

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The funeral for Katie Dougherty Wallace was held at St. Paul's yesterday. We continue to lift the Wallace, Dougherty, and Doyle families in our prayers and ask that God comfort them in the days, months, and years to come. The flowers on the altar are from the funeral. The bouquet on the right is from Grandma Florence to Katie.

We welcome Miranda Arndt, Ava Gruen, Jayda Leis, and Carlee Niedfeldt as confirmed members of St. Paul's. This is a special day, not only for each of them, but for their parents who honored their commitment at the time of their baptism. May they continue to grow in their faith



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Wilton, WI
Fifth Sunday of Easter
May 7, 2023
**Inviting People to
Journey with Christ's Family
in Spreading God's Love and Mercy**

As we continue to celebrate the fifty days of Easter, today's gospel includes Jesus' promise that he goes to prepare a place for his followers in his Father's house. Our baptism commissions us to share Jesus' mission in the world. As 1 Peter reminds us, we are a holy people, called to proclaim the one who called us out of darkness into light. In words and deeds we bear witness to the risen Christ—our way, our truth, our life.

**(Indicates that the people should stand as they are able.)*

Announcements

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

***Thanksgiving for Baptism**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
by whose hand we are given new birth,
by whose speaking we are given new life.
Amen.

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,
we are welcomed, restored, and supported
as citizens of the new creation.

Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Holy God,
holy and merciful,
holy and mighty,
you are the river of life,
you are the everlasting wellspring.
In mercy and might you have freed us from death
and raised us with Jesus, the firstborn of the dead.
In baptismal waters our old life is washed away,
and in them we are born anew.

Glory to you for oceans and lakes,
for rivers and streams.
Honor to you for waters that wash us clean,
quench our thirst, and nurture both crops and creatures.
Praise to you for the life-giving water of baptism,
the outpouring of the Spirit of the new creation.

**Wash away our sin and all that separates us from you.
Empower our witness to your resurrection.
Strengthen our resolve in seeking justice for all.**

Satisfy the world's need through this living water.
Where drought dries the earth, bring refreshment.
Where despair prevails, grant hope.
Where chaos reigns, bring peace.
We ask this through Christ,
who with you and the Spirit reigns forever.

Amen

Hymn **"Hallelujah! Jesus Lives!"**

ELW#380

***Greeting**

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

THOSE SERVING TODAY

Ministers: All God's People; Presiding Minister: Dennis Hallemeier;
Preacher: Chris Hallemeier; Organist: Nalani Bever; Reader: Greg Bever

IN THE MILITARY

Jacob Picha, Dylan Dougherty, Danelle Dougherty, Robert Cale,
Matthew Dutton.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Gloria Meltesen, Florence Dougherty, Darlene Babbitt, John Acker, Lois Reineke, Judy Bever, Craig King, Mary Leis, Tracie Herman, Patrick Reardon

IN THE MILITARY

Jacob Picha, Dylan Dougherty, Danelle Dougherty, Robert Cale,
Matthew Dutton.

CALENDAR

Sun., May 14

Sunday School

9:00 am

Worship

10:15 am

Mother's Day – Children Sing

Carlee Niedfeldt

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
Philippians 4:13

I love this verse because through Christ he strengthens me during everything I go through in life. He also lets me know that he will love me through it all.

I believe God is the creator of all things. Jesus, the son of God, who is kind and caring to all creatures great or small. He will always be there for me no matter what I am going through. I have always felt the closest to him when I am singing in Sunday school and attending church. I have learned a lot by going to Sunday school and church throughout these years. Throughout Sunday School I have learned to trust in the Lord, and he will guide me through the good and bad and make my path straight. I have learned that the Lord will not give me more than I can handle, so trust in him. I believe that the Lord is everywhere we go whether it be church or school.

I struggle with my faith when bad things happen in this world. Like when a loved one passes away. I felt the Lord directly when I recently lost someone close to me. His comfort through it, is what got me through that hard time in my life. Also knowing that my loved one was up in Heaven with him now. During this time, I know I could look to him, and he would comfort and guide me through it all.

