

**CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**700 County Road B Stoughton, Wisconsin**

**WELCOME TO WORSHIP**  
**Baseball Sunday**  
**July 27, 2025**

**Pastor:** Paula Geister-Jones   **Lay Ministry Administrator:** Jenny Hoffman  
**Pianist/Organist:** Linda Kunz   **Uke Fellowship**  
**Acolytes:** Addy Borchert & Lucas Peterson   **Lector:** Marti Conant  
**Baseball Player:** Brady Estervig  
**Ushers:** Sue Walls, Sandra Maerz, Sue Weum & Sharon Manson  
**Bat Kids:** Ella Pavolonis, Wyatt Lane and Sam Koshollek  
**Technical Support:** Thomas Lehr, Roger Slack



**ORDER OF SERVICE**

*"Baseball is like church. Many attend, few understand."* Wes Westrum  
**Call to Worship: "Life is a Ball Game" by Sister Wynonna Carr** [YouTube](#)

*Stand*

**Opening Hymn: "Star Spangled Banner/ Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"**

*"The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime." Babe Ruth*

*Stand*

**Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light  
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous fight.  
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?**

And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.  
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!  
O My soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!  
Let all who hear, now to his temple draw near,  
Joining in glad adoration.

*Sit*

### **Ceremonial First Pitch**

*President William Taft was the first sitting president to throw out the first pitch on Opening Day for the Washington Senators. Since then, practically every president has done so.*

## **GATHERING**

### **Confession**

*"Things could be worse. Suppose your errors were counted and published every day, like those of a baseball player." Unknown "Baseball is the only field of endeavor where a man can succeed three times out of ten and be considered a good performer." Ted Williams "I'm not perfect; no one is perfect. Everyone makes mistakes. I think you try to learn from those mistakes." Derek Jeter*

**P:** Help us admit our mistakes and shortcomings -- our errors -- in the presence of God, our Manager, and in the presence of our teammates.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

**P:** O God,

**C:** We admit that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. That's the truth. And yet, we do not want to admit it. We would rather blame our errors on someone else.

**C: (Left Side)** It was the umpire's fault. The man is blind.

**C: (Right Side)** If the shortstop would have thrown the ball to me, and not over my head, I could have made the play at first base.

**C:** And our list of excuses goes on and on...

## **Forgiveness**

*"Every day is a new opportunity. You can build on yesterday's success or put its failures behind and start over again. That's the way life is, with a new game every day, and that's the way baseball is." Bullet Bob Feller.*

**P:** God, like any good Manager, sets us straight.

**C: (Left Side)** You were out at second. The umpire got the call right.

**C: (Right Side)** The ball to first base was catchable. It was your error. Move on!

## *Music Interlude*

**P:** Despite our excuses the Manager keeps us in the lineup and gives us another chance to get up to the plate and hit that ball. God sends us out onto the field to make the plays. God's faith and trust in us never wavers. We became members of God's Team at our baptisms and we will be members of God's Team till the day we die. That is grace!

**C: Amen.**

## *Stand*

**Gathering Hymn/ Hula Hoop Hustle: "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian"**

## **Uke Fellowship**

*"We don't stop playing because we get old. We get old because we stop playing."*

*Satchel Paige "It's a great day for a ballgame. Let's play two." Ernie Banks*

*(Volunteers are needed to Hula Hoop.)*

**Vs. 1: Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart;  
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.  
In my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.**

**Vs. 2: Lord, I want to play for your team in my heart, in my heart;  
Lord, I want to play for your team in my heart.  
In my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to play for your team in my heart.**

**Vs. 3: Lord, I want to hit a homerun for your team, for your team.  
Lord, I want to hit a homerun for your team.  
Or a single, or a double,  
Lord, I want to hit a homerun for your team.**

**Vs. 4: Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart;**

**Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.  
In my heart, in my heart,  
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.**

**Greeting**

*"All winter long, I can't wait for baseball. It gets you back to doing the stuff you love and makes you wish the youthfulness of life could stay with you forever."*

*Tommy John*

**P:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the MVP, who gives his all for the team, the understanding and patience of God, our Manager, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

**Baseball Madness Litany**

*"Play me or trade me." Phil Linz "I think I was the best baseball player I ever saw." - Willie Mays. "When you start the game, they don't say 'Work Ball!' They say, 'Play Ball!'" Willie Stargell*

**P:** In the "Big Inning," God created the heavens and the earth, the birds of the air, all the animals of the land and finally man and woman and God said...

