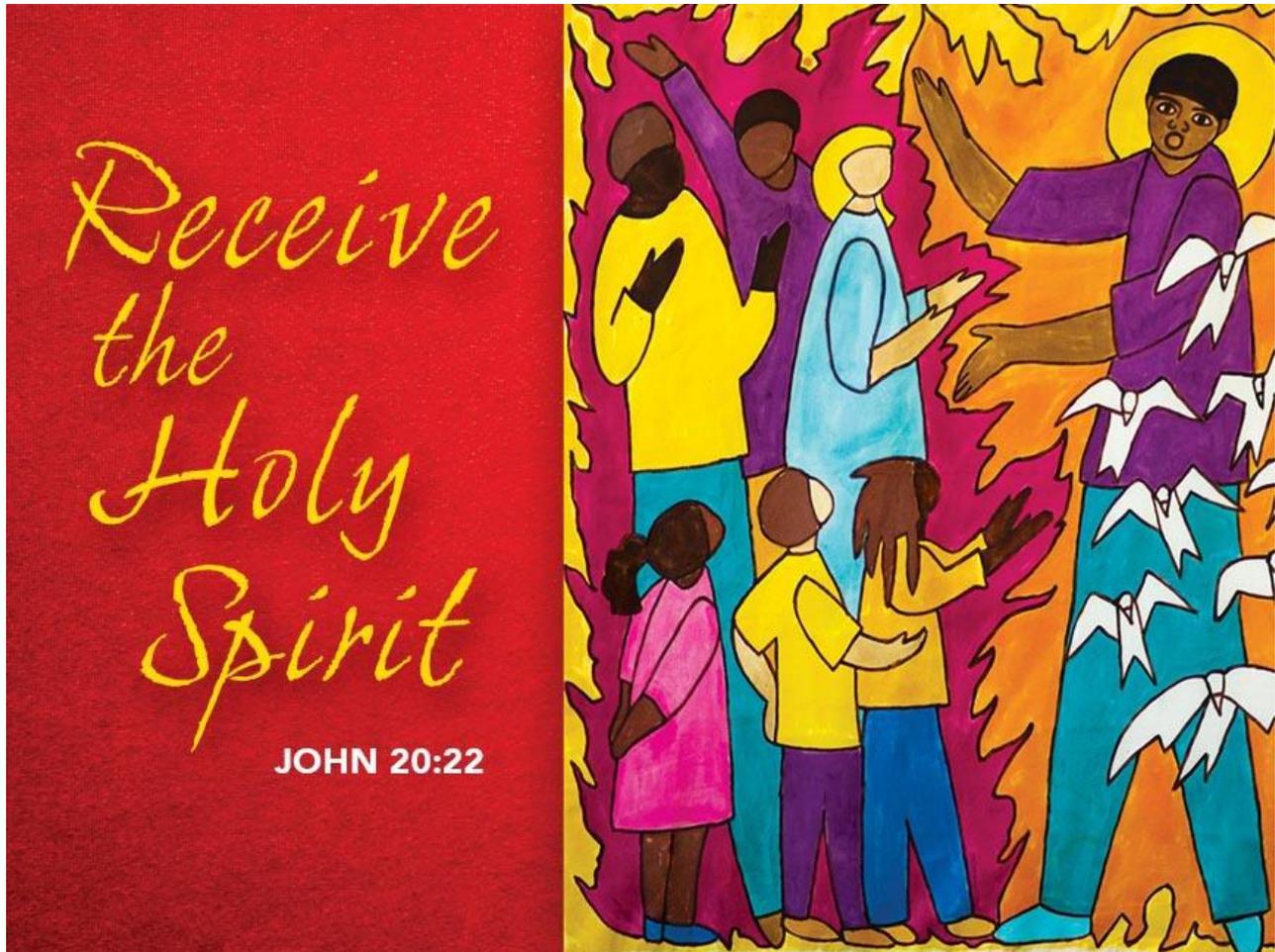


# St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

August 24<sup>th</sup>, 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 water bottle and information about our church. You may also want to download our new St. Paul's App and visit our website. Information on both are 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 Peg Gibbs to the Glory of God.

### **Introduction**

Because all of its baptized members share in Christ's ministry of love and service, the church equips and supports them for their ministries in the world. Within this context of ministry, the church calls some of its baptized members for specific ministries.

