

The background is a textured surface of recycled paper, featuring a large, dark blue cross at the top. A path of colorful flowers, including red, blue, pink, and yellow, leads from the bottom towards the cross. The overall composition is centered and visually balanced.

Carry the cross
and follow me

LUKE 14:27

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

25 W. Springettsbury Ave., York, PA 17403

Church Office 717-843-8155

Email: st.paulsyork@comcast.net

www.stpaulsyork.org

www.stpaulspreschoolyork.com

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.

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 CDC guidelines. Green/Optional, Yellow/Recommended, Red/Required. **The instruction will be posted on the entry doors. Please be sure to bring a mask in the event of required/recommended masking. Disposable masks are available at the entrance to the church nave.***

Offerings:

Monetary offerings may be placed in the basins provided at the entrances to the nave prior to the service. You may also donate via our website at www.stpaulsyork.org

Communion Procedure:

- 1. Come to communion using the center aisle (about 10 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 before you leave the chancel edge.*
- 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.*

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

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, September 4, 2022
Holy Communion 8:00 & 10:30 AM
Musical setting 6 from Evangelical Lutheran Worship

TEMPLE TALK Staff Recognition next week Carolyn Kapoun, Mutual Ministry

PRELUDE *Fugue on King's Lynn* Karl Osterland

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,

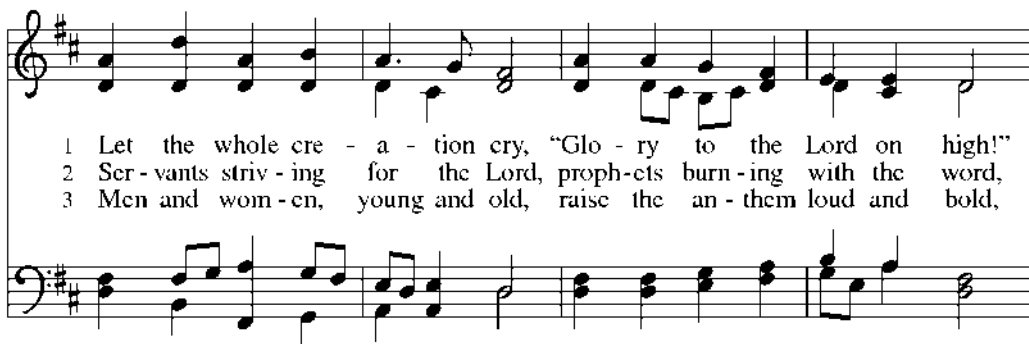
we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, 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.

