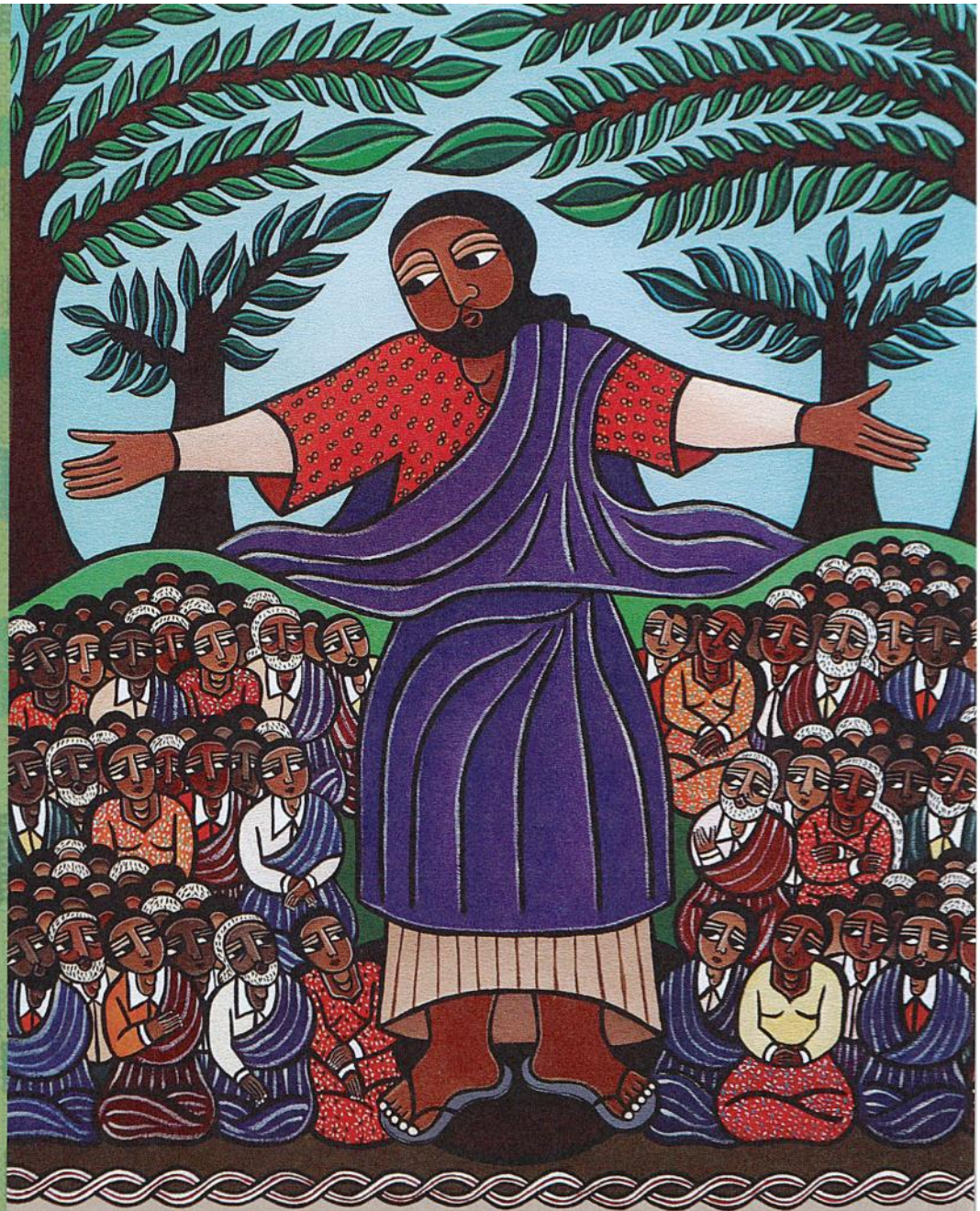




I will give you rest

MATTHEW 11:28

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 honor of America's 250th Anniversary of Independence by Tina Llorente and by Union Lutheran in thanks for St. Paul's continued support of their Clothing Ministry.

