ST PAUL
PINE GROVE MILLS
A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Presentation of our Lord (Candlemas)

February 2, 2025

Whenever you see an asterisk (*), you are invited to stand as you are able.
You are invited to speak sans serif **Bolded type** with the congregation.

Introduction to the Day

The Presentation of Our Lord is referred to in some corners of the church as Candlemas because of an ancient tradition of blessing all the candles to be used in the church in the coming year at the mass celebrated on that day. It was a way of underscoring the truth of Simeon's confession that this baby Jesus was "a light for revelation to the Gentiles" and a light for glory to Israel. Let the light of every candle in church be a little epiphany of the love of God for all people in the person of God's son, Jesus, the light of the world.

Prelude

Gathering

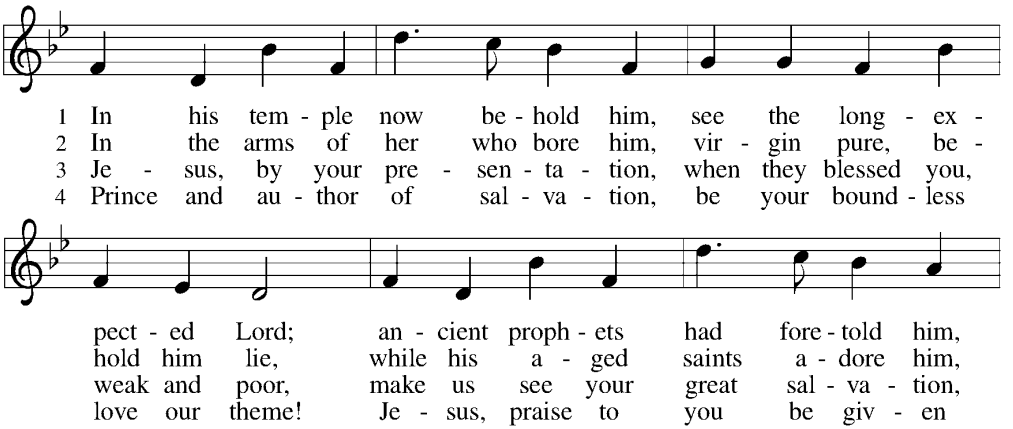
*Confession and Forgiveness

P: In the name of the Father, and of the ☩Son, and of the Holy Spirit. A: Amen.

P Most merciful God, **we confess that we are captive 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 rejected your discipline. We have avoided your pruning of our cluttered lives. We have failed to maintain the tools of stewardship, outreach, and witness you have provided for the nature of your Church. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, train us, and redirect us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us and for his sake God 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. **A: Amen.**

