



Jesus,
remember
me when
you come into
your kingdom

LUKE 23:42

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 189 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.



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

stpaulsyork.org

Restrooms are located in the Good Shepherd Room (Springettsbury lobby) and the narthex (George St). Baby changing stations are provided in these restrooms as well as in the nursery. The restrooms are independent units. Please remember to latch the door.

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.

We ask parents to accompany their children to the restroom during the liturgy and wait with them. This is a way for us to practice good safety protocol within our building.



*The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God
in memory of Judy McKee by her family*

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
Bell Choirs Director	Leah McComas	lmccomas.stpaulsyork@gmail.com
Children's Choir Director	Julianna Jones	jjones.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Secretary	Patee Pizzirusso	st.paulsyork@comcast.net
Sexton	Ted Weikert	tweikert.stpaulsyork@gmail.com
Preschool Director	Deb Becker	presch.stpaulsyork@comcast.net

Christ the King
Sunday, November 23, 2025
Holy Communion 8:00 & 10:30 AM
Evangelical Lutheran Worship musical setting 3

PRELUDE

At the Name of Jesus

John Hebdén Schaffner

ENTRANCE HYMN

You Servants of God (ELW 825)

1 You ser - vants of God, your Mas - ter pro - claim, and pub - lish a -
2 As - cend - ed on high, al - might - y to save, yet still he is
3 Sal - va - tion to God who sits on the throne! Let all cry a -
4 Then let us a - dore and give him his right, all glo - ry and

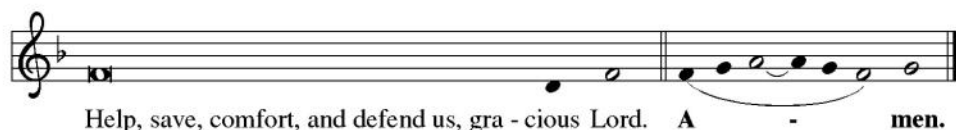
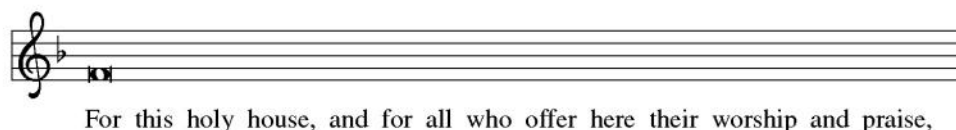
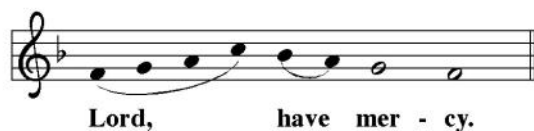
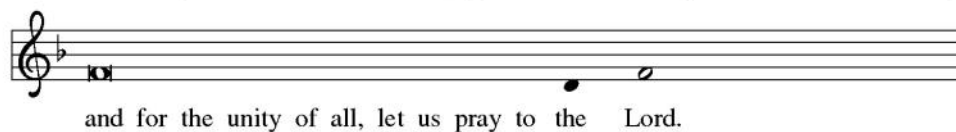
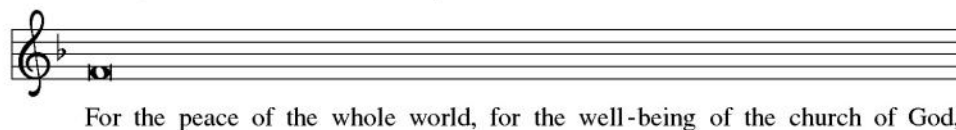
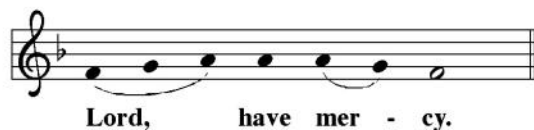
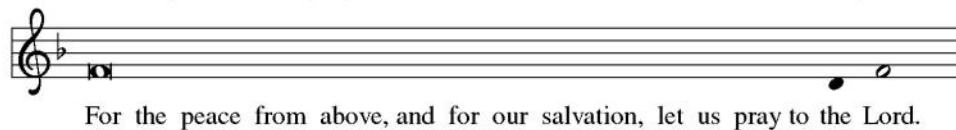
broad his won - der - ful name; the name, all - vic - to - rious, of
nigh, his pres - ence we have. The great con - gre - ga - tion his
loud and hon - or the Son. The prais - es of Je - sus the
pow'r and wis - dom and might, all hon - or and bless - ing, with

