

# ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

701 S. College Avenue, Newark, Delaware 19713

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*Growing in faith. Growing in community. Welcoming all in Jesus' name.*

**ASH WEDNESDAY**  
Wednesday, March 5, 2025

**12pm & 7pm Services of Holy Communion  
with the Imposition of Ashes**



As we begin our Lenten journey, we're invited to come fully as we are. The prophet Joel proclaims, "return to God with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning" (Joel 2:12). Your brokenness, joy, gifts, and doubts all belong to God. God wants you, authentically. God wants you, stripped down and vulnerable. You are enough. Come as you are, with all that you are.

**Hearing assist devices are available in the narthex.  
If you need any other help with worship, please  
speak with an usher at the doors to the sanctuary.**

### **WE WELCOME WORSHIPPERS OF ALL AGES**

We hope that our young people experience God in our gathering together. Families are welcome to use the Prayground in the rear corner of the sanctuary if you want more space and to use the Prayground in the narthex if you need a break from the activities in the sanctuary. Most of all, know that the joyful noise of young people in our worship is welcome!

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## SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

*In the principal service of Christian worship, the Holy Spirit gathers people around the means of grace – the saving Word of God and the sacraments. From the table of communion where Jesus Christ comes with forgiveness, life, and salvation, God sends us out to share the good news and to care for those in need.*

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### ✠ GATHERING ✠

*Christians gather on this day to mark the beginning of Lent's baptismal preparation for Easter. On this day, the people of God are marked with the ashes of human mortality, the church hears God's promise of forgiveness, and tastes God's mercy in the bread of life and the cup of salvation. From this solemn liturgy, the church goes forth on its journey to the great baptismal feast of Easter.*

### All gather silently.

*Please stand, as you are able, as the procession enters in silence.*

### CALL TO WORSHIP

"Even now, declares the Lord,  
return to me with all your heart." (Joel 2:12)

**Roll up your sleeves.**

Let down your guard.

**Come in from the storm.**

Make yourself at home.

**Pull up to the table.**

Release the tension in your jaw.

Take a deep breath.

Return to God

with all your heart.

**May it be so.**

### HYMN OF THE DAY

**Savior, When in Dust to You**  
ELW 601 (harmony)



1 Sav-ior, when in dust to you low we bow in hom - age due;  
2 By your help - less in - fant years, by your life of want and tears,  
3 By your hour of dire de - spair, by your ag - o - ny of prayer,  
4 By your deep ex - pir - ing groan, by the sad se - pul - chral stone,



when, re - pen - tant, to the skies scarce we lift our weep - ing eyes;  
by your days of deep dis - tress in the sav - age wil - der - ness,  
by the cross, the nail, the thorn, pierc - ing spear, and tor - turing scorn,  
by the vault whose dark a - bode held in vain the ris - ing God,



oh, by all your pains and woe suf - fered once for us be - low,  
by the dread, mys - te - rious hour of the in - sult - ing tempt - er's pow'r,  
by the gloom that veiled the skies o'er the dread - ful sac - ri - fice,  
oh, from earth to heav'n re - stored, might - y, re - as - cend - ed Lord,



bend - ing from your throne on high, hear our pen - i - ten - tial cry!  
turn, oh, turn a fa - v'ring eye; hear our pen - i - ten - tial cry!  
lis - ten to our hum - ble sigh; hear our pen - i - ten - tial cry!  
bend - ing from your throne on high, hear our pen - i - ten - tial cry!

Text: Robert Grant, 1779–1838, alt.  
Music: ABERYSTWYTH, Joseph Parry, 1841–1903

## GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.**

Let us pray.

Loving Creator, we are here, telling stories of dust. We are here, trying to shake the dust out of our ears so that we might hear you clearly. We are here, hoping that showing up is the first step in returning to you. Scoop us up in your embrace and carry us to a place of truth. Clear the smog that makes it hard to see. Clear the dust that makes it hard to hear. We are at the edge of our seats. We are listening for you.