We extend our appreciation and thanks to the choir for their musical leadership.

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

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

July 5, 2026

Holy Communion 9:30 AM

Musical Setting 5 With One Voice

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *Andante from Piano Concerto No. 21 by Mozart* arr. Lynne Latham
Andrew Jones, violin

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

Jesus Shall Reign (ELW 434) sung in 4 part Harmony

1 Je - sus shall reign wher - e'er the sun does its suc -
2 To him shall end - less prayer be made, and prais - es
3 Peo - ple and realms of ev - 'ry tongue dwell on his
4 Bless - ings a - bound wher - e'er he reigns: the pris - 'ners
5 Let ev - 'ry crea - ture rise and bring pe - cu - liar

ces - sive jour - neys run; his king - dom stretch from
throng to crown his head; his name like sweet per -
love with sweet - est song; and in - fant voic - es
leap to lose their chains, the wea - ry find e -
hon - ors to our king; an - gels de - scend with

shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more.
fume shall rise with ev - 'ry morn - ing sac - ri - fice.
shall pro - claim their ear - ly bless - ings on his name.
ter - nal rest, and all who suf - fer want are blest.
songs a - gain, and earth re - peat the loud a - men.

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. . . God of glory, Father of love, peace comes from you alone. Send us as peacemakers and witnesses to your kingdom, and fill our hearts with joy in your promises of salvation; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Sit

CHILDREN'S SERMON

FIRST LESSON **Zechariah 9:9-12** *back cover*

PSALM **Psalm 145:8-15** sung unaccompanied cantor/congregation

⁸ The LORD is gracious and full | of compassion,*

slow to anger and | of great kindness.

⁹ **The LORD is loving to | everyone***

and his compassion is over | all his works.

¹⁰ All your works praise | you, O LORD,*

and your faithful | servants bless you.

¹¹ **They make known the glory | of your kingdom***

and speak | of your power;

¹² that the peoples may know | of your power*

and the glorious splendor | of your kingdom.

¹³ **Your kingdom is an ever- | lasting kingdom;***

your dominion endures through- | out all ages.

¹⁴ The LORD is faithful in | all his words*

and merciful in | all his deeds.

¹⁵ **The LORD upholds all | those who fall;***

he lifts up those who | are bowed down.

SECOND LESSON **Romans 7:15-25a** *back cover*

Stand

ALLELUIA



HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

(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.

Father, we are your people, called together in your name. Make us one in spirit and purpose and move us to all the world with your love. Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Let your favor rest upon us as a nation, not that we may be more blessed than the other nations of this earth, but rather that we may see ourselves as a people brought together for our common good and for the welfare of other people in other lands. As we commemorate the 250th anniversary of the nation, allow the hopes and aspirations set forth in the *Declaration of Independence* to come to fruition for all the inhabitants of the land. Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Look upon the president of his nation, Donald, the governor of this state, Josh, and the mayor of this city, Sandie. Help them to be wise, and just, and compassionate as they fulfill their responsibilities. Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Be with your servants (*names from the prayer list*), who are ill, and strengthen them with your grace. Attend those who minister to them, their physicians and nurses, and give them insight and guidance. By your will give healing to the sick, and peace.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Be with those who travel by land or sea or air. Protect them against harm and grant them a safe return to their homes and loved ones. Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

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. Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We remember with love and affection our dearly departed. Grant us grace to persevere where they have led the way and bring us at last to your heavenly kingdom. Lord of mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Into your hand 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

Panis Angelicus by Franck
Andrew Jones, violin

arr. Lynne Latham

Stand

OFFERTORY

The musical score is written for a treble and bass staff in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first system covers the first two lines of the text, and the second system covers the next two lines. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Praise God, from Whom all bless-ings flow; Praise Him, all crea-tures here be-low;

Praise Him a-bove, ye heav'n-ly host; Praise Fa-ther, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost! A-men.

