



# The Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

SUNDAY, 17 AUGUST 2025

11:00 AM

SAINT PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH ♦ DENVER, COLORADO ♦ 303.839.1432 ♦ WWW.STPAULDENVER.ORG

Welcome to Saint Paul Church, an open, affirming, and diverse community of faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We rejoice in the manner in which diversity has enriched, nurtured, and challenged the life and ministry we share in Christ, and we regret actions and attitudes throughout the Church that may have inhibited or prevented access to Word and Sacrament because of age, race, socio-economic or marital status, physical or mental capacities, gender identity or sexual orientation. We are a Reconciling in Christ community.

C=Congregation  
P=Presiding Minister  
A=Assisting Minister

## The Entrance Rite

As the Prelude begins, please gather in respectful silence for prayer and meditation, remembering that extraneous conversation may disturb others in their preparation for worship.

### PRELUDE

Partita on  
Your Strong Word Once Cleaved the Darkness  
I. Theme  
II. Pedal Solo  
III. Bicinum  
V. Fanfare

John A. Behnke

At the sound of the bell, the people stand to face the font at the entrance to the church.

### INVOCATION

P: In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
C: Amen.

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Baptized into Christ, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: you free us to love others, but we neglect our neighbors and follow our own way. You lead us by the Spirit of joy and peace, but we turn away from the abundant life you offer. You surround us with patience, kindness, and generosity, but we grow weary in doing what is right. In your mercy, forgive us, heal us, and break our bonds. Show us the path of life.

P: You belong to Christ Jesus, and you are God's children through faith. In the cross of ✠ Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. Clothed with Christ, you are a new creation.

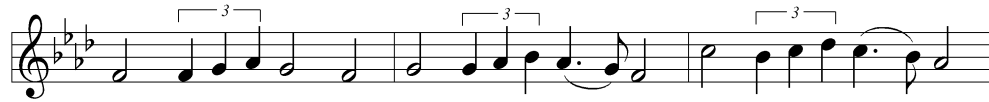
C: Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Your Strong Word Once Cleaved the Darkness

EBENEZER

In today's First Reading we hear, "Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?" and in the Psalm, "They do not know, . . . (nor) understand; they go about in darkness." In this hymn, we affirm that God's "strong word once cleaved the darkness," bringing light and life to all. Thus, may that "saving light . . . fill our songs with alleluias!"



1 Your strong word once cleaved the dark-ness; at your speak-ing  
 2 Your strong word de- clares us right-eous; bright with your own  
 3 From the cross your wis- dom blaz- ing now breaks forth in  
 4 God the Fa- ther, light cre- a- tor, God the Son, be -



1 it was done. For cre- a- ted light we thank you,  
 2 ho- li- ness, glo- rious now, we press to glo- ry,  
 3 match- less might; from the cross, for- ev- er beam- ing,  
 4 got- ten light, God the Spi- rit, light re veal- er,



1 while your or- dered sea- sons run.  
 2 and our lives our hopes con- fess.  
 3 gleams your own re- deem- ing light.  
 4 Trin- i- ty now shin- ing bright:



1 Al- le- lu- ia! Al- le- lu- ia! May the sav- ing  
 2 Al- le- lu- ia! Al- le- lu- ia! May the sav- ing  
 3 Al- le- lu- ia! Al- le- lu- ia! May the sav- ing  
 4 Al- le- lu- ia! Al- le- lu- ia! May the sav- ing



1 light you send fill our songs with al- le- lu- ias,  
 2 light you send fill our songs with al- le- lu- ias,  
 3 light you send fill our songs with al- le- lu- ias,  
 4 light you send fill our songs with al- le- lu- ias,



1 al- le- lu- ias with- out end!  
 2 al- le- lu- ias with- out end!  
 3 al- le- lu- ias with- out end!  
 4 al- le- lu- ias with- out end!

Text: Martin H. Franzmann, 1907-1976, alt.  
 Music: Thomas J. Williams, 1869-1944.

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GREETING

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

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

O God, judge eternal, you love justice and hate oppression, and you call us to share your zeal for truth. Give us courage to take our stand with all victims of bloodshed and greed, and, following your servants and prophets, to look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

# The Liturgy of the Word

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The people are seated.

