

**Unless
a grain
of wheat
falls into
the earth
and dies,
it remains
just a
single
grain**

JOHN 12:24

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

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WELCOME Thank you for being with us.

We are a Christian church within the Lutheran tradition (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) and we welcome people of all Christian traditions as well as people of other faiths and people of little or no faith. Christian worship has been offered to God in this congregation for 185 years. By worshipping with us today, you become part of that living tradition.

Restrooms are available in the Good Shepherd Room (Springettsbury lobby) and the narthex. Baby changing stations are provided in these restrooms.

Thank you for your faithfulness in sending your offering through the mail, by using online options from your financial institution, or through the “Donate” now from the church website **stpaulsyork.org**. Your gifts are keeping us current with the commitments associated with St. Paul’s and our ministry partners.

Guidelines for Worship during the time of COVID-19

Entering and Leaving the Church:

Face masks are required inside,

Kindly sign in at the door through which you entered. This will help if we need to be in contact.

Please take your service bulletin with you and dispose of it properly.

Offerings:

Monetary offerings may be placed in the basins provided at the entrances to the nave prior to the service or immediately following the service. You may also donate via our website at

www.stpaulsyork.org

While in the Nave:

Please wear your mask. Please sit in designated pews only. You may sit together as a family. We ask that you practice social distancing from one family to the next within the pew.

Communion Procedure:

- *Ushers will direct you. The pulpit side (left) of the nave communes first followed by the font side (right).*
- *Wearing your face mask, come to the chancel step taking your place at one of the five positions marked on the chancel floor with a green cross.*
- *Your entire household may gather at a position marked by the green cross.*
- *Extend your arms and cup your hands together to receive the host.*
- *Please do not reach out to take the Host from the minister.*
- *Once the minister has moved to the next group, then remove your mask, receive the host, replace your mask and return to your pew by the closest side aisle. There is no need to hurry.*
- *We are receiving communion in one kind only (bread/host).*

Our COVID-19 task force is assisting us as we remain open at St. Paul’s. Please thank Dr. Jessica Ericson, Sheridan Palmer, Norma Shue, Deacon Harold Sargeant, and Dr. Martha Thomas for their dedication and service.

Sunday, March 21, 2021
Fifth Sunday in Lent
Holy Communion 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM

PRELUDE

O, Mankind, Mourn Your Great Sins.

Johann Sebastian Bach

Stand

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the ✙ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are in bondage 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. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen

Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✙ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

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.**

LITANY FOR LENT

Sung by the cantor

Leader:

O Christ, out of your fullness we have all received grace upon grace.

You are our eternal hope;

you are patient and full of mercy;

you are generous to all who call upon you.

Assembly

Save us, Lord. Save us, Lord.

O Christ, fountain of life and holiness,
 you have taken away our sins.
 On the cross you were wounded for our transgressions
 and were bruised for our iniquities.
Save us, Lord. Save us, Lord.

O Christ, obedient unto death,
 source of all comfort, our life and resurrection,
 our peace and reconciliation:
Save us, Lord. Save us, Lord.

O Christ, Savior of all who trust you,
 hope of all who die in you, and joy of all the saints:
Save us, Lord. Save us, Lord.

Leader Assembly Leader

Je - sus, Lamb of God, have mer - cy on us. Je - sus,

Assembly

bear - er of our sins, have mer - cy on us.

Leader

Je - sus, re - deem - er of the world,

Assembly

grant us peace, grant us peace.

Text: Taizé Community, alt. *Book of Common Worship*, © 1975, 1993 Les Presses de Taizé, admin. GIA Publications, Inc.
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PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty God, our redeemer, in our weakness we have failed to be your messengers of forgiveness and hope in the world. Renew us by your Holy Spirit, that we may follow your commands and proclaim your reign of love; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Sit

READING

Hebrews 5:5-10 (back page)

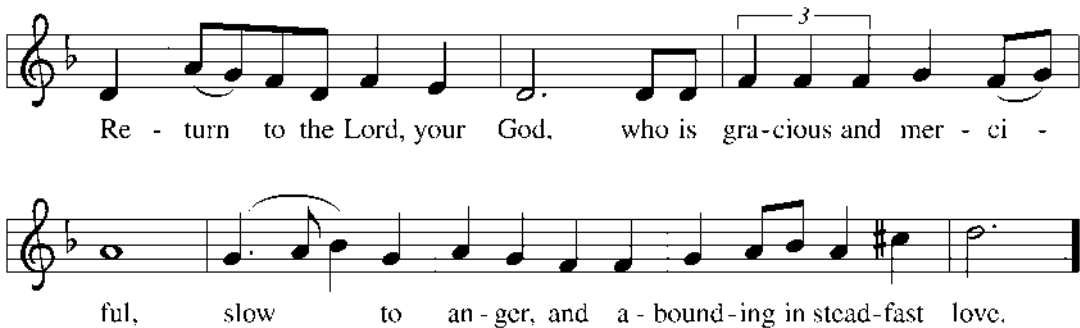
The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

