

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
SUNDAY March 17th, 2024



Unless a
grain of wheat
falls into the
earth and dies,
it remains
just a single grain

JOHN 12:24

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 Kathy & Bryan Corban.

The **Throne flowers** were given by Carol Stoner in loving memory of Ron Stoner.

Today's Worship Theme

God promises Jeremiah that a "new covenant" will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God's heart through Christ and draws God's love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God's love with all the world.

Readings and Psalms

Jeremiah 31:31-34

A new covenant written on the heart

Psalms 51:1-12

Create in me a clean heart, O God. (*Ps. 51:10*)

Hebrews 5:5-10

Through suffering Christ becomes the source of salvation

John 12:20-33

The grain of wheat dying in the earth

Today's Hymns from The Tower

Church Carillon

The Westminster Strike

Welcome and Announcements

PRELUDE

Goin' Home arr. Kevin McChesney (b. 1963)
Handbell Choir

Welcoming of New Members

We are here this morning to welcome these new members into our community of faith. We are not a building, but the gathered family of God. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, given this new identity through our baptism into Jesus' death and resurrection. Today we welcome you as members of this family in the larger body of Christ.

And so we ask, do you desire to join the membership of St Paul's Lutheran Church? If so please answer: "We do."

I ask the congregation to stand and join in confessing our faith.

Do you believe in God the Father?

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen**

Having together confessed our faith in the Triune God, we now welcome you into the family of our congregation and into the ministry of the church. As active followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to spread his Good News. We encourage you to accept that call through your involvement in the church.

We welcome you as brothers and sisters in Christ, and thank God for this unique opportunity to serve God and one another. May the God to whom we belong equip us for every good work that we do together in his name.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, as you called James and John, Simon and Andrew to fish for people, so you have called us to serve you with our own talents and resources. We thank you for bringing to us these new members of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. You have told us that wherever two or more are gathered in your name, there you are with them. Help us, we pray, to see and feel that presence and that others may come to know you through their interactions with us.

All: Amen

GATHERING HYMN

Now the Green Blade Rises

ELW 379

GREETING

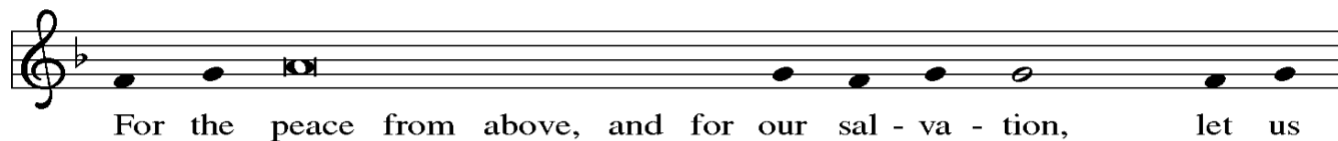
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Kyrie



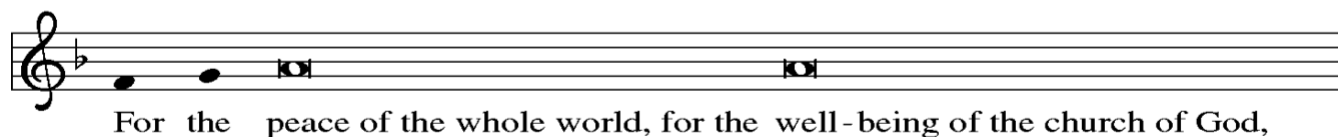
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer-cy.**



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



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



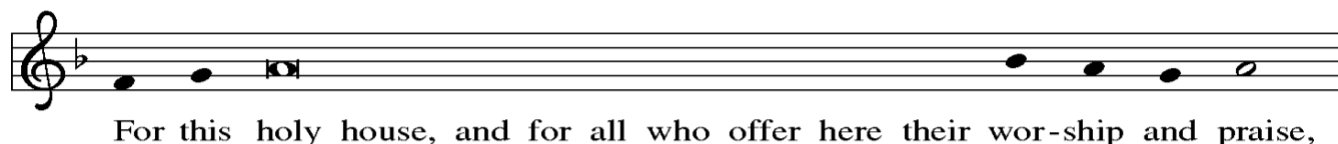
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in 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: Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 51:1-12



¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your ¹steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out ¹my offenses.

