ST PAUL
PINE GROVE MILLS

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Third Sunday in Lent

March 23, 2025

Welcome to Saint Paul!

We are happy to have you here!

How to know when to stand, sit, or speak

Whenever you see an asterisk (*) at a heading, you are invited to stand as you are able. You are not required to stand, so if, for health or emotional reasons you cannot or do not wish to stand, that is okay.
You are invited to speak the words printed in **bold type**.

We are an Open Communion Congregation

This means that any Christians who have received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism are invited to receive Holy Communion.

How to financially support us

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.

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.

Gathering

The Gathering for worship began when you started readying yourself for worship

An Introduction to the day

The warnings are plentiful and blunt on the third Sunday in Lent. Cut it out or get cut down! The warnings are accompanied by God's invitation to attentiveness: "Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live." The landowner's ultimatum is forestalled by the gardener's readiness to till the ground one more year. That is good news for all of us. Thanks be to God!

Prelude – *Out of consideration for our musicians, please refrain from talking during the prelude.*

*Confession and forgiveness

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

P: Let us pray: 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.
A: Amen.

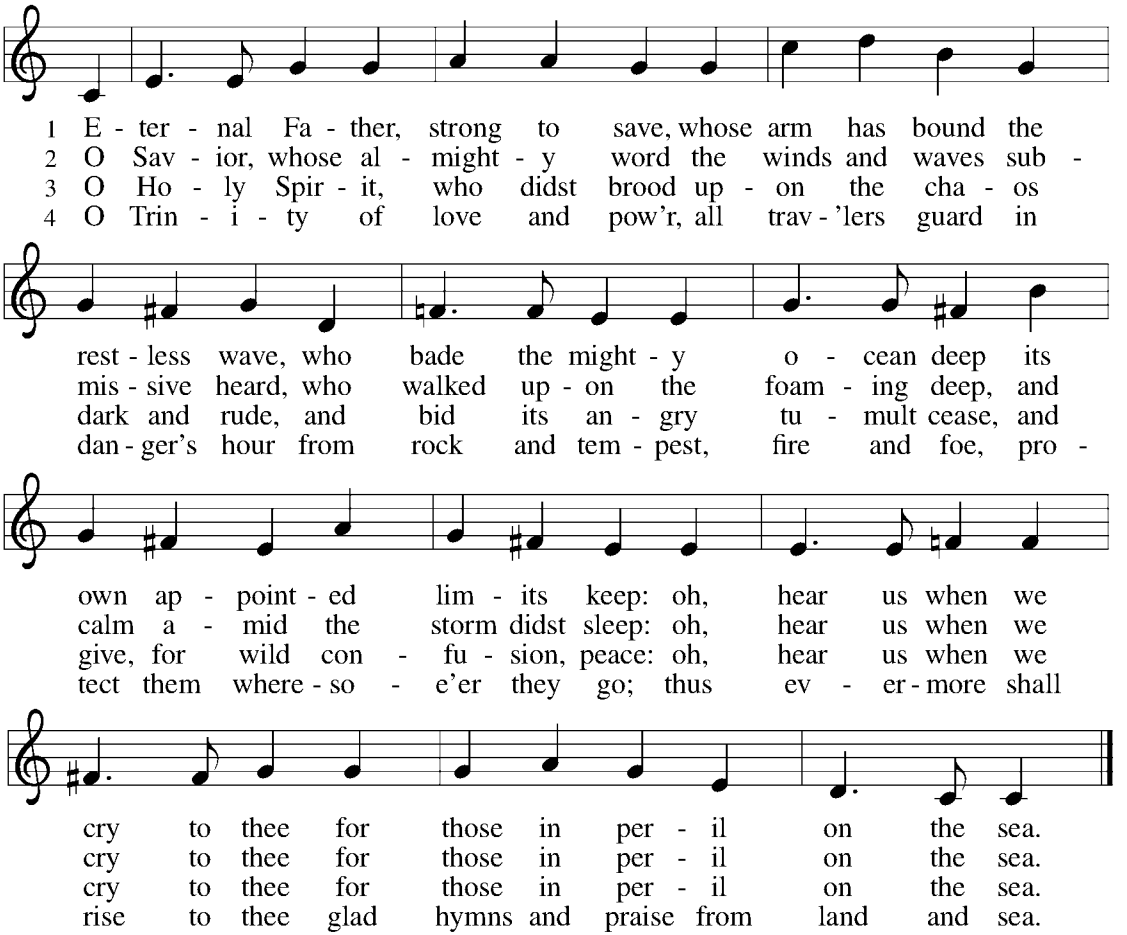
P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

