

The truth  
will make you  
free

JOHN 8:32

# 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.

**An AED/Defibrillator** unit is located in the Good Shepherd room. It is placed on the wall left side of the Springettsbury door exit.

**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.

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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Preschool Director	Deb Becker	<a href="mailto:director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com">director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com</a>

**Reformation**  
**Sunday, October 29, 2023**  
**Holy Communion 8:00 & 10:30 AM**

TEMPLE TALK

Photo Directory

Earline Jones

PRELUDE

*With High Delight, Let Us Unite*

Charles Ore

*Stand*

ENTRANCE HYMN

*A Mighty Fortress (ELW 504)*



1 A might - y for - tress is our God, a sword and shield vic -  
2 No strength of ours can match his might! We would be lost, re -  
3 Though hordes of dev - ils fill the land all threat - 'ning to de -  
4 God's Word for - ev - er shall a - bide, no thanks to foes, who



to - rious; he breaks the cruel op - pres - sor's rod and  
ject - ed. But now a cham - pion comes to fight, whom  
vour us, we trem - ble not, un - moved we stand; they  
fear it; for God him - self fights by our side with



wins sal - va - tion glo - rious. The old sa - tan - ic foe  
God him - self e - lect - ed. You ask who this may be?  
can - not o - ver - pow'r us. Let this world's ty - rant rage;  
weap - ons of the Spir - it. Were they to take our house,



has sworn to work us woe! With craft and dread - ful might  
The Lord of hosts is he! Christ Je - sus, might - y Lord,  
in bat - tle we'll en - gage! His might is doomed to fail;  
goods, hon - or, child, or spouse, though life be wrenched a - way,



he arms him - self to fight. On earth he has no e - qual.  
God's on - ly Son, a - dored. He holds the field vic - to - rious.  
God's judg - ment must pre - vail! One lit - tle word sub - dues him.  
they can - not win the dav. The king - dom's ours for - ev - er!

## 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

Assisting minister



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.


All



Lord God, heav'n-ly King, al-might-y God and Fa - ther, we wor -




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



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, O 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. 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. A - men.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, gracious Lord, pour out your Holy Spirit upon your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your Word, protect and comfort them in all temptations, defend them against all their enemies, and bestow on the Church your saving peace; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever **Amen.**

*Sit*

**10:30 AM CANTABILE BELLS**

*Jesus Loves Me*

## CHILDREN'S SERMON

**FIRST READING**

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (*back cover*)

**PSALM Psalm 46**

*The organist introduces the tone then it is sung unaccompanied by cantor/congregation*



- <sup>1</sup> God is our ref- | uge and strength,\*  
a very present | help in trouble.
- <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the | earth be moved,\*  
and though the mountains be toppled into the depths | of the sea;
- <sup>3</sup> **though its waters | rage and foam,\***  
**and though the mountains tremble | at its tumult.**
- <sup>4</sup> **The LORD of | hosts is with us;\***  
**the God of Jacob | is our stronghold.**
- <sup>5</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the cit- | y of God,\*  
the holy habitation of | the Most High.
- <sup>6</sup> God is in the midst of her; she shall not be | overthrown;\*  
God shall help her at the | break of day.
- <sup>7</sup> **The nations make much ado, and the king- | doms are shaken;\***  
**God has spoken, and the earth shall | melt away.**
- <sup>8</sup> **The LORD of | hosts is with us;\***  
**the God of Jacob | is our stronghold.**
- <sup>9</sup> Come now and look upon the works | of the LORD,\*  
what awesome things he has | done on earth.
- <sup>10</sup> It is he who makes war to cease in | all the world;\*  
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the | shields with fire.
- <sup>11</sup> **"Be still, then, and know that | I am God;\***  
**I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted | in the earth."**
- <sup>12</sup> **The LORD of | hosts is with us;\***  
**the God of Jacob | is our stronghold.**

**SECOND READING**

Romans 3:19-28

(*back cover*)