²**Wash me through and through ¹from my wickedness,
and cleanse me ¹from my sin.**

³For I know ¹my offenses,
and my sin is ev- ¹er before me.

⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil ¹in your sight;
so you are justified when you speak and right ¹in your judgment. R**

- ⁵Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my | mother's womb.
- ⁶**Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**
- ⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.
- ⁸**Let me hear | joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken | may rejoice. R**
- ⁹Hide your face | from my sins,
and blot out | all my wickedness.
- ¹⁰**Create in me a clean | heart, O God,
and renew a right spir- | it within me.**
- ¹¹Cast me not away | from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spir- | it from me.
- ¹²**Restore to me the joy of | your salvation
and sustain me with your boun- | tiful Spirit. R**

Second Reading: Hebrews 5:5-10

⁵Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”;

⁶as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

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: John 12:20-33

The holy gospel according to John, the 12th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world

will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Rev. Mark Kreemer

HYMN OF THE DAY **Beneath the Cross of Jesus** ELW 338

BAPTISM (*see insert*)

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

Wondrous Love
Handbell Choir

arr. Douglas E. Wagner (b. 1952)

OFFERTORY



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that



we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of



all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble



with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

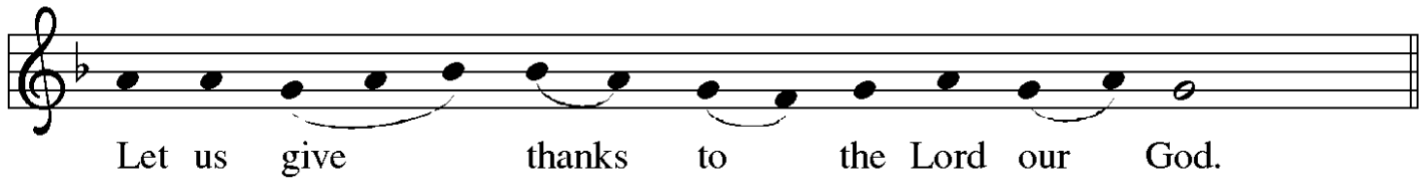
OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

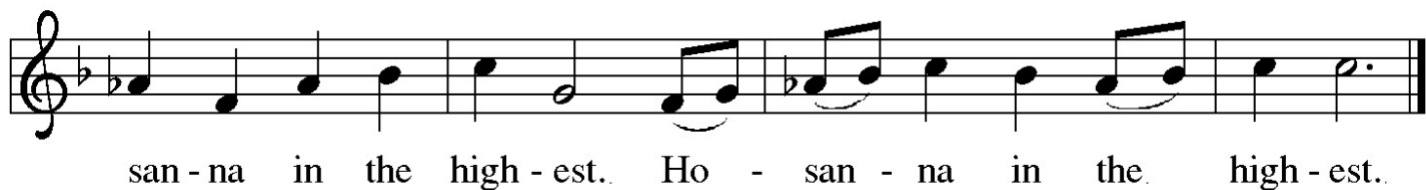
Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name.

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:



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.

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

**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

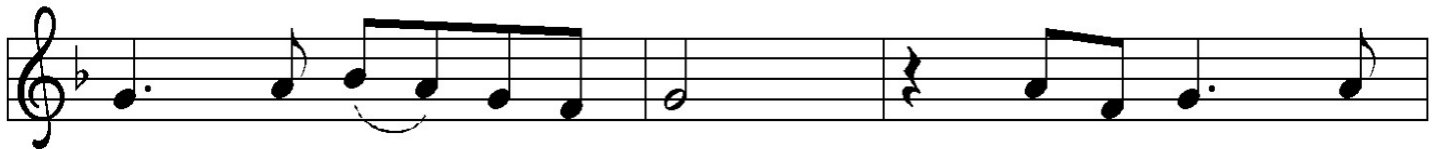
Bread for the journey. A feast for hungry hearts. Come!