## FIRST READING

Jeremiah 23.23-29

Because Jeremiah preaches the unpopular message of God's judgment, he suffers rejection. Today's reading distinguishes between the true prophet, like Jeremiah, who speaks God's word, and the false prophet who misleads the people through dreams. One is like wheat; the other like worthless straw.

Before the reading:

A: A reading from Jeremiah.

Am I a God near by, says the LORD, and not a God far off? Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD. I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, "I have dreamed! I have dreamed!" How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophesy lies and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart? They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the LORD. Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

After the reading:

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

## PSALMODY

Psalm 82

John Paradowski



Cantor: ANTIPHON

C: ANTIPHON

Cantor: God takes his stand in the council of heaven; he gives judgment in the midst of the gods: "How long will you judge unjustly, and show favor to the wicked? Save the weak and the orphan; defend the humble and needy; rescue the weak and the poor; deliver them from the power of the wicked.

C: ANTIPHON

Cantor: "They do not know, neither do they understand; they go about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. Now I say to you, 'You are gods, and all of you children of the Most High; nevertheless, you shall die like mortals and fall like any prince.'" Arise, O God, and rule the earth, for you shall take all nations for your own.

C: ANTIPHON

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## SECOND READING

Hebrews 11.29-12.2

*The author of Hebrews presents us with rich stories of faith. In a long list of biblical heroes, we find examples of trust in God that enabled them to face the trials of life faithfully. In addition to this “cloud of witnesses,” we have Jesus, the perfect model of faithful endurance.*

*Before the reading:*

A: A reading from Hebrews.

By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death; they were sawn in two; they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and holes in the ground.

Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

*After the reading:*

A: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*The people stand.*

4

Al - le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le-

lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Verse (Cantor): My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

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## GOSPEL

Luke 12.49-56

*Jesus delivers harsh words about the purifying and potentially divisive effects of obedience to God's call. The way of the cross often leads followers to encounter hostility and rejection, even from those they love.*

*Before the Gospel:*

**P:** The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke.

**C:** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

**P:** [Jesus said]: "I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already ablaze! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain,' and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat,' and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"

*After the Gospel:*

**P:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**C:** **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The people are seated.*

## HOMILY

Pastor Sara Wirth

*The people stand for the Hymn of the Day following a moment of silence for reflection on the sermon.*

Jesus' words in today's Gospel are quite negative: "I came to bring fire to the earth . . . I have a baptism with which to be baptized . . . Do you think that I have come to bring peace? . . . No, . . . rather division!" Similar imagery in this hymn seems much more positive: "God, whose purpose is to kindle, now ignite us with your fire . . . Baptize with your fiery Spirit, crown our lives with tongues of flame . . . God who still a sword delivers rather than a placid peace, with your sharpened word disturb us, from complacency release!"

1 God, whose pur - pose is to kin - dle: Now ig - nite us  
 2 God, who still a sword de - liv - ers rath - er than a  
 3 God, who in your ho - ly gos - pel wills that all should

1 with your fire; while the earth a - waits your burn - ing,  
 2 plac - id peace, with your sharp - ened word dis - turb us,  
 3 tru - ly live, make us sense our share of fail - ure,

1 with your pas - sion us in - spire. O - ver - come our sin - ful  
 2 from com - pla - cen - cy re - lease! Save us now from sat - is  
 3 our tran - quil - li - ty for - give. Teach us cour - age as we

1 calm - ness; stir in us your sav - ing name. Bap - tize  
 2 fac - tion when we pri - vate - ly are free, yet are  
 3 strug - gle in all lib - er - at - ing strife. Lift the

1 with your fier - y Spir - it; crown our lives with tongues of flame.  
 2 un - dis - turbed in spir - it by our neigh - bor's mis - er - y.  
 3 small - ness of our vi - sion by your own a - bun - dant life.

Text: David E. Trueblood, 1900-1994.

Music: William P. Rowlands, 1860-1937.

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## NICENE CREED

**C:** We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## INTERCESSIONS

**A:** Let us pray for the church, the creation, and the whole people of God, for God is near, saying: Your mercy is great.

**C:** **Your mercy is great.**

*After each petition of the prayer:*

**A:** Hear us, O God.

**C:** **Your mercy is great.**

*After the final petition:*

**P:** Confident in God's presence and promise, we entrust our prayers to the one who always receives them; through Jesus Christ, our wisdom and companion.

