

COME GROW SERVE

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2026

Fourth Sunday of Lent

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

Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. "I was blind, now I see," declares the man. In baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God's beloved children. As David was anointed king of Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

*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**

*The King of Love My Shepherd Is*

**Charles Callahan**

*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**

*Restore In Us, O God*

**ELW 328**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

A: Let us pray.

Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us. By your gracious life and death for  
us, bring light into the darkness of our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign  
with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**All: Amen.**

*The assembly is invited to be seated.*

*WORD*

**FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 16:1-13**

A reading from First Samuel.

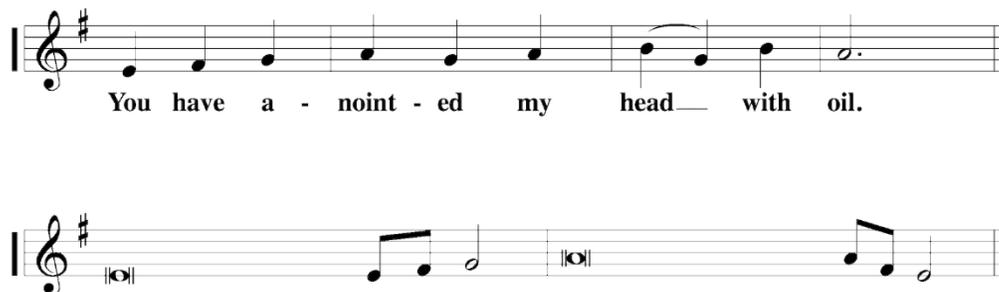
<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” <sup>2</sup>Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’” <sup>3</sup>Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.” <sup>4</sup>Samuel did what the LORD commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?” <sup>5</sup>He said, “Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup>When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely his anointed is now before the LORD.” <sup>7</sup>But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” <sup>8</sup>Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” <sup>9</sup>Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” <sup>10</sup>Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any of these.” <sup>11</sup>Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here.” <sup>12</sup>He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The LORD said, “Rise and anoint him, for this is the one.” <sup>13</sup>Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Word of God. Word of Life.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM 23



<sup>1</sup>The Lord | is my shepherd;  
I shall not | be in want.

<sup>2</sup>**The Lord makes me lie down | in green pastures  
and leads me be- | side still waters.**

<sup>3</sup>You restore my | soul, O Lord,  
and guide me along right pathways | for your name’s sake.

<sup>4</sup>**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall | fear no evil;  
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they | comfort me. R**

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence | of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is | running over.

<sup>6</sup>**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days | of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the | Lord forever. R**

## SECOND READING: Ephesians 58-14

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

<sup>8</sup> Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, <sup>9</sup> for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. <sup>10</sup> Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, <sup>13</sup> but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, <sup>14</sup> for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

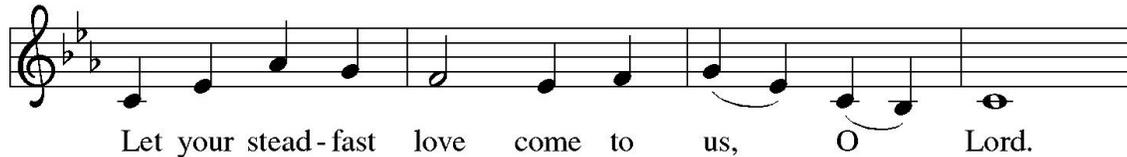
“Sleeper, awake!  
Rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

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 9:1-41

The Holy Gospel according to John.

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

<sup>1</sup> As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. <sup>4</sup> We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup> When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, <sup>7</sup> saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. <sup>8</sup> The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” <sup>9</sup> Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” <sup>10</sup> But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” <sup>11</sup> He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” <sup>12</sup> They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

<sup>13</sup> They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup> Now it was a Sabbath day

when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup> Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” <sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. <sup>17</sup> So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

<sup>18</sup> The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight <sup>19</sup> and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” <sup>20</sup> His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, <sup>21</sup> but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” <sup>22</sup> His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup> Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

<sup>24</sup> So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” <sup>25</sup> He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” <sup>26</sup> They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” <sup>27</sup> He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” <sup>28</sup> Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup> We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” <sup>30</sup> The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup> We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. <sup>32</sup> Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” <sup>34</sup> They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” <sup>36</sup> He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” <sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” <sup>38</sup> He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.” <sup>40</sup> Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” <sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

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**

*God, When Human Bonds are Broken*

**ELW 603, v. 1-4**

## 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, our shepherd, we pray that you guide the church. Lead Christians in our community and across the globe in right paths for your name's sake. Hear us, O God.

