

*I came that they may
have life and have it
abundantly*

JOHN 10:10



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.

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

Restrooms are available in the Good Shepherd Room (Springettsbury Ave) and the narthex (George St). Baby changing stations are provided in these restrooms as well as in the nursery.

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.



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

stpaulsyork.org

We extend thanks and appreciation to Christine Kates for serving as our organist this morning.

Fourth Sunday of Easter April 26, 2026 Holy Communion 8:30 & 10:30 AM *Musical Setting 1 Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

PRELUDE

Trio on the tune "Duke Street" (Fey)

Stand

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is Risen Indeed. Alleluia

ENTRANCE HYMN

O Christ, Our Hope (ELW 604)



1 O Christ, our hope, our hearts' de - sire, cre - a - tion's
 2 How vast your mer - cy to ac - cept the bur - den
 3 But now the bonds of death are burst, the ran - som
 4 Oh, let your might - y love pre - vail to purge us
 5 All praise to you, as - cend - ed Lord; all glo - ry



might-y Lord, re - deem - er of the fall - en world, by
 of our sin, and bow your head in cru - el death to
 has been paid; you reign a - bove at God's right hand, in
 of our pride, that we may stand be - fore your throne by
 ev - er be to Fa - ther, Son, and Spir - it blest through



ho - ly love out - poured, by ho - ly love out - poured:
 make us clean with - in, to make us clean with - in.
 robes of light ar - rayed, in robes of light ar - rayed.
 mer - cy pu - ri - fied, by mer - cy pu - ri - fied.
 all e - ter - ni - ty, through all e - ter - ni - ty!

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

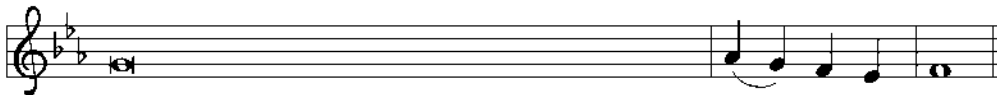


In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

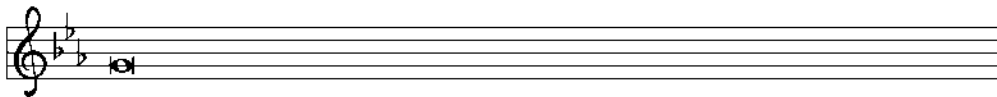
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For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



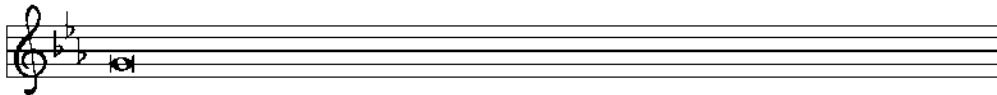
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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 worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

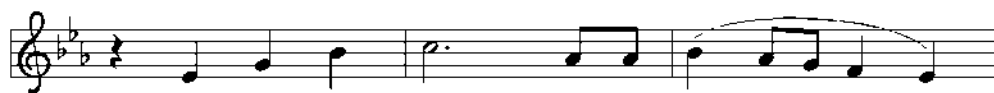


Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

HYMN OF PRAISE



Glo - ry to God in the high -



est, 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.



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. . . God of all power, you called from death our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep. Send us as shepherds to rescue the lost, to heal the injured, and to feed one another with knowledge and understanding; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

Sit

10:30 AM PRESCHOOL PRESENTATION *Children singing Chapel Songs.*

PSALM 23 **8:30 AM** Sung as hymn paraphrase (next page)

10:30 AM Sung by the Choir to a setting by Howard Goddall

PSALM Psalm 23

The Lord's My Shepherd (ELW 778)



1 The Lord's my shep-herd; I'll not want. He makes me down to lie
 2 My soul he doth re - store a - gain, and me to walk doth make
 3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, yet will I fear no ill;
 4 My ta - ble thou hast rich - ly spread in pres - ence of my foes;
 5 Good - ness and mer - cy all my life shall sure - ly fol - low me,



in pas - tures green; he lead - eth me the qui - et wa - ters by.
 with - in the paths of righ - teous - ness, e'en for his own name's sake;
 for thou art with me, and thy rod and staff me com - fort still;
 my head thou dost with oil a - noint, and my cup o - ver - flows.
 and in God's house for - ev - er - more my dwell - ing - place shall be;



He lead - eth me, he lead - eth me the qui - et wa - ters by.
 with - in the paths of righ - teous - ness, e'en for his own name's sake.
 for thou art with me, and thy rod and staff me com - fort still.
 My head thou dost with oil a - noint, and my cup o - ver - flows.
 and in God's house for - ev - er - more my dwell - ing - place shall be.

