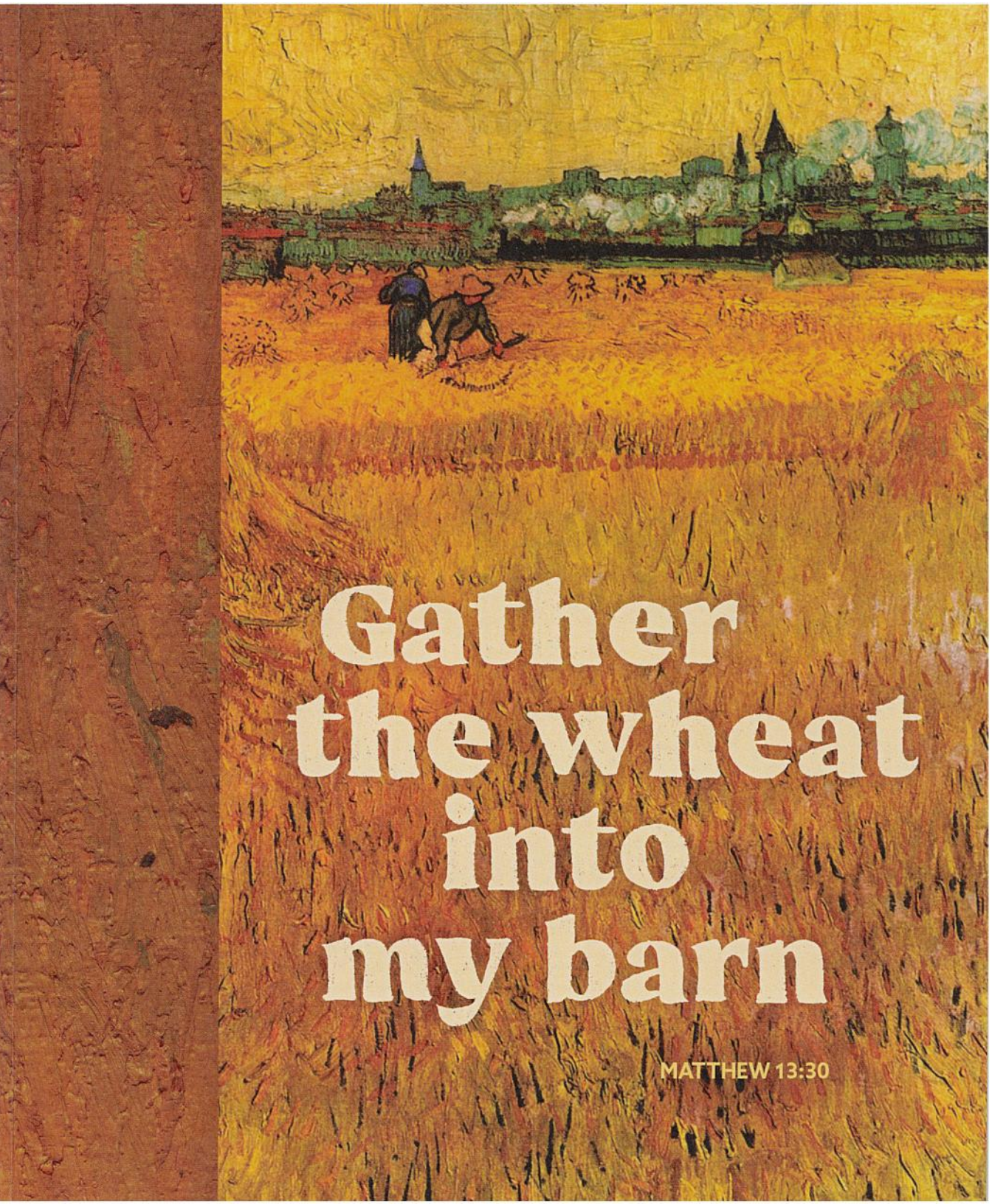




Gather the wheat into my barn

MATTHEW 13:30

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

25 W. Springettsbury Ave., York, PA 17403

Church Office 717-843-8155

Email: st.paulsyork@comcast.net

www.stpaulsyork.org

www.stpaulspreschoolyork.com

Facebook: St. Paul's Lutheran Church York PA on Springettsbury & George

YouTube: St. Paul's Lutheran Church - South George St. York

WELCOME Thank you for being with us.

