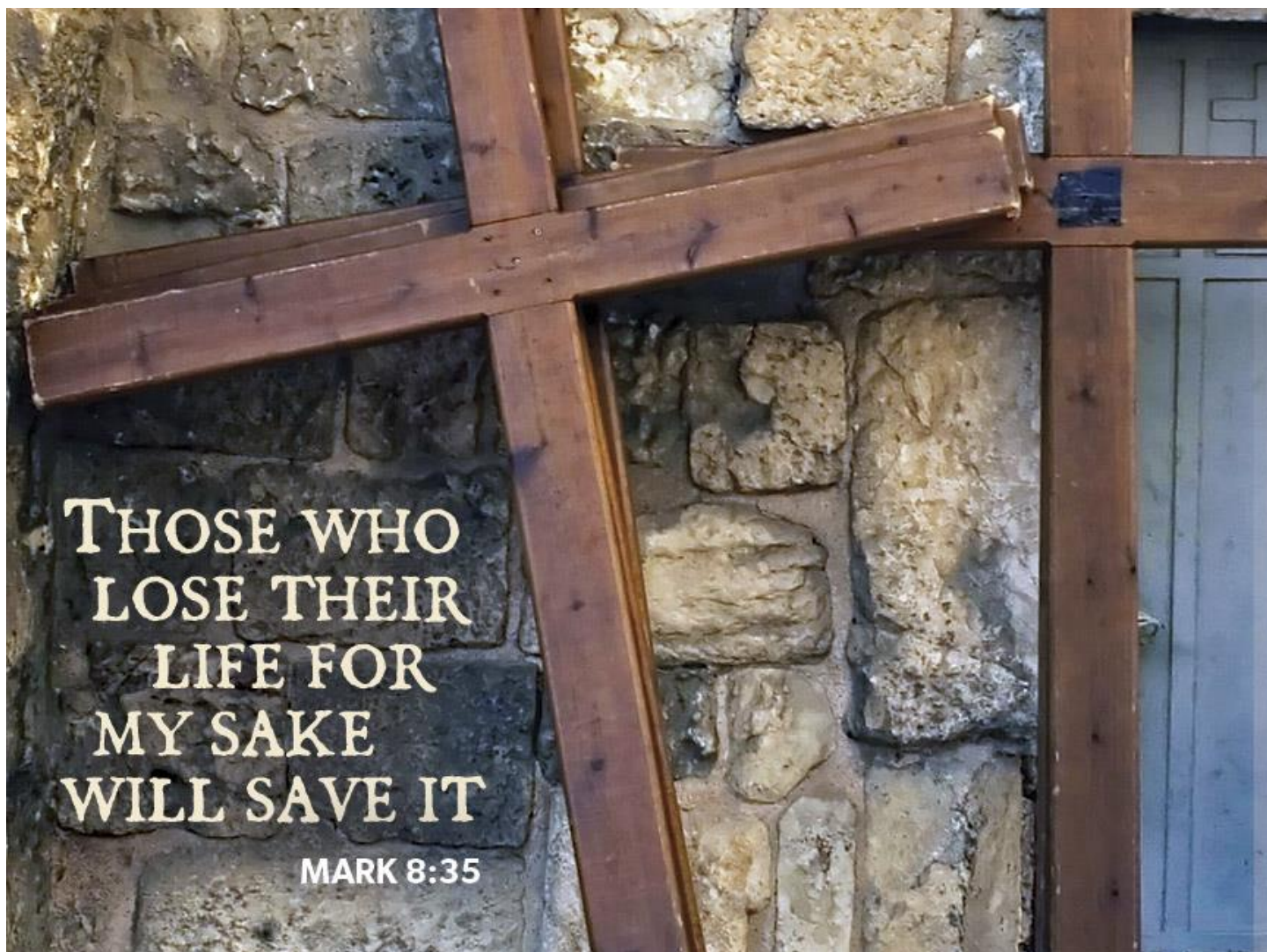


St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
SUNDAY February 25th, 2024



WELCOME,
to our Church Family.
We're Glad You're Here!