READING 1 Peter 2-19-25 (back cover)

Stand
 ALLELUIA



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



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Repeat alleluia



Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

HOLY GOSPEL

John 10:1-10 (*back cover*)

The Holy Gospel according to St. John
At the conclusion of the Gospel.
The Gospel of the Lord.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON

Pastor 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

Trusting in the power of Christ's resurrection to heal and redeem our broken world, let us pray for the needs of all creation.

A brief silence.

Shepherding God, lead us in paths of righteousness. Embolden us to enter the dark valleys of this world and guide us to the still waters of your grace. We pray for strength for all military and prison chaplains serving near and far. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Through the resurrection of your Son, Christ Jesus, show us your steadfast love and instruct our hearts in your ways. Help us to revere and protect the wonders of your creation. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Strengthen and uphold those who work for justice and advocate for human rights. Bring an end to oppression and save us from the temptation of violence or vengeance. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Walk with those who are grieving, and anoint those who are ill or injured (*especially*). Restore them to health of body, mind, and spirit. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Form us into a community where all are honored and cared for. Spread a feast before us and gather us into your tender embrace. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils that surround them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We praise you for the saints who have died in faith and now dwell in your love. At our end, bring us, with them, to our heavenly home. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Into your hands we commend all for whom we pray trusting in your mercy through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

The ministers and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Sit

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

Organ

Alleluia (Honore)

Stand

OFFERTORY

This is Christ's Body (ACS 967)

This is Christ's bod - y, bro - ken and blest. Feed us with

mer-cy and love.
with mer - cy and love. We are Christ's bod - y,

bro-ken and blest. Heal us and make us one.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Merciful Father,
we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us; our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered 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.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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

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, almighty and everliving God. But chiefly we are bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of our Lord; for he is the true Passover Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin, who by his death has destroyed death, and by his rising has brought us to eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of

pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. 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.

THANKSGIVING

You are indeed holy, O God, the fountain of all holiness;
you bring light from darkness, life from death, speech from silence.

We worship you for our lives and for the world you give us.

We thank you for the new world to come and for the love that will rule all in all.

We praise you for the grace shown to Israel, your chosen, the people of your promise:
the rescue from Egypt, the gift of the promised land,
the memory of the fathers, the homecoming from exile,
and the prophets' words that will not be in vain.

In all this we bless you for your only-begotten Son,
who fulfilled and will fulfill all your promises.

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.

Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup we remember the incarnation of your Son:
his human birth and the covenant he made with us.

We remember the sacrifice of his life:

his eating with outcasts and sinners, and his acceptance of death.

But chiefly on this day we remember his rising from the tomb,

his ascension to the seat of power,

and his sending of the holy and life-giving Spirit.

We cry out for the resurrection of our lives, when Christ will come again in
beauty and power to share with us the great and promised feast.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, that we and all who share in this bread and cup
may be united in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, may enter the fullness of the
kingdom of heaven, and may receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place,
and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he
comes as victorious Lord of all.

**Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor
and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.**

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father 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



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. We receive communion by intinction today.

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*

Refrain

This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.

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

1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose
2 Sing . . with all the peo - ple of God, and

blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.
join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion:

Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and strength, and
Bless - ing and hon - or, glo - ry and might be to

Refrain

hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.
God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

3 For the Lamb who was slain has be -

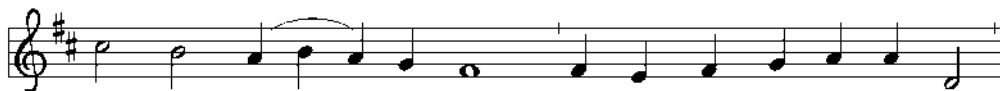
Refrain

gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

10:30 AM COMMUNION HYMN *At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing (ELW 362)*