We are a Christian church within the Lutheran tradition (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) and we welcome people of all Christian traditions as well as people of other faiths and people of little or no faith. Christian worship has been offered to God in this congregation for 190 years. By worshipping with us today, you become part of that living tradition.

Offerings Offerings are received during the liturgy. They are presented along with gifts of bread and wine at the altar. You may also donate via our website at www.stpaulsyork.org or use the QR Code provided.

An AED/Defibrillator unit is located in the Good Shepherd room. It is placed on the wall left side of the Springettsbury door exit.

Restrooms are available in the Good Shepherd Room (Springettsbury Ave) and the narthex (George St). Baby changing stations are provided in these restrooms as well as in the nursery.

The Nursery is accessed through the front right double doors. The liturgy is live-streamed into the Nursery. Parents are asked to stay with their children. Quiet activities are also available in the Narthex for infant through preschool children to use with an adult.

Parents, please accompany your child to the restroom during the liturgy and wait with them. This is a way for us to practice good safety protocol within our building.



Lutheran Church in York, PA - St. Paul's Lutheran...

stpaulsyork.org

*The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God in loving memory of our mother, Emma V. (Zirkle) Sweitzer by her daughters, Charlene Graffius & Shirley Haugh
And in honor of my daughter Jill Striebig's birthday by Ann Anstadt*

STAFF		
Pastor	Rev. Stanley Reep	st.paulsyork@comcast.net
Visitation Pastor	Rev. Dan Yeiser	st.paulsyork@comcast.net
Youth Director	Kelly Moore-Spencer	kmoorespencer.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Organist, Choir Director	Victor Fields	vfields.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Bell Choirs Director	Leah McComas	lmccomas.stpaulsyork@gmail.com
Children's Choir Director	Julianna Jones	jjones.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Secretary	Patee Pizzirusso	st.paulsyork@comcast.net
Sexton	Ted Weikert	tweikert.stpaulsyork@gmail.com
Preschool Director	Deb Becker	presch.stpaulsyork@comcast.net

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

July 19, 2026

Holy Communion 9:30 AM

Musical Setting 5 With One Voice

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Ode to Joy

Arr. by Ray Thompson

Stand

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

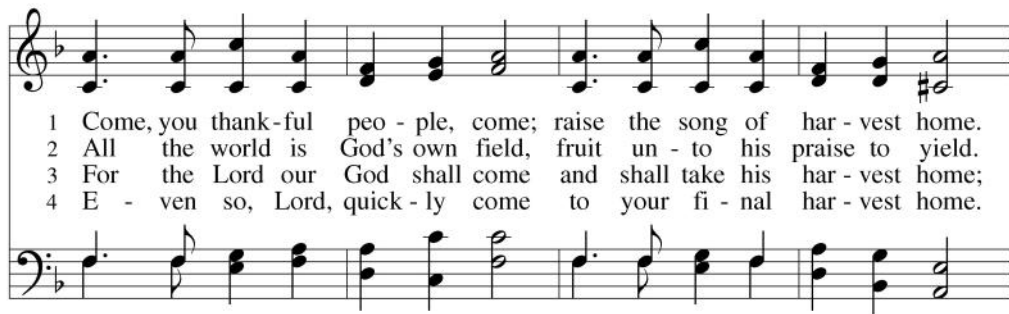
Most merciful God,

we confess that we are in bondage 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

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. **Amen**

ENTRANCE HYMN

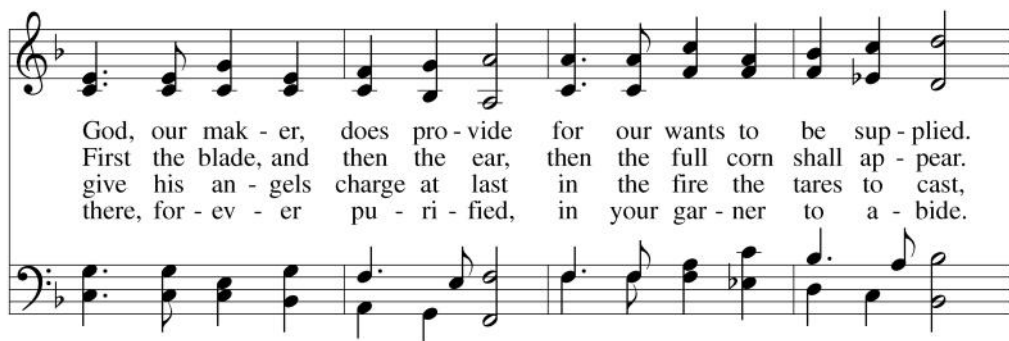
Come, You Thankful People Come (LBW 407)



