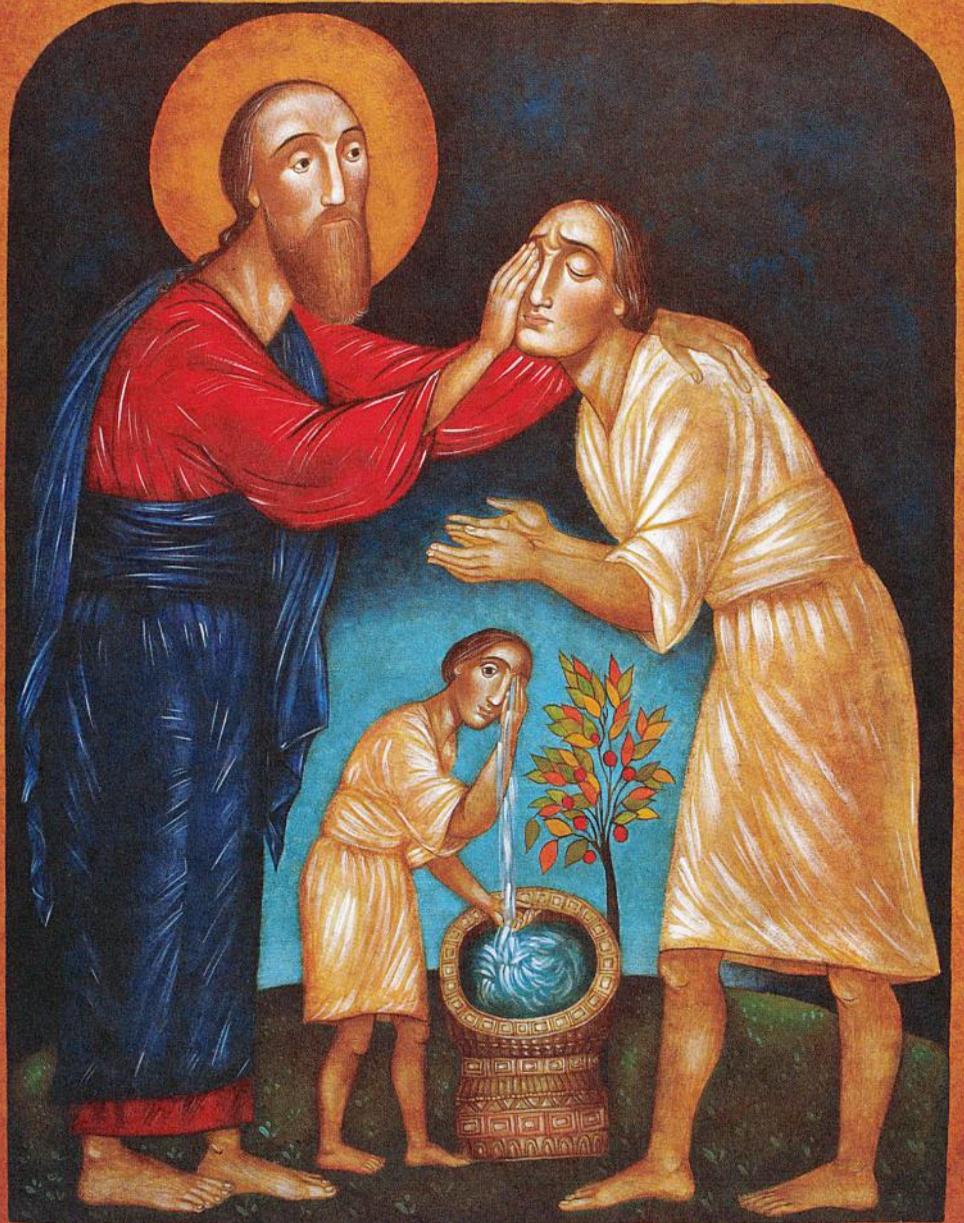


Lord, I believe

JOHN 9:38



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

25 W. Springettsbury Ave., York, PA 17403

Church Office 717-843-8155

www.stpaulsyork.org

Email: st.paulsyork@comcast.net

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 190 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.

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 which is accessed through the double doors front right.

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.

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

Parents, please 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.



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

stpaulsyork.org

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's Music Director	Julianna Jones	Jjones.stpaulsyork@gmail.com
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

March 15, 2026
The Fourth Sunday in Lent
Holy Communion 8:30 and 10:30 AM

PRELUDE **Organ** *The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want* Gerald Near

Stand

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**

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 *sung 3 times*

Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy; have mer - cy, O Lord.

