

Are you envious  
because I am  
generous?

MATTHEW 20:15

# St. Paul's Lutheran Church

25 W. Springettsbury Ave., York, PA 17403

Church Office 717-843-8155

Email: [st.paulsyork@comcast.net](mailto:st.paulsyork@comcast.net)

[www.stpaulsyork.org](http://www.stpaulsyork.org)

[www.stpaulspreschoolyork.com](http://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 187 years. By worshipping with us today, you become part of that living tradition.

**Offerings** Offerings are received during the liturgy. They are presented along with gifts of bread and wine at the altar. You may also donate via our website at [www.stpaulsyork.org](http://www.stpaulsyork.org)

**Postlude** It is our tradition to remain seated for the postlude. If you need to leave we ask that you do so reverently. This tradition developed as a result of our livestream. We want anyone viewing to be able to listen to the postlude without unnecessary distraction. Thank you.

**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.

**The Nursery** is accessed through the front right double doors. The liturgy is live-streamed into the Nursery. Parents are asked to stay with their children. Quiet activities are also available in the Narthex for infant through preschool children to use with an adult.

**Please be aware** that there is a rise in individuals loitering at church buildings and asking for money. This is panhandling and it is illegal. Please do not give money. Simply direct them to contact the Pastor at a time other than during worship. Thank you.

**Parents**, please do accompany your child to the restroom during the liturgy and wait with them. This is a way for us to practice good safety protocol within our building.



The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God  
in loving memory of Richard W. Haugh by loving wife Shirley and Family

STAFF		
Pastor	Rev. Stanley Reep	<a href="mailto:prreep.stpaulsyork@comcast.net">prreep.stpaulsyork@comcast.net</a>
Youth Director	Kelly Moore-Spencer	<a href="mailto:kmoorespencer.stpaulsyork@comcast.net">kmoorespencer.stpaulsyork@comcast.net</a>
Organist, Choir Director	Victor Fields	<a href="mailto:vfields.stpaulsyork@comcast.net">vfields.stpaulsyork@comcast.net</a>
Children Choirs Director	Julianna Jones	<a href="mailto:jjones.stpaulsyork@comcast.net">jjones.stpaulsyork@comcast.net</a>
Bell Choirs Director	Leah McComas	<a href="mailto:lmccomas.stpaulsyork@gmail.com">lmccomas.stpaulsyork@gmail.com</a>
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Sexton	Ted Weikert	<a href="mailto:st.paulsyork@comcast.net">st.paulsyork@comcast.net</a>
Preschool Director	Deb Becker	<a href="mailto:director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com">director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com</a>

**Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**Sunday, September 24, 2023**  
**Holy Communion 8:00 & 10:30 AM**

**TEMPLE TALK**     *From Bread & Wine to Bountiful Giving*  
8:00 AM            Kirsten Barnes  
10:30 AM           Nicki Herdson

**PRELUDE**             *All People That On Earth Do Dwell*             Henry Purcell

*Stand*

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*The assembly stands turning to face the Baptismal Font. 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.*

