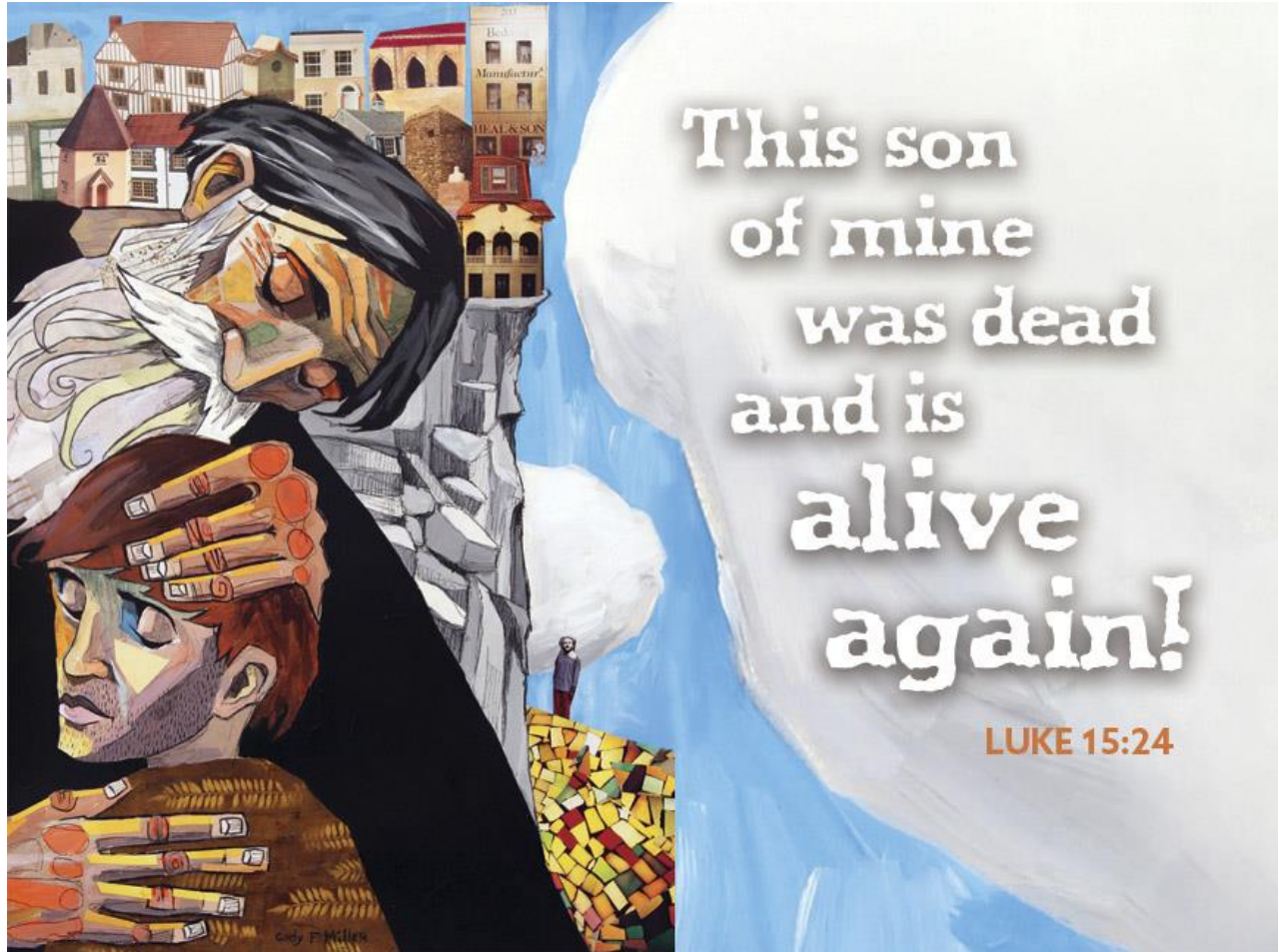


St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

March 30th, 2025



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 Karl Kalk in memory of Pastor W.L. & Gertrude Kalk.

Introduction

The psalm sets the tone this day: "Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!" Happy are those who have "become the righteousness of God" in the merits of Christ Jesus. Happy are those for whom the forgiveness of God has "rolled away . . . the disgrace" of former times. Happy is the father at the return of his prodigal son. Happy are we that our sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake. Rejoice!

