

Unless
a grain of
wheat falls
into the earth
and dies, it
remains just a
single grain

JOHN 12:24

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 188 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 or use the QR Code provided. During the Season of Lent our special appeal is for “God’s Global Barnyard”. *Today following the 10:30 AM Liturgy the children will be at the exits of the church collecting for “God’s Global Barnyard”.*



Lutheran Church in York, PA - St.
Paul's Lutheran...

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.

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	st.paulsyork@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	tweikert.stpaulsyork@gmail.com
Preschool Director	Deb Becker	director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com

Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 17, 2024
Holy Communion 8:00 AM & 10:30AM
Evangelical Lutheran Worship Setting 4

PRELUDE

Who Knows How Near to Me My End

Helmut Walcha

Stand turning to face the Baptismal Font

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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 *Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain (LBW 301)*



- 1 Come to Cal-v'ry's ho - ly moun-tain, sin - ners, ru - ined by the fall;
2 Come in sor - row and con - tri - tion, wound - ed, im - po - tent, and blind;
3 Those who drink shall live for - ev - er; 'tis a soul re - new - ing flood.



here a pure and heal - ing foun - tain flows to you, to me, to all,
here the guilt - y, free re - mis - sion, here the trou - bled peace may find.
God is faith - ful; God will nev - er break his cov - e - nant of blood,

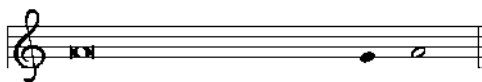


in a full per - pet - ual tide, o - pened when our Sav - ior died.
Health this foun - tain will re - store; those who drink shall thirst no more.
signed when our re - deem - er died, sealed when he was glo - ri - fied.

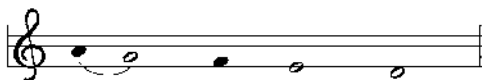
APOSTOLIC GREETING

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.**

KYRIE



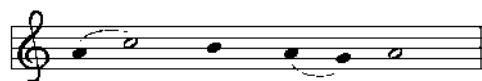
In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