*Gathering Hymn *"In His Temple Now Behold Him"* *(ELW 417)*

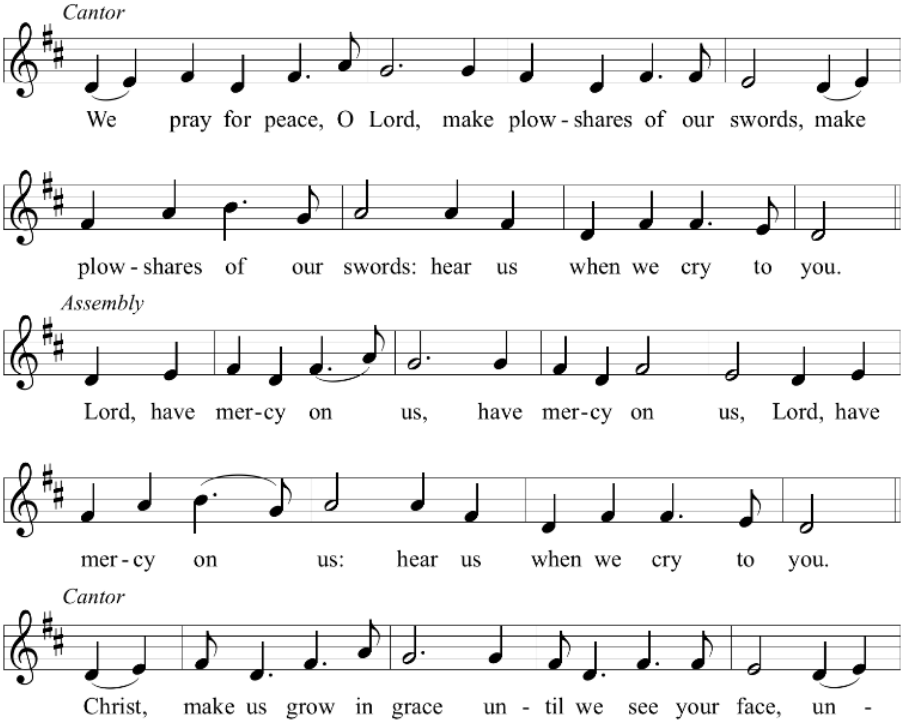


Text: Henry J. Pye, 1825–1903, alt.
Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

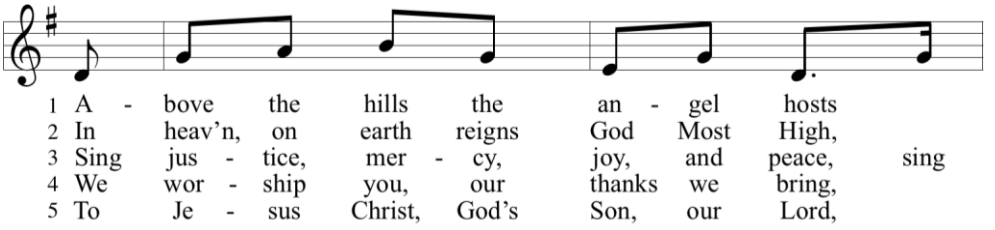
*GREETING

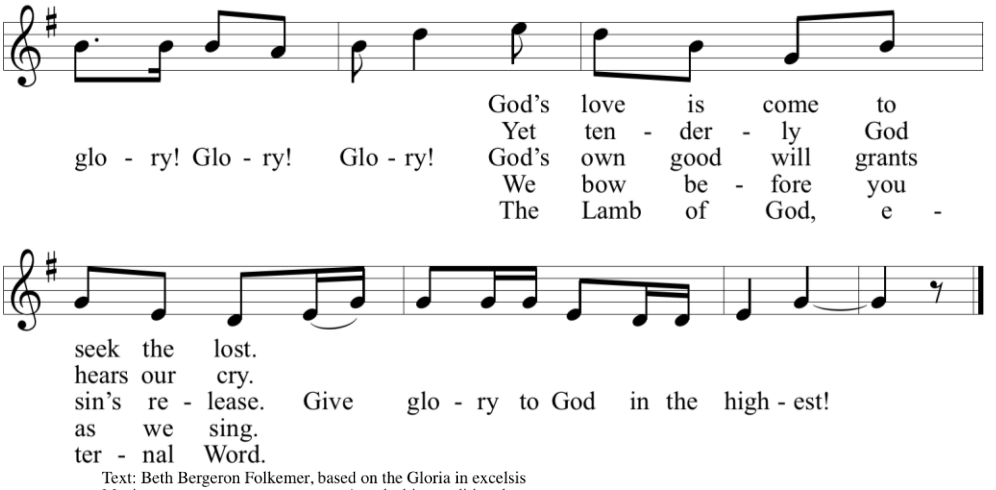
P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **A: And also, with you.**

KYRIE



Hymn of Praise





Text: Beth Bergeron Folkemer, based on the Gloria in excelsis
Music: The Devil's Nine Questions, Appalachian traditional
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*Prayer of the Day

P: The Lord be with you. **A: And also, with you.**

P: Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, your only-begotten Son was presented this day in the temple. May we be presented to you with clean and pure hearts by the same Jesus Christ, our great high priest, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **A: Amen.**

Word

First Reading: Malachi 3:1-4

Malachi (which means "my messenger") was written soon after the Temple was rebuilt and worship beginning in Jerusalem again after the exile in Babylon. "Refiner's fire" was hot enough to melt metal and separate it from its impurities; "fuller's soap" bleached cloth. The "sons of Levi" were the hereditary priesthood of Israel, empowered to offer sacrifices in the temple.

[1] See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you
seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you
delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. [2] But who can endure the day of his
coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like washers' soap; [3] he will sit as a refiner and purifier of
silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until
they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. [4] Then the offering of Judah and
Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord, as in the days of old and as in former years.

