



Lord, teach us to pray

LUKE 11:1

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

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Facebook: St. Paul's Lutheran Church York PA on Springettsbury & George

YouTube: St. Paul's Lutheran Church - South George St. York

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 186 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 (George St). Baby changing stations are provided in these restrooms as well as in the nursery.

Our Communion is "open" to all believers who trust that the Risen Christ is present for his people in the Holy Eucharist.

The Nursery is accessed through the front right double doors. The 9:15 AM liturgy is live-streamed into the Nursery.

Today we thank Christine Kates for serving as our guest organist while Victor Fields is on vacation.

Guidelines for Worship during the time of COVID-19

Entering and Leaving the Church:

*Wearing a mask while in worship is optional, recommended or required based on the local percentage of infection. 5% or lower/Optional, Between 5% & 10%/Recommended, 10% or higher/Required. **The instruction will be posted on the entry doors. Please be sure to bring a mask in the event of required/recommended masking.***

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

Communion Procedure:

- 1. Come to communion using the center aisle (about 8 adults per side).*
- 2. Communion glasses are placed on credence tables at the front pews (left and right side).*
- 3. Take a communion glass from the tray of glasses.*
- 4. Take your place along the chancel step. The ministers will bring the bread and wine to you.*
- 5. Extend your hands to receive the communion host.*
- 6. Consume the communion host before you leave the chancel edge.*
- 7. Hold the communion glass with both hands at chest height so that the communion assistant can easily pour the wine into the glass.*
- 8. Consume the wine.*
- 9. Place the used cup in an empty tray located on a credence table at the side aisle.*
- 10. Return to your pew using the side aisle.*

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, July 24, 2022
Holy Communion 9:15 AM

PRELUDE

Reflection on “Thaxed”

Blersch

Stand turning towards the font.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The assembly stands. The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Let us pray. 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

APOSTOLIC 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.**

KYRIE



Al Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:



Al Chri - ste e - le - i - son: Christ, have mer - cy.
Christ, have mer - cy:




Al Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:

HYMN OF PRAISE



1 Glo - ry to God, whose good - ness shines on me,
2 World with - out end, . . . with - out end. A - men.



and to the Son, whose grace has par - doned me,
World with - out end, . . . with - out end. A - men.



and to the Spir - it, whose love has set me free.
World with - out end, with - out end. A - men.



As it was in the be-gin-ning, is now, and ev-er shall be. A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

O God, your ears are open always to the prayers of your servants. Open our hearts and minds to you, that we may live in harmony with your will and receive the gifts of your Spirit; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Sit

CHILDREN'S SERMON

FIRST LESSON

Genesis 18:20-32 (back cover)

PSALM Psalm 138 *Spoken responsively by whole verse.*

¹ I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with | my whole heart;*
before the gods I will | sing your praise.

² **I will bow down toward your holy temple and | praise your name,*
because of your | love and faithfulness;**

³ for you have glori- | fied your name*
and your word a- | bove all things.

⁴ **When I called, you | answered me;*
you increased my | strength within me.**

⁵ All the kings of the earth will praise | you, O LORD,*
when they have heard the words | of your mouth.

⁶ **They will sing of the ways | of the LORD,*
that great is the glory | of the LORD.**

⁷ Though the LORD be high, he cares | for the lowly;*
he perceives the haughty | from afar.

⁸ **Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you | keep me safe;*
you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies;
your right | hand shall save me.**

⁹ The LORD will make good his pur- | pose for me;*

O LORD, your love endures forever; do not abandon the works | of your hands.

SECOND LESSON

Colossians 2:6-19

⁶As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. ¹¹In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; ¹²when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, ¹⁴erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

¹⁶Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. ¹⁷These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸Do not let anyone disqualify you, insist-

ing on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking,¹⁹ and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.

Stand
VERSE

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
Al - le - lu - ia. You have the words of e - ter - nal life.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

HOLY GOSPEL Luke 11:1-13 (*back cover*)
The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke **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
APOSTLE'S 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.
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

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

A brief silence.