Within the people of God and for the sake of the gospel ministry entrusted to all believers, God has instituted the office of the ministry of word and sacrament. In the service of Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, the church entrusts this office to those who have accepted the church's call and sends them into this ministry.

### **Readings and Psalm**

#### **Isaiah 42:5-9**

*I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness.*

#### **Acts 20:28-35**

*And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace.*

#### **Matthew 7:24-37**

*Everyone, then, who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.*

### **In our prayers today we will remember**

*Olivia Harrington, Darlene Lewis, Cindy Nash, Michael Jordan, Paul Daily, Rick Thesis, Jerry Sturtz, Judy Hall, Richard Green, Arthur Barnett, and Randy Balder.*

## The Westminster Strike Welcome and Announcements

**Prelude:** Here I Am, Lord arr. Marianne Kim (b. 1972)

### Confession and Forgiveness

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

In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

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.

**Amen.**

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

*The assembly kneels or stands. Silence is kept for reflection.*

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**GATHERING HYMN**

We All Are One in Mission

ELW 576

### 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.**

*Refrain*



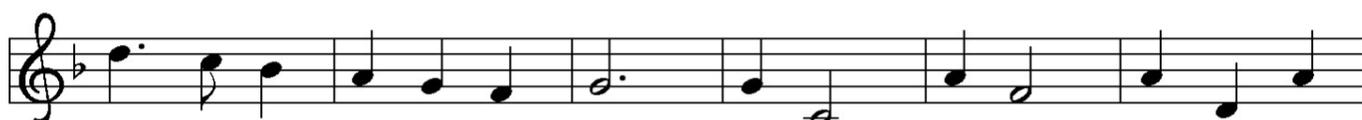
This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God. Al - le -



lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo - ple of God. Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and



strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

*Refrain*



This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God. Al - le -



lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God, and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or, glo - ry, and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

*Final refrain*

This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God,  
 for the Lamb who was slain has be - gun his reign.  
 Al - le - lu - ia. al - le - lu - ia. al - le - lu - ia.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty and merciful God, you built your church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and you instituted the office of the ministry of word and sacrament so that the apostolic and prophetic work might continue throughout the ages. Grant that Pastor Mark, who is celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination, may carry out this ministry faithfully in the power of your Spirit; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## First Reading: Isaiah 42:5-9

- <sup>5</sup> Thus says God, the LORD,  
 who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
 who spread out the earth and what comes from it,  
 who gives breath to the people upon it  
 and spirit to those who walk in it:  
<sup>6</sup> I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness;  
 I have taken you by the hand and kept you;  
 I have given you as a covenant to the people,  
 a light to the nations, <sup>7</sup> to open the eyes that are blind,  
 to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
 from the prison those who sit in darkness.  
<sup>8</sup> I am the LORD; that is my name;  
 my glory I give to no other,  
 nor my praise to idols.

<sup>9</sup> See, the former things have come to pass,  
and new things I now declare;  
before they spring forth,  
I tell you of them..  
The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### Second Reading: Acts 20:28-35

<sup>28</sup> Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. <sup>29</sup> I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. <sup>30</sup> Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them. <sup>31</sup> Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to warn everyone with tears. <sup>32</sup> And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace, a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified. <sup>33</sup> I coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. <sup>34</sup> You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions. <sup>35</sup> In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' ”.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### ALLELUIA VERSE



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,  
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. *Repeat alleluia*  
Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 7:24-37**

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>24</sup> “Everyone, then, who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!”

<sup>28</sup> Now when Jesus had finished saying these words, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, <sup>29</sup> for he taught them as one having authority and not as their scribes. The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

**Rev. Karen Asmus-Alsnauer**

## **HYMN OF THE DAY**

The Church’s One Foundation

ELW 654

## **Presentation**

**Presenter:** I present the Rev. Mark Kreemer, who was ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament 25 years ago, having been prepared, examined, and called by the church to this ministry through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

We gather today to give thanks to God for Mark’s ministry, to celebrate God’s faithfulness across these 25 years, and to affirm once again the call of the gospel that sustains us all.

**Assembly:**

**Thanks be to God.**

(Presenter steps aside. Assembly is seated.)

## **Reflections on the Call**

All baptized Christians are called to share in Christ's ministry of love and service in the world, to the glory of God and for the sake of the human family and the whole creation.

