



Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
February 5, 2023

SAINT PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH
3383 EAST LAKE LANSING ROAD
EAST LANSING, MI 48823



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VISITORS WELCOME! If this is your first time worshipping with us, please sign our guest registry just outside the sanctuary doors. We hope you are blessed through worship today. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the church at (517) 351-8541.

Children are always welcome in worship! We consider the sounds of children a joyful noise. The choir room (off the sanctuary) can also be used as a **cry room** for younger children and includes a sound system so parents may continue to participate in the service. Clipboards with children's bulletins, activities and crayons are available for use during the service.

Sunday School/Education is available September-May.

This Bulletin is for your use during the service and to take with you for the upcoming week. If you choose not to take it home, please place in the recycle receptacle in the back.

Newsletters and Calendars of Upcoming Events are available in the lobby/narthex. We welcome anyone who has an interest in our small groups or activities! You can also look us up on the web at www.stpaul-el.org.

Contacting Us: Our office manager is Maria Oliver. The office e-mail address is officemanager@stpaul-el.org. Our Director of Music is Elene Kobulashvili. You may leave a message for at (517) 351-8541.

Holy Communion is available at most services. All who believe in the real presence of Christ in the bread and the wine are invited to celebrate Communion with us. Those who wish can come forward for a blessing.

You are invited to share in fellowship after worship. Kay (with the assistance of Bob) usually makes the most delicious snacks to our delight. We would love this opportunity to introduce you to the St. Paul community.

P: Presiding Minister

A: Assisting Minister

C: Congregation

PRELUDE

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

Light shines in the darkness for the upright, the psalmist sings. Isaiah declares that when we lose the bonds of injustice and share our bread with the hungry, the light breaks forth like the dawn. In another passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, the light of the world, calls his followers to let the light of their good works shine before others. Through baptism we are sent into the world to shine with the light of Christ.

GATHERING

P: The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

(Please rise as you are able)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who makes all things new,
whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

P: Holy One, source of our renewal,
**we confess that we are wrapped up in sin,
and cannot free ourselves.
We have not practiced your righteousness.
Our hearts have turned away from you.
For the sake of the world you so love,
forgive us,
that we may be reconciled to one another
for the glory of your holy name.
Amen.**

P: Thus says our God:

"The former things have come to pass

and new things I now declare.”

God’s mercy makes us new.

As a called and ordained minister in the Church of Christ and by his authority I therefore declare to you the forgiveness of all your sins in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

GATHERING SONG

Gather Us In

ELW 532

*Here in this place the new light is streaming,
now is the darkness vanished away;
see in this space our fears and our dreamings
brought here to you in the light of this day. As
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken,
gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken,
we shall arise at the sound of our name.*

*We are the young, our lives are a myst'ry,
we are the old who yearn for your face;
we have been sung throughout all of hist'ry,
called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,
gather us in, the proud and the strong;
give us a heart, so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.*

*Here we will take the wine and the water,
here we will take the bread of new birth,
here you shall call your sons and your daughters,
call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,
give us to eat the bread that is you;
nourish us well, and teach us to fashion
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.*

Not in the dark of buildings confining,

*not in some heaven, light years away—
here in this place the new light is shining,
now is the kingdom, and now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever,
gather us in and make us your own;
gather us in, all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.*

GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

KYRIE

ELW Setting 2, Page 120

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

Liberating God,

you break the bonds of injustice
and let the oppressed go free.

Receive these offerings in thanksgiving

for all your works of merciful power,

and shape us as people of your justice and freedom.

You we magnify and adore, through Jesus our Savior,

Amen.

(Please be seated.)

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

(Children are invited to Sunday School)

Lord, Let my Heart be Good Soil

ELW 512

*Lord, let my heart be good soil,
Open to the seed of your word.
Lord, let my heart be good soil,
Where love can grow and peace is understood.*

THE WORD

P: God speaks to us in scripture, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING:

Isaiah 58:1-9a [9b-12]

Shortly after the return of Israel from exile in Babylon, the people were troubled by the ineffectiveness of their fasts. God reminds them that outward observance is no substitute for genuine fasting that results in acts of justice, such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and clothing the naked.

