

God will
wipe away
every tear
from their eyes

REVELATION 7:17

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

25 W. Springettsbury Ave., York, PA 17403

Church Office 717-843-8155

Email: st.paulsyork@comcast.net

www.stpaulsyork.org

www.stpaulspreschoolyork.com

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

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

WELCOME Thank you for being with us.

We are a Christian church within the Lutheran tradition (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) and we welcome people of all Christian traditions as well as people of other faiths and people of little or no faith. Christian worship has been offered to God in this congregation for 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

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	prreep.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Youth Director	Kelly Moore-Spencer	kmoorespencer.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Organist, Choir Director	Victor Fields	vfields.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Children Choirs Director	Julianna Jones	jjones.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Bell Choirs Director	Leah McComas	lmccomas.stpaulsyork@gmail.com
Secretary	Patee Pizzirusso	st.paulsyork@comcast.net
Sexton	Ted Weikert	st.paulsyork@comcast.net
Preschool Director	Deb Becker	director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com

All Saints Day
Sunday, November 5, 2023
Holy Communion 8:00 & 10:30 AM

PRELUDE

For All the Saints

Arthur Hutchings

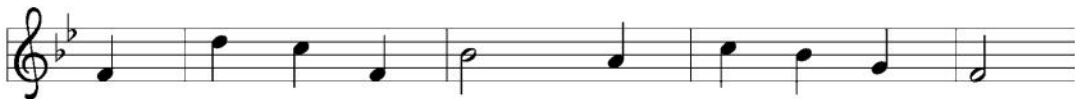
Stand

ENTRANCE HYMN

Rejoice in God's Saints (ELW 418)



1 Re - joice in God's saints to - day and all days!
2 Some march with e - vents to turn them God's way;
3 Re - joice in those saints, un - praised and un - known,
4 Re - joice in God's saints to - day and all days!



A world with - out saints for - gets how to praise.
some need to with - draw, the bet - ter to pray;
who bear some - one's cross, or shoul - der their own:
A world with - out saints for - gets how to praise.



Their faith in ac - quir - ing the hab - it of prayer,
some car - ry the gos - pel through fire and through flood:
they share our com - plain - ing, our com - forts, our cares:
In lov - ing, in liv - ing, they prove it is true:



their depth of a - dor - ing, Lord, help us to share.
our world is their par - ish, their pur - pose is God.
what pa - tience in car - ing, what cour - age is theirs!
their way of self - giv - ing, Lord, leads us to you.

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

Let us pray. . . Almighty God, whose people are knit together in one holy Church, the body of Christ our Lord: Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

Sit

CHILDREN'S SERMON

FIRST READING

Revelation 7:9-17 (*back cover*)

PSALM Psalm 34:1-10, 22

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



- ¹ I will bless the LORD | at all times;*
his praise shall ever be | in my mouth.
- ² **I will glory | in the LORD;***
let the humble hear | and rejoice.
- ³ Proclaim with me the greatness | of the LORD;*
let us exalt his | name together.
- ⁴ **I sought the Lord, and he | answered me***
and delivered me out of | all my terror.
- ⁵ Look upon him | and be radiant,*
and let not your faces | be ashamed.
- ⁶ **I called in my affliction, and | the Lord heard me***
and saved me from | all my troubles.
- ⁷ The angel of the LORD encompasses | those who fear him,*
and he will de- | liver them.
- ⁸ **Taste and see that the | LORD is good;***
happy are they who | trust in him!
- ⁹ Fear the LORD, you that | are his saints,*
for those who fear | him lack nothing.
- ¹⁰ **The young lions lack and | suffer hunger,***
but those who seek the LORD lack nothing | that is good.
- ²² The LORD ransoms the life | of his servants,*
and none will be punished who | trust in him.

SECOND READING

1 John 3:1-3

(*back cover*)

Stand
VERSE

Sung by all



Repeat alleluia



HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-12

(back cover)

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew
At the conclusion of the Gospel.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON

Pastor Stan Reep

10:30 AM

Chancel Choir

By All Your Saints

Jeremy Bankson

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 worshipped and glorified.

