



ST PAUL PINE GROVE MILLS

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

MARCH 10, 2024

Whenever you see an asterisk (*), you are invited to stand as you are able.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

The fourth of the Old Testament promises providing a baptismal lens this Lent is the promise God makes to Moses: those who look on the bronze serpent will live. In today's gospel Jesus says he will be lifted up on the cross like the serpent, so that those who look to him in faith will live. When we receive the sign of the cross in baptism, that cross becomes the sign we can look to in faith for healing, for restored relationship to God, for hope when we are dying.

PRELUDE: *"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent"*

(Michael Burkhardt)

GATHERING

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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

P: 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.

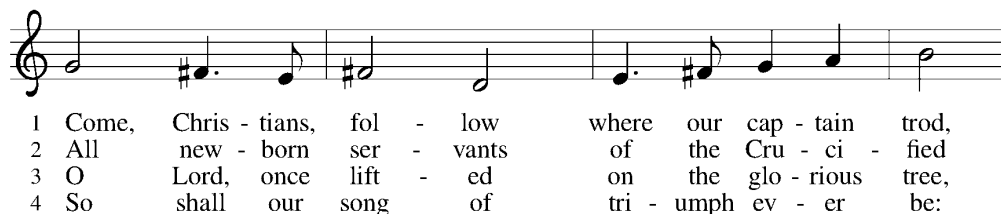
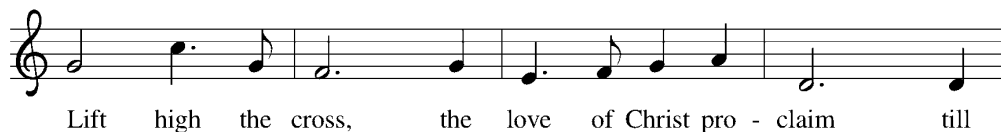
P: Holy God,

we confess that we are caught in snares of sin and cannot break free. We hoard resources while our neighbors are hungry and cold. We speak in ways that silence others. We are silent when we should speak up. We keep score in our hearts. We let hurts grow into hatred. For all these things and for sins only you know, forgive us, Lord. Amen.

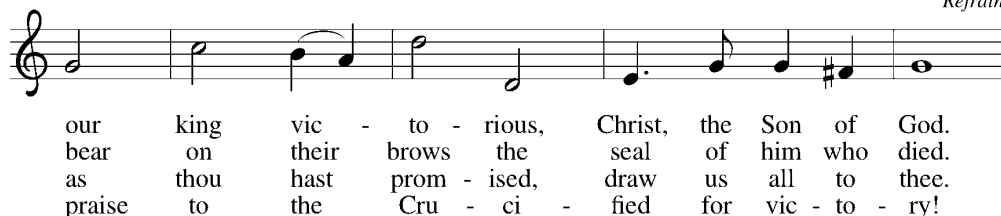
P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ☩ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **A: Amen.**

*GATHERING HYMN: "Lift High the Cross"

(ELW 660)



Refrain



Text: George W. Kitchin, 1827–1912; rev. Michael R. Newbolt, 1874–1956

Music: CRUCIFER, Sydney H. Nicholson, 1875–1947

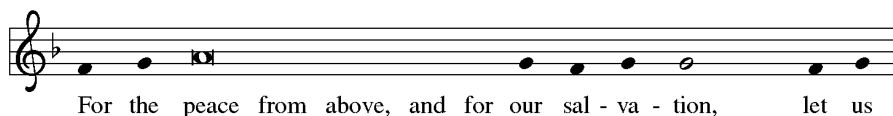
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*GREETING

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



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, O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **A: Amen.**

ANTHEM: "O Savior of the World"

(John Goss)

WORD

FIRST READING: NUMBERS 21:4-9

The first readings for Lent this year focus on the succession of covenants God has made. This week we hear of the healing of Israel after a curse, using the bronze image of a snake. This statue was one of the things, together the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments, enclosed in the Ark of the Covenant.

