

St. Paul Lutheran Church, LCMS

503 S. State Street, Caro, MI 48723

989-673-4214, www.stpaulcaro.org

Rev. Michael Stahl, Vacancy Pastor

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—PROPER 21

September 27, 2026, 8:30 AM

Divine Service Setting 4 Abbreviated



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.)

PRESERVICE MUSIC

WELCOME

HYMN OF INVOCATION: “Lord, Whose Love through Humble Service” LSB 848

(Please stand)

INVOCATION *(Spoken responses)*

Matthew 28:19b; 18:20

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

Amen.

EXHORTATION

Psalm 124:8; Psalm 130:3–4; Luke 18:13

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

If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

Since we are gathered to hear God’s Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

CONFESSION OF SINS

Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

ABSOLUTION

[John 20:19–23]

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore 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.

KYRIE ♪

Mark 10:47

**Lord, have mercy;
Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy.**

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS ♪

Luke 2:14; John 1:29

**1 To God on high be glory
And peace to all the earth;
Goodwill from God in heaven
Proclaimed at Jesus' birth!
We praise and bless You, Father;
Your holy name, we sing—
Our thanks for Your great glory,
Lord God, our heav'nly King.**

**2 To You, O sole-begotten,
The Father's Son, we pray;
O Lamb of God, our Savior,
You take our sins away.**

**Have mercy on us, Jesus;
Receive our heartfelt cry,
Where You in pow'r are seated
At God's right hand on high—**

**3 For You alone are holy;
You only are the Lord.
Forever and forever,
Be worshiped and adored;
You with the Holy Spirit
Alone are Lord Most High,
In God the Father's glory.
“Amen!” our glad reply.**

Text: Stephen P. Starke

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY: Proper 21 (Year A)

(Spoken responses)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

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.

(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)

ALLELUIA AND VERSE

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

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

HYMN OF THE DAY:

“‘As Surely as I Live,’ God Said” LSB 614
(Please stand for Stanza 8)

(Please be seated)

SERMON

OFFERING *(Please fill out the fellowship pad in the pew.)*

(Please stand)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

PREFACE *(Spoken responses)*

2 Timothy 4:22; [Colossians 3:1]; [Psalm 136]

The Lord be with you.

And also 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 Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good, right, and salutary . . . evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS ♪

Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9

**Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth adored;
Heav'n and earth with full acclaim shout the glory of Your name.
Sing hosanna in the highest, sing hosanna to the Lord;
Truly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!**

Text: Stephen P. Starke

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

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.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI *(Spoken response)*

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
Amen.

AGNUS DEI

John 1:29

- 1 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.
- 2 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.

Text: Stephen P. Starke

(Please be seated)

DISTRIBUTION HYMN:

“O God, My Faithful God” LSB 696

DISTRIBUTION HYMN:

“Renew Me, O Eternal Light” LSB 704

(Please stand)

NUNC DIMITTIS

Luke 2:29–32

1. O Lord, now let Your servant
Depart in heav’nly peace,
For I have seen the glory
Of Your redeeming grace:

**A light to lead the Gentiles
Unto Your holy hill,
The glory of Your people,
Your chosen Israel.**

- 2. All glory to the Father,
All glory to the Son,
All glory to the Spirit,
Forever Three in One;
For as in the beginning,
Is now, shall ever be,
God's triune name resounding
Through all eternity.**

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT *(Spoken responses)*

Amen

BENEDICAMUS

Psalm 103:1

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

Amen.

(Please be seated)

HYMN TO DEPART:

“May God Bestow on Us His Grace” LSB 824
(Please stand for Stanza 3)

LEAVING

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2026 Concordia Publishing House.

St. Paul Lutheran Church (LCMS), CCLI#277564

503 S. State St., Caro, MI 48723, (989) 673-4214

Vacancy Pastor: Rev. Michael Stahl

Minister of Family Life: Zane Simon

Organist: Cindy Engelhard