Stand

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray. . . God of all mercy, by your power to heal and to forgive, graciously cleanse us from all sin and make us strong; 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 1 Samuel 16:1-13

¹ The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." ² Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.'" ³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." ⁴ Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, "Do you come peaceably?" ⁵ He said, "Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely his anointed is now before the Lord." ⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." ⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." ¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any of these." ¹¹ Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes

here.”¹² He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The Lord said, “Rise and anoint him, for this is the one.”¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 23

spoken antiphonally pulpit side -odd verses/font side-even verses

¹ The LORD | is my shepherd;*

I shall not | be in want.

² He makes me lie down | in green pastures*

and leads me be- | side still waters.

³ He re- | vives my soul*

and guides me along right pathways | for his name's sake.

⁴ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall | fear no evil;*

for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they | comfort me.

⁵ You spread a table before me in the presence of those who | trouble me;*

you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is | running over.

⁶ Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days | of my life,*

and I will dwell in the house of the | LORD forever.

SECOND READING

Ephesians 5:8-14

⁸ for once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, ⁹ for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰ Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, ¹³ but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,

and Christ will shine on you.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

VERSE



Let your stead - fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom-ised; we will trust your word.

HOLY GOSPEL

John 9:1-41

(back cover)

The Holy Gospel according to St. John.

Glory to you, O Lord.*At the conclusion of the Gospel.*

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.*Sit***SERMON**

Pastor Reep

*Stand***HYMN OF THE DAY***Be Thou My Vision (ELW 793)*

1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
 3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,
 4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.
 thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,
 Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,
 thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
 great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

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.

God, our shepherd, lead Christians in our community and across the globe in right paths for your name's sake. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Rescue endangered animals and plants, preserve threatened ecosystems, and save creatures from natural disasters. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Bring an end to war and violence, and raise up leaders in governments, courts, businesses, schools, and community organizations who seek goodness and mercy. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Transform the hearts of all infected by bigotry and prejudice. Care for all in special need this day (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Continued on next page...

Awaken us to share and receive the gifts we each possess, and stir up a spirit of understanding, and welcome for all. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You know the futility of our wars. Bring us to our senses, that throughout all the world humankind will beat their swords into plows and learn to live in peace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We thank you for the promise of life eternal for all who have died completing their baptismal journey. Grant us courage to live faithfully until we too dwell in your house forever. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation. **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.

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

8:30 AM Organ

O Lamb of God Innocent

James Melby

10:30 AM Chancel Choir

Of the Glorious Body Telling

arr. Alan Bullard

OFFERTORY

Return to the Lord (LBW setting II)



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,



slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

Stand

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

The Lord be with you **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

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. You bid your people cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast. Renew our zeal in faith and life, and bring us to the fullness of grace that belongs to the children of God. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -



san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.



Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -



san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God.

You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory.

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.

We give you thanks for his coming into the world to fulfill for us your holy will and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

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 is risen. Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command, his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and the promise of his coming again, we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty, not as we ought but as we are able; we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants, and these your own gifts of bread and wine, so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace, and, receiving the forgiveness of sin, may be formed to live as your holy people and be given our inheritance with all your saints.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever. **Amen.**

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

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 *A brief silence is kept.*

AGNUS DEI

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

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

COMMUNION HYMN

10:30 AM *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light (ELW 815)*



1 I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to
2 I want to see . . . the bright-ness of God. I want to
3 I'm look - ing for . . . the com - ing of Christ. I want to



fol - low Je - sus. God set the stars to give
look at Je - sus. Clear Sun of righ - teous-ness,
be with Je - sus. When we have run . . . with



light to the world. The star of my life is Je - sus.
shine on my path, and show me the way to the Fa - ther.
pa - tience the race, we shall know the joy of Je - sus.

Refrain



In him there is no dark-ness at all. The night and the



day are both a - like. The Lamb is the light of the



cit - y of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

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



Now, Lord, 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.



Now, Lord, you let your ser - vant go in peace.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace. **Amen**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

The Whole World Lord Jesus Christ

Josef Doppelbauer

St. Paul's Women's Retreat, April 18, 8:30 AM-4:30 PM. Come for a day of rest, a time to get away from the business of daily life, to renew old friendships and build new ones, and to deepen your relationship with God. Sign up by completing the registration form you received in the mail. Forms are also located near church exits. Registration deadline is Monday, April 6, the day after Easter. Get your registration in soon before the busy time of Holy Week and Easter.