*Stand*  
**VERSE**

*Sung by all*



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** John 8:31-36 *(back cover)*

The Holy Gospel according to St. John

**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

**HYMN OF THE DAY** *Faith Begins by Letting Go (ACS 1004)*



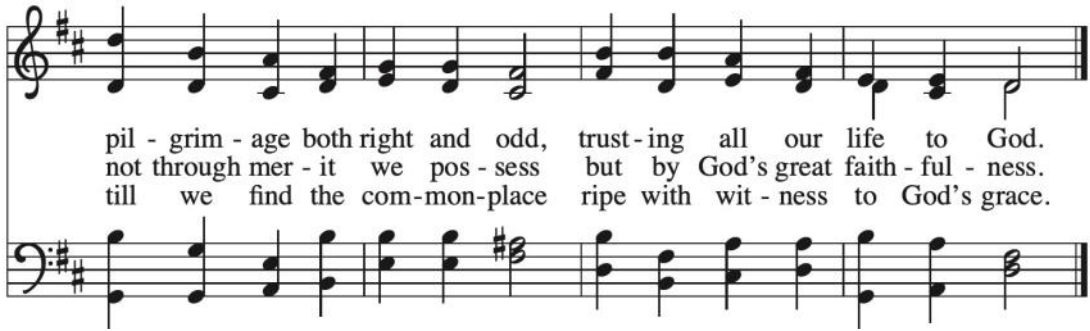
1 Faith be - gins by let - ting go, giv - ing up what had seemed sure,  
2 Faith en - dures by hold - ing on, keep - ing mem - 'ry's roots a - live  
3 Faith ma - tures by reach - ing out, stretch - ing minds, en - larg - ing hearts,



tak - ing risks and press - ing on, though the way feels less se - cure:  
so that hope may bear its fruit; prom - ise - fed, our souls will thrive,  
shar - ing strug - gles, liv - ing prayer, bind - ing up the bro - ken parts;



*Continued on next page...*



pil - grim - age both right and odd, trust - ing all our life to God.  
 not through mer - it we pos - sess but by God's great faith - ful - ness.  
 till we find the com - mon - place ripe with wit - ness to God's grace.

*Stand*

**NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.**

**Through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven;**

**by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin  
Mary, and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;**

**he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;**

**he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,**

**and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.**

**With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.**

**He has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,**

**and the life of the world to come. Amen**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray for the whole people of God, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

*A brief silence.*

God our Father, heal the church's many divisions, bring understanding and peace where there has been contention and strife, and unite us in one body through the love of your Son. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Bring relief to areas harmed by wildfires, floods, storms, and human carelessness (*especially*). Renew the face of the earth. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Let your justice and peace roll down like waters wherever there is strife, injustice, war, or religious conflict. We pray for Russia & Ukraine, and Israel & Palestine.

God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

God our champion, you are our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. Draw near to all who suffer (*especially*). Be their rest and comfort. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Free us from complacency, open us to unexpected ways, and kindle zeal in us for the future. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God our savior, you made yourself known in the lives of all who have died in the hope of your grace. We give thanks for the witness of reformers like Martin Luther and for all whose example has brought us closer to you. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending love and amazing grace; 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.*

*Sit*

<b>OFFERING</b> 8:00 AM	<i>All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name</i>	Heinrich Fleischer
10:30 AM Chancel Choir	<i>All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly</i>	David M. Cherwien
	Andrew Jones, Violin	



*Stand*

**OFFERTORY HYMN**      *The Sacrifices of God*

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

Litany in Phrygian Mode  
Swedish *Mässa* bok, 1942

Adapted, REGINA H. FRYXELL

*Unison*

The sac - ri - fic - es of God are a bro - ken spir - it:

