



**ENTER  
INTO JOY**

MATTHEW 25:21

# 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:st.paulsyork@comcast.net">st.paulsyork@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>
Secretary	Patee Pizzirusso	<a href="mailto:st.paulsyork@comcast.net">st.paulsyork@comcast.net</a>
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>

**25th Sunday After Pentecost**  
**Sunday, November 19, 2023**  
**Holy Communion 8:00 & 10:30 AM**

**PRELUDE**

*For the Fruit of All Creation*

Frank Stoldt

*Stand*

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*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.**

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

### *God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending (ELW 678)*



- 1 God, whose giv-ing knows no end-ing, from your rich and end-less store:
- 2 Skills and time are ours for press-ing toward the goals of Christ, your Son:
- 3 Trea-sure, too, you have en-trust-ed, gain through pow'rs your grace con-ferred;



na-ture's won-der, Je-sus' wis-dom, cost-ly cross, grave's shat-tered door,  
all at peace in health and free-dom, rac-es joined, the church made one.  
ours to use for home and kin-dred, and to spread the gos-pel word.



gift-ed by you, we turn to you, of-f'ring up our-selves in praise;  
Now di-rect our dai-ly la-bor, lest we strive for self a-lone;  
O-pen wide our hands in shar-ing, as we heed Christ's age-less call,



thank-ful song shall rise for-ev-er, gra-cious do-nor of our days.  
born with tal-ents, make us ser-vants fit to an-swer at your throne.  
heal-ing, teach-ing, and re-claim-ing, serv-ing you by lov-ing all.

