

COME GROW SERVE

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2026

First Sunday of Lent

Welcome to St. Paul's Lutheran Church!

Today's gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.

*Words printed in **bold** are spoken by all. Visitors are invited to sign the guest registry in the Narthex or fill out a pew card and place it in the offering plate.*

THIS SERVICE IS LIVE STREAMED. TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

GATHERING

WELCOME

PM: Welcome to those who are joining us online. Welcome to worship at St. Paul's!

PRELUDE

From Depths of Woe (Psalm 130)

Friedrich Zachau

The assembly is invited to stand.

CALL TO WORSHIP

P: Jesus went to the mountaintop to pray.

All: Jesus went into the city to heal.

P: Jesus walked to Samaria to extend love.

All: Jesus went to the water's edge to teach.

P: Jesus went to places of peace and connection,

All: but Jesus also went to the wilderness.

P: There is nowhere we can go that God does not walk with us.

All: We are in God's house. Let us worship the Holy One, who creates, redeems, and moves among us still.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross as the pastor begins.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

All: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Gracious God,

All: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you: Gracious God,

All: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God,

All: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

All: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdainning the living water Christ offers:
Gracious God,

All: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the
world: Gracious God,

All: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to
life: Gracious God,

All: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, you have
been clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.
The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, pours God's love into your
hearts, and gives you life and peace.

All: Amen.

KYRIE

ELW pp. 98-99

GATHERING HYMN

Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church

ELW 321

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A: Let us pray.

Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the
devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word,
and when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

All: Amen.

The assembly is invited to be seated.

WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

A reading from Genesis.

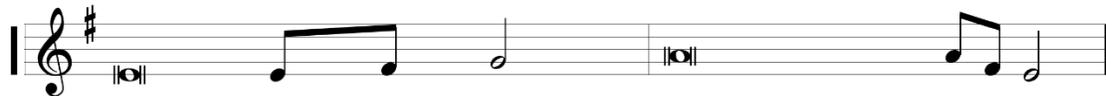
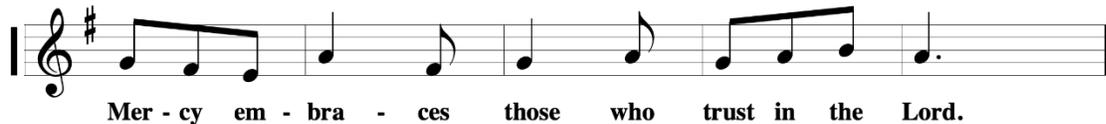
¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

^{3:1}Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die, ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Word of God. Word of Life.

All: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 32



¹Happy 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!**

³While 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. R**

⁵Then 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.**

⁷You 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 | you should go;
I will guide you | with my eye. R**

⁹Do not be like horse or mule, which have no | understanding;

who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will | not stay near you.”

¹⁰ **Great are the tribulations | of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust | in the Lord.**

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

SECOND READING: Romans 5:12-19

A reading from Romans.

¹² Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned ¹³ for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.

¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷ If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

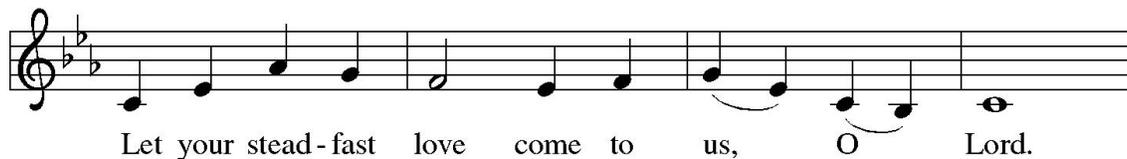
¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Word of God. Word of Life.

All: Thanks be to God.

The assembly is invited to stand for the reading of the Gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Matthew 4:1-11

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” ⁴ But he answered, “It is written,

‘One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’ ”

⁷ Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, ⁹ and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

‘Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.’ ”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

SERMON

Pr. Elizabeth Palmer

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

When We Are Tested



1 When we are test - ed and wres - tle a - lone,
2 When in the des - ert we cry for re - lief,
3 When we are tempt - ed to bar - ter our souls,
4 When we have strug - gled and searched through the night,



fam - ished for bread when the world of - fers stone,
plead - ing for paths marked by cer - tain be - lief,
trad - ing the truth for the pow'r to con - trol,
sort - ing and sift - ing the wrong from the right,



nour - ish us, God, by your word and your way,
lift us to love you be - yond sign and test,
teach us to wor - ship and praise on - ly you,
Sav - ior, sur - round us with cir - cles of care,



food that sus - tains us by night and by day.
trust - ing your pres - ence, our on - ly true rest.
seek - ing your will in the work that we do.
an - gels of heal - ing, of hope, and of prayer.