VERSE

Sung by the cantor



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, who is gra-cious and mer - ci -
ful, slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

Text: Joel 2:13

Music: Anne Krentz Organ

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HOLY GOSPEL

John 12:20-33 (back page)

The Holy Gospel according to **Glory to you, O Lord.**

At the conclusion of the Gospel

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON

Pastor Stan Reep

Stand

APOSTLES' CREED

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.*

On the third day he rose again.

Continued on next page...

**He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
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**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

You wash us through and through and remember our sin no more. Make us a community of forgiveness. Give us courage to forgive. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You fill the earth with your presence, and call us to attend to your will for all creation. Grant weather that prepares the soil for seeds. Grant protection from violent storms, flooding, and wildfires. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You promise to write your law on our hearts. Guide citizens throughout the world to shape communities that reflect your mercy, justice, and peace, and give them creativity to work for the welfare of all. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You sustain us with your bountiful Spirit. Restore the joy of all who need to know your presence: those who are lonely or feel unforgivable, those who need healing of mind or body, those who are dying, and all who grieve. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Jesus calls us to follow him in life and death. Empower our congregation in discipleship. Equip children and teachers in Sunday school, confirmation, and learning ministries. Give us your truth and wisdom and teach us to follow Jesus. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In the cross of Christ, your name is glorified. We praise you for those who have given us words to worship you. With all those who have died in Christ, bring us into life everlasting. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. *Merciful Father,*

we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

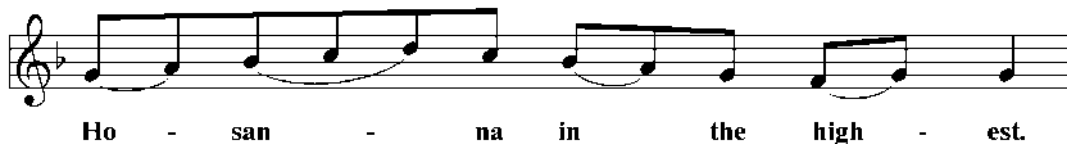
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. You bid your people cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast. Renew our zeal in faith and life, and bring us to the fullness of grace that belongs to the children of God. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS *Sung by the cantor. Congregation joins at* C



EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth.

In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son,
that all those who believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

We give thanks to you

for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ.

Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts,
that we may receive our Lord with a living faith
as he comes to us in his holy supper.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and 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.

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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 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.**

FRACTION RITE *A brief silence is kept.*


AGNUS DEI *Sung by cantor, women, all*

Cantor:



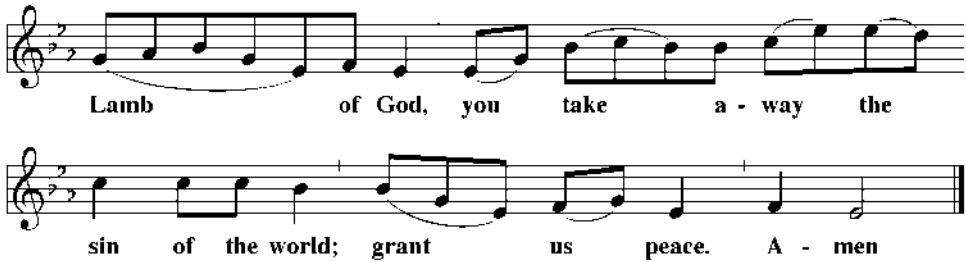
Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

Women:



Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

All:



Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace. A - men

Sit The pastor cleanses hands and prepares for the distribution of Holy Communion.

COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL

Instructions for receiving the sacrament are on the inside front cover of the bulletin.

Stand

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

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

Amen

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Almighty God, you gave your Son both as a sacrifice for sin and a model of the godly life. Enable us to receive him always with thanksgiving, and to conform our lives to his; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

BLESSING

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

HYMN*My Song is Love Unknown (LBW 494) stanza 1*

1 My song is love un - known, my Sav - ior's love to me,
 love to the love - less shown, that they might love - ly be.
 Oh, who am I, that for my sake my Lord should take frail
 flesh and die? My Lord should take frail flesh and die?