L: The word of the Lord. **A: Thanks be to God**.

Psalm: 84

(sung to the tune Ellecombe. ELW 722)

This love song to the Temple was probably sung as people journeyed to Jerusalem for the festivals or (like Mary and Joseph) to offer sacrifice at the birth of a new child.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

A familiar theme of the beginning of Luke's Gospel is that Jesus went through everything that a human baby – indeed, that a Jewish boy – did: conception, birth, circumcision, and presentation.

14 Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, [Jesus] himself likewise shared the
same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death,
that is, the devil, 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of
death. 16 For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of
Abraham. 17 Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so

that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. [18] Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

L: The word of the Lord. **A: Thanks be to God.**

*Gospel Acclamation

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., 1923–2007
Music: ABIDING PRESENCE, Stephen P. Folkemer, b. 1952
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*Gospel Reading: Luke 2:22-40

Tradition was that mothers and their newborns were ritually unclean because of their contact with blood, and needed to be purified at the Temple, usually 40 days after the birth. Further, first born sons belonged to God, and needed to be "bought back" with a sacrifice at the Temple. The song Simeon sings is one which is sung at Compline, a prayer service immediately before bed, and which was quoted by many at their own deaths. Among Lutherans it is often sung immediately after communing as well.

P: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke, the second chapter. **A: Glory to you, O Lord.**

22 When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Mary and
Joseph] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the
law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), 24 and they
offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or
two young pigeons."

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous
and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on
him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he
had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27 Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple, and
when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the
law, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

29 "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word,
30 for my eyes have seen your salvation,
31 which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
32 a light for revelation to the gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel."

33 And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about
him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the
falling and the rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed 35 so that the
inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul, too."

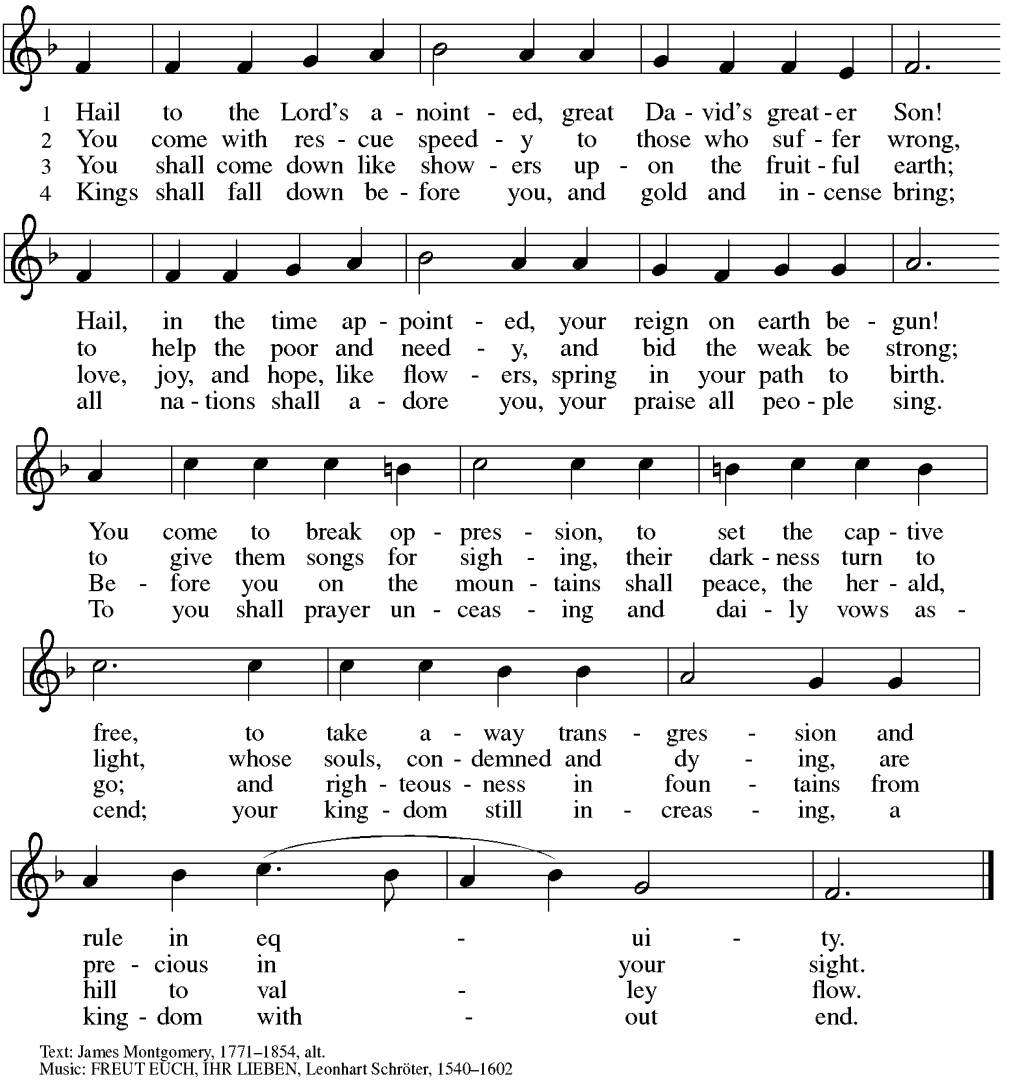
36 There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was
of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 then as a
widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting
and prayer night and day. 38 At that moment she came and began to praise God and to
speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

