

COME GROW SERVE

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2026

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Welcome to St. Paul's Lutheran Church!

In today's gospel Jesus reveals his power over death by raising Lazarus from the dead. The prophet Ezekiel prophesies God breathing new life into dry bones. To those in exile or living in the shadows of death, these stories proclaim God's promise of resurrection. In baptism we die with Christ that we might also be raised with him to new life.

*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

Allemande from Partita in A minor
Stefan Westerberg, cello

J. S. Bach

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 disdain 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 GATHERING HYMN

ELW pp. 98-99

As the Winter Days Grow Longer

1 As the win - ter days grow long - er, draw - ing short the hours of night;
2 As the vines burst in - to blos - som, fra - grant in the morn - ing air,
3 As we jour - ney through this sea - son, pil - grims through a thirst - y land,

as our ea - ger ex - pec - ta - tion waits for Eas - ter's dawn - ing light —
lift - ing spir - its with their sweet - ness, lur - ing hearts to thank - ful prayer —
quench us with your liv - ing pres - ence; guide us with your lov - ing hand.

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics provided for three verses and a concluding line.

yearn-ing peo-ple, here we gath-er, turn-ing watch-ful eyes to you:
Lent-en peo-ple, here we gath-er, seek-ing lives re-freshed from sin.
Wan-d'ring peo-ple, here we gath-er, called to rest a-long our way.

God who bless-es earth with spring-time, shine with-in our world a-new!
God who bless-es earth with spring-time, bloom with-in our hearts a-gain!
God who bless-es earth with spring-time, grant us sab-bath joy this day!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A: Let us pray.

Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through 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: Ezekiel 37:1-14

A reading from the Prophet Ezekiel.

¹The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” ⁴Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

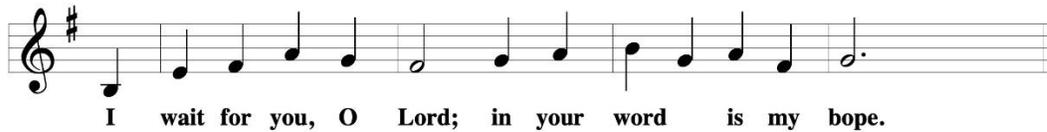
⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ ¹²Therefore prophesy and say to them: Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD when I open your graves and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.”

Word of God. Word of Life.

All: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 130



¹ Out | of the depths

I cry to | you, O Lord;

² **O Lord, | hear my voice!**

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my | supplication.

³ If you were to keep watch | over sins,

O Lord, | who could stand?

⁴ **Yet with you | is forgiveness,**

in order that you | may be feared. R

⁵ I wait for you, O Lord; | my soul waits;

in your word | is my hope.

⁶ **My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch | for the morning,**

more than those who keep watch | for the morning.

⁷ O Israel, wait for the Lord, for with the Lord there is | steadfast love;

with the Lord there is plen- | teous redemption.

⁸ **For the Lord shall | redeem Israel**

from | all their sins. R

SECOND READING: Romans 8:6-11

A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans.

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

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,

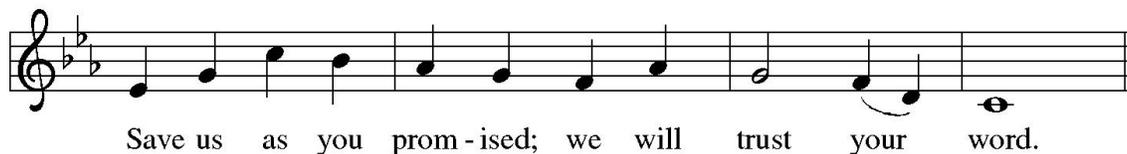
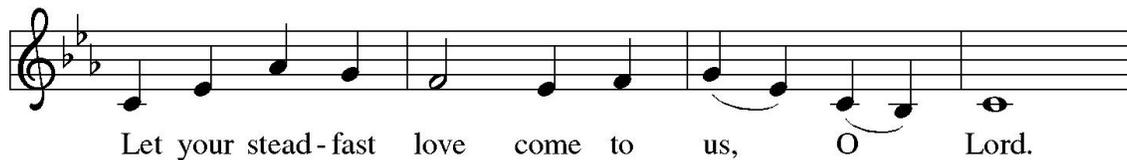
and Christ will shine on you.”

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 11:1-45

The Holy Gospel according to John.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." ⁴ But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." ⁵ Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶ after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸ The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" ⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰ But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them." ¹¹ After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." ¹² The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." ¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶ Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

²⁸ When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." ²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴ He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord,

come and see.”³⁵ Jesus began to weep. ³⁶ So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

⁴⁵ Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in 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

Dem Dry Bones

James Weldon Johnson

Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones,
Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones,
Dem bones, dem bones, dem very bones,
Now hear the word of the Lord.

