

COME GROW SERVE

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2026

Second Sunday of Lent

**Welcome to St. Paul's Lutheran Church!**

During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.

*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

*Plaintive Cry*

Leon Böellmann

*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 disdainingly 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**

*Bless Now, O God, The Journey*

**ELW 326**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

A: Let us pray.  
O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world 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 12:1-4a

A reading from Genesis.

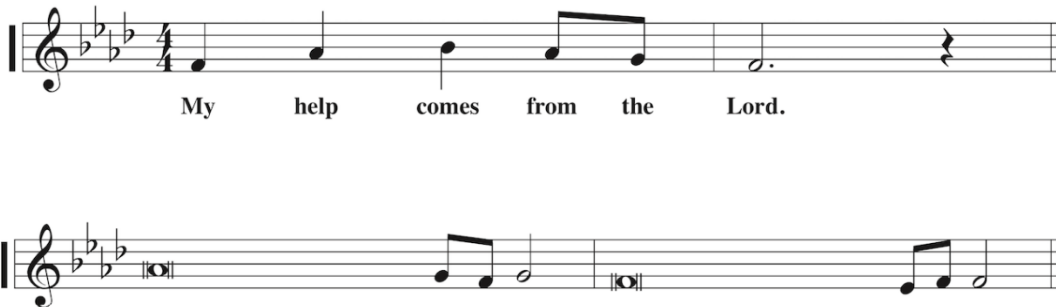
<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

<sup>4a</sup> So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him.

Word of God. Word of Life.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM 121



- <sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes | to the hills;  
from where is my | help to come?
- <sup>2</sup> **My help comes | from the LORD,  
the maker of heav- | en and earth.**
- <sup>3</sup> The LORD will not let your | foot be moved  
nor will the one who watches over you | fall asleep.
- <sup>4</sup> **Behold, the keep- | er of Israel  
will neither slum- | ber nor sleep; R**
- <sup>5</sup> the LORD watches | over you;  
the LORD is your shade at | your right hand;
- <sup>6</sup> **the sun will not strike | you by day,  
nor the | moon by night.**
- <sup>7</sup> The LORD will preserve you | from all evil  
and will | keep your life.
- <sup>8</sup> **The LORD will watch over your going out and your | coming in,  
from this time forth for- | evermore. R**

### SECOND READING: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

A reading from Romans.

<sup>1</sup> What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” <sup>4</sup> Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. <sup>5</sup> But to one who does not work but trusts him who

justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

<sup>13</sup> For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup> For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

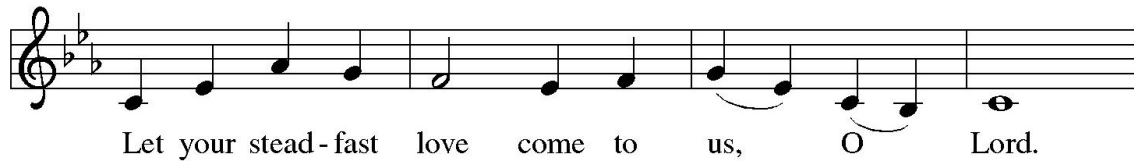
<sup>16</sup> For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup> as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”), in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

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: John 3:1-17

The Holy Gospel according to John.

**All: Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” <sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup> What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” <sup>9</sup> Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” <sup>10</sup> Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?”

<sup>11</sup> “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup> If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup> “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through 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**

*What Wondrous Love is This*

**ELW 666**

**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: Faithful One, you renew us by grace. As you have inspired faith through the work of church artists and hymnwriters throughout the ages, give your church the means to praise your beauty today. Hear us, O God.

**All: Your mercy is great.**

A: Living One, you delight in this world. The sun and moon, the wind and the water declare your goodness. Preserve this earth, and protect conservationists, scientists, and all who labor in service to creation. Hear us, O God.