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

P Compassionate One, **you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect you and your love for the world. We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. We oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again. We squander the abundant gifts of the earth. Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross. Amen.**

P: Beloved in Christ, God's arms are always stretched open wide to welcome the wandering ones home. In ☩ Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God's house forever. **A: Amen.**

*Gathering Hymn *"Eternal Father, Strong to Save"* *(ELW 756)*

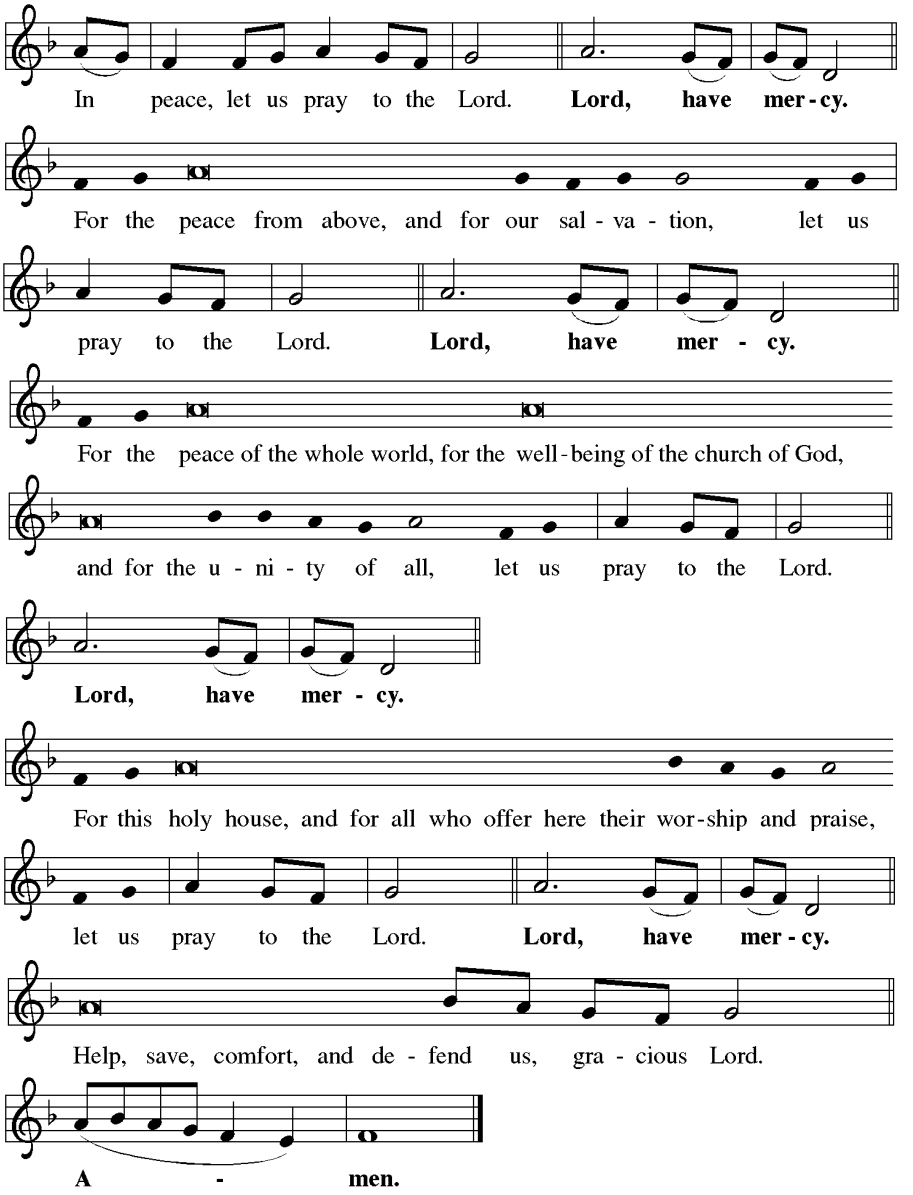


Text: William Whiting, 1825–1878, alt.
Music: MELITA, John B. Dykes, 1823–1876

*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


In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.
For the peace from above, and for our sal - va - tion, 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 u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mer - cy.
For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.
Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.
A - men.

*Prayer of the Day

P: The Lord be with you. **A: And also with you.**
P: Let us pray. Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **A: Amen.**

Word

First Reading: Isaiah 55:1-9

In words reminiscent of Wisdom's invitation in Proverbs (9:1-6), God invites all Israel, about to return from exile, to the banquet of divine love. While "seek the Lord" sometimes refers to an openness to visions, the context here makes it clear that it refers to repentance – one of the central disciplines of Lent.

[1] Hear, everyone who thirsts;
come to the waters;
and you who have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
[2] Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread
and your earnings for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
[3] Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.
[4] See, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.
[5] Now you shall call nations that you do not know,
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,
because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

[6] Seek the LORD while he may be found;
call upon him while he is near;