¹Shout 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.

²Yet 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.

³“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.

⁴Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵Is such the fast that 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?

⁶Is not this the fast that I choose:
to lose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

⁷Is 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 to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸Then 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.

^{9a}Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

^{9b}If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

¹⁰if 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.

¹¹The 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.

¹²Your 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.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 112:1-9 [10]

Light shines in the darkness for the upright. (Ps. 112:4)

¹Hallelujah! Happy are they who fear the LORD
and have great delight in God's commandments!

²**Their descendants will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.**

³Wealth and riches will be in their house,
and their righteousness will last forever.

⁴**Light shines in the darkness for the upright;
the righteous are merciful and full of compassion. R**

⁵It is good for them to be generous in lending
and to manage their affairs with justice.

⁶**For they will never be shaken;
the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance.**

⁷They will not be afraid of any evil rumors;
their heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

⁸**Their heart is established and will not shrink,
until they see their desire upon their enemies.**

⁹They have given freely to the poor, and their righteousness stands fast
forever;

they will hold up their head with honor.

**¹⁰The wicked will see it and be angry; they will gnash their teeth and pine away;
the desires of the wicked will perish. R**

SECOND READING:

1 Corinthians 2:1-12 [13-16]

Though people such as the Corinthians are enamored with human philosophy and wisdom, Paul continuously presents God's hidden wisdom which is Jesus Christ crucified. True spiritual maturity involves judging ourselves and others in light of God's revelation in the cross.

¹When I came to you, brother and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. ²For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. ³And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

⁶Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. ⁷But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

¹⁰these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. [¹³And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

¹⁴Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.

¹⁶"For who has known the mind of the Lord

so as to instruct him?"
But we have the mind of Christ.]

Word of God, word of life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please rise as you are able.)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW Setting 2, Page 124

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

GOSPEL ANNOUNCEMENT: Matthew 5:13-20

The Gospel according to Matthew the 5th chapter

C: Glory to You O Lord

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus encourages his followers to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, doing good works and keeping God's commandments.

[Jesus said:] ¹³"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

¹⁷"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called

least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord

C: The Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated.)

SERMON

Pastor Carl Ballard

(Please rise as you are able.)

HYMN OF THE DAY

Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises **ELW 535**

Refrain

*Hallelujah! We sing your praises,
all our hearts are filled with gladness.*

*Hallelujah! We sing your praises,
all our hearts are filled with gladness. Repeat*

Christ the Lord to us said:

I am wine, I am bread,

I am wine, I am bread,

give to all who thirst and hunger. Refrain

Now he sends us all out,

strong in faith, free of doubt,

strong in faith, free of doubt.

Tell to all the joyful gospel. Refrain

APOSTLES CREED

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.

(Please be seated.)

THE PRAYERS

A: Called together to follow Jesus, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

(A brief silence.)

Call your people to seek your wisdom in difficult conversations and action. Give the church everywhere courage to repent for the ways we have tolerated and practiced injustice. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

Inspire our wonder at creation, from the light of dawn to the beauty of the dark night. Sustain the unseen depths of the ocean to the plants and animals we know well. Bring healing to lands and communities experiencing natural disasters. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

Instruct the powerful in your ways. Provide upright leadership in business and industry, that workers are not oppressed. Throughout the world, inspire voters and raise up politicians to heed your call for nations to practice righteousness. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

Loosen the bonds of injustice in our midst. Grant peace to endless quarrels, put an end to hunger, and break every yoke of oppression. Shelter all who flee abuse in their homes or violence in their communities. Satisfy those afflicted in any way. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

As with your people Israel, remind this congregation of your saving acts. Remind us how your faithfulness brought us through difficulties and sustained us despite our weaknesses. Establish the cross as the center of our life together. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

Shape our congregation to be salt for the earth. Give us delight in your commandments, that we are generous with those in need. Make us steadfast in our trust in you, ready with tangible mercy and compassion for our neighbors. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