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.**POSTLUDE***Toccata in C***Johann Sebastian Bach**

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*Please be respectful of distancing and personal space as you leave.
 Feel free to gather outside for conversation.*

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Reservations needed for Palm Sunday and Easter Indoor Services

As we did for Christmas services this past year we ask that if you plan to attend indoor services for Palm Sunday and Easter that you make a reservation. This will help us monitor in person attendance for our liturgies. With the guidance of CDC and our own St. Paul's COVID-19 task force we want to maintain our percentage for worshipers gathering indoors. To make a reservation simply call or email the church office with your name, number of individuals that will be seated in the same pew with you and the service: 8:00 AM or 5:00 PM Palm Sunday, March 28th or Easter Day April 4th. We want to facilitate all of our members and friends who desire attending in person services. Through an advance sign-up we can plan accordingly. Thank you. A reservation form is also included in this bulletin.



Amelia Reep Horn Recital TODAY, March 21, 3:00 PM

Amelia Reep will engage us with her Senior Horn recital on March 21st at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. The recital will take place at 3:00 PM and will be approximately an hour in length. Featuring traditional and contemporary horn works Repertoire will include Mozart, Poulenc, Basler, Ewazen, and more. She will be accompanied by David Erickson. Covid safety

procedures will be followed.

Food Pantry—March

Items needed: Canned or boxed potatoes, stuffing mix, jelly, boxed rice. We also need paper grocery bags with handles. [Anyone able to help can contact Teresa Rohrbaugh or Janet and Larry Moore.](#) Plastic Bags are always needed. Money donations are gratefully accepted. Please place cash or check in a "special" envelope marked "Pantry".

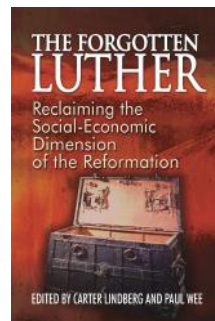
In our prayers we remember...

Sandy Dickensheets, Teresa Rohrbaugh, Isaiah King, Delores Sergent, Sandra Farcht, Wayne Wagner, Jannette Guetersloh, Oonagh Newman, Jenny Zimmerman, Deborah Fulton, Reid Weinbrom, Darrell Kopp, Shawn Sunday, Mike Johnston, Betty Mehrling, Drew Herdson, David List, Kristine Gross, Porter Stacey

Bible Study In-person Wednesdays at 10:30 AM in Christ Hall. Wednesday, March 24 we will study the readings for Palm Sunday, especially the Passion Narrative from St. Mark.

Lenten Wednesday Evenings led by Pastor William Snyder The Forgotten Luther, edited by Carter Lindberg and Paul Wee March 24 7:00-8:00 PM

We often forget how frequently Luther called for reform in the social and economic dimensions of life, which he saw as a natural outgrowth of theology and love of neighbor. The book, *The Forgotten Luther*, will be the jumping off point for our discussion. Reading the book is optional. We will consider such topics as: the common chest; the danger of greed; subversion when called forth; creating new vision in the world. We will take the opportunity to examine together many social issues that challenge us in these times. Contact the office email st.paulsyork@comcast.net to register and receive the Zoom



No turning back. These are the stories of people who seem somehow to have a greater risk tolerance, a threshold for possibility that far exceeds my own; people who will not turn back. In the American experience I think of pioneers during the western expansion, crossing the mighty Mississippi and setting out to cross over the Rockies. On the global frontier I think of explorers setting sail in tiny ships to cross vast oceans to discover what lay beyond their visual horizon. In the realm of science and technology I think of women and men preparing to send a Rover to Mars pushing the ability of remote communication to its limit. In the biblical narrative I think of Moses leading God's people out of bondage and captivity under Egyptian rule that Passover night when they fled by foot and were forced to the edge of the Red Sea being chased by Pharaoh's soldiers and chariots and horsemen and God having Moses part the waters with his staff and making it possible for God's people to crossover to the other side before that staff was lowered and the waters came crashing in on the chariots and the horsemen and the Pharaoh's military. No, there was no turning back for God's people.

In our own lives there are plenty of stories to share of situations and events where there was no turning back. It wasn't an option. It wasn't a possibility. Oh I am certain that there were settlers who wanted to turn back but it wasn't an option. There were explorers who boarded tiny vessels and set out to sea who wanted to turn back but it wasn't an option. There are scientists who experience setbacks and they wanted to turn back but it wasn't an option. Why even the Israelites wanted to turn back after they were safely across those Red Sea waters because the journey that was before them seemed daunting.