Readings and Psalm

Joshua 5:9-12

Israel eats bread and grain, the produce of the land

Psalm 32

Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD. (Ps. 32:11)

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

The mystery and ministry of reconciliation

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

The parable of the prodigal father and the repentant son

In our prayers today we will remember

Jason Loveday, Kathryn Sheets, Darlene Lewis, Betty Scot, Anna Lagenfeld, Jay Danielson, Chrissy Sturtz, Shirley Douglas, Matt Moore, Amy Williams, Phyllis Wilson, Jackie Whitman, Jessie Shaffer, Mark King, Richard Green, and David Fox.

The Westminster Strike

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude Canon Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)/arr. Sandra Eithun (b. 1963)
Handbell Choir

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 forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God's abiding love.

Silence is kept for reflection.

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.

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.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing ELW 807

GREETING

During this time, the presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.

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.

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. **Amen.**

First Reading: Joshua 5:9-12

⁹ The LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt.” And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

¹⁰ While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 32



Be glad, you righ-teous, and re-joice in the LORD.

¹ Happy are they whose transgressions [|] are forgiven,
and whose sin is [|] put away!

² **Happy are they to whom the LORD im-[|]putes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there [|] is no guile! R**

³ While I held my tongue, my bones with-[|]ered away,
because of my groaning [|] all day long.

⁴ **For your hand was heavy upon me [|] day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the [|] heat of summer.**

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not con-[|]ceal my guilt.

I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.” Then you forgave me the guilt [|] of my sin.

⁶ **Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in [|] time of trouble;
when the great waters overflow, they [|] shall not reach them. R**

⁷ You are my hiding-place; you preserve [|] me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts [|] of deliverance.

⁸ **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way that ^l you should go;
I will guide you ^l with my eye.**

⁹ Do not be like horse or mule, which have no ^l understanding;
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will ^l not stay near you.”

¹⁰ **Great are the tribulations ^l of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust ^l in the LORD.**

¹¹ Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice ^l in the LORD;
shout for joy, all who are ^l true of heart. **R**

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

One way to describe the gospel is the promise that in Christ everything is transformed into newness. All mistakes, all deliberate sins, all old history is reconciled with Christ's resurrection. This is Paul's strong message to the congregation in the city of Corinth.

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷ So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³ So he told them this parable: ^{11b} “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’” ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ ³¹ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Rev. Mark Kreemer

HYMN OF THE DAY

Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling

ELW 608

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

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

After each petition the following response is given

God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

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. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

OFFERING

ANTHEM:

Wayfaring Stranger
Handbell Choir

arr. Eithun

OFFERTORY



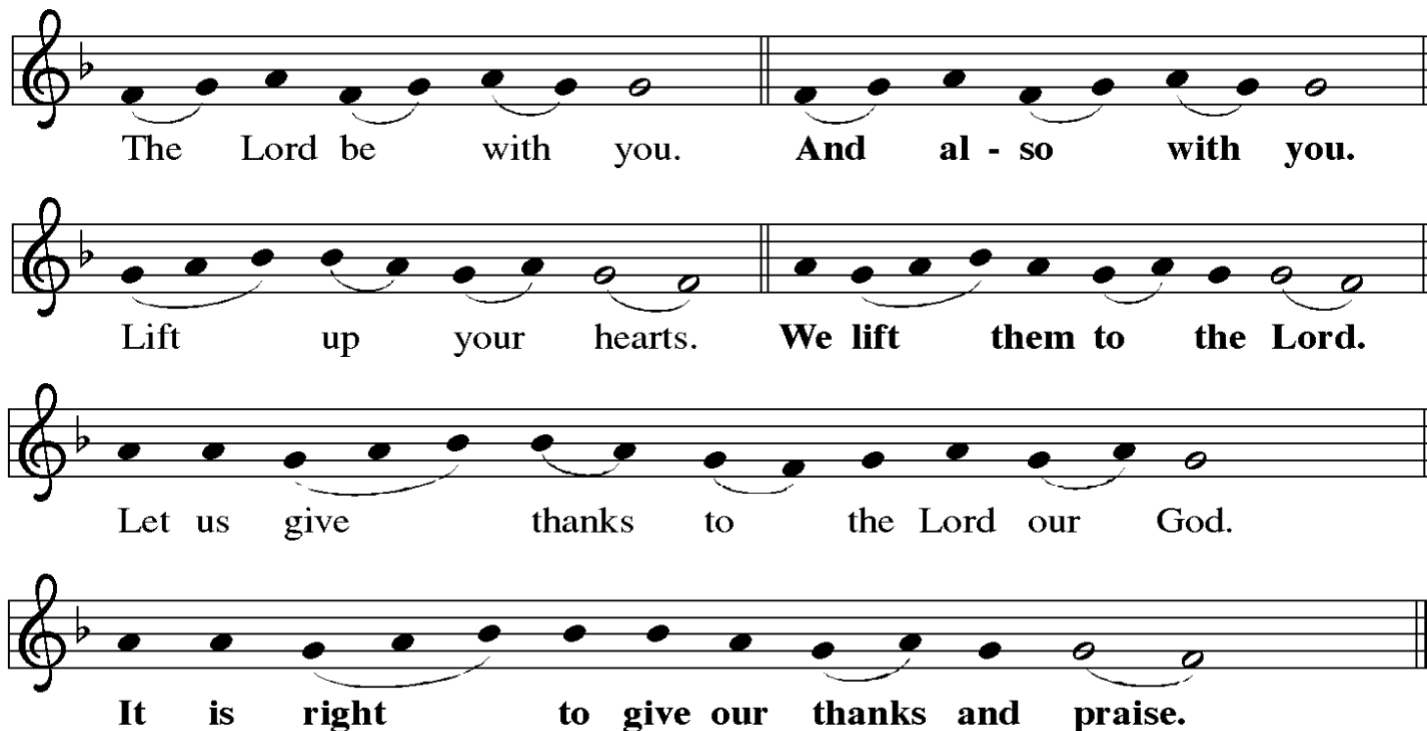
Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