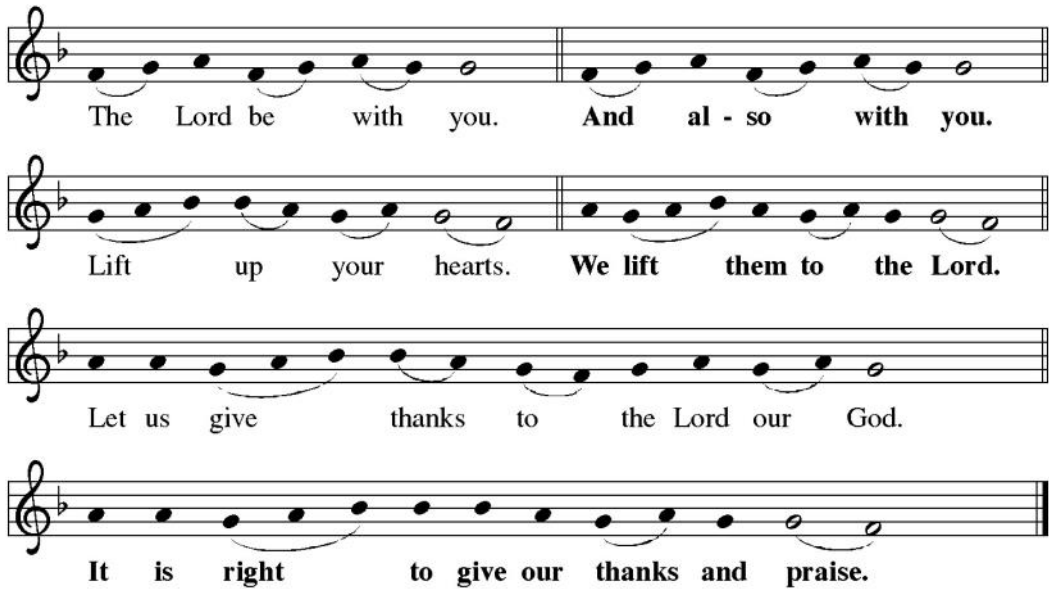
a bro - ken and a con-trite heart, O God, thou wilt not de-spise.

Do good in thy good pleas-ure un - to Zi - on: build thou the

walls of Je - ru - sa - lem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sac - ri -

fic - es of right-eous-ness: with burnt off - ering, and whole burnt off - ering.

## DIALOGUE

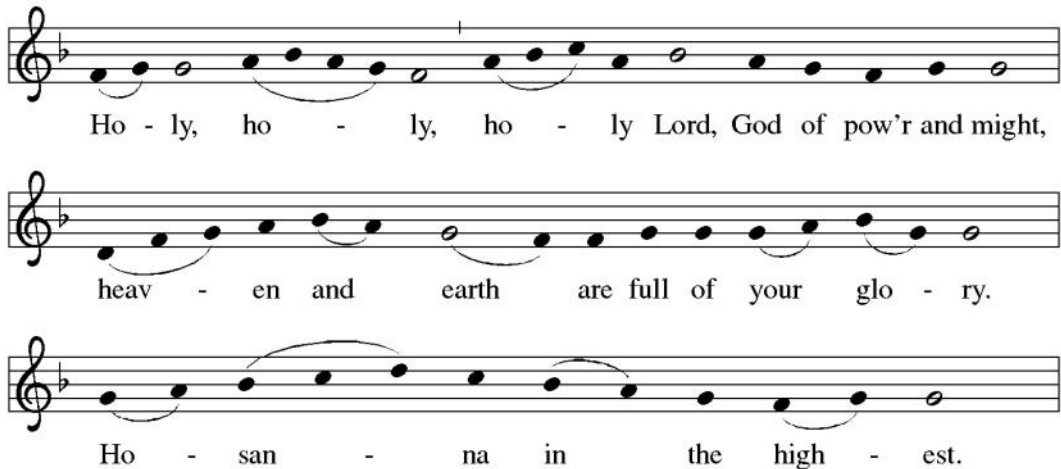


The Lord be with you. And also with you.  
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

