

*We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Anishinabek Nations, and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. This territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.*

*This territory is also covered by the Toronto Purchase, Treaty 13 of 1805, and the Williams Treaties of 1923. Today, our community is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island. We gather by these territorial lands and waters to worship, listen, learn, share, and heal together in the name of our Creator, the Holy One of Blessing.*

## **St. Paul's Lutheran Church**

### **Lent Two**

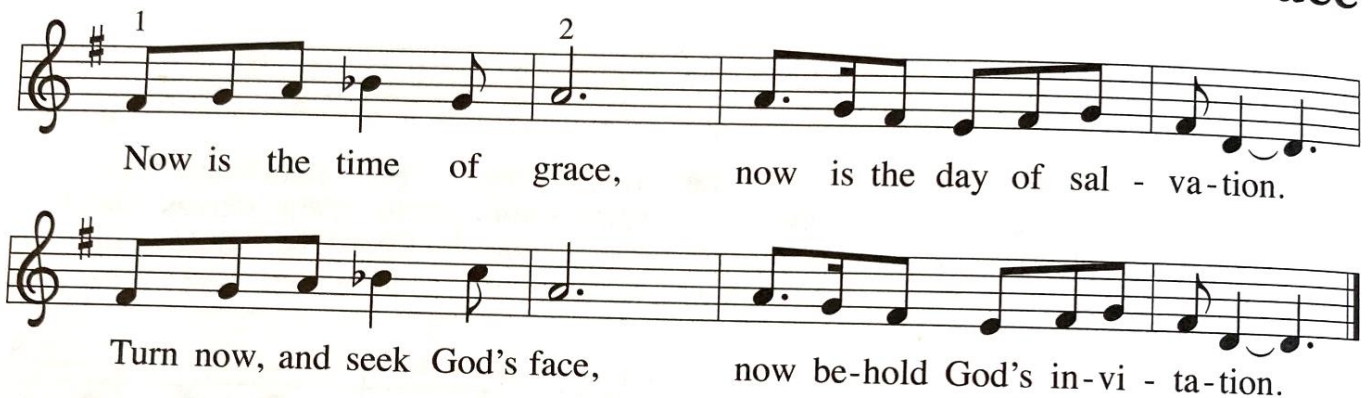
**March 5, 2023**

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**HYMN ACS # 918 NOW IS THE TIME OF GRACE**

**Congregation**



The image shows two staves of musical notation for the hymn 'Now is the Time of Grace'. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics 'Now is the time of grace, now is the day of sal - va - tion.' are written below the staff. A first ending bracket is shown above the first measure, and a second ending bracket is shown above the second measure. The second staff continues the melody with the lyrics 'Turn now, and seek God's face, now be-hold God's in-vi - ta-tion.'.

**Leader:**

*This is the fast that God would choose,  
To loose the bonds of injustice,  
To let the captives go free,  
And to break the yoke of oppression*

## PSALM 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills;

**from where is my help to come?**

My help comes from the Lord,

**the maker of heaven and earth.**

The Lord will not let your foot be moved;

**nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.**

Behold the keeper of Israel

**will neither slumber nor sleep.**

The Lord watches over you;

**the LORD is your shade at your right hand.**

The sun will not strike you by day,

**nor the moon by night.**

The Lord will preserve you from all evil;

**and will keep your life.**

The Lord will watch over your going out and your coming in,

**from this time forth forevermore.**

## 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

O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## GOSPEL JOHN 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and

Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

#### REFLECTION

#### **HYMN ELW # 326 BLESS NOW, O GOD, THE JOURNEY**

**Bless now, O God, the journey that all your people make,  
the path through noise and silence, the way of give and take.  
The trail is found in desert and winds the mountain round,  
then leads beside still waters, the road where faith is found.**

**Bless sojourners and pilgrims who share this winding way,  
whose hope burns through the terrors, whose love sustains the day.  
We yearn for holy freedom while often we are bound.  
Together we are seeking the road where faith is found.**

**Divine Eternal Lover, you meet us on the road.  
We wait for lands of promise where milk and honey flow.  
But waiting not for places, you meet us all around.  
Our covenant is written on roads, as faith is found.**

## THE CELTIC CREED

**We believe in God above us, maker and sustainer of all life,  
of sun and moon, of water and earth, of male and female.**

**We believe in God beside us, Jesus Christ, the word made flesh,  
born of a woman, servant of the poor, tortured and nailed to a tree.  
A man of sorrows, he died forsaken.**

**He descended into the earth to the place of death.**

**On the third day he rose from the tomb.**

**He ascended into heaven, to be everywhere present,  
and His kingdom will come on earth.**

**We believe in God within us, the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire,  
life-giving breath of the Church, Spirit of healing and forgiveness,  
source of resurrection and of eternal life.**

**Amen.**

## PRAYERS

**SINGING INTO PRAYER ACS # 921 RETURN TO GOD**

**In all affliction. In all affliction..... return, return to God.**

**With great endurance**

**In every hardship**

**With humble spirit**

*A brief silence*

God of the covenant, you call us to be fruitful servants within creation,  
and to offer our lives as the foundation of your reign. We lay before you the  
desires of our hearts, that we may be transformed by their fulfillment.