**Amen.**

*Be seated.*

✠ WORD ✠

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

**FIRST READING**

**Isaiah 58:1-12 and Psalm 51:1-17**

Lisa A. Frenz

A compilation from the book of Isaiah and the Psalms:

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet!  
Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins.

**Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy blot our my transgressions.**

Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God. They ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.**

**For I know my transgression, and my sin is ever before me.**

“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice? Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers.

**Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass  
judgment.**

Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with wicked fist.  
Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.

**Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.**

Is such the fast I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head

like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

**You desire truth in the inward being; therefore, teach me wisdom in the secret of my heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the yoke's thongs, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

**Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.**

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not hide yourself from your own kin?

**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.**

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

**Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.**

**Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.**

**Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.**

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

**O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare your praise.**

The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

**For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SECOND READING      2 Corinthians 5:20b – 6:10**

A reading from Second Corinthians:

<sup>20b</sup> We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake God made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<sup>6:1</sup> As we work together with God, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup> For God says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,  
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! <sup>3</sup> We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, <sup>4</sup> but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, <sup>5</sup> beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; <sup>6</sup> by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, <sup>7</sup> truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; <sup>8</sup> in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; <sup>9</sup> as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see – we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup> as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand.*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

ELW Setting 10



We are turn - ing, Lord, to hear you; you are mer - ci - ful and kind—



slow to an - ger, rich in bless - ing, and with love to us in - clined.

## HOLY GOSPEL

## Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the sixth chapter.

### Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] <sup>1</sup>“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

<sup>2</sup>“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup> But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup> But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>16</sup>“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

### Praise to you, O Christ.

*Be seated.*

INVITATION TO LENT

Lent can sometimes get a negative reputation. It's viewed as the season in our faith when we give things up, we prepare for the worst. Imagine instead that God wants more for us than just six weeks of discipline or six weeks without chocolate. Imagine that God wants a life for us so expansive that faith, joy, and hope flow over the edges. So let us confess, not because we have to suffer our way through Lent, but because the truth moves us one step closer to that expansive faith.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Let us pray: Holy God,  
**we confess: we don't return to you fully.**  
**We share with you the pieces of our lives that are convenient.**  
**We put on different hats in different rooms.**  
**We forget that we are called, invited, and loved with all that we are –**  
**including our mess, our beauty, our faith, and our doubt.**  
**Forgive us, and give us hearts that long to return.**

Friends, God sees you. God hears you. God loves you.  
You are forgiven and claimed with all that you are.  
Rest in that good news.  
**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*We are marked with ashes – a sign of our death and of our sorrow for sin but the ashes trace a cross on our forehead, where the baptismal water first marked us with God's grace. Those who desire ashes come forward to the chancel and kneel. Ministers mark the forehead of each person, saying:*

Remember that you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.