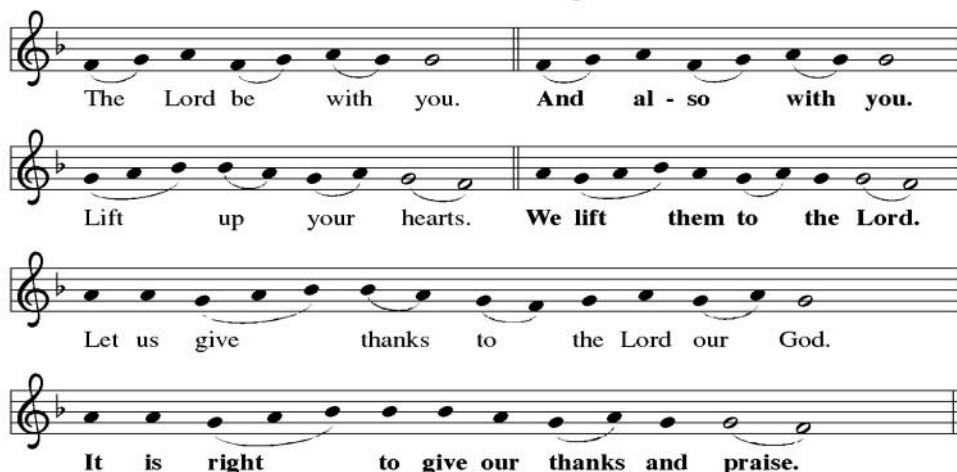
OFFERTORY PRAYER

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



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



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



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 *Lord of All Hopefulness (LBW 469)*



1 Lord of all hope - ful - ness, Lord of all joy,
2 Lord of all ea - ger - ness, Lord of all faith,
3 Lord of all kind - li - ness, Lord of all grace,
4 Lord of all gen - tle - ness, Lord of all calm,



whose trust, ev - er child - like, no cares could de - stroy:
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe:
your hands swift to wel - come, your arms to em - brace:
whose voice is con - tent - ment, whose pres - ence is balm:



be there at our wak - ing, and give us, we pray,
be there at our la - bors, and give us, we pray,
be there at our hom - ing, and give us, we pray,
be there at our sleep - ing, and give us, we pray,



your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

COMMUNION HYMN

O Living Bread From Heaven (LBW 197) *sung in 4 part Harmony*



1 O liv - ing Bread from heav - en, how well you feed your guest!
2 My Lord, you here have led me with - in your ho - liest place,
3 You gave me all I want - ed; this food can death de - stroy.
4 Lord, grant me then, thus strength - ened with heav'n - ly food, while here



The gifts that you have giv - en have filled my heart with rest.
and here your - self have fed me with trea - sures of your grace;
And you have free - ly grant - ed the cup of end - less joy.
my course on earth is length - ened, to serve with ho - ly fear.



Oh, won - drous food of bless - ing, oh, cup that heals our woes!
for you have free - ly giv - en what earth could nev - er buy,
My Lord, I do not mer - it the fa - vor you have shown,
And when you call my spir - it to leave this world be - low,



My heart, this gift pos - sess - ing, with prais - es o - ver - flows!
the bread of life from heav - en, that now I shall not die.
and all my soul and spir - it bow down be - fore your throne.
I en - ter, through your mer - it, where joys un - min - gled flow.



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 *For the Beauty of the Earth (LBW 561) sung in 4 part Harmony*

1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the beau - ty of the skies,
2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,
3 For the joy of car and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,
4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
5 For your - self, best gift di - vine to the world so free - ly giv'n;

for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:
hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:
for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:
friends on earth and friends a - bove; for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:
a - gent of God's grand de - sign, peace on earth and joy in heav'n:

Refrain
Christ, our Lord, to you we raise this our sac - ri - fice of praise.