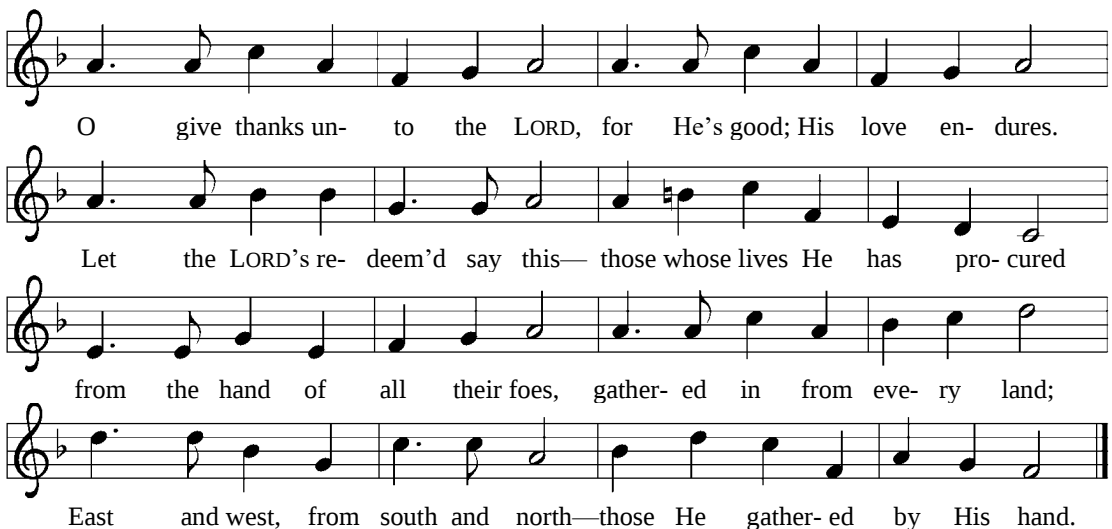
⁴From Mount Hor [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." ⁶Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

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

PSALM 107:1-3, 17-22

(Sung to the tune George's Windsor ELW 693)

This psalm tells a series of stories about how God has rescued and redeemed Israel when they fell away – an important dynamic for our Lenten consideration. This section of the psalm refers particularly to the today's First Reading



O give thanks un- to the LORD, for He's good; His love en- dures.

Let the LORD's re- deem'd say this— those whose lives He has pro- cured

from the hand of all their foes, gather- ed in from eve- ry land;

East and west, from south and north—those He gather- ed by His hand.

Some were fools with rebel ways; for their sins, in woe were left;
They abhorred all kinds of food; and drew near the gates of death.
Then they cried out to the LORD, in their trouble and distress;
He sent forth His word and healed, rescued them in faithfulness.

Let them give thanks to the LORD, for His steadfast, cov'nant love,
And His wondrous deeds for them, sent unfailing from above.
Let them sacrifice with praise, and with thanks their off'rings make,
Tell of all His works always, sing with joy for His name's sake.

SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 2:1-10

Ephesians seems to have been written at least in part to bridge the developing divide between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Like Paul does in Romans, the author of Ephesians argues that both Jews and Gentiles have fallen into sin and rebellion, and are rescued by God's action in Jesus, a dynamic which echoes today's First Reading and is echoed again in the Gospel.

¹You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

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

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION





*GOSPEL READING: JOHN 3:14-21

Because Lent points us toward Holy Week, the Gospel readings this year collect Jesus' predictions of his own suffering and death. During his secret nighttime conversation with the Jewish official Nicodemus, Jesus uses the First Reading to prefigure his own death – a theme he will return to in John 12.

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

[Jesus said:] ¹⁴"Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

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

SERMON

*HYMN OF THE DAY: "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"

(ELW 335)



1 Je - sus, keep me near the cross, there's a pre - cious foun - tain;
2 Near the cross, a trem - bling soul, love and mer - cy found me;
3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes be - fore me;
4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hop - ing, trust - ing ev - er,



free to all, a heal - ing stream flows from Cal - v'ry's moun - tain.
there the bright and morn - ing star sheds its beams a - round me.
help me walk from day to day with its shad - ow o'er me.
till I reach the gold - en strand just be - yond the riv - er.



In the cross, in the cross be my glo - ry ev - er;



till my ran - somed soul shall find rest be - yond the riv - er.

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820–1915

Music: NEAR THE CROSS, William H. Doane, 1832–1915

*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**

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

A brief silence.

