



# Pentecost +4

June 25, 2023

+

9:00 AM

*Welcome to our worship of the living God on this Fourth Sunday after Pentecost! Today's readings remind us that God doesn't promise that the path of discipleship will be easy. Jeremiah feels the pain of rejection from those who don't want to hear what he has to say, and Jesus reminds His disciples that His words may bring stark division. Even so, we needn't be afraid, for God accounts for each hair on our heads. Though we may experience rejection, frustration, division, and death in our journey of discipleship, God's grace and love raise us up into a new beginning each day. Marked with the cross of Christ, we're sent from our worship to witness to Christ in the world.*

*Congregational responses are in boldface italics.*

## GATHERING

### GATHERING MUSIC

**GATHERING HYMN: "How Firm a Foundation"**

*ELW 575*

*How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in Christ Jesus, the Word!  
What more can He say than to you He has said  
Who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?*

*"Fear not, I am with you! Oh, be not dismayed,  
For I am your God and will still give you aid;  
I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,  
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.*

*"When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,  
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be your supply.  
The flames shall not hurt you; I only design  
Your dross to consume and your gold to refine.*

*"Throughout all their lifetime my people shall prove*

*My sov'reign, eternal, unchangeable love;  
And then, when gray hairs shall their temples adorn,  
Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne."*

## **INVOCATION, CONFESSION, AND FORGIVENESS:**

Blest are You, Holy and Living God, the Creator, + Redeemer, and Reconciler of all!

*And blest is Your Reign, now and forever!*

You love us with an everlasting, death-defying love—  
but even so, we still cling to the old life of sin within us.  
For turning away from You and ignoring Your will for our lives,

*Lord, have mercy on us!*

For failing You in what we've thought, in what we've said and done,  
through ignorance, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault,

*Christ, have mercy on us!*

For wounding Your love and marring Your image in us,

*Lord, have mercy on us!*

*We observe a time of silence for personal soul-searching and confession.*

For the sake of Your Son, Christ Jesus our Lord,

*forgive us our sins, transform us by Your Spirit,  
and free us to love to the glory of Your holy Name. Amen.*

Hear the Good News, brothers and sisters: God is rich in mercy!  
So great is God's love for us that even when we were dead in sin,  
in Christ, God has made us alive again. By God's grace you've been saved,  
and in the Name of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven!  
May God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit,  
that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

*Amen. Thanks be to God!*

## **HYMN OF PRAISE: "You Are the God We Praise!"**

**>**

*We'll sing this to the tune of "Crown Him with Many Crowns" ELW 855*

*You are the God we praise, the Lord whom we acclaim;*

*Eternal Father, all the world bows down at Your great Name!  
To You angelic hosts and all the pow'rs of heav'n,  
The cherubim and seraphim, sing praises without end:*

*“Lord God of pow'r and might, most holy Lord on high,  
The heav'ns and earth are filled with all Your glorious majesty!”  
Apostles, prophets, saints, and martyrs sing Your praise;  
Throughout the world Your holy Church acclaim You Lord always:*

*Father of majesty, Your true and only Son,  
And Holy Spirit, Strength and Guide, exalted Three-in-One!  
Lord Christ, the Father's Son, in glory, King above,  
You humbly chose the virgin's womb to set us free in love.*

*You overcame death's sting and opened heaven's door  
To all the faithful where You reign in glory evermore.  
Come, Lord, and help all those for whom Your blood was spent  
And bring us with Your holy saints to glory without end.*

## **GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the + love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit are with you all.

*And also with you.*

Then let's pray: Teach us, good Lord, to serve You as You deserve:  
to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds,  
to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward,  
except that of knowing that we do Your will through Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord.