Mark, 25 years ago, by the laying on of hands and prayer, you were entrusted with the office of Word and Sacrament in the one holy catholic and apostolic church. Today we give thanks for the Spirit's guidance and sustaining grace in your life and for your ministry among the people of God.

*A reading from Matthew:* Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (*Matthew 28:18-20*)

*A reading from First Corinthians:* I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (*1 Corinthians 11:23-26*)

## **Reaffirmation of Call**

### **Presiding Minister:**

Mark, in the presence of God and this assembly, we ask:

Will you continue in the covenant of your ordination, believing that the church's call is God's call to the ministry of Word and Sacrament?

**I will, and I ask God to help me.**

Will you continue to preach and teach in accordance with the holy scriptures and the creeds and confessions of the church?

**I will, and I ask God to help me.**

Will you continue in prayer, in faithful study of the Word, and in service to God's people through Word and Sacrament, that the gospel may be known in your living and in your loving?

**I will, and I ask God to help me.**

**Presiding Minister:**

Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously give you the strength and compassion to continue them.

**Assembly:**

**Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Let us pray for the church, the creation, and the whole people of God, for God is near.

*After each petition the following response is given:*

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Confident in God's presence and promise, we entrust our prayers to the one who always receives them; through Jesus Christ, our wisdom and companion.

**Amen.**

## **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**OFFERTORY:**

Anthem: I Choose Love  
Chamber Choir

Mark Miller (b. 1967)

*In the midst of pain, I choose love. In the midst of pain, sorrow falling down like rain, I await the sun again, I choose love. In the midst of war, I choose peace. In the midst of war, hate and anger keeping score, I will seek the good once more, I choose peace. When my world falls down, I will rise. When my world falls down, explanations can't be found, I will climb to holy ground, I will rise. In the midst of pain, I choose love. In the midst of pain, sorrow falling down like rain, I await the sun again, I choose love.*

## OFFERTORY



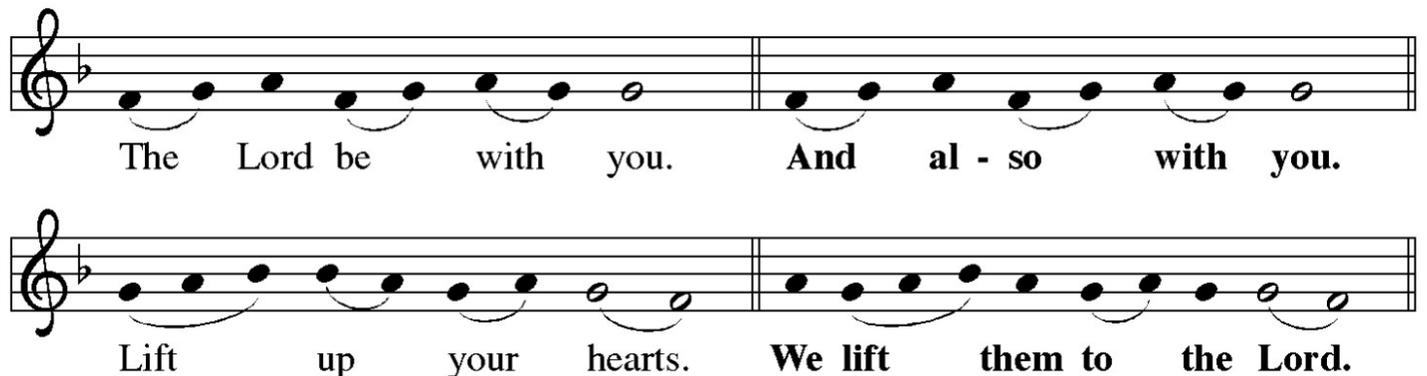
Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right  
spir-it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take  
not your Ho-ly Spir-it from me. Re-store to me the joy of  
your sal-va-tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir-it.

## OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Creator God, in your wisdom you bring forth all that is good and the harvest is plentiful. Strengthen us at your table with these gifts of the earth and our labor, that we may work for the good of all; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING



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.

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, .... 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.