[7] let the wicked forsake their way
and the unrighteous their thoughts;
let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
[8] For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.
[9] For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

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

Psalm: 63: 1-9

(sung to the tune Kingsfold ELW 412)

The psalm is usually chosen to respond to the First Reading, and today it indeed expresses human response to God's invitation in Isaiah.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

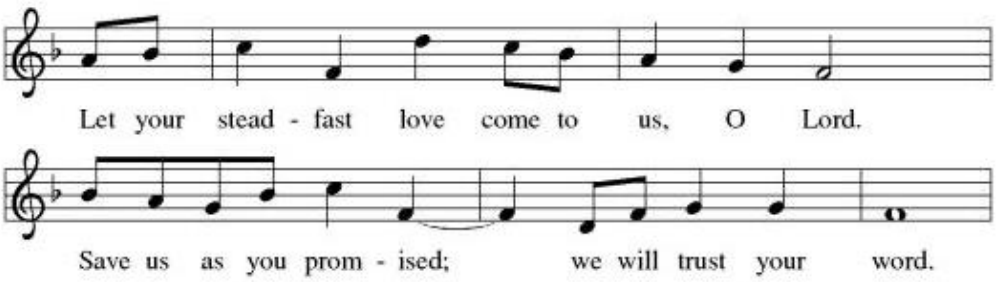
The congregation at Corinth was in dire straits – it was split into factions, there were people who behaved scandalously (believing that God's grace meant any behavior was acceptable), and some were participating in banquets dedicated to other gods. Paul uses the example of the Israelites after their rescue from Egypt to warn them (in terms reflecting today's Gospel reading) that God may allow suffering in order to correct them.

[1] I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all
under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, [2] and all were baptized into Moses in
the cloud and in the sea, [3] and all ate the same spiritual food, [4] and all drank the same
spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock
was Christ. [5] Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck
down in the wilderness.

[6] Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as
they did. [7] Do not become idolaters as some of them did, as it is written, "The people sat
down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." [8] We must not engage in sexual
immorality, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. [9] We
must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by
serpents. [10] And do not complain, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the
destroyer. [11] These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were
written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. [12] So if you think
you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. [13] No testing has overtaken you that is
not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your
strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to
endure it.