He has spoken through the prophets.

Continued on next page...

**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.

Holy God, the church triumphant gathers around your throne. We join them in worship and remember your sustaining grace in every generation. Heal our divisions; show us unity in your presence. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Turn us from selfish consumption and open us to gentle healing of the earth so all creation thrives. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Grant wisdom to those who will be elected and safety to poll workers. May civic leaders serve the whole community. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for peace in the Middle East. Bring resolution to the conflicts that fuel war. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send your compassion to all who grieve, grant wholeness to those who are sick, and accompany the dying. Be near to all who need you (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for this congregation, that the promise of your new life may be shared and experienced. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

For the saints who now rest in your mercy, we give you thanks. We remember their witness of faithfulness and love. 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.**

NECROLOGY

Lord God, we give you thanks for saints, those of our day and of days before, who nurtured us in faith, who told us the stories of Jesus, and who cultivated among us the sense of our own vocation to follow your path. Help us not only to remember them, but also to follow their example, to nurture their expectant hope, and to live our lives so that others might see your love reflected in all that we say and do.

Thank you, God, for the gift of your saints.

O God, we give thanks to you for those from our congregation who died this past year.

Mahlon Leiphart 10-2-22

Richard Riese 4-18-23

Orven Cook 11-22-22

Gloria Jean Williams 6-2-23

William Banta 12-15-22

Audrey Houck 10-2-23

Eddie Turner, Sr. 1-3-23

Keep us grateful for the witness of the saints of all generations, and make us, like them, eager to follow your way. Then at the last, bring us with them to share in the inheritance promised 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 *How Firm a Foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord* Wilbur Held
10:30 AM Handbell Choir *Jerusalem, My Happy Home* Jason Krug

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 *Mässbok*, 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.

The image shows a musical score for a unison hymn. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first system of music ends with a colon, and the second system continues the lyrics. The music is in Phrygian mode, as indicated by the title.

Continued on next page...

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-cous-ness: with burnt off - ering, and whole burnt off - ering.

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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 and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. In the blessedness of your saints you have given us a glorious pledge of the hope of our calling; that, moved by their witness and supported by their fellowship, we may run with perseverance the race that is set before us and with them receive the unfading crown of glory. And so, 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.



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

Sing with All the Saints in Glory (ELW 426)



- 1 Sing with all the saints in glo - ry, sing the res - ur - rec - tion song!
- 2 Oh, what glo - ry, far ex - ceed - ing all that eye has yet per - ceived!
- 3 Life e - ter - nal! heav'n re - joic - es: Je - sus lives who once was dead.



Death and sor - row, earth's dark sto - ry, to the for - mer days be - long.
Ho - liest hearts for a - ges plead - ing nev - er that full joy con - ceived.
Shout with joy, O death - less voic - es! Child of God, lift up your head!



All a - round the clouds are break - ing, soon the storms of time shall cease;
God has prom - ised, Christ pre - pares it, there on high our wel - come waits.
Life e - ter - nal! Oh, what won - ders crowd on faith; what joy un - known,



in God's like - ness we a - wak - en, know - ing ev - er - last - ing peace.
Ev - 'ry hum - ble spir - it shares it, Christ has passed the e - ter - nal gates.
when a - mid earth's clos - ing thun - ders. saints shall stand be - fore the throne!

Stand

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Almighty Father, in the Eucharist you give us a foretaste of the Lamb's Feast of Victory. Keep us faithful to you so that we, with all your saints in heaven, may at length celebrate the Feast which has no end in Christ our Lord. **Amen**

BLESSING

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

HYMN **8:00 AM** *For All Your Saints, O Lord (ELW 427)*



1 For all your saints, O Lord, who strove in you to live,
 2 For all your saints, O Lord, who strove in you to die,
 3 They all in life and death, with you, their Lord, in view,
 4 For this, your name we bless and hum - bly pray a - new
 5 To God, the Fa - ther, Son, and Spir - it, ev - er blest,



who fol - lowed you, o - beyed, a - dored, our grate - ful hymn re - ceive.
 who count - ed you their great re - ward, ac - cept our thank - ful cry.
 learned from your Ho - ly Spir - it's breath to suf - fer and to do.
 that we like them in ho - li - ness may live and die in you.
 the One in Three, the Three in One, be end - less praise ad - dressed.