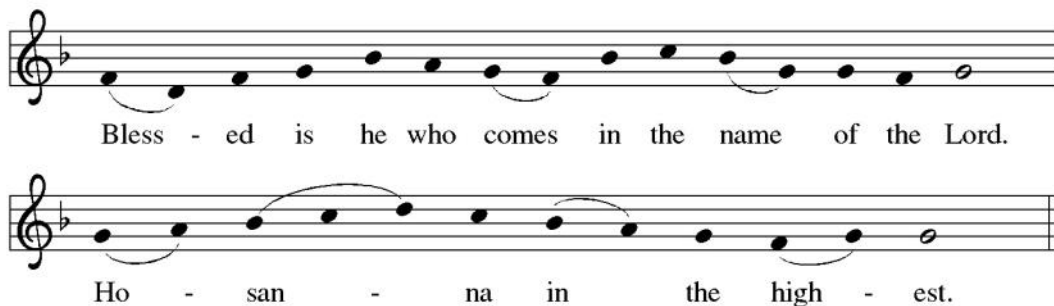
## PREFACE *The preface appropriate to the day is said.*

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'r and might,  
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's  
death until he comes.

**Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.**

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,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

**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. A - men.

*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**      *Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior (ACS 963)*



1 Je - sus Christ, our bless - ed Sav - ior,  
2 Christ says, "Come, that you may ev - er  
3 This be - lieve with faith un - shak - en:  
4 Christ says, "Come to me, you wea - ry;  
5 Nour - ished, go to thank - ful la - bor,



took our sin a - way for - ev - er,  
here re - mem - ber God's great fa - vor.  
Je - sus' meal is to be ta - ken  
all your bur - dens I will car - ry.  
bear - ing fruit in love for neigh - bor.



bear - ing bit - ter grief and pain,  
Take this bread, my bod - y; dine.  
by all those with hearts dis - tressed,  
There is noth - ing you can do  
Those you serve can taste from you



free - dom from death for us to gain.  
My blood I give for you in wine."  
by all who yearn for peace and rest.  
to earn this mer - cy; take it new."  
what won - ders God in love will do.

**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. O God, we give you thanks that you have set before us this feast, the body and blood of your Son. By your Spirit strengthen us to serve all in need and to give ourselves away as bread for the hungry, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**BLESSING**

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

**HYMN**

*Go to the World (ACS 991)*



1 Go to the world! Go in - to all the earth.  
2 Go to the world! Go in - to ev - 'ry place.  
3 Go to the world! Go strug - gle, bless, and pray;  
4 "Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,



Go preach the cross where Christ re - news life's worth,  
Go live the word of God's re - deem - ing grace.  
the nights of tears give way to joy - ous day.  
for I am with you till the age shall end,



bap - tiz - ing as the sign of our re - birth.  
Go seek God's pres - ence in each time and space.  
As ser - vant church, you fol - low Christ's own way.  
when all the hosts of glo - ry cry, A - men!"



Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

**DISMISSAL**

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

**POSTLUDE**

*Built On the Rock the Church Doth Stand*

Bedrich Janacek

## This Week at St. Paul's

Church Office hours Mon-Thurs 8am-4pm

### Sunday, October 29 Reformation Sunday

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

### Monday, October 30

7:00 PM Worship & Arts—Good Shepherd Rm

### Tuesday, October 31

9:30 AM Food Pantry  
 6:00 PM NO CREATE

### Wednesday, November 1

#### No parking on Springettsbury

10:00 AM Preschool & Pastor—Nave  
 10:30 AM Bible Study— Christ Hall

### Thursday, November 2

10:00 AM Preschool & Pastor—Nave  
 6:30 PM Handbell Choir—Christ Hall  
 7:30 PM Chancel Choir—Music Room

### Sunday, November 5 All Saints Day

#### Handbell Choir

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist  
 9:15 AM Sunday School for All  
 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live Stream  
 5:00 PM Sr. High Fellowship  
 Guadalajara Mexican Restaurant  
 6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm

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.