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

*Gospel Acclamation



*Gospel Reading: Luke 13:1-9

One of the threads running through the Gospel readings this Lent is the ways God may use human suffering. Here Jesus immediately denies one of the most common explanations – that suffering must indicate that the sufferer was particularly sinful. But God is willing to use suffering – our own and others – to call us to renewal.

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

1 At that very time there were some present who told Jesus about the Galileans whose
blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 [Jesus] asked them, "Do you think that
because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other
Galileans? 3 No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish as they did. 4 Or those
eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they
were worse offenders than all the other people living in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you, but
unless you repent you will all perish just as they did."

6 Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came
looking for fruit on it and found none. 7 So he said to the man working the vineyard, 'See
here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none.
Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' 8 He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more
year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. 9 If it bears fruit next year, well and good,
but if not, you can cut it down.' "

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

Sermon

*HYMN OF THE DAY: *"Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery"* (ELW 334)

Verse 4: Living Water of Salvation, be the fountain of each soul;
Springing up in new creation, flow in us and make us whole.

*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

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: We pray for the church, called to be a witness to all peoples. Grant humility and wisdom to bishops, pastors, deacons, elders, councils, and congregations, that they may call upon you in making decisions. God, in your mercy, **A: receive our prayer.**

L: We pray for the earth, called to provide abundantly. Teach your people the goodness of your generosity, that in sharing what we have been given, all life may flourish on the planet that is our shared home. God, in your mercy, **A: receive our prayer.**

L: We pray for the nations, called to protect their inhabitants and collaborate in the work of justice and peace. Forge bonds of compassion and mutual care across human borders and boundaries, that all the world may have enough to live. God, in your mercy, **A: receive our prayer.**

L: We pray for those in need, called to receive your compassion (*especially*). Comfort those whose lives have been disrupted through natural disasters and human conflict (*especially*). Aid communities in coming together to mourn, heal, and rebuild. God, in your mercy, **A: receive our prayer.**

L: We pray for this assembly, called to welcome its neighbors to the table of your grace. Bless food pantries, community gardens and kitchens, clean water projects, and all ministries that address human hunger and thirst. God, in your mercy, **A: receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

L: We give thanks for the faithful lives of those who proclaimed your gospel in times of challenge and strife, and for all those whose lives of love and service have ended especially Mabel Witherite. May their witness inspire our own. God, in your mercy, **A: receive our prayer.**

L: Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life. **A: Amen.**

*Peace

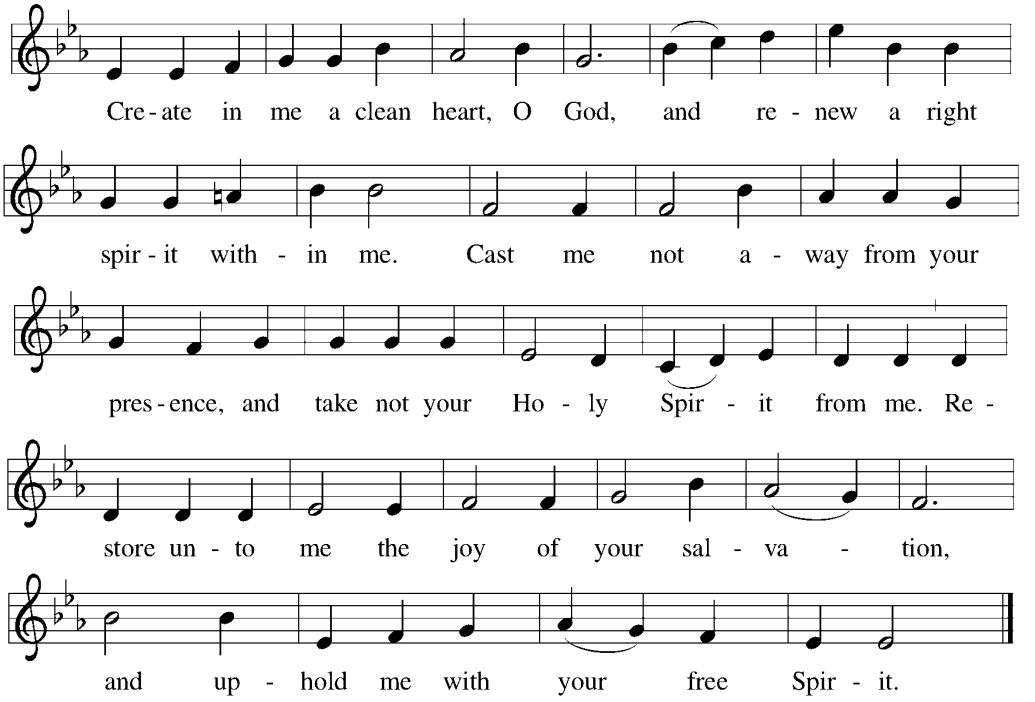
P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **A: And also with you.**

