# Welcome to St. Paul's The Lord Bless You as You Worship!



March 17, 2024

# St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Enter to Listen, Exit to Serve

#### WORSHIP NOTES

Thank you for worshipping with us this morning. We're glad you're here! May you experience God's love through the words you hear and sing, the meal you eat, and the fellowship of God's people.

**Prayer Requests** If you have a prayer request, please give a note to the ushers or send an email to Pastor Lori.

**Face Masks** Are optional however, just a friendly reminder...please wear a mask in the building if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19/experiencing any kind of respiratory or flu-like symptoms. Masks are available on the table in the narthex in case you forget yours as home. Thank you!

**Holy Communion** All are welcome to share in Christ's meal of forgiveness and grace. Children who do not yet commune are welcome to come forward for a blessing. (If you feel your child is ready to receive or have additional questions, please speak with Pastor Lori.) *Please come forward at the direction of the ushers.* Wine is in the outer rings of the tray. Grape juice is in the center of the tray. Gluten-free bread is available; please indicate your need to the pastor.

**Pew Cushions** Are available on the pew in the back of the sanctuary.

**Hearing Assistance** Individual hearing devices are available at the back of the sanctuary. Please return the device at the end of worship so they can be sanitized.

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# We Worship God

#### Welcome

**Prelude:** "O God, Thou Faithful God" Flor Peeters

The prelude is a time for people to become quiet, to meditate and pray, and to prepare their hearts and minds to worship God. You are invited to pray this prayer to help you transition from the cares and activities of daily life to worshipping the Living God: God of grace, you have given us minds to know you, hearts to love you, and voices to sing your praise. Fill us with your Spirit, that we may celebrate your glory and worship you in spirit and truth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

(Please stand as you are able)

## Call to Worship

P: God has given us a new covenant.

All: God will put God's law within us.

P: God will write it on our hearts.

All: We shall all know God, forevermore.

## **Confession and Forgiveness**

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

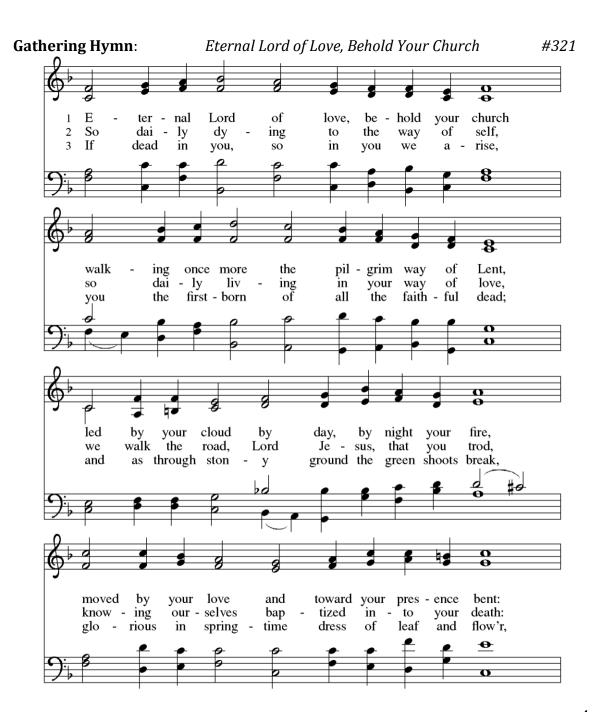
Pause for silence and reflection.

P: God of love,

All: When we look inward and are honest with ourselves, we see where we have lived as though you are not our God. We have sought after our own gain rather than the good of all. We have not loved you or our neighbors as ourselves. We have betrayed and denied you in what we have done and not done. Create in us clean hearts, O God, that we might become what you have called us to be.

P: God whose unfathomable love went to the cross for our sake now forgives us all our sins and welcomes us all over again into the promise of eternal life in Christ's name.

All: Amen.