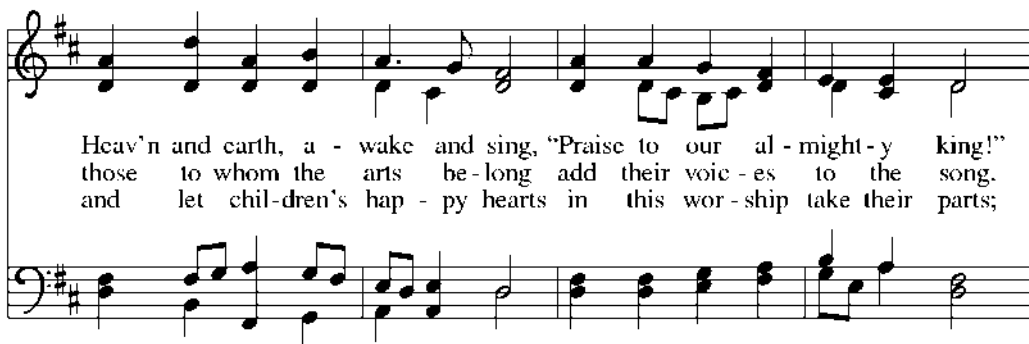
Amen

ENTRANCE HYMN

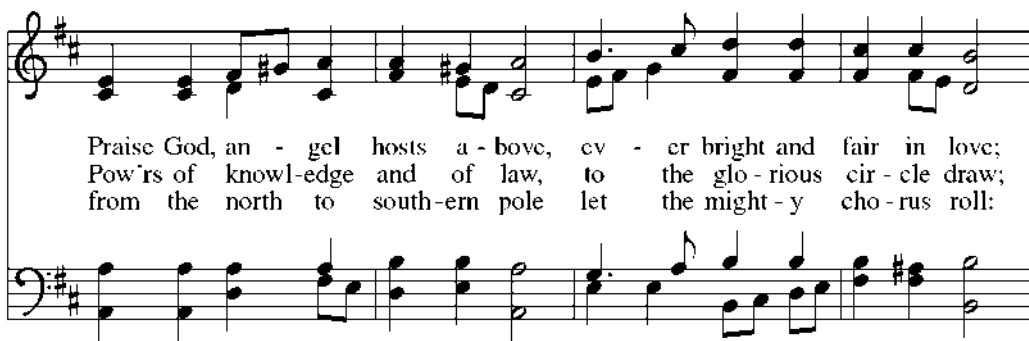
Let the Whole Creation Cry (ELW 876)



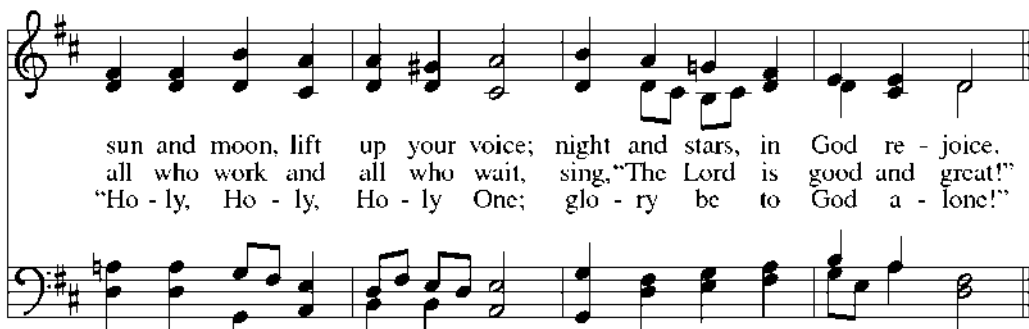
1 Let the whole cre - a - tion cry, "Glo - ry to the Lord on high!"
 2 Ser - vants striv - ing for the Lord, proph - ets burn - ing with the word,
 3 Men and wom - en, young and old, raise the an - them loud and bold,



Heav'n and earth, a - wake and sing, "Praise to our al - might - y king!"
 those to whom the arts be - long add their voic - es to the song,
 and let chil - dren's hap - py hearts in this wor - ship take their parts;



Praise God, an - gel hosts a - bove, ev - er bright and fair in love;
 Pow'rs of knowl - edge and of law, to the glo - rious cir - cle draw;
 from the north to south - ern pole let the might - y cho - rus roll:




sun and moon, lift up your voice; night and stars, in God re - joice,
 all who work and all who wait, sing, "The Lord is good and great!"
 "Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly One; glo - ry be to God a - lone!"

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.**

HYMN OF PRAISE *Refrain sung by congregation. Verses sung by Cantor*


Refrain



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace




to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the



high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



1 Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al - mighty God and Fa-ther,



we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.

Refrain



2 Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God,



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world:



have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the right

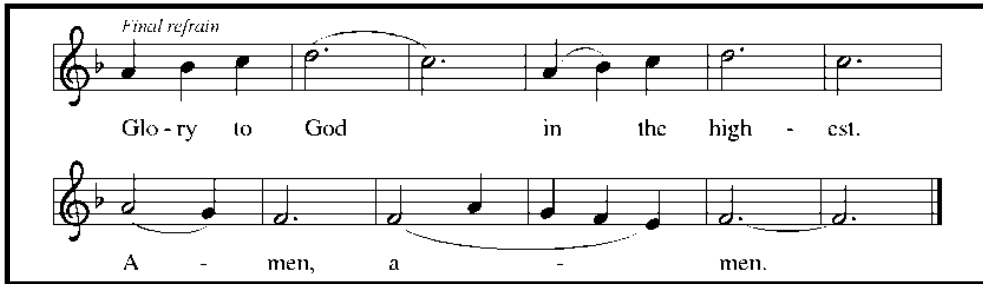


hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

Refrain



3 For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord, you a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it, in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther.