MEAL

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING

*OFFERTORY: *"Create in Me a Clean Heart"* *(ELW 188)*



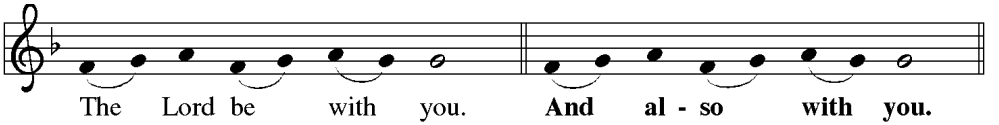
Music: J. A. Freylinghausen, 1670–1739

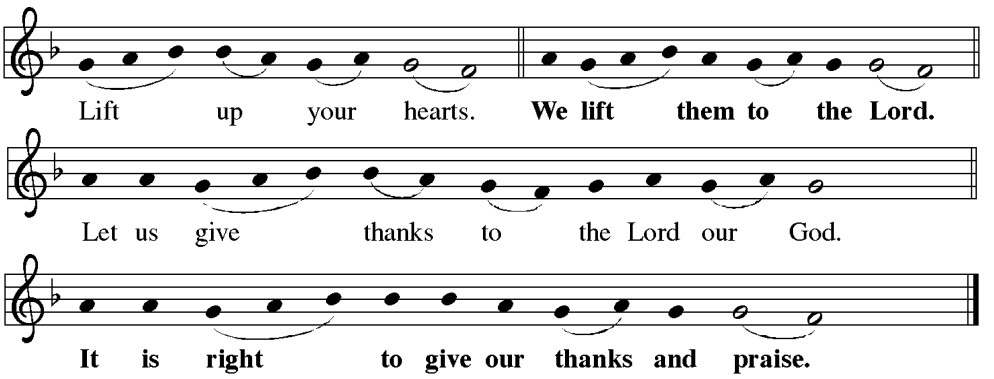
*OFFERING PRAYER

L: Let us pray: Gracious Provider, you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world. As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ.
A: Amen.