### *Serving the Lord with Gladness*

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Ushers	Altar Set-up & Clean-up
10/29	8:00 AM	Jennifer Ports	Denise Rider	Lois Ann Schroeder		Kathleen Lemke, Denise Rider	Alex Bastian, Michael Poster	Kathleen Lemke, Ann Anstadt
	10:30 AM	Janet Fitch	Tom Gibson	Jessica Ericson	William Snyder	Scott & Nicki Herdson, Frank & Earline Jones	Dave Kopp, Sandy Dickensheets, Steve Heistand	Deb Becker, Isabelle Lehr



*The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God  
 in loving memory of Ivy Jo Jacobs by her family Carl, Peggy, Leah,  
 Aaron and Pearl.  
 And in celebration of Edward & Teresa Rohrbaugh's 40th wedding anniversary.*

Thank you to the Cantabile Bells for ringing *Jesus Loves Me* this morning at the 10:30 AM liturgy.



**St Paul's is collecting clothing for Union Lutheran Church's Clothing Ministry.** 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.



### **Food Pantry—Fall**

**Thanksgiving in the Pantry** Each year our preschool families collect food for our shoppers who come to the pantry. The number of shoppers has tripled since 2019. You can help the preschool families in their collection by donating the following items by November 12.

#### **Stuffing Mix, Canned sweet potatoes, Instant potatoes**

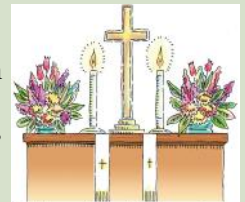
Please put your donations in the shopping cart in the Good Shephard Room. Thank You. We also need paper grocery bags with handles and plastic bags. Money donations are gratefully accepted. Please place cash or check in a "special" envelope marked "Pantry". **Volunteers are needed Tuesday mornings to help our neighbors shop. Call Teresa Rohrbaugh or the church office (717-843-8155) to volunteer.**

**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.

**Victor Fields** will be the guest organist with the Central Pennsylvania Symphony Orchestra in concert TODAY, Sunday, October 29, 3:00pm to be held in the sanctuary at First Lutheran Church, 21 S. Bedford St. in Carlisle. Tickets can be purchased on the Symphony website.

### **2024 Flower Chart**

The 2024 flower chart is posted on the Springettsbury vestibule bulletin board. The cost of the flowers is **\$35 per vase**. You are welcome to sign up to provide one or both vases. After you have signed up, simply make a check payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church and mark it altar flowers. This is a great way to honor someone, celebrate a milestone in life, or remember a loved one. The flowers may be taken home with you at the conclusion of the last liturgy or you may have them given to someone who is sick, shut it, or hospitalized. If you wish, you can contact the office to reserve a date, and to provide us with all of the correct information for inclusion in the Sunday bulletin.



**Please note the current price of \$35. per vase.**



## Up-dates and Announcements October 29, 2023

**Today we begin utilizing a plain song musical setting of the liturgy.** This music has been wed to the liturgical texts for centuries of Christian worship. At St. Paul's we have used this setting during the seasons of Advent and Lent. The offertory is from the *Swedish Mass book 1942* and was used in our Lutheran resource; *The Service Book and Hymnal*. Its gentle Phrygian Mode works well with the text from Psalm 51:18-20.

**New altar and pulpit paraments** have been provided through a memorial gift for the white and green seasons of the church year. We anticipate their arrival, blessing and dedication.

**The George Street Doors** have received a fresh coat of paint in time for the holiday season.

**Fall mums have been planted** in the large urns at the entrances to the church as well as along the Springettsbury Ave. side of the building.

**We extend our sincere appreciation** to Kirstin Barns and Nicki Herdson for leading us through our fall stewardship campaign *From Bread and Wine to Bountiful Giving*. Please do complete both a Time and Ability form and a Commitment Card. When completed they may be folded in half and placed in the offering basin or returned to the church office.

**Next Sunday we remember** by name those from our congregation who have died during the past year. At the 10:30 AM liturgy the Handbell Choir will ring a fitting anthem for the day, *Jerusalem, My Happy Home*.

