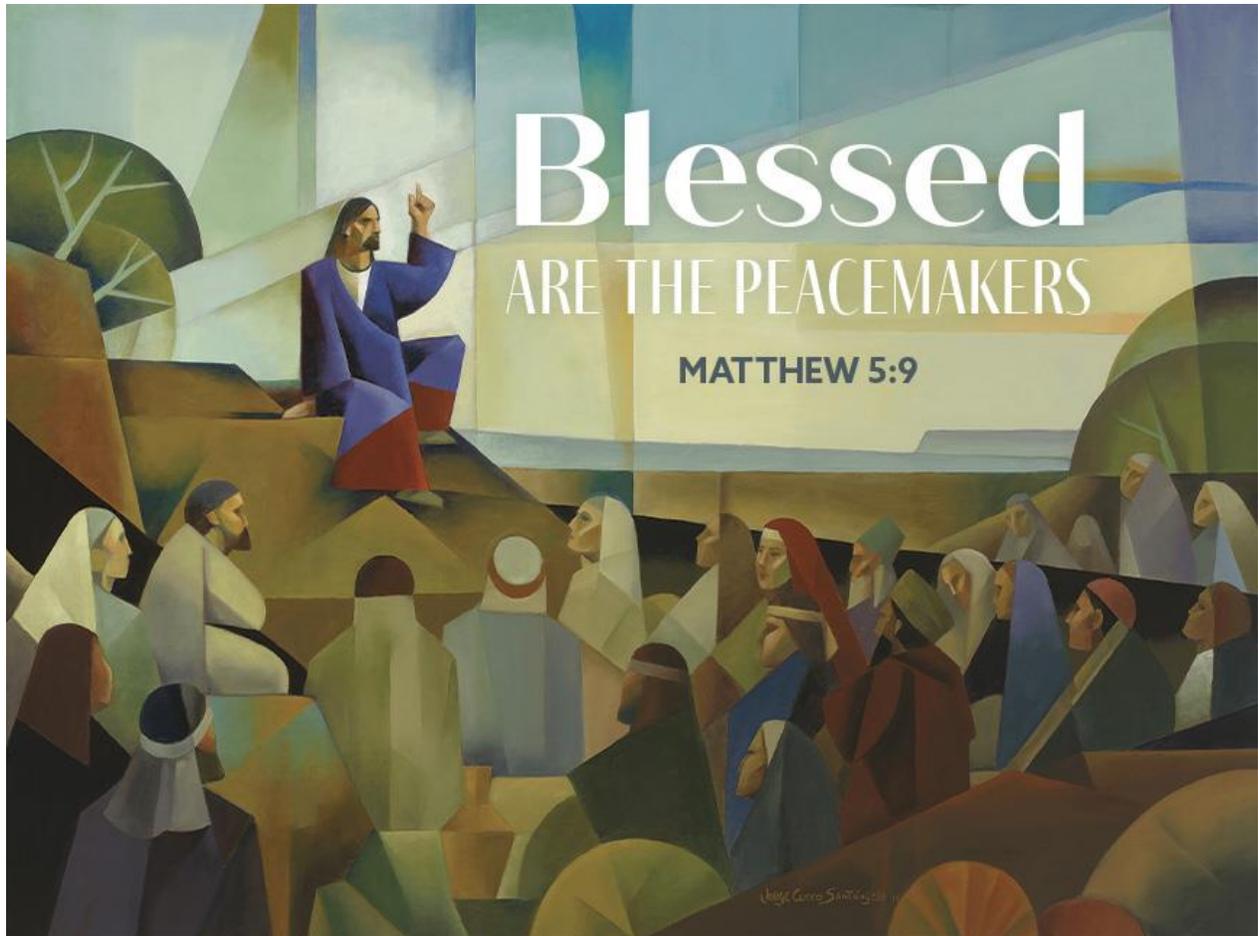


St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

February 1st, 2026



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 Leslie and Dick Longworth in Honor of Jake Foster's birthday.