Je - sus ex - tol; his king - dom is glo - rious and rules o - ver all!
tri - umph shall sing, as - crib - ing sal - va - tion to Je - sus, our king!
an - gels pro - claim, fall down on their fac - es, and wor - ship the Lamb.
an - gels a - bove, and thanks nev - er ceas - ing, and in - fin - ite love!

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



HYMN OF PRAISE



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.



Lord God, heav - en - 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, 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.

PRAAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. . . Almighty and everlasting God, whose will it is to restore all things to your beloved Son, whom you anointed priest forever and king of all creation: Grant that all the people of the earth, now divided by the power of sin, may be united under the glorious and gentle rule of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

Sit

CHILDREN'S SERMON

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 23:1-6

(back cover)

PSALM Psalm 46

Sung Cantor/Congregation unaccompanied.



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

SECOND READING

Colossians 1:11-20 *(back cover)*

Stand
VERSE



HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 23:33-43 (back cover)

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the conclusion of the Gospel.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit
SERMON

The Reverend Stanley 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.

O God, we pray for the church in the world, its leaders, and its mission to share the good news of healing and restoration. Inspire us to embody the beloved community in ways that faithfully witness to the Holy Spirit. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the trembling mountains and glad streams of creation. Preserve and renew your coastlines, deep seas, forests, and grasslands. Guide all who tend flocks or care for creatures of any kind. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for leaders and advocates in government, civic life, and public safety. Support equity across the globe, and heal division with accountability and truth. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for those who are hungry, living in poverty or desperation, weary in body or spirit, or sick (*especially*) grant comfort to all in need of your tender care. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for our congregation gathered around word and sacrament. Bring us into authentic community where all ages are valued and experience your faithfulness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for all who have died in faith (*especially*). May we remember them faithfully until we are gathered with you in the fullness of the paradise you promise. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We offer these and all our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your grace and unyielding love; 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 OF OUR GIFTS