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 HYMN

Were You There?

arr. Moses Hogan

Andy Rambler, bass-baritone

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

Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing ELW 545

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: Introduction and Fugue Adela Douglas-Pennant (1858-1955)

In our prayers today we will remember

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

Music Notes

March is Women's History Month, and today's music features music performed and written by women.

Adela Douglas-Pennant was born into a titled English family in the mid-19th century. Her father, a baron, was a Scottish landowner in Wales; he was also a politician and played a major role in the development of the Welsh slate industry. Unfortunately, little is known of Adela's life. Her "Introduction and Fugue" was written for the *Organist's Quarterly Journal*, a publication based in London during the 19th century. Only the composer's initials—"Pennant, The Hon. A. D."—were listed in the table of contents for that issue as was the custom of the day when it came to the inclusion of music by female composers. The work consists of two parts—a short, yet stately introduction followed immediately by a four-voice fugue written in the Romantic harmonic language.

Chancel Choir Practice, every Wednesday

7:00 pm

Needed: Handbell Ringers!

Can you count to three or four? Do you like having fun? Can you commit three Wednesdays? Come make a joyful noise and join us April 17 and 24 and May 1 in preparation to ring in worship on May 5!

Cathedral Concert Series

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



The University of Akron Choirs will be 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.

Lenten Services

Wednesday Community Lenten Service

Soup Supper 5:30

Worship 6:30

March 20th

First Baptist

Rev. Tina Crog

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

Capital Campaign Report

Phase One Projects

\$337,000

Funds raised

\$255,189

Interest

\$ 2,308

Building Fund

\$ 30,000

Remaining funds

\$ 49,503

to be raised

Thursday Morning Bible Study:

John: The Gospel of Light and Life by Adam Hamilton

10:00 am

This Lent, join Adam Hamilton and experience a season of spiritual growth and life-changing renewal while exploring the major themes of John. Along with Hamilton's comments, this book includes the entire text of the Gospel of John (CEB), divided into six parts for ease of reading and study. Topics are:

1. The Word Made Flesh
2. The Miraculous Signs of Jesus
3. The "I Am" Sayings of Jesus
4. The Farewell Discourse
5. The Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion of the King
6. Eternal Life



*We invite you to **study, pray, reflect and give** with us during ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving — for our families, our neighbors and communities around the world.*

These 40 days are a season to reflect and remember, to look forward and ahead. These are not easy times for many of us. We know the challenges our world faces. Yet the season of Lent reminds us that God is not yet through with us or our world. Amid our own dependence on God, we know by faith that God is even now at work, drawing us toward the resurrection and restoration of the world.

ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving invites us to be part of that work and to bear witness to it with partners, companions, friends, and neighbors. Will you join us? Pick up your coin banks at the entrance to the sanctuary and return them on April 7th.

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, and see the church calendar. You can even give electronically.

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GATHERING HYMN Now the Green Blade Rises ELW 379
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HYMN OF THE DAY **Beneath the Cross of Jesus** ELW 338
Public Domain

SENDING HYMN Lord, Dismiss Us With Your Blessing ELW 545
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Thank you to those serving today:

Presiding	Rev. Mark Kreemer
Director of Music	Dr. Abigail Haake
Lector	Rev. Lynn Williamson
Assisting Minister	Karl Kalk
Communion Assistants	David Stoner & Carol Stoner
Greeters	Rev. Lynn & Lashelle Williamson
Sacristy	Sue Ambrosic
Ushers	Gary Collard, Chris Hall Shane Jackson, Craig Maurer
Soundboard	Jim Johnson
Video/Live-Stream	John Stanko

Images in the Readings

The Attraction of the Repellent Cross

Two themes vie for attention in the readings: divine forgiveness (with attention paid to the human sinfulness that makes it necessary!) and the cross's mysterious power.