L: Gracious God, your love unites. Give vision to the global church and foster cooperation in mission. Increase inter-religious understanding and ecumenical dialog. Make your church a sanctuary for all fleeing persecution, disaster, and war (*areas in crisis may be named*). Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

L: Creating God, your love enlivens. Restore balance to the earth's fragile habitats. Preserve wilderness lands, rainforests, and wildlife. Cleanse oceans, rivers, and streams especially Slab Cabin Run. Make us good stewards of the earth. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: Righteous God, your love liberates. We give thanks for those who courageously witness to your liberating love especially Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, renewers of society, whom we commemorate today. Free all people from the evils of racism, religious strife, and hatred. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

L: Merciful God, your love heals. Care tenderly for all whose loved ones perished from pandemic disease in every nation. Strengthen health care workers, first responders, and caregivers. Relieve all who live with chronic illness and pain. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

L: Incarnate God, your love enlightens. Open our hearts and minds to fresh understandings of our faith. Deepen our love for you and for one another. Teach us to pray for our enemies. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

L: Abiding God, your love saves. Those who died in the faith are made alive in Christ like John Nordberg and Nelson Wheeler. We give thanks for your promise that we also will be raised to newness of life. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

L: Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **A: Amen.**

***PEACE**

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

MEAL

OFFERING

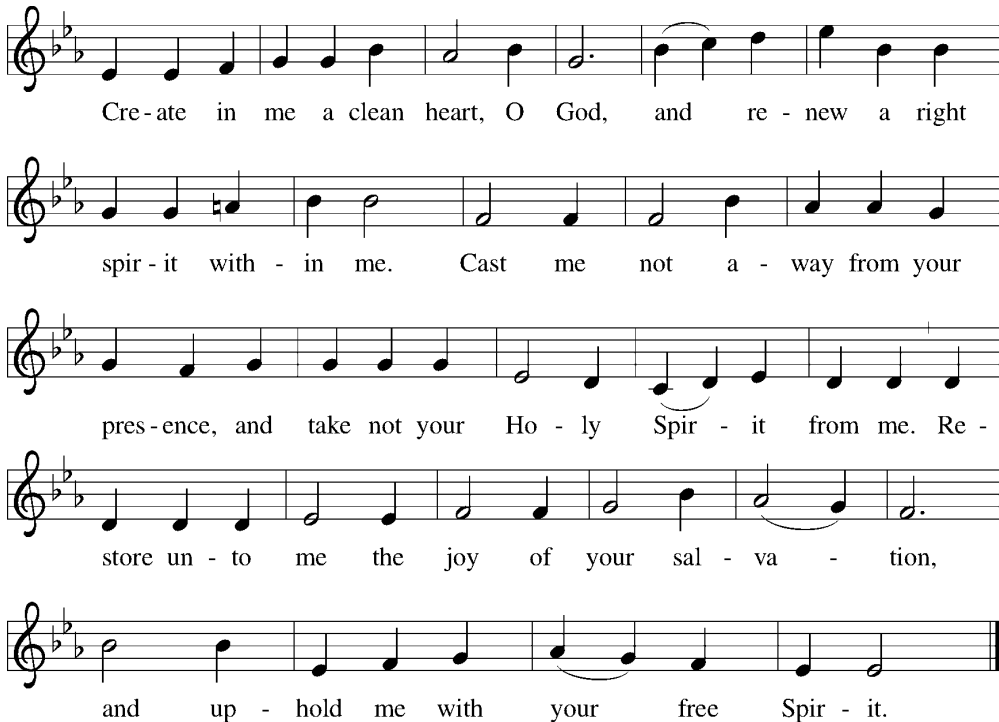
Offerings can be made online at stpaulpgm.org/give, mailed to St. Paul Lutheran Church, PO Box 200, Pine Grove Mills, PA 16868, placed in the mail slot (outside door to Pastor Paul's office), or in the offering plate located in the lobby/narthex near the entrance of the sanctuary.

MUSICAL OFFERING: "Lord Jesus, Think on Me"

(James Engel)

*OFFERTORY: "Create in Me a Clean Heart"

(ELW 188)



Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your
pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -
store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,
and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

