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

Ash Wednesday

March 5, 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

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that "now is the day of salvation." Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

Prelude

Gathering

*Gathering Hymn: *"Great Litany"* *(ELW 238)*

*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.**

*Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, you hate nothing you have made, and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and honest hearts, so that, truly repenting of our sins, we may receive from you, the God of all mercy, full pardon and forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **A: Amen.**

Anthem: *Lenten Meditation*

Word

First Reading – Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

The book of Joel is a sermon in the context of natural disaster. A plague of locusts has decimated the crops, raising the specter of famine to come. Since God is the ruler of nature as well as history, the response to this wonder is fervent prayer and renewed commitment..

1 Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sound the alarm on my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near—
2 a day of darkness and gloom,

a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness spread upon the mountains
a great and powerful army comes;
their like has never been from of old,
nor will be again after them
in ages to come.

12Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
13rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.
14Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering
for the LORD, your God?

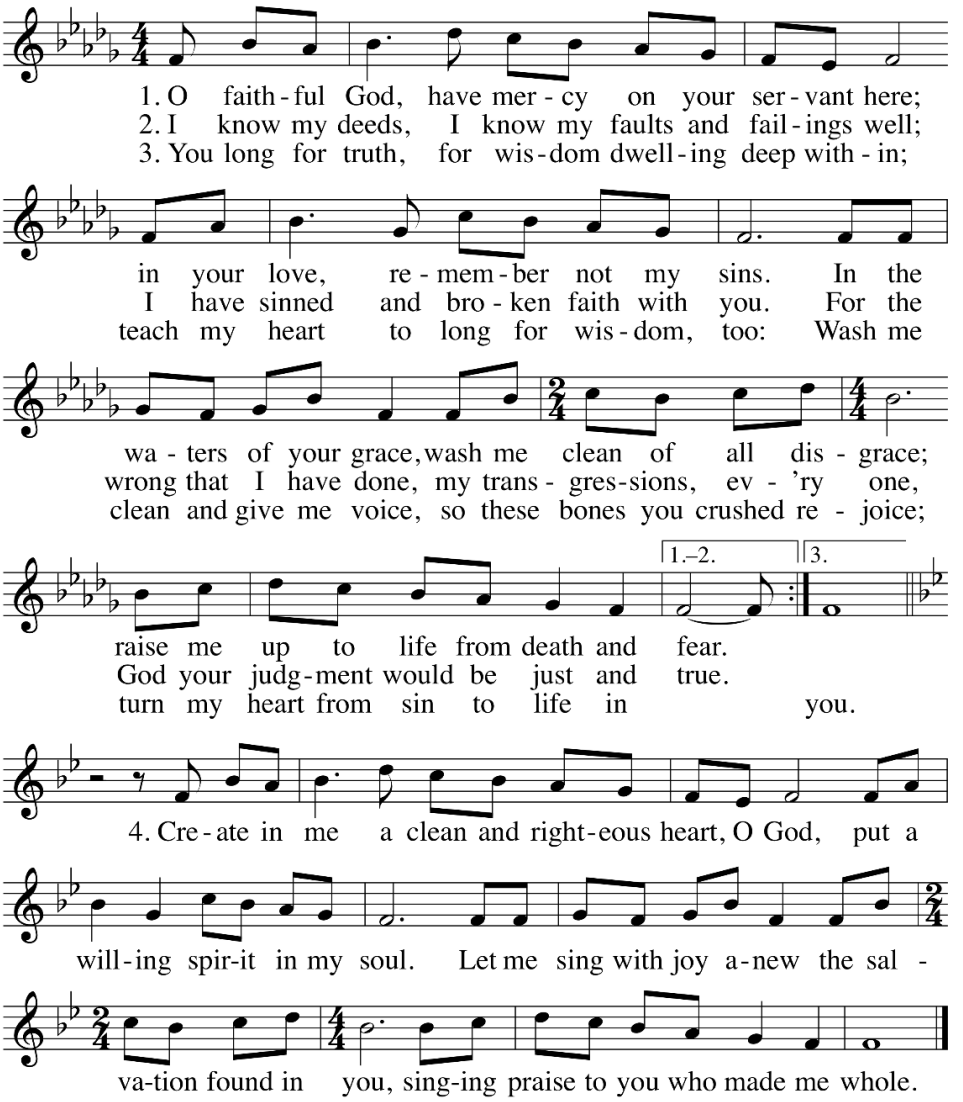
15Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast;
call a solemn assembly; 16gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged;
gather the children, even infants at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.

17Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep.
Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD,
and do not make your heritage a mockery,
a byword among the nations.
Why should it be said among the peoples,
'Where is their God?'"

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

Psalm 51

This is the greatest of the penitential psalms. Tradition has it that it was composed by David in repentance for his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of her husband Uriah.



Text and Music: Marty Haugen, © 2016 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.

Second Reading – 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

Paul's opponents in Corinth emphasized their ability and power. Paul, however, boasts only of his similarities to the crucified Christ, whose ambassador he is. The quote in 6:2 is from Isaiah 49, in which God not only rescues Israel from exile, but sends the rescued out with the Good News to the whole world.

[20b]We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. [21]For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[6:1]As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. [2]For he says,

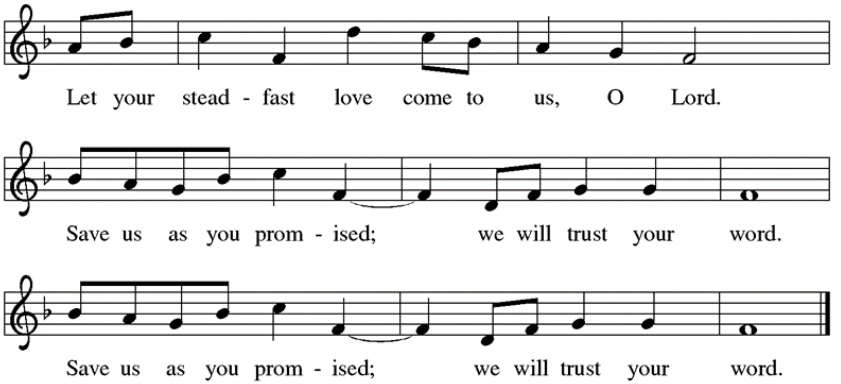
"At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you."

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! [3]We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, [4]but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, [5]beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; [6]by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, [7]truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; [8]in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; [9]as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; [10]as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

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

*Gospel Acclamation

Return to the Lord, your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.



*Gospel Reading – Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Sermon on the Mount begins with Jesus's affirmation that his followers are blessed; they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. He goes on to make the 10 Commandments even more radical than they seem. This passage immediately follows, and includes disciplines which the church has traditionally emphasized in Lent.

P: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Mark, the sixth chapter. A: Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 1"Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 3But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

5"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 6But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

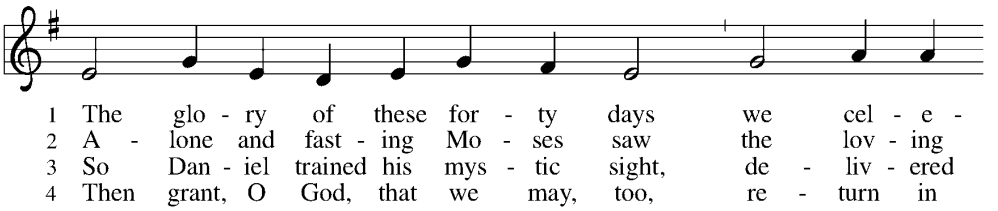
16"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 17But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

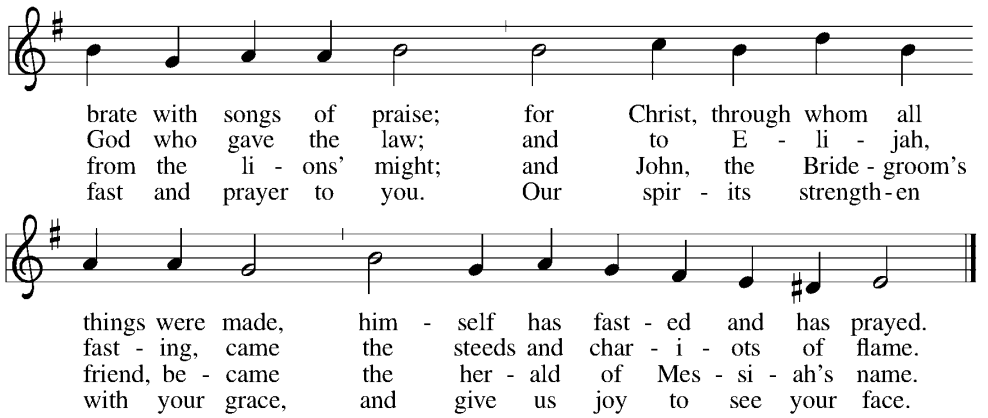
19"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; 20but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