**C: "Play Ball!"**

**P:** Soon afterwards God put together a team: Abraham, Sarah and their descendants. They were to be God's people in this world and do God's will, and God said...

**C: "Play Ball!"**

**P:** God's team found themselves "in the cellar" in Egypt. God rescued them from the basement, set down in stone the rules of the game, relocated them in Israel and built a new ballpark for them in Jerusalem. Once again the Manager told them, "You're my team" now...

**C: "Play Ball!"**

**P:** For a while God's team was on top of their division, but then the trouble began. It started with the team's "stars." They thought they knew more than the Manager. They wouldn't listen. Their attitude spread to the team. Those were frustrating years for the Manager, yet God would not give up. All God wanted to do was...

**C: "Play Ball!"**

**P:** God loved the game and his team so much that finally God sent God's Son, Jesus. Jesus became a member of the team and with his natural leadership

skills, dedicated work ethic and raw talent, became the team's MVP. This MVP listened to the Manager and gave his all for the team...

**C: "Play Ball!"**

**P:** He was with the team for three short, amazing years, but his Spirit remains and that Spirit continues to inspire ball players to play their best and give all they have. Since Jesus' time, more players have been added to the team and now they come from all corners of the world - 18 different counties and territories. On Opening Day 2025 there were 265 of them. The Manager still loves to watch his team, season after season, 162 games a year.

**C: "Play Ball!" Amen.**

**Hymn of Praise: "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" Uke Fellowship**  
*"Baseball was, is, and always will be the best game in the world to me." - Babe Ruth.*

**Vs. 1: He's got the whole world in his hands. (4 times)**

**Vs. 2: He's got the pitchers and the batters in his hands. (3 times)**  
**He's got the whole world in his hands.**

**Vs. 3: He's got the infield and the outfield in his hands. (3 times)**  
**He's got the whole world in his hands.**

**Vs. 4: He's got the umps and the fans in his hands. (3 times)**  
**He's got the whole world in his hands.**

**Vs. 5: He's got the whole world in his hands. (4 times)**

**Prayer of the Day**

*"Thank-you, God, for giving me strength and making me a ballplayer." Jim "Catfish" Hunter*

**P:** Let us pray...

**C: O God, help us be good sports in this game of life. We don't ask for an easy place in the lineup. Put us anywhere you need us. We only ask that we can give you 100% of everything we have. If all the hard drives come our way, we thank you for that compliment. Help us remember you never send a player more trouble than they can handle. And help us, Lord, to accept the bad breaks as part of the game. May we always play on the square, no matter what others do. Help us study the Book so we'll know the rules.**

**Finally, God, if the natural turn of events goes against us and we are benched for sickness or old age, help us accept that as part of the game, too. Keep us from complaining that we got a raw deal. And when we finish the final inning, we ask for no laurels. All we want is to believe in our hearts that we played as well as we could and that we didn't let you down. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

*Sit*

## **WORD**

### **Readings**

*"I've never questioned the integrity of an umpire. Their eyesight, yes," says Babe Ruth League. "Umpires are most vigorous when defending their miscalls," according to thebaseballumpire.com.*

### **First Reading: Genesis 18:20-32**

<sup>20-21</sup> GOD continued, "The cries of the victims in Sodom and Gomorrah are deafening; the sin of those cities is immense. I'm going down to see for myself, see if what they're doing is as bad as it sounds. Then I'll know."<sup>22</sup> The men set out for Sodom, but Abraham stood in GOD's path, blocking his way.<sup>23-25</sup> Abraham confronted him, "Are you serious? Are you planning on getting rid of the good people right along with the bad? What if there are fifty decent people left in the city; will you lump the good with the bad and get rid of the lot? Wouldn't you spare the city for the sake of those fifty innocents? I can't believe you'd do that, kill off the good and the bad alike as if there were no difference between them. Doesn't the Judge of all the Earth judge with justice?"<sup>26</sup> GOD said, "If I find fifty decent people in the city of Sodom, I'll spare the place just for them."