8:00 AM *All Creatures of Our God and King*

Mark Hayes

10:30 AM *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*

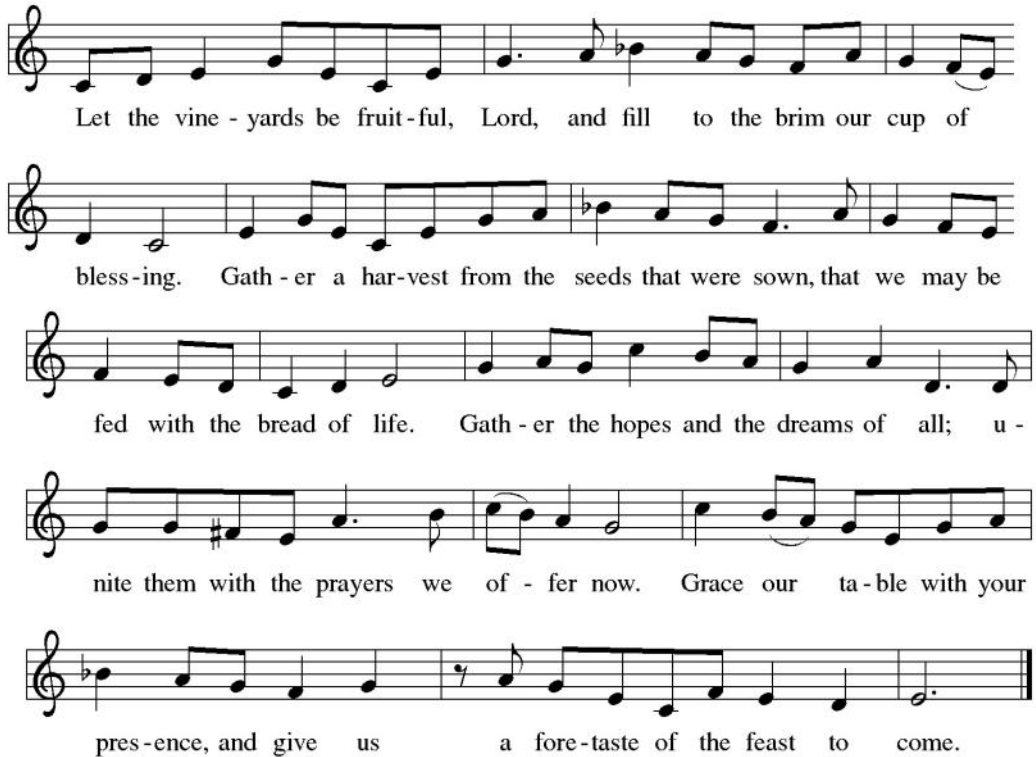
Hugo Distler

Stand

OFFERTORY

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful

(ELW 182)



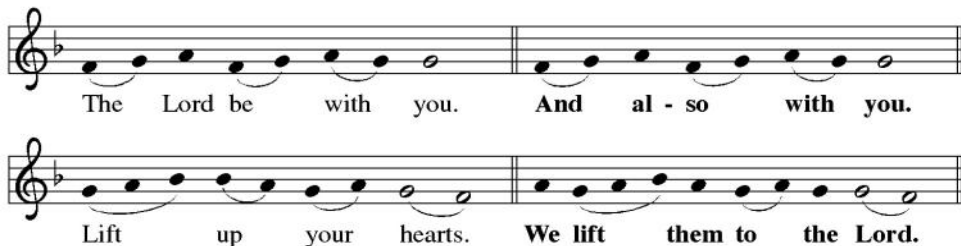
Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Blessed are you,
O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

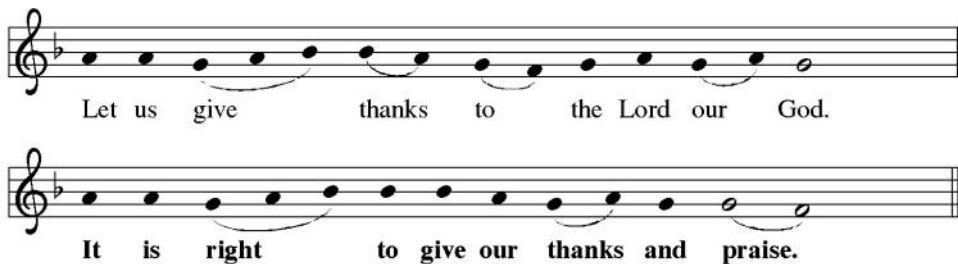
DIALOGUE

Sung by Pastor and congregation



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

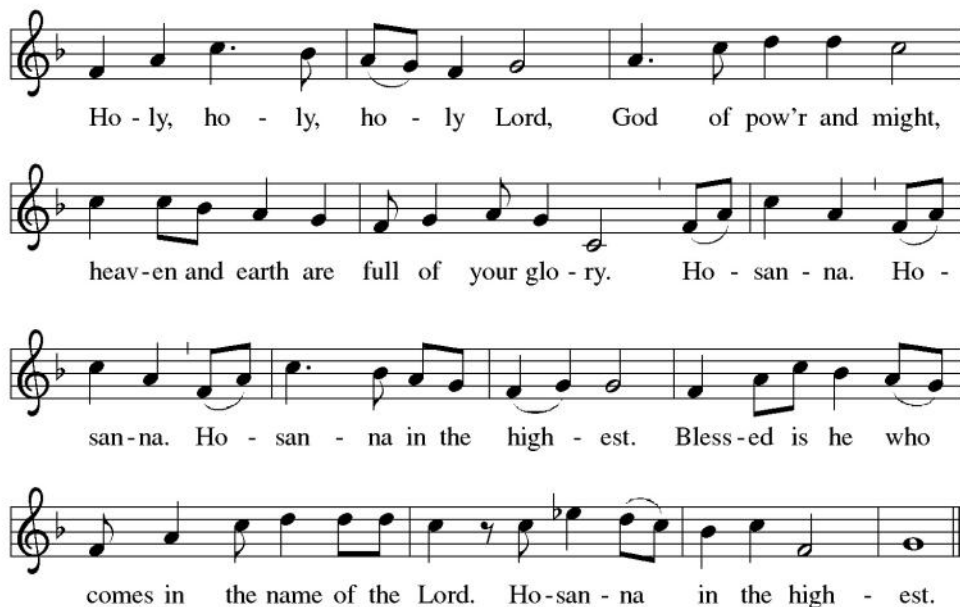
Continued on next page...