**The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held on November 19, 2023** at Noon in the Fellowship Hall. The Fellowship Committee will provide the meal. We will elect leaders, vote on proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws, adopt a 2024 budget, and hear from council members and committee chairs regarding current and future ministry plans. Do plan to attend.

**Mutual Ministry Committee has planned this year's staff recognition** to be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting on November 19. Please do prepare a note of thanks, share a story about a meaningful part of ministry that you have experienced during the year and place it in the specially marked basket. Make certain you place the staff person's name on the exterior of the envelope. Blank cards are provided if needed.

**All Annual Reports are due** to the church secretary by Friday, November 10.

**The glass globes utilized on our aisle posts need to be cleaned** in preparation for the upcoming Christmas season. This is a huge job, but can be made more manageable with many volunteers. Please contact the office if you are able to help.

**2024 Offering Envelopes** will be available on the Day of the annual meeting, November 19.

**Please do sign up to have your picture taken** for a new pictorial directory. We are doing this in house so that you will not need to sit through a sales pitch. Picture days are November 12 and 19. The link for signing up is <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040D4BAEAC2AAAF49-45117049-stpauls#/>

**The umbrella stand** at the Springettsbury Ave. entrance is hemorrhaging umbrellas. Please check to see if one of them may belong to you. We need to empty the stand so that there is room for wet umbrellas on the next rainy Sunday. Thank you.

## Reformation Sunday 2023

**Jeremiah 31:31-34**

**Psalms 46**

**Romans 3:19-28**

**St. John 8:31-36**

An engineer, a psychologist and a theologian were hunting in the wilds of northern Canada. They became very cold and happened upon an isolated cabin. As they approached the cabin they could see light from the window and smoke drifting in a haze from the smokestack. When they arrived, there was no answer to their repeated knocks, they turned the door knob and discovered the cabin was unlocked. Presuming the hospitality of those who hunt in wilderness areas, they entered the cabin. It was small with just two rooms and there was nothing unusual about it, except the wood stove. The wood stove was suspended in mid-air by wires attached to the sides of the stove and attached to the ceiling beams.

“Fascinating!” said the psychologist “it is obvious the lonely trapper feels isolated from humanity, and he has elevated his stove so he can curl up under it and emotionally return to a secure safe place similar to his mother’s womb. It is a rather brilliant means of adapting to one’s environment!”

“That’s a bunch of Freudian nonsense!” said the engineer. “The man is simply practicing the laws of thermodynamics. He discovered that by elevating his stove off of the floor, he can distribute the heat more evenly through the cabin. Simply the laws of physics put to practical use!”

There was a moment or two of silence before the theologian jumped into the lively conversation. “With all due respect to both of you and your expertise, I think that you are both mistaken! Hanging his stove from the ceiling has powerful religious symbolism. Fire lifted up has been a symbol of the nearness and active presence of God. Remember the pillar of fire by night as God’s people were led away from bondage and captivity toward the Promised Land. And you know how many churches hang sanctuary lamps over their altars to be reminded of the presence of God. Why it is just his way of coping with loneliness in this desolate place and helping him ward off any sense of abandonment.”

The three hunters continued to debate their individual theories of the elevated wood stove, all the while enjoying its warming effect, but without ever resolving their different theories. While they were talking and warming themselves, the trapper returned to this cabin, and after a quick “Welcome to my humble shack,” he began fixing them something to eat. The hunters were appreciative of his generosity and fine hospitality on such a cold evening. After some time, the trapper went to the stove and added some wood to the fire. The three hunters immediately saw this as an opportunity to pose their question: “Why do you suspend your wood stove from the ceiling?” They asked.

His answer was brief and simple, “I had plenty of wire cable but not much stove pipe!”

We have gathered on this Reformation Sunday morning recalling the period of reformation during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. For some it is just another Sunday. For others it is a day to recall our heritage as Lutherans. And for still others it is a day that reminds us of how creative minds can easily reach differing conclusions given the same information.