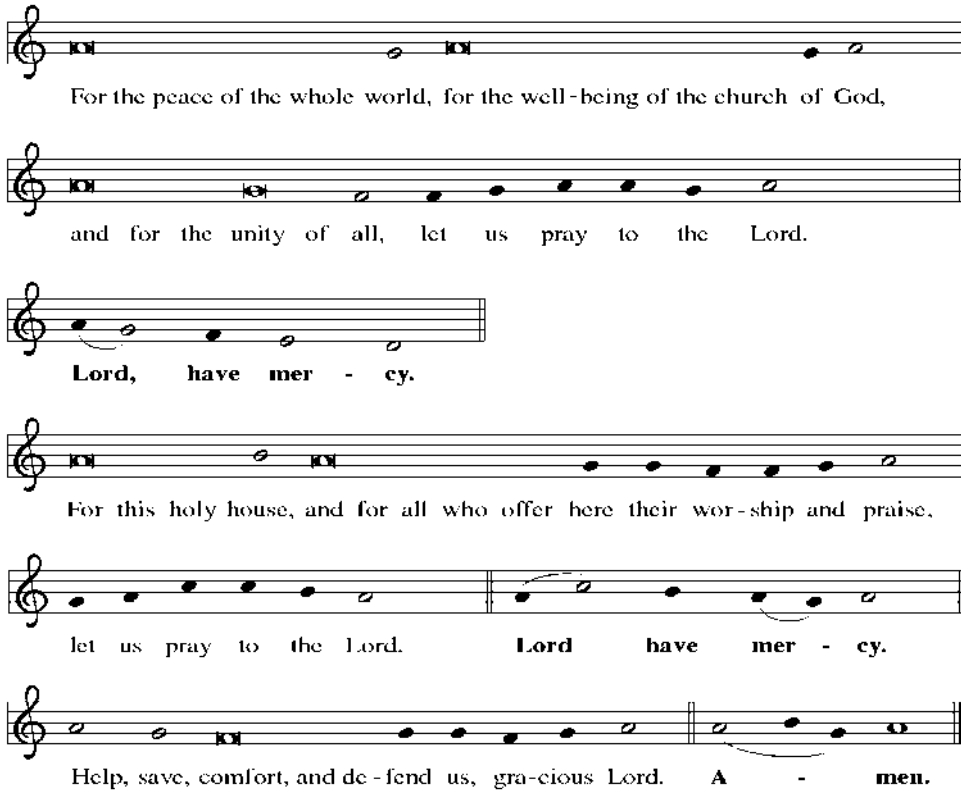


For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

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For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray....Almighty God, our redeemer, in our weakness we have failed to be your messengers of forgiveness and hope in the world. Renew us by your Holy Spirit, that we may follow your commands and proclaim your reign of love; 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 BELL CHOIR 10:30 AM *Fairest Lord Jesus* Kirsty Mitchell

FIRST READING Jeremiah 31:31-34 (back page)

PSALMODY Psalm 51:1-13 *spoken antiphonally men/women*

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | lovingkindness;*
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.

² **Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,***
and cleanse me | from my sin.

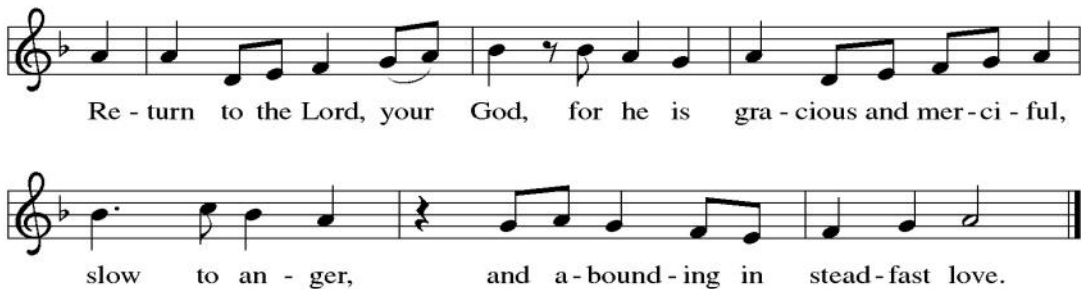
³ For I know | my transgressions,*
and my sin is ev- | er before me.

- ⁴ **Against you only | have I sinned***
and done what is evil | in your sight.
- ⁵ And so you are justified | when you speak*
 and upright | in your judgment.
- ⁶ **Indeed, I have been wicked | from my birth,***
a sinner from my | mother's womb.
- ⁷ For behold, you look for truth | deep within me,*
 and will make me understand | wisdom secretly.
- ⁸ **Purge me from my sin, and I | shall be pure;***
wash me, and I shall be | clean indeed.
- ⁹ Make me hear of | joy and gladness,*
 that the body you have broken | may rejoice.
- ¹⁰ **Hide your face | from my sins,***
and blot out all | my iniquities.
- ¹¹ Create in me a clean | heart, O God,*
 and renew a right spir- | it within me.
- ¹² **Cast me not away | from your presence,***
and take not your Holy | Spirit from me.
- ¹³ Give me the joy of your saving | help again*
 and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit.

SECOND READING Hebrews 5:5-10 (back page)

Stand

VERSE Sung by all



HOLY GOSPEL John 12:20-33 (back page)

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 Reep

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 in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

A brief silence.

Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the means of grace around which we gather. Inspire writers, musicians, and artists whose creative gifts adorn our worship and draw us more closely to you. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Preserve the rich and complex diversity of living things. Support local, national, and international efforts to protect the environment for future generations to enjoy. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Support the work of those who challenge oppression and expose corruption. Support advocates for human rights, economic justice, and the welfare of children (*organizations may be named*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for any who are experiencing estrangement, conflict, or abuse in families and relationships. Protect and comfort all who are vulnerable, especially those who are living in institutions. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Make us reach out to those who are homebound, lonely, grieving, in treatment, or ill. Especially we pray forHear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for the saints whose faith inspires us (*especially Patrick, missionary to Ireland, whom we commemorate today*). Grant us faith to trust in your everlasting love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, 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

OFFERING

8:00 AM

Lament

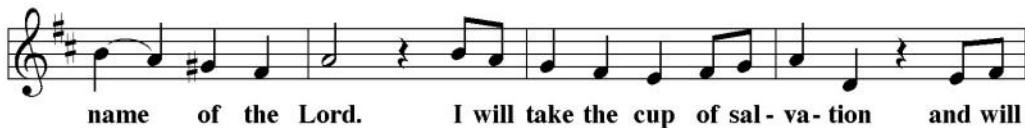
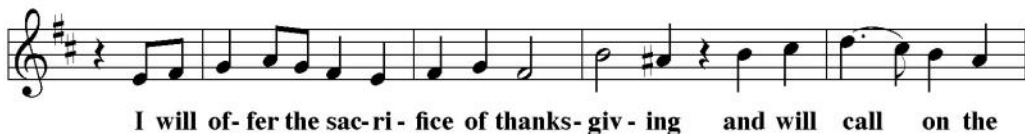
Malcolm Archer

10:30 AM

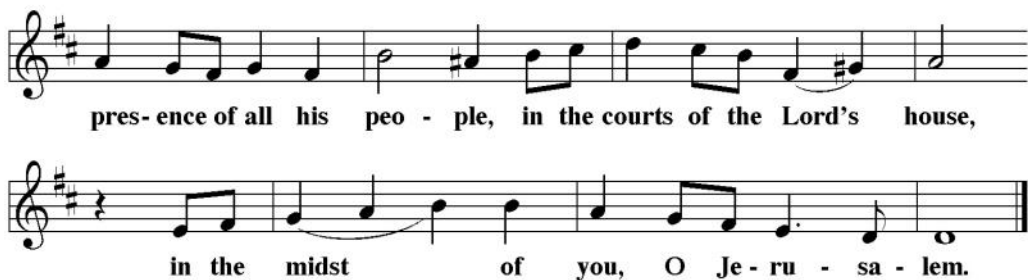
Create in Me , O God, a Pure Heart

Johannes Brahms

OFFERTORY



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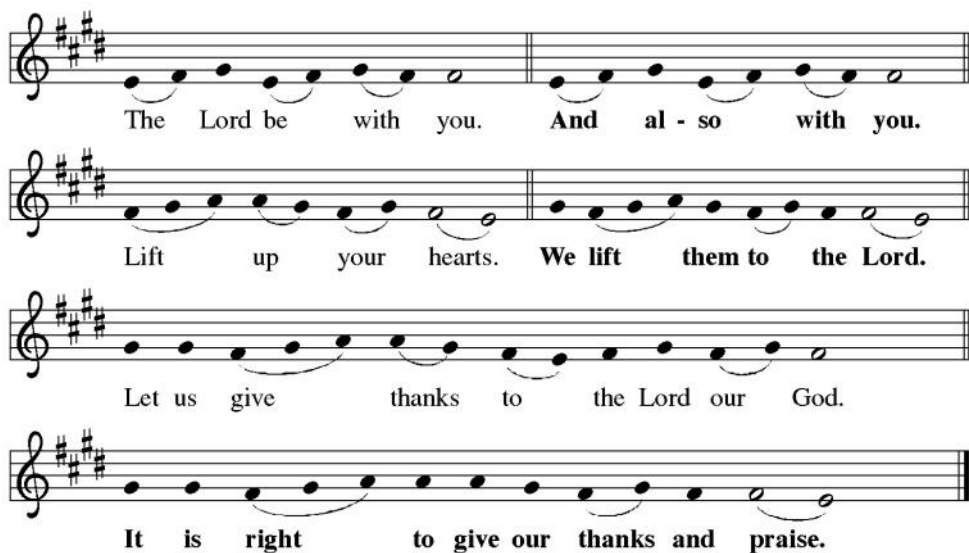


OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Blessed are you,

O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

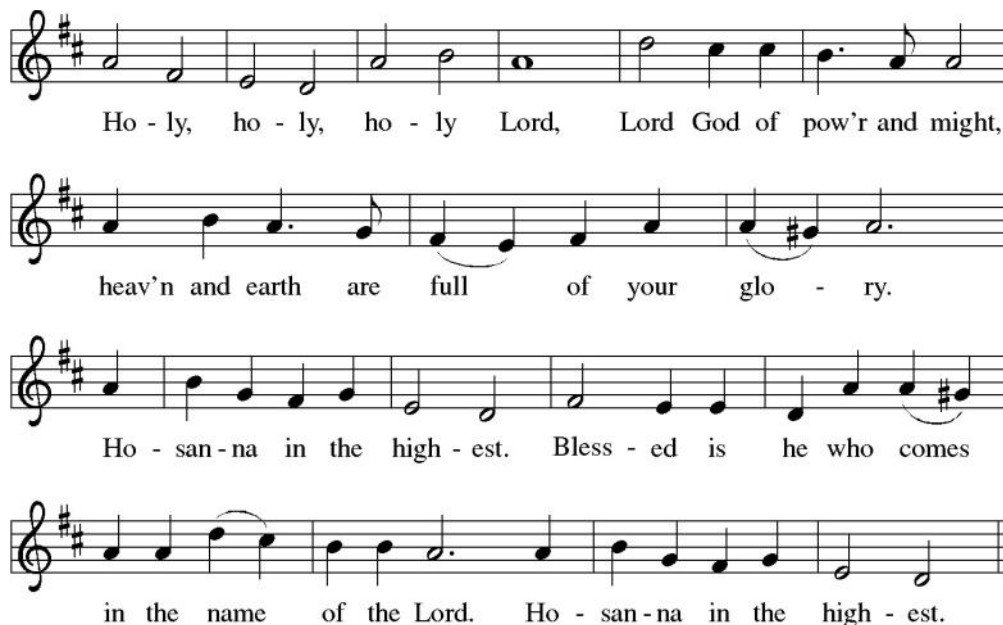
DIALOGUE *Sung by Pastor and congregation*



PREFACE *The preface appropriate to the day is sung.*

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. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. 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, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n 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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.

Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.

Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness
to the land of milk and honey.

Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.

Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

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.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

Come, Holy Spirit.

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

Come, Holy Spirit.

With [name/s and] your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, 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, grant us peace.

Sit *The pastor cleanses hands and prepares for the distribution of Holy Communion.*

COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL

Our Communion is “open” to all believers who trust that the Risen Christ is present for his people in the Holy Eucharist.

1. Come to communion using the center aisle (about 10 adults per side).
2. Communion glasses are 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 & wine to you.
5. Extend your hands to receive the communion bread.
6. Consume the communion bread.
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 *As the Grains of Wheat* (ELW 465)

Refrain

As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were
gath-ered in-to one to be-come our bread; so may all your peo-ple from
all the ends of earth be gath-ered in - to one in you.

1 As this cup of bless-ing is shared with-in our midst,
2 Let this be a fore-taste of all that is to come when

Refrain

may we share the pres-ence of your love.
all cre-a-tion shares this feast with you.

Stand

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

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

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



Lord, now you let your ser- vant go in peace; your word has been ful -
filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre -
pared in the sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple: A light to re - veal you to the
na - tions and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.
Glo - ry to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spir - it,
as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now,
and will be for - ev - er. A - men

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Almighty God, you gave your Son both as a sacrifice for sin and a model of the godly life. Enable us to receive him always with thanksgiving, and to conform our lives to his; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

BLESSING

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

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The people remain standing until the minister and servers exit the nave.