Introduction

Who are the blessed ones of God? For Micah, they are those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. For Paul, they are the ones who find wisdom in the weakness of the cross. For Jesus, they are the poor, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who mourn, and those who hunger for righteousness. In baptism we find our blessed identity and calling in this countercultural way of living and serving.

Readings and Psalm

Micah 6:1-8

The offering of justice, kindness, humility.

Psalm 15

LORD, who may abide upon your holy hill? (*Ps. 15:1*)

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Christ crucified, the wisdom and power of God.

Matthew 5:1-12

The teaching of Christ: Beatitudes.

KYRIE

Refrain

Ky-ri-e e-lei-son, on our world and on our way.

Ky-ri-e e-lei-son, ev-ry day.

For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the unity of all;
for this holy house, for all who worship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. *Refrain*

That we may live out your impassioned response to the hungry and the poor;
that we may live out truth and justice and grace,
let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. *Refrain*

For peace in our hearts, for peace in our homes, for friends and family;
for life and for love, for our work and our play,
let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. *Refrain*

For your Spirit to guide; that you center our lives in the water and the Word;
that you nourish our souls with your body and blood,
let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. *Refrain*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Micah 6:1-8

¹ Hear what the LORD says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

² Hear, you mountains, the case of the LORD,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for the LORD has a case against his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

³ “O my people, what have I done to you?
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

⁴ For I brought you up from the land of Egypt
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,
and I sent before you Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam.

⁵ O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.”

⁶ “With what shall I come before the LORD
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

⁷ Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Anthem

Come Ye Saints

arr. A. Grant Williams

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

¹⁸ The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. ²² For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

²⁶ Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, ²⁹ so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA VERSE



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 5:1-12

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 5th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Rev. Mark Kreemer

HYMN OF THE DAY

Build a Longer Table

p. 18 of bulletin

APOSTLES' CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As God's beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

After each petition the following response is given:

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Confident that the Holy Spirit receives our prayers and answers us, we commend all for whom we pray to God's loving-kindness made known to us in Christ Jesus our Savior. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

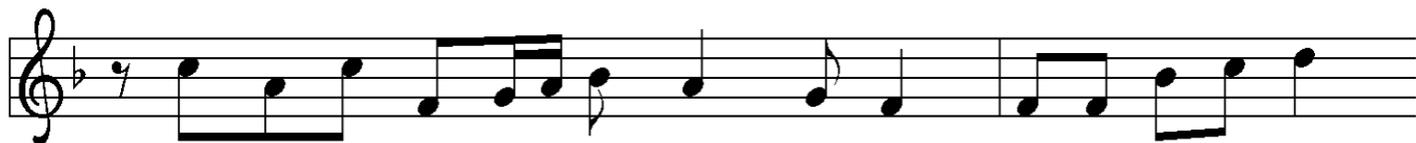
The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

ANTHEM

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

Bach

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.

God of majesty, no eye has seen, no ear has heard what you have prepared for those who love you, yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy. Use what we have gathered to feed us with the reign of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also 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'r and might,
 heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry, full of your glo-ry. Ho -
 san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high -
 est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
 san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