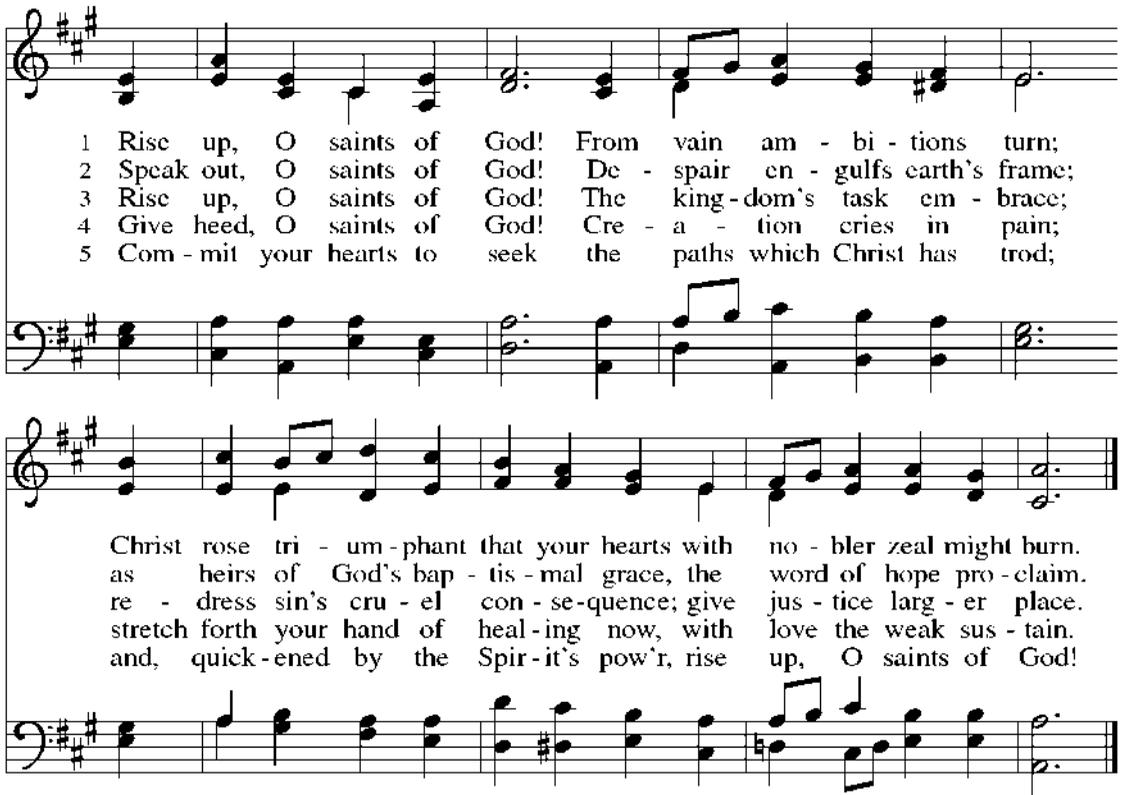
Most merciful God,

**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

### *Rise Up, O Saints of God! (ELW 669)*



1 Rise up, O saints of God! From vain am - bi - tions turn;  
2 Speak out, O saints of God! De - spair en - gulfs earth's frame;  
3 Rise up, O saints of God! The king - dom's task em - brace;  
4 Give heed, O saints of God! Cre - a - tion cries in pain;  
5 Com - mit your hearts to seek the paths which Christ has trod;

Christ rose tri - um - phant that your hearts with no - bler zeal might burn.  
as heirs of God's bap - tis - mal grace, the word of hope pro - claim.  
re - dress sin's cru - el con - se - quence; give jus - tice larg - er place.  
stretch forth your hand of heal - ing now, with love the weak sus - tain.  
and, quick - ened by the Spir - it's pow'r, rise up, O saints of God!

## 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.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord God, you call us to work in your vineyard and leave no one standing idle. Set us to our tasks in the work of your kingdom, and help us to order our lives by your wisdom; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

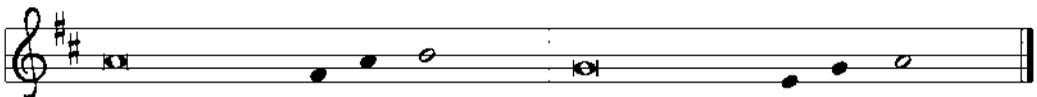
*Sit*

## CHILDREN'S SERMON

**FIRST READING**          Jonah 3:10—4:11          (*back cover*)

**PSALM**    Psalm 145:1-8

*The organ introduces the tone, then it is sung unaccompanied by all.*



- <sup>1</sup> I will exalt you, O | God my King,\*  
and bless your name forev- | er and ever.
- <sup>2</sup> Every day | will I bless you\*  
and praise your name forev- | er and ever.
- <sup>3</sup> Great is the LORD and greatly | to be praised;\*  
there is no end | to his greatness.
- <sup>4</sup> One generation shall praise your works | to another\*  
and shall de- | clare your power.
- <sup>5</sup> I will ponder the glorious splendor | of your majesty\*  
and all your | marvelous works.
- <sup>6</sup> They shall speak of the might of your | wondrous acts,\*  
and I will tell | of your greatness.
- <sup>7</sup> They shall publish the remembrance of | your great goodness;\*  
they shall sing of your | righteous deeds.
- <sup>8</sup> The LORD is gracious and full | of compassion,\*  
slow to anger and | of great kindness.