## 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

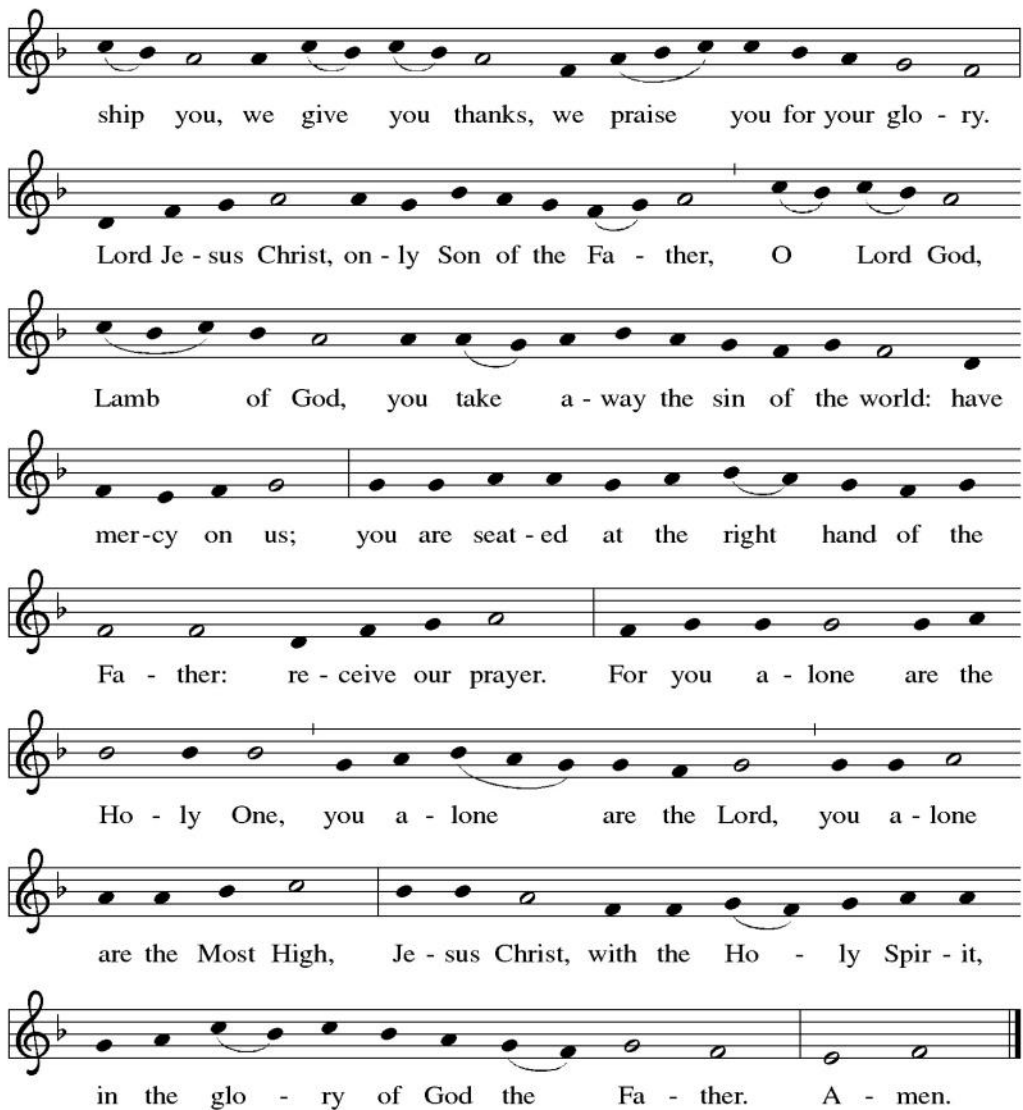


Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

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

Let us pray. . . Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people to seek more eagerly the help you offer, that, at the last, they may enjoy the fruit of salvation; through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen**

*Sit*

**10:30 AM CHILDREN'S CHOIR**

*By the Waters of Babylon*

## FIRST READING

Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

<sup>7</sup>Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is at hand; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests.

<sup>12</sup>At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts, "The LORD will not do good, nor will he do harm."

<sup>13</sup>Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.

<sup>14</sup>The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there.

<sup>15</sup>That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness,

<sup>16</sup>a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

<sup>17</sup>I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind; because they have sinned against the LORD, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung.

<sup>18</sup>Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath; in the fire of his passion the whole earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

## PSALM Psalm 90: 1-8

The verses are sung by the cantor/choir, the refrain is sung by all at the appointed time.

Henri F. Hemy  
Arr. Hal H. Hopson

REFRAIN

Teach us, O Lord, to count our days;  
O set our hearts on all your ways.

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<sup>1</sup> Lord, you have | been our refuge\*  
from one generation | to another.

<sup>2</sup> Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the | earth were born,\*  
from age to age | you are God. **REFRAIN**

<sup>3</sup> You turn us back to the | dust and say,\*  
"Go back, O | child of earth."

<sup>4</sup> For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when | it is past\*  
and like a watch | in the night. **REFRAIN**

- <sup>5</sup> You sweep us away | like a dream;\*  
 we fade away suddenly | like the grass.  
<sup>6</sup> In the morning it is | green and flourishes;\*  
 in the evening it is dried | up and withered. **REFRAIN**  
<sup>7</sup> For we consume away in | your displeasure;\*  
 we are afraid because of your wrathful | indignation.  
<sup>8</sup> Our iniquities you have | set before you,\* **REFRAIN**  
 and our secret sins in the light | of your countenance.

**SECOND READING**

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

*(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**

Matthew 25:1-4-30

*(back cover)*

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*At the conclusion of the Gospel.*

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Sit*

**SERMON**

Pastor Stan Reep

*Stand*

**APOSTLES' CREED**

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

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

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

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

He descended into hell.\* On the third day he rose again.

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, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

*A brief silence.*

Gracious God, you give talents and gifts to all your people equipping the church for service. Turn us from fear and self-serving ways so that we use our talents to glorify you and encourage our neighbor. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Sustain the life of the planet; let the earth produce bountifully. Direct us in the wise stewardship of all resources. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Instill values of integrity and honesty in the hearts of all nations and their leaders. Free those who are oppressed, and bring redemption to victims of injustice. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Where there is sickness or sorrow, bring healing, and where there is loneliness, reveal your love in community. We remember before you (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the faith formation ministries of our church. Encourage all children, youth, and adults to study your word. Shape us by your love showing us how to encourage one another. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Gracious God, you are faithful in all generations. For the promise of life and rest and for the witness of those who have died in faith (*especially*) we praise your goodness. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We offer our spoken prayers and those held in our hearts trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior and 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

*God, Whose Almighty Word*

Jeffrey Blersch

10:30 AM Chancel Choir

*A Paeon of Praise*

Jack H. Ossewarde

*Stand*



## OFFERTORY HYMN

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



What shall I ren - der to the Lord for all his ben - e - fits to me?



