

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



March 30, 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:

"Gibbon's Song 24"

Healey Willan

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: All we, like the prodigal son, have wandered off.

All: Yet our God pursues us, and brings us home.

P: Our God cherishes and protects us, and will not rest until we are back among the fold.

All: Thanks be to God!

Confession and Forgiveness

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

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: God of the journey,

All: we do not want to follow where you lead. Instead, we turn inward, focusing on satisfying our own wants, even at the expense of our neighbors. We do not see their suffering; we do not act for their justice. We are motivated by the fear of not getting what we want, or of losing what we have. We ignore the example of your sacrificial love, which has the power to heal and make whole. Forgive us for refusing to heed your call. Change our hearts, our minds, and our actions, so that we might return to following you, no matter where your journey leads.

P: Our God is a God of abundant grace and mercy, and never lets us go. For the sake of Jesus, God with Us, who gave all for the redemption of creation, your sins are forgiven. Follow in Christ's loving footsteps.

All: Amen.

Gathering Hymn:

As the Winter Days Grow Longer

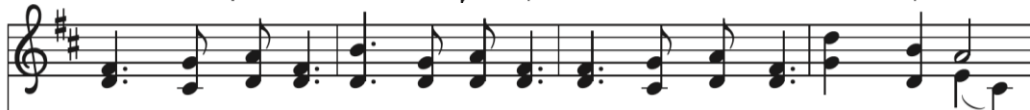
ACS#924



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,



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.



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 - fresh - ed 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!



Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953
Music: SUO GÂN, Welsh melody; arr. hymnal version
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Arr. © 2020 Augsburg Fortress

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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:

From Depths of Woe

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The first system contains three lines of lyrics, and the second system contains two lines of lyrics. The piano accompaniment features chords and moving lines in the bass.

1 From depths of woe I lift my cry, O Lord— my
2 Our land cries out in toil and pain; we burn and
3 O heal the rift where voi- ces rise; u- nite our

soul would you draw nigh? In mer- cy hear my plead- ing
build for self- ish gain. Your balm a- waits, as walls di-
hearts and give us eyes to see your grace come break- ing

voice, and bid my wear y heart re - joice.
vide, when the whole world stands side by side.
through, and so re - store our sight on you.

Cre-ate in me a heart made new; my spir-it strong,

O Lord, re - new. O cleanse me in your bound-less grace,

and let me stand be - fore your face.

Prayer of the Day

P: Holy God,

All: you travel down any path and go to any lengths to find us, and you rejoice when we are back in your loving arms. Keep us ever mindful of your endless mercy and grace, that we might release our shame when we once again wander from your loving care. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

(Please be seated)

We Hear God's Word

Prayer for Illumination

A: Gracious God,

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.

Psalm 32

A: Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

All: Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

A: While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

All: For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

A: Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord', and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

All: Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.

A: You are a hiding-place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

All: I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

A: Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.

All: Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.

A: Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

A: Word of God, Word of life.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

(Please rise in body or spirit)

Gospel Acclamation

Return to the Lord, you God

Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,
slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

The Gospel

P: The Gospel according to Luke.

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

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” So he told them this parable: “There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he

began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate. “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

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.

Hymn of the Day: *Softly and Tenderly, Jesus is Calling* #608 (Requested Hymn)

1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
 2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
 3 Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for

you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
 you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
 you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

Refrain

watch - ing for you and for me.
 mer - cies for you and for me? "Come home, come home!
 par - don for you and for me. Come home, come home!"

You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,



Text: Will L. Thompson, 1847–1909
 Music: THOMPSON, Will L. Thompson

Affirmation of Faith

A: Please join me in affirming our faith in the Triune God.

All: 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: With trust and hope, we pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

A: We are sorry for all the things which we allow to come between ourselves and others, and between ourselves and you, O Lord. Give us a clean slate and another chance to build our relationships and renew our souls. God, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

A: Creation sings your praises. Help us to join this praise and care for the earth with joy and gratitude for your provision. God, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

A: Violence and war rage around the world. Protect those who are most vulnerable, and inspire all who lead to work tirelessly for peace and compassion in all lands. God, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

A: Abide with those who are in pain and who are suffering (*especially...*) God, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

A: Be with those who are estranged from their families. Bring them healing and restoration, and may they find love and community in new places. God, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: We remember with gratitude those who have died in the faith. May the example of their lives point us back to the right path when we have gone astray. God, in your mercy,

All: hear our prayer.