**SECOND READING**          Philippians 1:21-30

<sup>21</sup>For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. <sup>22</sup>If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. <sup>23</sup>I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; <sup>24</sup>but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. <sup>25</sup>Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, <sup>26</sup>so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

<sup>27</sup>Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28</sup>and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. <sup>29</sup>For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well — <sup>30</sup>since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

*Stand*

**VERSE**

*Sung by all*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

*Repeat alleluia*

Lord, to whom shall we go?      You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

**HOLY GOSPEL**

Matthew 20:1-16

*(back cover)*

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

*At the conclusion of the Gospel.*

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Glory to you, O Lord.****Praise to you, O Christ.***Sit***SERMON**

Rev. Stan Reep

*Stand***HYMN OF THE DAY***Lord of Light (ELW 688)*

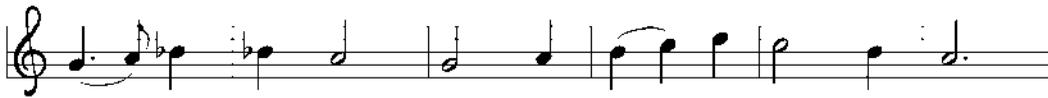
1 Lord of light, your name out - shin - ing all the stars and  
 2 By the toil of faith - ful work - ers in some far out -  
 3 Grant that knowl - edge, still in - creas - ing, at your feet may  
 4 By the prayers of faith - ful watch - ers, nev - er si - lent



suns of space, use our tal - ents in your king - dom  
 ly - ing field, by the cour - age where the ra - diance  
 low - ly kneel; with your grace our tri - umphs hal - low,  
 day or night; by the cross of Je - sus, bring - ing



as the ser - vants of your grace; use us to ful -  
 of the cross is still re - vealed, by the vic - to -  
 with your char - i - ty our zeal; lift the na - tions  
 peace to all and heal - ing light; by the love that



fill your pur - pose in the gift of Christ your Son.  
 ries of meek - ness, through re - proach and suf - f'ring won:  
 from the shad - ows to the glad - ness of the sun:  
 pass - es knowl - edge, mak - ing all your chil - dren one:

*Refrain*

Fa - ther, as in high - est heav - en, so on earth your will be done.

## 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 church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

*A brief silence.*

Lord God teach us to invite and welcome all people into your church. In the challenging work of evangelism give us the vision and strength to proclaim your love. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Help us remember creation and how precious it is to you. Make us care for the earth and its creatures. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Give courage to all who serve their communities in times of uncertainty, stress, or exhaustion. Especially, legislators, judges, members of the military, and law enforcement. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Protect us from calamity and disaster. Encourage all who are in despair or pain of any kind by your word of forgiveness and hope (*especially*). Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Help us to experience in abundant life in our vocations and through our service in this congregation. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give thanks for the saints called to the kingdom of heaven (*especially*). United with them in spirit, hold us firm as we labor in this life and look to the life to come. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through your Son, 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.*

## Sit

**OFFERING** 8:00 AM

*Our Father in Heaven*

Ulrich Steigleder

10:30 AM Chancel Choir

*Jubilate Deo*

Leo Sowerby

## Stand

**OFFERTORY** *The gifts of bread and wine and monetary gifts are presented at the altar.*



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles - 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 the dreams of all; u -



nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your



pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Merciful God,

**as grains of wheat scattered upon the hills were gathered together to become one bread, so let your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom, for yours is the glory through Jesus Christ, now and forever. 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** *The preface appropriate to the day is said.*

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; 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 all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**SANCTUS** *Sung by all.*

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. Blessed is he who comes in the  
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

**THANKSGIVING**

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.

Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place,  
and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest  
until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

**Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory 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,**

**FRACTION RITE** *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

Holy Communion at St. Paul's Church is "open" to all believers who trust that the Risen Christ is present for his people in the Holy Eucharist.

*Procedure for receiving Communion:*

1. Come to communion using the center aisle.
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.
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.

## COMMUNION HYMN *By Your Hand You Feed Your People (ELW 469)*



- 1 By your hand you feed your peo - ple, food of an - gels, heav-en's bread.
- 2 In this meal we taste your sweet-ness, bread for hun - ger, wine of peace.
- 3 Send us now with faith and cour - age to the hun - gry, lost, be - reaved.



For these gifts we did not la - bor, by your grace have we been fed:  
Ho - ly word and ho - ly wis - dom sat - is - fy our deep - est needs.  
In our liv - ing and our dy - ing, we be - come what we re - ceive:



Christ's own bod - y, blessed and bro - ken, cup o'er - flow - ing, life out - poured,



giv - en as a liv - ing to - ken of your world re - deemed, re - stored.