I will of - fer the sac - ri - fice of thanks - giv - ing



and will call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of sal -



va - tion and will call on the name of the Lord.



I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the

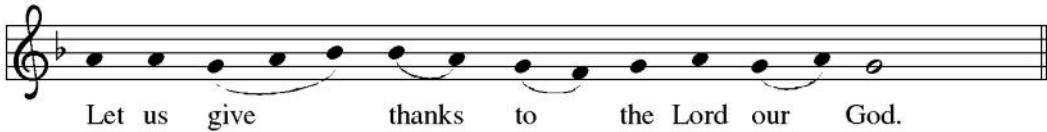


pres - ence of all his peo - ple, in the courts of the Lord's house,



in the midst of you, O Je - ru - sa - lem.

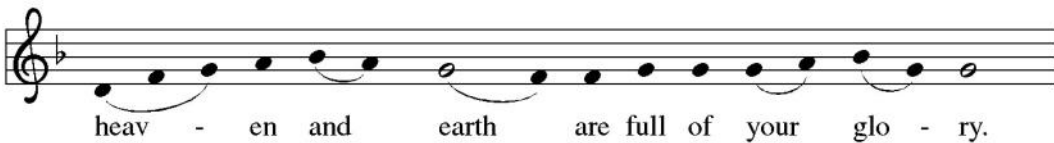
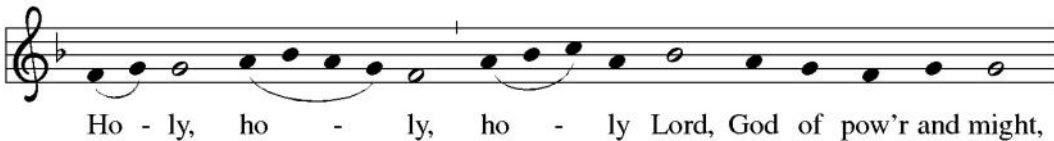
## DIALOGUE



## 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.*





Bless - ed 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.

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      10:30 AM      *Come to Us, Creative Spirit (ELW 687)*



1 Come to us, cre - a - tive Spir - it, in this ho - ly  
2 Po - et, paint - er, mu - sic - mak - er, all your trea - sures  
3 Word from God e - ter - nal spring - ing, fill our minds, we  
4 In all plac - es and for - ev - er glo - ry be ex -



house; ev - 'ry hu - man tal - ent hal - low,  
bring; crafts - man, ac - tor, grace - ful danc - er,  
pray; and in all ar - tis - tic vi - sion  
pressed to the Son, with God the Fa - ther



hid - den skills a - rouse, that with - in your earth - ly  
make your of - fer - ing; join your hands in cel - e -  
give in - teg - ri - ty: may the flame with - in us  
and the Spir - it blest: in our wor - ship and our



tem - ple, wise and sim - ple may re - joice.  
bra - tion: let cre - a - tion shout and sing!  
burn - ing kin - dle yearn - ing day by day.  
liv - ing keep us striv - ing for the best.

**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 8:00 AM *We Give Thee but Thine Own (ELW 686)***



1 We give thee but thine own, what - e'er the gift may be;  
2 May we thy boun - ties thus as stew - ards true re - ceive,  
3 The cap - tive to re - lease, to God the lost to bring,  
4 And we be - lieve thy word, though dim our faith may be:



all that we have is thine a - lone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.  
and glad - ly, as thou bless - est us, to thee our first - fruits give.  
to teach the way of life and peace—it is a Christ-like thing.  
what-e'er we do for thine, O Lord, we do it un - to thee.

**HYMN 10:30 AM *Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending (ELW 435) next page***

**DISMISSAL**

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

**POSTLUDE**

*We Praise You, O God*

Flor Peeters

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# Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending



1 Lo! he comes with clouds de - scend - ing,  
2 Now re - demp - tion, long - ex - pect - ed,  
3 Yea, a - men, let all a - dore thee,



once for our sal - va - tion slain;  
comes in sol - emn splen - dor near;  
high on thine e - ter - nal throne;



thou - sand thou - sand saints at - tend - ing  
all the saints this world re - ject - ed  
Sav - ior, take the pow'r and glo - ry,



join to sing the glad re - frain:  
thrill the trum - pet sound to hear:  
claim the king - dom as thine own.