*Amen.*

## **WORD AND PRAYER**

*Sung to the tune of "Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty" ELW 533*

*Alleluia! Lord and Savior, open now Your saving Word.  
Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred!  
Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that You bring.*

**FIRST READING:****Jeremiah 20.7-13**

NRSVUE

*Jeremiah complains to the Lord:* O Lord, You've enticed me, and I was enticed; You've overpowered me, and You've prevailed! I've become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me. <sup>8</sup>For whenever I speak, I must cry out; I must shout, "Violence and destruction!" For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. <sup>9</sup>If I say, "I won't mention Him or speak any more in His name," then within me there's something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I'm weary with holding it in, and I can't. <sup>10</sup>For I hear many whispering: "Terror's all around! Denounce him! Let's denounce him!" All my close friends are watching for me to stumble. "Perhaps he can be enticed, and we can prevail against him and take our revenge on him." <sup>11</sup>But the Lord is with me like a terrifying warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble, and they won't prevail. They'll be greatly shamed, for they won't succeed. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten. <sup>12</sup>O Lord of hosts, You test the righteous; You see the heart and the mind. Let me see Your retribution upon them, for to You I've committed my cause!

<sup>13</sup>Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord— for He's delivered the life of the needy from the hands of evildoers!

This is holy wisdom; this is holy word.

*Thanks be to God!*

**SECOND READING:****Romans 6.1-11**

NRSVUE

*St Paul writes:* What, then, are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup>By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? <sup>3</sup>Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we were buried with *Christ* by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup>For if we've been united with *Christ* in a death like his, we'll certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup>We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, so we might no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup>For whoever has died is freed from sin. <sup>8</sup>But if we died with Christ, we believe that we'll also live with Him. <sup>9</sup>We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. <sup>10</sup>The death He died, He died to sin once for all— but the life He lives, He lives to God. <sup>11</sup>So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

This is holy wisdom; this is holy word.

*Thanks be to God!*

**THE HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 10.24-39**

**NRSVUE**

*See ELW 172 for the tune.*

***Halle, halle, hallelujah! Halle, halle, hallelujah!  
Halle, halle, hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!***

The Holy Gospel according to St Matthew, the tenth chapter. ***Glory to You, O Lord!***

*Jesus said to His disciples, “A disciple’s not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; <sup>25</sup> it’s enough for the disciple to be like the teacher and the slave like the master. If they’ve called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!*

<sup>26</sup> “So have no fear of them— for nothing’s covered up that won’t be uncovered, and nothing secret that won’t become known. <sup>27</sup> What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. <sup>28</sup> Don’t fear those who kill the body but can’t kill the soul; rather, fear the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. <sup>29</sup> Aren’t two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. <sup>30</sup> And even the hairs of your head are all counted. <sup>31</sup> So don’t be afraid; you’re of more value than many sparrows.

<sup>32</sup> “Everyone, therefore, who acknowledges Me before others, I’ll also acknowledge before My Father in heaven; <sup>33</sup> but whoever denies Me before others, I’ll also deny before My Father in heaven.

<sup>34</sup> “Don’t think that I’ve come to bring peace to the earth; I haven’t come to bring peace, but a sword! <sup>35</sup> For I’ve come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; <sup>36</sup> and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household. <sup>37</sup> Whoever loves father or mother more than Me isn’t worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me isn’t worthy of Me—<sup>38</sup> and whoever doesn’t take up the cross and follow Me isn’t worthy of me. <sup>39</sup> Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for My sake will find it.”

This is the Gospel of our Lord. ***Praise to You, O Christ!***

*Sung to the tune of “Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty” ELW 533*

***Christ, the Song of Love Incarnate, touching earth with heaven’s grace,  
For Your living, suff’ring, dying, for Your rising, hear our praise!  
Alleluia, Lord of life! Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ!***

# PROCLAMATION OF THE GOOD NEWS

## HYMN OF FAITH: **“We Believe!”**

*Adapted from Graham Kendrick’s “We Believe”.  
Sung to the tune of “Christ is Risen! Alleluia!” ELW 382*