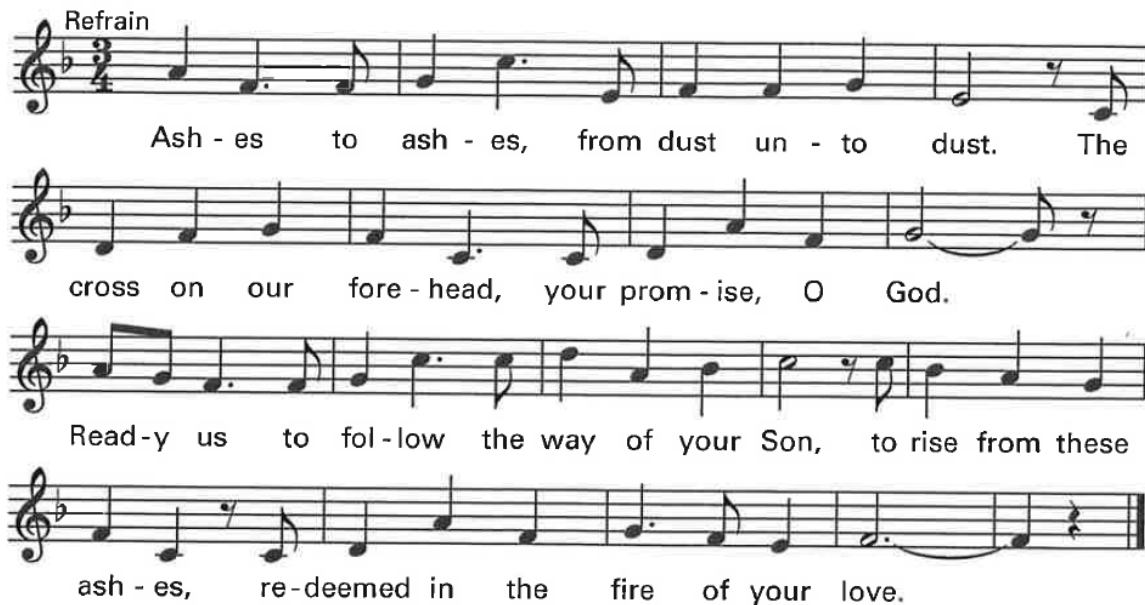




# PENITENTIAL SONG

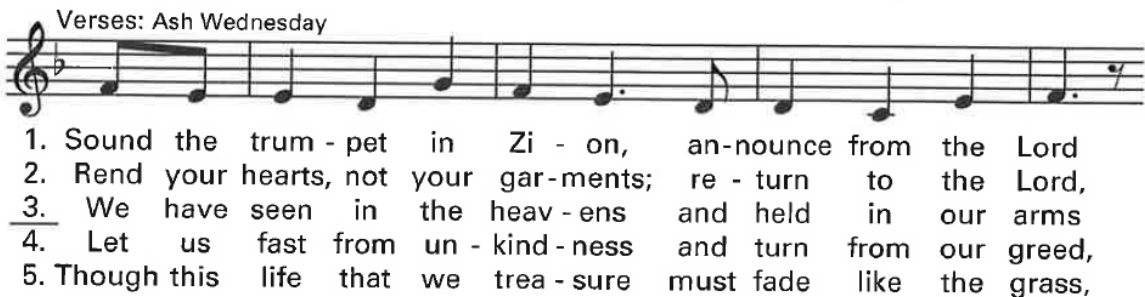
# Ashes to Ashes

Refrain



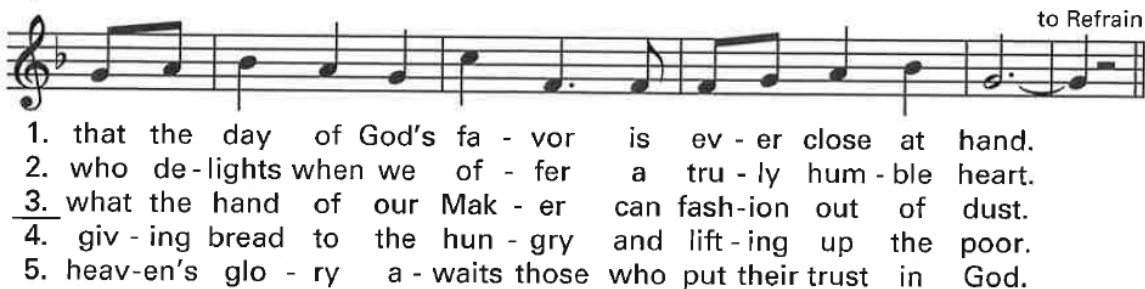
Ash - es to ash - es, from dust un - to dust. The  
cross on our fore - head, your prom - ise, O God.  
Read - y us to fol - low the way of your Son, to rise from these  
ash - es, re - deemed in the fire of your love.

Verses: Ash Wednesday



1. Sound the trum - pet in Zi - on, an - nounce from the Lord  
2. Rend your hearts, not your gar - ments; re - turn to the Lord,  
3. We have seen in the heav - ens and held in our arms  
4. Let us fast from un - kind - ness and turn from our greed,  
5. Though this life that we trea - sure must fade like the grass,

to Refrain



1. that the day of God's fa - vor is ev - er close at hand.  
2. who de - lights when we of - fer a tru - ly hum - ble heart.  
3. what the hand of our Mak - er can fash - ion out of dust.  
4. giv - ing bread to the hun - gry and lift - ing up the poor.  
5. heav - en's glo - ry a - waits those who put their trust in God.