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



lu - ia! Christ the Lord re - turns to reign.  
lu - ia! See the day of God ap - pear!  
lu - ia! Thou shalt reign, and thou a - lone!

## This Week at St. Paul's

Church Office hours Mon, Tues 8am-4pm; Weds 7:30-11:30am

### Sunday, November 19—Photos for Directory

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist  
 9:15 AM Sunday School for All  
 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live Stream  
 11:45 AM Annual Meeting followed by lunch  
 6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm

### Monday, November 20

7:00 PM Finance Meeting—ZOOM

### Tuesday, November 21

9:30 AM Food Pantry  
 6:00 PM CREATE—Preschool thru Grade 6

### Wednesday, November 22 Office closed 11:30am

10:30 AM NO Bible Study

### Thursday, November 23 Thanksgiving Office closed

### Friday, November 24 -Office Closed

### Sunday, November 26 Christ the King

*Poinsettia Orders due*

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist  
 9:15 AM NO Sunday School  
 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live Stream  
 Blessing of Paraments  
 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.



*The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God  
in memory of Andrew Glessner.*

### *Serving the Lord with Gladness*

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Ushers	Altar Set-up & Clean-up
11/19	8:00 AM	Harold Sargeant	Kirsten Barnes	Harrison Palmer		Bob & Connie Reed	Jeff Riese, Sammy Barnes, Alex Bastian	Pat Scarborough, Melissa Yakim
	10:30 AM	Tom Gibson	Jaclyn Kinkella	Jessica Ericson	Patty Snyder	Steve & Sue Heistand, Scott & Nicki Herdson	Kem Vaught, Larry Becker, Dave Kopp	Sandy Dickensheets, Tonya Cave



### Adult Sunday School Sessions

Nov. 19

Ten Important Things that Happened between the Old & New Testament

Nov. 26

Christ the King—Crowning the Year with Goodness, Mercy, and Love.



## **Announcements and Up-dates for the week November 19, 2023**

**Deacon April Trout, ELCA representative to Konde Diocese, Tanzania,** will be at St. Paul's on Wednesday evening November 29 at 6:00 PM. We will meet for a pot luck supper in Christ Hall where she will provide current information about our companion synod and our companion congregation Mpuguso Lutheran Church. Members of St. Paul's who are planning to travel to Tanzania during the summer of 2024 will meet following the supper at the appointed 7:00 PM meeting time. This pot luck meal provides opportunity for anyone interested in our mission partnership to join in conversation with April. Please notify Pastor Reep if you plan to attend.

**New green and white sets** of altar and pulpit hangings and clergy vestments will be blessed and dedicated on Sunday November 26, Christ the King, at the 10:30 AM liturgy. This gift was made by Martina Uffelman in memory of her late husband John.

**Photos for a new pictorial directory** are being taken in Christ Hall. The link for signing up is <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040D4BAEAC2AAAF49-45117049-stpauls#/>

**In conjunction with the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool** a newly designed T-shirt is available for purchase. The preschool receives a percentage from each T-shirt purchased. Buy one to wear on Pentecost! The bright red color is sure to be noticed and you will help get the word out about our fabulous early childhood education program at St. Paul's.

**The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held TODAY, 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 TODAY. 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.

**2024 Offering Envelopes** are available in the Good Shepherd Room . Please take yours along with you.

### **Help us celebrate 60 years of St Paul's Lutheran Preschool!**

T-Shirts for sale November 12-30. Orders go in on December 1st.

Pick-up will be Sunday December 17 during church 8-12 and Dec 18-20 during school hours 9-12.

Adult sizes Small-4XL. Youth XS-XL.

Short sleeved \$20 or long sleeved \$25 are for sale.

Adult sizes come in Hanes Cotton or a Tri-blend short sleeve upgrade for an additional \$10.

Samples will be in the Good Shepherd room on Sunday 11/12, 11/19 and 11/27 to see sizes.

Orders are to be placed online. Please see clipboard by samples if you need assistance.