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

* DIALOGUE

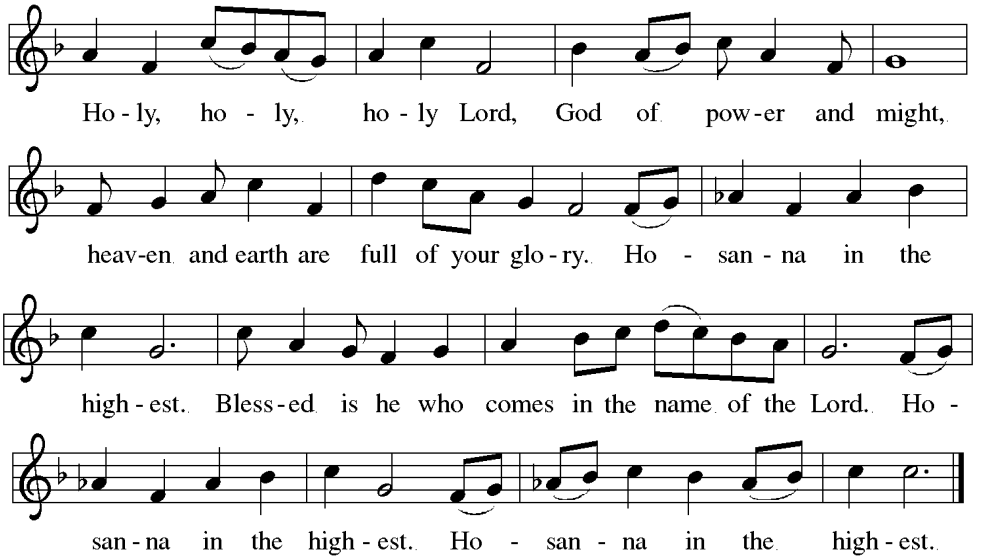




*PREFACE

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. 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

P: 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:

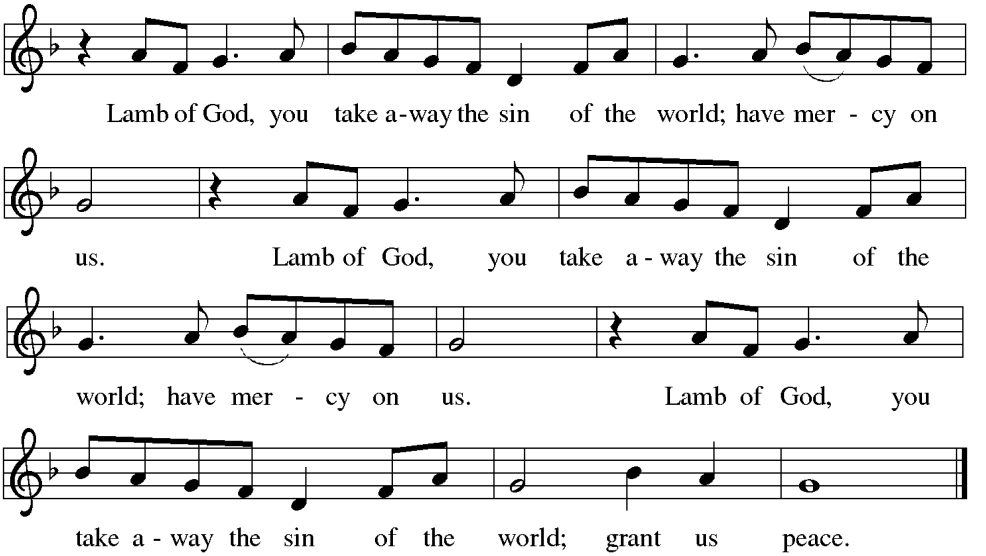
Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the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

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.
Lead us not into time of trial,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
forever and ever. Amen.