*After all who desire ashes receive them, please stand, as you are able.*

## **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Let us profess our faith.

**We believe in an expansive love**

**that healed the sick,**

**welcomed the children,**

**and saw this world as it could be.**

**We believe that that expansive love**

**runs over the edges of our lives,**

**smoothing our rough places,**

**and pulling us home.**

**We call that expansive love**

**Father and Mother God,**

**Jesus and Divine Creator.**

**Thanks be to God**

**for a love like that.**

**Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of our journeys, we pray for the church as the season of Lent begins. Guide your people in spiritual practices and preparation for baptism. Strengthen communities of faith in discipleship and witness for the sake of the gospel. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

God of creation, we pray for the earth. As you once brought forth life from the dust, breathe healing and renewal into all places where ecosystems are stretched and strained. Nurture organic cycles of life, death, and rebirth. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

God of the nations, we pray for an end to wars and occupations that reduce communities to ash. Turn leaders away from fearful decision-making, and lead all people into the justice and compassion of your reign. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of the suffering, we pray for all who live with any pain. Comfort people living with chronic or terminal illnesses, addictions, or anxiety. Grant that all who dwell in the dust of grief may know your presence there. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of community, we pray for those who accompany the dying: for first responders, health care and hospice workers, chaplains, and those who facilitate burials of the dead. Sustain them as they serve their neighbors in life and death with dignity and care. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of the cross, we give thanks for those who have completed their lives on earth and have returned to you. Strengthen us with the promise that within the ashes of death are the seeds of resurrection life. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

*The presiding minister concludes the prayers.*

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

**Amen.**

*Be seated.*

✙ MEAL ✙

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

**GATHERING OF GIFTS**

*For those in need and the mission of the church.*

*At this time, please sign the Fellowship Pad (the black folder) found at the end of your pew and pass it to your neighbor and back again. We ask **visitors** to provide us with contact information so we can thank you for enriching our worship experience. We ask **members** to update any changes to their information so our records can be maintained.*

*Please sing all verses of the hymn below, standing on Verse 4  
as the gifts are presented and the table is set.*

**ANTHEM (7 PM)**      “We Are Dust, You Are God” - King  
Sanctuary Choir

*Please stand and sing as the gifts are presented and the table is set.*

**OFFERTORY (7 PM)**      Once We Sang and Danced  
Verses 1 & 4 only

ELW 701



- 1 Once we sang and danced with glad-ness, once de-light filled ev-'ry breath;
- 2 All the wil-lows bow in weep-ing, all the riv-ers rage and moan,
- 3 God, who came to dwell a-mong us, God, who suf-fered our dis-grace,
- 4 Come, O Christ, a-mong the ash-es, come to wipe our tears a-way,



now we sit a-mong the ash-es, all our dreams de-destroyed by death.  
as cre-a-tion joins our plead-ing: “God, do not leave us a-lone.”  
from your own heart, grieved and wound-ed, come the rich-es of your grace.  
death de-destroy and sor-row ban-ish; now and al-ways, come and stay.

Text: Susan R. Briehl, b. 1952, based on Psalm 137

Music: KAS DZIEDĀJA, Latvian folk tune

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## GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also 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.**

God who knows us, we are amazed by you.

Your love never runs out, your hope never runs dry, your joy never gives up.

We wish that we could be more like you in that way.

In a world that loves scarcity, your abundance is shocking.

In a world that knows fear, your joy is compelling.

In a world that knows anxiety, your peace is captivating.

We long for these things.

So today we ask you – be with us on the hamster wheel.

**Be with us when compassion fatigue rears her head.**

Be with us when stress makes it hard to breathe.

**Be with us when self-doubt pushes in close.**

Be with us when exhaustion becomes constant or when loneliness becomes our primary language.

**Be with us and show us the way to the life you long for us.**

Be with us as we remember the night in which our Lord Jesus 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.