Rooted and built up in Christ, we pray for the church. Embolden church leaders to take risks for the sake of the gospel, and equip the baptized to proclaim your extravagant love for the whole world. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Rejoicing in the works of your hands, we pray for the natural world. Make rivers and lakes, oceans and all waterways, sparkle with your radiance. Protect water sources (*local water sources may be named*) and strengthen those who defend them. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Interceding on behalf of the vulnerable, we pray for the peoples of the world. Inspire all rulers and governing authorities with your justice. Guide the work of legislators and public officials, that they advocate for the well-being of those they serve. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Persistent in prayer, we pray for our neighbors in need. To all who have hunger, give daily bread. To all who have bread, give hunger for justice. Open us to the cries of those who suffer (*especially Peggy Jacobs, Carl Jacobs, Katie Guyer, Eddie Turner, Gloria Kendrick, Amy Hollis, Heidi Glaudel, Kristine Gross, Rachel Barnes, Courtney Snell the family and loved ones of John Uffelman*). Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Abounding in thanksgiving, we pray for this congregation. Bless the prayer and fellowship ministries in this place. Call us together in times of praise and blessing, trouble and sorrow, in your holy name. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Buried with Christ in baptism and raised with him to new life, we give thanks for your saints who rest in your eternal presence. Join our voices with theirs as we sing of your great glory. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Receive the prayers of your children, merciful God, and hold us forever in your steadfast love; through Jesus Christ, our holy Wisdom.

Amen.

PEACE

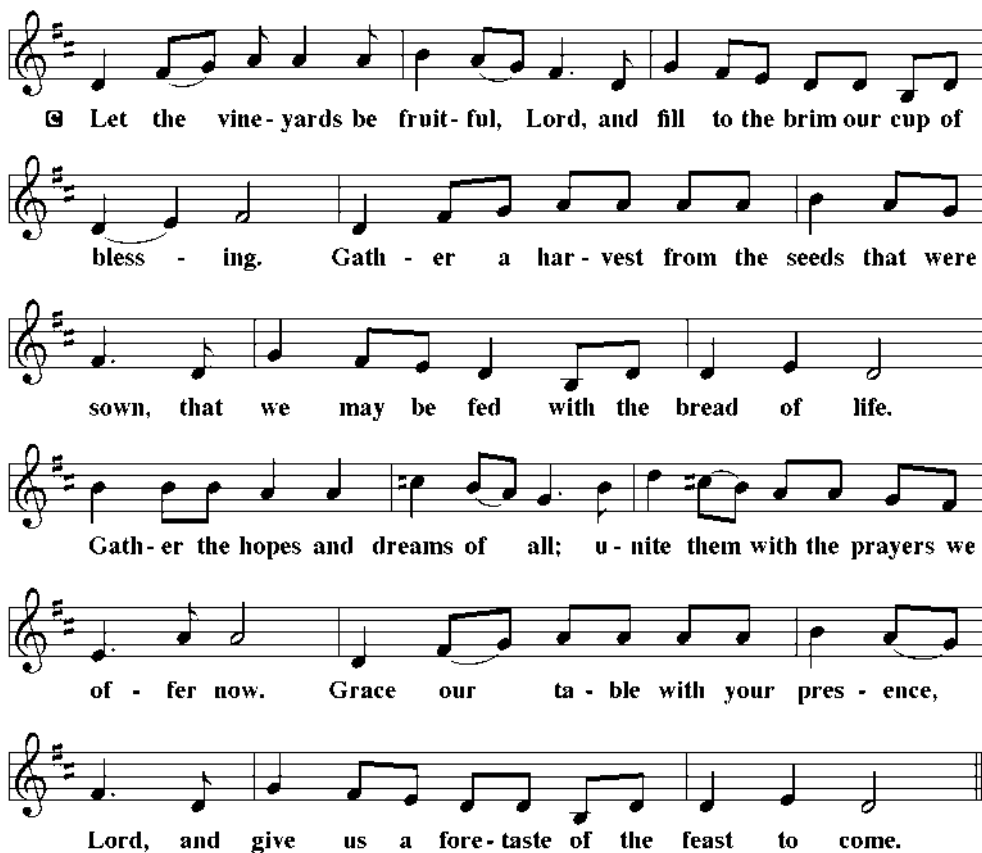
The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

The ministers and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.