Text: Thomas H. Cain, 1931-2003

Music: OLD 124TH, Trente quatre pseaumes de David, Geneva, 1551

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#### Greeting

P: 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. All:



Music: BAYLOR, Hal H. Hopson, b. 1933

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## **Prayer of the Day**

P: Holy God,

All: As Jesus' faith persevered to the very end, even as he knew the death he was to die, make our faith steadfast in the midst of life's challenges, and renew our commitment to your work of love and justice in all the earth. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

(Please be seated)

## We Hear God's Word

# **Prayer for Illumination**

A: Gracious God, our way in the wilderness,

All: guide us by your Word through these forty days, and minister to us with your Holy Spirit, so that we may be reformed, restored, and renewed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

#### Psalm 119:9-16

A: How can young people keep their way pure?

All: By guarding it according to your word.

A: With my whole heart I seek you; do not let me stray from your commandments.

All: I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.

A: Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes.

All: With my lips I declare all the ordinances of your mouth.

A: I delight in the way of your decrees as much as in all riches.

All: I will meditate on your precepts, and fix my eyes on your ways.

A: I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

## Second Reading: Hebrews 5:5-10

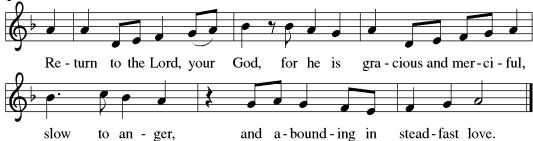
So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek." In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

A: Word of God, Word of life.

All: Thanks be to God!

(Please stand as you are able)

# **Gospel Acclamation**



## The Gospel

P: The Gospel according to John.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

# John 12:20-33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever

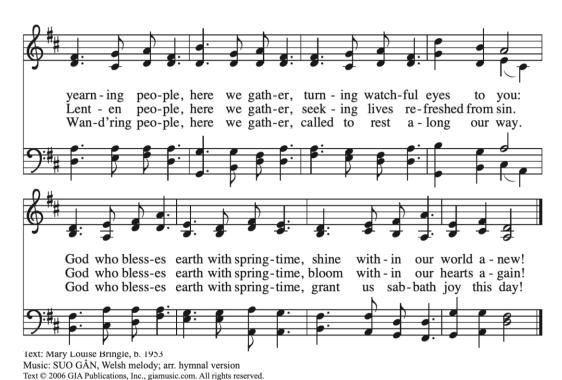
serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

Rev. Lori Nickoloff Sermon **Hymn of the Day:** As the Winter Days Grow Longer ACS#924 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, waits for Eas - ter's dawn-ing lightour ea - ger ex - pec - ta - tion 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.



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## (Please stand as you are able)

#### **Affirmation**

All:

A: Let us profess our faith together with the words of this affirmation.

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I believe in God the Creator,
who made me and all things,
who set me on my path in this world.
I believe in God the Savior,
who is one with the Creator,
who rescued me and all creation
from the depredations of our violations
against God and creation.
This man, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ,
walked a path through this world,
taking on human form having been born of a woman

through the power of the Holy Spirit.

He lived and worked in this world among people just like me.

He walked God's path to death on a cross,
and rose from the dead to open our pathway to eternal life.

I believe in God the Holy Spirit, my counselor and guide,
who is one with the Creator and the Christ,
who through the body and blood of Jesus
brings me into communion with all people, past, present and future;
who calls me to walk a sacred way of life through this world,
caring for creation and the people I meet on the way,
loving them, helping them, welcoming them without prejudice,
being God's hands and feet in the world. Amen.

— written by Lisa Frenz, and posted on Lisa's Liturgies.