1 At the Lamb's high feast we sing praise to
2 Praise we Christ, whose love di - vine gives his
3 Where the pas - chal blood is poured death's dread
4 Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed, pas - chal



our vic - to - rious king, who has washed us in the tide
sa - cred blood for wine, gives his bod - y for the feast—
an - gel sheathes the sword; Is - rael's hosts tri - um - phant go
vic - tim, pas - chal bread; with sin - cer - i - ty and love



flow - ing from his wound - ed side. Al - le - lu - ia!
Christ the vic - tim, Christ the priest. Al - le - lu - ia!
through the wave that drowns the foe. Al - le - lu - ia!
eat we man - na from a - bove. Al - le - lu - ia!

5 Mighty victim from the sky,
hell's fierce pow'rs beneath you lie;
you have conquered in the fight,
you have brought us life and light.
Alleluia!

7 Easter triumph, Easter joy!
This alone can sin destroy;
from sin's pow'r, Lord, set us free,
newborn souls in you to be.
Alleluia!

6 Now no more can death appall,
now no more the grave enthrall;
you have opened paradise,
and your saints in you shall rise.
Alleluia!

8 Father, who the crown shall give,
Savior, by whose death we live,
Spirit, guide through all our days:
Three in One, your name we praise.
Alleluia!

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. All powerful and ever-living God, in the Eucharist we celebrate the Mystery of Faith. By this Easter Sacrament, renew in us the gift of faith in the New Life it promises. We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you forever and ever. **Amen**

BLESSING

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

HYMN

Praise the Lord, Rise Up Rejoicing (ELW 544)



1 Praise the Lord, rise up re - joic - ing, wor - ship, thanks, de -
2 Scat - tered flock, one shep - herd shar - ing, lost and lone - ly,
3 Sins for - giv - en, wrongs for - giv - ing, we go forth a -



vo - tion voic - ing: glo - ry be to God on high!
one voice hear - ing, ears at - ten - tive to your word;
lert and liv - ing in your Spir - it, strong and free.



Christ, your cross and pas - sion shar - ing, by this eu - cha -
by your blood new life re - ceiv - ing, in your bod - y,
Part - ners in your new cre - a - tion, seek - ing peace in



rist de - clar - ing yours the fi - nal vic - to - ry.
firm be - liev - ing, we are yours, and you the Lord.
ev - 'ry na - tion, may we faith - ful fol - l'wers be.

DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is Risen, indeed. Alleluia!

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Victory (Helman)

St Paul's collects 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.





Thank you to the Men of St. Paul’s for preparing the delicious breakfast this morning. If you would like to contribute to their LWR project please place gifts in a “Special” pew envelope and mark it “LWR”.

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, April 26—Preschool Sunday

- 8:30 AM Holy Eucharist
- 9:30 AM Congregation Appreciation Breakfast Fellowship Hall
- 9:30 AM Mpuguso Bake Sale– Good Shepherd Rm.
- 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist —Live Stream
- 11:30 AM Mpuguso Bake Sale– Good Shepherd Rm.
- 6:30 PM AA Meeting—Community Rm

Monday, April 27

- 6:00 PM Christian Ed Mtg– Youth Rm

Tuesday, April 28

- 9:30 AM Pantry
- 6:00 PM Property Committee

Wednesday, April 29

- 10:00 AM Preschool with Pastor—Nave
- 10:30 AM Bible Study— Christ hall

Thursday, April 30

- 10:00 AM Preschool with Pastor—Nave
- 7:30 PM Chancel Choir

Sunday, May 3

- 8:30 AM Holy Eucharist
- 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist —Live Stream
- 11:45 AM Benevolence Committee—Christ Hall
- 3:00 PM Matinee Musci Club Recital
- 6:30 PM AA Meeting—Community Rm

The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God in memory of Ralph & Helen Wallace & Raymond Virginia Le Cates, our loving parents by Peggy & Byron Le Cates