Contact anyone from the planning committee with questions: Janet Fitch, Julianna Jones, Kat Lemke, Patty Snyder. Or call the church office.

Becoming the Neighbors the World Needs—Sunday 9:30 AM Christ Hall

This new curriculum was prepared for Bridge of Hope. Co-author, Rev. William Snyder will be introducing two stories from the biblical witness which were selected to foster greater neighborhood involvement, understanding, and active participation working to end homelessness. The stories highlighted over the 5 Sundays in Lent are based on Luke 10:25-37 (the Good Samaritan) and four chapters in the book of Ruth 1:16-18, Ruth 2:8-13, Ruth 3:9-11, and Ruth 4:13-17. These two narratives will provide a lens through which we can better understand ourselves, God, and our neighbors. We pray that together we are becoming the neighbors the world needs.

Wednesday Mid-Week Lent

The Seven Petitions of the "Lord's Prayer"

Soup, Salad & Bread Supper, Christ Hall 6:00 PM

Vespers with Preaching, Church Nave 7:00 PM



The Wednesdays of Lent offer opportunities to strengthen Christian witness through fellowship and prayer. A simple supper of soup, bread and salad, will be held in Christ Hall at 6:00 PM. A sign-up sheet is located on the stand in the Good Shepherd Room. If you are willing to bring some of the things needed for the weekly supper simply sign up so we know that which items are covered. Additionally we need a few volunteers to help set up and clean up following the meals. We will need at least three crock pots of soup for each week. Following the supper evening Prayer, Vespers, will be held in the church nave at 7:00 PM. We have invited the congregations of Christ York, Grace York, St. Peter's York, and Christ Manchester to join us.

St. Paul's Food Pantry Needs: Peanut Butter, Cereal, plastic and paper shopping bags, and monetary donations. Monetary donations can be placed in a special envelope marked "Pantry". Contact Teresa Rohrbough to volunteer for Tuesday distribution days. Contact Patty Snyder to volunteer for Thursday delivery days or Sunday stocking days or contact the church office. Thank you to all who help!

2026 Flower Chart—The 2026 flower chart is posted on the Springettsbury vestibule bulletin board. **The cost of each vase is \$40 per vase.** Simply complete the flower form, make a check payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church and mark it altar flowers, and slip it under the office window. You can also contact the office to reserve a date, and to provide all of the correct information for inclusion in the Sunday bulletin. All information for the bulletin needs to be received by Wednesday morning of the previous week. 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 10:30 AM liturgy or you may have them given to someone who is sick, shut it, or hospitalized. *Please note that there are no flowers during the season of Lent.*

Experimental Trial Worship Time

If there was something that you could do to increase involvement in the life of the congregation, would you do it? Would you try it? Would you give it a chance?

That was the question posed to the participants at the annual retreat held in January by committee chairpersons and congregation council members. The desire is to continue with an early worship service opportunity and one that will permit greater participation. By adjusting the Sunday schedule, from 8:00 to 8:30 AM, it is hoped that we can accomplish several things:

- Increase attendance by moving from 8:00 AM and starting at 8:30 AM. This may be appealing to families who regularly move out the door shortly after 8:00 AM during the week. This eliminates a half hour wait between Sunday worship and Sunday school. While the education time is scheduled at 9:15 AM the reality is that folks arrive at 9:30 AM. Worshipers can move directly from worship to Christian Education.
- Increase available parking for the 10:30 AM liturgy. By making the early worship time a bit more appealing for schedules this has the potential of freeing up parking spaces for those who arrive later in the morning. The 10:30 AM liturgy is often the time when we experience individuals and families visiting St. Paul's having more parking options would be beneficial. Currently 8:00 AM averages 35 and 10:30 AM averages 125.
- By evening out the participants across two service times, we increase the potential number of people available to serve. This will ease the burden currently experienced at the early service time.
- When there are 70 or more people in the church nave the energy in the room changes. This is most noticeable for the preaching task, both the one preaching and those who listen. The acoustics in the room change.

After significant deliberation the Council decided on **an experimental trial worship time of 8:30 AM (moving the 8:00 AM liturgy one half hour) from March 1st through May 17th.** This will provide a time to hear responses, see if we are moving toward the desired hopes, and have time to plan accordingly for the 2026-2027 academic year. **The start time of the second liturgy will remain at 10:30 AM.**

For additional information or questions regarding this decision, please contact any member of the Congregation Council.