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. **Amen.**

DIALOGUE



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

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

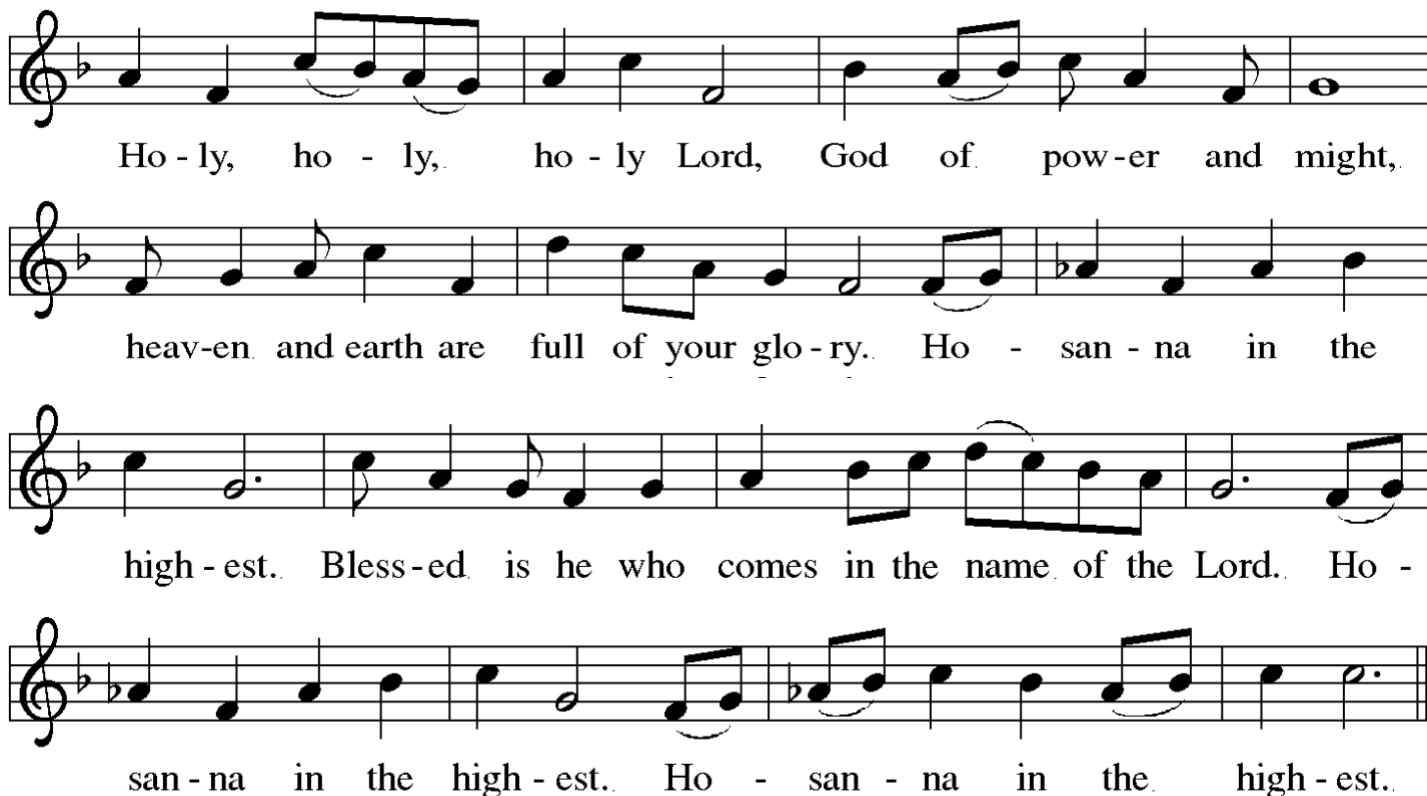
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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.....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:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