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; 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



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.

Remembering, then, his death and resurrection, we lift this bread and cup before you,
giving you thanks that you have made us worthy to stand before you and to serve
you as your priestly people.

And we ask you:

Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your Church;

gather into one all who share this bread and wine;

fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth,

that we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ.

Through him all glory and honor are yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church both now and forever. **Amen**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

Let us pray in confidence with the words our Savior taught us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

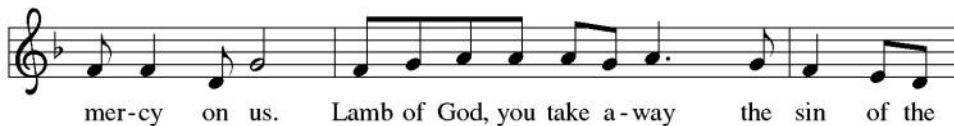
FRACTION RITE

When we eat this bread, we share the body of Christ.

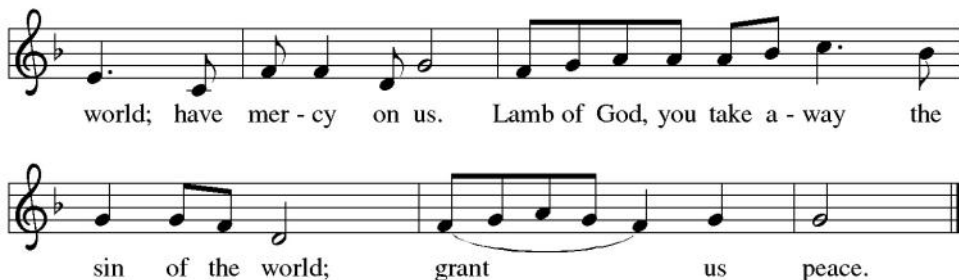
When we drink this cup, we share the blood of Christ.

**Reveal yourself to us, O Lord, in the breaking of the bread, as once you revealed
yourself to your disciples.**

AGNUS DEI



Continued on next page...



Sit

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.

Procedure for receiving Communion:

1. Come to communion using the center aisle.
2. Take a communion glass from the tray of glasses.
3. Take your place along the chancel step.
4. The ministers will bring the bread and wine to you.
5. Place the used cup in an empty tray located on a credence table at the side aisle.
6. Return to your pew using the side aisle

10:30 AM COMMUNION HYMN

How Shall I Sing That Majesty (ACS 1095)



- 1 How shall I sing that maj - es - ty which an - gels do ad -
- 2 En - light - en with faith's light my heart, in - flame it with love's
- 3 How great a be - ing, Lord, is thine, which doth all be - ings



mire? Let dust in dust and si - lence lie; sing, sing, ye
fire, then shall I sing and take my part with that ce -
keep! Thy knowl - edge is the on - ly line to sound so



heav'n - ly choir. Thou - sands of thou - sands stand a -
les - tial choir. They sing, be - cause thou art their
vast a deep; thou art a sea with - out a



round thy throne, O God most high; ten thou - sand
sun; Lord, send a beam on me; for where heav'n
shore, a sun with - out a sphere; thy time is



times ten thou - sand sound thy praise; but who am I?
is but once be - gun, there al - le - lu - ias be.
now and ev - er - more, thy place is ev - 'ry - where.

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. Lord, in this Most Holy Sacrament you have given Christ, the King of all creation, as food for eternal life. Give us the grace to live by His Gospel, and bring us to the joy of His Kingdom, where He lives and reigns forever and ever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

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

HYMN

O Christ the Same (ELW 760) next page

DISMISSAL

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

Sit

POSTLUDE

Laudate Dominum

J. Frank Freysinger

Copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies



Come help us get ready for the Advent/Christmas Season!