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

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: *"The Glory of These Forty Days"* (ELW 320)





Text: Latin hymn, 11th cent.; tr. Maurice F. Bell, 1862–1947, alt.
Music: ERHALT UNS, HERR, J. Klug, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543
Outside USA: Text from *The English Hymnal*, © Oxford University Press 1906, All rights reserved.

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Invitation to Lent

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent—self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love—strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Confession of Sin

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

The assembly kneels or sits. Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.

P: Most holy and merciful God,

A: we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

P: We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

A: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.
A: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you. **A: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you. **A: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you. **A: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you. **A: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us, we confess to you.
A: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you. **A: Have mercy on us, O God.**

P: Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.
A: Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

Imposition of Ashes

P: Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth.
May these ashes be a sign of our mortality and penitence, reminding us
that only by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ are we given eternal life;
through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
A: Amen.

People may come forward and kneel or stand to receive the ashes.
The minister mark the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying:
Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

HYMN: *"Savior, When in Dust to You"* *(ELW 601)*

Text: Robert Grant, 1779–1838, alt.
Music: ABERYSTWYTH, Joseph Parry, 1841–1903

Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,
that we may show forth your glory in the world.
By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,
bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.
Amen.

*Peace

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

Meal

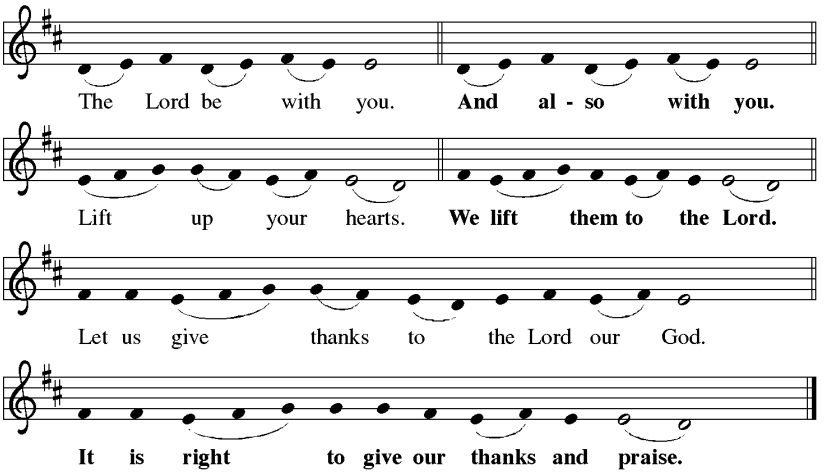
Offering

*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

*GREAT THANKSGIVING

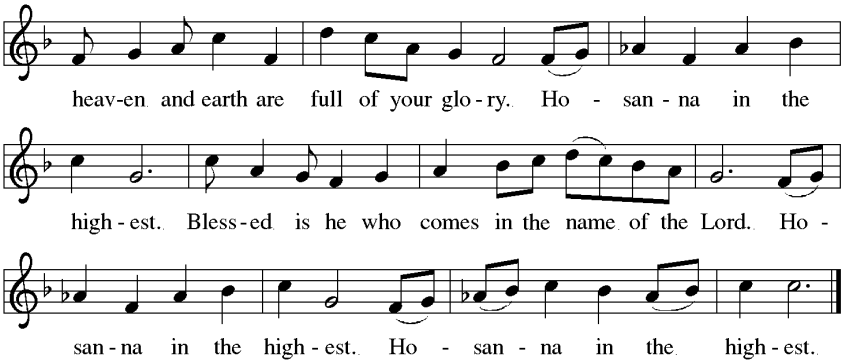
DIALOGUE



*PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

*SANCTUS



*Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy God, our living Water and our merciful Guide,
together with rivers and seas, wells and springs
we bless and magnify you.
You led your people Israel through the desert,
and provided them water from the rock.
We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water,
who joined us in our desert, pouring out his life for the world.
In the night in which he was handed over,
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.
Together we proclaim the mystery of our faith:
A: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.
Remembering, therefore,
his life, death, and resurrection,
we await your salvation for all this thirsty world.
A: Amen, come Lord Jesus.
Pour out your Spirit on this holy food
and on all the baptized gathered for this feast:
wash away our sin,
that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.
A: Amen, come Holy Spirit.

