

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

# February 12, 2023

SAINT PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

3383 EAST LAKE LANSING ROAD

EAST LANSING, MI 48823

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Pastor Carl E. Ballard

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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 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**

In today’s reading from Deuteronomy we are called to choose life by loving and obeying God. Much of today’s gospel reading echoes portions of the Ten Commandments. Jesus’ instructions to the crowd reveal a pattern of behavior that honors both God and the neighbor, resulting in life and health for the whole community. We too are invited to embrace these commandments, not out of fear of retribution, but because God has promised that to do so means life for us.

**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 *Come, All You People* *ELW 819***

*Come, all you people, come and praise the Most High;*

*come, all you people, come and praise the Most High;*

*come, all you people, come and praise the Most High;*

*come now and worship the Lord.*

*Come, all you people, come and praise the Savior;*

*come, all you people, come and praise the Savior;*

*come, all you people, come and praise the Savior;*

*come now and worship the Lord.*

*Come, all you people, come and praise the Spirit;*

*come, all you people, come and praise the Spirit;*

*come, all you people, come and praise the Spirit;*

*come now and worship the Lord.*

**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.

O God, the strength of all who hope in you, because we are weak mortals we accomplish nothing good without you. Help us to see and understand the things we ought to do, and give us grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**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: Deuteronomy 30:15-20**

The Lord sets before the people of God a clear choice. Life and prosperity will come to the faithful; loss of the land will be the consequence of disobedience. Choosing life entails loving and holding fast to the Lord. Life in God’s presence presupposes the promise made to the ancestors.

[Moses said to the people:] 15See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. 16If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. 17But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, 18I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. 19I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, 20loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Word of God, word of life. **C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Psalm 119:1-8**

*Happy are they who follow the teaching of the Lord.*(Ps. 119:1)

1Happy are they whose way is blameless,
  who follow the teaching of the Lord!
 2**Happy are they who observeyour decrees**
  **and seek you with all their hearts,**
 3who never do any wrong,
  but always walk in your ways.
 4**You laid downyour commandments,**
  **that we should fully keep them. R**
 5Oh, that my ways were madeso direct
  that I mightkeep your statutes!
 6**Then I should not beput to shame,**
  **when I regard all your commandments.**
 7I will thank you with a true heart,
  when I have learned your righteous judgments.
 8**I will keep your statutes;**
  **do not utterly forsake me. R**

### **SECOND READING:  1 Corinthians 3:1-9**

*Human leaders in the church are not the ones who control ministry. Rather they are coworkers who belong to God, the one who truly controls and continuously empowers the ministry of the church.*

1Brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, 3for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? 4For when one says, “I belong to Paul,” and another, “I belong to Apollos,” are you not merely human?
 5What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. 6I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. 9For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.

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 5:21-37**

The Gospel according to Matthew the 5th chapter

**C: Glory to You O Lord**

*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exhorts his followers to embrace standards of righteousness that exceed legal requirements and traditional expectations.*

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 21“You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ 22But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire. 23So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. 25Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. 26Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.
 27“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.
 31“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.
 33“Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’ 34But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.”

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 *Oh, That The Lord Would Guide My Way***

***ELW 772***

*Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways*

*to keep his statutes still!*

*Oh, that my God would grant me grace*

*to know and do his will!*

*Order my footsteps by your word*

*and make my heart sincere;*

*let sin have no dominion, Lord,*

*but keep my conscience clear.*

*Assist my soul, too apt to stray,*

*a stricter watch to keep;*

*and should I e'er forget your way,*

*restore your wand'ring sheep.*

*Make me to walk in your commands,*

*'tis a delightful road;*

*nor let my head or heart or hands*

*offend against my God.*

**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.)*

Inspire your church that it may be a sign of life throughout the world. From the exploration of faith with children and new believers to missionaries and bishops, shape lives of faithfulness, so that all find abundant life in your ways. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

Nourish your creation. Accompany all who plant and water. Bless the work of farmers; provide for subsistence farmers facing drought and climate change. Guide the work of agricultural scientists toward sustainable ways to feed the world. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

Give growth where there seems to be no hope for life. In nations and regions where reconciliation seems impossible, empower peacemakers with your Spirit. Where death holds sway through violence, disease, and hunger, equip relief workers to bring hope. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

Nurture all in need. Bring healing to all who experience trauma caused by systems of injustice and destructive relationships. Give courage to those struggling to repent and those seeking reconciliation. Sustain all who work for restoration. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

Encourage this congregation. Call us to a common purpose and keep us from quarrelling. Turn our hearts toward you and guide our leaders, so that our choices may be lifegiving for all. 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 Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Alpena. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

P: We bring to you our needs and hopes, O God, trusting your wisdom and power revealed in Christ crucified.

**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** ELW Setting 10, Page 207

*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.*

# **EUCHARISTIC 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  *I Know That My Redeemer Lives!* ELW 619**

**(V 1-4)**

*I know that my Redeemer lives!*

*What comfort this sweet sentence gives!*

*He lives, he lives, who once was dead;*

*he lives, my ever-living head!*

*He lives triumphant from the grave;*

*he lives eternally to save;*

*he lives exalted, throned above;*

*he lives to rule his church in love.*

*He lives to grant me rich supply;*

*he lives to guide me with his eye;*

*he lives to comfort me when faint;*

*he lives to hear my soul's complaint.*

*He lives to silence all my fears;*

*he lives to wipe away my tears;*

*he lives to calm my troubled heart;*

*he lives all blessings to impart.*

**DISMISSAL**

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

**C: Thanks be to God.**

Lenten devotional booklets are available on the table in the Narthex. We ask that when you pick one up please sign the sheet on the table so we may mail the remainder.

Ash Wednesday Service will be at 7pm on February the 22nd

Acknowledgments

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