<sup>27-28</sup> Abraham came back, "Do I, a mere mortal made from a handful of dirt, dare open my mouth again to my Master? What if the fifty fall short by five—would you destroy the city because of those missing five?" He said, "I won't destroy it if there are forty-five."<sup>29</sup> Abraham spoke up again, "What if you only find forty?" "Neither will I destroy it if for forty."<sup>30</sup> He said, "Master, don't be irritated with me, but what if only thirty are found?" "No, I won't do it if I find thirty."<sup>31</sup> He pushed on, "I know I'm trying your patience, Master, but how about for twenty?" "I won't destroy it for twenty."<sup>32</sup> He wouldn't quit, "Don't get angry, Master—this is the last time. What if you only come up with ten?" "For the sake of only ten, I won't destroy the city."

**L: The Word of the Lord.**

**C: Thanks be to God!**

**Psalm: "In the Highways" Uke Fellowship**

*"Baseball is like a poker game. Nobody wants to quit when he's losing; nobody wants you to quit when you're ahead." - Jackie Robinson.*

*(The words have been changed slightly.)*

**Vs. 1: In the dugouts, on the diamonds,  
in the dugouts, on the diamonds,  
in the dugouts, on the diamonds,  
I'll be somewhere a playing for my Lord.**

**Refrain: I'll be somewhere playing, I'll be somewhere playing,  
I'll be somewhere a playing for my Lord.  
I'll be somewhere playing, I'll be somewhere playing,  
I'll be somewhere a playing for my Lord.**

**Vs. 2: When he calls me up, I will answer,  
when he calls me up, I will answer,  
when he calls me up, I will answer,  
I'll be somewhere a playing for my Lord. Refrain...**

*Stand*

**Gospel Acclamation: "Jesus"**

*"Catching a fly ball is a pleasure, but knowing what to do with it after you catch it is a business." - Tommy Henrich*

**P:** Everybody clap your hands....

*(Clap your hands then shout...)*

**C: JESUS!!!**

**P:** The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 11th Chapter.

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

**Gospel Reading: Luke 11:1-13**

*"The key to winning baseball games is pitching, fundamentals, and three-run homers." - Earl Weaver "You can't make a great play until you first do it in practice." Chuck Noll "It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen." John Wooden*

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said, "Master, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."<sup>2-4</sup> So he

said, "When you pray, say, Father, reveal who you are. Set the world right. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil." <sup>5-6</sup> Then he said, "Imagine what would happen if you went to a friend in the middle of the night and said, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread. An old friend traveling through just showed up, and I don't have a thing on hand.' <sup>7</sup> "The friend answers from his bed, 'Don't bother me. The door's locked; my children are all down for the night; I can't get up to give you anything.' <sup>8</sup> "But let me tell you, even if he won't get up because he's a friend, if you stand your ground, knocking and waking all the neighbors, he'll finally get up and get you whatever you need. <sup>9</sup> "Here's what I'm saying: Ask and you'll get; Seek and you'll find; Knock and the door will open. <sup>10-13</sup> "Don't bargain with God. Be direct. Ask for what you need. This is not a cat-and-mouse, hide-and-seek game we're in. If your little boy asks for a serving of fish, do you scare him with a live snake on his plate? If your little girl asks for an egg, do you trick her with a spider? As bad as you are, you wouldn't think of such a thing—you're at least decent to your own children. And don't you think the Father who conceived you in love will give the Holy Spirit when you ask him?"