POSTLUDE

My Faith Looks Up to Thee

Seth Bingham

Tanzania Mission Trip—The group of travelers divides into 4 groups reflecting; Youth, Medical, Educational, and Pastoral Concerns. The children and youth plan to engage with peers learning of similarities and differences in growing up in a Christian community. Those interested in medical care, the new hospital being built in Matayma, and local health clinics will engage with health care professionals. Those who share a passion for education, especially music, will learn educational approaches as well as the enrichment of music. Lastly, others will learn of the work of the local congregation, Mpuguso Lutheran Church, and the Konde Diocese. Please know that the costs associated with the trip have escalated since planning began a year ago. Please do give a gift to help offset the enormous expense of the mission trip. You may do so through a “special” envelope located in the pew rack and marking it “Tanzania”. Thank you!

Below are our Mission Trip Travelers:

Kesetbrhan Keleta	Ezra Ericson	Anna Herdson	Elizabeth Uffelman Mitchell
Stan Reep	Iris Ericson	Paula Herdson	Cameron Dickerson
Emily Reep	Steve Heistand	Drew Herdson	Margaret Dickerson
Allen Reep	Sue Heistand	Keith Kates	Tina Llorente
Tristan Ericson	Scott Herdson	Christine Kates	Jacyln Kinkella
Jessica Ericson	Nicki Herdson	Laura Uffelman Ferree	Cheryl Reifsteck

Announcements and Up-dates for the week March 17, 2024

God’s Global Barnyard—Today following the 10:30 AM Liturgy the children will be at the exits of the church collecting for “God’s Global Barnyard’.

Rehearsals for the Children’s Play/Musical “Come Out Lazarus!” have begun. But it is not too late to get involved. Please contact Mrs. Jones, Miss Kelly, or Pastor Reep if your child would like to participate.

Spring Cleaning will be held on Saturday morning, March 23 from 8-11:00 AM. We want our church building to be clean and tidy as we prepare for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter. The more helpers the more tasks that can be accomplished. A sign-up sheet will circulate during the Prelude.

Benevolence Fund Applications are available (bright green paper) or online by request from the church office. If you are seeking funding to support a need in our community and beyond, please complete and submit an application. We still have capacity for projects in 2024. We are currently soliciting applications for 2025.

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 for collections.

St. Paul’s Book Club The April meeting is set for April 11th with the book to be announced. All are welcome.

Food Pantry News—We need **CANNED SOUPS!** Please put your donations in the shopping cart in the Good Shepherd Room. We are always in need of paper grocery bags with handles and plastic bags. Money donations are gratefully accepted as well. Please place cash or check in a “special” envelope marked “Pantry”. Volunteers are also needed for a variety of tasks. Contact Patty Snyder, Ken Hinkle Teresa Rohrbaugh or the church office (717-843-8155) to volunteer.

Serving the Lord with Gladness

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Ushers	Altar Set-up & Altar Clean-up
03/17	8:00 AM	Ken Hinkle	Kirsten Barnes	James Palmer		Nancy Banta, Harold & Donita Sargeant	Team 1E: Jeff Riese, John Monk, Alex Bastian	Kathleen Lemke, Kathy Monk
03/17	10:30 AM	Janet Fitch	Ephraim Lipp	Chris Lipp		Kem & Cindy Vaught	Team 1L: Dave Kopp, Carol Woodbury, Darren Smith	Larry & Janet Moore

This Week at St. Paul's

Church office open 8:00 a.m.—4pm Mon—Thurs

Sunday, March 17

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist
 9:15 AM Sunday School for All
 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live Stream
 4:30 PM Mission Trip Travelers—Christ Hall
 6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm

Monday, March 18

6:00 PM Springdale Neighborhood Assoc.—Christ Hall

Tuesday, March 19

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

Wednesday, March 20

10:00 AM Preschool & Pastor in Nave
 10:30 AM Bible Study—Christ Hall
 11:30 AM Mpuguso Mtg
 6:00 PM Lenten Dinner—Christ Hall
 7:00 PM Lenten Vespers—Nave

Thursday, March 21

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

Saturday, March 23

8:00 AM Spring Cleaning of the Church

Sunday, March 24—Palm Sunday

Handbells, Brass & Organ

9:15 AM Holy Eucharist
 6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm

Sunday Morning, Preschool through Grade

6 children will meet upstairs in their age grouped classrooms. This is a great time to start your child in a class. Some of the best stories are explored during this winter and spring season.

Our last Lenten Supper is this Wednesday, March 20 @ 6:00 PM in Christ Hall.

Lenten Vespers will be held this Wednesday, March 20 @ 7:00 PM and again on Monday of Week, March 25 @ 7:00 PM.

Next Sunday, Palm Sunday, there will be one combined liturgy at 9:15 AM. Children are invited to gather in the narthex (George St. entrance) if they wish to take part in the procession around the church nave.

Holy Week Services on Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday all begin at 7:00 PM



March 24	Palm/Passion Sunday Handbells, Brass, Organ	Combined liturgy	9:15 AM
March 25	York Conference Vespers Combined Conference Choir	Hosted by St. Paul's	7:00 PM
March 28	Maundy Thursday Foot washing/Stripping of Altar Cello Trio		7:00 PM
March 29	Good Friday Reproaches of the Cross		7:00 PM
March 30	The Vigil of Easter With Sacrament of Holy Baptism		7:00 PM
March 31	The Resurrection of Our Lord Organ, Trumpets, Piano Duet	Combined liturgy	9:15 AM

Summer brought the carnival to town. And with the carnival came a heightened curiosity about those who traveled with it. My family wasn't the carnival going kind. That I suppose made my curiosity as an 11 year old all the greater. What of the rumored fire breathing human dragon, the giant lady and the strong man who could hoist her to the pinnacle of the tent. Word got around pretty quickly. My best friend and I would ride our bikes around town listening to all of the stories about the carnival and the special attractions. We wanted to see the fire breathing human dragon. We ditched our bikes by the creek and began meandering through the carnival workers setting up their show. Miraculously they transformed the Little League ball field into a colorful summer time extravaganza. We were startled when one burly fellow asked us what we were doing. My friend and I looked at each other and blurted out "*we want to see the fire breathing human dragon!*" "*Come tonight and buy a ticket*" said the burly man with a gruff voice. We high tailed it back to the creek, got our bikes, and headed for home. My friend was convinced that his parents would let him go and buy a ticket to see the fire breathing human dragon if my parents said it was ok for me to go. I assured him that would happen when the hot place down under that we heard about in Sunday school would freeze over!

When the Greeks came to Jerusalem they didn't come to see the fire breathing human dragon. They had a more pressing need. Not entertainment. They had a serious desire to know about Jesus. "*We wish to see Jesus*" they asked. It was the festival and the city was vibrant with the influx of people. Devout Jews making their way to the Holy City to celebrate the Passover comprised the largest number of inhabitants. But there were others. Some cared about the Holy Days. Some did not. Some were there to make some money. And still others, Greeks, foreigners, had come to see Jesus. Word had spread about this one; that changed Water to wine, fed thousands with a few loaves and a couple of fish. But perhaps the greatest reason they wanted to see Jesus was that he had raised a dead man named Lazarus, who was four days dead. Jesus raised him to life with the command of his voice "*Lazarus, come out!*" And the dead man did just that.

In those days there wasn't anything like social media to propel the stories whirling about Jesus of Nazareth; water to wine; famished to fed; dead to alive. These feats that defied human comprehension weren't posted on favorite social media platforms; they were circulated by individuals, one friend telling another. They relied on eye witnesses. The stories may even have been embellished in the telling and retelling, but at the root, at the core, of each there was such simplicity; water become choice wine, hungry crowd fed, dead man alive! It would be difficult to get such stories too mixed up.