39 When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to
Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 The child grew and became strong, filled with
wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.

P: The gospel of the Lord. **A: Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

*Hymn of the Day: *"Hail to the Lord's Anointed"* (ELW 311)



Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt.
Music: FREUT EUCH, IHR LIEBEN, Leonhart Schröter, 1540–1602

*Invitation to Baptism

*Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Prayers of Intercession

With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

L: God of generations, you instilled in Anna and Simeon faith, dreams, and the welcome of a child. Bless elders who embody faith and hope; bless the newly baptized. Energize us to share faith from generation to generation. God of grace,
A: hear our prayer.

L: God of creation, in you the sparrow finds a home and we find lush valleys and living water. Bless the birds of the air, the animals of the valley, and renew our stewardship of this bountiful creation. God of grace,
A: hear our prayer.

L: God of the nations, strengthen our resolve to care for all children and strive for peace among nations. Refine our nation where we have failed to root out racism especially as we honor Black History Month and guide us in truth-telling and reconciliation. God of grace,
A: hear our prayer.

L: God of hope, many long to see your presence revealed amid challenging circumstances. We hold in prayer all longing for sustainable housing, secure employment, access to medical care, and health and wellness (*especially*). God of grace,
A: hear our prayer.

L: God of the people, you are made known in caring ministries. Bless those who serve as communion servers, homebound visitors, baptismal sponsors, confirmation mentors, and as prayer support. Reveal yourself in the neighborly care we give and receive. God of grace,
A: hear our prayer.

L: God of wisdom, as Susquehanna University seeks a new chaplain, guide the search committee with clarity, patience, and discernment. May they be led to a leader who will inspire faith, foster belonging, and walk with the community in love and justice. Prepare the heart of the one who will serve, that they may be ready for the joys and struggles of this calling. God of grace, **A: hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

L: God of life, we thank you for Jesus' life and for his death that has destroyed death. We remember the dearly departed especially S. Stine Walker, as they dwell with you in your holy courts now and forever. God of grace,
A: hear our prayer.