Final refrain
Glo-ry to God in the high-est.
A-men, a-men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

Almighty and eternal God, you know our problems and our weaknesses better than we ourselves. In your love and by your power help us in our confusion and, in spite of our weakness, make us firm in faith; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen

Sit

CHILDREN'S SERMON

FIRST READING

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

(back cover)

PSALM

Psalm 1

Spoken responsively by whole verse.

¹ Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel | of the wicked,*
nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats | of the scornful!

² **Their delight is in the law | of the LORD,***
and they meditate on his law | day and night.

³ They are like trees planted by streams of water,
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that | do not wither;*
everything they | do shall prosper.

⁴ **It is not so | with the wicked;***
they are like chaff which the wind | blows away.

⁵ Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when | judgment comes,*
nor the sinner in the council | of the righteous.

⁶ **For the LORD knows the way | of the righteous,*
but the way of the wick- | ed is doomed.**

SECOND READING Philemon 1-21 (*back cover*)

Stand
VERSE



HOLY GOSPEL Luke 14:25-33 (*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.

We pray for the church around the world and for the mission of the gospel. Refresh the hearts of your people and strengthen our partnerships in the faith. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the well-being of the earth and all its creatures: for trees and forests, for all that will yield fruit this season. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the nations and those in authority. Grant wisdom to those who govern and raise up citizens who make decisions in the best interest of their neighbors. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all in need: for those who suffer from disease, who struggle with homelessness or food insecurity, for those whose family life is difficult, and for all in this community who need your care (*especially Michael Martin, Erin Bastian, Harry Harman, Peggy Jacobs, Katie Guyer, Amy Hollis, Heidi Glaudel, Kristine Gross, Rachel Barnes, Courtney Snell*). God of grace,

hear our prayer.

We pray for this community of faith: for all our labors—begun, continued, and ended in you—that they glorify your holy name. Bless your people with the strength to live into their many vocations for the sake of the world. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for the saints who now rest from their labors (*especially Peter Claver, priest and missionary*). Give us faith, like them, to love you with all our hearts, and by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Gathered together in the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit, gracious God, we offer these and all our prayers to you; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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.

Praise God from whom all bless-ings flow; praise him, all crea-tures here be-low;
praise him a - bove, ye heaven-ly host: praise Fa - ther, Son and Ho - ly Ghost.

WORDS: *Doxology*, Thomas Ken (1637-1711)
MUSIC: Louis Bourgeois (ca. 1510-1561), *Genevan Psalter*, 1551

OLD 100th
L.M.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Merciful God,

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

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

Lift up your hearts.

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

And also with you.

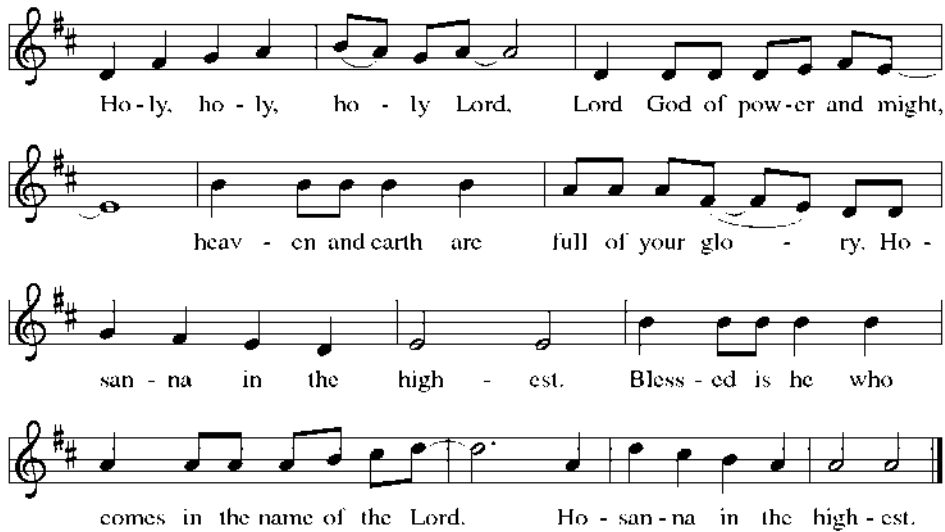
We lift them to the Lord.