The Property Committee invites you to join them with a fall house cleaning on Saturday, November 29 starting at 8:00 AM
Sign up on the clipboard this morning!

O Christ the Same

1 O Christ the same, through all our sto - ry's pag - es,
 2 O Christ the same, the friend of sin - ners, shar - ing
 3 O Christ the same, se - cure with - in whose keep - ing

our loves and hopes, our fail - ures and our fears;
 our in - most thoughts, the se - crets none can hide,
 our lives and loves, our days and years re - main,

e - ter - nal Lord, the king of all the a - ges,
 still as of old up - on your bod - y bear - ing
 our work and rest, our wak - ing and our sleep - ing,

un - chang - ing still a - mid the pass - ing years:
 the marks of love, in tri - umph glo - ri - fied:
 our calm and storm, our plea - sure and our pain:

O liv - ing Word, the source of all cre - a - tion,
 O Son of Man, who stooped for us from heav - en,
 O Lord of love, for all our joys and sor - rows,

who spread the skies, and set the stars a - blaze,
 O Prince of life, in all your sav - ing pow'r,
 for all our hopes, when earth shall fade and flee,

O Christ the same, who wrought our whole sal - va - tion,
 O Christ the same, to whom our hearts are giv - en,
 O Christ the same, be - yond our brief to - mor - rows,

we bring our thanks for all our yes - ter - days.
 we bring our thanks for this the pres - ent hour.
 we bring our thanks for all that is to be.

Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith, b. 1926

Music: RED HILL ROAD, Carl F. Schalk, b. 1929

Text © 1984 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
 Music © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

This Week at St. Paul's

Church office open Mon–Weds 8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Sunday, November 23 Christ the King

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist
 9:15 AM Sunday School for all
 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live Stream
 4:00 PM Piano Concert HyeSung Hwang
 5:30 PM Youth Group—Christ Hall
 6:00 PM Confirmation Class—Youth Rm
 6:30 PM AA Meeting—Community Rm

Monday, November 24

6:00 PM Christian Ed Mtg—Youth Rm & Zoom
 7:00 PM Mutual Ministry

Tuesday, November 25

9:30 AM Pantry
 6:00 PM Create—Preschool thru Grade 6
 6:00 PM Bible Study—Christ Hall

Wednesday, November 26

10:30 AM NO Bible Study
 1:00 PM Witness Committee

Thursday, November 27

Happy Thanksgiving!

Friday, November 28 Office Closed

Sunday, November 30 First Sunday of Advent

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist
 9:15 AM Making Advent Wreaths—Community Rm
 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live Stream
 6:30 PM AA Meeting—Community Rm

Serving the Lord with Gladness

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Greeters	Ushers -	Altar Guild
11-23	8:00 AM	Harold Sargeant	Tim Yakim	Kathy Monk	Dale & Betsy Smith, David & Brandi Snyder	Team 1E: Jeff Riese, John Monk, Alex Bastian, Claudia Deitrich	Lois Ann Schroeder, Kathy Monk
	10:30 AM	Tristan Ericson	Anna Herdson	Aaron Jacobs	Dick & Bonnie Keeports, Gail Kerchner	Team 1L: Dave Kopp, Scott Donaldson, Darren Smith, Kass Keleta	Deb Becker, Isabella Lehr

Music concerts and programs Fall 2025

St. Paul's Church is pleased to host the following musical events. Please show your support with your attendance. All events are FREE and open to the public.

Sunday, November 23 TODAY

HyeSung Hwang, piano

4:00pm

Dr. HyeSung Hwang is a piano instructor at York College and will play a recital featuring music of Robert Schumann and Modest Mussorgsky.

Sunday, December 7 York College Chorale and Orchestra

3:00pm

The York College Chorale under the direction of Dr. Erin Lippard and the York College Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Matthew Inkster will present a holiday concert featuring "Gloria" by Antonio Vivaldi plus other seasonal repertoire.

ADDITIONAL DATES HAVE BEEN ADDED! You may schedule your photo session on December 29 & 30. Please do so ASAP. Please call the church office if you have any questions. And remember that the 8 X 10 family portrait is free!