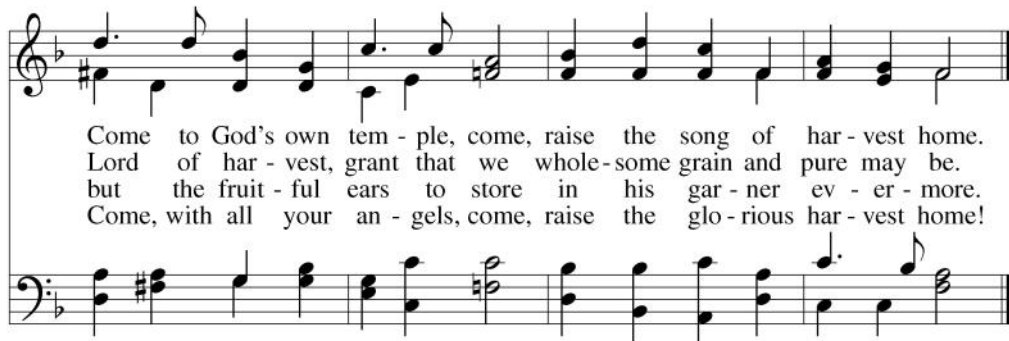
1 Come, you thank-ful peo - ple, come; raise the song of har - vest home.
 2 All the world is God's own field, fruit un - to his praise to yield.
 3 For the Lord our God shall come and shall take his har - vest home;
 4 E - ven so, Lord, quick - ly come to your fi - nal har - vest home.



All is safe - ly gath - ered in ere the win - ter storms be - gin.
 Wheat and tares to - geth - er sown, un - to joy or sor - row grown.
 from his field shall in that day all of - fens - es purge a - way,
 Gath - er all your peo - ple in, free from sor - row, free from sin,



God, our mak - er, does pro - vide for our wants to be sup - plied.
 First the blade, and then the ear, then the full corn shall ap - pear.
 give his an - gels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast,
 there, for - ev - er pu - ri - fied, in your gar - ner to a - bide.



Come to God's own tem - ple, come, raise the song of har - vest home.
 Lord of har - vest, grant that we whole - some grain and pure may be.
 but the fruit - ful ears to store in his gar - ner ev - er - more.
 Come, with all your an - gels, come, raise the glo - rious har - vest home!

APOSTOLIC GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. . . Pour out upon us, O Lord, the spirit to think and do what is right, that we, who cannot even exist without you, may have the strength to live according to your will; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Sit

CHILDREN'S SERMON

FIRST LESSON Isaiah 44:6-8 *back cover*

PSALM Psalm 86:11-17 sung unaccompanied cantor/congregation

- ¹¹ Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk | in your truth;*
knit my heart to you that I may | fear your name.
- ¹² **I will thank you, O LORD my God, with | all my heart,*
and glorify your name for- | evermore.**
- ¹³ For great is your | love toward me;*
you have delivered me from the neth- | ermost pit.
- ¹⁴ **The arrogant rise up against me, O God,
and a band of violent men | seeks my life;***
they have not set you be- | fore their eyes.
- ¹⁵ But you, O LORD, are gracious and full | of compassion,*
slow to anger, and full of kind- | ness and truth.
- ¹⁶ **Turn to me and have mer- | cy upon me;***
give your strength to your servant; and save the child | of your handmaid.
- ¹⁷ Show me a sign of your favor,
so that those who hate me may see it and | be ashamed;*
because you, O LORD, have helped me and com- | forted me.