I will keep my faith in the Lord as I keep coming to church. I will let people know that he is with them even in the bad times in their life. I will talk to them about him and spread his words of love. I will let them know that he will always love you no matter your sins. Not only will I be involved in the church after confirmation but also in the coming years by serving him through my career as an adult. I plan on serving God by working with animals which are also God’s creatures. I would like to help God’s creatures when they are sick and need medical care.

***KYRIE**

ELW p. 184

***Canticle of Praise**

“Glory to God“

ELW p.185

***Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading

Stephen was one of the seven men chosen by the apostles to serve tables so that the apostles could be free to serve the word (Acts 6:1-6). Stephen does more than distribute food, however. For his preaching of God’s word, he becomes the first martyr of the faith.

Acts 7:55-60

⁵⁵Filled with the Holy Spirit, [Stephen] gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶“Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” ⁵⁷But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

- ¹In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.
- ²**Incline your ear to me;
make haste to deliver me.**
- ³Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and
my stronghold;
for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.
- ⁴**Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me,
for you are my tower of strength.**
- ⁵Into your hands I commend my spirit,
for you have redeemed me, O LORD, God of truth.
- ¹⁵**My times are in your hand;
rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those
who persecute me.**
- ¹⁶Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love.”

Second Reading

Christ is the cornerstone of God's saving work and the foundation of our lives. We are God's chosen, holy people who continuously celebrate and declare the mercy of God we experience through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:2-10

- ²Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation—
- ³if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.
- ⁴Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- ⁶For it stands in scripture:
“See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

Jayda Leis

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me." -
Philippians 4:13

This verse is meaningful because, through Jesus Christ, God has strengthened me in more ways than not. He's shown me that during difficult times you can push through it if you believe in Him. This verse can guide me through life because when I'm in my darkest moments or having a rough day, God is there pushing me and telling me to keep going.

I believe God knows better than we do. God knows everything we are going through at this very moment, and everything we will go through in the future. An example of this is when I lost one of my good friends a few months ago, it changed me; it made me become stronger. I wasn't expecting her to leave me so fast, but God knew it was her time. I know that God is taking good care of her in heaven. I feel closest to God when a loved one passes, when I go to church or I'm sitting in Sunday school, and when I'm at a family gathering. I believe that God has died on the cross to forgive my sins and help me become successful. Over the course of the last two years, I have enjoyed every bit of it by going to Bible camp, Sunday school, church, and now concluding it with confirmation. This means I'm now one step closer to God.

I plan to serve God by making it to church as much as I can. I will continue to pray every night and to keep on reading the Bible. I will also give thanks to God every day and thank Him for who and what He's created and the work He's done for me. Volunteering is a way I plan to serve God and can be done in many ways; for example, I will try to volunteer at a local food shelter or help clean up our neighborhood or even be part of a neighborhood watch to protect those in my community. It's as simple as helping out a neighbor with a small task or favor. With this said, I'm planning to stay connected with God.

Being confirmed today means to me that I'm gonna go through life with God by my side. He's been by my side my whole life but getting confirmed makes everything more "official". I can go through life without being scared of where I'm gonna go after I die. Because I know I will meet him in Heaven. I am sure that I'm going to go to Heaven without any doubt in my mind. I think Greg Beaver helped me a lot with my faith because even when I asked question after question, he would always have an answer. I would not know all these stories without him reading them to us every Sunday.

I plan to stay connected with the Body of Christ by going to church, praying, and reading the bible to learn more about God. I will go through life talking about God and not being scared to say my religion. I am a Christian and I'm proud and not ashamed of it. I plan on finishing the bible in my lifetime, so I get to fully hear and understand God's message. I will continue praying every night and talk about my faith. This summer I will come to bible school and help out then. When I'm in high school I would like to help teach the little kids in Sunday School. I would like them to experience the joy I had when I was their age in Sunday School. When I'm older and have a family of my own I will take them to Sunday School and Church. I plan to stay connected with the church and my faith my whole life.

⁷To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the corner,”

⁸and

“A stone that makes them stumble,
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

¹⁰Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

***Gospel Acclamation**

“Alleluia”

ELW p. 188

GOSPEL READING

On the night that he is to be arrested, Jesus shares final words with his disciples. As the one through whom God is known, he promises to go before them and act on their behalf.