Show us a life of expansive faith.

**Show us a life of overflowing joy.**

Show us a life of absorbing beauty.

**Show us a life of engrossing purpose.**

Show us a life that is as honest, and rich, and meaningful as the one Jesus led.

And until that expansive and holy day, we will continue to gather at this Table.

Until that day we will continue to look for you in our midst. So pour out a double portion of yourself onto this bread and cup so that we might catch a glimpse of your goodness. God, we are amazed by you. Your love never runs out, so bring that never-ending love here as together we pray...

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come, your will be done,**

**on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO THE TABLE**

Jesus has always been one to invite, and that has not changed.

So friends, you are invited to this Table.

**Each and every one of us – with our doubts, our fears, our scars, our joy, our dreams, our hopes, our questions – we are invited to God’s table.**

And here we will be met. Here we will be fed.

Here we are given a taste of an expansive life that is full to the brim with love, overflowing with joy. So, come.

**Not because we must, but because we can.**

Come. You are invited. This Table is for you.

## **BREAKING OF THE BREAD**

Jesus, Lamb of God,

**have mercy on us.**

Jesus, bearer of our sins,

**have mercy on us.**

Jesus, redeemer of the world,

**grant us peace.**

*Be seated.*

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

*In Christ’s body and blood given to us, God forgives us and nourishes us for mission. All are welcome at the Lord’s Table. Children not yet communing are welcome to come forward for a blessing, indicated by crossed arms. If you would like to receive communion in your pew, please notify an usher.*

*Non-alcoholic grape juice and gluten-free communion wafers are available upon request.*

1 Lord Je - sus, think on me, and purge a - way my sin;  
 2 Lord Je - sus, think on me, by anx - ious thoughts op - pressed;  
 3 Lord Je - sus, think on me, nor let me go a - stray;  
 4 Lord Je - sus, think on me, that, when the flood is past,

from self - ish pas - sions set me free and make me pure with - in.  
 let me your lov - ing ser - vant be and taste your prom - ised rest.  
 through dark - ness and per - plex - i - ty point out your cho - sen way.  
 I may the e - ter - nal bright - ness see and share your joy at last.

Text: Synesius of Cyrene, 375–430; tr. Allen W. Chatfield, 1808–1896, alt.  
 Music: SOUTHWELL, W. Daman, *The Psalms of David*, 1579, alt.

There Is a Fountain

TFF 78

Found on p. 16

Text: William Cowper, 1731–1800  
 Music: CLEANSING FOUNTAIN, North American, 19th cent.





1 There is a foun - tain filled with blood drawn  
 2 The dy - ing thief re - joiced to see that  
 3 Thou dy - ing Lamb, thy pre - cious blood shall  
 4 E'er since by faith I saw the stream thy  
 5 When this poor, fal - t'ring mor - tal tongue lies



from Im - man - uel's veins; and sin - ners, plunged be -  
 foun - tain in his day; and there have I, though  
 nev - er lose its pow'r till all the ran - somed  
 flow - ing wounds sup - ply; re - deem - ing love has  
 si - lent in the grave, then in a no - bler,



neath that flood, lose all their guilt - y stains: lose  
 vile as he, washed all my sins a - way: washed  
 church of God be saved, to sin no more: be  
 been my theme, and shall be till I die: and  
 sweet - er song I'll sing thy pow'r to save: I'll



all their guilt - y stains, lose all their guilt - y stains; and  
 all my sins a - way, washed all my sins a - way; and  
 saved, to sin no more, be saved, to sin no more; till  
 shall be till I die, and shall be till I die, re -  
 sing thy pow'r to save, I'll sing thy pow'r to save; then



sin - ners, plunged be - neath that flood, lose all their guilt - y stains.  
 there have I, though vile as he, washed all my sins a - way.  
 all the ran - somed church of God be saved, to sin no more.  
 deem - ing love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.  
 in a no - bler, sweet - er song I'll sing thy pow'r to save.