P: We entrust all these prayers and those of our hearts to you, O God. In Jesus name we pray.

All: Amen.

Sharing of Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

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 **The Sharing Shed.***

Offertory Music

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent" Roger C Wilson

(Please rise in body or spirit)

Offertory Hymn:

Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God

#186



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right
spir-it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take
not your Ho-ly Spir-it from me. Re-store to me the joy of
your sal-va-tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir-it.

Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923

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Offertory Prayer

A: God, you have provided us with all we need to flourish.

All: **In gratitude for your generosity, we now return to you a portion of what you have first given us. Bless these gifts and use them according to your holy will. Amen.**

We Share God's Meal

The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

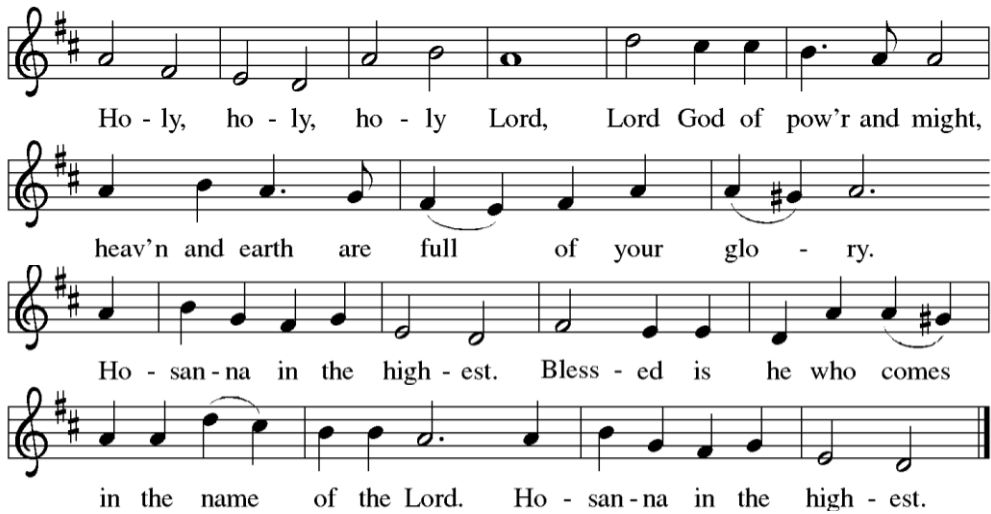
P: Lift up your hearts.

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: God of grace, you lift our hearts because, though we squandered your abundant gifts... ... with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, singing your unending praise.



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
 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: God of blessing, you are the host of our joyGreat is the mystery of faith.

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

P: Gathering God, when we languish with the pigs in a humiliation of our own making, may this broken body heal, restore, and renew our bodies. When we lurk in the shadows in a resentment of our own devising, may this shed blood soften and cleanse and refresh our hearts. Strengthen our hands, that we may seek a world where there is no hunger for you. Empower our spirits, that we may strive for a world where there is no thirst except thirst for your righteousness. Hasten the day when this body shows us your desire for our well-being, and this blood reveals how far you go to save us from ourselves and restore us in the image of your Son, through whom, and with whom, and in whom all honor and glory are yours, now and forever.

All: **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, God in Heaven Above

#746



1 Our Fa - ther, God in heav'n a - bove, we pray, u - nit - ed
 2 Give us to - day our dai - ly bread; let ev - 'ry - one be
 3 In time of tri - al, res - cue us. Let your word give suc -
 4 A - men. Yes, yes, it shall be so! Build up our faith and

in your love: Your name be hal - lowed. Help us, Lord,
 clothed and fed. For - give our sins, as we for - give
 cess to us when, on our left and on our right,
 make it grow; be - set by doubt, help us be - lieve

in faith - ful - ness to keep your word. Your king - dom come; your
 when oth - ers hurt us as we live. Help us to dwell in
 temp - ta - tions chal - lenge us to fight. De - liv - er us from
 what here we ask we shall re - ceive. So, by your prom - ise,

will be done on earth as there be - fore your throne.
 har - mo - ny and serve each oth - er will - ing - ly.
 e - vil's pow'r and com - fort us in life's last hour.
 in your name, with loud A - men your Yes we claim!