## **Prayers of Intercession**

A: Trusting in your eternal love, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

A: God of self-sacrifice, guide us to understand the profound lesson of the grain of wheat that falls to the earth. May we embrace the call to die to ourselves, so that we may bear much fruit in our lives, inspiring farmers, gardeners, and all who nurture growth and renewal. Lord grant us wisdom;

## All: Hear our prayers to you.

A: Creator of all, inspire us to see the interconnectedness of all creation. May we act as stewards of the earth, valuing the work of environmentalists, scientists, and all who strive to understand and protect the delicate balance of nature. Lord grant us wisdom;

#### All: Hear our prayers to you.

A: Guide our spiritual leaders, diplomats, and peacemakers, that they may foster understanding and collaboration among diverse peoples and cultures. May they lead with wisdom and grace, building bridges and embracing the universal longing to see and know you. Lord grant us wisdom;

## All: Hear our prayers to you.

A: Healing God, we pray for those who are in need of physical, emotional, mental or spiritual healing (especially...). May they find comfort and

restoration in your love, and may therapists, counselors, and friends be channels of your compassion and care. Lord grant us wisdom;

All: Hear our prayers to you.

A: God of justice and mercy, we pray for those who work tirelessly to uplift the downtrodden and marginalized. Strengthen social workers, activists, and volunteers, that they may reflect your love and commitment to justice, even in the face of adversity and challenge. Lord grant us wisdom;

All: Hear our prayers to you.

A: We remember the saints who have gone before us, those who have followed the path of self-sacrifice and devotion. May we be inspired by their example, honoring the legacy of teachers, martyrs, and all who have illuminated the way with their faith and courage. Lord grant us wisdom;

All: Hear our prayers to you.

P: We lift all these prayers and more to you, in the name of Jesus,

All: Amen.

## **Sharing of Peace**

P: In peace we are reconciled to God. Let us be reconciled to one another by sharing a sign of God's peace in a way that you are comfortable.

Please turn to the people near you to offer a gesture of peace and the greeting, "God's peace be with you!" You are also encouraged to turn to the back of the sanctuary and greet the worshippers on Zoom with a wave or gesture of peace.

(Please be seated)

## **Offering**

This month our Local Hunger Offering will be given to **The Sharing Shed.** 

Offertory Music

"Fairest Lord Jesus"

Kurt Kaiser

(Please stand as you are able)

**Offertory Hymn:** Lord of Glory, You Have Brought Us (Verse Two)

#707

Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to give you gladly, freely, of your own. With the sunshine of your goodness melt our thankless hearts of stone till our cold and selfish natures, warmed by you, at length believe that more happy and more blessed 'tis to give than to receive.

## **Offertory Prayer**

A: God of abundance,

All: you give us all we need to live lives of faithful service to you. Accept these gifts as a sign of that faithful service, that they might be used for the flourishing of all that you have made. Amen.

# We Share God's Meal

#### The 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: Glorious God, you created the heavens as the place for your glory to dwell and the earth as the theater for your glory to come among us... ... And so we gladly thank you, with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, singing the hymn of your unending praise.



P: Righteous God, when the hour came for your Son to be glorified, he sat down with his disciples and reenacted the story of your liberating purpose for your people... ... Great is the mystery of faith.

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

P: Heavenly God, you have glorified your name. Glorify it again today, that those who stand before you with prayers and supplications made with loud cries and tears may find in you the solace for their aching, the joy of their desiring, and the goal of their yearning. As you lifted up your Son through suffering to resurrected glory, lift up the wretched of the earth to find peace and rest at your side and in your heart. Bring all who would see you face to face with your Son in the power of your Holy Spirit, until all injustice is transformed by your mercy, all deceit healed by your truth, and all oppression dismantled by your grace, until your kingdom is known on earth, now and forever.

All: Amen.