**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. In your mercy, 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**

*Lord of All Hopefulness (ELW 765) next page*

**DISMISSAL**

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

**POSTLUDE**

*Trumpet Tune*

John Stanley, arr. Robert Hebble

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***Serving the Lord with Gladness***

**Please find a replacement if you are unable to serve on you scheduled date.**

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Ushers	Altar Set-up & Clean-up
9/24	8:00 AM	Harold Sargeant	Denise Rider	Kathy Monk		Jeff & Rose Riese	Bob Reed, Ron Riese	Ron & Norma Riese
	10:30 AM	George Fitch	Tom Gibson	Janet Fitch	Larry Becker	Deb & Larry Becker	Kem Vaught, Larry Becker, Steve Heistand, Dan Garber	Janet & Larry Moore



St Paul’s is collecting clothing for Union Lutheran Church’s Clothing Ministry and your help is requested. Union collects ‘gently used’ clothing (and shoes) for its clothing closet and offers it **free of charge** to needy families in the York City community. A bin has been placed in the Good Shepherd room to collect any clothing you would like to donate. These donations will surely be a blessing to our neighbors. Union’s volunteers are very appreciative of our cooperation and our help.

# Lord of All Hopefulness



1 Lord of all hope - ful - ness, Lord of all joy,  
2 Lord of all ea - ger - ness, Lord of all faith,  
3 Lord of all kind - li - ness, Lord of all grace,  
4 Lord of all gen - tle - ness, Lord of all calm,



whose trust, ev - er child - like, no cares could de - stroy:  
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe:  
your hands swift to wel - come, your arms to em - brace:  
whose voice is con - tent - ment, whose pres - ence is balm:



be there at our wak - ing, and give us, we pray,  
be there at our la - bors, and give us, we pray,  
be there at our hom - ing, and give us, we pray,  
be there at our sleep - ing, and give us, we pray,



your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.  
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.  
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.  
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

## Food Pantry—Fall

**Items needed: Canned fruit, canned chicken, canned tuna & Peanut Butter.** We also need paper grocery bags with handles and plastic bags. Money donations are gratefully accepted. Please place cash or check in a “special” envelope marked “Pantry”. **Volunteers are needed Tuesday mornings to help our neighbors shop. Call Teresa Rohrbaugh or the church office (717-843-8155) to volunteer.**

**DR. GEOFFREY SIMON, ORGANIST**  
**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1**  
**4:00 PM**  
**St. Paul's Lutheran Church**

The York Chapter, American Guild of Organists is pleased to present Geoffrey Simon in an organ recital at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 25 West Springettsbury Ave. York, PA on Sunday, October 1 at 4:00 PM.

Geoffrey Simon recently moved back to his hometown of York, Pennsylvania. His father was formerly Pastor of Union Lutheran Church, West Market Street, York. Geoff and his wife Sarah Morgan have been attending worship at St. Paul's. They plan to sing in the Chancel Choir.

Invite a friend to join you for this organ recital.

### **Youth News**

#### **Sr High Youth Fellowship grades 9 through 12**

Faith and Conversation around the table

Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup> Issacs Restaurant, South York Plaza 5:00pm

On Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup> Sr High Youth Grades 9 through 12 are invited to share conversation and dinner around the table. They will connect with each other while discussing a topic that they helped to choose ahead of time. Meals will be shared, stories will be told, together they will experience God's nearness, God's kindness and God's Love. While sharing stories they will experience God's Grace. At the Table we Talk - At the Table we Listen.

#### **Youth Fellowship grades 7 through 12**

11:45am following the 10:30am Liturgy

Sunday, October 8 Youth Room

Following the Liturgy the Youth will fill their lunch plates during 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Sandwiches and come to the Youth Room for a time of fellowship, prayer, and fun group icebreakers.

### **From Bread and Wine to Bountiful Giving**

The Stewardship Team, under the leadership of Nicki Herdson and Kirsten Barnes, has prepared a focused program for us. Beginning on the First Sunday of October we will be called upon to respond to God's call to faithful living which includes bountiful giving. Such giving includes our financial gifts, as well as the use of our time and talents in service to and for others.



**Harvest Dinner Tickets are on sale.** The dinner will be held at 5:30 PM on October 7, 2023. *Please note the new date.* Proceeds benefit the Food Pantry. This year will feature select regional wines and local microbrews paired with the menu. Ticket cost is \$100 per person. Contact the office for tickets.