OFFERTORY

As the pastor prepares the altar the people sing.



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were
sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gath - er the hopes and dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we
of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence,
Lord, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed are you,

O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

Lift up your hearts.

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

And also with you.

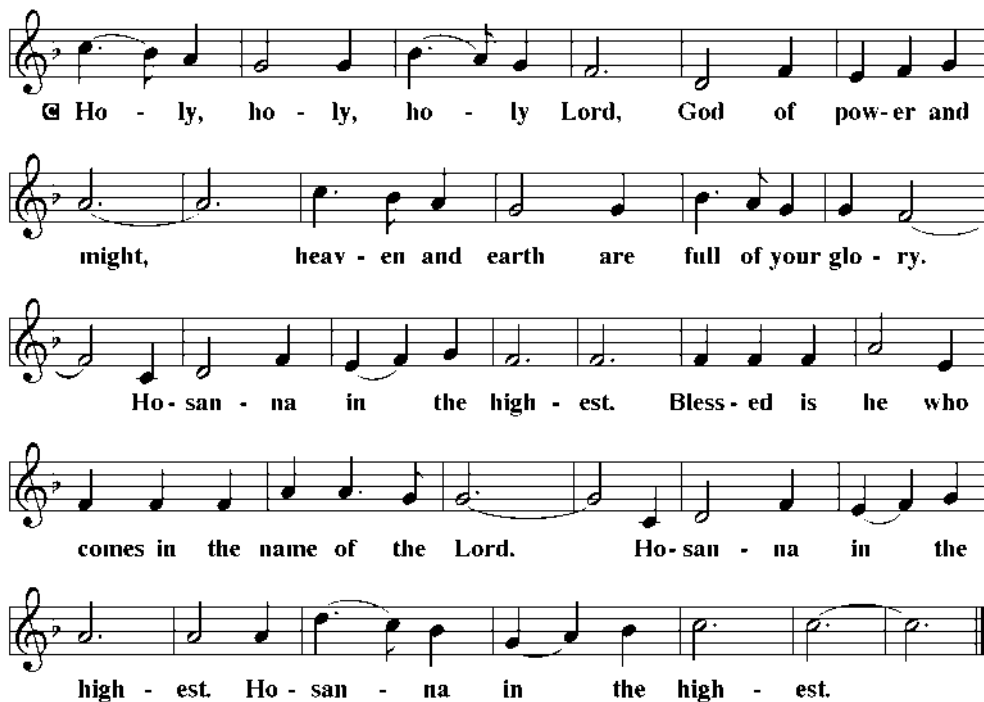
We lift them to the Lord.

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; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and
might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the
high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out your Holy Spirit,
that by this Holy Communion we may know
the unity we share with all your people
in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

Amen

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

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 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 *The bread is broken. A brief silence is kept.*

AGNUS DEI *sung by all*



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



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



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

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.

COMMUNION HYMN *Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God (WOV 783)*

Descant

Al - le - lu - ia, al -
D F#m G D G

1 Seek ye . . . first the king - dom of God and its
2 Ask and it shall be giv - en un - to you; seek and
3 We do not live by bread . . . a - lone, but by

le - lu - ia, al - le -
D Em A7 D F#m

righ - teous - ness, and all these things shall be
you shall find; knock and the door shall be
ev - 'ry word that pro - ceeds from the

lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.
G D G D Em A D

add - ed un - to you. Al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia.
o - pened un - to you. Al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia.
mouth . . . of . . . God. Al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia.