## The Lord's Prayer

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as 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, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

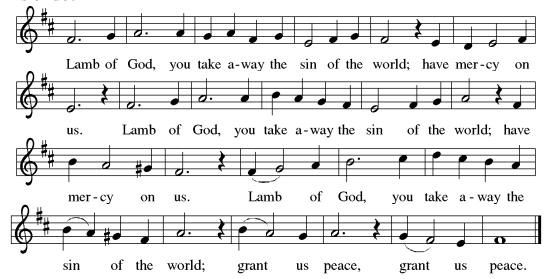
#### **Eucharistic Invitation**

P: Come to the table of eternal life, where Jesus meets us in the bread and the wine, and strengthens us in faith, so that we might be the hands and feet of Christ to one another and the world. All is prepared.

All: Amen.

(Please be seated)

#### Lamb of God



# **Hymns During Communion:**

| Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus         | #802 |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Take Up Your Cross, the Savior Said | #667 |
| Bless Now, O God, the Journey       | #326 |

## **Table Blessing**

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

All: Amen

## **Prayer After Communion:**

A: Thank you, gracious God, for giving us bread for the journey of these forty days.

All: As we travel on through the wilderness, help us to share your grace with others and draw us ever closer to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### We Leave to Serve

#### **Announcements**

#### **Benediction**

P: May the God of grace and glory go with you as you follow this Lenten path. Wherever it takes you, and to whomever it takes you, may you go with the blessing of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, both now and forever.

All: Amen.

## Litany

L: As we journey through Lent, we reflect,

All: And are confronted again with the inevitable suffering to come.

L: We wish there was an easier, softer way.

All: But Jesus tells us otherwise.

L: Without the grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying,

All: It cannot grow and bear fruit for the sake of the world.

L: God comes to us in our fear,

All: And strengthens us to go on to the bitter end.

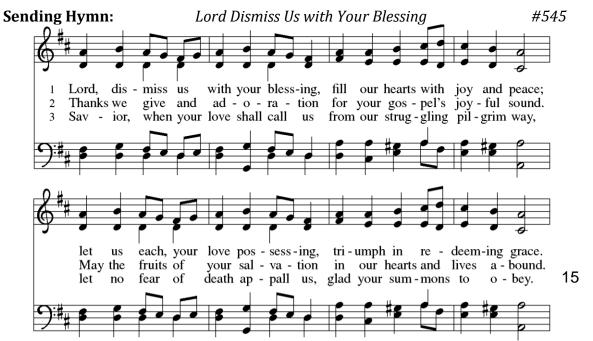
L: God proclaims his love for Jesus in our presence,

All: Like the sound of thunder.

L: As we journey through Lent, we reflect,

All: And thank our God for walking alongside us.

(Please stand to sing the hymn and turn to face the flame as it exits the church)





Text: attr. John Fawcett, 1740–1817, sts. 1–2, alt.; Godfrey Thring, 1823–1903, st. 3, alt. Music: SICILIAN MARINERS, Sicilian, 18th cent.

#### Sending

A: Go in peace. Serve in love.

All: Thanks be to God.

**Postlude** "O World, I Must Now Leave Thee"

Johannes Brahms

#### As the Winter Days Grow Longer ACS 924

Mary Louise Bringle (1953-) Is Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies and Chair of the Humanities Division at Brevard College (Brevard NC). She has written hymns since 1999 and published two collections of her work: "Joy and wonder, love and longing" 2002 and "In wind and wonder" 2007. Her hymns and anthem texts are numerous and well represented in many denominations.

The text connects the latter part of our Lenten journey with the transformation of winter into spring. The Light has returned. The easy and natural rhymes are filled with the optimism of new birth in springtime preparing our hearts for Resurrection Sunday. Each verse ends with the prayer: God who blesses earth in springtime, bring new light to the world, bloom in our hearts again, and grant us Sabbath joy.

The tune "SUO GAN" in Welsh means "lullaby" and is of anonymous origin. The repeated rhythm of long-short-short-long is the gentle push on the rocking cradle. If one imagines the quiet movement of the cradle, then the tempo naturally is revealed. The original text of the mother's song is of assurance, protection, and deep love. This tune is well suited to convey the love and reassurance being renewed in this heartwarming text.