## **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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**

The kingdom of God is set before you.  
Eat and rejoice

## **COMMUNION SONG**



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:**

Bread of Heaven  
Sammy Kay Smith, soprano

Karen Marrolli (b. 1975)

*Holy bread of heaven, come and feed our souls. Come and quench our thirst and make us whole, for our hunger for justice and hope has brought us here. Come and soothe our suffering and our fear. Holy bread of heaven, come and bring us life. Come and quell all violence and all strife, for our thirst for compassion and love has brought us here. Come and bid all conflict disappear. Come and soothe our suffering and our fear. Holy bread of heaven, come and bring your light. Come and fracture hopelessness and nightmares, for our hunger for healing will ever bring us here, welcoming your children, far and near.*

**TABLE BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, almighty and gracious God, that you have fed us with heavenly food, the body and blood of your Son, uniting us through him in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

We thank you for raising up among us faithful servants for the ministry of word and sacrament, especially for Pastor Mark, and we pray that *he* may continue to exemplify the gospel in word and deed. Grant that we, with Pastor Mark, may joyfully serve you all our days and finally rejoice in your glory; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**SENDING HYMN** I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light ELW 815

**BLESSING**

The love of God abound in you; the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ fill your hearts; and the life of the Spirit ✝ bless you and give you peace.

**Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Live by the Spirit.  
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Trumpet Tune

Craig Phillips (b. 1961)

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## Upcoming Special Music:

August 31: Loren Veigel

Dwight Butler, baritone

September 7: Carol Butler, Richard Evert, Heidi Hall

## Choir Returns

**Choir rehearsals will resume on Wednesday, September 10! All are welcome!**

## Pastor Mark's 25<sup>th</sup> Ordination Anniversary

A catered dinner will follow the church service today, and all are invited to celebrate with Pastor Mark and his family.

## Church Picnic Sunday September 14

Mark your calendar to join us for our annual picnic following our 10:00 AM service. We will be serving BBQ Ribs and Chicken.

Please bring a covered dish. If your **last name** starts with

A-F - bring a dessert

G-N - bring a salad or appetizer

O-Z - bring side dish

We will have special music from **Tom Judge**, who plays in the band *Digital Natives*. Tom is the son-in-law of Mary Ann and Russ Poling. Tom recently played in the Battle of the Bands at the Fan Fest for the Hall of Fame. There will be games on the lawn, so plan to join in the fun.

## Assisted Hearing Devices Available

Four assisted listening devices are available at the sound system table in the back of the sanctuary at the beginning of worship. Please see Jim Johnson or John Stanko if you need assistance with these devices.



You can also use your smartphone to access the system. Go to your app store and download the **WaveCAST** app. Then connect to the sanctuary Wi-Fi: **Network:** sound media **Password:** Sound127

## Capital Campaign Report

Construction is well underway on our new entrance and restrooms, and we are deeply grateful for the generosity of our members that has made this possible—**the project is fully funded!**

However, this is not the end of our building and maintenance needs. Two important projects still lie ahead: addressing the window wells around the base of the Parish Hall and upgrading the heating and cooling system in that same space. While we do not yet have formal estimates for these projects, we know they will come at a significant cost.

**That's why we are asking everyone to continue supporting the Capital Campaign.** Your continued giving will ensure that we can maintain a safe, welcoming, and comfortable environment for all who come through our doors.

We hope to have estimates for the next phase of work by the end of the summer and will keep you informed as those plans develop. In the meantime, thank you for your ongoing faithfulness and generosity.

## 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*”**

## **Sunday School Classes Starting**

The adult Sunday School class and the Thursday Morning Bible Study will reconvene with another series of lessons on September 8.

### **Adult Sunday School**

#### **Who is God the Holy Spirit?**

“The Spirit will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:13a)

The Holy Spirit may be the most neglected and misunderstood person of the Holy Trinity. God the Father and God the Son seem more relatable and easier to embrace. The lessons for September and October will focus on the person and work of the Holy Spirit and the privilege we have as believers to access this “power from on high.” Please join us following the Sunday worship service in the Parish Hall, top floor, as we begin this interesting series of lessons. We typically start at 11:30 and conclude shortly past noon. An elevator is available for easy access. Hope to see you there!