PRESENTATION OF NEW MEMBERS

P: Let us pray. Merciful God, we thank you for these sisters and brothers, whom you have made your own by water and the Word in baptism. You have called them to yourself, enlightened them with the gifts of your Spirit, and nourished them in the community of faith. Uphold your servants in the gifts and promises of baptism, and unite the hearts of all whom you have brought to new birth. We ask this in the name of Christ.

All: Amen.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

(Please stand and join in the responses)

P: James Kelly, Amanda Kelly, Eamon Kelly, and Evander Kelly. I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church. Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?

All: I renounce them.

P: Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?

All: I renounce them.

P: Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God?

All: I renounce them.

P: Do you believe in God the Father?

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

P: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

All: 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.

P: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

All: 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.

AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

P: You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

Kellys: We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

P: People of God, do you promise to support these sisters and brothers and pray for them in their life in Christ?

All: We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

P: Let us pray. We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life.

(laying of both hands on the heads of each member)

Stir up in [name] the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

All: Amen.

P: Let us rejoice with these sisters and brothers in Christ.

All: We rejoice with you in the life of baptism. Together we will give thanks and praise to God and proclaim the good news to all the world.

P: Please give a round of applause to our new St. Paul members.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

PM: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence.

PM: God of all grace, grant faith to your church. Give to all the baptized the will to resist temptation and to worship and serve you alone. Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

A: God of all creation, tend this earth. When human greed and disobedience threaten this planet and the life it contains, lead us by your Spirit into ways of reverence, awe, and gentleness. Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

PM: God of all nations, preserve us from trouble. Surround all living in places of violence with your steadfast love and give resilience to all who work for peace. Grant courage to those who challenge, especially around issues of racism and systemic oppression. Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

A: God of all healing, mend our wounds. Bring wholeness to all who are sick, give peace to all who groan in grief, and send companions to all who are lonely or isolated, especially those on our prayer list and those we pray for either silently or aloud (*pause*). Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

PM: God of all people, provide for our community. For any among us who hunger for bread, bring nourishment. For any among us who hunger for truth, speak your life-giving word. Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

A: God of all life, bring us to you. We thank you for your free and abounding grace, and for those who, by that same grace, now rest eternally in you (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

PM: Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

All: **Amen.**

PEACE

PM: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: **And also with you.**

The assembly is invited to be seated.

MEAL

THE OFFERING

An offering is gathered and the Table is set.

MUSICAL OFFERING

What Wondrous Love

William Walker
arr. **Kurt Westerberg**

Rachel Blaustein, soprano; Nicholas Marotta, mezzo-soprano

OFFERING PRAYER

A: Let us pray.

O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus' name.

All: **Amen**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: 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. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. 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

ELW 190

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P: God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, you have brought us this far along the way.

In times of bitterness you did not abandon us, but guided us into the path of love and light. In every age you sent prophets to make known your loving will for all humanity. The cry of the poor has become your own cry; our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire. In the fullness of

time, you sent your chosen servant to preach good news to the afflicted, to break bread with the outcast and despised, and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

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 all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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

P: Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection, we await the day when Jesus shall return to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death. Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen.

All: Amen.

P: Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate, to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world. Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen.

All: Amen.

P: Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age, that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection, we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son. Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

All: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Together as one body, we pray the prayer Jesus taught us.

All: 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, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNE

P: Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.



DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

We will commune one side of the church at a time. Please come forward to receive the bread first. Gluten free wafers are available.

You may choose a cup of red wine or white grape juice.

