

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



*Seventh Sunday after Epiphany
February 23, 2025*

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Rev. Lori Nickoloff, Pastor

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 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 at 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:

“Infinite Mercy”

G F Handel

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 rise in body or spirit)

Call to Worship

P: Trust in God and do what is good.

All: **We will take delight in our God.**

P: Be still before God.

All: **We wait patiently for our God.**

Thanksgiving for Baptism

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

P: Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God’s mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism. We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all. We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

All: **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn:

All Creatures Worship God Most High

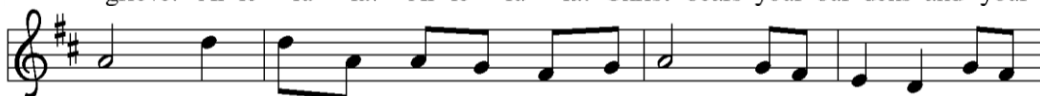
#835



1 All crea-tures, wor-ship God most high! Sound ev-'ry voice in earth and
 2 Sing, broth-er wind; with clouds and rain you grow the gifts of fruit and
 3 Sing, broth-er fire, so mirth-ful, strong; drive far the shad-ows, join the
 4 All who for love of God for-give, all who in pain or sor-row



sky: Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Sing, broth-er sun, in splen-dor
 grain: Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Dear sis-ter wa-ter, use-ful,
 thron: Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Dear moth-er earth, so rich in
 grieve: Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Christ bears your bur-dens and your



bright; sing, sis-ter moon and stars of night:
 clear, make mu-sic for your Lord to hear: Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-
 care, praise God in col-ors bright and rare:
 fears; still make your song a-mid the tears:



lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia!
 5 And you, most gentle sister death, waiting to hush our final breath:
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 Since Christ our light has pierced your gloom,
 fair is the night that leads us home.
 Alleluia.
 6 O sisters, brothers, take your part,
 and worship God with humble heart:
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 All creatures, bless the Father, Son,
 and Holy Spirit, Three in One:
 Alleluia.

Text: Francis of Assisi, 1182-1226; tr. composite
 Music: LASST UNS ERFREUEN, Geistliche Kirchengesänge, Köln, 1623
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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.

All: And also with you.

Hymn of Praise:

Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness

#843



1 Praise the One who breaks the dark-ness with a lib - er - at - ing light;
2 Praise the One who blessed the chil - dren with a strong yet gen - tle word;
3 Praise the one true love in - car - nate: Christ, who suf - fered in our place;



praise the One who frees the pris - 'ners, turn - ing blind - ness in - to sight.
praise the One who drove out de - mons with a pierc - ing, two - edged sword.
Je - sus died and rose for man - y that we may know God by grace.



Praise the One who preached the gos - pel, heal - ing ev - 'ry dread dis - ease,
Praise the One who brings cool wa - ter to the des - ert's burn - ing sand;
Let us sing for joy and glad - ness, see - ing what our God has done.



calm - ing storms and feed - ing thou - sands with the ver - y bread of peace.
from this well comes liv - ing wa - ter quench - ing thirst in ev - 'ry land.
Praise the one re - deem - ing glo - ry; praise the One who makes us one.



Prayer of the Day

P: Loving God,

All: you do not wish that injustice would prevail, but that love would reign supreme. Strengthen our hearts in the midst of suffering, that we might be your living examples of compassion in the world, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Please be seated)

We Hear God's Word

Prayer for Illumination

A: Guide us, O God, by your Word and Spirit,

All: that in your light we may see light, in your truth find wisdom, and in your will discover your peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Psalm 37

A: It's high time we stop complaining about the corruption of our world or the lack of values in our society.

All: It seems like at the same time we complain, we eye with envy those ungodly character who appear to have more fun or to be more successful than we are.

A: If we really trusted God and were truly committed to His purposes, the world would be better off today.

All: God is in our world.

A: He is the source of our joy and well-being, the fulfillment of our heart's desires.

All: God works through those who are dedicated to Him and His will to permeate the world's darkness with divine light.

A: Let's stay calm and try to be patient.

All: Stop worrying about the apparent hopelessness of it all.