*We believe in God the Father, Maker of the universe,  
And in Jesus Christ, our Savior, Word made flesh through virgin birth,  
God’s own Son, who served and suffered, for our sins was crucified.  
Then from death He rose victorious; now He reigns from God’s own side.  
Christ will come again in glory, judge the living and the dead;  
All creation will adore Him, for His Reign will have no end!*

*We believe the Holy Spirit gathers all the Church as one,  
Saints from ev’ry time and nation bound together in the Son.  
Spirit-born in Word and water, brought to faith, set free from sin,  
Sent to serve in love and mercy, sanctified and whole within,  
Reconciled through God’s forgiveness, one with Christ, His Body we,  
We will rise again from death to live with God eternally!*

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## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND SHARING OF PEACE:

Good and gracious God, we give You thanks for uniting us with Christ in the waters of Baptism and putting to death our enslavement to sin, so that we might find our lives united to His in resurrection and walk in newness of life. Stir us up to proclaim Your Gospel even when it challenges our society’s false notions of peace, and move us in all circumstances to embody and share the Gospel with all around us. God of grace,  
***hear our prayer.***

Under Your gracious watch, not even a sparrow goes unnoticed. Safeguard plant and animal habitats threatened by melting glaciers, rising oceans, and receding coastlines, and bring healing to Your creation wherever it writhes in pain. Where there’s fire, bring cool air and new growth; where there’s flooding, bring abatement; where there’s drought, bring rain; and inspire us to care for what You’ve so bountifully provided. God of grace,  
***hear our prayer.***

Deliver Your people in nations experiencing conflict or crisis, especially in Ukraine, Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan, Libya, Ethiopia, Mali, Israel, Palestine, the DRC, Central America, and homes and communities in our own nation. Thwart the efforts of those who sow chaos and terror, and guide those working to bring about peace and reconciliation. God of grace,  
***hear our prayer.***

You've counted even the hairs of our heads. Reassure those experiencing poverty, homelessness, unemployment, or exploitation that their lives have infinite value in Your sight. Lift up those who feel shunned or excluded because of their gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, or any other human distinction. Have mercy on all who struggle with any kind of sickness, loneliness, grief, or pain, and raise them to newness of strength and life, hope and joy. We especially seek Your healing grace for... God of grace,  
***hear our prayer.***

We give You thanks, Lord, that all who've died in union with Christ also live in union with Him. On this day, we especially thank You for Philip Melanchthon and the presenters of the Augsburg Confession, and for all the saints whose faithful confessions of faith have inspired our own discipleship. Continue to nurture us in their legacy of discipleship, and raise us with them to eternal life in You. God of grace,  
***hear our prayer.***

Gracious God, receive our prayers; hear our hearts deep yearnings, yet to be formed into words. Give us the courage to yield ourselves, all that we are and have yet to become, to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit; and carry out in us and through us Your work of new creation through Christ Jesus our Lord.  
***Amen.***

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

*Reconciled to God and to one another, we share a sign of Christ's peace.*

## **MEAL**

### **OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS AND OURSELVES**

#### **OFFERTORY HYMN:**

*Sung to the tune of "He Leadeth Me", LBW 501*

***Accept, O Lord, the gifts we bring to place upon Your Table.***

***We do not worship as we ought, but only as we're able.***

***Our hopes and dreams, our toils and cares, we lift in prayer before You;***

***Lord, by Your grace now come to us as humbly we adore You.***

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE:**

Blest are You, holy, mighty, and merciful Lord!

***Heaven and earth are full of Your glory!***

We praise and thank You for the goodness and love You've shown us in creation,

***in the calling and liberation of Your people Israel,***

in Your strong word spoken through the prophets,

***and above all in Your Son Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,***

who gave His life for us even unto death on the cross,

***that filled with the Spirit of His resurrection, we might have eternal life in Him.***

And so, with Your Church on earth and the whole company of heaven,

we praise Your Name and join their unending hymn:

*Sung to the tune of "Angels, From the Realms of Glory", ELW 275*

***Holy, holy, Lord most holy, God of power, God of might,  
Heav'n and earth proclaim Your glory! Hail, hosanna, God Most High!  
Blest is He who comes in Your Name! Hail, hosanna, God Most High!***

In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread,  
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."