The holy gospel according to John 14:1-14

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going.” ⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

⁷If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” ⁹Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. ¹²Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Reverend Chris Hallemeier

Hymn

“Borning Cry”

ELW #732

AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

Dear friends, we give thanks to God for the gift of baptism, in which God has made these men and women one with us in the body of Christ. Today, they affirm their baptism as a sign of their participation in the life of this community of faith and in our mission in the world.

Let us pray.

Merciful God, we thank you for Miranda Arndt, Ava Gruen, Jayda Leis, and Carlee Niedfeldt. You have made them your own by water and the Word in Holy Baptism. You have called them to yourself, enlightened them with the gifts of your Spirit, and nourished them in the community of faith. Uphold these, your daughters, as they affirm the gifts and promises of baptism, and unite the hearts of all whom you have brought to new birth through this holy sacrament. We ask this in the name of Christ, our Savior and our Friend.

Amen

Ava Gruen

“We love because he first loved us.”

1 John 4:19

This verse to me means that I should be grateful for having people that I love in my life. Without God loving me first I would never be able to love people like my Dad, Mom, Sister, Brother, Grandma, Grandpas, Aunts, Uncles, Friends, and my cousins. God loves everyone so that we could love as well. This verse also makes me aware of hating people. I should walk through life not judging people but by loving them and what makes them unique. Throughout my life I will take this verse and apply it to my heart and mind and be thankful for being able to love and being able to have people that I can love.

I believe that Jesus is my Lord and Savior and that he is God’s only son. When Jesus was born, he knew he was going to help people. He even helped people who didn’t believe in him. They didn’t believe that he was the savior coming to help and save them all. He made the blind be able to see, the crippled to be able to walk, and saved sinners from hell. God gave his only son, so whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life with him in heaven. Jesus will always be there for me and will never stop loving me. He will help me through my ups and downs and that’s who Jesus is to me.

I am very grateful that I got to learn about God and Jesus and their creations and stories of helping people ever since I was little. I am thankful that I got to go to Sunday school. I got to learn a lot about God and not everyone has that opportunity. I got to do Christmas plays with my cousins and friends, walk every Psalm Sunday around with Palm leaves, to listen to stories and coloring activities, sing songs, go to Bible School every summer, and I got to do all these things while learning about the power of Christ. My faith helps me in my everyday life by helping me be more cautious of things and being grateful for everything. I’m grateful for everything my family has done for me even if I don’t express it and I’m thankful for them teaching me about Christ and taking me to Church to learn more about him.

because these prayers are my own. No one tells me what to say. It all comes straight from the heart.

For me, God is all - knowing and all - controlling. God can do anything and everything. I believe that while we were still being formed, He knew us and already had our whole life planned out for us. I believe that everything that happens to us, God does on purpose and for a reason. I believe that God is loving and cares for us more than we know. That is why I worship and praise Him every day, because I believe that He is the one and only God who will love me all the days of my life.

Even though I am being confirmed, I still plan to be a faithful member of the church. I will show up (almost) every Sunday and hopefully at some point, teach Sunday School. Whenever I can, I will try to serve God, whether it be by going on mission trips, donating my time, or just helping someone out. One of my goals for the future is to have a career where I can be outside and protect and preserve this beautiful earth, which God has created for us. I always feel close to God in nature and being in it every day would be perfect for me. I can't tell you what will happen in my future, but I can tell you that I will strive my hardest to be all that God has planned for me to be and more.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Renouncing Evil

As you affirm your baptism, I ask you to reject sin, profess your faith in Christ, and confess the faith of the church.

Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?
I renounce them.

Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?
I renounce them.

Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you away from God?
I renounce them.

Professing Faith

Do you turn to Christ as your Lord and Savior?
In faith I turn to Christ.

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.
Do you believe in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord.
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father.
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen**

Making Promises

You have made public profession of your faith.

Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word
and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

Each affirmer responds individually:

I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

And you, people of God, do you promise to support these sisters and brothers and pray for them in their life in Christ?