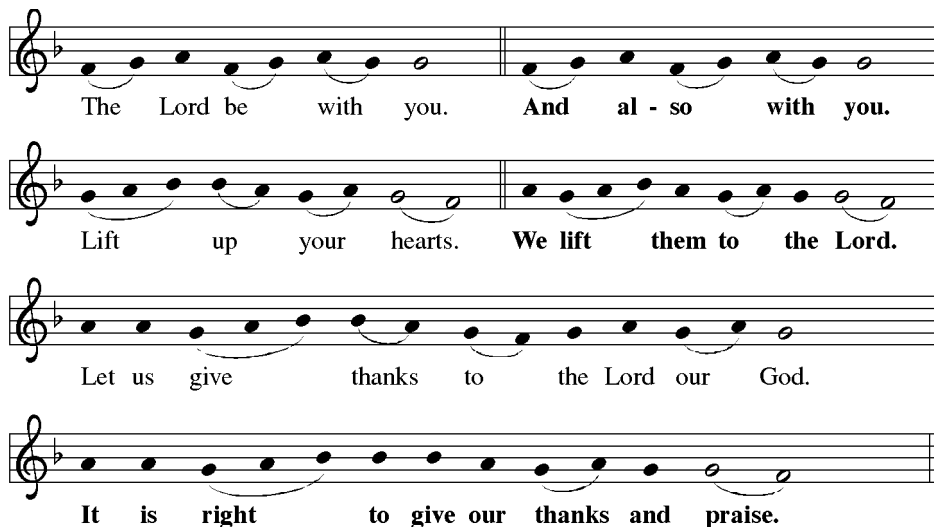
Music: J. A. Freylinghausen, 1670–1739

*OFFERING PRAYER

L: Let us pray: Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name. **A: Amen.**

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

* DIALOGUE



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

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

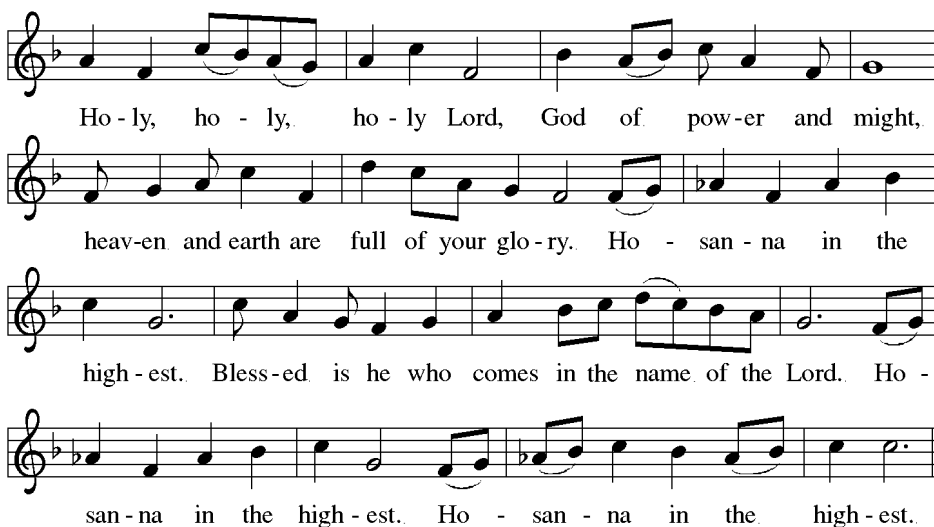
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*PREFACE

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



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

san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*THANKSGIVING 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.

Through our remembrance 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:

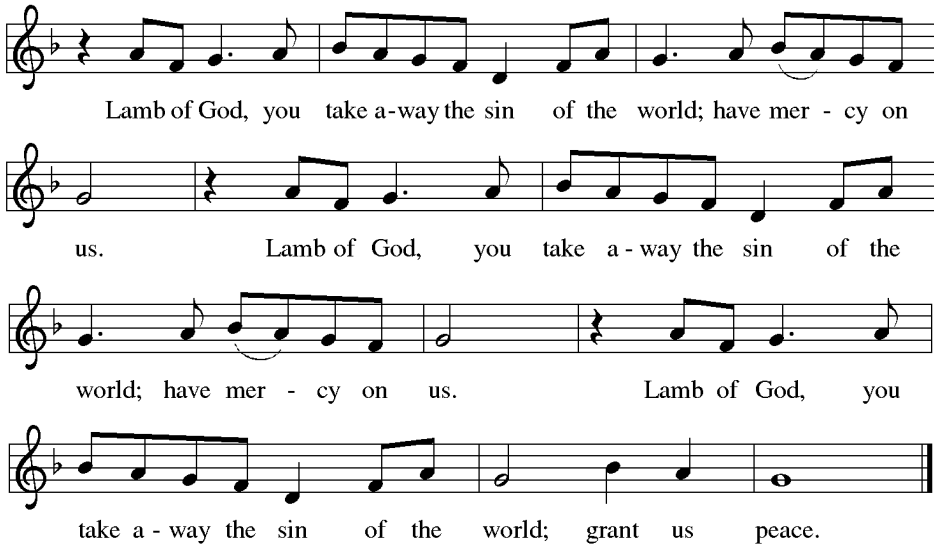
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**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: Bread for the journey. A feast for hungry hearts. Come!