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

We are so glad that you chose to worship with us today. If you are visiting with us for the first time, please visit our Welcome Center in the North Narthex. As our way of saying thank you, you will receive a St. Paul's Welcome Bag with a coffee cup and information about our church. You may also want to download our new St. Paul's App and visit our website. Information on both is in the Welcome Bag.

For our young worshipers we have children's packets to play and color with during the service. These are on the white stand near the east entrance to our sanctuary.

You are welcome at the table!

If you have been baptized and believe Christ is present in the Eucharist (Holy Communion), you are welcome to join us at the table. Please come forward at the direction of the ushers and return to your seats using the side aisles. If you do not wish to partake in the Sacrament but would like to receive a blessing, please just cross your hands over your chest when you come forward.

Grape juice and Gluten-free wafers are available on request. Grape juice is in the colored glasses in the center of the communion tray. If you are not able to come forward and would like to receive communion, please inform an usher and the pastor will bring communion to you.

Altar Flowers

The **Altar Flowers** were given today by Janet Kuller in memory of her mother.

Today's Worship Theme

The second covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them the ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal promise of resurrection life in faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ.

Readings and Psalm

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

God blesses Abraham and Sarah

Psalm 22:23-31

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD. (*Ps. 22:27*)

Romans 4:13-25

The promise to those who share Abraham's faith

Mark 8:31-38

The passion prediction

Today's Hymns from The Tower
The Westminster Strike
Welcome and Announcements

Church Carillon

PRELUDE

Spiritual "O Fix Me" J. Roland Braithwaite (1927-2014)

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who writes the law on our hearts, who draws all people together through Jesus.

Amen.

Held in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

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.

Here is a flood of grace: Out of love for the whole world, God draws near to us, breaks every snare of sin, washes away our wrongs, and restores the promise of life through † Jesus Christ.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

The God of Abraham Praise

ELW 831

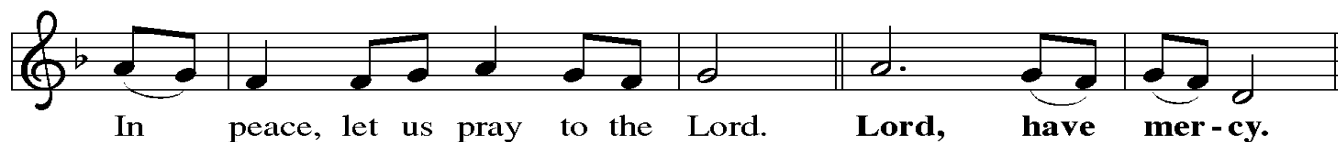
VV 1-4

GREETING

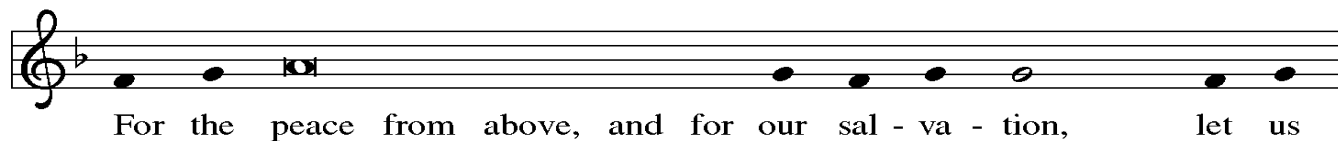
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Kyrie



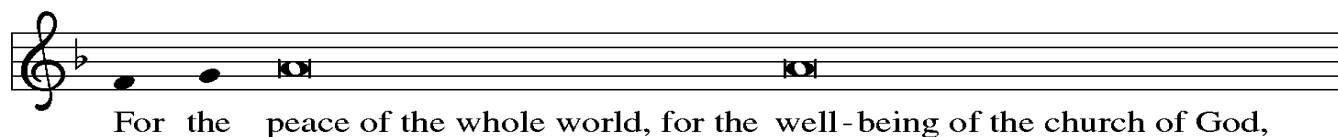
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer-cy.**