And so, remembering all that our Lord's done for us,  
believing the witness of His resurrection, awaiting His final appearing in glory,

***We share this foretaste of the feast to come.***

Now send Your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts,  
that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as He comes to us in His holy Supper.

***Empower us by that same Spirit to love and forgive,  
that our lives may anticipate that day when You'll make all things new.***

All this we pray with joy through our Lord Jesus Christ, who's taught us to pray:

***Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.***



Breaking this bread, drinking this cup, we share the body and blood of Christ.  
In Christ's presence, there's fullness of joy— so come to the banquet!

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

*Now we share God's consecrated gifts among God's consecrated people, knowing that our living Lord Jesus is fully present with us in His Supper, giving Himself to us in bread and wine and forgiving love. Today, we'll share the Lord's Supper by receiving the body and blood of Christ at communion "stations" at the altar rail. Come forward a pew at a time; take an empty glass from the tray, or a glass already filled with grape juice if necessary. Receive "**the body of Christ, given for you**" from the Pastor; receive "**the blood of Christ, shed for you**" from our communion assistant. We'll pause for silent prayer after we've all communed...*

*If you're joining us from your home, we invite you to share the bread and cup with one another. When giving the bread to your neighbor, say "**The body of Christ, given for you.**" When giving the wine/grape juice say, "**The blood of Christ, shed for you.**" Whatever's left over may be reverently eaten and drunk by everyone after our worship is over. Once we've all shared in the body and blood of Christ, we continue in blessing and prayer:*

## SENDING

### THANKSGIVING, PRAYER, AND BENEDICTION:

May the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us in His grace.

**Amen.**

We thank You, generous God, for the refreshment we've received at Your banquet table.

Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world,

through the One who's our dearest treasure, Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

And now may God watch over you and provide for you;

may Christ Jesus openly declare you to be His own;

and may the Holy Spirit bring you help and comfort always;

and Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

### SENDING HYMN:

**"O Jesus, I Have Promised"**

*ELW 810*



*O Jesus, I have promised to serve You to the end;  
Remain forever near me, my Master and my Friend.  
I shall not fear the battle if You are by my side,  
Nor wander from the pathway if You will be my guide.*

*Oh, let me feel You near me; the world is ever near.  
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear.  
My foes are ever near me, around me and within;  
But Jesus, then draw nearer to shield my soul from sin.*

*Oh, let me hear You speaking in accents clear and still  
Above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will.  
Now speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;  
Now speak and make me listen, O Guardian of my soul.*

*O Jesus, You have promised to all who follow You  
That where You are in glory, Your servant shall be too.  
And Jesus, I have promised to serve You to the end;  
Oh, give me grace to follow, my Master and my Friend!*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DISMISSAL:**

God has a plan.

*We're it!*

What's our part in God's plan?

*Sharing God's love in joyful service!*

Then let's go in peace, live in joy, and serve the Lord!

*Thanks be to God!*

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# What to Fear

What are you afraid of? What fills you with dread? What keeps you up at night, worrying? In these days of financial uncertainty, social isolation, cultural upheaval, and worldwide illness, I'm sure the answers to these questions are legion. We fear impoverishment. We fear Covid-19. We fear violence. We fear death...

As we wrestle with our fears, most of us turn to our faith to find fear's opposite— peace. We “share the peace” with each other on Sunday mornings. “The peace of the Lord be always with you,” we say. “And also with you.” We profess our faith in Jesus, the Prince of Peace. We pray that God will grant us “the peace that passes all understanding.” We assume (the vast majority of us, anyway) that ours is a religion of peace— a religion of peacemaking, peace-loving, and peacekeeping...

So it's jarring to open our Bibles this week to a text that says very little about peace. “Do you think that I've come to bring peace to the earth?” Jesus asks His disciples in our reading from the Gospel of Matthew. “I haven't come to bring peace, but a sword.”