SECOND LESSON Romans 8:12-25 *back cover*

Stand

ALLELUIA



HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

(back cover)

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the conclusion of the Gospel.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON

Pastor Stanley Reep

Stand

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.* On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

A brief silence is kept.

O God, protect your church from those who sow weeds among the wheat. Where we trade grace for judgment, restore us, and where we get lost among the complexities of life, guide us. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

O God, sustain creation in places not easily seen by humankind; the depths of oceans, microscopic plants and animals, galaxies beyond our own. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

O God, we yearn to live with justice and in righteousness. Renew the hearts of all in authority, that our leaders guide wisely toward the flourishing of all. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

O God, be a source of constancy for those whose lives have been uprooted by war, eviction, global climate change, unemployment, harassment, illness or injury. (*We pray especially for . . .*) God of grace,

hear our prayer.

O God, guide and provide for all summer camp staff and campers, daycare professionals, librarians, summer school educators and coaches, God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

O God, the message of your salvation is proclaimed among us by faithful witnesses.
We give you thanks for the witness of all the saints who shine like the sun in your presence. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

O God, Bless those who serve their country in the armed forces. Direct them with your truth as they do their difficult work and be their companion when they must engage in battle. Bless also our enemies and hasten the day when humanity shall lay down their arms forever. God of Grace,

Hear our prayer.

Into your hands we commend all for whom we pray trusting in your mercy through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

The ministers and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Sit

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

Sheep May Safely Graze

arr. Frank Halferty

Stand

OFFERTORY

The musical score is written for two staves, Treble and Bass clef, in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first system contains the lyrics: "Praise God, from Whom all bless-ings flow; Praise Him, all crea-tures here be-low;". The second system contains the lyrics: "Praise Him a-bove, ye heav'n-ly host; Praise Fa-ther, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost! A-men." The music is a simple, hymn-like melody with block chords in the bass line.

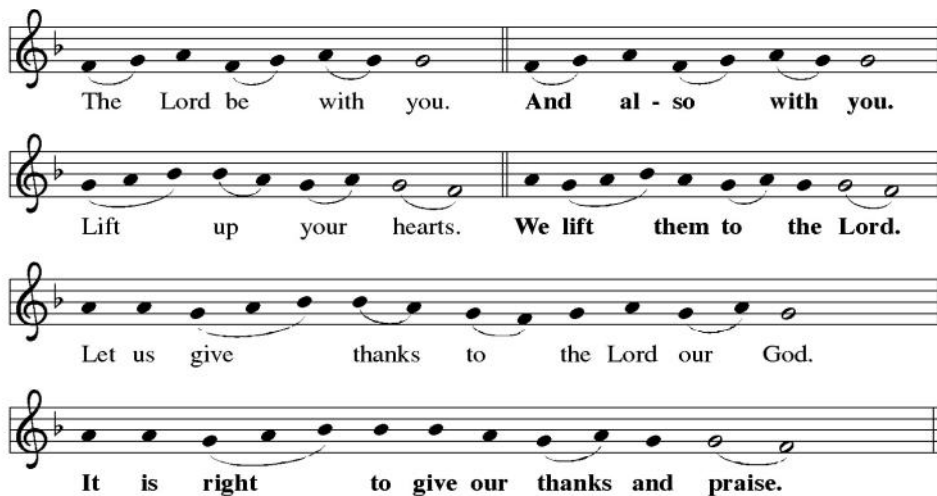
OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Blessed are you,