For the peace from above, and for our sal - va - tion, let us



pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



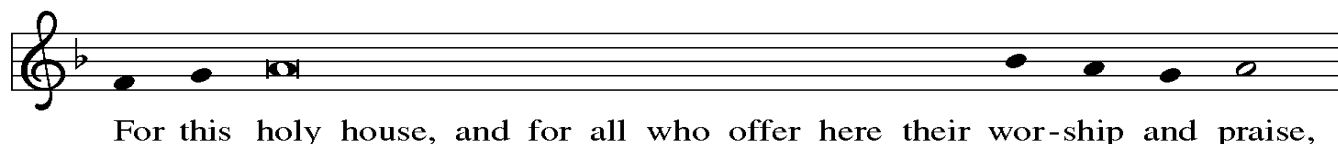
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



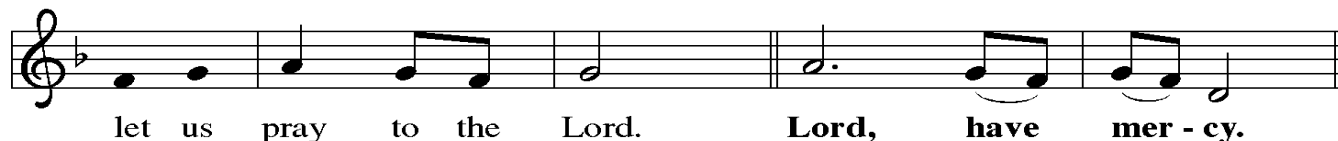
and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



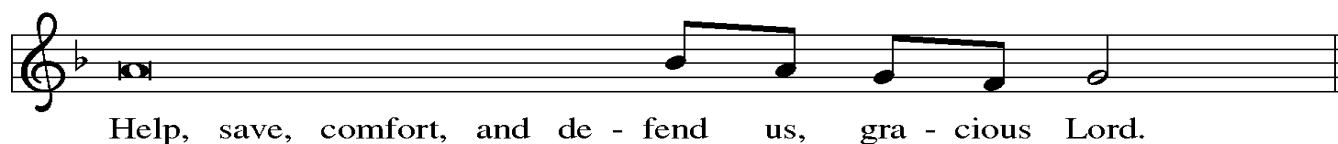
Lord, have mer - cy.



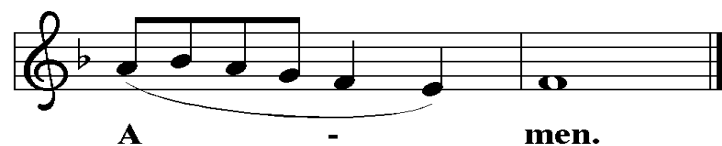
For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



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

Let us pray.

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. ²And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.” ³Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, ⁴“As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.”

¹⁵God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 22:23-31



All the ends of the earth shall re - mem - ber and turn to the LORD.

²³You who fear the LORD, give praise! All you of Jacob's ¹line, give glory.
Stand in awe of the LORD, all you off- ¹spring of Israel.

²⁴**For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither is the LORD's face hid-** | **den from them;**

but when they cry out, | the LORD hears them.

²⁵From you comes my praise in the | great assembly;

I will perform my vows in the sight of those who | fear the LORD.

²⁶**The poor shall eat | and be satisfied,**

Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts | live forever! R

²⁷All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn | to the LORD;

all the families of nations shall bow | before God.

²⁸**For dominion belongs | to the LORD,**

who rules o- | ver the nations.

²⁹Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow | down in worship;

all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel be- | fore the LORD.

³⁰**Their descendants shall | serve the LORD,**

whom they shall proclaim to genera- | tions to come.