*After all have returned to their places, please remain seated.*

## **BLESSING AND PRAYER**

Strengthened by the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and kept in his grace, let us pray:

Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

✠ SENDING ✠

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

## **LIFE OF THE CHURCH – ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Please stand.*

## **BENEDICTION AND DISMISSAL**

As you leave this place, may you be awestruck by the beauty of this world. May you laugh, and may it be contagious. May you overflow with love for those around you. May you be effusive with hope and quick to point out joy. And in all of your living, and breathing, and being, may you find yourself full to the brim with God's Holy Spirit, and may it change your life. In the name of the Lover, ✠ the Beloved, and Love itself – go in peace, full to the brim.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

## **SENDING SONG**

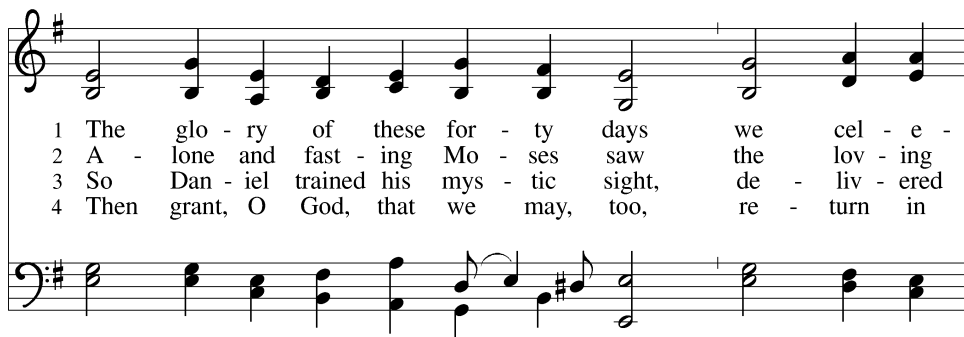
**The Glory of These Forty Days**

ELW 320

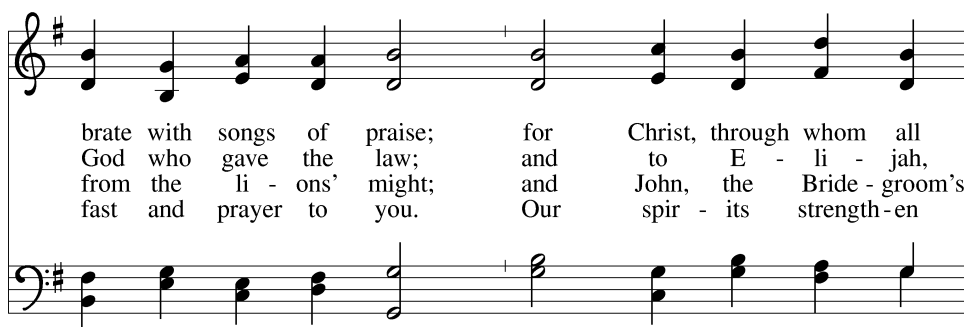
*Found on p. 18*

Postludes, a festive element of worship,  
will not be played during the season of Lent.

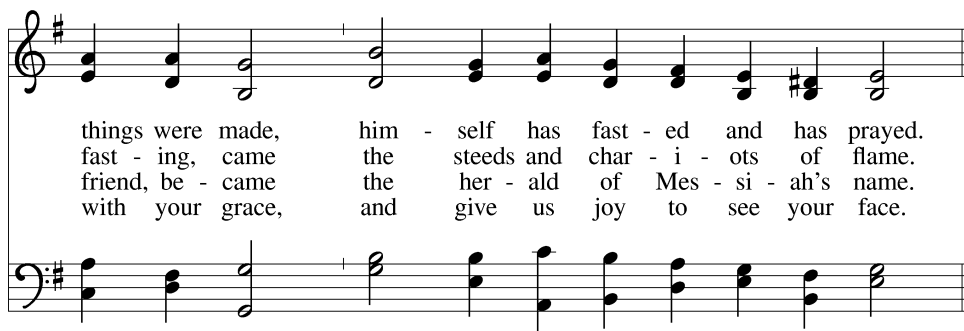
## The Glory of These Forty Days



1 The glo - ry of these for - ty days we cel - e -  
 2 A - lone and fast - ing Mo - ses saw the lov - ing  
 3 So Dan - iel trained his mys - tic sight, de - liv - ered  
 4 Then grant, O God, that we may, too, re - turn in