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

LORD'S PRAYER

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

All who are hungry, come!

The feast of grace is spread.

COMMUNION



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 O Sacred Head Now Wounded arr. Cindy Berry (b. 1949)
(In the setting of Frideric Chopin's Prelude in C Minor)
Pianist, Carol Butler

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound ELW 779

BLESSING

God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit,
✠ bless you now and forever.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.
Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE March Martha Sobaje (b. 1948)

Sandra Eithun, M.M.Ed—is a graduate of Silver Lake College in Manitowoc, WI, with an emphasis in the Kodály teaching method, keyboard, and flute. She is currently on the faculty at Holy Family Conservatory of Music in Manitowoc, WI, leading the handbell program there. She served as Director of Music Ministry, handbell director, children’s choir director, organist and choral accompanist at First Congregational United Church of Christ in New London, WI from 1992-2021. She directed the Silver Lake College Handbell Ensemble from 2009-2020, is an active member of the Handbell Musicians of America and has served on their Area VII Board of Directors. She has been commissioned to write music for many events and for numerous individual handbell ensembles. Most recently, she received the honor of being given the esteemed Donald E. Allured Original Composition Award for the 2020 Week of Handbells in Bay View, MI. She has over 600 pieces for handbells in publication as well as several sacred keyboard books and teaching collections for the incorporation of handbells in the music classroom.

Cindy Berry was born in Houston, Texas, and attended Houston Baptist University. Cindy is the composer/arranger of sacred choral anthems for all voicings, for children's anthems, children's musicals, and piano collections for several major publishers. She frequently serves as a choral and keyboard clinician and leads "composer weekends" and various workshops throughout the country. Her goal as a musician is to always present her music as an offering of worship to God, and to help lead others in worshiping and praising God also. She has received ASCAP Special Awards for the past several years.

Dr. Martha Sobaje is Minister of Music and Education at Phillips Memorial Baptist Church, and Adjunct Instructor of Music at the Community College of Rhode Island. She has previously held positions on the faculties of Gordon College, Barrington College, and the University of Northern Colorado. She holds the Bachelor of Music degree in Organ Performance from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California, the Master of Music degree in Organ Performance and Church Music from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, where she studied organ with Russell Saunders and David Craighead, and the Doctor of Sacred Music degree from the Graduate Theological Foundation in South Bend, Indiana. Dr. Sobaje has conducted choirs at all levels, including the Colorado Youth Chorale, of which she was the founder and director. She has conducted the Rhode Island Junior High All-State Chorus and the Rhode Island High School All-State Chamber Singers, has adjudicated the Rhode Island All-State auditions, the Rhode Island Music Educators High School Choral Festival, and the Rhode Island South County Choral Festival. She is a member of ASCAP, and, in addition to many choral, organ, and handbell publications, she has authored articles for Journal of Church Music, School Music News, Rhode Island Music Educators Review, Woodwind World-Brass & Percussion, The College Music Symposium, The Instrumentalist, and GlorySounds. She has also lectured and served as a clinician at several conventions across the country.