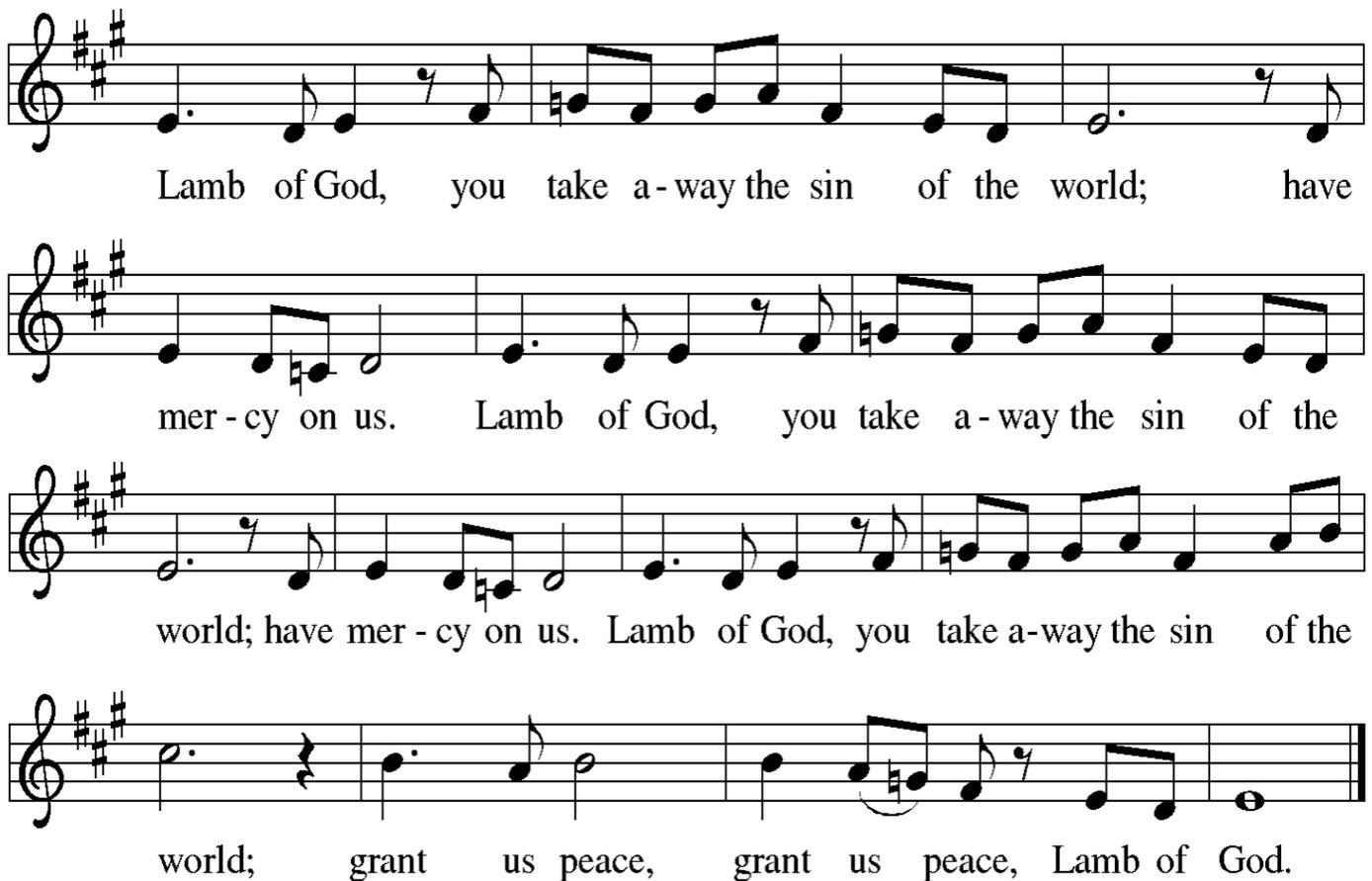
Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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 joy of the Lord is our strength.
Come, eat this meal of gladness.

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, grant us peace, Lamb of God.

Communion Panis Angelicus César Franck (1822-1890)
 Ave Maria Franz Schubert (1797-1828), arr. Lyne Latham

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.

Radiant God, we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. In the sacrament of his body and blood you have drawn us to your heart. Send us from this table with delight, that our lives may reflect the beauty of your love, and bear witness to all we have seen and heard, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve **ELW 551**

BLESSING

The Spirit of the triune God † bless you with joy,
anoint you with compassion, and send you in love.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Live in hope.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude La Rejouissance George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

In our prayers today we will remember

Cole, Marty, Curt & Paul Staver, Joan Spenser, Rick Theiss, Maggie Paul, Amy Williams, Jessie & Linda Shaffer, Nancy Lint, Steve Kress, Lenny Herd, Pastor Groenke, Judy Hall, Tom Fry, Kenneth & Jean Dexter, Anna Langenfeld, Arthur Barrett, Karen & Paul Daily.

Music Notes:

Today's Guest Musicians

Blooming Strings Quartet

Violin I: Kayla Brant

Violin II: Cynthia Snyder

Viola: Barb Phelps-Hutson

Cello: Carol Butler

The Blooming Strings Quartet is comprised of current or past teachers, a group of friends who have journeyed together over the years in the Alliance Symphony Orchestra and the Tuscarawas Philharmonic.