### **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.**



## **Thank you to those serving today:**

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Presiding Minister</b>   | <b>Rev. Mark Kreemer</b>   |
| <b>Director of Music</b>    | <b>Dr. Abigail Haake</b>   |
| <b>Preaching</b>            | <b>Rev. Karen Asmus-Alsnauer</b>                                   |
| <b>Assisting Minister</b>   | <b>Patricia Long</b>   |
| <b>Lector</b>               | <b>Larry &amp; Kim Oberlin</b>                                     |
| <b>Greeter</b>              | <b>Greg &amp; Lynda Klein</b>                                      |
| <b>Communion Assistants</b> | <b>Barb Palmer &amp; Gary Collard</b>                              |
| <b>Sacristan</b>            | <b>Lynda Klein</b>   |
| <b>Ushers</b>               | <b>Sue Ambrosic, Becky Johnson,<br/>Patty Long, &amp; Sue Reid</b> |
| <b>Soundboard</b>           | <b>Jim Johnson</b>   |
| <b>Video/Live-Stream</b>    | <b>John Stanko</b>   |

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**GATHERING HYMN**                      We All Are One in Mission                      ELW 576

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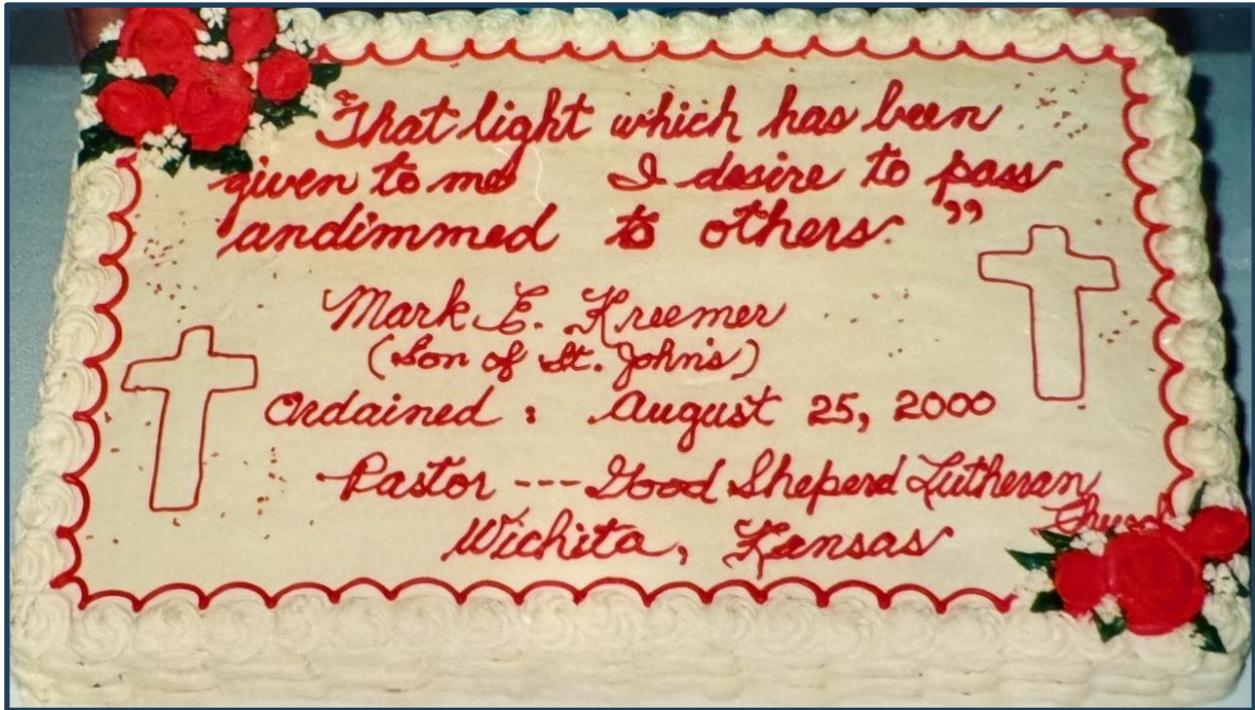
**HYMN OF THE DAY**                      The Church's One Foundation                      ELW 654

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**SENDING HYMN**                      I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light                      ELW 815