L: We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people. **A: Amen.**

*Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **A: And also with you.**

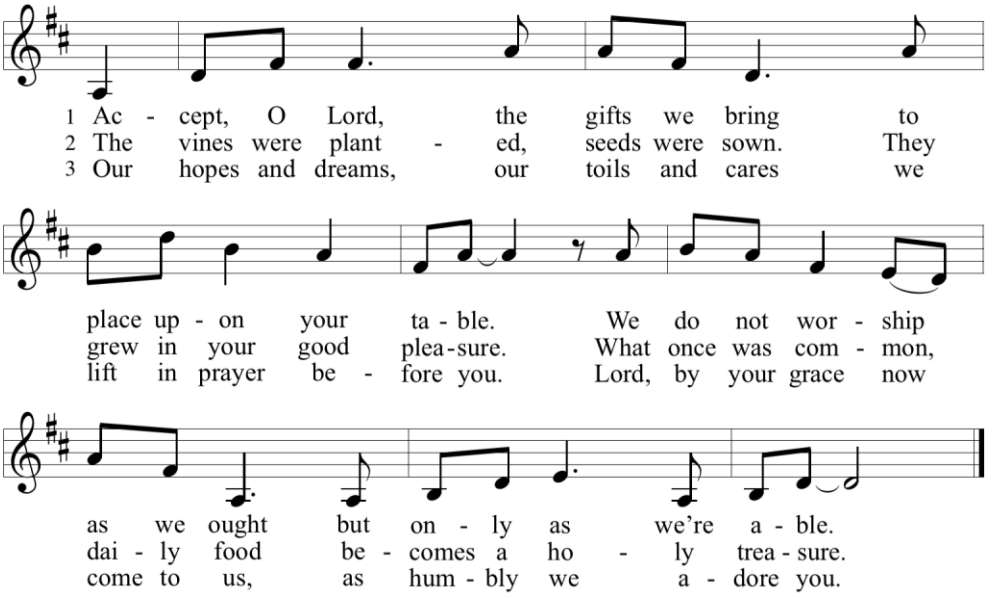
Meal

Offering

*Offerings can be made online at **stpaulpgm.org/give,** mailed to St. Paul Lutheran Church, PO Box 200, Pine Grove Mills, PA 16868, placed in the mail slot (outside door to Pastor Paul's office), or in the offering plate located in the lobby/narthex near the entrance of the sanctuary.*

Musical Offering

*Offertory



*Blessing of the Candles

P: Let us pray. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. You have enriched our lives with every good and perfect gift; you have commanded us to show your splendor to our children and to praise you with lives of love, justice, and joy. Accept these candles which we offer in thanksgiving; may they be to us a sign of Christ, the Light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome. Bring us all at length to your perfect kingdom, where you live and reign with the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.
A: Amen.

*Offering Prayer

L: Let us pray: Gracious God, You bless us with gifts of guidance, new life, growth in grace, and fruitful labor. Accept the first fruits of time and toil, field and orchard we offer here. Bless and multiply these gifts to our nurture and the care of your creation; for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **A: Amen.**

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

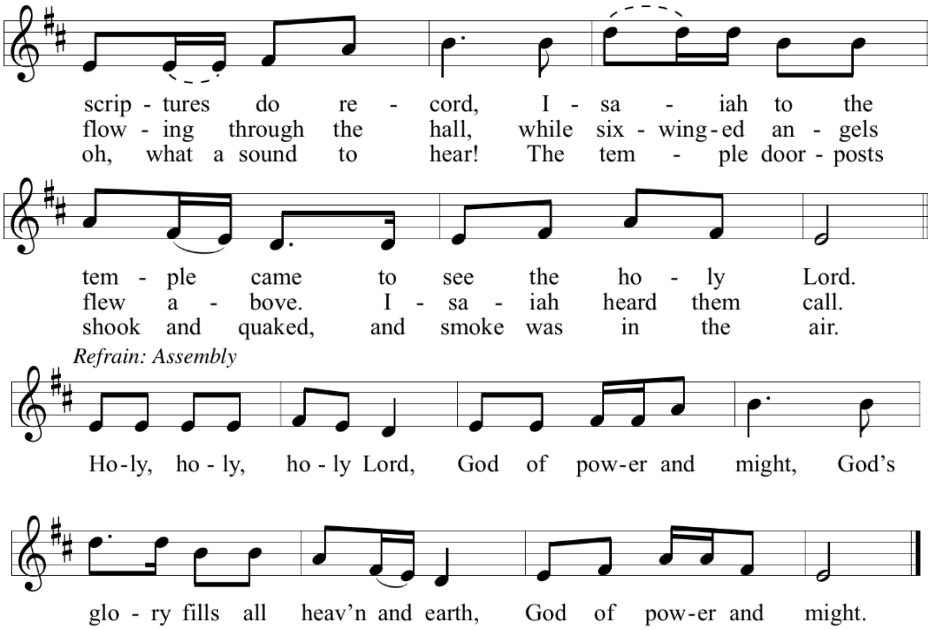
* DIALOGUE

P: The Lord be with you. **A: And also with you.**
P: Lift up your hearts. **A: We lift them to the Lord.**
P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **A: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*PREFACE