DISMISSAL

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

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This Week at St. Paul's

Church office open Mon–Thurs 8:00 AM–3:30 PM, Fri. Office Closed

Sunday, July 5

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

Monday, July 6 Office Closed

Tuesday, July 7

9:30 AM Pantry

Sunday, July 12

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

The congregation of Union Lutheran would like to thank the congregation of St. Paul's for the continued support of Union's clothing ministry. There have been many occasions when our inventory was getting low and St. Paul's showed up with many, many bags of clothing helping us to restock. We especially would like to thank Jeff and Rose Riese for finding a variety of sources to help us out, including a lovely financial gift from your congregation. Also big thanks to Lois Ann Schroeder who has regularly delivered your contributions. We are eternally grateful. God bless you all.



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

Theme and help needed

July 26

Deviled eggs, Ham & Cheese rollups—1 person needed for food

August 9

Sandwiches. We need one person to make a dozen sandwiches and cut them diagonally in half.

August 16

Cinnamon rolls/buns. 1 Helper is needed.

August 30

Fruit & Yogurt. 1 Helper is needed.

September 6

Brownies. 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.



Thank you to everyone who helped with Vacation Bible School and the culminating picnic. *Make me a Servant* helped the children deepen their understanding of what it means to be part of God’s kingdom. They learned about angelic messengers, Paul’s once hostile attitude toward Christians, the joy of hearing God’s word, baptism, and sending greetings to those who need to hear Good News. Thank you for making it a great week for the children of St. Paul’s.

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
7/5	9:30 AM	Harold Sargeant	Jennifer Ports	Chris Lipp	Ann & Axel Unrich, Kem & Cindy Vaught	Team 2E: Ron Riese, Kathy Monk, Ken Hinkle, Alex Bastian	Janet & Larry Moore	Justine Don-
7/12	9:30 AM	Larry Moore	Allison Lehr	Bob Reed	Scott & Johanna Wagner, Amelia & Michael West	Team 2L: Kem Vaught, Gail Kerchner, Sandy Dickensheets	Janet & Larry Moore	Janet Moore
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 Wad-dail	Mike & Becky Bingham, Scott & Justine Donaldson	Team 3E: Norma Shue, Cliff Beck, Sheridan Palmer	Pat Scarborough, Kat Lemke	Jessica Ericson

Proper 9 A, 2026
Zechariah 9:9-12

Romans 7:15-25a

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Yellow, pink and green neon water pistols were used to soak each other in an attempt to cool off. July brought soaring temperatures and elevated humidity. Air conditioning was a luxury limited to the wealthy and a few elderly people living in the neighborhood. As kids in the neighborhood, we were all looking for things to do, ways to cool down or to engage in something that would get our minds off the sweltering heat of the day.

Water pistols squirting cool water brought shrieks and laughter as we played. Running through the grass around the house trying to soak each other was good game on such a hot day. The intensity of play was something to behold. And everything was fine until one of the kids decided that the current game “just isn’t cutting it” and wants to switch games. This often led to a division, one group wanting to play one thing and another group wanting to play another. Sometimes the standoff led to no one playing anything and as kids we would roam back to our perspective homes, disappointed, frustrated or angry.

Children throughout the centuries haven’t changed as much as we would like to think. Jesus uses this very thing to illustrate his point. The boys in the parable want to play wedding so that they can dance. And the girls want to play funeral so that they can weep and wail. That’s the way it was when Jesus was speaking to the crowds who had gathered. Dancing at weddings was the responsibility of men and mourning at funerals was the responsibility of women. “If you won’t play this, then we won’t play that” leaving only one option that they don’t play either game. They are left out, sitting on the sideline.

The parable recalls the words of the Prophet John the Baptist. Society dismisses John because he backed away from social engagements, ate weird food, and didn’t care much about fashion trends. Jesus came on the scene, and he too was dismissed from mainline society because he was always sitting down to eat with people who were deemed by one group as outsider, sinner, tax collector, or prostitute. Those of the time of John and Jesus who were deemed as learned and wise dismissed both John as a Prophet and Jesus as the Savior of the World. The learned and wise of the time chose not to give credence to John or Jesus, putting themselves in the position of sitting on the sidelines watching, not engaged in the activity of either John or Jesus. Those in authority liked the standoff position, so no one played anything.