Jeremiah prophesies of God's desire and ability to wipe the slate clean and to come even closer than before, in the form of a "new covenant" with God's people. But how is this possible? God and God's people were already as close as husband and wife—one flesh! Even so, God promises to forgive the divorce and forge an even more profound unity and intimacy with God's people.

The composers of both psalm alternatives (51 and 119) sing of the relief and joy of being forgiven and then taught, sustained, and sanctified by God's Spirit. Both psalmists testify that relief and joy more than balance the agony of confessing their unworthiness and brokenness and their own culpability for both.

In the gospel, Jesus plants the image of the (dead) seed coming to life and bearing fruit as a metaphor for his own crucifixion and being "lifted up" on our behalf. The Greeks ask to see Jesus. We might paraphrase Jesus' oblique response this way: "If you want to see me, first look down into the dirt; then look up to the cross."

The connection point for the two themes is deep (even intimate) service to the other. Jeremiah tells us that God will come closer to us than a husband to a wife—directly into our hearts! Deep in this mystery we will be known—truly known even beyond our fear of being known—and forgiven and loved. Jesus then promises that through his life in us, we will be drawn into a similar emptying of selves as we enter richly into the lives of others so that they too will know the joy and relief of being known and loved. In this way, confession leads finally to mission.

Now the Green Blade Rises



1 Now the green blade ris - es from the bur - ied grain,
 2 In the grave they laid him, love by ha - tred slain,
 3 Forth he came at Eas - ter like the ris - en grain,
 4 When our hearts are win - try, griev - ing, or in pain,



wheat that in dark earth man - y days has lain;
 think - ing that he would nev - er wake a - gain,
 he that for three days in the grave had lain;
 your touch can call us back to life a - gain,



love lives a - gain, that with the dead has been;
 laid in the earth like grain that sleeps un - seen;
 raised from the dead, my liv - ing Lord is seen;
 fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;



love is come a - gain like wheat a - ris - ing green.

Text: John MacLeod Campbell Crum, 1872–1958

Music: NOËL NOUVELET, French carol

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Beneath the Cross of Jesus



1 Be - neath the cross of Je - sus I long to take my stand;
2 Up - on the cross of Je - sus, my eye at times can see
3 I take, O cross, your shad - ow for my a - bid - ing place;



the shad - ow of a might - y rock with - in a wea - ry land,
the ver - y dy - ing form of one who suf - fered there for me.
I ask no oth - er sun - shine than the sun - shine of his face;



a home with - in a wil - der - ness, a rest up - on the way,
And from my con - trite heart, with tears, two won - ders I con - fess:
con - tent to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,



from the burn - ing of the noon - tide heat and bur - dens of the day.
the . . . won - der of his glo - rious love and my un - wor - thi - ness.
my . . . sin - ful self my on - ly shame, my glo - ry all, the cross.

Text: Elizabeth C. Clephane, 1830–1869

Music: ST. CHRISTOPHER, Frederick C. Maker, 1844–1927

Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing



1 Lord, dis - miss us with your bless - ing, fill our hearts with joy and peace;
2 Thanks we give and ad - o - ra - tion for your gos - pel's joy - ful sound.
3 Sav - ior, when your love shall call us from our strug - gling pil - grim way,



let us each, your love pos - sess - ing, tri - umph in re - deem - ing grace.
May the fruits of your sal - va - tion in our hearts and lives a - bound.
let no fear of death ap - pall us, glad your sum - mons to o - bey.



Oh, re - fresh us; oh, re - fresh us, trav - 'ling through this wil - der - ness.
Ev - er faith - ful, ev - er faith - ful to your truth may we be found.
May we ev - er, may we ev - er reign with you in end - less day.

Text: attr. John Fawcett, 1740–1817, sts. 1–2, alt.; Godfrey Thring, 1823–1903, st. 3, alt.

Music: SICILIAN MARINERS, Sicilian, 18th cent.