Shipping is free to the church or may be shipped to your home for \$9.95.



### Food Pantry—Fall

**Items needed: Stuffing Mix, Canned sweet potatoes, Instant potatoes** Please put your donations in the shopping cart in the Good Shepherd Room. 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.**

**December collection is for canned fruit which has been difficult for the pantry to get. Start saving now. Thank you.**

### 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.



**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.

### *Holiday Voices December 3 at 3:00 PM at St. Paul's Lutheran*

The York College Chorale and Chamber Singers will present their annual “Holiday Voices” concert at St. Paul's Lutheran on Sunday, December 3 at 3:00PM.

Along with the two choirs, the concert will feature Grace Muzzo as conductor, Victor Fields as organist and pianist, and selected student soloists. Repertoire will include newly imagined choral settings of ancient Christmas texts, as well as holiday songs from a variety of languages and traditions. The audience will be invited to join in the singing at the end of the program!

This concert is free and open to the public.

**Proper 28 A, 2023**

**Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

**Matthew 25:14-30**

There is some sort of relationship between a priceless treasure and joy. It is the kind of thing that Johann Franck must have thought about in the 1600s when he penned the text of famed Lutheran hymn *“Jesus Priceless Treasure.”* We often sing it during the season of Lent when our focus is on repentance and restoring our side of a relationship adrift from God. Zephaniah the prophet depicts the situation when the priceless treasure, God and the law of the Lord, is deemed of little value. There is no joy, only destruction, loss, a terrible end. The Apostle Paul writes to the young church at Thessalonica, they too have permitted the joy of the treasure bestowed in Christ Jesus to be diminished through their discouraging words. This leads Paul to write to them stressing the importance of encouraging one another. The Evangelist Matthew stresses to his community, through the parable of Jesus, the desire for all to *“enter into the joy of the master.”*

On this Sunday before a National Day of Thanksgiving I took notice of a sign board along my commute to church. *“Where there is thanksgiving there is joy.”* Not knowing the author of the sign I am not certain if this equates; a big meal, football and shopping with joy, or whether there is something else in mind, something deeper about thanksgiving and joy, much like Johann Franck in the text of his hymn, and the way I believe that there is some connection between priceless treasure and joy.

*“Therefore encourage one another and build up each other as indeed you are doing.”* That is what the Apostle Paul does for the early church. He encourages and builds up. This morning it is the church at Thessalonica. There are a variety of ideas, views, and theological perspectives being circulated within the Christian community. Paul’s concern is for the faith community to stay connected and to fulfill their discipleship responsibilities. Those responsibilities include, but are not limited to; increasing the community through the proclamation of the good news of God’s loving purpose made known through Christ Jesus. Stated another way, are you leading people to the waters of Holy Baptism or are you frightening them away by discouraging remarks and undermining foundations? Such conditions were prevalent in the days of the early church community prompting Paul to remind them of the central message *“For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him.”*

Encouraging and building up is work. It is of course our work. It is work that has been entrusted to us. If time permitted we could share tales of how we have each had our share of discouragement and being torn down. The unfortunate part of such tales is that many of them occur within the community of faith. Those are the situations that I suppose were the impetus for the Apostle Paul to write letters and make visits, to keep the beloved children of God on the right path. It would be nice to think that such situations are securely tucked away neatly in the annals of early church history, but they are not. Discipleship is work. And in order to fulfill such work encouragement and up building are necessary.

Encouraging and up building is also witnessed as we hear the parable of the Talents told by Jesus to his followers. It is easy to get swept up in the *“outer darkness, where there will be*

*weeping and gnashing of teeth.*” It is more challenging to hear how the master entrusted his property to each servant. The incredible generosity and trust of the master for those in his service is hard to take in. These are enormous sums. A talent today would be in the range of \$1.1 million. So the first one receives \$5.5 million, the second \$2.25 million and to the third \$1.1 million. These sums in and of themselves might be considered priceless treasures by some, but certainly not by the master. The master seems to welcome, *enter into the joy of the master*, the one who engages, does work, who brought about increase from what had been entrusted to them for a time. These are the ones who made five more or two more, those who utilized the talent to extend, enrich, enliven, and build up. The one who out of fear buries the treasure, that one may have benefitted from some encouraging words. But that one provides the vivid example of what is not desired by the master. And what does not bring joy.