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

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

*Sit*

**Sermon: "The Fundamentals of the Game"**

*"You can't make a great play until you first do it in practice." Chuck Noll "Be patient, go through the process and master the basics." Danny Garcia "There is no time to fool around when you practice. Every drill must have a purpose."*

*Pensador*

**Hymn of the Day: "Seek Ye First"**

*"Each strike gets me one step closer to the next home run." Babe Ruth "A person who never gives up is hard to beat." Babe Ruth*

**Vs. 1: Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,  
And all these things will be given unto you – Allelu, alleluia!**

**Vs. 2: One shall not live by bread alone but by ev'ry word  
That proceeds from the mouth of God – Allelu, alleluia!**

**Vs. 3: Ask and it shall be given unto you, Seek and ye shall find, -  
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you – Allelu, alleluia!**



## **Apostles' Creed**

*"You can try to get that game out of your mind, but it never leaves you." "Cool Papa" Bell*

**P:** Do you believe in God the Team Manager?

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

*"Baseball is almost the only place in life where a sacrifice is really appreciated."  
Mark Beltaire.*

**P:** Do you believe in Jesus Christ, God's Son and MVP?

**C: 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 to judge the living and the dead.**

*"You can't tell how much spirit a team has until it starts losing." Rocky Colavito*

**P:** Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the team's Inspiration?

**C: 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.**

## **Sharing of the Peace/Seventh Inning Stretch – "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" Uke Fellowship**

*"Baseball ought never to be hurried. It is the only unhurried institution we have left, which is one reason, I think, we love it." James Kilpatrick*

**P:** The peace of God, our Manager, and of God's + Son, the MVP, and of God's Inspiring Holy Spirit, be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

*(As you sing the Bat Kids will be throwing out peanuts and Kracker Jacks.)*

**Take me out to the ball game, Take me out with the crowd.**

**Buy me some peanuts and cracker jacks, I don't care if I never get back,**

**Let me root, root, root for the home team, If they don't win it's a shame.**

**For it's one, two, three strikes you're out, At the old ball game.**

**Offertory with The Dance Cam: "Sweet Caroline" Uke Fellowship**

*"I am not too serious about anything. I believe you have to enjoy yourself to get the most out of your ability." George Brett "Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game." Babe Ruth*

*(Look for yourself up on the big screen.)*

**Where it began - I can't begin to knowin'**

**But then I know it's growin' strong**

**Was in the spring - and spring became the summer**

**Who'd have believe you'd come along?**

**Hands - touchin' hands –**

**reachin' out – touchin' me, touchin' you**

**Sweet Caroline. Good times never seemed so good**

**I've been inclined - to believe they never would**

**But now -**

**Look at the night and it don't seem so lonely**

**We fill it up with only two**

**And when I hurt - hurtin' runs off my shoulders**

**How can I hurt when holdin' you?**

**Warm - touchin' warm –**

**reachin' out - touchin' me, touchin' you**

**Sweet Caroline. Good times never seemed so good**

**I've been inclined - to believe they never would**

**Oh no no**

**Sweet Caroline. Good times never seemed so good**

**I've been inclined - to believe they never would**

Oh no no

**Lord's Prayer**

*"A Manager's Prayer: Heavenly Father, be with my young athletes as they test their physical skills. Let them play well, but fairly. Let competition make them strong, but never hostile. Grant them the strength to best their opponent, and lead them to always help the opponent up."*

**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**

*Sit*

**Announcements**

*Be sure to join us for hot dogs, brats, baked beans, chips and root beer floats following the worship service. The free will donation will go towards the organ repair.*

**SENDING**

*Stand*

**Blessing**

*"I never want to quit playing baseball. They'll have to cut this uniform off of me to get me out of it." Roy Campanella*

**P:** May you always find your arm slot, may all your swings be pure, through every bruise and bad hop, I hope that you endure. May your change-up find the strike zone, may your blooper find a hole, let your dreams hit down the line, stay just inside the pole. May the wind blow out when you're at bat, this is my wish for you. And if you're ever in a jam, I hope that you turn two.

**C: Let's go out and play ball!**

**Sending Hymn: "God Bless America"**

*"Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball, the rules, and reality of the game." Jacques Barzun*

**God bless America,  
Land that I love.  
Stand beside her, and guide her  
Thru the night with a light from above.  
From the mountains, to the prairies,  
To the oceans, white with foam.  
God bless America, my home sweet home.**

**Postlude: "Put Me in Coach" by John Fogerty Youtube**