O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

DIALOGUE

Sung by Pastor and congregation



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

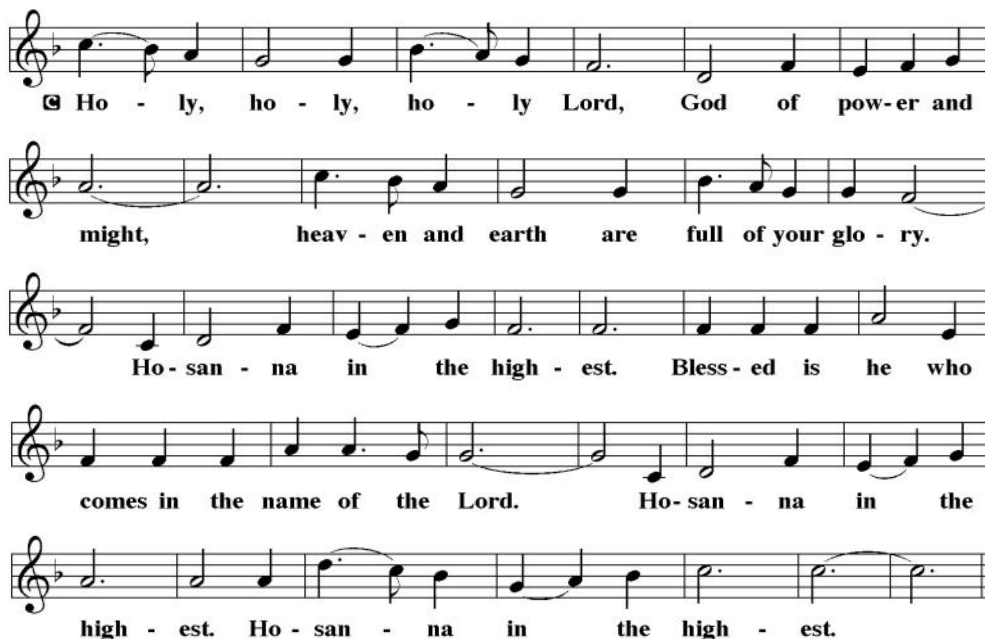
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE *The preface appropriate to the day is said.*

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; 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 the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS



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. 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.

THANKSGIVING

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 your Holy Spirit, that by this Holy Communion we may know the unity we share with all your people in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

FRACTION RITE

When we eat this bread, we share the body of Christ.

When we drink this cup, we share the blood of Christ.

Reveal yourself to us, O Lord, in the breaking of the bread, as once you revealed yourself to your disciples.

AGNUS DEI



☩ 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

Continued on next page



Sit

COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL

Our Communion is “open” to all believers who trust that the Risen Christ is present for his people in the Holy Eucharist. We receive communion by common loaf and pouring chalice today.

Procedure for receiving Communion:

1. Come to communion using the center aisle.
2. Take a communion glass from the tray of glasses.
3. Take your place along the chancel step.
4. The ministers will bring the bread and wine to you.
5. Place the used cup in an empty tray located on a credence table at the side aisle.
6. Return to your pew using the side aisle

COMMUNION HYMN *Let My Heart Be Good Soil (WOV 713) sung twice*



COMMUNION INSTRUMENTAL SELECTION

Simple Gifts

arr. Frank Halferty

Stand

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen**

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Almighty God, you provide the true bread from heaven, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that we who have received the Sacrament of his body and blood may abide in him and he in us, that we may be filled with the power of his endless life, now and forever. **Amen**

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, Holy Spirit, Bless you now and forever. **Amen**

HYMN *On What Has Now Been Sown (LBW 261)) next page*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sit

POSTLUDE

Fireflies

Mekel Rogers

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We extend our appreciation and thanks to the members of the
Woodwind Quintet for providing musical leadership today.

Harrison Palmer	Bassoon
Lena Smith	Oboe
Leah McComas	Flute
Emily Reep	Clarinet
Amelia West	Horn

On What Has Now Been Sown

1 On what has now been sown your bless-ing Lord, be - stow; the
2 To you our wants are known, from you are all our pow'rs; ac -
3 Oh, grant that each of us, now met be - fore you here, may

The first system of music features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff contains a melody with eighth and quarter notes, while the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

pow'r is yours a - lone to make it sprout and grow. O Lord, in
cept what is your own and par-don what is ours. Our prais - es,
meet to - geth - er thus when you and yours ap - pear, and fol - low

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff shows a key signature change to one sharp (F#) in the second measure. The lyrics are aligned with the notes in the treble staff.

grace the har - vest raise, and yours a - lone shall be the praise!
Lord, and prayers re - ceive and to your word a bless - ing give.
you to heav'n, our home. E'en so, A - men! Lord Je - sus, come!

The third system concludes the piece. The treble staff ends with a double bar line. The bass staff continues with a final chord. The lyrics are aligned with the notes in the treble staff.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt.