A: We only contribute to this despair with negativity and defeatism.

All: God has not taken a vacation; He is here.

A: He has His own way of dealing with corruption and greed, disease and bigotry, war and violence, insecurity and fear.

All: The ultimate victory is God's.

A: Those who live within God's will shall surely discover that His purposes prevail, that true joy and peace and security come from Him.

All: Let us wait on God and seek daily to obey Him.

A: He is our salvation and our security, and nothing in this world can take that away from us.

All: Ask Him to calm our hostilities, to overcome our anxieties, and to help us walk in peace and love.

from Psalms/Now by Leslie F. Brandt

Acts 8: 26-40

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.” The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

A: Word of God, Word of life.

All: Thanks be to God!

(Please rise in body or spirit)

Gospel Acclamation

Come and See

ACS#976

What are you look - ing for? Come,

see, come and see. What are you

look - ing for? Come and see. Come and see.

The Gospel

P: The Gospel according to Luke.

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

Luke 6:27-38

“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you. “If you love those who love you, what

credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

Sermon

Rev. Lori Nickoloff

Following the sermon, there is a time of silence for reflection and quiet meditation.

Our liturgy is made up not only of words, gestures, and music, but also moments of silence.

As the hymn begins, the assembly stands to sing.

Be merciful,
JUST AS YOUR FATHER
is merciful.
LUKE 6:36

Hymn of the Day:

Build a Longer Table

ACS#1062



1 Build a long - er ta - ble, not a high - er wall,
2 Build a saf - er ref - uge, not a larg - er jail;
3 Build a broad - er door - way, not a long - er fence.
4 When we lived as ex - iles, ref - u - gees a - broad,



feed - ing those who hun - ger, mak - ing room for all.
where the weak find shel - ter, mer - cy will not fail.
Love pro - tects all peo - ple, spar - ing no ex - pense.
Christ be - came our door - way to the reign of God.



Feast - ing to - geth - er, strang - er turns to friend,
For an - y place where jus - tice is de - nied,
When we em - brace com - pas - sion more than fear,
So must our ta - bles wel - come those who roam.



Christ breaks walls to piec - es; false di - vi - sions end.
Christ will breach the jail wall, free - ing all in - side.
Christ tears down our fenc - es: all are wel - come here.
None can be ex - clud - ed; all must find a home.

Text: David Bjorlin, b. 1984

Music: NOËL NOUVELET, French carol

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Apostles Creed

A: With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

All: **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy**

catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

A: Confident in your grace and truth, we pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

A: Lord, you long for wounds to be healed and divisions to be mended. Give us strength to forgive, courage to care, and the will to let go of poisonous grudges. God, draw near,

All: receive our prayer.

A: Many parts of creation are suffering. Bring rain where there is drought, and relief where there have been too many storms. Nourish the earth and all that you have made. God, draw near,

All: receive our prayer.

A: We lift up doctors, nurses, and all medical staff who care for those who are ill. Guide them in their work, and be present in all that they do. God, draw near,

All: receive our prayer.

A: Grant comfort and peace to all who cry out to you for help. Strengthen the hearts and bodies of all who face difficulties, (*especially...*) God, draw near,

All: receive our prayer.

A: Provide refugees and all displaced peoples with safety, comfort, and new opportunities and communities. May they find deep welcome and hospitality wherever they go. God, draw near,

All: receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: We remember with love and longing those who have been a part of this congregation in years past. Thank you for their faithfulness and for working through their lives to reach us today. God, draw near,

All: receive our prayer.

P: We lift up all of our prayers, spoken and unspoken to you. In Jesus' name we pray.

All: Amen.

Sharing of Peace

P: The Lord of peace give you peace at all times and in all ways.

All: And also to you.

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 **Milly's Pantry**.

Offertory Music

"He is Gracious"

B Molique

(Please rise in body or spirit)

Offertory Hymn:

As with Gladness Men of Old (verse 3)

#302

*As they offered gifts most rare at thy cradle, rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'nly king*

Offertory Prayer

A: Life-giving God, all we have is from you.