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

A: Amen

*Lord's Prayer

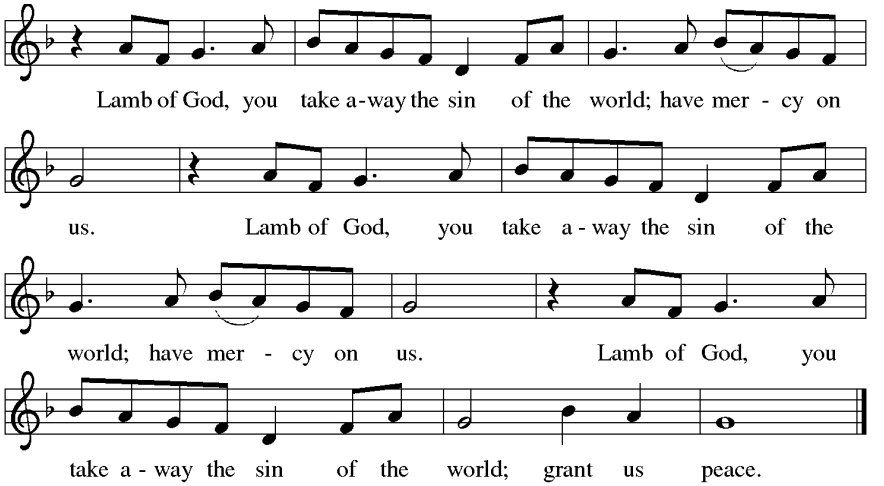
P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray

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

P: All who are hungry, come! The feast of grace is spread.

*Lamb of God



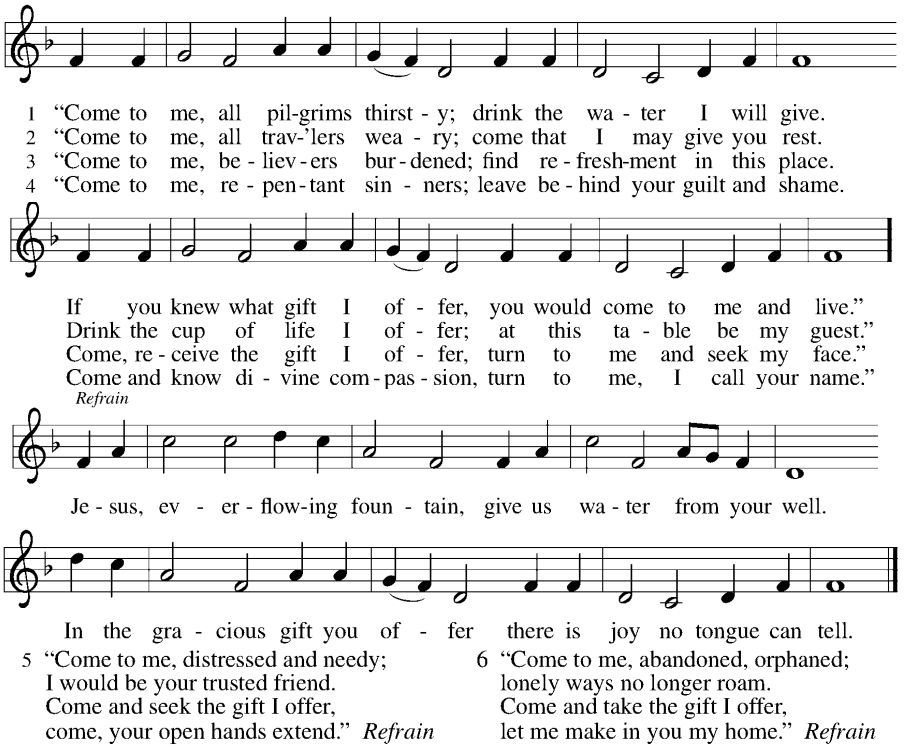
A note on Communion Wafers

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

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

*Communion Hymn: "*Come to Me, All Pilgrims Thirsty*" (ELW 777)