Music: DARWALL'S 148TH, John Darwall, 1731–1789

This Week at St. Paul's

Church office open Mon–Thurs 8:00 AM—3:30 PM, Fri. 8-11:30 AM

Sunday, July 19

9:30 AM Holy Eucharist
10:30 AM Summer Fellowship
6:30 PM AA Meeting—Community Rm

Monday, July 20

6:30 PM Council Mtg—Christ Hall

Tuesday, July 21

9:30 AM Pantry

Sunday, July 26

9:30 AM Holy Eucharist
10:30 AM Summer Fellowship
6:30 PM AA Meeting—Community Rm



St Paul's collects clothing for Union Lutheran Church's Clothing Ministry and your help is requested. Union collects 'gently used' clothing (and shoes) for its clothing closet and offers it **free of charge** to needy families in the York City community. A bin has been placed in the Good Shepherd room to collect any clothing you would like to donate. These donations will surely be a blessing to our neighbors. Union's volunteers are very appreciative of our cooperation and our help. If you have large donations you may take them directly to Union Lutheran Church. Simply call them to arrange a time.

St. Paul's Food Pantry Needs: Peanut Butter, Cereal, plastic and paper shopping bags. Monetary donations can be placed in a special envelope marked "Pantry". Contact Teresa Rohrbaugh to volunteer for Tuesday distribution days. Contact Patty Snyder to volunteer for Thursday delivery days or Sunday stocking days or contact the church office. Thank you to all who help!

Summer Fellowship Time

Thank you to everyone who signed up to help. There remain a few slots open where items or help is needed. Know that you may bring something to augment the assigned theme. Thank you!

Date

Help needed

August 9	<i>Sandwiches.</i> We need one person to make a dozen sandwiches and cut them diagonally in half.
August 16	1 Helper is needed.
August 30	1 Helper is needed.
September 6	<i>Brownies.</i> 1 Helper/Host is needed and 1 person to bring brownies

The sign-up sheet remains on the stand in the Good Shepherd Room.



We are delighted to add to our ministry staff The Rev. Daniel Yeiser. Pastor Yeiser will be providing pastoral care through visitation. The current arrangement has Pastor Yeiser working part-time on Wednesdays. We thank the Mutual Ministry Committee for their work in preparing for additional staffing hours, to the Congregation Council for their final approval, and to the congregation for recognizing this need and acting during the 2025 Annual Meeting last November. Please extend your greeting and welcome to Pastor Yeiser when next you see him during worship, coffee hour or at other congregation events.

Called for Service, Peace, Instruction & Renewal

the theme for the 2026/27 stewardship emphasis highlights four aspects of our baptismal life. Work is underway now in preparation for our fall events. Helpers are always needed and welcome as we prepare. If you would like to aid in this important work, please notify the church office. There are many aspects to the campaign; preparing print materials, writing skits, actors for the skits, coordinating a “Thank You” dinner, cooking, setting up, cleaning up, providing Temple Talks, and leading discussions during the Sunday education time. Please prayerfully consider how you can share your gifts for the building up of the faith community.



Calling all crocheters and knitters. Last November we gave out over 200 scarves to our pantry shoppers. It’s time to start making scarves again for November 2026. The only suggestion is that scarves are about 4 ½ - 5 feet long and about 6 inches wide. When you finish a few scarves, put them in the pantry shopping cart in the Good Shepherd Room with your name on the bag. We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who provided the amazing scarves. Let’s see if we can surpass last year’s number!