³¹They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people | yet unborn,

saying to them, "The | LORD has acted!" **R**

Second Reading: Romans 4:13-25

¹³The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

¹⁶For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." ¹⁹He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had

promised. ²²Therefore his faith “was reckoned to him as righteousness.” ²³Now the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone, ²⁴but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

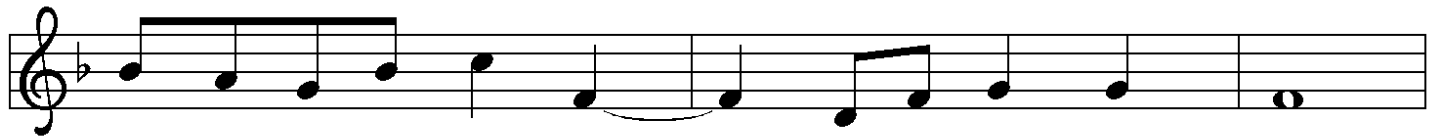
The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Let your stead - fast love come to us, O Lord.



Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.



Save us as you prom - ised; we will trust your word.

GOSPEL: Mark 8:931-38

The holy gospel according to Mark, the 8th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

³¹[Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Rev. Mark Kreemer

HYMN OF THE DAY

Take Up Your Cross the Savior Said

ELW 667

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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**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,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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 God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

After each petition the following response is given:

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Offertory Anthem

Steal Away

arr. Malcolm Archer (b. 1952)

Chancel Choir Sopranos and Altos

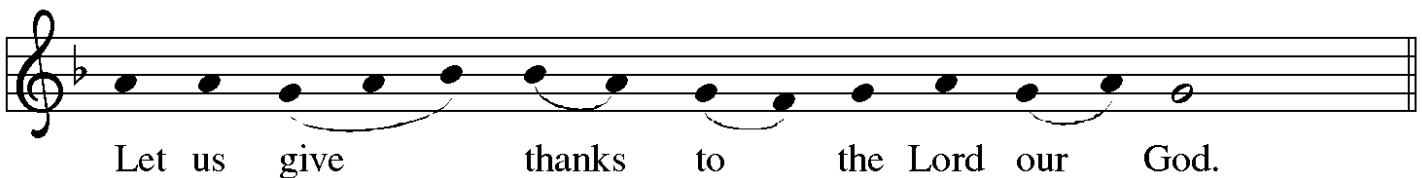
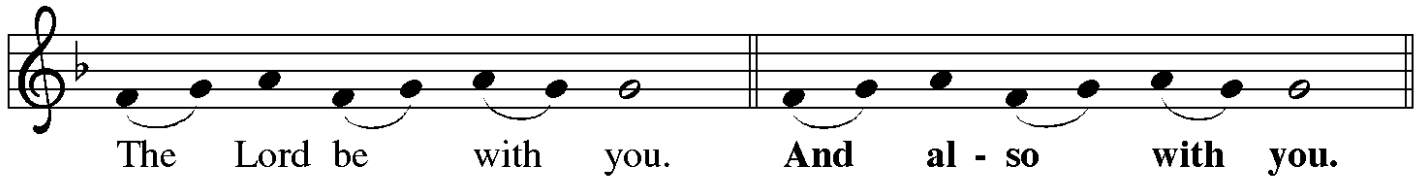
OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