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, 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.

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

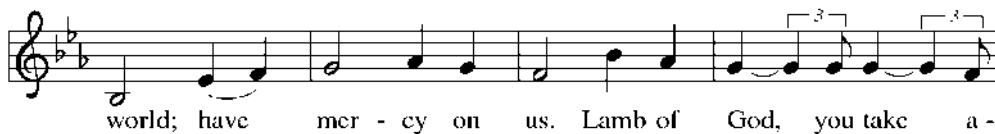
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

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*



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. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

BLESSING

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

HYMN *Let All Things Now Living (ELW 881) next page*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE *O Rejoice, Ye Christians* Charles Ore

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*The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God
in thanksgiving for our 60th anniversary by Jim & Nancy Bennett*



**Adult Discussion Session – Christ Hall
Sundays September 18 & 25**

This fall we begin the year with a discussion format to engage those new to Christian faith as well as those who have been involved for a life-time. In September we will draw from two short articles each week. The articles will be read in class. The articles are from *The Christian Century* magazine featuring current authors. A designated discussion leader will start the conversation helping to make connections with faith and life. References to the biblical witness will be identified as well as theological themes. The hope is that we will deepen our relationships with one another, develop a vocabulary reflective of our Christian faith, and be drawn more deeply into life in Christ Jesus.

September 18 *Attending to Others*, Peter W. Marty

Faith by Proxy, Brian Bantum

September 25 *The Gift of Tears*, Peter W. Marty

Communion Tears, Isaac S. Villegas

Let All Things Now Living



1 Let all things now liv - ing a song of thanks - giv - ing to
2 God rules all the fore - es: the stars in their cours-es and



God the cre - a - tor tri - um - phant - ly raise,
sun in its or - bit o - be - dient - ly shine;



who fash - ioned and made us, pro - tect - ed and stayed us, who
the hills and the moun - tains, the riv - ers and foun - tains, the



still guides us on to the end of our days.
deeps of the o - cean pro - claim God di - vine.



God's ban - ners are o'er us, God's light goes be -
We too should be voic - ing our love and re -



fore us, a pil - lar of fire shin - ing forth in the night,
joic - ing; with glad ad - o - ra - tion a song let us raise



till shad - ows have van - ished and dark - ness is ban - ished, as
till all things now liv - ing u - nite in thanks - giv - ing: "To



for - ward we trav - el from light in - to light.
God in the high - est, ho - san - na and praise!"

Serving the Lord with Gladness

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Ushers	Altar Set-up & Altar Clean-up
9/4	8:00 AM	Kirsten Barnes	Ann Ulrich	Ed LeCates		Harold & Donita Sargeant	Bob Reed , Ron Riese	Kathleen Lemke, Pat Scarborough
9/4	10:30 AM	Janet Fitch	Larry Becker	Deb Becker		Mike & Becky Bingham	Dave Kopp , Sandy Dickensheets, *Steve Heistand	Deb Becker, Janet Fitch

This Week at St. Paul's

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

Sunday, September 4

Worship Schedule Change

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist
 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist
 6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm

Monday, September 5 LABOR DAY

Office Closed

Tuesday, September 6

9:30 AM Pantry
 5:45 PM Jr. League Meeting—Community Rm

Wednesday, September 7

10:30 AM Scripture Study—Christ Hall

Thursday, September 8

9:00 AM Preschool Orientation
 6:30 PM Handbells
 7:30 PM Chancel Choir

Sunday, September 11

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist
 9:15 AM God's Work Our Hands Project
 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist /Staff Recognition
 11:30 AM Second Sunday Fellowship
 6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm



Food Pantry—September

Items needed: Beans, corn, juice, jelly, macaroni, Rice (1 or 2 lb bags), dehydrated potatoes, powdered milk, canned tuna, tomato sauce and soup. We also need paper grocery bags with handles and plastic bags.

Anyone able to help can contact Teresa Rohrbaugh, Patty Snyder, or Janet and Larry Moore. . Money donations are gratefully accepted.

Please place cash or check in a “special” envelope marked “Pantry”.