**C:** **Amen.**

## PEACE

**P:** The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C:** **And also with you.**

*The people are seated.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

# *The Liturgy of the Eucharist*

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*The Saint Paul QR code on the final page of the worship folder may be used for electronic giving.*

## OFFERING

*Redeeming Grace*  
Lorena Perry, soprano

K. Lee Scott

Come all who love my Lord and Master  
and like old David, I will tell,  
though chief of sinners, I've found favor,  
redeemed by grace from death and hell

Far as the east from west is parted,  
so far my sins, by his dying love,  
from me by faith are separated,  
blest antepast\* of joys above.

I late estranged from Jesus wandered  
and thought each dangerous poison good,  
but he in mercy long pursued me  
with cries of his redeeming blood.

Though like Bartimaeus I was blinded  
 in nature's darkest night concealed,  
 but Jesus' love removed my blindness,  
 and he his pardoning grace revealed.

Now I will serve him while he spares me  
 and with the people sing aloud;  
 though hell oppose and sinners mock me,  
 in rapturous songs I'll praise my God.

By faith I view the heavenly concert;  
 they sing high strains of Jesus' love.  
 I fain\*\* would be with Christ above.  
 Oh, with desire my soul is longing  
 and fain would be with Christ above.

Text: *Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*, 1854.

\*an appetizer. a foretaste of what is to come

\*\*gladly; willingly

The people stand.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A: Let us pray. God of abundance,

C: you have set before us a plentiful harvest. As we feast on your goodness, strengthen us to labor in your field,  
 and equip us to bear fruit for the good of all, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PREFACE DIALOGUE

(from A Community Mass)

Richard Proulx

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 God thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

P: It is indeed right and salutary . . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord*  
 (from A Community Mass)

Richard Proulx

Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,  
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho -

san - na in the high-est, ho - san - na in the high-est.  
 Blest is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
 san - na in the high-est, ho - san-na in the high-est.

**EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

P: Blessed are you, O God, creator of heaven earth . . . we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

C: Christ has died; Christ is ris-en; Christ will come a - gain.

P: Pour out your Holy Spirit in this meal . . . of the Most High, now and forever

C: A - men, a - men, a - men.

**LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Remember us, O God, not according to our sins and transgressions, but only according to your great mercy, and make us ever bold to pray:

C: **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.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: God invites you to this table of bounty. Come, the banquet is ready.

C: Thanks be to God.

**AGNUS DEI**

*Lamb of God*  
 (from *A Community Mass*)

Richard Proulx

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the  
 world: have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you  
 take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace.

*The people are seated.*

## COMMUNION

All are welcome to come forward to receive the sacrament of Christ's body and blood. You are invited to receive Holy Communion by proceeding down the center aisle to the minister bearing the body of Christ. You may receive the bread in your hand (please indicate your need for gluten-free bread to the pastor) before moving to the minister holding the chalice of wine, which you may receive only by intinction (dipping the bread into the chalice), OR take one of the pre-filled and sealed packets with a wafer and non-alcoholic wine before returning to your seat by way of the side aisle. Those who do not wish to receive the sacrament are invited to come forward with arms crossed to receive a blessing.

## COMMUNION HYMN

### How Firm a Foundation

## FOUNDATION

Those who first sang this early American folk hymn must have been inspired by today's Second Reading in proclaiming, "How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent word!" Indeed, the biblical "cloud of witnesses" serving as our examples in that reading "were commended for their faith" in spite of "fiery trials" of all kinds.



1 How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord,  
2 "Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dismayed,  
3 "When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,  
4 "Through-out all their life-time my peo-ple shall prove  
is laid for your faith in his ex-cel-lent word!  
for I am your God and will still give you aid;  
my grace, all-suf-fi-cient, shall be your sup-ply.  
my sov-'reign, e-ter-nal, un-change-a-ble love;  
What more can he say than to you he has said  
I'll strength-en you, help you, and cause you to stand,  
The flames shall not hurt you; I on-ly de-sign  
and then, when gray hairs shall their tem-ples a-dorn,  
who un-to the Sav-ior for ref-uge have fled?  
up-held by my righ-teous, om-nip-o-tent hand."  
your dross to con-sume and your gold to re-fine."  
like lambs they shall still in my bo-som be borne."

Text: J. Rippon, *A Selection of Hymns*, 1787, alt.  
Music: Early American.