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 provide the true bread from heaven, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that we who have received the Sacrament of his body and blood may abide in him and he in us, that we may be filled with the power of his endless life, now and forever. **Amen**

BLESSING

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

HYMN

How Shall I Sing that Majesty (ACS 1095)



1 How shall I sing that maj - es - ty which an - gels do ad -
2 En - light - en with faith's light my heart, in - flame it with love's
3 How great a be - ing, Lord, is thine, which doth all be - ings



mire? Let dust in dust and si - lence lie; sing, sing, ye
fire, then shall I sing and take my part with that ce -
keep! Thy knowl - edge is the on - ly line to sound so



heav'n - ly choir. Thou - sands of thou - sands stand a -
les - tial choir. They sing, be - cause thou art their
vast a deep; thou art a sea with - out a



round thy throne, O God most high; ten thou - sand
sun; Lord, send a beam on me; for where heav'n
shore, a sun with - out a sphere; thy time is



times ten thou - sand sound thy praise; but who am I?
is but once be - gun, there al - le - lu - ias be.
now and ev - er - more, thy place is ev - 'ry - where.

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Flowers This Week

*The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God in loving memory of our mother, Emma V. (Zirkle) Sweitzer by her daughters, Charlene Graffius & Shirley Haugh and in loving memory of our brother Neil E. Shue
By Michael, Brian and Lynn*

Prayerful consideration needed for Congregation Treasurer. Interim Treasurer, Peter O’Conor is bringing those duties to a close with completion of the 2021 audit (August 31). The duties associated with the treasurer’s position have been greatly clarified during the past several years. If you are willing to consider this ministry opportunity or would like more information, please speak to President Tristan Ericson or Pastor Reep.

The Nominating Committee is beginning its work to secure persons willing to serve on Congregation Council, Benevolence Committee, Mutual Ministry Committee, and Voting Members to the Synod Assembly. Please contact Tristan Ericson or Kathryn Wicker if you would be willing to serve.

Food Pantry—July



Items needed: Rice (1 or 2 lb bags), dehydrated potatoes, powdered milk, tomato sauce and soup. We also need paper grocery bags with handles.

Anyone able to help can contact Teresa Rohrbaugh, Patty Snyder, 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”.

Serving the Lord with Gladness

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Ushers	Altar Set-up & Altar Clean-up
7/24	9:15 AM	Harold Sargeant	Larry Moore	Laura Livingston	Janet Fitch	Jim & Nancy Bennett	Bob Reed , Ron Riese, Kem Vaught, Larry Becker, Steve Heistand, Dan Garber	Tim & Melissa Yakim

Our next Outdoor Service will be held Sunday, July 31, Vespers at 7:00 PM. The service is preceded with a covered dish supper at 6:00 PM. Please bring something to share and join us for prayer!

Harvest Dinner Tickets are on sale. The dinner will be held on October 8, 2022. Proceeds benefit the Food Pantry. This year will feature select regional wines and local microbrews paired with the menu. Contact the office for tickets.

Altar Flowers sponsors are needed. Please check out the Springettsbury Hallway bulletin board for the sign-up sheet and available dates for the year. Cost is \$30 per vase.

Ukraine Offering—Offerings to give aid to Ukrainian refugees, orphans, widows and humanitarian help can be given through St. Paul’s website www.stpaulsyork.org by selecting the designated button or through our pew envelopes marking them “Ukraine”.



Sunday Coffee Hour—If you would be willing to help by contributing baked goods, fruits or veggies for Fellowship following any of our Summer 9:15 AM services simply notify the church office or sign up in the Good Shepherd room and we can add you to the schedule. The desire is to have fellowship opportunities following worship each Sunday throughout the summer. A member of the Fellowship Committee will provide oversight for each gathering.

This Week at St. Paul’s

Church office open 7:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m. Mon—Thurs

Sunday, July 24

- 9:15 AM Holy Eucharist
- 10:15 AM Fellowship—Good Shepherd Rm
- 6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm

Monday, July 25

- 7:00 PM Mutual Ministry

Tuesday, July 26

- 9:30 AM Pantry
- 12:30 PM Christian Ed—ZOOM
- 6:00 PM Property Committee
- 7:00 PM Worship & Arts—Good Shepherd Rm