Serving schedule for July and August

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Greeters	Ushers -	Early: Altar Set-up Late: Altar Clean -up	Bread Bakers
7/19	9:30 AM	Ken Hinkle	James Palmer	Carolyn Kapoun	Carol Woodbury, Tim & Melissa Yakim	Team 3E: Norma Shue, Cliff Beck, Sheridan Palmer	Kathy Monk, Lois Ann Schroeder	Janet Fitch
7/26	9:30 AM	Patty Snyder	Larry Becker	Connie Reed	Dan & Christy Yeiser, Barb Young, Sharon Diazcum	Team 3L: Dan Garber, Joe Guarriello, Larry Becker	Kathy Monk, Lois Ann Schroeder	Pat Rudacille
8/2	9:30 AM	Harrison Palmer	Jaclyn Kinkella	Emily Reep	Bob & Judy Hoover, Matt & Betsy Herrington	Team 1E: Jeff Riese, John Monk, Alex Bastian, Claudia Deitrich	Tim & Melissa Yakim	Johanna Patter-
8/9	9:30 AM	James Palmer	Tim Yakim	Patty Snyder	Ann Anstadt, Alex & Erin Bastian	Team 1L: Dave Kopp, Scott Donaldson, Darren Smith, Kass Keleta	Tim & Melissa Yakim	Nancy Bennett
8/16	9:30 AM	Aaron Jacobs	Allison Lehr	Rev William Snyder	Cliff & Janine Beck, Deb & Larry Becker	Team 2E: Ron Riese, Kathy Monk, Ken Hinkle, Alex Bastian	Janet Fitch, Sandy Dickensheets	Abby Jacobs
8/23	9:30 AM	Janet Fitch	Denise Rider	Rev. George Fitch	Jim & Nancy Bennett, Mike & Carrie Berkey	Team 2L: Kem Vaught, Gail Kerchner, Sandy Dickensheets	Janet Fitch, Sandy Dickensheets	Kat Lemke
8/30	9:30 AM	Tristan Ericson	Ken Hinkle	Chris Wadail	Mike & Becky Bingham, Scott & Justine Donaldson	Team 3E: Norma Shue, Cliff Beck, Sheridan Palmer	Pat Scarborough, Kat Lemke	Jessica Ericson

Betsy gave us cleome seeds. Cleomes are beautiful flowers that bloom just about this time of year in south central Pennsylvania. They have rather long stems, nearly three feet tall, with textured leaves growing close to the stem until they reach a rather large flower head. They come in a variety of colors. Their appeal in a garden is that they are beautiful in structure, arching slightly, swaying in the summer breeze, and they are not regimented, they are very organic because they self-seed. In my book this makes them a delightful addition to any garden.

We had success in the corner flower bed with beautiful cleome the first year that we planted them because the soil was prepared and they were the only seeds that we planted. The following spring I became an overzealous gardener and began to weed the corner bed with renewed vigor. Determined that the weeds were not going to get ahead of me, I went out early in the morning and worked earnestly riding the bed of weeds. Unfortunately, early growth of cleome, I have learned, is almost indistinguishable from ordinary weeds. I inadvertently pulled up all of what was to be a summer show of elegant flower heads bobbing ever so slightly in the wind. Sometimes when we are looking for something, seeking our hearts' desire, yearning for that which has long been promised, when it presents itself, we are unable to recognize it. So, it was with our flower bed at the corner of the garden.

God's people, Israel, were looking for a kingdom that would be better than that of King David, or at least a kingdom where the leadership would be morally up-right, honest, true, trustworthy. They were looking for the Messiah, the promised one who would make all things new and usher in an age where peace and justice would be the hallmarks of daily life and living. God's people were looking for change. They were praying for change. They were tired of leadership emersed in corruption, marital infidelity, lies regarding kingdom life, and the needs of the widow and orphan being neglected.

When Jesus of Nazareth appeared and began to preach and teach, the crowds gathered and followed, because they were curious if this individual could be the Messiah. Jesus of Nazareth was different from the mighty warriors they had known in previous ages. He proclaimed a message that was more approachable. *"You are the light of the world"* he told them when preaching on the mountain top. *"You are salt"* give flavor to the world. *"Let your light so shine before others and give glory to your Father in heaven"* he announced with a boldness that instilled confidence even among the least of those gathered to hear him. This one sets a new standard, one where in the needs of others and the least among them were recognized and met.

When Jesus spoke to them and began his stories with *"the kingdom of heaven may be compared to..."* people listened. They were longing for a different kind of kingdom. And even with their desire for change, for a different kind of leadership, a differently shaped kingdom, a different kind of justice ever present in their minds, they didn't recognize it in the moment, in the now, Jesus' presence with them. Perhaps it was because God's promises were always for a time stretched out into a distant future. The distance in time was unreachable given humanity's life span. But now that God became one with humanity in Christ Jesus, time had forever changed.