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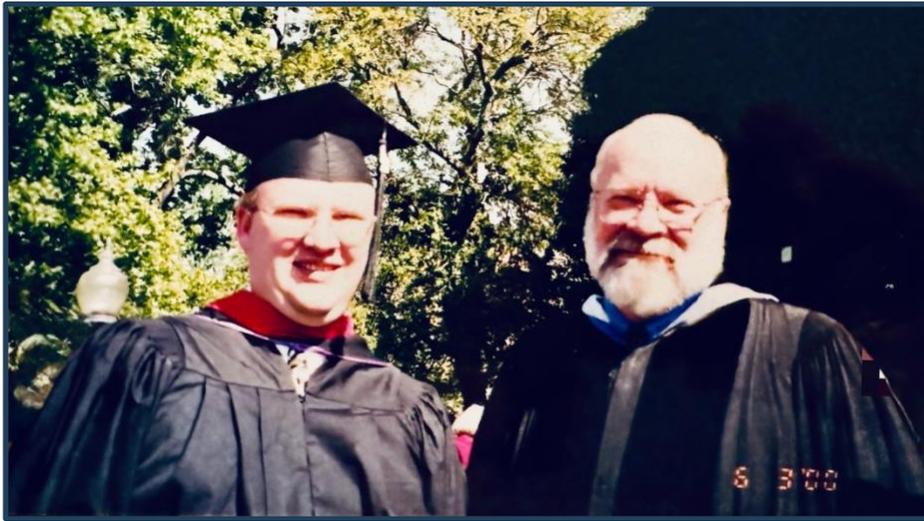
# In Celebration of the Ordination of Rev. Mark Kreemer



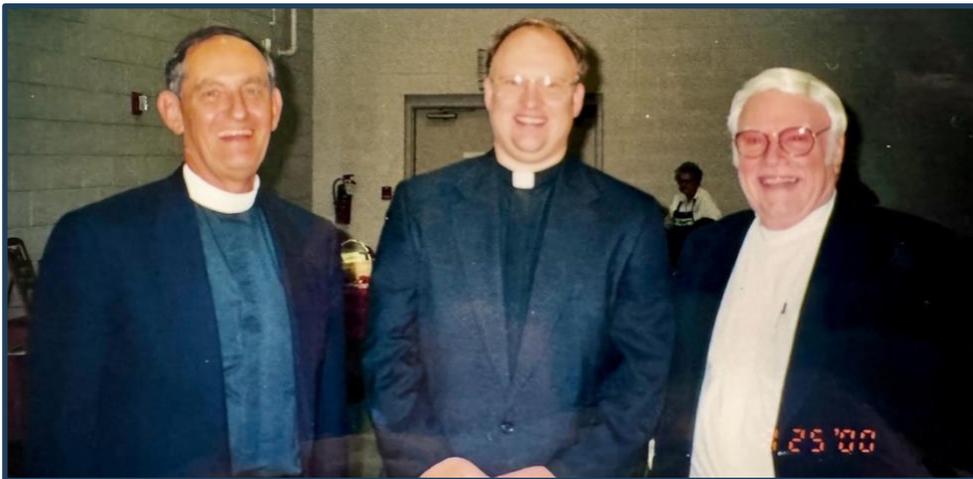
The celebration cake at his ordination on August 25, 2000.



Pastor Mark and Veronica at his ordination.



In June 2020 at his graduation with one of his professors, Dr. Tim Huffman.



Pastor Mark with Bishop Charlie Maahs on the left and Pastor George Hartman on the right—his pastor growing up who inspired him to go into the ministry.

After graduation and ordination, Pastor Mark was installed at his first church, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Wichita.



## We All Are One in Mission



1 We all are one in mis - sion; we all are one in call,  
2 We all are called for ser - vice, to wit-ness in God's name.  
3 Now let us be u - nit - ed, and let our song be heard.



our var-ied gifts u - nit - ed by Christ, the Lord of all.  
Our min - is - tries are dif - f'rent; our pur - pose is the same:  
Now let us be a ves - sel for God's re - deem-ing Word.



A sin - gle great com - mis - sion com - pels us from a - bove  
to touch the lives of oth - ers with God's sur - pris-ing grace,  
We all are one in mis - sion; we all are one in call,



to plan and work to - geth - er that all may know Christ's love.  
so ev - 'ry folk and na - tion may feel God's warm em - brace.  
our var - ied gifts u - nit - ed by Christ, the Lord of all.