Send angels of protection to provide care and compassion to those who serve in our armed forces as they face the trauma of war. We pray especially for Beth & Ryan, Coen, Jonathan, Jacob, Noah, Irene, and Alex. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

Healing God, raise up any who are bowed down with illness or sorrow. Deepen our care and concern for one another. We lift to you all who

are undergoing transition in relationships, occupation, living situation, or health condition especially Ahren, Anne & Bob, Bev, Dan, David, John, Jon, Jordan, Lawton, Lera & family, Carrie, and Tim. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

We especially lift up to you Presiding Bishop Elizabeth, our Synod Bishop Craig, and Pastor Carl. We ask that you be with their respective staffs as they live out their callings to serve. As we are called to be one, even as Jesus and the Father are one, be with the leaders and the congregation of Immanuel Lutheran Church, in Allegan. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

P: Pondering the mystery of eternal love made flesh in Christ Jesus, we commend all for whom we pray to the mercy of God.

Amen.

GREETING OF PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

THE MEAL

*The gifts of the bread, wine and contributions
are brought forward to the altar.*

OFFERTORY ***Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*** **ELW 184**

*Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,
and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.
Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,
that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gather the hopes and dreams of all;*

*unite them with the prayers we offer.
Grace our table with your presence,
and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.*

OFFERING PRAYER

**C: Liberating God,
you break the bonds of injustice
and let the oppressed go free.
Receive these offerings in thanksgiving
for all your works of merciful power,
and shape us as people of your justice and freedom.
You we magnify and adore, through Jesus our Savior,
C: Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY

*Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and
might, heav'n and
earth are full of your
glory. Hosanna in the
highest.*

*Blessed is he who comes in
the name of the Lord.*

*Hosanna in the
highest, hosanna in
the highest.*

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, 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.

P: 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.

P: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

P: With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

C: Come, Lord Jesus.

P: Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

C: Come, Holy Spirit.

P: All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

C: 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.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

All who believe in the real presence of Christ in the bread and the wine (juice) are welcome to the table. Others may come forward for a blessing.

Communion will be offered a couple of ways. You may either take a communion cup with host as you enter worship and come forward to the rail or take part where you are seated. Or you may come forward and receive Communion directly from the Pastor at the rail.

When approaching the communion rail, come forward down the side aisle, kneel, if you are able, starting at the front of the communion rail (spot closest to the font) on your side and filling in toward the back. After receiving both the bread and the wine, you may return to your seat by the center aisle. If you prefer grape juice, please ask the assisting minister.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Come and taste the joy of God!

P: The body of Christ, given for you.

C: **Amen.**

A: The blood of Christ, shed for you.

C: **Amen.**

COMMUNION HYMN *Let Us Break Bread Together* ELW 471

*Let us break bread together on our knees;
let us break bread together on our knees. [Refrain]*

Refrain:

*When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.*

*Let us drink wine together on our knees;
let us drink wine together on our knees. [Refrain]*

Refrain:

*When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.*

*Let us praise God together on our knees;
let us praise God together on our knees. [Refrain]*

Refrain:

*When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.*

*(When all have returned to their seats,
please stand as you are able.)*

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

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: Let us pray.

Holy One, we thank you for the healing
that springs forth abundantly from this table.
Renew our strength to do justice,
love kindness,
and journey humbly with you.
Amen.

BLESSING

P: The God who faithfully brings forth justice
and breaks the oppressor's rod
✠ bless, strengthen, and uphold you,
today and always.

C: Amen.

SENDING HYMN *This Little Light of Mine* ELW 677

*This little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine;
this little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine;
this little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

*Ev'rywhere I go, I'm goin'-a let it shine;
ev'rywhere I go, I'm goin'-a let it shine;
ev'rywhere I go, I'm goin'-a let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

*Jesus gave it to me, I'm goin'-a let it shine;
Jesus gave it to me, I'm goin'-a let it shine;
Jesus gave it to me, I'm goin'-a let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Follow the way of Jesus.

C: Thanks be to God.

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