HYMN **10:30 AM** *For All the Saints (ELW 422) Next page*

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE *Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart* Robert J. Powell

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Serving the Lord with Gladness

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Ushers	Altar Set-up & Clean-up
11/5	8:00 AM	Kirsten Barnes		Laura Livingston		Mike & Linda Hanson	Jeff Riese, Mike Postler, Alex Bastian	Kathy Monk, Lois Ann Schroeder
	10:30 AM	Rev. George Fitch	Dylan Lauer	Carl Jacobs	Rev. Judy McKee	Deb & Larry Becker	Kem Vaught, Larry Becker, Dave Kopp	Sandy Dickensheets, Tonya Cave

Acolytes at 10:30 AM: Drew & Paula Herdson



*The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God
 In thanksgiving for Nancy's birthday by Jim Bennett
 And in loving memory of Judy's parents, Pastor and Mrs. J. Paul Kennedy,
 by Pastors Judy and Tom McKee*

10:30 AM

For All the Saints



1 For all the saints who from their labors rest, who
2 Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might; thou,
Stanzas 3-5 below.
6 But then there breaks a yet more glorious day: the
7 From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast, through



thee by faith before the world confessed, thy
Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight; . .
saints triumphant rise in bright array; the
gates of pearl streams in the countless host, . .



name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
thou, in the darkness dread, their one true light.
King of glory passes on his way.
sing - ing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!



3 Oh, blest communion, fellowship divine, we feebly struggle,
4 And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long, steals on the ear the
5 The golden evening brightens in the west; soon, soon to faithful



they in glory shine; yet all are one in thee, for all are
distant triumph song, and hearts are brave again and arms are
servants cometh rest; . . . sweet is the calm of paradise the



thine. Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
strong.
blest.

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

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

Tuesday, November 7

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

Wednesday, November 8

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

Thursday, November 9

- 10:00 AM Preschool & Pastor—Nave
- 12-5 PM Scheduled meeting—Christ Hall
- 6:30 PM Handbell Choir—Chancel
- 7:30 PM Chancel Choir—Music Room

Friday November 10—Annual Reports Due

Sunday, November 12

- 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist
- 9:15 AM Sunday School for All
- 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live Stream
- 11:45 AM Second Sunday Sandwiches
- 11:45 AM Youth Fellowship Grades 7-12—Youth Rm
- 6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm
- 5:00 PM Bridge of Hope Mtg.

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.**

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.

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.



Up-dates and Announcements November 5, 2023

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.

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. Join us on Wednesday, November 15 at 6:30 PM in Christ Hall.

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.

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:

Number of plants _____ in Loving Memory of:

Number of plants _____ Dedicated to the Glory of God

Your Name:

**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

The words *Sun-drenched Island hopping* drew me in like a fish to a fisherman's lure. The words printed in dark red ink seemed to leap off of the page. Usually for me it is the pictures that first grab my attention when reading an article. But this time it was the words. The words, sun-drenched and Island hopping, appealed to two parts of my inner being: my desire to lounge comfortably in the warmth of the sun, coupled with the intrigue of an adventure. It wasn't until I noticed the inset map on the adjacent page that the island of Patmos entered into my mind.

Patmos is a tiny little island in the Mediterranean Sea just off of the coast of Turkey. Most often it is referenced in the days of the early church and the spread of the Gospel. But in the magazine article it was a story for modern readers sharing information about John of Patmos, his writing, which would find its place as the last book of the New Testament, the cave of the Apocalypse, and references to Revelation.