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546, abridged; tr. hymnal version
 Music: VATER UNSER, V. Schumann, Geistliche Lieder, 1539
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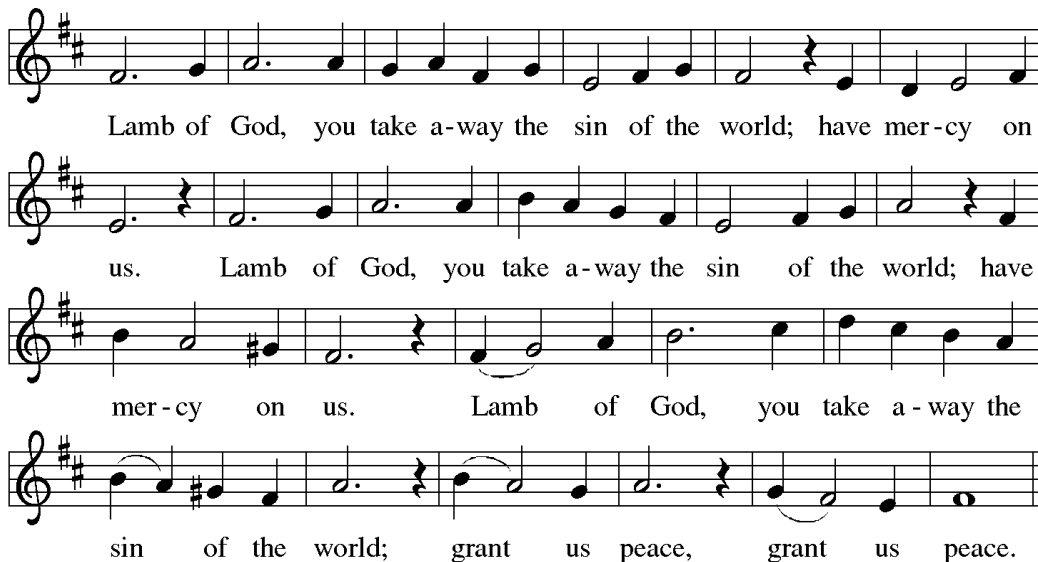
Eucharistic Invitation

P: All who have strayed and gotten lost are called back into Jesus' presence at this holy table, and welcomed with open arms. Come with joy and be nourished in love, for all is prepared.

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, grant us peace.

Hymns During Communion:

Amazing Grace

#779 (*Requested Hymn*)

Restore in Us, O God

#328

Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways

#772

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.

All: **Amen.**

Litany

L: Where do we see ourselves in the story of the Prodigal Son?

All: **Are we the son? Selfish and thoughtless? But who finally finds humility?**

L: Are we the father? Loving and generous? Rejoicing in those around us?

All: **Are we the older brother? Petty and resentful when we think life is unfair?**

L: We are at times all of these.

All: **And God loves us regardless.**

L: No matter how lost we are, how lost we feel,

All: **God will find us and welcome us with open arms.**

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



Sending Hymn:

Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me

#767

1 Lord, take my hand and lead me up - on life's way;
2 Lord, when the tem - pest ra - ges, I need not fear;
3 Lord, when the shad - ows length - en and night has come,

di - rect, pro - tect, and feed me from day to day.
for you, the Rock of A - ges, are al - ways near.
I know that you will strength - en my steps toward home,

With - out your grace and fa - vor I go a - stray;
Close by your side a - bid - ing, I fear no foe,
then noth - ing can im - pede me, O bless - ed Friend!

so take my hand, O Sav - ior, and lead the way.
 for when your hand is guid - ing, in peace I go.
 So, take my hand and lead me un - to the end.

Text: Julie von Hausmann, 1825–1901; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
 Music: SO NIMM DENN MEINE HÄNDE, Friedrich Silcher, 1789–1860
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Sending

A: Go in peace, seek justice for the poor.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

Postlude

"Largo from D minor Concerto"

Antonio Vivaldi

Hymn Notes “Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling” ELW 608

Author and composer Will L Thompson (1847-1909) attended Boston Conservatory and then studied in Leipzig, Germany. He started his own music publishing company for his popular songs and traveled by horse and buggy through Ohio. He did very well financially in this itinerant venture. This was the musical foundation for his Gospel style hymns.

There has been some conflict between this American Gospel style of Evangelistic hymnody and Protestantism’s more classical European influenced hymn tunes. “Softly and tenderly” presents a very personal and emotional Savior reaching out to us more strongly than standing at the door and knocking. Indeed, this early Gospel style hymn and its kind influenced the music of the modern American Evangelical Church.

THOMPSON has a gently swinging character, like a lullaby. It is a tender call for us to return to the care and comfort of our loving Savior.