All: **Accept now these gifts out of your abundance. Bless them for the work of bringing life to all who are in need, in this community and in the world. 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: Blessed above all are you, Lord God of creation, for in the beginning you formed the earth in magnificent splendor, and from humble dust you raised up a man made in your image... .. And so we join our voices with angels and archangels, praising your name and joining their unending hymn.



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.

P: Providing God, you look with mercy upon the hungry and meet famine with your plenty Great is the mystery of faith.

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

P: Merciful God, by the cross of Christ you transform hatred into love, curse into blessing, and evil into good. Meet your children anew today with the power of your Holy Spirit, that wherever there is hatred, they may live love; wherever there are enemies, they may do good; wherever there are beggars, they may give grace; wherever there are persecutors, they may bring blessing. Make your resurrecting power known through the grace you give your people to love in the face of fear with forgiveness that passes understanding. Raise us on the last day with all the saints who have made your kingdom their one sure hope and your grace their imperishable trust, ever-living God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, 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: Jesus who brings healing and wholeness to all people regardless of who they are or where they come from welcomes you and all people to this holy feast. Come with all your siblings in Christ to share the bread and wine of Jesus' presence.

All: Amen.

(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.

Hymns During Communion:

<i>Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee</i>	#836
<i>There's a Wideness in God's Mercy</i>	#588
<i>O God of Mercy, God of Light</i>	#714

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: Generous God,

All: in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

We Leave to Serve

Announcements

Benediction

P: May God strengthen you and bless you with peace; may Christ Jesus bring forth justice for you and among you; and may the Holy Spirit alight on you and affirm you as God's beloved ones.

All: Amen.

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Litany

L: Be merciful, says God, as I am merciful.

All: Forgive, says the Lord, as you have been forgiven.

L: But we are human, imperfect.

All: We love those who love us,

L: and despise those who ill-treat us.

All: How, O God, can we forgive and love someone who hates us?

L: Have we not also been forgiven?

All: Do we not receive God's mercy?

L: Make forgiven ones forgivers,

All: And beloved ones peacemakers.

L: Let us be merciful as God shows mercy.

All: Let us forgive as God forgives.

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

Sending Hymn:

O Christ, Your Heart Compassionate

#722

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "O Christ, Your Heart Compassionate". It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the melody and a bass clef staff for the accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style with a mix of quarter and eighth notes. The accompaniment consists of chords, primarily triads and dyads, providing a harmonic foundation for the melody. Below the staves, the lyrics are written in four lines, with the first line starting with "1 O Christ, your heart, com - pas - sion - ate, bore ev - 'ry hu - man pain." and the fourth line ending with "4 O Love that made the dis - tant stars, yet marks the spar-row's fall,".

1 O Christ, your heart, com - pas - sion - ate, bore ev - 'ry hu - man pain.
2 As once you wel - comed those cast down and healed the sick, the blind,
3 O Christ, cre - ate new hearts in us that beat in time with yours,
4 O Love that made the dis - tant stars, yet marks the spar-row's fall,

Its beat - ing was the pulse of God; its breadth, God's vast do - main.
 so may all bruised and bro - ken lives through us your help still find.
 that, joined by faith with your great heart, be - come love's o - pen doors.
 whose arms stretched wide up - on a cross em - brace and bear us all:

The heart of God, the heart of Christ com - bined in per - fect rhyme
 Lord, join our hearts with those who weep that none may weep a - lone,
 We are your bod - y, ris - en Christ; our hearts, our hands we yield
 come, make your church a ser - vant church that walks your ser - vant ways,

to write God's love in hu - man deeds, e - ter - ni - ty in time.
 and help us bear an - oth - er's pain as though it were our own.
 that through our life and min - is - try your love may be re - vealed.
 whose deeds of love rise up to you, a sac - ri - fice of praise!

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., b. 1923
 Music: ELLACOMBE, German melody, 18th cent.; adapt. X. L. Hartig, *Melodien zum Mainzer Gesangbuche*, 1833
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Sending

P: Go in peace. You are God's beloved.

All: Thanks be to God!

Postlude

"Fantasia on the Austrian Hymn"

Charles Sergisson