**This Week at St. Paul's**  
Church Office hours Mon-Thurs 8am-4pm

**Sunday, September 24**

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist  
9:15 AM Sunday School for All  
9:15 AM AED Training  
9:15 AM Confirmation Class—Youth Room  
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live Stream  
6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm

**Monday, September 25**

7:00 PM Worship & Arts  
7:00 PM Mutual Ministry

**Tuesday, September 26**

9:30 AM Food Pantry  
12:30 PM Christian Ed—ZOOM  
6:00 PM CREATE—Preschool thru Grade 6  
6:00 PM Property Committee

**Wednesday, September 27**

10:00 AM Preschool Chapel with Pastor  
10:30 AM Bible Study—Christ Hall

**Thursday, September 28**

9:10 AM Fellowship Mtg—Christ Hall  
10:00 AM Preschool Chapel with Pastor  
6:30 PM Handbell Choir—Christ Hall  
7:30 PM Chancel Choir—Music Room

**Sunday, October 1**

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist  
9:15 AM Sunday School for All  
9:15 AM Confirmation Class  
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live Stream  
4:30 PM Organ Recital  
6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm



**Sunday Morning  
Adult Study**

Aligning with our current lectionary scriptures using the gospel of Matthew, our Sunday Adult Christian Education class will begin with a five-week study of the book of Matthew. Several scriptures will be featured throughout the gospel narrative, and we will use a Book of Faith Series publication from Augsburg Fortress. Please join us starting September 17th for this deeper look into Matthew! Tristan Ericson will facilitate and the class will meet in Christ Hall located on the main level.



**Mission Trip to Tanzania**—Our delegation has been assembled. We are blessed to have a group of 13 households comprised of 26 persons representing St. Paul's as we travel to our sister congregation next June. If you would like to help defray the cost of our delegation please use a special envelope located in the pew rack and mark it "Tanzania Trip Donation". Please remember that this is not a vacation, it is a mission trip. We do need help defraying the cost for participants.

*Please extend birthday wishes to our September "Vintage" Birthdays:  
Janice Cromer*



Please be sure to check with the church secretary *before* you schedule your meetings at the church. Call or email the office with your request.

## Proper 20 A, 2023

### Jonah 3:10-4:11 Psalm 145:1-8 Philippians 1:21-30 Matthew 20:1-16

A candle flickering on the kitchen counter signaled that the odor, from the delicious tasting cod served only hours earlier, lingered in the air. The darkness of evening was advancing and with it came bed time. The candle was extinguished. The following morning, still dark, refreshed from sleep, coffee was prepared. The rich aroma of the dark roast didn't seem to mask or overcome the lingering odor of the fish. I didn't remember the fish being strong smelling when unwrapped, prepared, or served. The candle was lighted again with hopes that its "weathered spice" scent would bring change to the persistent pungent air quality.

It wasn't until the breakfast dishes were whisked into the dishwasher and cast iron skillet wiped clean and the counters were being given a quick wipe down when the real culprit was revealed. One of the beautiful plump red tomatoes sitting neatly in a row was seeping liquidly goo onto the counter. The odor had not been from the cod but from a rotten tomato. When lifted gently from its place, it caved in on itself, creating a powerful stench and an incredible mess.

Jonah thought he knew well the stench of the evil ways of the people of Ninevah. His knowledge of people in a distant land came from somewhere. How quickly he judged them. How quickly he ran from them. How delighted he was to be heading in the opposite direction from them. But he couldn't hide from God or run from God, or as it turns out, couldn't forgive like God. Like the rotten tomato on the kitchen counter the real culprit was a lot closer than he realized, it was his anger.

Today we are abounding in the goodness of God's generosity. Such generosity isn't limited to the likes of us. God's goodness and generosity is extended to the horribly rotten to the core people of Ninevah (from the perspective of Jonah).

We pick up the story after Jonah has spent three nights in the belly of a great big fish. We have already witnessed how Jonah attempts to run from God's mission. How he decided that God's mission was not right for him and so he would go a different direction. He spent time on board ship with sailors, was thrown overboard, was swallowed by a fish, spent three days and nights in the fish's belly, was spewed out on the dry ground conveniently at the entrance to the city of Ninevah, the place where all of the horribly rotten to the core people of the earth were concentrated.