What are we to make of these words? Indeed, what are we to make of this week's lectionary as a whole, which explodes off the page with dire, provocative language that sounds anything but peaceful? The prophet Jeremiah describes God's presence in his life as fire, “a burning fire shut up in my bones.” The Psalmist writes that his faith makes him an object of shame, gossip, insult, and reproach in his community. Paul reminds us that our commitment to Christ requires us not simply to be nice people, but to consider ourselves utterly “dead to sin.” And in our Gospel, Jesus speaks of exposed secrets, broken homes, heavy crosses, and lost lives.

In short, these texts invite us— no, they *compel* us— to move beyond soft, saccharine Christianity and wrestle with the hard, high costs of discipleship. Descriptive rather than prescriptive, they declare in honest, unflinching terms what will happen if we dare to take our faith seriously. What'll happen in our families, our communities, our churches, and our world if we allow the “fire” of God's word to burn through us. Bottom line? If “gentle Jesus, meek and mild” is what we prefer, then this week's lectionary's not for us. If an risk-free religion is what we feel entitled to practice, we've misunderstood Christianity. If neither you nor anyone within your sphere of influence has ever been provoked, disturbed, surprised, or challenged by your life of faith, then things aren't okay in your life of faith...

This week's readings offer more riches than I can count, so I want to highlight just a few representative phrases, and consider what they say to us about fear, peace, and faith:

- ***“The Lord is with me like a dread warrior.”*** This is the phrase Jeremiah uses to describe the presence of God in his life, and I'll confess at the outset that it makes me wince. I grew up with “fire and brimstone” preaching, and I know what it's like to envision God as harsh and punitive. So I tread carefully around images of a “scary” God, aware of their many pitfalls. And yet I wonder, are we, the 21<sup>st</sup>-century Church, willing to “fear” God in ways that are right and necessary? Do we recognize that when it comes to evil, injustice, and oppression, God is in fact a “dread warrior?” Are we willing, for example, to allow this God to shatter the monolith that is white privilege and white supremacy in America? Are we open to God warring against our

thoughtless consumerism, our casual lusts, our quiet hatreds, our unexamined idolatries? Can we allow God to battle the large-scale indifference to death and addiction to guns that daily turn our streets, schools, playgrounds, and shopping malls into bloody war zones? Are we open to God breaking our hearts with compassion so that we can welcome into our midst the stranger, the refugee, the immigrant, the exile?

Make no mistake, God's "peace" doesn't come at the expense of holiness, righteousness, mercy, and justice. Some things must break, must shatter, must die, before the Word of God can take root and grow. Whether it's a besetting sin in my personal life, or a corporate failure in my communal or national life, the question that matters is this: do I trust God to be a dread warrior, doing battle against the evil within and around me? Do I really want God's Word to engage my life at its hardest, stoniest core? Or do I want a soft substitute?

- ***"Zeal for Your house has consumed me."*** Has it? This is an earnest question, one I've been asking myself over and over again as I've prepared to write this essay. "Zeal" in the Biblical context is fervor, ardor, enthusiasm, or passion. Do I feel ardent about God's house? God's reputation? God's name and standing in the world I live in? Am I so consumed by the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection that I feel pain when the Good News is twisted, abused, maligned, or neglected? Do I have stakes in God's house, God's family, God's people, God's world?

I'll admit that the answer is very often "no." Let's face it — "zeal" makes most of us uncomfortable. When it comes to religious devotion, we prefer a gentle reserve, a polite detachment, a measured interest. But zeal? Zeal is embarrassing, fanatical. Zeal is what the Bible-thumping weirdos have.

And yet the Psalmist writes without apology that he's consumed with passion for the things of God. Jesus Himself echoes this sentiment when He warns his disciples against the dangers of a half-baked, tepid spirituality: "Whoever doesn't take up the cross and follow Me isn't worthy of Me." What we should fear, these passages imply, isn't an ardent and intense devotion. What we should fear is indifference, casualness, a lukewarm faith that risks nothing and therefore gains nothing...