Coming in 2026! The St. Paul's Steelband!

Through a generous donation of five instruments, Eleanor Manes will be starting a steelband for the congregation and greater Massillon community. No musical background necessary, and any and all ages/skills are welcome. For more information, please contact Ellie: 330-400-8543.

Bell Choir to Start Up Rehearsals

Bells will be playing for the March 15 service. Rehearsals will be 2/25, 3/4, and 3/11. See Abby if you'd like to join this growing and fun group!

Cathedral Concert Series

Sunday, February 22, 4:00 PM

**Baritone Dr. Emery Stephens,
Associate Professor of Voice Studies, St. Olaf College**

Community Lenten Worship Services

Our theme this year is "Objects of the Passion."

February 25th	St. Paul's Lutheran	Rev. David Oliver
March 4th	First Baptist Rev.	Rev Mark Kreemer
March 11th	St. John's UCC	Rev. George Baum
March 18th	Christ Lutheran	Rev. Oliver Kling
March 25th	First United Methodist	Rev. Tina Crog

Adult Sunday School

2nd Floor of the Parish Hall

Pointing to the Redeemer: The Book of Ruth

The Old Testament contains many scripture passages and stories that point to the Redeemer, Savior of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Book of Ruth is one such story. Even in an ancient culture so different from our own, we see how God uses this story to point toward Jesus, God's beloved Son, the One to redeem all humanity. The story also reveals God's love and compassion for a world full of sorrow. Join us for this interesting study and good conversation each Sunday at 11:30. We meet on the top floor of Parish Hall. An elevator is available for easy access.

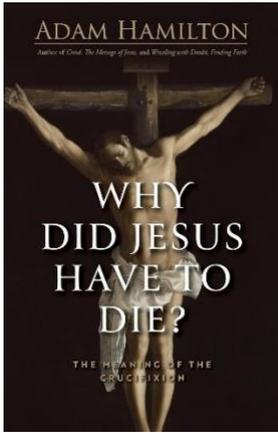
Women's Lenten Retreat

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble.

(Psalm 46:1)

The Women's Lenten Retreat this year will focus on the promise of God as our refuge. If you have ever wondered where God is when it hurts, you will be encouraged by this Saturday morning spent with other women during the season of Lent. There will be time for worship, Bible study, meaningful craft making, and Holy Communion.

The retreat will take place at St. Paul's on March 7 from 8:45 am until 12:30 pm. If you plan to attend and perhaps bring a friend, please let LaShell Williamson or Patty Long know. Registration is not required but it is helpful to have an approximate number of participants for planning purposes. Please consider taking advantage of this opportunity for spiritual growth and encouragement as we journey together toward Easter.



Thursday Morning Bible Study

Beginning February 5th

Why Did Jesus Have to Die?:

The Meaning of the Crucifixion

By Adam Hamilton

When words fall short, the cross still speaks.

Despite the crucifixion's central place in Christian faith, the New Testament offers few clear answers about how Jesus' death saves, or why, exactly, he had to die. The New Testament writers use a host of metaphors—ransom, sacrifice, reconciliation, victory—but never explain exactly how it works or why it had to happen this way.

What if that's because we've been asking the wrong question? What if the cross isn't a transaction to be explained, but a living Word from God meant to transform who we are and how we live?

Join the Fellowship Committee in these events!

February 7: Valentine Dinner Dance with Chuck Richard

We will gather for dinner at 5:00 pm followed by music with Chuck Richards. The cost per person is \$15, which you can pay at the door. We do need you to make a reservation. A sign up is in the lounge. Menu for dinner:

- Rolls
- Mediterranean Salad
- Chicken Cordon Blue or Chicken Skewers
- Scallop Potatoes
- Vegetable blend
- Valentine Dessert
- Punch, Red Wine, White Wine

Tuesday, February 17, from 5 to 7 pm: Shrove Pancake Dinner

This is our feast before we begin the Lenten season, serving pancakes (regular and gluten free), sausage, applesauce & drinks. The topping bar for pancakes will include maple syrup, whipped cream, strawberries, raspberries, chocolate, & caramel. Participants will be invited to make a Mardi Gras craft. We need volunteers to help cook pancakes and sausage. We will take a free will offering.