Capital Campaign Report

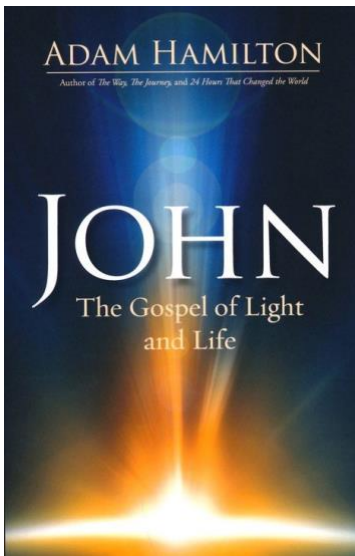
Remaining Phase One Projects	\$377,000
Funds raised	\$351,317
<hr/>	
Remaining funds to be raised	\$ 25,683

Adult Sunday School Class

God's Redemptive Grace in Jesus

Jacob's well was there and Jesus, tired out from his journey, was sitting by the well. (John 4:6)

Did you know that Shechem of the Old Testament is Sychar in the New Testament? The lessons to come will focus on the tragic story of Dinah at Shechem told in Genesis 34 and then the story of the woman in Sychar at Jacob's well in John 4. God's grace abounds! Please join us on Sunday for this fascinating study at 11:30, third floor, Parish Hall. An elevator is available for your convenience. Please note. **No class on Palm Sunday (April 13) or Easter (April 20).**



Thursday Morning Bible Study

John: The Gospel of Light and Life

By: Adam Hamilton

The Gospel of John is the most deeply spiritual of the four gospels. This writing is filled with rich images and profound truths, but John notes that his aim in writing the gospel is that readers will not only believe in Jesus Christ, but that they “may have life in his name.”

Adults, youth, and children alike can experience a season of spiritual growth and life-changing renewal in Adam Hamilton's six-week, DVD-series, John: The Gospel of Light and Life. You'll follow the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus through the Gospel of John and understand the context of some of the best-known verses in the New Testament.

Windows to Wonder: A Devotional Crafting Series for Lent 2025

This Lent, engage your faith through devotional crafting with Windows to Wonder, a creative series inspired by Nicodemus' journey in the Gospel of John. Choose from three free creative options: a mystery cross-stitch stitch-along, a crochet-along shawl, or weekly creative writing prompts. Each craft is paired with a devotional podcast co-hosted by Pastors Tina Crog and Angel Jackson, exploring how we see Jesus more clearly over time.



Deepen your faith with this prayerful, hands-on Lenten journey!

All materials are free. Visit www.stitchologycrafts.com/windowstowondersal

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.

Community Social Media Pages

Facebook & Instagram, Search "*Massillon Lutheran Churches*"

Facebook

"St Paul's Lutheran Church in Massillon" or *"Cathedral Concerts at St Paul's"*

Massillon Area Clergy Association Community Lenten Worship Services

April 2nd, First UMC
301 Lincoln Way E, Massillon, OH 44646
Rev. David Anderson preaching on penitence

April 9th, First Baptist Church
20 Sixth St. SE, Massillon, OH 44646
Rev. Ed Hill preaching on repentance

Through the season of Lent, churches in the Massillon area will once again join together for worship and Holy Communion, rotating locations and preachers. Our focus this year is “The Five Themes of Lent.”

A light dinner of soup and salad will be served at 5:30pm. Then at 6:30pm, we will worship together. Childcare may be provided. Offerings will go to the Family Living Center, which provides housing for local families in need.

Forty Days of Giving

We have bottled water, personal water bottles, cold water on our refrigerator doors, rainforest showerheads. Our daily water supply is simply not a matter that we think about often. But in many countries, obtaining daily water is sometimes impossible or may involve walking many miles to the nearest well which may or may not provide safe water on any given day.

This Lenten season we will be joining in the ELCA Safe Water Access project to provide a well in a needy community. Please consider picking up a Lenten folder and donating one dollar a day during Lent. If we can collect just 62 folders, we can provide an entire well!!! You can fold a bill into the slots, merely put the bills inside the folder, or enclose a check written to St. Paul.

Thank you so much for your generosity during the 40 days of Lent.

Welfare and Social Action Committee and Evangelism Committee

St. Joseph Lenten Concert Series

Wednesdays 12:00 noon

April 2: Dennis Roden, Little Flower Catholic Church

April 9: Heather Cooper, Christ Presbyterian Church, Canton

Last Cathedral Concert for '24-'25

The Canton Symphony Orchestra Chorus

Sunday, May 17, 2025, 2:00 pm

“Come to the Water”

Upcoming St. Paul's Concerts

These concerts are FREE and open to all. Your freewill offering is gratefully received.

Sonnenberg Station, Sunday, April 6, 3:00 PM



Holy Week

Palm Sunday

April 13th 10:00 am

The Blessing of the Palms and Easter Cantata “The Last Words of Christ”

We follow Christ from triumphal entry to the cross, each waypoint of the journey marked by Jesus’ compassion for those who would betray, mock, accuse, or do violence to him. Though persecuted and beaten, Jesus the Son of God is not disgraced; instead, he asks forgiveness for those who put him to death.