*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

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

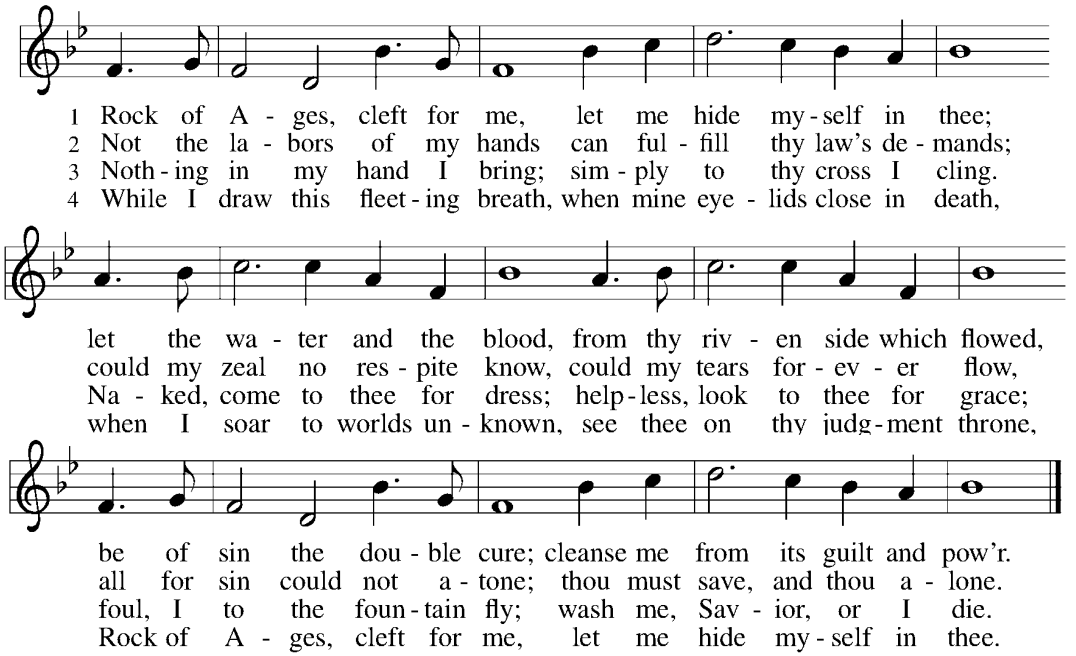
*Lamb of God



Communion

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

Communion Hymn: *"Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me"* *(ELW 623)*

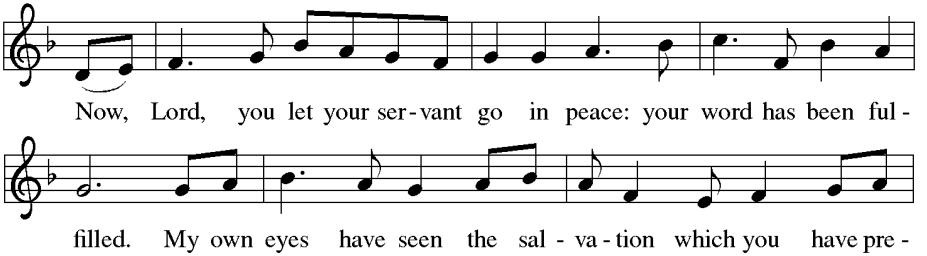


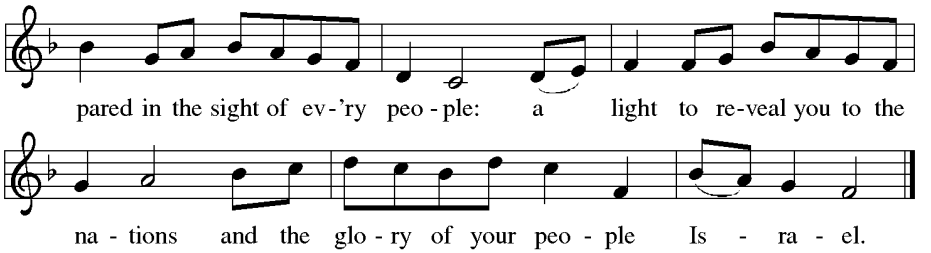
Text: Augustus M. Toplady, 1740–1778
Music: TOPLADY, Thomas Hastings, 1784–1872