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
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

News and Updates:

Wednesday Scripture Study—Resumes this week, September 7, 10:30 AM—Christ Hall

Next Week, God's Work Our Hands – provides an opportunity to participate in a mission project. Sunday September 11 from 9:15- 10:15 AM we will be assembling health kits for Lutheran World Relief. This event is for all ages and will be held outdoors on the South Lawn.

St. Paul's Staff Recognition Brunch. The Second Sunday Brunch on September 11th, following the second service, will be hosted by the Mutual Ministry committee in celebration and recognition of our St. Paul's Church Staff. Please mark your calendars to be at this service and special lunch to recognize and support our hard working staff. If you are unable to attend we are accepting well wishes cards which we will forward to our staff for you. Please join us in this celebration.

Bibles – will be presented to children and youth who are entering Kindergarten, Fourth Grade and Seventh Grade during the liturgy on Sunday September 18.

Confirmation ministry – will be held on Sunday mornings at 9:15 AM with the first session on the Lord's Prayer beginning on September 18.

Food Pantry Workers – will be recognized in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of St. Paul's Food Pantry ministry on Sunday September 25.

Grateful appreciation is extended – to members of the Fellowship Committee for serving as hosts for the summer coffee hours and to those who generously provided the delicious variety of food. We raise our voices in thanksgiving for this tremendous time of fellowship. Thank you!

Sunday school classes - for all ages begin on September 18th at 9:15 AM. Primary, Confirmation and High School students meet on the upper level. An adult class will be held in Christ Hall on the main level.

Pre-school and Kindergarten through Grade 2 children will be learning about many important Old Testament people including Adam & Eve, Joseph, Moses and others.

Grades 3-6 will study one of the lessons being heard in worship. This will help them tie the stories from the Bible with worship and everyday life.

Harvest Dinner and Auction – tickets are available for purchase through the Church office. Tickets for the October 8th event are \$100 and all proceeds benefit the Food Pantry at St. Paul's. We are offering two tracks in hope of widening participation; craft beers paired with the menu as well as select wines. This should make for elevated conversation around the table, who likes what and why! The twelve original paintings by Pastor Reep that are featured in the 2022 calendar showcasing southern York county farms, and scenes from New England and Colonial Williamsburg will be auctioned live providing a huge amount of entertainment for the evening. And there are silent auction items donated to provide an additional source of funding for the food pantry. The American Heritage themed menu prepared by Chef Mummert features something that just about everyone will enjoy.



Tomorrow the nation celebrates the American labor force, Labor Day. We rejoice that people have work and that there are some sectors where jobs remain plentiful. Currently the percentage rate of unemployed Americans, those seeking employment remains extremely low. This hasn't always been the case. And it can change without much advance notice.

Ninety years ago our nation was charting the percentage rate at 25% unemployment. Such distressing numbers have become synonymous with the Great Depression. The citizenry was on the move with nearly two million people wandering around the country searching for work, and food, and shelter. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president and addressed the nation through radio communication with a series of "fireside chats." The idea was to bring calm, address the situation, and bring the nation through the difficult time it was experiencing. Politicians have continued the use this approach with varying degrees of success ever since.

But I am not so sure that the "fireside chat" was a completely original concept for President Roosevelt. The Old Testament reading from Deuteronomy shares the story of a leader concerned about the future of the people and the nation. Moses is addressing the religious community; he is concerned about their wellbeing, their ability to settle in a land, to have enough food, and to secure shelter, and to remain God's people. He has been quick tempered in his younger years. He grew impatient with their selfish desires. But now, as they are able to see across the Jordan River to the Promised Land, Moses is speaking to them, let's call them "riverside chats" using a tone that would bring calm, address the situation and bring them through the difficult time that they have experienced.

Moses addresses those who would listen, those who would take heed of the situation before them. The book of Deuteronomy records three such speeches from Moses. The first three chapters provide an overview of what they have been through together; Egypt, their abrupt departure, crossing the Red Sea, snakes and manna and water from the rock. The next huge chunk, comprising 18 chapters, stresses the moral and civil code they agreed to keep. This sounds as if it could be rather dry reading but Moses shares his crazy outbursts, simple object lessons, and ways in which to remember who they are as God's beloved, chosen and saved people. In the last chapters we have his third speech summing up 40 years of life together, the importance of their future and the choices that they make. Will they willingly fall back into oppression, slavery, death, or will they choose life? The tone of this "riverside chat" is clear and straight to the point. He is an old man facing certain death. Soon they will be on their own. How will they go about life as God's people?