We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

Let us pray: We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, wash us from sin, and raise us to eternal life. Strengthen these sisters and brothers with the gifts of your Holy Spirit:

the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord,
the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

Amen

Miranda Arndt

“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.” - 1 John 4:7-8.

These verses are important to me because for the past 9 years of my life, I have gone to bed hearing these verses as a song. We always sing a song before bed each night, and this one is the most popular by far. The meaning of the verse is important to me. If you don't love, you don't know God. In order to know God, all you need is love.

My faith journey up to this point has been a very teaching one. When I was younger, I would never pay attention to the sermons. I know that is SO shocking to everyone but it's true. In Sunday School, we would read a Bible story and then, even though I wasn't listening, the pastor would preach about the same story. I used to think, “I know how this story goes. What else is there to know?” But that is the question, what else is there to know? In these past couple years as I have been listening to the sermons for sermon notes, I have come to realize that there is always something else to learn, something that I didn't know before. I have come to realize that there is always something else to be learned from God. God is a great and mysterious being, but I know that even though I don't understand Him, He understands me and is constantly guiding me. I don't understand God yet, I trust Him.

Prayer is a regular part of my everyday life. I pray before meals and before I go to bed. Even though it is praying, sometimes it just feels too routine. After starting confirmation, I have started saying my own prayers. Not just the ones we recite every night, but ones I come up with on my own. I pray for anything I feel like. I pray, thanking God for the wonderful day I had, asking Him to help specific people who I know need it, or simply asking Him to help those in the world who need it. There is never a short supply of those people. Every once in a while, I pray for myself, but I try to be as selfless as possible in my prayers because I know that there is always someone who needs help more than me. My prayers every night have brought me closer to God

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

*Benediction

*Hymn “The Church’s One Foundation” ELW #654

Dismissal

P Go in peace. Serve the Risen One.

C Thanks be to God.

BIBLE VERSE AND BLESSING

*Each confirmand’s Bible verse is read,
then the laying on of hands and blessing:*

Father in heaven, for Jesus’ sake,
stir up in name the gift of your Holy Spirit;
confirm her faith, guide her life,
empower her in his/her serving,
give her patience in suffering,
and bring her to everlasting life.

*Each affirmer responds: **Amen***

JOYFUL WELCOME

Let us give thanks for those affirming baptism as we carry out the life of this Christian community and God’s mission in the world.

As your sisters and brothers in the body of Christ, we rejoice with you as you affirm your baptism. Together we give praise to God and bear God’s creative and redeeming word to all the world.

THE PRAYERS AND PEACE

Standing before God and given new life in the risen Christ, let us pray in the power of the Holy Spirit.

By your Holy Spirit, enliven your people in ministry, cleanse our sin, heal our brokenness, and strengthen us to shine with your love.
Life-giving God: **Send us your Spirit.**

By your Spirit, silence the discord of violence, terror, and destruction throughout the world. Raise up leaders who seek peace for all people.
Life-giving God: **Send us your Spirit.**

Send your healing power upon all who suffer. Dry the tears of all who mourn, and make your presence known to those we especially hold dear. Life-giving God: **Send us your Spirit.**

We give you thanks for all who have loved and served you in this life, especially those we remember now. Keep us faithful to your ways and bring us to the joys of your heavenly kingdom.

Life-giving God: **Send us your Spirit.**

Hear our prayers, gracious God, and receive them for the sake of your crucified and risen Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Friend.

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always!

And also with you!

OFFERING

*Offertory Hymn “**Lord Let My Heart Be Good Soil**” **ELW# 512**

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Generous God,
in this meal you offer your very self.
We give thanks for these gifts of the earth.
In the breaking of this bread
reveal to us the Risen One.
In the pouring of this wine
pour us out in service to the world;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Meal

***GREAT THANKSGIVING**

ELW p. 190

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

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***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Words of Institution

***LORD’S PRAYER**

Lord, lead us into your new life and teach us to pray.

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Come and know Christ, broken and poured out for you.

Distribution

Everyone who believes in Jesus is welcome at Christ’s table.

“Lamb of God”

ELW p.191

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Holy One,
**we thank you for the healing
that springs forth abundantly from this table.
Renew our strength to do justice,
love kindness,
and journey humbly with you.
Amen.**