Greeters will be needed for this concert and all future concerts. You will **not** be required to set up or clean up before or after the event. Your duties are to guide people to the nave and/or restrooms, etc... You will need to arrive 1/2 hour prior to the event and stay until all the guests have left. If you are interested in representing our church as part of the Hospitality Team please contact Patee at the church office.

Serving the Lord with Gladness

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Greeters	Ushers -	Altar Guild	Bread Bakers
3/15	8:30 AM	Harrison Palmer	Kathy Monk	James Palmer	James & Heather Eaton	Team 2E: Ron Riese, Kathy Monk, Ken Hinkle, Alex Bastian	Lois Ann Schroeder, Kathy Monk	Abby Jacobs
	10:30 AM	George Fitch	Anna Herdson	Nancy Bennett	Eric & Brianne Humpal, Aaron & Abby Jacobs	Team 2L: Kem Vaught, Gail Kerchner, Sandy Dickensheets	Larry & Janet Moore	Abby Jacobs

This Week at St. Paul's

Church office open Mon–Thurs 8:00 AM—4:00 PM Fri 8:00 AM—11:30 AM

Sunday, March 15 Easter Flowers Orders due

8:30 AM Holy Eucharist
 9:30 AM Sunday School for All Ages
 9:30 AM New Members Class—Community Rm
 Lower level
 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist —Live Stream
 5:30 PM York Jr & Sr Honors Choirs Concert
 6:30 PM AA Meeting—Community Rm

Monday, March 16

6:30 PM Council Meeting—Christ Hall

Tuesday, March 17

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

Wednesday, March 18

10:00 AM Preschool with Pastor—Nave
 10:30 AM Bible Study— Christ hall
 4:30 PM Lenten Watercolors with Pastor Reep
 6:00 PM Lenten Dinner
 7:00 PM Lenten Vespers

Thursday, March 19

10:00 AM Preschool with Pastor—Nave
 11:30 AM York College Student Event
 6:30 PM Handbell Choir
 7:30 PM Chancel Choir

Sunday, March 22

8:30 AM Holy Eucharist
 9:30 AM Sunday School for All Ages
 9:30 AM New Members Class—Community Rm
 Lower level
 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist —Live Stream
 6:30 PM AA Meeting—Community Rm

Watercolor Painting Class—2 Sessions Remain—Wednesdays in Lent—4:30 – 6:00 PM

Pastor Reep is offering a watercolor class during the season of Lent. “*Lenten Watercolors*” will be held in the Youth Room on the Upper Level. Middle school students, through adults, are welcome to participate. Bring any supplies that you may have for the first session.. The remaining Wednesdays are March 18 & 25.

TODAY Sunday, March 15 York County Junior and Senior Honors Choir 5:30 pm

The York County Honors Choir will present their season finale concert. Comprised of auditioned choral students from junior and senior high schools throughout York County, these are some of the finest young singers who love to perform. The concert is free and open to the public.

The text arrived from the optometrist. It is time for my annual eye examination. Corrective lenses are something that I have needed since the second grade. Mrs. Long, my teacher, realized that I could not read the text on the film strip projection. It was the equivalent of a power point presentation today. It wasn't because I couldn't read. It was because I couldn't see the text from my position in the room. The text on the screen was blurry from only a few yards away. She notified my parents. And for the rest of my life I have received regular eye exams. I have worn glasses and contact lenses. And with each passing year something more needs to be added so that I can see as clearly as possible. That is the desire of the optometrist, to help me see with clarity at a distance and up close. Being able to see is an incredible gift. I suppose it is one that we who are sighted take for granted.

The optometrist has the task of examining the state of our vision. I have discovered that not everyone goes to the eye doctor. And folks don't go for a variety of reasons. Too expensive, no insurance, don't like to go to doctors, they see just fine, too vain to wear eye glasses, or they don't think that going to the eye doctor will make any difference. Physicians exist to make life better.

Jesus, the Great Physician, makes a difference in the life of a man who was born blind. Jesus has the remarkable ability to notice people and situations that most of us in our sightedness overlook. The man born blind doesn't ask for healing. He is a beggar. In those days blindness reduced a person's life and worth to begging for enough to get by. But in a miraculous turn of events, the blind man encounters Jesus. Jesus *"spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes"* Then Jesus told him *"Go wash in the pool of Siloam."* The man did what Jesus said, he went and washed in the pool of Siloam and came back able to see.