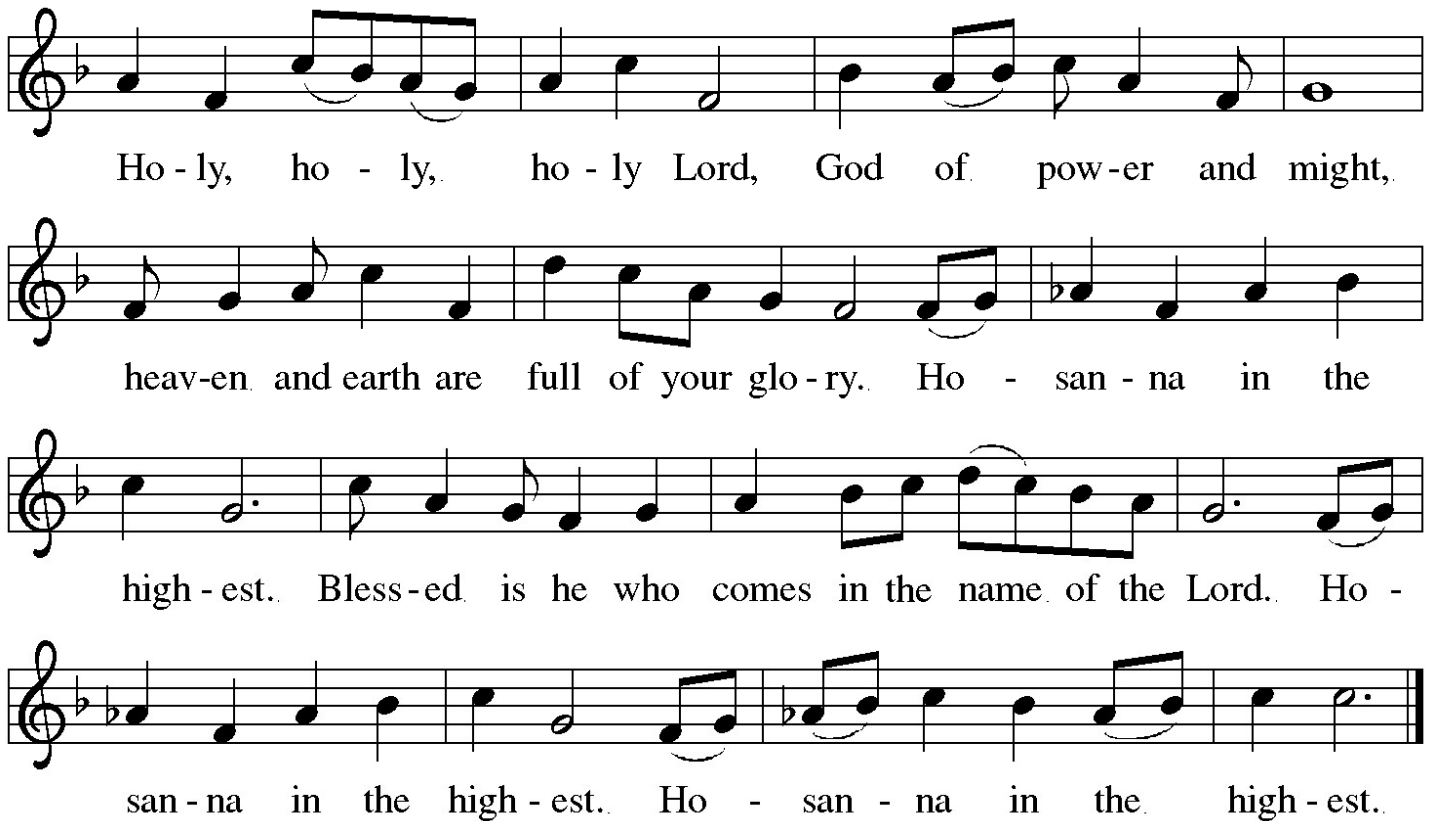
Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING



It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places.... 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:



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

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age. Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth. Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood. Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey. Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one. Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

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 we remember our Lord's passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

Come, Holy Spirit.

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

May the body and blood of our lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

How Firm a Foundation

ELW 796

BLESSING

Beloved, we are God's own people, holy, washed, renewed.

God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill you with courage, and ✠ give you peace.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share your bread.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude: Lord, Build Me a Cabin In Glory Land setting by Uzee Brown Jr. (b. 1950)

In our prayers today we will remember

Adam Sadler, Barb and Tom Hamilton, Paula Kritzer, Dave Paul, Eleanor Grunden, Lyn Delon-Fellonsteps, Mary Hardesty, Pat Adams, Linda Shaffer, Chris Collard, Chrissy Sturtz, and Carol Rohr, Mary Gainer, Adam Sadler, and Will Vandevander.

Music Notes

In honor of Black History Month, our service music will feature texts and compositions by black composers.

