

St. Paul Lutheran Church, LCMS

503 S. State Street, Caro, MI 48723

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Rev. Michael Stahl, Vacancy Pastor

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—PROPER 21

September 27, 2026, 11:00 AM

Contemporary Service



AS WE GATHER

From the beginning, God implanted His life-creating power into His creation with the command “Be fruitful and multiply” to animals (Genesis 1:22) and to humans (1:28), with one important difference. You are not an accident or only a product of biology. Every human being is a personal soul. So we confess, “I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes,

ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them” (Small Catechism, Creed, Explanation of the First Article). Because of our inherited sin, however, “the soul who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). Nevertheless, God’s design is for life—eternal life. He declares, “I have no pleasure in the death of anyone” (18:32). Because God so loves you, He sent His Son to take away your sin by the shedding of His blood on the cross. Therefore, “we preach Christ crucified, . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:23–24). Christ died to sin for you. By Holy Baptism, you died with Christ and are raised to new life in Him. The love of God is yours today by faith in the cross of Jesus Christ. The Father’s declaration of Jesus now becomes yours: “My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).



FOR THOSE DESIRING HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord's Supper is celebrated at this congregation in the confession and glad confidence that, as He says, our Lord gives into our mouths not only bread and wine but His very body and blood to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our union with Him and with one another. Our Lord invites to His table those who trust in His words, repent of all sin, and set aside any refusal to forgive and love as He forgives and loves us, that they may show forth His death until He comes. Because those who eat and drink our Lord's body and blood unworthily do so to their great harm and because Holy Communion is a confession of the faith which is confessed at this altar, any who are not yet instructed, in doubt, or who hold a confession differing from that of this congregation and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and yet desire to receive the Sacrament, are asked first to speak with the Pastor. For further study, see Matthew 5:23ff; 10:32ff; 18:15-35; 1 Cor. 11:17-34.)

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

“Come, Now is the Time to Worship”

(Chorus, Verse, Chorus, Verse, Chorus)

**Come, now is the time to worship,
Come, now is the time to give your heart,
Come, just as you are to worship,
Come, just as you are before your God,
Come.**

**One day every tongue will confess You are God,
One day every knee will bow,
Still the greatest treasure remains for those
Who gladly serve You now.**

WELCOME

(Please stand)

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

Psalm 43:4; 124:8; Isaiah 25:9

I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy.

Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, that He might save us.

**This is the LORD; we have waited for Him; let us be glad and rejoice in
His salvation.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

God invites His whole creation to the great feast of His salvation. That we may boldly enter into His gates of mercy, let us lift up our prayer of repentance and faith.

Lord God, heavenly Father, with thanksgiving for Your great love and promise of new life and hope for living, we confess to You all our sins, our waywardness, our neglect of Your call, as well as our failure to be of help to our neighbor and one another. We humbly pray, have

**mercy on us. Forgive us, renew and cleanse our hearts and minds,
and give us true faith in Your promised grace and deliverance.**

The feast of God's salvation has already begun for you by your Baptism into Christ. Now receive the Lord's abiding forgiveness, faith, strength, and help to live in the certain hope of eternal life in fellowship with Him: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

INTROIT

Psalm 147:1–5; antiphon: v. 6

The LORD lifts up the humble;
he casts the wicked to the ground.

**Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God;
for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.**

The LORD builds up Jerusalem;
he gathers the outcasts of Israel.

**He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.**

He determines the number of the stars;
he gives to all of them their names.

**Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;
his understanding is beyond measure.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

The LORD lifts up the humble;
he casts the wicked to the ground.

(Please be seated)

SONG OF PRAISE

“Famous One”

(Chorus, Verse, Chorus, Verse, Chorus)

Chorus:

**You are the Lord, the famous One, famous One;
Great is Your name in all the earth.
The heavens declare You're glorious, glorious;
Great is Your fame beyond the earth.**

**And for all You've done and yet to do,
with ev'ry breath, I'm praising You.
Desire of nations and ev'ry heart,
You alone are God, You alone are God.
Chorus:**

**The Morning Star is shining through,
And ev'ry eye is watching You.
Reveal Thy nature and miracles.
You are beautiful, You are beautiful. Chorus:**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty God, You exalted Your Son to the place of all honor and authority. Enlighten our minds by Your Holy Spirit that, confessing Jesus as Lord, we may be led into all truth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

SERVICE OF THE WORD

(Please be seated)

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Ezekiel 18:1–4, 25–32

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²“What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’? ³As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die. . . .