Any questions call or text Sue Reid at 330-323-6688

Capital Campaign Report

With joy and gratitude, we celebrate the completion of our new entrance and bathrooms—made possible by your faithful generosity. What a gift it is to see these improvements already serving our community!

Yet our work of caring for God’s house is not finished. Three pressing needs lie ahead: a \$125,000 replacement of the Parish Hall heating and cooling system, repairs to the Parish Hall window wells, and fixing a boiler leak in the Education Building. Through your continued giving, we can preserve this sacred space as a place of safety, welcome, and comfort for all who come through our doors. Together, we are ensuring that our church remains a living witness to God’s grace for generations to come.

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.



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

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*”

Thank you to those serving today:

Presiding Minister	Rev. Mark Kreemer
Director of Music	Dr. Abigail Haake
Assisting Minister	Scott Larson
Lector	Karl Kalk
Greeters	Rob Pritchett
Communion Assistants	Dwight Butler & Jim Johnson
Sacristan	Barb Palmer & Brooke Duplain
Ushers	Mark Waltz & Carol Marlow
Acolytes	Scott Larson, Thomas Haake
Soundboard	Jim Johnson
Video/Live-Stream	John Stanko

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GATHERING HYMN **As We Gather At Your Table** **ELW 522**

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HYMN OF THE DAY **Build A Longer Table** **Pg 18**

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SENDING HYMN **The Spirit Sends Us Forth To Serve** **ELW 551**

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Build a Longer Table



1 Build a long - er ta - ble, not a high - er wall,
2 Build a saf - er ref - uge, not a larg - er jail;
3 Build a broad - er door - way, not a long - er fence.
4 When we lived as ex - iles, ref - u - gees a - broad,



feed - ing those who hun - ger, mak - ing room for all.
where the weak find shel - ter, mer - cy will not fail.
Love pro - tects all peo - ple, spar - ing no ex - pense.
Christ be - came our door - way to the reign of God.



Feast - ing to - geth - er, strang - er turns to friend,
For an - y place where jus - tice is de - nied,
When we em - brace com - pas - sion more than fear,
So must our ta - bles wel - come those who roam.



Christ breaks walls to piec - es; false di - vi - sions end.
Christ will breach the jail wall, free - ing all in - side.
Christ tears down our fenc - es: all are wel - come here.
None can be ex - clud - ed; all must find a home.

Text: David Bjorlin, b. 1984

Music: NOËL NOUVELET, French carol

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Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

In most of the standard Sundays after the Epiphany and after Trinity Sunday, Year A reads through significant passages in the gospel of Matthew. Most of the Sermon on the Mount is appointed. Jesus Christ has come among us, and Christians are called to adopt the transformed life described in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:1-12

The Beatitudes describe the rigorous values that according to Matthew characterize the Christian life. In the service of the word, we hear Matthew's description of life within God's kingdom, and we turn for forgiveness and renewal in the service of holy communion. Jesus Christ is himself the embodiment of the Beatitudes.

Micah 6:1-8

Christians recognize that Jesus' call to a life of justice follows in the Old Testament tradition, in which prophets spoke God's word of righteous living to a people who had received God's saving deeds. The Micah passage parallels the Beatitudes.

1 Corinthians 1:18-21

The cross of Christ represents a paradoxical divine wisdom that is alien to the world's common understanding of reality. We stand within the righteousness that comes to us through the cross as we hear the stern Sermon on the Mount.

Comments from the Cloud of Witnesses

Christ's liberation goes to the roots of all injustice and exploitation. It is not a liberation which is susceptible to a "spiritualist" interpretation, which is still so tenaciously present in certain Christian spheres. Love and sin (that is, the negation of love) are historical realities. They live in concrete conditions. It is for this reason that the Bible speaks of justice and liberation as opposed to slavery and the humiliation of the poor. God becomes truth in the heart of the society when the social classes question themselves and take the part of the poor of the grass-roots classes, of the despised races, of the marginalized cultures. To believe is to love God, to be united with the poor and exploited of this world. To believe is to preach, as Christ did, the kingdom from within the struggle for justice which led him to his death.