- ***"Those who lose their life for My sake will find it."*** Here, Jesus implies that God's timing will sometimes offend us, and that God's measure of loss and gain in a human life will sometimes appall us. What I take Jesus to mean is that "losing our lives" is part of the deal if we choose to follow Him. If we take our faith lives seriously, we'll pay a price before we reap a reward. Which is to say, we Christians need to be clear and honest about the faith we profess. Yes, there's joy in the Christian life. Yes, there's beauty, awe, healing, and laughter. Yes, the hairs on our head are all counted, and yes, we're worth more to God than many sparrows. But the life of faith is also arduous. The life of faith is also risky. The life of faith doesn't guarantee us health, wealth, prosperity, or safety. The life of faith is sacrificial at its heart, and to suggest otherwise is to lie. To preach otherwise is to make a mockery of the Gospel.
- ***"I haven't come to bring peace, but a sword."*** Again, it's important to remember that when Jesus speaks of division rather than peace in this Gospel, He's being descriptive, not

prescriptive. It's not Jesus' desire or purpose to set fathers against sons or mothers against daughters. It's certainly not His will that we stir up conflict for conflict's sake, or use His words to justify violence or war. But His words are a necessary reminder that the peace Jesus offers us isn't the fake peace of denial, dishonesty, and harmful accommodation. His is a holistic, truth-telling, disinfecting peace— the kind of deep, life-changing peace that doesn't hesitate to break in order to mend and cut in order to heal.

Jesus will name realities we don't want named. He'll upset hierarchies we'd rather keep intact. He'll expose the lies we tell ourselves out of cowardice, laziness, or obstinacy. And He'll disrupt all dynamics in our relationships with ourselves and with each other that keep us from wholeness and holiness. This isn't because Jesus wants us to suffer. It's because He knows that real peace is worth fighting for.

Consider the fact that Jesus forced choices from just about everyone He met during His years of incarnate ministry. No one met Him without feeling compelled to change. He consistently brought people to the point of crisis, tension, movement, or transformation. He consistently led people to decisions their families and communities didn't understand. Jesus Himself was considered crazy by His mother and siblings. Still, the status quo held no sway over Him; His project was *shalom* or bust. And so I have to ask myself: When was the last time my faith "divided" me? When was the last time I allowed Jesus to bring me to a point of saving crisis? When was the last time my faith life encouraged holy division, holy change, in someone else's heart? In other words, what am I most invested in— my comfort or my salvation?

As I said at the outset, this week's lectionary is full of zingers. I know I've barely scratched the surface, but just these few highlighted phrases bring me back to the question I started with: What should we be most afraid of? Not insult. Not change. Not persecution. Not death. What we should fear, these passages of Scripture tell us, is a life half-lived— a life of blandness and niceness, a life of disengaged devotion, a life of piety without power. What we should fear is any Christianity that's not cruciform...

Scripture offers us so many beautiful names for Jesus: Son of God, Son of Man, Emmanuel, Logos, Lord, Christ. Dare we add another— Jesus, the Disturber of the Peace? What would it be like to allow Him to disturb us, unmake us, and divide us? What would it be like to experience the peace that costs, the peace that breaks, the peace that saves? Jesus will indeed "guide our feet into the way of peace." He will— but only if we'll let Him. May we do so...