Revelation has intrigued readers for centuries. Some seek to find a sort of code to be cracked to make certain that they are counted among the 144,000. Others use its apocalyptic language and imagery to secure followers out of fear. For the novice there seems to be a lot of scary stuff appearing in the writing of John of Patmos. And there are still others who embrace the text, viewing the images in the context of heavenly worship with the faithful gathered around the throne of God.

We are among the later. We set the words of the text to melodic lines, paraphrase them in hymns and assign their reading for the public assembly. ***Worthy is Christ the Lamb who was slain – Blessing and Honor and power to the Lamb – Salvation belongs to our God.*** These few examples highlight our acknowledgment of God as the one who is worthy, the one to whom blessing, honor, power and salvation belong.

Salvation is a word inserted into a vocabulary of one who recognizes the need to be rescued, saved from something. Currently we live in a time where people need to be saved and rescued from all sorts of things, situations, and environments.

Addictions - drugs, alcohol and food;

Diseases – We have all become familiar with the work of the CDC;

Abusive relationships – be they verbal or physical;

Toxic situations – everything from polluted areas of the earth, Palestine Ohio and the train derailment, to places where you find yourself stifled having trouble breathing;

Oppressive governments – their prevalence grows

Unjust systems – seemingly too many to number;

Civilians caught in crossfire – in city streets and in warring nations.

With each of these categories one or more of them falls a bit closer to home. One or more hold us personally captive. These days fewer people identify that they need to be rescued from or saved from sin. Sin it seems is antiquated. Fewer recognize the need for God's central presence in their lives. Few recognize that sin is what works its way keeping us from God, from a right relationship, from forgiveness, and reconciliation and new beginning.

John of Patmos knew that it was God alone who sets humanity free. Free from sin. Free from old systems. Free to live. He knew that it is God alone to whom blessing, power, wisdom, strength and salvation rightly belong. John was living during a time when all of those things were assumed by the empire. He suffered persecution for the Christian faith. These were the days when Christians were no longer welcomed in synagogue worship and Constantine had not yet made a decree that Christianity was an acceptable religion. And so John was exiled to the Island of Patmos. His writing, strange as we may think it is today, was offered to Christian believers then to bolster their spirits and keep them steadfast in their convictions about God alone being sovereign.

For those seeking a different pace and way of life, God, the Lamb who was slain, Christ Jesus, offers it to all. He washes away sin in Baptism's bath and clothes the baptized with the garment of salvation, and prepares a banquet table. He does this for those who follow him, believe in him, he does this for us, so that we live life loved, forgiven, reconciled, and comforted with his Word of hope when all that surrounds us seems to be hopeless.

On this All Saints Sunday we remember those from our congregation who have entered into the Church Triumphant: Mahlon, Orven, Bill, Eddie, Dick, Jean, and Audrey. We remember their life among us and the ways in which they bore witness to the Lamb; proclaiming the Lord using words in common speech, singing his praise in words of scriptural hymn and song, and modeling Christ through action looking out for the needs of others. They confessed Christ as Lord; the one seated on the throne, the one who went to Calvary's Cross and was raised triumphantly at Easter's dawn. They confessed that this is the one who leads followers to springs of the water of life and wipes away tears from weeping eyes.

The 144,000 was John of Patmos' way of articulating the completeness of heaven. God's desire is that all are gathered at the heavenly banquet table whether the mathematical formula works out or not. God's desire is that we all experience heavenly worship basking in the presence of the Son, the only Son of the Father, Christ Jesus the Lamb who was slain. He has begun his reign and invites us into the adventure of life in him. At times it may be calming, sometimes it may be scary, and still at other times rewarding. But mostly it is a hope filled journey comprised of Word and water, bread and wine, beloved companions (like those we remember this morning), and endless song. Amen.

FIRST READING: Revelation 7:9-17

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

¹¹And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²singing,

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might

be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

¹³Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” ¹⁴I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

¹⁶They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat;

¹⁷for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Psalm 34:1-10, 22**SECOND READING: 1 John 3:1-3**

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

GOSPEL: Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Next Sunday’s Readings: Amos 5:18-24 or Wisdom 6:12-16; Psalm 70 or Wisdom 6:17-20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:1-13.

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