—Gustavo Gutierrez, OP

[Gustavo Gutierrez, OP *Liberation and Change*, ed. Ronald H. Stone (Atlanta: John Knox, 1977), 90, 92.]

A Hunger for Justice

In today's first reading, God cries, "O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me!" (Micah 6:3). The people of God have forgotten God's deliverance and who God has called them to be. Like a shrewd prosecutor, God has placed them on trial and is examining their actions, recounting the signs of mercy and loving kindness shown to them from generation to generation and searching for a sign that they are living into who God has called them to be. And so, they are reminded that this is how you shall live: do justice, love kindness, walk humbly.

A Latin American prayer asks: "Lord, to those who hunger, give bread. And to those who have bread, give the hunger for justice." The words of this more modern-day prayer do not sound so different from the ancient words spoken by the prophet Micah to God's people. "What does the Lord require of you," asks Micah, "but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). The hunger of God's people has already been filled by the mercy of God, and so they are called by God to feed the hunger of others through lives of justice, kindness, and humility.

In the Sunday assembly, God surrounds the gathered people with reminders of who and whose they are: we splash in the waters of baptism, are brought to new life in the word, are fed and forgiven through bread and wine. Around the table, hunger is satisfied, and a hunger for justice is renewed. From the table, God sends the gathered assembly, blessed and broken, to feed the hunger of others as, together, we await the fulfillment of the kingdom.

Images in the Readings

Jesus preaches from the top of a **mountain**. In the Bible, significant religious events occur on a mountain because God was described as dwelling above the earth, and still today people climb mountains for an otherworldly experience. In worship, the mountain is here in the church building, on the ambo, in the pulpit, on the altar.

Especially inter-testamental Jews wrote about *hokmah*, the **wisdom** of God, personified as a goddess-like figure who accompanied, even governed, the activity of God. Yet Paul criticizes the cultural idea of wisdom as being quite other than the mercy of the cross.

The oracle from Micah includes the imagery of **sacrifice**, that is, burnt offerings of animals or children to prove veneration of the gods. Although Christians never authorized literal sacrifices, the imagery remains, both in the theological proposal that Christ's death was in some way a similar sacrifice and in the church's speech about a selfless life of giving for others.

As We Gather at Your Table



1 As we gath-er at your ta - ble, as we lis - ten to your word,
2 Turn our wor-ship in - to wit-ness in the sac - ra - ment of life;
3 Gra - cious Spir - it, help us sum-mon oth-er guests to share that feast



help us know, O God, your pres-ence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
send us forth to love and serve you, bring-ing peace where there is strife.
where tri - um-phant Love will wel-come those who had been last and least.



Nour-ish us with sa - cred sto - ry till we claim it as our own;
Give us, Christ, your great com-pas-sion to for - give as you for - gave;
There no more will en - vy blind us nor will pride our peace de - stroy,



teach us through this ho - ly ban-quet how to make Love's vic - t'ry known.
may we still be - hold your im - age in the world you died to save.
as we join with saints and an - gels to re - peat the sound-ing joy.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

Music: IN BABILONE, *Oude en Nieuwe Hollandse Boerenliedjes en Contradansen*, 1710

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The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve



1 The Spir - it sends us forth to serve; we go in
2 We go to com - fort those who mourn and set the
3 We go to be the hands of Christ, to scat - ter
4 Then let us go to serve in peace, the gos - pel



Je - sus' name to bring glad tid - ings
bur - dened free; where hope is dim, to
joy like seed and, all our days, to
to pro - claim. God's Spir - it has em -



to the poor, God's fa - vor to pro - claim.
share a dream and help the blind to see.
cher - ish life, to do the lov - ing deed.
pow - ered us; we go in Je - sus' name.

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939

Music: CHESTERFIELD, attr. Thomas Haweis, 1734–1820

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