Discipleship has at its core, work. Today is the day of our Annual Meeting. It is a time for us to reflect back on the work that has been done, those things that we have accomplished for the sake of the gospel, and to look forward to what is before us. Historically meetings comprised of a membership actively engaging in the work of discipleship bring great joy. They are also the meetings that permit participants to look forward to a future, unknown as it may be, but trusting God the Holy Spirit and relying on the presence of the risen Lord to provide a way. These are the types of gatherings for which the Apostle Paul and the Evangelist Matthew were on the lookout. The encouraging words advocated by Paul and the building up of the body of Christ through active living, loving, engaging, attested by Matthew, bore witness to priceless treasure and joy.

In mid-September we presented Bibles to the young people of the congregation. I stressed then that I didn't want the Bibles to be brought back to the church, returned at a later date in their pristine brand new condition. My desire is that each of them gets used, read, studied, marked up, put to the intended use. And that through reading and study and conversation the gift would keep giving, strengthen each child's ability to bear witness to Christ, our Lord and master, the one who will come as judge, and the one whom we will see face to face. I shared those remarks at the time partly in response to the parable that it before us this morning. The tendency for too many of us is to wrap things up and keep them because we are afraid to take a risk, afraid of failure. Fear is a crippling debilitating state of being. In congregational life it often keeps us from, as St. Paul says, *“running the race that is set before us.”* And even with all of the biblical witness reminding us of Jesus the priceless treasure and of God's joy bestowed upon his beloved children, it is difficult to consider possibilities that extend, and challenge us in ministry and mission.

Zephaniah's proclamation was in response to God's people for growing lax, becoming complacent, and thinking that *“the Lord will not do good, nor will he do harm.”* Paul's First Letter to the church at Thessalonica was to encourage them and support them in the work that they were doing. Matthew shares a parable of Jesus at a time when the community of faith needed active participants to build up, enlarge, and expand the community, to embrace others with the good news of God's love made known in the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. God's messengers; Zephaniah, Paul, and Matthew, hold before us, the community of faith, God's law, God's grace, and God's generous trust. These remind us that the Lord is; the priceless treasure, the one who will come to judge, and the master whose desire is that all may enter into his joy. Amen.

## Poinsettia Orders

Decorating our beautiful church chancel and nave with brilliant red poinsettias is a Christmas tradition at St. Paul's. With the joyful anticipation of celebrating the Nativity of our Lord we are asking you to contribute a poinsettia. Plants this year are \$12.00. An order form is below. The donor recognitions will be printed in the Christmas bulletins. Once again, thank you for your support and for helping to make our church ready for our Christmas liturgies. The deadline for orders is Nov.26.



**Cost is \$12.00 per plant.  
They will be RED in  
color.**

**List plant(s) as shown below  
(please print clearly)**

**Number of plants \_\_\_\_\_ in Honor of:**

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**Number of plants \_\_\_\_\_ in Loving Memory of:**

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**Number of plants \_\_\_\_\_ Dedicated to the Glory of God**

**Your Name:**

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**Plants may be picked up anytime *after* the  
10:30 a.m. service on Monday, December 25th.**

**Total # of Plants \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$12.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_**  
Checks made payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church

The completed order form with payment attached may be placed  
in the offering plate or returned to the church office.

**Orders due by Sunday, November 26th**

**FIRST READING: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18**

[not printed]

**Psalms 90:1-8 [9-11] 12****SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. <sup>2</sup>For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup>When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! <sup>4</sup>But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; <sup>5</sup>for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. <sup>6</sup>So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; <sup>7</sup>for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. <sup>8</sup>But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup>For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup>who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. <sup>11</sup>Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

**GOSPEL: Matthew 25:14-30**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; <sup>15</sup>to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup>The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. <sup>17</sup>In the same way,

the one who had the two talents made two more talents. <sup>18</sup>But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup>After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' <sup>21</sup>His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>22</sup>And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' <sup>23</sup>His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>24</sup>Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; <sup>25</sup>so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' <sup>26</sup>But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? <sup>27</sup>Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup>So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>30</sup>As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

**Next Sunday's Readings:** Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 95:1-7a; Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46.

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