**All: Your mercy is great.**

PM: Ruling One, you bless us to be a blessing. Open the hearts of all leaders to seek the flourishing of every person and lend your help to all who wait for justice, deliverance, and peace. Hear us, O God.

**All: Your mercy is great.**

A: Compassionate One, you send your Son to save. Declare your word of acceptance to any who feel condemned and lift up any brought low by hatred and exclusion. Tend to all who are struggling with illness or loss, 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: Guiding One, you watch over our going out and coming in. Bless newcomers and new members in this assembly, especially the Kelly family, and accompany those who have recently left this community to journey elsewhere. Hear us, O God.

**All: Your mercy is great.**

A: Eternal One, you neither slumber nor sleep. Be our keeper in life and in death. Thank you for our beloved who have died, and for your promise which saves this whole world by your love. 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

*Brighter Than Snow (Psalm 51)*

**Ruth Schramm**

Libby Harrison, 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.*

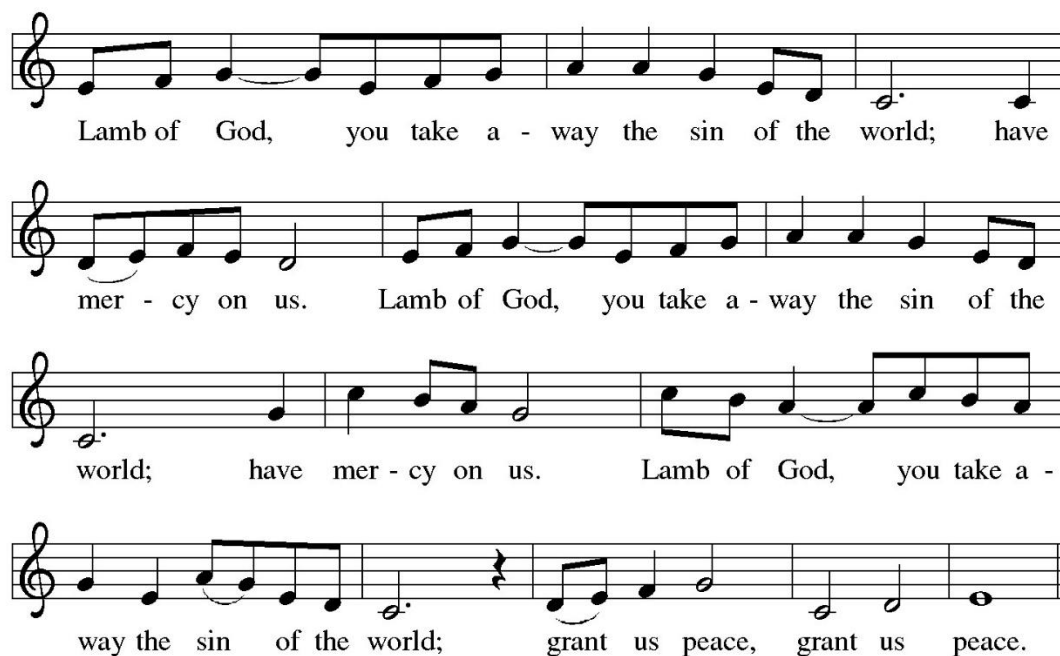
*Move to the side eat and drink.*

*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

*Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery*

ELW 334, v. 1-3, Lent 2

***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**

*Christ, the Life of All the Living*

**ELW 339**

**DISMISSAL**

A: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

*Ciaconna*

**Dietrich Buxtehude**

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

Immediately after service Barb Hiller will lead us  
in a discussion of Parts I and II of Civic and Social Life.  
Grab a cup of coffee and pull up a chair in the back.

**THANK YOU**

To our musicians: Libby Harrison, soprano; Nicholas Marotta, mezzo-soprano.  
To Bill Kastilahn and David Foster for figuring out why our sanctuary wasn't heating.

**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@stpaulevanston.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.