

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

MARCH 15, 2026



ST. PAUL'S

Evangelical Lutheran Church

WELCOME

Welcome! We are glad you are joining our community of faith for worship today. Whether you are a long-time Lutheran, or you come from another Christian tradition, or you're wandering or wondering about faith and the church, you are welcome to participate in worship in whatever ways are comfortable for you. If you are new to St. Paul's you can request more information on our web site contact page here:
www.stpaulsbrenham.org/contact

Our worship liturgy is rooted in the ancient church's practice of gathering on Sundays to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus through hearing God's Word and sharing the communion meal in the presence of Christ. We welcome all baptized Christians to receive communion. Children who are communing in other churches are invited to commune here. All who are not receiving are invited to come forward for a blessing—you may indicate you want a blessing by holding your hands together or crossing your arms in front of you.

This bulletin is a helpful guide to our worship liturgy, as are ushers and friendly people gathered here with you to worship God together.

ST. PAUL'S STAFF

Michael Coffey	Lead Pastor
Donna Krueger	Pastor of Care Ministry
Diane Garrett	Organist
Larry Smith	Choir Director
Dr. Sarah Burke	Director of Contemporary Music
Lisa Eben	Financial Director
Thomas Johnson	Communications Coordinator
Anne Briggs	Membership Coordinator
Sarah Zwahr	Director of Youth and Family
Julie Guiberteau	Media Technician
Sandra Ehlinger	Head of Christian Day School

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*St. Paul's is a congregation of
the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
Learn more at www.elca.org*

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

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.

TODAY'S FLOWERS

The altar flowers are given by the Mertz family in celebration of Collin and Alie's wedding.

OFFERING

Offering plates are on the welcome table in the narthex. Feel free to leave your offering there. The offering will be presented during the worship liturgy. You can also make an offering online at www.stpaulsbrenham.org/give

FIRST AID

A First Aid Kit and AED (defibrillator) are located in the closet of the usher room in the Narthex.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Pastorale

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

SOUNDING OF THE BELL

When the bell sounds, please stand as you are able and face the procession.

KYRIE PROCESSION

ELW 153

The cantor sings each line and the congregation repeats it.

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The lyrics are as follows:

Nko - si, Nko - si, yi - ba nen - ce - ba.
Lord, have mer - cy, have mer - cy up - on us.

Kres - tu, Kres - tu, yi - ba nen - ce - ba.
Christ, have mer - cy, have mer - cy up - on us.

Nko - si, Nko - si, yi - ba nen - ce - ba.
Lord, have mer - cy, have mer - cy up - on us.

CONFESSON AND FORGIVENESS

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

Amen.

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

You may kneel or sit. Silence is kept for reflection.

Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For failing to recognize your coming reign,
and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition,
and for disdain the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For disregarding voices from the margin,
and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent,
and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God,
have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

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.
Amen.

Please stand as you are able.

GATHERING SONG

ELW 520 *Dearest Jesus, at Your Word*

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

WELCOME

(10:30) DISMISSAL FOR CHILDREN'S CHURCH

WORD

FIRST READING

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Samuel anointed David even though he was the eighth-oldest son of Jesse and did not match his brothers in height or other physical characteristics. With the anointing came endowment with the Spirit of the LORD, designating David as the LORD's chosen successor to Saul.

¹ 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."² 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.'³ 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."⁴ 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?"⁵ 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.

⁶ When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely his anointed is now before the LORD."⁷ 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."⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one."¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these."¹¹ 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."¹² 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."¹³ 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.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Psalm 23

The psalm is sung responsively.

¹ The LORD¹ is my shepherd;
I shall not¹ be in want.

² **The LORD makes me lie down¹ in green pastures
and leads me be-¹ side still waters.**

- ³ You restore my | soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways | for your name's sake.
- ⁴ **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.**
- ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence | of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is | running over.
- ⁶ **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days | of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the | LORD forever.**

SECOND READING

Ephesians 5:8-14

Because we now live in the divine light which is Jesus Christ, we conduct our lives in ways that reflect the light of Christ, so that our activity is truly pleasing to God.

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.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand as you are able for the Gospel

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW 177

*The cantor sings the acclamation and the congregation repeats it.
The cantor sings the verse and the congregation sings the acclamation again.*



*Cantor: Jesus says, I am the light | of the world; *
whoever follows me will have the | light of life. (John 8:12)*

GOSPEL

John 9:1-41

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Due to the length of the reading, please be seated.