**All: Your mercy is great.**

A: God our provider, we cry out for this planet and the life it holds. Rescue endangered animals and plants, preserve threatened ecosystems, and save creatures from natural disasters. Hear us, O God.

**All: Your mercy is great.**

PM: God our sovereign, we plead for your peace on earth. Bring an end to war and violence, and raise up leaders in governments, courts, businesses, schools, and community organizations who seek goodness and mercy. Hear us, O God.

**All: Your mercy is great.**

A: God our healer, we call to you in our need. Uplift all who are made to feel unimportant, and transform the hearts of all infected by bigotry and prejudice. Care for all in special need this day, especially those on our prayer list and those we pray for silently or aloud (*pause*). Hear us, O God.

**All: Your mercy is great.**

PM: God our friend, we praise you for the diversity of people among us. Awaken us to share and receive the gifts we each possess, and stir up a spirit of understanding, celebration, and welcome for all. Hear us, O God.

**All: Your mercy is great.**

A: God our home, we thank you for all who have died and completed their baptismal journeys. Grant us faith to live until we too dwell in your house forever. 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

*Prayer To Jesus*

**R.R. Terry**

Rachel Blaustein, soprano; Nicholas Marotta, mezzo-soprano

## Text of Musical Offering:

Jhesu, Lord, that madest me, And with Thy blessyd blood hast bought,  
Forgive that I have grievéd Thee with word, and will and eek with thought.  
Jhesu, in whom is all my trust, That died upon the roodé tree,  
Withdrawe myn herte from fleshli lust, and from all worldly vanyté.

Jhesu, for they woundés smerte on feet and on thyn hadés two  
O make me meeke and low of herte, and Thee to love as I schulde do.  
Jhesu, keep them that are good, amende then that han grievéd Thee  
And send them fruites of earthli food as each man needeth in his degree.

### **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.*

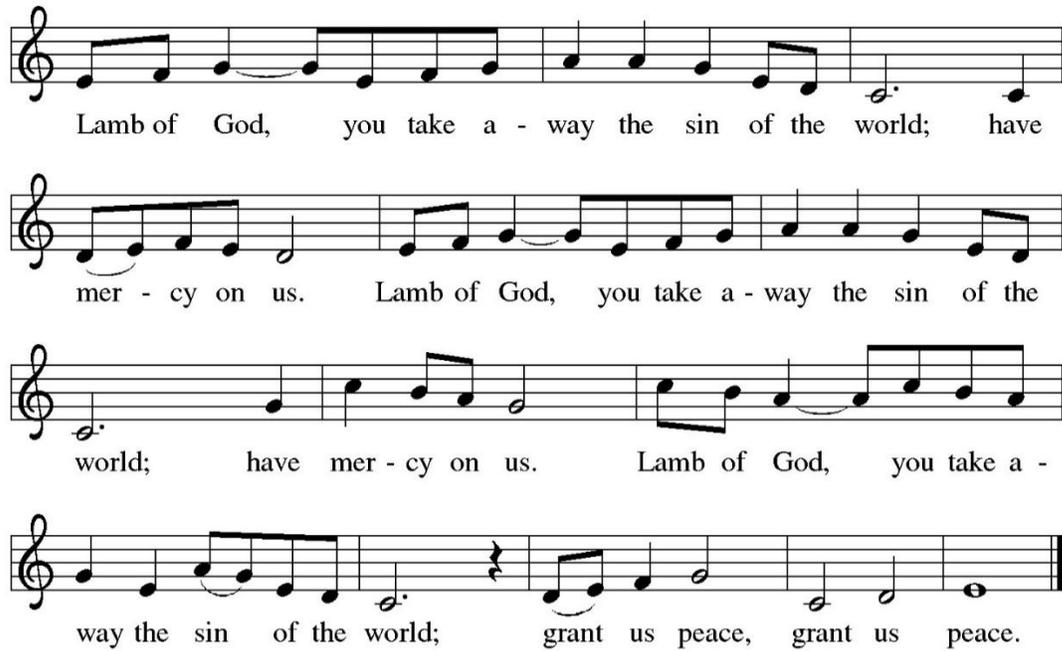
*Move to the side eat and drink.*

*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

*The King of Love, My Shepherd Is*

ELW 502

*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.

**DISMISSAL**

A: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

*Jesus, Still Lead On*

**Paul Manz**

*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.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

For Jan Rock, as she recovers from stenoses

For the family of Joan Brandt, as they mourn the death of her sister-in-law  
and brother-in-law, Ellie and John Grant.

For Paul Lucci, friend of LuAnne Origer, recovering from thyroid cancer surgery



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."



**WELCOME 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.