*LAMB OF GOD



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.

COMMUNION

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

COMMUNION HYMN: "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound" (ELW 779)



1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
 have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to



now am found; was blind, but now I see.
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt., sts. 1–4; anonymous, st. 5
 Music: NEW BRITAIN, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

*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. **A: Amen**

*POST COMMUNION CANTICLE



Now, Lord, you let your ser-vant go in peace: your word has been ful -
filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre -
pared in the sight of ev-'ry peo - ple: a light to re-veal you to the
na - tions and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.

*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

L: Let us pray. Generous God, at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace. As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread, now make us one loaf to feed the world; in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life. **A: Amen.**

SENDING

*SENDING OF COMMUNION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

You may be seated.

*CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE

*BLESSING

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:** "What Wondrous Love Is This"

(ELW 666)



1 What won-drous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What
 2 When I was sink - ing down, sink-ing down, sink-ing down, when
 3 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing; to
 4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on; and



won - drous love is this, O my soul! What won-drous love is this
 I was sink - ing down, sink-ing down, when I was sink - ing down
 God and to the Lamb I will sing; to God and to the Lamb,
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and when from death I'm free,



that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dread-ful curse for my
 be - neath God's righ-teous frown, Christ laid a - side his crown for my
 who is the great I AM, while mil - lions join the theme, I will
 I'll sing God's love for me, and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing



soul, for my soul, to bear the dread-ful curse for my soul?
 soul, for my soul, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul.
 sing, I will sing, while mil - lions join the theme, I will sing.
 on, I'll sing on; and through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on.

Text: North American folk hymn, 19th cent., alt.

Music: WONDROUS LOVE, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace. Share your bread. **A: Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE: "Were You There"

(Rebecca Owens)

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES FOR CHURCH!!

Wednesdays February 21-March 13: Holden Evening Prayer 6PM, meal following.

March 24: Palm and Passion Sunday

March 28: Commandment Thursday (Maundy Thursday) 7PM

March 29: God's Friday (Good Friday) 7PM

March 30: The Great Vigil (Easter Eve) 7PM

March 31: Resurrection of our Lord/Pascha (Easter)
Sunrise Service: Jo Hays Vista, 6:30AM?
Regular Service: 10AM

YOU'RE INVITED TO TELL THE ELCA WHAT YOU THINK OF IT

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was officially formed on January 1, 1988. It is now over 36 years since its formation and the world has changed in dramatic ways, but the core of our constitutional structures hasn't.

At the 2022 Churchwide Assembly, the highest governing authority of the ELCA, a memorial was passed to create a commission to explore if we should have a reconstituting convention. From what has been disclosed by committee members, it is highly likely that this will happen and be recommended to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly.

The commission will be presenting their report, and to help them write it they want to hear from members like yourself. Are there ways the ELCA has confused, frustrated, or perplexed you? Now is the time to make that known!

Go to: <http://tinyurl.com/CRLC-elca-Survey> to give your thoughts and opinions.

RELATEDLY: If you would like to try to go the Phoenix, Arizona in 2025 to be part of the Churchwide Assembly, you can fill out this form to run for the chance:

<http://tinyurl.com/8c-2024-Nominations>



DAILY READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Sunday, March 10

Numbers 21:4-9

Psalms 107:1-3, 17-22 (19)

Ephesians 2:1-10

John 3:14-21

Thursday, March 14

Isaiah 30:15-18

Hebrews 4:1-13

Psalms 51:1-12

Monday, March 11

Exodus 15:22-27

Hebrews 3:1-6

Psalms 107:1-16

Friday, March 15

Exodus 30:1-10

Hebrews 4:14—5:4

Psalms 51:1-12

Tuesday, March 12

Numbers 20:1-13

1 Corinthians 10:6-13

Psalms 107:1-16

Saturday, March 16

Habakkuk 3:2-13

John 12:1-11

Psalms 51:1-12

Wednesday, March 13

Isaiah 60:15-22

John 8:12-20

Psalms 107:1-16



SERVING TODAY

Worship Leader.....Pastor Paul Tomkiel
Assisting Minister.....Morgen Hummel
Musician..... Jim Rearick
Sacristan.....Delorse Homan
Reader.....Sydney Bennington

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, 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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