¹ As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³ Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am

in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶ 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, ⁷ saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ 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?”⁹ Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.”¹⁰ But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?”¹¹ 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.”¹² They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.¹⁵ 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.”¹⁶ 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.¹⁷ 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.”

¹⁸ 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 sight¹⁹ and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?”²⁰ His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind,²¹ 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.”²² 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.²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴ 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.”²⁵ He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”²⁶ They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”²⁷ 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?”²⁸ Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”

³⁰ The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will.³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

³⁴ They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.³⁹ 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.”⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?”⁴¹ 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.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Intern Pastor Frank Karoli

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

ELW 688 Lord of Light

The creed is omitted during Lent.

Please kneel or sit for the prayers of intercession.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

ELW 751 O Lord, Hear My Prayer

The congregation sings the song at the beginning and after each petition.

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, answer me.

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and listen to me.

Please stand for the Peace.

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Greet one another with the peace of Christ.

After the Peace, please be seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEAL

OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

Offering plates are on the welcome table in the narthex before and after the service.

MUSICAL OFFERING

(8:00) Liebster Jesu Walter Pelz

(10:30) Lenten Fantasia

Please stand as you are able.

OFFERING SONG

ELW 182 *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be



fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -

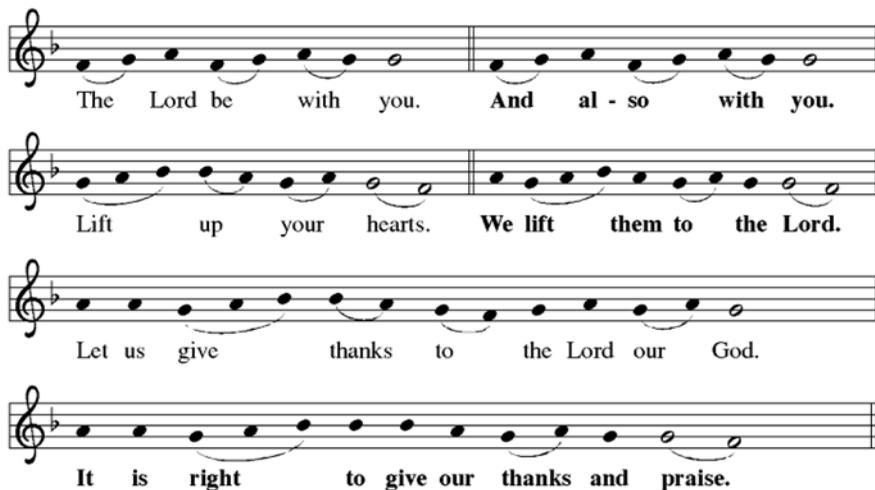


nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your



pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

DIALOGUE AND PREFACE

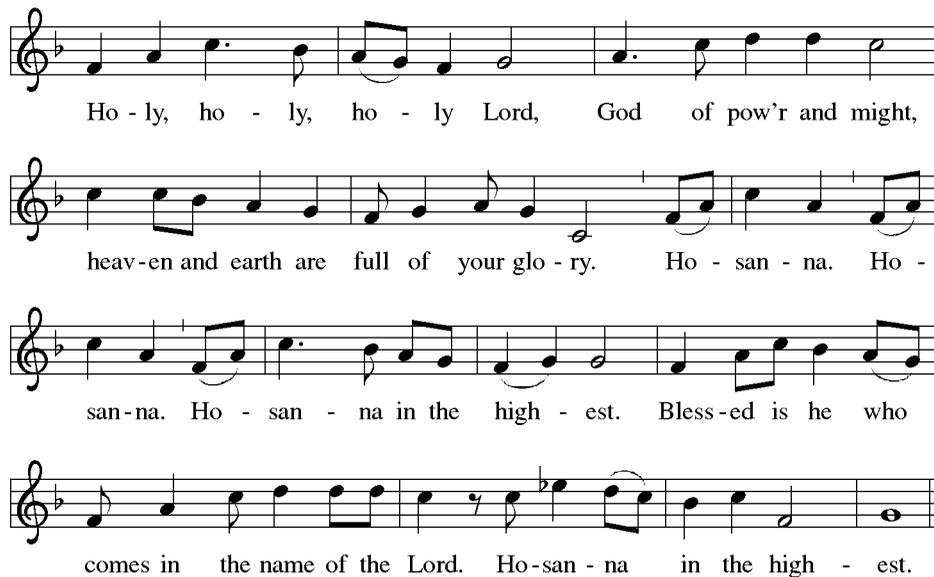


The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW Setting Three p. 144 *Holy, Holy, Holy*



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are 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 in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Blessed are you, O God...