²⁵“Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? ²⁶When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. ²⁷Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. ²⁸Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?

³⁰“Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE: Philippians 2:1–4, 14–18

¹If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. . . .

¹⁴Do all things without grumbling or questioning, ¹⁵that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. ¹⁷Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 21:23–27

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-first chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

²³When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it

among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'" ²⁶But if we say, 'From man,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet." ²⁷So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life ✝ of the world to come. Amen.

(Please be seated)

CHILDREN'S SONG OF THE MONTH: "This is My Commandment"

(Verse 1 = Love, Verse 2 = Trust, Verse 3 = Serve)

**This is My commandment,
that you love one another that your joy may be full;
This is My commandment,
that you love one another that your joy may be full.
That your joy may be full, that your joy may be full.
This is My commandment,
that you love one another that your joy may be full.**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SONG OF THE DAY

“From the Inside Out”

(Verse, Pre-Chorus, Chorus, Verse, Pre-Chorus, Chorus, Ending)

**A thousand times I've failed, still Your mercy remains.
And should I stumble again, still I'm caught in Your grace.**

Pre-Chorus:

**Everlasting, Your light will shine when all else fades.
Never ending, Your glory goes beyond all fame.**

Chorus:

**In my heart, in my soul, Lord, You have control.
Consume me from the inside out, Lord.
Let justice and praise become my embrace,
To love You from the inside out.**

**Your will above all else, my purpose remains.
The art of losing myself, in bringing You praise.**

Pre-Chorus & Chorus

Ending:

**Everlasting, Your light will shine when all else fades.
Never ending, Your glory goes beyond all fame.
And the cry of my heart is to bring You praise,
From the inside out. Lord, my soul cries out.
From the inside out. Lord, my soul cries out, Lord.**

MESSAGE

OFFERING *(Please fill out the fellowship pad beside you)*

(Please stand)

PRAYERS

LORD'S PRAYER

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

HOLY COMMUNION

(Visitors, please read the statement at the beginning of this service folder.)

WORDS OF OUR LORD

PEACE OF CHRIST

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

LAMB OF GOD

**O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away;
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away.
Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ, And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.**

(Please be seated)

RECEIVING THE LORD'S SUPPER

DISTRIBUTION SONG

“Remembrance”

(Verse, Chorus, Verse, Chorus, Bridge, Chorus)

**Oh, how could it be
That my God would welcome me into this mystery
Say take this bread, take this wine
Now the simple made divine for us to receive
By Your mercy, we come to Your table
By Your grace, You are making us faithful**

Chorus:

**Lord, we remember You
And remembrance leads us to worship
And as we worship You
Our worship leads to communion
We respond to Your invitation, we remember You**

See His body, His blood
Know that He has overcome every trial we will face
None too lost to be saved
None too broken or ashamed, sinners welcome in this place
By Your mercy, we come to Your table
By Your grace, You are making us faithful: Chorus

Bridge:
Dying You destroyed our death
Rising You restored our life
Lord Jesus, come in glory
Lord Jesus, come in glory
Lord Jesus, come in glory
Lord Jesus, come in glory: Chorus

DISTRIBUTION SONG

“To You O Lord”

(Chorus, Verse, Chorus, Verse, Chorus)

To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul, In You I trust, O Lord.
To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul, In You I trust, O Lord.

Higher than the mountains, deeper than the seas,
Wider than the oceans is Your love for me.
You're with me on the mountains, in the valleys below.
You are right here beside me ev'rywhere that I go.

(Please stand)

PRAYER OF THANKS

Amen

BLESSING

(Please be seated)

SONG TO DEPART

“Build Up”

(Chorus, Verse, Chorus)

Chorus: (X=clap)
Oh we're gonna build up, build up the (X) Body of Christ.
Oh we're gonna build up, build up the (X) Body of Christ.
Oh we're gonna build up, build up the (X) Body of Christ.
We'll trust in the Lord to make us strong!

**Read your Bible. Pray every day.
Trust in the Lord to make us strong
Pray to the Lord. Talk to the Lord.
We'll trust in the Lord to make us strong.
Chorus:**

LEAVING

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish, Series A, Quarter 1.

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