Maundy Thursday

April 17th 7:00 pm

Holy Communion & the stripping of the Altar

This evening our Lenten observance comes to an end, and we gather with Christians around the world to celebrate the Three Days of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Tonight, we remember Christ’s last meal with his disciples, but the central focus is his commandment that we live out the promise embodied in this meal. As Jesus washed his disciples’ feet, so we are called to give and receive love in humble service to one another.

Good Friday

April 18th 12:00 noon

The Stations of the Cross at St Mary’s Catholic Church

Good Friday

7:00 pm

The Veneration of the Cross at St Paul’s

Life and death stand side by side as we enter into Good Friday. In John’s passion account, Jesus reveals the power and glory of God, even as he is put on trial and sentenced to death. Standing with the disciples at the foot of the cross, we pray for the whole world in the ancient bidding prayer, as Christ’s death offers life to all.

Easter Sunrise

April 20th 7:30 am

The tomb is empty “He is Risen”

Easter Traditional Service

April 20th 10:00 am

Special Music with the Camarada Brass

Today Christ is risen, and we gather together with astonishment and joy. Christ is risen, and we have been set free from the bonds of death. Christ is risen, and we are forgiven. Christ is risen, and with the women at the tomb and Peter, we are amazed. Let us rejoice: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Thank you to those serving today:

Presiding Minister	Rev. Mark Kreemer
Director of Music	Dr. Abigail Haake
Assisting Minister	Sue Reid
Lector	Lynda Klein
Greeter	Jackie Pritchett
Communion Assistants	Shane Jackson & Barb Palmer
Sacristan	Lynda Klein
Ushers	Gary Collard, Chris Hall, Shane Jackson, & Craig Maurer
Soundboard	Jim Johnson
Video/Live-Stream	John Stanko

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GATHERING SONG Come, Thou Fount Of Every Blessing ELW 807
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HYMN OF THE DAY Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling ELW 608
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SENDING SONG Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound ELW 779
Public Domain



Less Grumbling, More Humbling

Grumbling! The crowd around Jesus—the “in” crowd, that is—was grumbling. Grumbling because Jesus welcomed those who traditionally had been set apart: tax collectors and sinners. Who are those who cause us to grumble? Whose seemingly undeserved handout or unearned status change filled our hearts with resentment this week? Jesus speaks to us today because we too often see life as a game with winners and losers, points and playbooks, offense and defense. Can we open our hearts and minds to hear today’s humbling good news? God’s love is freely shared with all: we cannot earn it, we cannot deserve it. When we attend worship, we do so out of thanksgiving and praise for God’s glory, hunger and thirst for God’s word and sacrament. We do not attend worship to achieve some status within God’s kingdom. When we help a neighbor, share with a stranger, assist the afflicted, or acknowledge the overlooked we do so because Christ first did the same for us. We respond to God’s grace and mercy with our own feeble attempts to emulate God’s perfect love. It is challenging, exhausting, never-ending, perspective-altering, radically humbling work. It’s work that is impossible to do without the inspiration of Christ, the nourishment of wine and bread, and the strength of the saints who have gone before us and with whom we walk Christ’s path today. Let us find those in our world who teach us about Christ’s unending reconciliation, so that we can all celebrate and rejoice as the family of God.

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing



1 Come, thou Fount of ev - 'ry bless-ing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
2 Here I raise my Eb - en - e - zer: "Hith-er by thy help I've come";
3 Oh, to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be;



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud - est praise.
and I hope, by thy good plea - sure, safe - ly to ar - rive at home.
let that grace now like a fet - ter bind my wan-d'ring heart to thee.



While the hope of end-less glo - ry fills my heart with joy and love,
Je - sus sought me when a strang - er, wan-d'ring from the fold of God;
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.



teach me ev - er to a - dore thee; may I still thy good-ness prove.
he, to res - cue me from dan - ger, in - ter - posed his pre - cious blood.
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

Text: Robert Robinson, 1735–1790, alt.

Music: NETTLETON, J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part II, 1813

Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling



1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
3 Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for



you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

Refrain



watch - ing for you and for me.
mer - cies for you and for me? "Come home, come home!
par - don for you and for me.



You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,



Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847-1909

Music: THOMPSON, Will L. Thompson

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound



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