Text: Rusty Edwards, b. 1955

Music: KUORTANE, Finnish folk tune

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# The Church's One Foundation



1 The church's one foun - da - tion is Je - sus Christ, her Lord;  
2 E - lect from ev - 'ry na - tion, yet one o'er all the earth,  
3 Though with a scorn - ful won - der this world sees her op - pressed,  
4 Through toil and trib - u - la - tion and tu - mult of her war,  
5 Yet she on earth has u - nion with God, the Three in One,



she is his new cre - a - tion by wa - ter and the word.  
her char - ter of sal - va - tion one Lord, one faith, one birth:  
by schisms . . rent a - sund - er, by her - e - sies dis - tressed,  
she waits the con - sum - ma - tion of peace for - ev - er - more;  
and mys - tic sweet com - mu - nion with those whose rest is won.



From heav'n he came and sought her to be his ho - ly bride;  
one ho - ly name she bless - es, par - takes one ho - ly food,  
yet saints their watch are keep - ing; their cry goes up: "How long?"  
till with the vi - sion glo - rious her long - ing eyes are blest,  
Oh, bless - ed heav'n - ly cho - rus! Lord, save us by your grace,



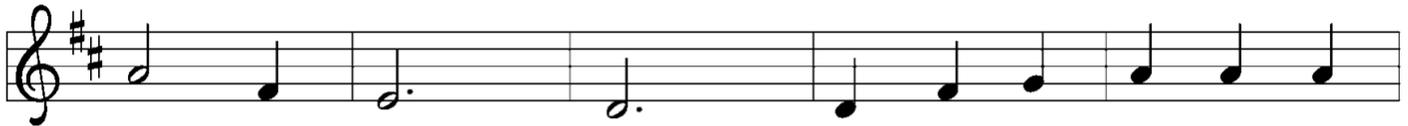
with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.  
and to one hope she press - es with ev - 'ry grace en - dued.  
and soon the night of weep - ing shall be the morn of song.  
and the great church vic - to - rious shall be the church at rest.  
that we, like saints be - fore us, may see you face to face.

Text: Samuel J. Stone, 1839–1900  
Music: AURELIA, Samuel S. Wesley, 1810–1876

# I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light



1 I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to  
2 I want to see . . . the bright-ness of God. I want to  
3 I'm look - ing for . . . the com - ing of Christ. I want to



fol - low Je - sus. God set the stars to give  
look at Je - sus. Clear Sun of righ - teous-ness,  
be with Je - sus. When we have run . . . . with



light to the world. The star of my life is Je - sus.  
shine on my path, and show me the way to the Fa - ther.  
pa - tience the race, we shall know the joy of Je - sus.

## *Refrain*



In him there is no dark-ness at all. The night and the



day are both a - like. The Lamb is the light of the



cit - y of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

Text: Kathleen Thomerson, b. 1934

Music: HOUSTON, Kathleen Thomerson

Text and music © 1970, 1975 Celebration

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# Comments from the Cloud of Witnesses

As a flame of fire has three qualities, so there is one God in three Persons. How? A flame is made up of brilliant light and red power and fiery heat. It has brilliant light that it may shine, and red power that it may endure, and fiery heat that it may burn. There, for the brilliant light, we understand the Father, who with paternal love opens his brightness to the faithful; and by the red power, which is in the flame that it may be strong, we understand the Son, who took on a body born from a virgin, in which his divine powers were shown; and by the fiery heat, we understand the Holy Spirit, who burns ardently in the minds of the faithful.

—*Hildegard of Bingen*

[Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, trans. Columba Hart and Jane Bishop (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 163-164.]

## God's Verbs

Through the lens of the gospel, today's texts offer a clear identification of God's work. What is God doing? God is reaching out to the bound-up to proclaim release from captivity. God is lifting up the oppressed. God is satisfying the needs of the afflicted. God raises up foundations. God restores and rebuilds, reconciles and sets free. God, whose word can shake the very foundations of the earth, speaks a better word than we've ever heard, or that we could ever speak. Like yeast that's included in bread dough or the seed of a particularly stubborn weed sown in the garden (Luke 13:18-21), when God speaks, there's no going back. The bread will be leavened; the garden will have a mustard bush; and precious daughters and sons of Abraham will be set free. It is God's work and God's activity that Isaiah calls us to be about. Why is the prophet so confident that light will conquer darkness and needs will be satisfied? Because this is already God's work, or as the prophet says, because "the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

These texts focus us on the *verbs*, the actions, of God. When we're attuned to the verbs of God within passages like these, it might make it easier to see and give witness to God's work and the verbs around us right now.