After all have communed, and the table is cleared, the people stand.

## POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

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

C: Amen.

## POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A: Let us pray.

Mothering God, you gathered us to your table and we drank deeply of your grace. Send us out by your Spirit to love our neighbors as ourselves and proclaim your love in Jesus' name.

C: Amen.

## BENEDICTION

P: The love of God abound in you; the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ fill your hearts; and the life of the Spirit ✠ bless you and give you peace.

C: Amen.

This great testament of faith is drawn from Dietrich Bonhöffer's last poem, written while he was in a Gestapo prison in Berlin. Given his outspoken resistance against the Nazi regime and his subsequent martyrdom, Bonhöffer certainly belongs to that "cloud of witnesses" in the Second Reading, "of whom the world was not worthy," who "were tortured, suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment," as well as death "by the sword."

1. By gra-cious powers so won-der - ful - ly shel-tered, and con-fi-dent - ly  
 2. Yet is this heart by its old foe tor-ment - ed, still e - vil days bring  
 3. And when this cup you give is filled to brim-ming with bit-ter sor-row,  
 4. Yet when a - gain in this same world you give us the joy we had, the

wait - ing come what may, we know that God is with us night and morn - ing,  
 bur-dens hard to bear; oh give our fright-ened souls the sure sal - va - tion,  
 hard to un - der-stand, we take it thank - ful - ly and with-out tremb-ling,  
 bright-ness of your sun, we shall re - mem - ber all the days we lived through,

and nev - er fails to greet us each new day.  
 for which, O Lord, you taught us to pre - pare.  
 out of so good and so be - loved a hand.  
 and our whole life shall then be yours a - lone.

5 By gracious pow'rs so faithfully protected,  
 so quietly, so wonderfully near,  
 we live each day in hope, with you beside us,  
 and go with you through ev'ry coming year.

Text: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1906-1945; tr. Fred Pratt Green, 1903-2000.  
 Music: *Trente quatre psaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551.

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DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Live by the Spirit.  
 C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Partita on  
*Your Strong Word Once Cleaved the Darkness*  
 VI. Fugue

John A. Behnke

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## Participants in the Liturgy

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### TODAY

**Presiding Minister:** Pastor Barbara Berry-Bailey  
**Homilist:** Pastor Sara Wirth  
**Assisting Minister:** Carolyn Swenson  
**Organist and Music Director:** Deacon Mark Alan Filbert  
**Liturgical Cantor:** Lorena Perry  
**AV Technicians:** Cyndi Bailey, Jeff Harms, Jim Harrer,  
Michael Wallin, Ric White

### NEXT SUNDAY

**Presiding Minister and Homilist:** Pastor Barbara Berry-Bailey  
**Assisting Minister:** Cyndi Bailey  
**Organist and Music Director:** Deacon Mark Alan Filbert  
**Liturgical Cantor:** Lauren Bumgarner  
**AV Technicians:** Cyndi Bailey, Jeff Harms, Jim Harrer,  
Michael Wallin, Ric White

## Music Notes

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Most of this morning's organ and vocal music is by two contemporary American composers. The Prelude, a partita, i.e., a set of variations, based on the Processional Hymn, is by **John Behnke** (b. 1953). Behnke is Professor of Music at Concordia University in Mequon, Wisconsin, where he teaches organ and directs the Alleluia Ringers, Concordia's touring handbell choir. A frequent organ recitalist, handbell clinician, and festival director, Behnke completed his undergraduate study at Concordia University in River Forest, Illinois, and did both master's and doctoral work at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. The Offertory solo is a **K. Lee Scott** (b. 1950) arrangement of an early American hymn drawn from the 1856 edition of *Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*. The final stanza of the text ("By faith I view the heavenly concert.") echoes the author of today's Second Reading, who uses the phrase, "By faith," three times in the reading's first paragraph. Scott, a prolific composer of music for the church with over 300 choral and instrumental works in print, completed undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa and later founded the Lee Scott Singers, a professional choral ensemble for which he also serves as Music Director.

## Readings for Next Sunday

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### SAINT BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE

Exodus 19.1-6  
Psalm 12  
1 Corinthians 12.27-31a  
John 1.43-51



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The Rev. Barbara Berry-Bailey, Pastor  
The Rev. Deacon Mark Alan Filbert, Cantor

### SAINT PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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