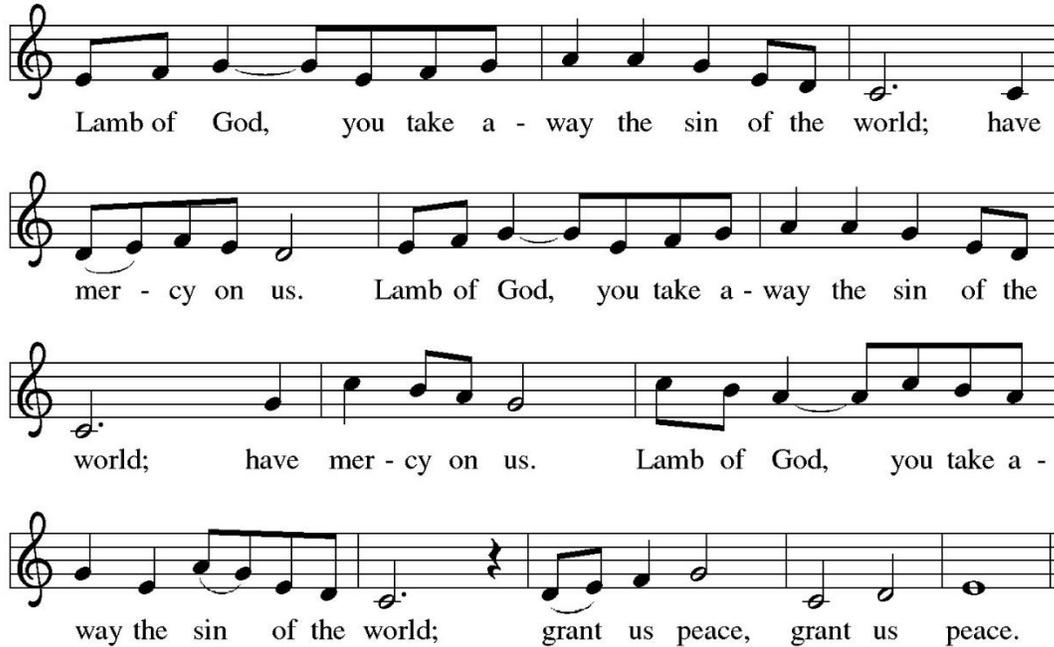
Move to the side eat and drink.

Place your empty cup in the tray provided.

All are welcome at Christ's Table. We believe Jesus is the host and the gifts of God are for everyone. Children will be offered communion unless otherwise indicated by parents. The wine is red and grape juice is white.

Please be seated.

LAMB OF GOD



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.

COMMUNION HYMN

Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am

ELW 814

Please stand as you are able.

TABLE BLESSING

P: Now may the power of Christ's body and blood reach deep into your heart, your mind, and your body to heal your wounds and, through your healing to all the earth. In Jesus' name,

All: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A: Let us pray.

God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ's body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

All: Amen.

SENDING

Please be seated for the announcements.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly is invited to stand.

SENDING BLESSING

P: Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, ✠ bless you now and always.

All: Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer

ELW 618

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Christ, The Life of All The Living

Flor Peeters

During Lent, you are kindly requested to refrain from applause after the postlude, ending the service in silence.

THANK YOU

To our musicians: Rachel Blaustein, soprano; Nicholas Marotta, mezzo-soprano.

To Council for our special coffee hour to welcome the Kelly family.

To Jonas Gonzalez for cooking and cleaning for our Mardi-Gras party.

To everyone who helped set-up, clean-up, or brought food for the Mardi-Gras party

PRAYER REQUESTS

For Jan Rock, as she recovers from stenoses.

For Paul Lucci, friend of LuAnne Origer, awaiting biopsy results.

For Matt Reese, friend of DD, recovering from a stroke.



To donate via Zelle, aim your device's camera at the code on the left, click on the link and follow the instructions. Or you can go to your bank's website, go to Zelle payments and look for "office@stpaulvanston.org."



**WELCOM BACK,
PR. ELIZABETH**

We are delighted to be welcoming back our good friend, Rev. Elizabeth Palmer, as our Pastoral Fellow. Pr. Elizabeth has led us many times over the years, most recently last year as our February Pastoral Fellow. We are thrilled and grateful to have her returning again to St. Paul's, this year for the entirety of the Lent through Holy Week season. Pr. Elizabeth is currently senior editor at the *Christian Century* magazine. Prior to that call, she served as the Lutheran Campus Pastor at the University of Chicago for eight years. She has also worked as a hospital chaplain. She holds a Ph.D. in theology from the University of Chicago Divinity School and is the author of *Faith in a Hidden God: Luther, Kierkegaard, and the Binding of Isaac* (Fortress Press).

Pr. Elizabeth lives in Skokie with her husband Liam, their 15-year-old daughter Anna, and their 11-year-old daughter Miriam.