Sunday, July 29

- 9:15 AM Holy Eucharist
- 10:15 AM Fellowship—Good Shepherd Rm

STAFF		
Pastor	Rev. Stanley Reep	prreep.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Youth Director	Kelly Moore-Spencer	kmoorespencer.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Organist, Choir Director	Victor Fields	vfields.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Children Choirs Director	Cody Messersmith	cmessersmith.stpaulsyork@gmail.com
Bell Choirs Director	Leah McComas	lmccomas.stpaulsyork@gmail.com
Secretary	Patee Pizzirusso	st.paulsyork@comcast.net
Sexton	Ted Weikert	st.paulsyork@comcast.net
Preschool Director	Deb Becker	director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com

Summer Worship

Combined Service time at 9:15 AM with Fellowship to Follow

Following each service there will be a time for fellowship held in the Good Shepherd Room. A member of the Fellowship Committee is scheduled to provide oversight with the set-up, serving and clean up each week. Please do volunteer to provide fruit or veggies or a baked good for one of these fellowship times. A sign-up sheet is located on the server in the Good Shepherd Room if you are able and willing to provide and item or two. Thank you to the Fellowship Committee for taking the lead on making these important times possible.

Preschool Webpage—We are excited to let everyone know that St. Paul's Preschool has a new webpage (stpaulspreschoolyork.com). Please take a few minutes to check it out and share it with people you know who may have children 2, 3, or 4 years of age. Applications for 2022-2023 enrollment are being accepted now.

Confirmation instruction will begin in September and will be held on Sunday morning. Students entering the 7th Grade should be enrolled in the program. Please contact Pastor Reep for additional information.

Family Ministry - Picnic in the Park, August 16th, 5:30pm – 7:00pm

Kain Park, Perch Pavilion

God Creates the Creatures in the Sea

Join your friends from St. Paul's for an evening picnic and bible activities at one of York Counties local parks. Each family is asked to bring their own picnic dinner to enjoy as we gather. The evening will include an interactive bible story and craft. All pavilions are located close to the park playground so your children can enjoy time playing with their friends. Restrooms and parking are located within walking distance.

5:30 – Picnic

6:00 – 7:00 – Bible Story and Craft

Ask, Search, Knock. It sounds simple enough. It is what Jesus says to his disciples when they ask him to teach them to pray. After he provides them with the brief text, an outline for prayer, what we know as the Lord's Prayer, Jesus continues by telling a story about need and persistence. After he tells the story he continues, "*Ask, search, knock.*" He says "*For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.*"

Asking I suppose is the easiest of these three. For the most part asking God is what we do. Unfortunately most of the time it seems that we are asking for stuff, for things, for our desires to be realized. That's not exactly what I think our Lord was on about that day when the disciples ask about prayer. Searching is a bit more complicated. We often tire of searching. We are after all a generation of folks who rely heavily upon features like "find my phone" or "find the remote." Time spent searching is reduced through technological advancements. And Knocking? The persistence that is required, the time spent going door to door, makes us grow weary of such an enterprise. But these are the three that Jesus advises in our lives of prayer. And these are the three that lead to receiving, finding, opening.

As we have moved through the gospel of Luke this lectionary season we have witnessed prayer continually being modeled for those who follow Jesus. When Jesus was praying the Spirit descended onto him following his baptism. The night before He called the twelve apostles Jesus was in prayer. On the mount of Transfiguration Jesus is praying. In the garden of Gethsemane on the night of his arrest Jesus is praying. There is something important about prayer. Jesus is modeling it for us in the gospel narrative.

In Luke, writes Richard Carlson, prayer is the act of fully opening oneself to the power and will of God. I have thought a lot about this simple statement about prayer and the ramifications it has for our lives of faith most of the week. This is one week where I could have really benefited from the Wednesday scripture study group, their insights, observations and experiences. They certainly would have lightened the load and shed light on what it means to be fully open to God, fully open to the power of God, fully open to the will of God. The catch for me in Dr. Carlson's statement are the words "fully" and "opening."

