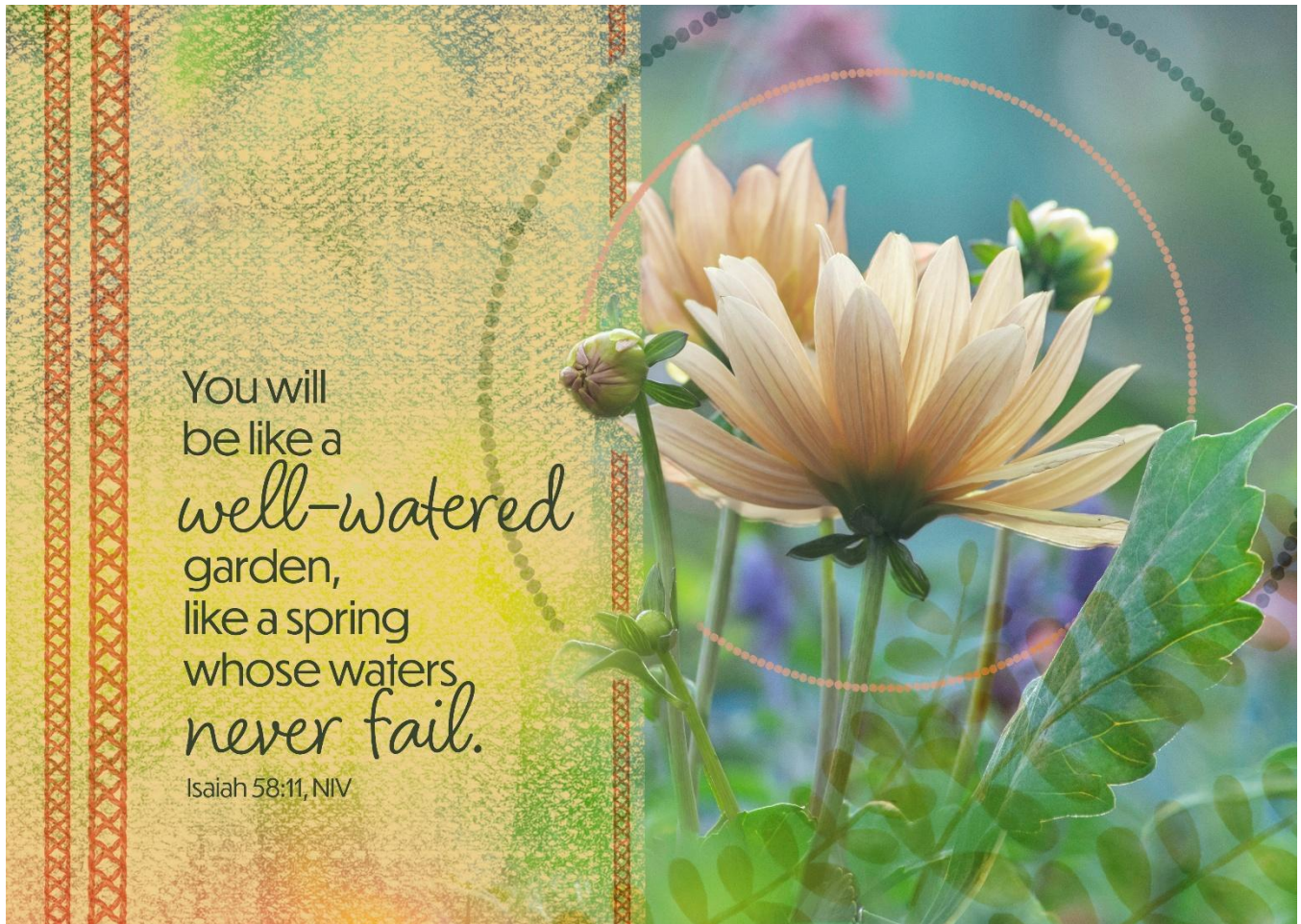


Welcome to St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

August 24, 2025



GOD IS STILL SPEAKING

,

*NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, OR WHERE YOU ARE ON
LIFE'S JOURNEY YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!*

Worship Leadership

Preacher: The Rev. John J. Ward-Diorio
The Rev. Allyssa A. Boyer
Lector: Beth Lengel

Ministry of Music

Minister of Music: Eric R. Dundore
Assistant Music Director: Mark A. Dundore
Organist: Sarah A. Myers
Assistant Organist: Patrice G. Miller

Ministry of Audio and Video

Jeffrey A. Dundore

Ministry of Service

Lead Greeter: Don Dupes
Greeters: Melanie Shaver-Durham, Susan Miller
Acolyte: Elsa Riesmeyer
Kids' Place: Sherry Spencer, Dale Thorpe
Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel
Flower Delivery: Dale Thorpe and Don Dupes
Counting Team: Melissa Cawley, Sherry Spencer

Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Herrold

Ministers

The Entire Congregation

*Visit the church website, under the 'Sign Up' menu heading,
to help as a Sunday volunteer or Worship Participant.
We're grateful for your generosity.*

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**ONLINE
GIVING**



ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SERVICE OF WORSHIP

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 24, 2025

The livestream starts with the Announcements. If you'd prefer not to be on camera, kindly choose a seat in the back three pews of the Sanctuary. Leave prayer requests in the bowl in the Common area or give them to the Lead Greeter.