✦ *Debie Thomas*



# This Week at St Paul's

P = Parish House, F = Fellowship Hall

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
<b>Sun. 6/25</b> <b>Pentecost +4</b>	9:00 AM 10:30 AM	Holy Communion, in person and online: <a href="http://www.facebook.com/StPaulsQtown/live">www.facebook.com/StPaulsQtown/live</a> Fellowship Hour [F]
<b>Tues. 6/27</b>	7:00 PM	Worship & Music Team via Zoom/FCC *
<b>Wed. 6/28</b>	7:00 PM	VBS Planning via Zoom/FCC *
<b>Thur. 6/29</b>	6:00 PM 7:00 PM	Cub Scouts 007 [F] Scouts BSA Troop 007 [F] - pick up hoagies after 8:15 PM
<b>Fri. 6/30</b>	1:00 PM 7:00 PM	Al-Anon [F] AA [F]
<b>Sun. 7/2</b> <b>Pentecost +5</b>	9:00 AM 10:30 AM	Holy Communion, in person and online: <a href="http://www.facebook.com/StPaulsQtown/live">www.facebook.com/StPaulsQtown/live</a> Fellowship Hour [F]

- \* If you'd like to participate in these **activities taking place over Pr Dave's Zoom platform**, go to [zoom.us](http://zoom.us), click "Join a Meeting" at the top right of the page, use meeting ID 3700147169, and if it asks for a password, use 119805 and you should be in. If you're using your phone, these dial-in numbers will work: 929.205.6099 or 312.626.6799. After you dial, you'll be asked for the host's code, and you'll type in 3700147169#, then 119805# and you're in. You can also use **Free Conference Call [FCC]**: Dial 857.232.0157, enter conference code 144261, and you're in.

## **REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK:**

- The Armed Forces, President Biden and his cabinet, Crossroads Pregnancy Care, David & Mary Johnson Sr., Morgan, Ally, Dontay, & Emily Hassler, Andrew Edmonds, Don & Karen Ludovici, Derek & Matt Ludovici, Barbara Graser, Bob Knapp, Bob & Charyl Westervelt, Connie Slotter, Norm Diehl Sr., Amy Miller, Karen Capella, Chrissy Cousins, Bob Shimalla, Robert & Cheryl Ball, Melissa Manhart, Tammy Zepiora, Aaron Hamlin, Gary Hertzog, David & Carol Marks, Katie, Cassidy Owens, Kelly & Jim, Kelsey Shaak, John Apple, Dr Jenn Phelps, Karen K., Keith, Joe, Ron Diehl, Annabelle Weller, Kelly, Kareem, Bret & Layann, Dr Stephen Motsay, Brenda Oelschlager, Brody, Sens. John Fetterman and Bob Casey, former Pres. Jimmy Carter, Roy Weidner, Bill Schumacher Jr., Jack Lawrence, Cindy Cunnane, Michael Ludovici, Pr John Hansen, Pr Robert Lescalette, Paul Ahlum Jr., Pr Erika Wesch, Sheila & Jamie Simpson, Sable Wilcox; the people of Afghanistan and Ukraine; victims of natural disasters and gun violence; everyone struggling with COVID-19 and its containment.
- Families and friends of Kamryn Jenkins, Martha Reumann, Pr John Stevens Kerr, Patti Jo Zackowski, Ray Constable, Pr John Keating.

## Serving in Worship Today:

<b>Usher:</b>	<i>Volunteer Needed</i>	<b>Altar Guild:</b>	Sascha Baringer, Stefanie Bauman
<b>Communion:</b>	Bruce Krogslund	<b>Bulletin:</b>	Aundie Hamlin
<b>Acolyte:</b>	Aaron Shimalla	<b>Reader:</b>	Patty Schumacher
<b>Counter:</b>	Tom Sutkins		

**Today's bulletins** are sponsored by Kristin Umstead in loving memory of William Umstead. "Happy heavenly birthday today!"

**Many, many thanks to all of you who helped in any way with our Joyful Noise 9 Music Festival!** What a marvelous event for our entire community— and what a marvelous testimony to the grace of God abounding through us unto the blessing of many around us!

**Congratulations to our graduates** from high school and college:

- From Quakertown Community High School, *Ben Bauman* and *Victoria Hassler*; and
- From Cairn University, with her master's degree in counseling, *Alicia Byelich*.