In ministry I have found myself conversing with leadership groups from congregation committees to synod councils. On more than one occasion I have asked people to simply consider the possibility of going about something differently, or the possibility of what some proposed changes might bring. We have engaged in such conversations here. Early in ministry I was surprised by the seeming inability people had to consider possibilities, to simply think about, dream, or envision something different from the known. At my current age I am no longer surprised. I see a correlation between opening oneself in prayer, opening oneself to God, opening oneself to the possibilities that God has in store.

In prayer I will lean in towards opening myself to God. I begin with the desire to be open. Then I realize that I keep a sort of safety break on, not fully wanting to give up control, not fully trusting. It is part of human nature I suppose knowing how often in human relationships we have been let down. So in our relationship with God it is easy, logical, understandable to hold back not being, as Dr. Carlson puts it, fully open to God. But such holding back, hesitating, remaining closed to the full realm and possibility of God prevents us from a richer fuller life lived in faith, hope, and trust.

Prayer is not a foreign concept to us. I regularly teach the text of the Lord's Prayer during confirmation instruction. People call upon me to offer prayer on their behalf. People call upon us to remember them, a loved one, or friend, in the Sunday intercessory prayer. I am not convinced that I am always, as Professor Carlson states, fully opening myself to the power and will of God when I pray. Sometimes it seems that I am just checking a box, going over a litany when I pray. And at other times it seems that through the act of prayer my entire being is changed. Those are the times when I realize that I am leaning further into the being fully open, the side that puts down my self-preservation modes and permits opening myself to God, God's realm, God's way and will. This isn't an easy task for a control freak like me. I know full well that this is challenging. But that, I believe, is what Jesus was on about that day when he taught his disciples to pray. Jesus is drawing his followers into a deeper relationship with God and with one another. He wants them to be asking continually, not for things, but for deeper relationships. He wants them to search, not because they are lost souls, but to search for, as the petitions of the prayer put it for God's reign breaking in on earth. He wants them to knock, with the persistence as if your best friend is in need of; bread, life, forgiveness, hope.

At this time in our lives people all around us need hope. Messages of hope, stories of hope seem to be few and far between. People need forgiveness. Forgiveness is the very thing that allows you to reset the clock, begin again, and experience a fresh start and a new beginning. People need life that really is life, what we know of as life in Christ, life made possible through Jesus' suffering death and resurrection. Jesus comes into our midst teaching us to pray, and calling us to a way of life where asking, seeking, knocking, is not some mysterious approach to life but is the way that strengthens us as followers announcing to anyone and everyone that a relationship with him and with the Father is possible. It may mean that we simply need to consider the possibilities, fully opening ourselves to God.

That thought can be frightening I suppose if you fear letting go of what you know and what you think you have control over. For the disciples, they had already left everything to follow Jesus. At times they got things wrong. They misunderstood. They lost sight of their calling. Today, however, when they witness Jesus at prayer, they recognize the need to be at prayer too. And so they ask. Lord, teach us to pray. With a few short sentences Jesus lays out a format that has stood the test of time. Then he told a story to underscore the importance of prayer and the ramifications that it would have for their lives. Collectively we share stories about prayer and the corollaries of such prayers on our lives. Such stories usually have an element of someone fully opening themselves to God. And through such prayer we hear of receiving, finding, opening. Those are the stories where doors are opened revealing a persistence that goes beyond human comprehension; bringing change, fresh perspectives, new relationships, opportunities, and often a way forward when it seemed that things were stuck, closed, fixed, stagnant, trapped. *"Ask, search, knock."* Jesus says, *"For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."* Amen.

FIRST READING: Genesis 18:20-32

The LORD said, "How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! ²¹I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know."

²²So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the LORD. ²³Then Abraham came near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

²⁶And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake." ²⁷Abraham answered, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." ²⁹Again he spoke to him, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." ³⁰Then he said, "Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." ³¹He said, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." ³²Then he said, "Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."

Psalm 138**SECOND READING: Colossians 2:6-15**

[16-19] [not printed]

GOSPEL: Luke 11:1-13

[Jesus] was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ²He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone
indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial."

⁵And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' ⁷And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' ⁸I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

⁹So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹²Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Next Sunday's Readings: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23; Psalm 49:1-12; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21.

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