P: 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. With gentle hands you prune and shape your people, cutting away that which is dead to you or would keep the warmth of your light from us. You graft us to the True Vine, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, that he may abide in us and we in him. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join in adoring song:

*SANCTUS (Sung by all)



*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P: Blessed are you, O Lord, for creation:
when all was formless and void, you sent your Spirit to brood over chaos,
preparing it for the dawning of light and life.
Blessed are you, O Lord, for your election of Israel:
throughout the ages you have shown your love
by rescuing and disciplining your people,
forming them to be your peculiar treasure among the nations.
Blessed are you, O Lord, for the Incarnation of your Son:
for he is the true Vine,
through whom you give us, his branches, the life of your grace
In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
With this bread and cup, then, we remember him:
his birth and baptism;
his call of the disciples,
and his training of them by hard words and consolation;
his acceptance of punishment on our behalf, and his sharing of our death;
his glorious resurrection and ascension,
and his promise to be present with us as teacher and host,
so that his joy may be in us and that our joy may be complete.
Send your Spirit upon this meal and all who share it.
As you have united us with your Son, unite us with each other.
Prune what is wayward; heal what is out of joint;
and fit us to pursue peace and holiness.
In your Spirit, through your Son,
with your people of every time and place,
we give you thanks and praise,
offering all the fruits of our heart, our soul, our mind, and our strength,
now and forever.

A: Amen

*Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

L: Just as this broken bread was first scattered on the hills, then was brought together and became one, so let your Church be brought together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom, for yours are the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.

A: Amen.

*Lamb of God

A note on Communion Wafers

To topple barriers that prevent participation in worship, we want to make it possible for individuals with Celiac Disease or gluten intolerant to be able to eat the Body of our Lord. Our default wafers are made by Parish Crossroads and are known as "Low Gluten Wafers" because they contain trace amounts of gluten. However, the wafers are tested at least once a year for how much gluten is in them. Since 2020, the wafers have routinely tested to contain 15ppm gluten or less (The US FDA defines most food products with 20ppm or less as "gluten free"). Use the QR Code and look for the link that gives the most recent test results.

If you still have concerns, we have some truly gluten-free wafers available upon request.

Communion

L: The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you. **A: Amen.**

Communion Hymn: "*We Praise You for the Life That Stirs"* *(OLS 9)*

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr.
Music: Prospect, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835
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*Post-Communion Blessing

L: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in grace.
A: Amen.

*Post-Communion Canticle – *O Lord of the blossom*

*Post-Communion Prayer

L: Let us pray. Gracious God, we give thanks for your pruning, planting, and nurture. We rejoice that you have used the harvest of field and vineyard to renew and sustain us. Lead us as we go from this life-giving meal into lives of grateful service to you and your cherished creation; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **A: Amen.**

Sending

*Sending of Communion

Announcements

You may be seated.

*Charge to the People

*Blessing

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. In the name of the Father, and the Son, ☩ and the Holy Spirit. **A: Amen.**

*Sending Hymn: *"O Lord, Now Let Your Servant!"* *(ELW 313)*

Text: Ernest E. Ryden, 1886–1981, alt., based on the Nunc dimittis
Music: KUORTANE, Finnish folk tune
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*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Go in peace. Live in hope.
A: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

ST PAUL
PINE GROVE MILLS
A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Serving Today

Worship Leader.....Pastor Paul Tomkiel
Assisting Minister.....Eleanor Bird
Organist..... Michelle McMullen
Sacristan.....Karen Magnuson
Reader.....Karen Magnuson

About St. Paul

Purpose

We are a beacon, boldly sharing the light of Jesus' grace and love.

Mission

Guided by Jesus, we strengthen faith, deepen compassion, extend generosity, and serve community.

Core Values

Faith ❧ Compassion ❧ Generosity ❧ Community

Our Bible Verses

As Paul was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. [Jesus said,] 'Paul is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before the nations.'– Acts 9:3,15

Land Acknowledgement

St. Paul is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Susquehannock people, where we gather for worship this morning. We also acknowledge the Seneca, Cayuga, Lenne Lenape, as well as all of our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to care for this place – this land – and call it their home.

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