****Those who are comfortable doing so are invited to stand.***

THE RINGING OF THE CHIMES

THE WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE ORGAN PRELUDE "Behold The Man"

Gertrude Haupt Richolson

CALL TO WORSHIP

Excerpt from "Letter from Birmingham City Jail"

By The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all....

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience....

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress....

One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence."

*THE HYMN No. 459 "Come, O Fount of Every Blessing"

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

Healing God, guide us in bringing healing in the various ways You have empowered us to. Help us to recognize that any rule or law is not of Your Will, that prevents us from offering healing, or the lessening of suffering of another. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Ideally, the intent of rules and laws is to bring order and consistency to how we interact with one another. They are also put in place so that all people might be treated fairly and equally, so that a dominant person or small group does not structurally or randomly abuse others. Rules and laws however, because they are made and enacted by humans, can be used to abuse others. God sees that and notes it. We need to as well, and not ignore the consequences for those being hurt. We may be called to break a rule. Let us join in a time of Silent Prayers of Confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: God forgives us, and through Jesus' teachings and ways of living, and through the witness of other faithful persons, demonstrates that when our human laws are contrary to God's Laws of compassion and love, they should not be followed.

ALL: **We need to be very discerning. Recognizing when God's Call to love our neighbors as ourselves is of higher priority than human laws is not easy. When those rules are enacted or interpreted in ways that harm others, we may be called to break them. Amen.**

If you are able, please rise and greet one another with signs of Peace.

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

*THE GLORIA PATRI (#759 is the tune, but not all the same words)

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

BLESSING OF THE PRAYER SHAWLS (unison)

May God's grace be upon these shawls...warming, comforting, enfolding, and embracing. May these mantles be safe havens...sacred places of security and well-being...sustaining and embracing in good times as well as difficult ones. May the ones who receive these shawls be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace, and wrapped in love. Blessed be!

*Children are invited to the front at this time.
Everyone who comes forward will be on camera.*

SING THE CHILDREN TO THE FRONT

Jesus Loves the Little Children

**Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world
Shy and Joyful, Bold and Bright
They are precious in his sight
Jesus loves the little children of the world.**

THE WORD FOR THE YOUNG

SING THE CHILDREN TO THEIR SEATS

Jesus Loves Me

**Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so
Little ones to him belong. They are weak but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me
Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so**

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 58:9b-14

THE READING OF THE PSALM

Psalm 103:1-8

*THE HYMN “O God, We Rage at Hurtful Things” (to the tune of no. 25 “Our God, Our Help in Ages Past”)

***O God, we rage at hurtful things Beyond our own control,
Like all the pain that illness brings To body, mind and soul.***

***There's much we cannot understand; O Lord, we ask you, "Why?"
And yet in Christ you know firsthand The tears your people cry.***

***O Christ, your loving, saving touch Heals children, women, men.
We pray for ones we love so much; Lord, make them whole again.***

***Now work through those your Spirit sends To heal, restore and care.
May doctors, nurses, neighbors, friends Be answers to our prayer.***

***And when the journey seems too rough And you seem far away,
Remind us, Lord: You are enough To bring us through each day.***

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THE RESPONSE:

One: God is Still Speaking.

All: Thanks be to God!

THE GOSPEL READING & MESSAGE:

Luke 13:10-17

“No Prohibitions for Healing”

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE CHORAL RESPONSE (unison)

pp Devoutly 5. 5. 5. 5. GEORGE WHELPTON, 1847-1930

Hear our prayer, O Lord; Hear our prayer, O Lord;

Hear our prayer, O Lord, And grant us Thy peace. A-MEN.

Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

THE OFFERTORY Charles Ricedorf, soloist

*DOXOLOGY

***From all who dwell beneath the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise!
Let the Redeemer's name be sung.
Through every land, by every tongue! Amen.***

*THE PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)

O God, we cannot forget all Your benefits. Accept our offerings as expressions of praise and acts of true worship. We pour out our thanks for all You have given us and for all You do for us. We are grateful for the opportunities You grant us to help others. May healing come to all who suffer and freedom be granted to those weighed down and bent over with heavy burdens. Use us and our gifts to bring the changes for good that You intend for our world. Amen.

*THE HYMN No. 551 "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior"

*THE BIDDING TO MISSION

*THE WORLD PEACE PRAYER

One: Lead us, O God.

**All: Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth.
Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace.
Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe. Amen.**

*THE BENEDICTION

* THE THREE-FOLD AMEN

The livestream ends after the Postlude. You're welcome to converse in the Narthex after the Three-fold Amen.

THE ORGAN POSTLUDE "A Joyful Trumpet"

Patricia Lou Harris

References:

The Call to Worship is selections from The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham City Jail," pages 293, 294, 295, and 302, as found in A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr., edited by James M. Washington, 1986, Harper and Row.

The Prayer of Dedication is from "Gathered by Love" by Lavon Bayler, 1996, United Church Press.

The World Peace Prayer is a paraphrase of a verse from the Upanishads, the most ancient scriptures of Hinduism, also prayed daily by Roman Catholic Benedictine nuns.

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The red rose on the altar today is in celebration of the birth of Felix Merritt to Allyson and Mitchell Merritt last week. Please join us in keeping their whole family in your prayers.