Luther, like the trapper in the story, was a creative thinker. He worked within the parameters of what was available to him. He was long on diligent study of scripture and short on abuses in the church. He was a faithful priest, brilliant theologian, and biblical scholar. And like the three hunters in the wilds of northern Canada looking for shelter and protection from the cold, Luther was searching for the shelter and protection of a gracious and loving God.

It was during his study of St. Paul's letter to the Romans when he came to a different conclusion about God and God's generosity to humanity. Scripture texts that had been studied by hundreds of scholars before him, yet God's grace, given to the likes of us through Christ Jesus, took on a whole new meaning. Luther finally felt free, reborn, alive in such a way that he had never before experienced. And so, Luther began to see the work of the church and the clergy from a different point of view.

This empowered Luther to speak out about the abuse of the church. In those days it was the selling of Indulgences. Indulgences were slips of paper that you would buy for a price fixed by the clergy and in exchange for your hard earned cash; the slip of paper was proof that you would be relieved of time spent in purgatory. Luther knew that God wasn't planning to punish sinners in a place called purgatory, some place between heaven and hell, because it wasn't mentioned in Holy Scripture. Such teachings Luther proclaimed were not God's teachings but a convenient way for the Church to raise money for a nearly bankrupt Vatican.

On October 31, 1517, Luther posted 95 points, topics, for debate and conversation on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. These 95 theses opened the way for people to talk and discuss matters pertaining to the church, and Christian life. Salvation, justification, grace and the Word, were topics spawning the beginning of a movement sparking the imaginations of generations of people.

In our age we are aware of the importance of people experiencing God's love for them through welcome and hospitality, through sacraments and preaching, through the forgiveness of sins which bestows life and salvation. Fewer people attend church or claim any religious tradition now than at any other time in our nation's history. We must look a bit like a wood stove suspended from the ceiling by wire cables. How odd we must appear to the world. People who believe and trust in God. People who rejoice in Christ's saving grace. People who order our days and deeds in response to the One who gave himself for us on Calvary's Cross. Like Luther before us, we do need to study the scriptures diligently, speak more intelligibly about faith, and live life graciously, remembering our neighbor.

500 plus years have passed since the posting of those 95 points for debate. And over the course of those centuries' laity and clergy have continued to debate their individual and communally held understandings of God's gracious goodness made known in Christ Jesus. This morning we join that renowned group with our own held convictions. Some of which align more readily with the historic teachings of the church while others do not. But all of us enjoy God's warmth and generous hospitality.

Washed in Christ's bath of forgiveness we are given entrance to God's realm of grace and mercy and are opened to a world where everything can look as different and confusing as that wood stove suspended from the rafters in the trappers cabin in the wilds of northern Canada. We are fed at Christ's table of grace where he is both host and guest giving himself to us in bread and wine to that we are strengthened for the journey that awaits us as we go forth to serve. And while Jesus is being a gracious host, we often interrupt to pose our own questions. Some of them must sound to our Lord like the one posed by the guests in the cabin, "Why do you suspend your wood stove from the ceiling?" We ask such questions while we are the recipients of his righteousness. We may never resolve our differences as to how and why and for what reasons God does what God does. But we do enjoy the warmth, acceptance, hospitality and love – the effect of his suffering death and resurrection so that grace may abound. God's answer to our question is brief and simple, "I am long on forgiveness and mercy, and I love you!" Amen.

**FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34**

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

**Psalm 46****SECOND READING: Romans 3:19-28**

Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup>For “no human being will be justified in his sight” by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

<sup>21</sup>But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, <sup>22</sup>the righteousness

of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, <sup>23</sup>since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; <sup>24</sup>they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; <sup>26</sup>it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

<sup>27</sup>Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup>For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

**GOSPEL: John 8:31-36**

Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; <sup>32</sup>and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” <sup>33</sup>They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free?’”

<sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup>The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. <sup>36</sup>So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”