Dr. J. Roland Braithwaite earned his B. Mus. in organ, M.A. in church music, and Ph.D. in musicology from Boston University. He had a long tenure at Talladega College in Alabama, serving as College Organist and Dean of College. Dr. Braithwaite composed a number of works for organ, based on spirituals including "Go Tell It on the Mountain," "Let Us Break Bread Together," and "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder." In his study of the early church music of African Americans, he prepared the reprint of the first African-American hymn, "A Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs," 1801, for the Historical Commission of the Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church of Philadelphia.

It is believed the spiritual "Steal Away" was written sometime before 1862 to the former slave Wallace Willis, who also authored the lyrics for the song "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." Willis's words and melody were transcribed by Alexander Reid, a minister at a Choctaw boarding school, after he had heard Willis sing them. The song was made famous by the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, when they toured the United States and Europe. It is believed the "Steal Away to Jesus" had a hidden meaning for slaves, escaping to freedom. Not only did the words reflect their faith and that they would one day "steal away to Jesus" but also acted as code to their fellow workers that they were going to seek to escape their slave-owners, that they would "steal away" via the Underground Railroad.

Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus! Steal away, steal away home, I ain't got long to stay here. My Lord, He calls me, He calls me by the thunder; The trumpet sounds within my soul; I ain't got long to stay here. Green trees a-bending, Poor sinner stand a trembling; The trumpet sounds within my soul; I ain't got long to stay here.

Dr. Uzee Brown, Jr., is a professor in the Music Department at Morehouse College. In addition to writing music for two of Spike Lee's movies, *School Daze* and *Red Hook Summer*, Professor Brown has written works for National Public Radio and the Atlanta Symphony, including an orchestral setting for chorus of "We Shall Overcome" for the celebration of the 70th birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. His compositions and arrangements have been performed internationally in cathedrals and concert halls on four continents. Dr. Brown is a noted opera singer, composer, arranger, and orchestrator, and he holds a doctoral degree from the University of Michigan.

Chancel Choir Practice, every Wednesday

7:00 pm

Bell Choir

6:00 pm

Handbell ensemble will rehearsal February 28, March 6, and 13 from 6:00-6:50 in preparation to play in worship on March 17. We need ringers to have an ensemble, so please consider making this short-term commitment to enrich worship through ringing!

Capital Campaign Report

Phase One Projects	\$337,000
Funds raised	\$239,109
Interest	\$ 1,706
Building Fund	\$ 30,000
<hr/>	
Remaining funds to be raised	\$ 66,185

Cathedral Concert Series



Hector Olivera, Organist **Sunday, March 10th 5:00 pm**

We are looking forward to our first concert of the year, on Sunday, March 10 at 5:00 PM, when Maestro Hector Olivera will join us in concert on our beautiful Schantz organ! We hope you will join us and invite your friends to join us too!

The University of Akron Choirs **March 17th 4:00 pm** **Reflections of Reverence**

Performing selections of *Handel's Messiah*, Vaughan Willian's *Five Mystical Songs*, Shaw's *To The Hands*, and more



Adult Sunday School **Getting Ready for Easter**

What is a spiritual discipline? During this series of lessons, we'll explore spiritual disciplines that help get us ready for Easter, for resurrection, including our own. What is the place in our daily Christian lives for such practices as meditation, fasting, simplicity, and submission? And is there joy in this preparation, these disciplines? The answer is a resounding *yes!* Please join us as we meet each Sunday for Bible study and fellowship at 11:30, top floor of Parish Hall. An elevator is available for easy access.

Thursday Morning Bible Study:
***Wrestling With Doubt* by Adam Hamilton**
10:00 am

Struggling with uncertainties on your spiritual journey? Whether a longtime Christian or someone brand new to the faith, get to know the God who is unafraid of hard questions. Hamilton draws from the wisdom of the Bible to approach reservations with honesty and insight. Learn how doubt can drive you to a deeper encounter with the Lord!

Download the St Paul's Phone APP

Go to your Google or Apple app store on your smart phone and download the "My Church" by Pushpay. It is a free download.