*Post-Communion Blessing

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

*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.**

Sending

*Sending of communion

Announcements

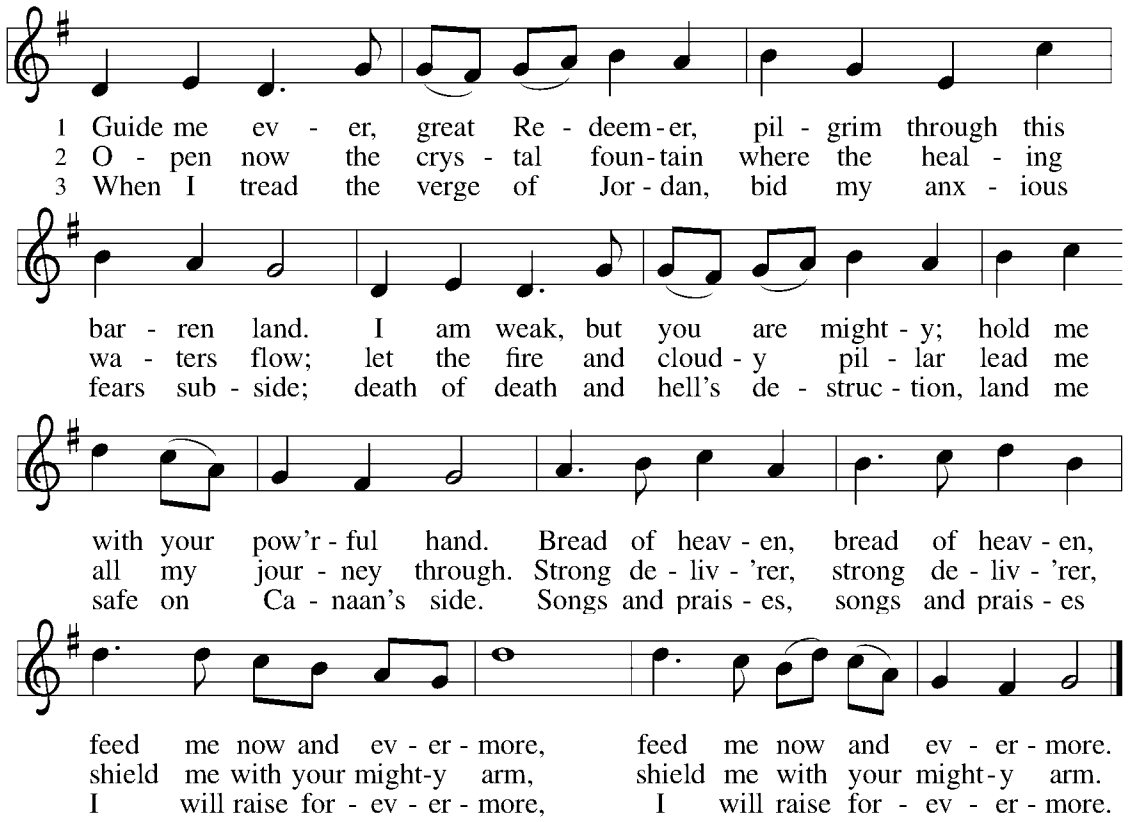
You may be seated.

*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: *"Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer"* *(ELW 628)*



Text: William Williams, 1717–1791; tr. William Williams and Peter Williams, 1722–1796, alt.
Music: CWM RHONDDA, John Hughes, 1873–1932

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you. **A: Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Daily Readings for the week

Sunday, March 23
Isaiah 55:1-9
Psalm 63:1-8 (1)
1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Luke 13:1-9

Monday, March 24
Jeremiah 11:1-17
Romans 2:1-11
Psalm 39

Tuesday, March 25
Ezekiel 17:1-10
Romans 2:12-16
Psalm 39

Wednesday, March 26
Numbers 13:17-27
Luke 13:18-21
Psalm 39

Thursday, March 27
Joshua 4:1-13
2 Corinthians 4:16—5:5
Psalm 32

Friday, March 28
Joshua 4:1-13
2 Corinthians 5:6-15
Psalm 32

Saturday, March 29
Exodus 32:7-14
Luke 15:1-10
Psalm 32

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

Serving Today

Worship Leader.....Pastor Paul Tomkiel
Assisting Minister.....Art Reede
Pianist..... Michelle McMullen
Sacristan.....Delorse Homan
Reader.....Ann Reede

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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