That's how I make sense of the Greeks who came to Jerusalem seeking out Jesus. They came across one of Jesus' followers named Philp and made their request "*Sir we wish to see Jesus.*" Philp went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philp together made their way to Jesus. Being good disciples, relaying with clarity the request "*There are Greeks here who wish to see you sir*" Jesus responds with anything but a simple reply to their request. Consider for a minute; Mary makes a request at the wedding at Cana in Galilee "*the wine ran out.*" The disciples make an observation along the Galilean seaside "*the crowd is hungry and there isn't any food except there is a boy here with a small lunch of five barley loaves and two fish.*" And in Betha-

ny, Mary and Martha announce “*Our brother Lazarus is dead,*” voicing disappointment that Jesus took so long in getting there. These lead us to today’s request by the visiting Greeks at the Jewish festival through two of the disciples, how could the response seem so out of touch? Jesus says “*The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.*” And Jesus just keeps going on and on until a voice from heaven declares that his name is glorified. Some heard thunder while others said an angel spoke to him. But the response remains odd for those who simply want to “see” Jesus.

Perhaps there is something for us to glean from this long seemingly convoluted response to a few Greeks who want to see Jesus, when he says “*I will draw all people to myself.*” When those visitors “see” him being lifted up on the cross, then they will really “see” him, the one who draws all people to himself; religious and non-religious, devout and skeptical, insider and outsider, those from the continent and those from the island, those speaking Hebrew and those speaking Greek, young and old, rich and poor, women and men, girls and boys, urban dwellers and country farmers, those enjoying good health and those who are sick. When Jesus speaks all he means all. The Creator of the universe grasps all in ways that we can’t. But when those Greeks “see” him lifted up on the cross they will know that this is the one who was promised, the one to bring peace, to redeem, to reconcile, to forgive, to heal, to save, to welcome, to make way and room for all. Seeing Jesus being lifted up will move them from seeing Jesus to believing Jesus.

We wish to see Jesus. We gather here this morning each of us wishing for something, desiring something of and from the Promised One; peace, redemption, reconciliation, forgiveness, salvation, healing, welcome, acceptance, place. We wish to see him. And like the Greeks at the festival it is in seeing him lifted up on the cross, giving his life for all, that we begin to really see with eyes of faith. There he is lifted up in bread and wine. There he is lifted up for our forgiveness of sins. There he is drawing me, drawing us, drawing all people to him, the one glorified through suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension. Here he is in the banquet. Here he is the meal. Here he is granting life. Those Greeks knew something of the wedding and how the celebration continued long into the night, they knew something of the thousands who were fed by the Galilean seaside, they knew something of life given to a dead man from Bethany, and they wanted, longed, searched, and journeyed to see him, to see Jesus, to see the one to whom all of this was attributed.

The one they wanted to see is the one in whom we believe. The one who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven only to be lifted up, only to suffer and die, only to be raised and ascended, so that all have life and have it abundantly. With eyes opened our seeing moves us to believing his promise, bringing life to and for all people.

Next week begins the festival. Hosannas will punctuate the air. Palm branches will sway in the breeze. Among those coming to the festival will be some wishing to “see” Jesus. Like Philp and Andrew we will lead them to the one who is lifted up. We will accompany them to the cross, stay with them, pray with them, and rejoice with them on Easter morning, because Jesus, when he is lifted up from the earth, draws all people to himself. 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. ³²It 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. ³³But 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. ³⁴No 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.

Psalms 51:1-12**or Psalm 119:9-16****SECOND READING: Hebrews 5:5-10**

Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”;
⁶as he says also in another place,
“You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a Son, he

learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

GOSPEL: John 12:20-33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.