Serving the Lord with Gladness

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Greeters	Ushers -	Early: Altar Set-up Late: Altar Clean - up	Bread Bakers
4/26	8:30 AM	James Palmer	Lois Ann Schroeder	Bob Reed	Nancy Banta, Tom Martin	Team 1E: Jeff Riese, John Monk, Alex Bastian, Claudia Deitrich	Lois Ann Schroeder, Kathy Monk	Ann Ulrich
4/26	10:30 AM	George Fitch	Larry Moore	Allen Reep	Tina Llorente, Peter & Nancy O'Connor	Team 1L: Dave Kopp, Scott Donaldson, Darren Smith, Kass Keleta	Deb Becker, Isabel-la Lehr	Ann Anstadt

Sunday, May 3 Matinee Musical Club of York piano recital 3:00 PM St. Paul's Church

Come and hear some of York's finest young pianists ages 8-18 perform in concert on the church's magnificent Steinway Concert grand piano. This is the annual Piano Competition and the caliber of playing is extraordinary. This event is free to the public.



Greeters will be needed for the May 3rd. Concert. 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.

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. All information for the bulletin needs to be received by Wednesday morning of the previous week. 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.



**Mpuguso Bake Sale—Sunday April 26– TODAY
Proceeds Benefit our sister congregation, Mpuguso Lutheran Church,
Tanzania**

Today is our Bake Sale! Please take a booked good with you. Simply make a donation. Know that your gift will help extend the ministry of our sister congregation in Tanzania. Thank you to everyone who has contributed: bakers, workers, and donors.



Benevolence Committee Update and Call for Applications

We are currently still calling for applications for 2026. Please have applications to the office by April 30. You can request the online application from Patee in the office or use the green application form available in the Springettsbury Entrance. The application has a place for the year the funding is requested. Remember, you may support local, regional, national, or international ministry opportunities. Each applicant should have a connection to the project or ministry. Contact Jamie Palmer, cell 717-451-3415, and email jlsip202@yahoo.com.



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 Rohrbaugh 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!

OUR FOOD PANTRY
NEEDS CEREAL DONATIONS!
HELP US FILL THE CEREAL BOX
IN THE GOOD SHEPHERD ROOM.
COLLECTION RUNS THROUGH MAY.



Instrumentalists for Summer Worship—A sign-up sheet for anyone willing to share their musical talent is located on the stand in the Good Shepherd room. We are planning to have instrumental ensembles provide leadership for our summer worship.

Will and Estate Planning Seminar Sunday, May 17, 3:00 PM.—by Saxton & Stump

Members of St. Paul's who attend the seminar will have the opportunity for Saxton and Stump to prepare a Will, Durable Power of Attorney, and Living Will at no cost to them through the generosity of St. Paul's Benevolence Fund. A sign-up sheet is in the Good Shepherd Room.



St. Paul's Lutheran Church is celebrating our 190th anniversary as a congregation.

As part of honoring this historic occasion, we are undertaking a special project to recognize the legacy of our founding pastor, Jonathan Oswald. His family's burial plot at Prospect Hill Cemetery stands as an important reminder of our congregation's roots.

To honor his contribution and celebrate the church's long history, a planning committee has begun organizing a restoration and beautification effort for the Oswald family cemetery plot.

This effort will rely on the support of volunteers from our congregation and community. If you would like to assist with this project or learn more about ways to help, please contact:

Aaron Jacobs ajacobs@scorecardsales.com 717-324-8133

Preschool Sunday calls to mind the days when our own children were in preschool. Our son was in the three-year-old class with Mrs. Becker and Mrs. Rost, which was only 15 years ago! And the days when our daughter was in preschool, we were still living in Western Pennsylvania. Those are good memories of children being in preschool.

When our daughter was three, we would go for long rides in the minivan to visit friends and relatives. Emily and I would try to engage her and interact with her along the way to keep things interesting and lively. When pointing out a particular sight, something that we thought interesting, something that would bring joy or delight her, or pique her curiosity, her response was often *"I can't see, the trees are in my eyes!"* It seems that in life there are always things that prevent us from truly seeing the one who is our Good Shepherd.

Last week it was Cleopas and his friend who couldn't see. They didn't recognize Jesus' walking with them and talking with them as they walked along the Emmaus Road on that Easter afternoon. It was their disappointment and sadness that enveloped them.

In the chapter proceeding this morning's reading, a man blind from birth is given vision. Jesus makes a little bit of mud, places it on the man's eyes and tells him to go wash. The man has restored sight. He now sees Jesus, as Lord, while the others, the religious authorities, the people from the community and even the man's own parents have difficulty seeing.