Jonah, knowing that running from God's mission didn't work out so well for him; followed through by announcing to the great city of Ninevah that it was high time that they repented for their horribly smelly rotten to the core ways. He announced that the Lord God wants to forgive them and set them on a new path. A path that does not lead to a core that is horribly rotten but that leads to lives that are generously filled with the robust goodness of God, and the sweet aroma of His loving forgiveness. With God they can really live and move and have their being. And when the people of Ninevah heed the message sent to them through Jonah, when they repent of their evil rotten to the core smelly ways, God relents and does not destroy them or their city or their animals.

And that is where we encounter Jonah when the Old Testament reading begins. Jonah is displeased and angry. Jonah is annoyed at God's graciousness, at God's mercy, at God's being slow to anger, and God's steadfast love. Jonah is perplexed at God's ability to see something other than the horribly rotten to the core lives of the people of Ninevah. He is so distraught over the outcome of the Ninevah mission that Jonah pleads to the Lord God to take his life.

Instead, the Lord continues to care for Jonah by appointing a bush to grow up providing a generous canopy of shade to protect Jonah from the scorching heat of the sun. Jonah perked up a bit. The next day God appointed a worm to come along and consume the green leaves so that the bush withered away. Jonah again thinks it is better for him to die than to live. He just can't grasp the capacity of God's generosity. To Jonah the sweet aroma of God's forgiveness of Ninevah smells more like a rotten tomato! He just doesn't like it one bit!

It was a similar scene that day with Peter when Jesus told a kingdom of heaven parable of the landowner and his generosity toward the laborers. Some worked all day, some half a day, some a quarter of a day and some barely made it out into the vineyard when they were called in and were given the day's wage. All received the same daily wage. And the grumbling broke out against the landowner's generosity. The laborers can't grasp the capacity of this one's financial generosity. Some of us would rather die than to allow for generosity. It nearly kills us to think that God sees the horribly rotten to the core people (from our perspective) as having worth, value, and needing love.

When God pours forth the Holy Spirit on the likes of us it is a similar scene. We don't like to think of ourselves as smelly horribly rotten to the core individual's living in south central Pennsylvania. We like to think that we are the laborers who have spent the entire day in the vineyard; or the ones who have faithfully carried forth God's mission into the world. It is easier for us to live ordinary, turned in on self-lives, rather than listen to the words of God's messenger, calling us to repent of our smelly ways, and receive the forgiveness of the Lord. His generosity cannot be matched.

God's generosity guides the lives of the people of Ninevah, guides the lives of the laborers in the vineyard, and guides our lives through the suffering death and resurrection of his Son, Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus gives himself for us so that we can live and move and have our being, not encumbered with sin, the horribly rotten to the core stuff that keeps us from him and from our neighbors. He wants us to be abounding in his steadfast love! So he forgives us; forgives our incorrect assumptions, our running away from mission, and our anger over the many things that disappoint and seem unfair.

Jonah would rather die than to live with such generosity from God. The laborers in the vineyard would rather grumble than live with such generosity from the landowner. And what of us, how will we live? Choosing death, grumbling, rejecting life giving suggestions? Heaven no, we live repentant forgiven lives with the knowledge of a gracious God, who is merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love for all. Amen.

**FIRST READING: Jonah 3:10—4:11**

When God saw what [the people of Nineveh] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

<sup>41</sup>But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. <sup>2</sup>He prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. <sup>3</sup>And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” <sup>4</sup>And the LORD said, “Is it right for you to be angry?” <sup>5</sup>Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. <sup>7</sup>But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. <sup>8</sup>When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

<sup>9</sup>But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?” And he said, “Yes, angry enough to die.” <sup>10</sup>Then the LORD said, “You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. <sup>11</sup>And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?”

**Psalms 145:1-8****SECOND READING: Philippians 1:21-30**

[not printed]

**GOSPEL: Matthew 20:1-16**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup>After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup>When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; <sup>4</sup>and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. <sup>5</sup>When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. <sup>6</sup>And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ <sup>7</sup>They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ <sup>8</sup>When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ <sup>9</sup>When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. <sup>10</sup>Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. <sup>11</sup>And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, <sup>12</sup>saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ <sup>13</sup>But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? <sup>14</sup>Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. <sup>15</sup>Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ <sup>16</sup>So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

**Next Sunday's Readings:** Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32; Psalm 25:1-9; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32.

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