A most recent situation in which I experienced the reality that there is no turning back was right here at St. Paul's. It occurred just about the place in which I am currently standing. It was the first week of August 2017. After nearly five years of prayerful planning and deliberation to embark on a renovation of our church building to remove barriers and make it more accessible and to upgrade the antiquated mechanical and electrical systems, I came to work only to walk through those doors to see the concrete in the former chancel being jackhammered away. The dust was flying. The steps to the high altar were reduced to a pile of rubble. The chancel as I had known it was gone. I took a good look around. The place was in shambles. My heart sank. I had a rushing feeling of despair, pains in my chest, and there were sleepless nights which followed. Like my forbearers the journey that was before me seemed daunting. There was no turning back.

That is the situation observed by the writer of Hebrews. The writer experiences that the Christian community is daunted by the journey that was ahead of them. The writer senses that they would rather slip back to what they once knew and experienced than to keep keeping on. It would be easier to return to their former ways of living and worshipping and interacting with one another. And so he writes, in what has been deemed a letter but something that is probably closer to a sermon, encouraging them to press on, to continue following Christ Jesus, to persevere in faith. Thomas Long writes in his commentary that the writer of Hebrews knows that they are: tired of serving the world, tired of worship, tired of Christian education, tired of being peculiar, tired of being whispered about, tired of spiritual struggle, tired of trying to keep prayer life going, why they were even tired of Jesus! He-

brews addresses faith when it seems like turning back would be easier, more convenient, and less perplexing. And yet those early followers of Jesus longing to turn back are reminded of the great cloud of witnesses that have brought them this far. And they are presented again with the story of Christ, the high priest who became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

John writes that there is no turning back for Jesus. What we will recall next Sunday; the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, a day when followers of Jesus waved branches of palm and made a welcome carpet for him out of their garments, hailing him as their king and shouting hosanna. John shares the solemn reality that Jesus' hour has come and his glory is going to be very different from what they anticipated. The king they longed for will be arrested and sentenced to death as a common criminal. There is no turning back. The Son of Man will be lifted up from the earth, and will draw all people to him. This foreshadowing of Good Friday's cross stopped followers in their tracks. The journey that was before Jesus was daunting. And it was daunting for his followers. And yet John records every step of this Holy Week journey as a way to give courage and hope by telling the message of God's self-giving love for humanity. This is a love that could not be turned back.

Lately it seems that our own hands are drooping and our knees are weakened from a year of pandemic, being cooped up, distanced from one another in our extended family and in our faith community. Like the congregation addressed in Hebrews there are real issues that confront us and which take their toll on our wellbeing and our desire to persevere. The journey that stretches before us is daunting. We need renewed energy for serving. Our preschool has taken it on the nose just like all institutions of learning. Food Pantry needs have multiplied leaving volunteers physically exhausted. Leadership is in triage rather than providing their desired comprehensive vision for ministry. Christian education is occurring but not with the robust participation once enjoyed. Even our central act of worship has been diminished with constricted liturgies, limited singing, reception of communion in one kind, and a congregation physically distanced from one another in this room and spread across three worship times and add to that those who remotely access prayers, praise and thanksgiving but whom we do not see. Turning back or even turning our back might seem to be more appealing at this moment. And yet the message from the writer of Hebrews and from the Gospel of John proclaim that turning back is not an option for people of faith, people who follow Jesus. Christ Jesus comes to us for just such a time as this. As high priest and as the one lifted up, he is drawing us into a future that we may not be able to see but one which we hear proclaimed through faithful witnesses.

No turning back. Jesus did not turn back. Those serving him did not turn back. The early church community addressed in Hebrews did not turn back. And we do not turn back because we are called into service through Christ's abundant grace made known to us through baptism. Our forbearers in faith persevered so that we would hear of the future hope that is ours in Christ Jesus. Such hope cannot be seen apart from the dying love of God made known through his only Son. It is there on the cross that God's love is witnessed; "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." Jesus did not turn back. He died so that through him we would have life. Our journey may seem daunting but it is one born out of great love, freely given, in order that we lead lives of service. Amen.

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Psalm 51:1-12*or* **Psalm 119:9-16****SECOND READING: Hebrews 5:5-10**

Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”;

⁶as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a Son, he

learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

GOSPEL: John 12:20-33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Next Sunday's Readings: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Mark 14:1—15:47 *or* Mark 15:1-39 [40-47].

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Tracks 1 and 2
ELCA-R