Today we are still dealing with vision, trouble seeing, recognizing what seems to be clear, at least to some. There may be something precluding each of us from seeing, recognizing the Good Shepherd.

Jesus tells a story thinking that those who hear, the religious leaders, the neighbors, the parents, why even the man with sight, will understand who he is and why he has come. He uses the imagery of a shepherd who enters by the gate, who knows the sheep, calls them by name and leads them out of the secure fold to green pastures, cool water, open space to roam and explore and even risk straying off, occasionally even getting lost.

But the sheep know the shepherd and the sheep know his voice and they follow. This is life-giving, this is abundant life. Jesus is telling his followers and pointing out to them important things. Like when parents point out a particular sight, something that we think is interesting, something that brings joy or delights or piques our child's curiosity. Our daughter would say *"I can't see, the trees are in my eyes!"* It seems that in life there are always things that prevent us from truly seeing the one who is our Good Shepherd. We even get confused by mistaking the thief and bandit, and listening to the voice of another, the voice of one that does not have our best interest or our life at heart.

That is the contrasting part of the story Jesus tells. He tells of the one who climbs over the fence, a thief and a bandit whose voice the sheep do not know, a voice from which they run.

Such voices divide and scatter. To make it clearer Jesus simplifies his approach, like the way we do as parents so that our children will understand. *"I am the gate for the sheep"* he said. *"All who came before me are thieves and bandits."* *"I am the gate."* Jesus said. *"Those who enter by me will be saved, they will come in and go out and find pasture."* They will have access to green pastures, cool waters, open spaces to roam and explore and even risk straying off and occasionally even getting lost. It is my voice they will hear, my voice they will follow.

Jesus is our Good Shepherd. He is Good; because he provides abundantly for us, not providing us with riches, silver and gold, but providing us with healing and wholeness and love, and comfort and affection, understanding and forgiveness, and from him every blessing. These blessings flow from Good Friday's death and Easter morning's resurrection.

Jesus is our Shepherd; because he never gives up on us, he seeks us out when we are lost, welcomes us back, leads us to the refreshment and nourishment of life in him, with him, through him. He thinks not of himself but only of his flock. That is why he is our Good Shepherd. He is thinking only of ways to preserve you and your life, so that you live long in the land.

Decades ago, our daughter had trouble seeing specific things pointed out to her because *"The trees were in her eyes."* Those pesky trees made viewing things out the minivan windows a challenge.

Last week Cleopas and his friend had trouble recognizing Jesus, the resurrected Lord walking with them and talking with them as they traveled the Emmaus Road. Wearing their grief, their disappointment, their loss of hope, made seeing him challenging. But then in the breaking of the bread, he was made known to them. Their eyes were open and they recognized him.

Today we continue dealing with vision, trouble seeing, recognizing the Good Shepherd who provides a way for us. There are lots more things than *"trees in our eyes"* that prevent us from seeing him. He is the gate. And his is the voice we heed. He wants only for us to enjoy creation, reveal to us something interesting, things that bring joy and delight and pique our curiosity. He gives himself to us in bread and wine, calling us by name and providing the essential things, saving us, forgiving us, welcoming us into a safe fold, providing access to green pastures and cool streams, and protection from those who honestly don't care about us (the thieves and bandits of this life).

The Lord is our Shepherd; he is our Good Shepherd because he has given his entire life so that you and I are blessed with the abundance of eternal life. Don't let your eyes be clouded by the many things that go rushing past like the trees viewed out the minivan window at 60 miles an hour. Instead, see the one who on the tree of the cross bore the weight of all our sin. Listen to his voice calling you into relationship and longing to spend eternity with you. Enter through the one who is the gate, the Good Shepherd who grants blessing all the days of your life. Amen.

FIRST READING: Acts 2:42-47

[The baptized] devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

⁴³Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Psalm 23**SECOND READING: 1 Peter 2:19-25**

It is a commendable thing if, being aware of God, a person endures pain while suffering unjustly. ²⁰If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do good and suffer for it, this is a commendable thing before God. ²¹For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

²²"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."
²³When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not

threaten, but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

GOSPEL: John 10:1-10

[Jesus said:] "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Next Sunday's Readings: Acts 7:55-60; Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16; 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14.

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