"We give You thanks, O God, for all of life and for our common calling as Your servants. Look with favor upon our young people who've completed another milestone in their education. Give them courage, patience, and vision as they go their way; and strengthen us all in our vocation of witness to the world and of service to others, for the sake of Your whole creation and to the glory of Your holy Name both now and forever."  
*(ELW Prayers for Occasional Services)*

**Lutheran Disaster Response** continues to work with companions in Ukraine, Turkey, Syria, and in our own land to providing refugees and disaster victims with immediate support and supplies as well as pastoral and psychological support and long-term reconstruction efforts— and we can be partners in those relief and rebuilding efforts. For more information or to give, go to [www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/Ways-to-Give](http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/Ways-to-Give). You can send your donations to Lutheran Disaster Response, PO Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009. Your gifts will be used entirely (100%) to provide support for people impacted by these disasters.

Our Scout Troop 007 and Cub Pack 007 are holding a **Hoagie Sale in June**. You can choose Italian or turkey hoagies, with or without onions, at **\$7 each**. Orders due June 22; hoagie build and pickup Jun. 29. An order form is posted in the narthex— sign up and prepare to enjoy!

Our Social Ministry Team is now helping to **pack food bags at the Quakertown Food Pantry** the first Thursday of every month from 1:00-3:00 PM. No experience is necessary— everyone's welcome to provide this vital ministry to the community. In addition to our food-packing work at the Food Pantry, you can also come in on Mondays from 10:00 AM-1:00 PM to serve at the front desk (keeping a record of customers) or as a "shopper" (adding the perishable items to the pre-packaged grocery bags). Contact Sara George ([primrose40@aol.com](mailto:primrose40@aol.com) or 215.538.3786) or Food Pantry coordinator Donna Sorok (215.313.4644 cell) if you're interested in helping. In addition, we encourage you to **bring in canned goods** to donate to the Quakertown Food Pantry. You can place your donations in the narthex for pickup.

Our **Monthly Special** recipient for June is the **FEAST Food Pantry** in Trumbauersville. Opening in 2015, their mission has always been, as children of God, to provide food to those in need. With the guidance of pantry coordinator Gary Nace and the members of Christ's Lutheran Church in Trumbauersville, FEAST continues to thrive and give to those in need. The FEAST Pantry is open Tuesdays from 11am-2pm, Thursdays from 6pm-8pm, and the third Saturday of each month from 11am-1pm. Please give as you're able!

**Stewardship Note:** Our congregation's expenses for 2023 have already exceeded our income by \$19,000. Please prayerfully consider how you might support our ministry together. If you'd like to give electronically and would like some information on how to do that, please contact the church office.

**"Paint St Paul's":** Back in 2022, we completed the painting of St Paul's inside and out at a cost of \$19,900, which we're now ready to raise the funds to repay our investments. A form for making a pledge toward this campaign is available in the pews. Please prayerfully consider what you can donate toward this worthy cause as we welcome all to St Paul's.

Our brothers and sisters at Christ's Lutheran Church in Trumbauersville are once again presenting **free drive-in family movies** in their parking lot once or twice a month on Friday evenings at sunset. Bring your lawn chairs, blankets, etc. and enjoy! Popcorn is served up for free; other snacks are also available at a small cost. Next up is **"Wakanda Forever"** [PG-13] on **July 14**.



## Vacation Bible School

**August 7-11, 2023**

**5:30 PM**

**Light Dinner**

**6:00-8:00 PM**

**Program**

**St Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**837 Old Bethlehem Road, Applebachville**  
**Open to kids in grades K-5.**

*For the latest announcement updates, go to:*

[docs.google.com/document/d/1aZi\\_lL0SHaQ1BOGFS\\_s3bt0oHoTQ4fCy9t0372PZioE/edit#](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aZi_lL0SHaQ1BOGFS_s3bt0oHoTQ4fCy9t0372PZioE/edit#)

*For more information on our ministries, please contact:*

**St Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church**

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215.536.5789

[www.stpaulsqtown.org](http://www.stpaulsqtown.org)

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**Rev. David A. Heckler, Pastor**

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