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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

Pour out your Holy Spirit... now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

ELW Setting Five p. 163

Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.

Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,
your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we
for-give those who sin a - gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al
and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,
and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

INVITATION

We welcome all baptized Christians to receive communion. Children who are communing in other churches are invited to commune here. All who are not receiving are invited to come forward for a blessing—you may indicate you want a blessing by holding your hands together or crossing your arms in front of you. Please follow the guidance from the ushers. Gluten-free wafers are available on request. Wine is red; grape juice is white. Those unable to come forward, remain seated and communion will be brought to you.

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.

Please be seated.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

MUSIC (8:00) *Wondrous Love* D. Johnson (10:30) *Softly and Tenderly* Wm. Cutter
SONG ELW 666 *What Wondrous Love Is This*

Please stand as you are able.

TABLE BLESSING

May Christ, who is present with you now in this meal,
journey with you on your path of discipleship. **Amen.**

SONG AFTER COMMUNION

ELW 545 stanza 1 *Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing*

Lord, dismiss us with your blessing, fill our hearts with joy and peace;
let us each, your love possessing, triumph in redeeming grace.
Oh, refresh us; oh, refresh us, trav'ling through this wilderness.

SENDING

BLESSING

Be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people;
love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. The blessing of our merciful God,
Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you now and always. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG

ELW 848 *Give to Our God Immortal Praise!*

DISMISSAL

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness. Care for others as God cares for you.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

O Sacred Head

Michael Burkhardt

GOSPEL MESSAGE

Unbelievable!

This story from the Gospel of John captures the religious leadership in Jerusalem in a struggle to understand this Jesus who restores sight to a person born blind. This miraculous healing is so unbelievable, so contrary to the leaders' understanding, that they reject it altogether, even accusing the man of lying. Their quest for a certainty that feels familiar forces them to reject the miracle in front of them and closes them off to a greater truth—that the Messiah has come in Christ Jesus.

Certainty and its pursuit often disrupt our ability to see reality, which is at its core a mystery. Mystery in the Christian tradition refers to that deep truth that surpasses our understanding, as in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity or the efficacy of the sacraments. We know them as true, but not how or why they are so. Mysteries transcend the world of certainty, and our efforts to possess certainty, like those of the religious leaders in John 9, can cut us off from something miraculous happening right in front of us.

How much conflict and division in our church and in our world is amplified by our pursuit of certainty? How many possibilities have we missed in our commitment to the way things are? How often in our pursuit of certainty do we use it to hoard power and keep others on the outside looking in? Certainty is the enemy of community because it rejects the very notion that God may be doing a new thing.

Embracing mystery in our life of faith looks like learning to say “I don’t know,” “Maybe,” and “What if . . . ?” It asks us to let go of our need to control and understand, and to trust God’s promises more than our evidence. Mystery requires a posture of humility and curiosity, a willingness to look for God in inexplicable and unbelievable places and events. After all, we preach Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23), an unbelievable notion if ever there was one.

COMMEMORATIONS

Patrick, bishop, missionary to Ireland, died 461

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

A native of Britain, Patrick was kidnapped by pirates at age sixteen and sold into slavery in Ireland. After a few years, he escaped, returned home, and entered the ministry. Returning to Ireland, he successfully served as a bishop and missionary there.

Joseph, Guardian of Jesus

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Though the Bible tells us little about the husband of Jesus' mother Mary, we know that he was a carpenter or builder by trade. He is also shown as being devoted both to God and to Mary and Jesus. It is assumed that he died before Jesus became an adult.

Thomas Cranmer, Bishop of Canterbury, martyr, died 1556

Saturday, March 21, 2026

Cranmer's lasting achievement is contributing to and overseeing the creation of the Book of Common Prayer, which remains (in revised form) the worship book of the Anglican Communion. He was burned at the stake under Queen Mary for his support of the Protestant Reformation. Born into wealth and power, Gregory was for a time the chief administrator of the city of Rome. Giving this up for a life in the church, he was elected pope in 590. He influenced public worship through the establishment of a lectionary and prayers to correlate with the readings. Gregorian chant is named in his honor.