ONLINE SCHEDULING INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHURCH DIRECTORY

1. Go to the Universal Church Directories website (www.ucdir.com)
2. Click on the box on the right side of the homepage entitled “photography appointment scheduling login”
3. Enter your church code [pa1207](#)
4. Enter your church password [photos](#)
5. Click on the Enter button
6. Click on the desired photography date
7. Click on the Reserve Time button beside the desired photography appointment time
8. Enter the appropriate information in all required fields (indicated by the asterisk)
9. Click on the Schedule Appointment button at the bottom of the screen to reserve the photography appointment time in your family’s name
10. If you have more than six family members being photographed, please reserve two appointments consecutively (such as 6:00 and 6:10)
11. Print the next screen to use as a reminder of your family’s photography appointment
12. Contact your church’s online scheduling administrator to change or cancel your photography appointment

If you have sponsored altar flowers please remember to give the church secretary the sentiment you want printed in the bulletin by the Tuesday before the flower date.

A Partnership Between Local Churches & LifePath Thrift Stores

Now is the time to clear out unwanted toys and donate them to LifePath BEFORE Christmas so families can purchase them to give to children at Christmas. The stores then return a portion of the value of these items in the form of gift cards to your church to help those directly in your care. Look in your newsletter for more information.



Food Pantry Needs: St. Paul’s Food Pantry needs **Whole Grain Cereal donations.** We give out 80 boxes of cereal each week and our sources for cereal currently have very little available.

Other Pantry Needs: Peanut butter, Plastic and paper shopping bags, Monetary donations. Monetary donations can be placed in a “special” envelope marked “Pantry”.



St. Nicholas Breakfast—Due to scheduling conflicts we will not hold a St. Nicholas Breakfast on December 6. Thank you to those who volunteered to help.



Advent Wreath—NEXT SUNDAY

Sign up on the designated clipboard sheet if your household plans to make an Advent Wreath on Sunday, November 30 at 9:15 AM. This will help us secure proper supplies and best location for the event.

Advent Mid-Week Suppers—Casseroles, Pot Luck, and Other Good Things is the theme for our Wednesday 6:00 PM suppers. Please sign up to make something to share. The clipboard is located by the church office door.

December Reading—

Marking time with devotion, prayer, activity, and reading

The days are quickly coming. Advent is here. Christmas is on its way. December, the last month of the calendar year, can easily evaporate. With invitations, holiday concerts, preparations for visits with family and friends and services at church the thirty-one days pass speedily. Mark this blessed season with time spent in devotion, prayer, advent activities, and reading. In the Good Shepherd Room an assortment of resources awaits, some are for use with children, some are daily devotions, others are provided to center your thought on the season, Christ Jesus, and God's out poured love.



The Children Need You in the New Year

Jackson Elementary School needs some adult volunteers for their kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms. They're asking for an hour or two per week, more if desired in order to read to/ with children and assist teachers. This need is a result of the former "grandparent" program losing its funding. If you have any interest or questions, please contact Nancy Bennett

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



Reminder! Poinsettia orders are due TODAY.
Order forms are in your newsletter and by all the nave doors.

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread."

Jesus was famished. Bread would take away the hunger and restore his depleted energy. But it wasn't just bread. There was the visual showing of the kingdoms of the world. As if our Lord didn't know what the world's kingdoms looked like or the authority that came with them. And then the tempting plea, "*If you will worship me*" states the devil. Add to these two, the highpoint, the pinnacle of the temple where the devil tempts "*If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here.*" Then with a few scripture quotations to justify his selfish desire, and when Jesus doesn't fall for the taunting, the devil departs until an opportune time.

"When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left." This is an opportune time. Now is the time to act, to tempt, to change the course of God's divine Event of forgiveness and love for humanity. It appears that Jesus has reached the end of the road. He is at the place of The Skull. He has reached Golgotha. The devil tempts. Will Jesus come down from the cross, abandon the sentence of death, and stop the crucifixion from taking place? The devil's tempting words have permeated those gathered. The temptations come from the lips of the rulers and religious authorities, from the empire's soldiers, from a criminal sentenced to crucifixion. The rulers of the day scoffed at him. "*He saved others; let him save himself If he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!*" The soldiers mocked him. "*If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!*" A criminal derided him. "*Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!*"

God's realm in Jesus has everything to do with salvation. That was one aspect that those tempting Jesus had right. God's kingdom is brought about by and through saving grace. Paul writing to the Colossians put it like this; "*Jesus has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*" Jesus comes among us to save us from sin, death, and the devil, and to make us his own, heirs of his kingdom. That's what the catechism and Holy Scriptures teach. Each group in the gospel story this morning; the rulers, the soldiers, the followers and the criminals all know that Jesus has something to do with salvation. They all know that he has power to change things. They know that Jesus changes things for the most unlikely of persons.