Jesus has done an astonishing thing. But Jesus doesn't stick around to receive credit or accolades. When the man who was blind but who now sees returns, his encounter with Jesus throws the entire community into a protracted argument, quarrelling, and discussion about how the man was healed. The religious community weighs in on the situation and they are perplexed that the man can't tell them how he was healed. The Pharisees become divided over the situation. The man consistently tells the same series of events over and over but it seems his experience and action doesn't count, because in their eyes, he is a beggar. What could a beggar say to enlighten the most learned of the neighborhood or the religious community?

Notice, Jesus is absent from all of this conflictual dialogue. He healed the man and then stepped away from the community. It is as though our Lord wants nothing to do with the exchanges that are not life giving. (I suppose the reverse is true; Jesus wants everything to do with exchanges that are life giving!)

As the story unfolds, attempting to make sense out of a man born blind and whose sight has been restored, several things transpire. The man believes in Jesus. The man is classified as a disciple (This is an incredible elevation in stature from beggar to disciple.) The man gives testimony to Jesus who healed him. The Pharisees refuse to believe the

man's testimony. The man's parents are questioned in an attempt to debunk the story that their son was born blind. The parents fear retribution. They do not want to be excluded from the faith community. They know what that looks like, their own son experienced exclusion his entire life. The Pharisees again question the man who had been blind. And again the story of Jesus spitting mud placing it on his eyes and him going to wash in the pool of Siloam is reiterated. The intensity of the Pharisee's interrogation can mean only one thing to the man who now sees, they too must want to be disciples of Jesus. But the man who now sees is, in the eyes of the Pharisees, dead wrong. He is called a sinner and is driven out. He is expelled from the community.

Now Jesus enters into the narrative again. Jesus receives word that the villagers and the religious elite have driven the man out. Jesus does what Jesus always does; he seeks out the lost and the excluded. So it is no surprise that Jesus sought him out. Jesus found him. The exchange is monumental "*Do you believe in the Son of Man?*" The man answered, *and who is he sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.*" Jesus, the one who opened the eyes of the man born blind, says to him, "*You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.*" From a blind beggar to a disciple giving testimony the man exclaims "*Lord, I believe.*"

The text from St. John arrives this morning. It is time for our eye examination. Corrective lenses are something that we have needed since the day we were born. We are in need of, a Mrs. Long; someone who realizes that we are not clearly able to see what is before us. It's not because we can't see, but because we are only viewing things from our own position in the room. We need to be able to see a larger picture, a vast all-encompassing view, as well as to be able to see up close, what is right before our very eyes.

As people who have been washed in the water of Holy Baptism, and marked with the cross of Christ, each day our vision is being corrected moving us from our blindness, and the darkness of sin and death, to the light of Christ and his forgiveness and life. With each passing day something new comes to us about the one, Jesus, who comes to us, the one who seeks us out, the one who claims us as disciples and entrusts us with a message of hope for the world. A message that often leaves people quarrelling, and bickering about the things associated with "how" and missing the miraculous "That" God in Christ Jesus sought you out.

Being able to see is an incredible gift. I suppose it is a gift that we who are sighted take for granted. We who are baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus may take such a gift for granted. We may find ourselves acting more like the community and the religious elite in the gospel narrative from John than like the man born blind whose sight is given by the Lord Jesus.

The optometrist has the task of examining the state of our vision. Jesus comes among us, touching us with his own life, offering us his body and blood, to forgive our sins and to open our blind eyes to his message of hope and salvation. Not just for some, but for all people. This is the vision; this is the mission to open blind eyes, yours and mine, our neighbors and our friends, governments and nations so that beggars are sought out, human dignity given, and life restored. Like the man born blind, we give testimony so that others will come to believe in the Son of Man. He is the Savoir of the world. Amen.

FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 16:1-13 [not printed]

Psalm 23

SECOND READING: Ephesians 5:8-14 [not printed]

GOSPEL: John 9:1-41

As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind?”

How then does he now see?” ²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” ²⁵He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” ²⁶They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” ²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” ³⁰The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” ³⁴They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” ³⁷Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” ³⁸He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. ³⁹Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.” ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” ⁴¹Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

Next Sunday’s Readings: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45.

Cover: *Healing of a Man Born Blind* by Julia Stankova. Copyright © Julia Stankova. All rights reserved. Used by permission of the artist.

Readings from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. 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. Tracks 1 and 2

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

ITEM014965 ELCA-R