Open the app and search for St Paul's by typing STPLC APP.
Then click on the St Paul's logo, that's it.



To take advantage of all the app's features you must create an account. Get notifications and reminders of upcoming events, access our live stream worship and worship bulletins, send prayer requests, see the church calendar, and you can even give electronically.

Lenten Services

Wednesday Community Lenten Service

Soup Supper 5:30 Worship 6:30

February 28th	Grace UCC
March 6th	Central Presbyterian
March 13th	St. Timothy's Episcopal
March 20th	First Baptist

Holy Week at St. Paul's Lutheran

Palm Sunday	March 24, 10:00 AM
Maundy Thursday	March 28, 7:00 PM
Community Stations of the Cross (St Mary's Roman Catholic)	March 29, 12:00 noon
Good Friday	March 29, 7:00 PM
Easter Sunrise	March 31, 7:30 AM
Easter Morning	March 31, 10:00 AM

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GATHERING HYMN The God of Abraham Praise ELW 831
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HYMN OF THE DAY Take Up Your Cross the Savior Said ELW 667
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COMMUNION HYMN Let Us Break Bread Together ELW 471
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SENDING HYMN How Firm a Foundation ELW 796
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Thank you to those serving today:

Presiding	Rev. Mark Kreemer
Director of Music	Dr. Abigail Haake
Lectors	Scott Larson
Assisting Minister	Patty Long
Communion Assistants	Patty Long & John Stanko
Greeter	Marilyn Norton
Sacristy	Lynda Klein
Ushers	John & Linda Litman, Carol Marlow, Mark Waltz
Soundboard	Jim Johnson
Video/Live-Stream	John Stanko

The God of Abraham Praise



1 The God of A - br'ham praise, who reigns en - throned a - bove;
 2 The God of A - br'ham praise! At your su - preme com - mand
 3 The God of A - br'ham praise! Your all - suf - fi - cient grace
 4 Your prom - ise you have sworn; I on your oath de - pend.



An - cient of ev - er - last - ing days, and God of love—
 from earth I rise and seek the joys at your right hand.
 shall guide me all my pil - grim days in all my ways.
 I shall, on ea - gle wings up - borne, to heav'n as - cend.



“I Am the One I Am”—by earth and heav'n con - fessed;
 I all on earth for - sake— its wis - dom, fame, and pow'r—
 You deign to call me friend; you call your - self my God!
 I shall be - hold your face; I shall your pow'r a - dore,



I bow and bless the sa - cred name for - ev - er blest.
 and you my on - ly por - tion make, my shield and tow'r.
 And you will save me to the end through Je - sus' blood.
 and sing the won - ders of your grace for - ev - er - more.

5 Though nature's strength decay,
 and earth and hell withstand,
 to Canaan's bounds I urge my way
 at your command.
 The wat'ry deep I pass,
 with Jesus in my view,
 and through the howling wilderness
 my way pursue.

7 Before the great Three-One
 the saints exulting stand
 and tell the wonders God has done
 through all their land.
 The list'ning spheres attend
 and swell the growing fame
 and sing the songs which never end,
 the wondrous name.

6 The goodly land I see,
 with peace and plenty blest;
 a land of sacred liberty
 and endless rest.
 There milk and honey flow,
 and oil and wine abound,
 and trees of life forever grow
 with mercy crowned.

8 The whole triumphant host
 give thanks to God on high.
 “Hail, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!”
 they ever cry.
 Hail, Abr'ham's God and mine!
 I join the heav'nly lays:
 to you be glory, might divine,
 and endless praise!