As Jesus moved around the region, crowds followed. Disciples listened. Neither group seemed to grasp what Jesus proclaimed as "the kingdom of heaven." Jesus, God's Son, is in their midst. This reality, this change in the nature and revelation of God, from out there somewhere to here with them now, escaped their human comprehension. Jesus continued to provide special insights to his Disciples, but even so, they are not grasping this newly defined kingdom life. There remains a void between what they longed for and what Jesus proclaims.

Every time these parables resurface in the lectionary, I am being given another opportunity to think again about the kingdom, what Jesus proclaims, and how life is altered now allowing for a better future. Notice I didn't say can be altered, I said life is altered now allowing for a better future, a different way of living, change that is longed for, hopes that become reality.

The Sower sows good seeds. The enemy sows' weeds. The workers identify the weeds early in their growth cycle. They want to gather them immediately removing them from the wheat. The one sowing the good seed says to leave them both until harvest. Then you won't risk uprooting any of the wheat. At harvest the weeds will be gathered and burned, and the wheat will be gathered into the barn. That is a comparison to the kingdom of heaven.

This time around I admit that I find myself relating to the workers, who identify the work of the enemy, and who want to immediately eradicate the unsightly situation. While I know we have weeds in our many beds of plants and flowers; the thought of the unsightly weeds growing to full stature is not something I personally want to see or allow to take place. However, I think back to my overzealous weed pulling and the devastation that it had with the cleome, and I begin to see that God's time is best. One aspect of the parable that tugs at me this morning has to do with patience. The patience that the Sower is requesting of his servants. Patience is both needed and desired for kingdom work and kingdom living; patience with myself, yourself and patience with others. It is challenging for us to be patient when things in life are certainly not the way we would like them to be. The culture of which we are apart is permeated with immediacy; fast food restaurants, microwave entrees, express lines at the supermarket, email, Instagram, Facebook and texts that assume immediate responses, instant everything from your breakfast oatmeal to your mortgage application, and merchants offer overnight next day delivery to ward of impatience by consumers.

"Let both grow together until harvest" says Jesus. His words make me uncomfortable. A tension arises between God's way and mine. It says that perhaps I'm not competent to judge between wheat and weeds, or maybe it's not competency, it is simply not my job in the kingdom. Who is plucking up what? Are you sure those are weeds? Only God can make such a judgment. In the meantime, perhaps kingdom life has something to do with being patient with one another; patient with those we know and those we don't, patient with those like us and patient with those who differ from us, patient with those we like and with those we don't like. From the parable's point of view Kingdom life needs an abundance of patience. It seems that it is a significant part of the Kingdom of heaven. Sometimes when we are looking for something, seeking our hearts' desire, yearning for that which has long been promised, when it presents itself we are unable to recognize it.

Like the followers of Jesus during his earthly ministry, we often miss Jesus revealing himself to us. We may not recognize his presence with us in the bread and wine of Holy Communion. We may not recognize his voice proclaiming the forgiveness of our sins; the things that we have done and the things that we have left undone as stated in our weekly confession. But his body and blood given for the forgiveness of sin, and his freeing words proclaiming absolution, bring with them good news and the opportunity for change, for a different way to live, work, play, love, and to simply be, and view the world as God's forgiven ones. Patiently God is forgiving sin, welcoming us into kingdom work, and reminding us that the kingdom reveals itself in ways that are different from what we may desire, want, or conceive it to be. Jesus says *"Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"* Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 44:6-8

Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel,
and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
I am the first, and I am the last;
besides me there is no god.
⁷Who is like me? Let them proclaim it;
let them declare and set it forth before me.
Who has announced from of old the things to come?
Let them tell us what is yet to be.
⁸Do not fear or be afraid;
have I not told you from of old and declared it?
You are my witnesses!
Is there any god besides me?
There is no other rock; I know not one.

or Wisdom of Solomon 12:13, 16-19 [not printed]

Psalm 86:11-17

SECOND READING: Romans 8:12-25

So then, brothers and sisters, we are obligated, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if we in fact suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, ²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor,

²³and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

GOSPEL: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away. ²⁶So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ ²⁸He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹But he replied, ‘No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’ ”

³⁶Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” ³⁷He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, ⁴²and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!”

Next Sunday's Readings: 1 Kings 3:5-12; Psalm 119:129-136; Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52.

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