Luke has recorded many stories of unlikely people being changed, people being saved from one thing to live a new life and a new day. A rebellious son who squanders his father's resources, a foreigner who proved to be neighbor to the man who fell among thieves, a woman who crashes a dinner party and pours out ointment from an alabaster jar, a paralytic whose friends hoist him down from the roof, a Samaritan leper restored to health, those gathered know that Jesus has always been with and seemingly for the most unlikely person. They have witnessed it before.

Salvation is part of the Kingdom. Jesus is crucified precisely as “Savior.” We know through eyewitnesses and the words of sacred scripture that Jesus, by not saving himself, does in fact save us, saves all people, all humanity. On that day he saves the most unlikely, a dying thief, promised paradise. He saves you and me. The place of The Skull, the place where we arrive today, the destination where the drama of the passion narrative unfolds, what appears to be the end of the road, Jesus continues to offer forgiveness and healing. This has been his pattern. He consistently tells stories about forgiveness and healing or offers forgiveness and healing to unlikely people. Jesus speaks to us through these stories. He saves unlikely people. Today he offers salvation to you and me as unlikely as that might seem. “*Your sins are forgiven*” he says, “*your wounds are healed, you may enter Paradise with me*” he proclaims.

The place of The Skull, Golgotha, is perhaps the place of deepest need, utmost yearning, and greatest separation. This is the place recognized by one criminal and railed against by another. It is the place where ordinary people face fears and recognize sin’s powerful sway and separation. This is the place where Christ the King, Our King, the Savior of the Nations, comes. At the cross where all appears to be lost, God comes; for all, for you and me, and for all who are divided by the power of sin or enslaved by it. He comes precisely for the most unlikely people. At times such as these Jesus does not waver. He endures suffering and even death. Once again, the Apostle Paul; “*For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.*”

While others put their trust and hope in world power, earthly prestige, and accumulation of possessions, the King of all creation, Ruler of all, is with us speaking forgiveness. Some recognize the need for forgiveness and the true giver of it. Others continue along the track of destruction, delusional, drifting farther from the one who can, and does, and will make all people free, “*Father forgive them; for they know not what they are doing.*”

Throughout the centuries artists have given visual expression to this different kind of king, poets have penned it, theologians written of it, preachers proclaimed it; the cross-announcing victory over sin and death. Christ gives himself freely to save and free us from sin. Christ gives himself in sacramental Words and water, bread and wine. Simple ordinary visible signs of forgiveness, love, hope, and a reign that is paradise made known for the most unlikely. That day, on the cross, a dying thief is remembered and given a promise. Today in our eucharistic celebration we are remembered and given a promise. The standard that is raised over us, traced on our brow, and marking us forever is Christ’s cross. In God’s royal reign, forgiveness is spoken, salvation is made known for all people (the likely and the unlikely). This is the Kingdom to which we are welcomed. A promise today and for our tomorrows, Paradise in God’s Kingdom. Amen.

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 23:1-6

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD.

²Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. ³Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD.

⁵The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

Psalm 46**SECOND READING: Colossians 1:11-20**

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things

visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

GOSPEL: Luke 23:33-43

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" ⁴¹And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴²Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Next Sunday's Readings: Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44.

Cover: Metal carving of three men on crosses. Photo copyright © 2024 Peter Griffin/Alamy Stock Photo. Used by permission.

Readings are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States. Revised Common Lectionary copyright © 1992 by the Consultation on Common Texts (CCT), admin. Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Please visit our website at www.augsburgfortress.org.

Copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced. Printed in U.S.A.

ITEM013749 ELCA-R