brate with songs of praise; for Christ, through whom all  
 God who gave the law; and to E - li - jah,  
 from the li - ons' might; and John, the Bride - groom's  
 fast and prayer to you. Our spir - its strength - en



things were made, him - self has fast - ed and has prayed.  
 fast - ing, came the steeds and char - i - ots of flame.  
 friend, be - came the her - ald of Mes - si - ah's name.  
 with your grace, and give us joy to see your face.

Text: Latin hymn, 11th cent.; tr. Maurice F. Bell, 1862–1947, alt.  
 Music: ERHALT UNS, HERR, J. Klug, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543  
 Outside USA: Text from *The English Hymnal*, © Oxford University Press 1906. All rights reserved.





Our Lenten theme is an invitation – into a radically different Lent, into a full life – as we pursue justice and hope, or express grief and gratitude. And so, let us trust – fully – that we belong to God. Let us increase our capacity to receive and give grace. Let us discover the expansive life God dreams for us.

## **FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT, March 9, 2025**

*Even in the desert*

*10AM Service of Holy Communion – Live Streamed*

Even in the desert, Jesus expands our definitions of a full life. It's not the life the Tempter presents: a life defined by excess power, control, or reign. Excess is not abundance, but there is more. There is a fuller life we are called to live. Even in the midst of struggle, oppressive forces, hardship, and grief – God's promises spill over, like the bounty of the first fruits from the ground. Even in the desert, you are called to the riverside to be washed by grace.

## **SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT, March 16, 2025**

*Under God's wing*

*10AM Service of Holy Communion – Live Streamed*

God is our refuge. There is nothing that can separate you from God, or could keep God from gathering you in, protecting you fiercely. Jesus' lament for Jerusalem is surprising given how he is treated by Jerusalem. And yet, no matter how much we try to separate ourselves from God, God will run to protect us. God's love for us is fuller than we can imagine.

## **THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT, March 23, 2025**

*You are worthy*

*10AM Service of Holy Communion – Live Streamed*

Like the fig tree, you are worthy. You're not a lost cause. You're not a waste of resources. You deserve to be nurtured. Your fruit will come. Like the gardener, you are invited to see others with audacious hope and budding potential. The lesson of the fig tree invites us to unpack the source of our worth in a system and society that often measures worthiness by commerce, production, output, success, status, achievement, ethnicity, and/or gender identity. We might ask, "Can the fig tree have worth even if it never produces any figs?" What does that mean for us if the answer is "yes"?

**ASSISTING IN WORSHIP TODAY**

**12 PM**

**7PM**

Assisting Minister: Marjorie Chin

Lector: Barb Rhodes

Joanne Hench

Bread Provider: Barb Rhodes

Altar Guild: Cheri Simons

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church Welcomes All in Jesus' Name**

Phone/Fax: 302-368-0064 Website: [www.stpaulsnewarkde.org](http://www.stpaulsnewarkde.org)

**The Reverend Cris Frigm**

*Pastor*

302-368-0064 ext. 104

[pastor@stpaulsnewarkde.org](mailto:pastor@stpaulsnewarkde.org)

**Michael Bareham**

*Director for Music and Worship*

302-368-0064 ext. 123

[music@stpaulsnewarkde.org](mailto:music@stpaulsnewarkde.org)

**Jerilynn Hinrichs**

*Office Administrator*

302-368-0064 ext. 101

[office@stpaulsnewarkde.org](mailto:office@stpaulsnewarkde.org)

**Nalini Janaki**

*Business Administrator*

302-368-0064 ext. 102

[business@stpaulsnewarkde.org](mailto:business@stpaulsnewarkde.org)

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***Return to the Lord, your God, who is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.***

Joel 2:13