Getting higher:

The toe bone’s connected to the foot bone,
The foot bone’s connected to the ankle bone,
The ankle bone’s connected to the leg bone,
The leg bone’s connected to the knee bone,
The knee bone’s connected to the thigh bone,
The thigh bone’s connected to the hip bone,
The hip bone’s connected to the back bone,
The back bone’s connected to the shoulder bone,
The shoulder bone’s connected to the neck bone,
The neck bone’s connected to the head bone,
Now hear the word of the Lord.

Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones,
Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones,
Dem bone, dem bones, dem dry bones,
Now hear the word of the Lord.

Getting lower:

The head bone's connected to the neck bone,
The neck bone's connected to the shoulder bone,
The shoulder bone's connected to the back bone,
The back bone's connected to the hip bone,
The hip bone's connected to the thigh bone,
The knee bone's connected to the leg bone,
The thigh bone's connected to the knee bone,
The leg bone's connected to the ankle bone,
The ankle bone's connected to the foot bone,
The foot bone's connected to the toe bone,
Now hear the word of the Lord.

Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones,
Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones,
Dem bone, dem bones, dem dry bones,
Now hear the word of the Lord.

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: We pray for the church. Grant life and peace to all who gather in your name. Breathe into us so that we may share your message of forgiveness, hope, and love. Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

A: We pray for creation. Renew landscapes that have dried up, prosper the work of those who restore homes and habitats after natural disasters, and sustain places where biodiversity thrives. Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

PM: We pray for the nations. Unbind leaders trapped by fear to act boldly for justice, free all who live in places of war and violence, and guide refugees and asylum seekers to safety. Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

A: We pray for all people in need. Take away the stone of poverty that weighs down so many. Console any who weep and heal all who are sick, 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: We pray for this assembly. Ready the hearts and spirits of all preparing to be baptized. Deepen our wonder at the mystery of your resurrection and life. Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

A: We offer our thanksgiving for all people who have died in faith. Give us faith to trust in your power to redeem and save, and bring us up from our graves to life in you. 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

Kyrie Eleison

Kurt Westerberg

Rachel Blaustein, soprano; Nicholas Marotta, mezzo-soprano

Sung in Latin: Lord have mercy; Christ have mercy; Lord have mercy

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

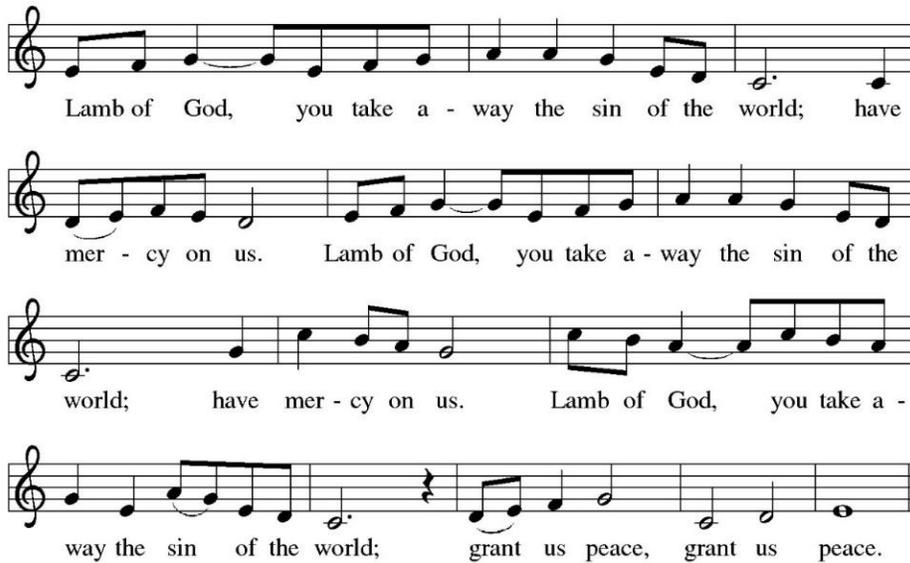
P: Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

	<p><u>DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION</u></p> <p><i>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.</i></p>
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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

O Bread of Life from Heaven

ELW 480

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

Jesus Is a Rock in a Weary Land

ELW 333

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Prelude and Fugue in A minor

J. S. Bach

In honor of the 341st birthday of J. S. Bach, born on March 21, 1685

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; Stefan Westerberg, cello.

PRAYER REQUESTS

For Jan Rock, as she recovers from stenoses

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

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



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.