Life is too complex for children’s games. American Society doesn’t seem to really know much about John the Baptizer and pays little attention to the kinds of folks that Jesus associated with during his earthly ministry. Oh, people will use his name when it is convenient and back away when their sinfulness is brought to light.

If we know anything at all about John it is that he is an interesting Biblical character who seemed to be mentally unstable, ate strange food and dressed in animal pelts. Jesus for the most part is ignored, especially when he talks about welcoming all people and loving enemies and giving to the poor. By deeming one group unstable and ignoring the other, the culture in which we live ends up sitting on the sideline thinking of course that we are really in the thick of the play. That is where the Scribes and Pharisees of old positioned themselves. Thinking that they are wise and learned when in fact they are far removed from Wisdom. *“Wisdom is vindicated by her deeds”* the reading states. Wisdom is demonstrated by the fruit that it bears.

No matter how wise and understanding Jesus’ opponents claim to be, their behavior exhibited their lack of wisdom. If they were wise, they would be bearing fruit. Their deeds would be showing, demonstrating, or illuminating their wisdom. But they are either on the sideline or on a standoff over what game they should be playing. “If you won’t play this, then we won’t play that.” And yet Jesus still beckons *“Come to me all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest.”* Jesus continues to invite, offer welcome, and give hope even to those who reject him.

Those who take neither John nor Jesus seriously find themselves sitting alone, not part of the action, or activity, or the fruit bearing. Wisdom then, as it is now, is made known by the fruit that is born. Actions, attitudes, outlook, can lead to a position of standoff, or they can lead to bearing fruit. As the Baptized children of God, we are to be about bearing fruit worthy of the Gospel; fruit that leads to reconciliation, fruit that leads to forgiveness, and fruit that leads to love not just for some but for all.

God doesn’t want us to sit on the side lines or to come to a standoff. God wants us to be involved in the action of life – bearing fruit worthy of the gospel. This isn’t any kind of fruit, this is specific fruit, fruit that is connected to the suffering of our Lord and to his unjust sentencing and to his execution on a cross outside of Jerusalem. *“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance. We wailed and you did not mourn. Wisdom is demonstrated by the fruit that it bears.”* The fruit we bear in our lives reveals wisdom: the fruit we bear in daily life exalts the one who came eating and drinking, the one who calls us to come and follow and find rest, the one who was willing to suffer and die, the one who is raised up so that life is possible for all; Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord.

It is July in south central Pennsylvania. Temperatures are elevated and increased humidity slows us down. Jesus invites us to Come and find rest. He doesn’t want us to sit on the sidelines. Nor does he want us to be disappointed, frustrated or angry. Jesus wants us to be involved, engaged, and active in the life that we have been given, a life given to bearing fruit worthy of the Gospel. And in the bearing of fruit, we discover something of Jesus’ gentleness and the lightness of his yoke. Amen.

FIRST READING: Zechariah 9:9-12

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you;

triumphant and victorious is he,

humble and riding on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim

and the war horse from Jerusalem;

and the battle bow shall be cut off,

and he shall command peace to the nations;

his dominion shall be from sea to sea

and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,

I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

¹²Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;

today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Psalms 145:8-14

SECOND READING: Romans 7:15-25a

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷But in fact it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸For I know that the good does not dwell within me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do the good lies close at hand, but not the ability.

¹⁹For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me.

²¹So I find it to be a law that, when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. ²²For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self,

²³but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

²⁴Wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ^{25a}Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

[Jesus spoke to the crowd saying:] "To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

¹⁷'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;

we wailed, and you did not mourn.'

¹⁸"For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; ¹⁹the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

²⁵At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸"Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."