"See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity." It seems that there are only two choices: "life and prosperity" or "death and adversity." Moses wants them to honor the covenant relationship, so from his perspective there really is only one real choice. Moses has given his life to this enterprise leading God's people out of slavery and death toward freedom and life. We may hear this as a rather harsh word in our modern society. For Moses the only way to have a future is through; loving the Lord God, walking in God's ways, and observing God's commandments, decrees and ordinances.

When words from the prophets of old seem hard and difficult to hear we often look to Jesus to soften what may seem harsh or burdensome from the Old Testament. But Jesus' word to us this morning is every bit as challenging for us as the word recorded in Deuteronomy. Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. He is on his way to the cross, to suffering and certain death. He has left the home of the Pharisee and "dinner table chats" and is once again out among all the people who are pressing in upon him. The words Jesus speaks to us mirror the magnitude of those spoken by Moses in his "riverside chat." Jesus wants them to know that being a disciple brings with it priority in love, taking up cross, and giving away possessions.

Discipleship is not easy. Following in the way of the cross is challenging. Giving up possessions is hard to hear and even harder to act upon. We have heard how God fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty. We have heard in Jesus' preaching in his home town that his ministry will be to the poor. We have heard that the disciples left everything to follow him. We have heard words of blessing to the poor and words of woe to those with positions. We have heard stories of a wrong way and a right way to respond to Jesus' call of what to do with our possessions; a rich young ruler who turns and walks away from Jesus clinging tightly to his possessions, and a tax collector named Zacchaeus discovering a generous way to give away and live with possessions.

Giving shape to Jesus' message are two parables; setting out to build a tower and advancing troops in a military battle. Who doesn't calculate the cost of building a tower, or the strength of the opposing foe? Don't start building if you can't finish what you have begun, you will become a mockery. Draw up terms of peace and agreement if you can't win the approaching battle. As baptized Christians we often gloss over the cost of discipleship with a banner of grace. Grace certainly abounds but not without the costliness of Christ's cross born for you and me. Through Christ's victory over sin and death God opens up a future for us. God makes a way forward for us.

Jesus wants us to honor the covenant relationship that he has established with us in Baptism. He wants us to have a future. The call to discipleship is a call to love the Lord, walk in the Lord's ways and observe the commandments, decrees and ordinances made known to us through his suffering, death and resurrection. Jesus wants for us to have life and freedom. He wants us to use life and freedom to make his ways known to those who suffer adversity and to preclude needless destruction and death.

There are times when it seems as if there isn't a way forward. It was certainly true in our nation 90 years ago during the Great Depression. Through "Fireside chats" fears were calmed, the dreadful situation was addressed, and the nation was brought through the difficult time it was experiencing. We heard of another time when it seemed as though there wasn't a way forward for God's people. Moses addressed them reminding them of their past and of God's steadfast love. In a "riverside chat" he prepared them for life ahead and reminded them of the importance of their daily choices. Make good choices, choices that reflect God's generosity, choices that permit food and shelter and life. In Christ Jesus we have been given life now and prepare for the life to come. Our days of discipleship are days of laboring; loving God and neighbor. Amen.

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. ¹⁶If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. ¹⁷But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, ¹⁸I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Psalm 1**SECOND READING: Philemon 1-21**

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, ²to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God ⁵because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. ⁶I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. ⁷I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

⁸For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, ⁹yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. ¹⁰I am appealing to you for my child,

Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. ¹¹Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. ¹²I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. ¹³I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; ¹⁴but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. ¹⁵Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back forever, ¹⁶no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

¹⁷So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. ¹⁹I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. ²⁰Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

GOSPEL: Luke 14:25-33

Now large crowds were traveling with [Jesus]; and he turned and said to them, ²⁶“Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. ²⁷Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³²If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. ³³So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.”

Next Sunday's Readings: Exodus 32:7-14; Psalm 51:1-10; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10.

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