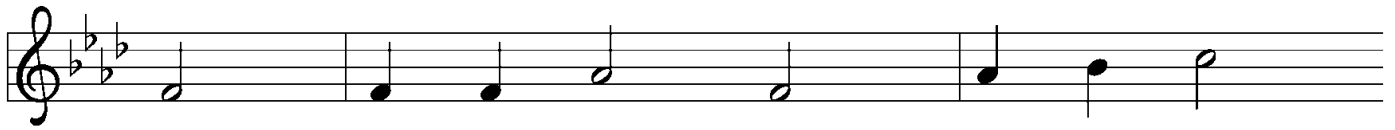
Text: Thomas Olivers, 1725–1799, alt., based on the Yigdal, c. 14th cent.
 Music: YIGDAL, Jewish melody; arr. Meyer Lyon, 1751–1797

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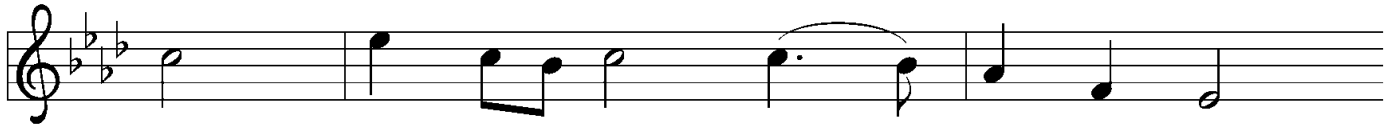
Take Up Your Cross, the Savior Said



1 "Take up your cross," the Sav - ior said,
 2 Take up your cross; let not its weight
 3 Take up your cross, nor heed the shame,
 4 Take up your cross and fol - low Christ,



"if you would my dis - ci - ple be;
 per - vade your soul with vain a - larm;
 nor let your fool - ish heart re - bel;
 nor think till death to lay it down;



for - sake the past, and come this day,
 his strength shall bear your spir - it up,
 for you the Lord en - dured the cross
 for those who hum - bly bear the cross



and hum - bly fol - low af - ter me."
 sus - tain your heart, and nerve your arm.
 to save your soul from death and hell.
 one day will wear the glo - rious crown.

Text: Charles W. Everest, 1814–1877, alt.

Music: BOURBON, W. Hauser, *Hesperian Harp*, 1848

Let Us Break Bread Together



1 Let us break bread to - geth-er on our knees;
2 Let us drink wine to - geth-er on our knees;
3 Let us praise God to - geth-er on our knees;



let us break bread to - geth-er on our knees.
let us drink wine to - geth-er on our knees.
let us praise God to - geth-er on our knees.



When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris - ing

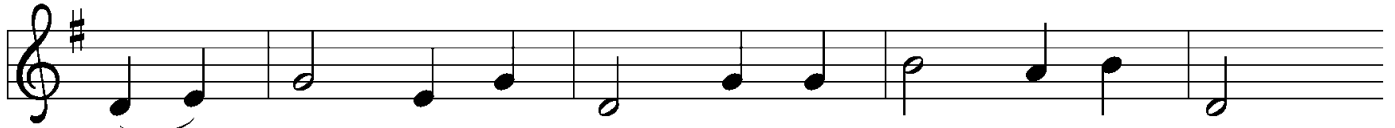


sun, O Lord, have mer-cy on me.

Text: African American spiritual

Music: BREAK BREAD TOGETHER, African American spiritual

How Firm a Foundation



1 How firm a foun - da - tion, O saints of the Lord,
2 "Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dis - mayed,
3 "When through fi - 'ry tri - als your path - way shall lie,
4 "Through - out all their life - time my peo - ple shall prove



is laid for your faith in Christ Je - sus, the Word!
for I am your God and will still give you aid;
my grace, all - suf - fi - cient, shall be your sup - ply.
my sov - 'reign, e - ter - nal, un - change - a - ble love;



What more can he say than to you he has said
I'll strength - en you, help you, and cause you to stand,
The flames shall not hurt you; I on - ly de - sign
and then, when gray hairs shall their tem - ples a - dorn,



who un - to the Sav - ior for ref - uge have fled?
up - held by my righ - teous, om - nip - o - tent hand."
your dross to con - sume and your gold to re - fine."
like lambs they shall still in my bo - som be borne."

Text: J. Rippon, *A Selection of Hymns*, 1787, alt.
Music: FOUNDATION, Early American