Text: Delores Dufner, osb, b. 1939
Music: Beach Spring, The Sacred Harp, Philadelphia, 1844
Text © 1992, 1996 Sisters of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, MN

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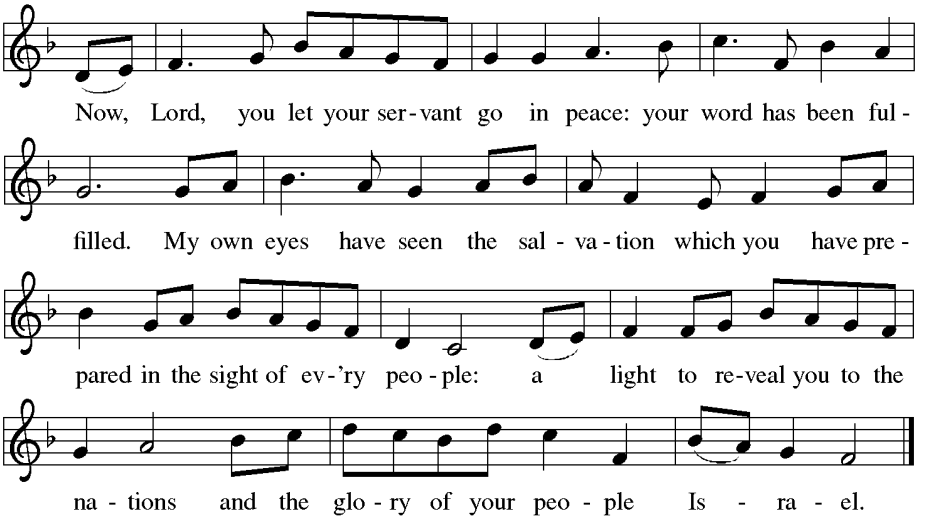
*Post-Communion Blessing

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strength and keep you, body, mind, and soul, now and unto eternal life.

*Post-Communion Canticle – *Nunc Dimittis* (*Now, Lord)*



*Post-Communion Prayer

L: Let us pray. Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.
A: Amen.

*Prayer for the Beginning of the Pilgrimage of Lent

L: Let us pray. Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **A: Amen.**

Sending

Announcements

You may be seated.

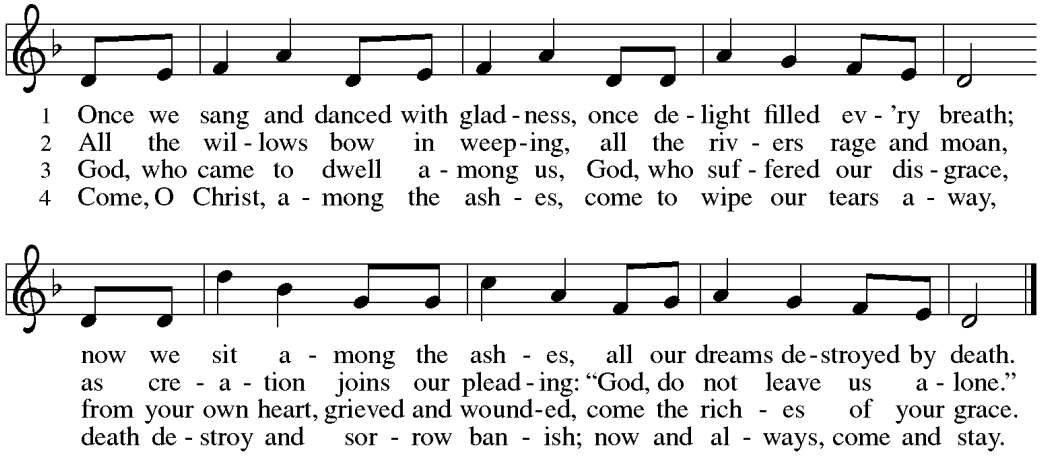
*Charge to the People

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage;
hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people;
love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

*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: "*Once We Sang and Danced*" (ELW 701)



Text: Susan R. Briehl, b. 1952, based on Psalm 137
Music: KAS DZIEDĀJA, Latvian folk tune
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*Dismissal

L: Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.
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.....Karen Magnuson
Musician..... Michelle McMullen
Sacristan..... Delorse Homan
Reader.....Jeff Muthler

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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