*A brief silence*

O God, you so love your church. Raise us up to care for your people. Bless us  
as teachers and learners of your way and inspire us for the work of the gospel.  
Merciful God.....**receive our prayer.**

O God, you so love your creation. You create verdant gardens and expansive  
deserts. Tend to the needs of every living creature. Protect all enduring severe  
weather. As winter sleep continues here, nourish the earth to bring forth spring  
and summer growth.

Merciful God.....**receive our prayer.**

We pray for this nation and every nation, O God. Guide our leaders and decision makers with your wisdom. May we know what is good, holy, and right; and have the courage to do it. Let your peace empower all in Ukraine and Russia, calm the spirits of those in Palestine, Israel, Iran, and Pakistan. Wherever your people serve in harm's way—protect and enable them to act justly and with compassion.

Merciful God.....**receive our prayer.**

You are a resting place for all in distress. Draw near to exiles and accompany all refugees and immigrants. In times of trouble, trauma, or illness surround us with your steadfast love. Wherever relief workers work tirelessly to aid the homeless and hungry, the dispossessed and poor—give them strength to care, and to care some more. We pray for the people of Greece, Turkey, and Syria. We pray for our synod family as we mourn the death of Bishop retired William Huras and for all who need care and healing in our community among our friends and families.....

*Pause*

Merciful God.....**receive our prayer.**

Give us spiritual eyes open wide to your vision for us. Deepen our love for you, for each other and for those who have yet to call you “Lord”. Meet us on the road and change us as we learn more of your grace and love in our Lenten journey. Make our welcome your welcome to the study of scripture and times of worship and prayer.

Merciful God.....**receive our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

**Amen.**

**SINGING INTO PEACE ACS # 921 RETURN TO GOD**

**By speech that's truthful. By speech that's truthful.....return, return to God.**

**To cease oppression**

**By loving justice**

**With gentle kindness**

SHARING THE PEACE

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

OFFERING

*The offering will now be received and may God bless the gifts of your life*

## PRAYER OF PREPARATION

God of good gifts, receive these and all our offerings as we present them in faithful service for the sake of your gospel. Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal as you pour out your very presence through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life. **Amen.**

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Holy God, our living Water and our merciful Guide,

Together with rivers and seas, wells and springs

We bless and magnify you.

You led your people Israel through the desert,

And provided them water from the rock.

We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water,

Who joined us in our desert,

Pouring out his life for the world.

in the night in which he was betrayed, 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 for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection,

We await your salvation for all this thirsty world.

Pour out you Spirit on this holy food

And on all gathered for this feast:

Wash away our sin,  
That we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.  
Through him all glory and honour is yours,  
Almighty God, with the Holy Spirit,  
In your holy church, both now and forever.

**Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

**Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**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 COMMUNION

Come and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness. **Thanks be to God!**

HOLY COMMUNION

*you are invited to eat your bread and drink your wine as you hear the words*

*"the body of Christ given for you"      "the blood of Christ shed for you"*

TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen us  
and keep us always in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Embodied God, at you table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With the  
eyes of our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our  
neighbours and touch the world with your love. **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

God, the giver of love, + Christ, the resurrection and the life,  
and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey. **Amen.**

**HYMN ELW # 767 LORD TAKE MY HAND AND LEAD ME**

**Lord, take my hand and lead me upon life's way;**

**direct, protect, and feed me from day to day.**

**Without your grace and favour I go astray:**

**So take my hand, O Saviour, and lead the way.**

**Lord, when the tempest rages, I need not fear;  
for you, the Rock of Ages, Are always near.  
Close by your side abiding, I fear no foe,  
for when your hand is guiding, In peace I go.**

**Lord, when the shadows lengthen and night has come,  
I know that you will strengthen my steps toward home,  
then nothing can impede me, O Blessed Friend!  
So, take my hand and lead me unto the end.**

**DISMISSAL**

**Go in peace. Serve in love. Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**