

# Seventh Sunday after Epiphany February 23, 2025

Mercy. Mercy. Mercy. Joseph lives it in Egypt. Jesus preaches it in the gospel. The Spirit guides us into merciful lives with the power of forgiveness to reconcile what is fractured and divided. Such merciful living is the baptismal blessing of having put on Christ. It is the gift of the life-giving Spirit. It is a reflection of God's glory revealed in Christ.

# **GATHERING** The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## PRELUDE

My Faith Looks Up to Thee by Karl Osterland

Please quietly reflect and prepare for worship during the music.

# **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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

In the name of the Father, and of the  $\oplus$  Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.** 

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

### Amen.

Silence is kept for reflection.

## Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the  $\pm$  Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.** 

The prelude's purpose is to prepare your heart, your hands, and your mind for worship. The Lord is worthy of our preparation and the prelude provides us a time to do just that.

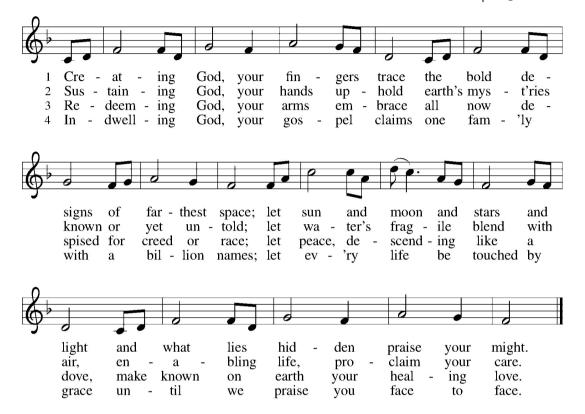
Washed in water and marked with the cross, the baptized children of God are united with Christ, and through him, with other believers, we confess our sins and return to our baptism. In forgiveness God raises us up again.

The paraments, which are the hangings on the altar, pulpit, and lectern, are green for growth, new life, and the expansion of the gospel to the world.

#### **GATHERING HYMN**

#684 Creating God, Your Fingers Trace

The Hymns proclaim the Gospel in song. We sing a variety of hymns to help us tell God's story.



Text: Jeffery Rowthorn, b. 1934

Music: PROSPECT, W. Walker, Southern Harmony, 1835

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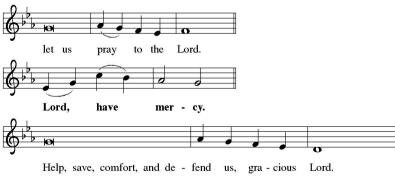
GREETING

During this time, the presiding minister and the assembly greet each other. 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.

The Apostolic Greeting is given by the Pastor using the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Cor 13:13. In this greeting the assembly is rooted in the Triune life of God.

#### **KYRIE**







#### **CANTICLE OF PRAISE**



# PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The assembly is seated.



# FIRST READING Genesis 45:3-11, 15

The prayer of the day is typically a prayer focused around the scripture texts for the day.

The Word part of our liturgy, is where we hear "the living voice of the Gospel." We experience this in the Biblical readings, a sermon based around these readings, and the hymn of the day.

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, "Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty." And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.



## Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40

Do not be provoked by | evildoers; do not be jealous of those | who do wrong.

# For they shall soon wither | like the grass, and like the green grass | fade away.

Put your trust in the Lord | and do good; dwell in the land and | find safe pasture.

# Take delight | in the Lord,

# who shall give you your | heart's desire. R

Commit your way to the Lord; put your trust | in the Lord, and see what | God will do.

## The Lord will make your vindication as clear | as the light and the justice of your case like the | noonday sun.

Be still before the Lord and wait | patiently. Do not be provoked by the one who prospers, the one who succeeds in | evil schemes.

# Refrain from anger, leave | rage alone;

# do not be provoked; it leads on- | ly to evil. R

For evildoers shall | be cut off,

but those who hope in the Lord shall pos- | sess the land.

# In a little while the wicked shall | be no more;

# even if you search out their place, they will | not be there.

But the lowly shall pos- | sess the land;

they will delight in abun- | dance of peace.

# But the deliverance of the righteous comes from | you, O Lord; you are their stronghold in | time of trouble.

You, O Lord, will help them and | rescue them; you will rescue them from the wicked and deliver them, because in you | they seek refuge. **R** 

#### SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.** 

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.



Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e-ter-nal life.

#### GOSPEL Luke 6:27-38

[Jesus said:] "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

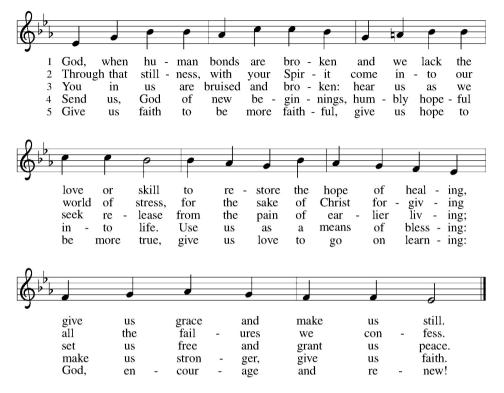
"Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated. CHILDREN SERMON SERMON

#### **HYMN OF THE DAY-** #603

#### God, When Human Bonds Are Broken



Text: Fred Kaan, b. 1929

Music: MERTON, William H. Monk, 1823-1889

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#### THE APOSTLES' CREED

Living together in hope and trust, let us confess our faith together. 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.

As Lutheran Christians we have three creeds to articulate our faith. The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds. Through the Apostles' Creed we confess our faith in the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

# PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

With the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

Surprising God, you call us to love our enemies and to show kindness in the face of cruelty. Let our actions be a shining witness of your overwhelming grace for all. God of grace, hear our prayer.

As animals hibernate and fields lay dormant, let them be a reminder that life and faith are not static but always changing and growing. May we, with all creation, trust that the ending of one thing promises life in a new way. God of grace, hear our prayer.

We pray for leaders and policymakers who work to reduce violence in our nations, cities, and towns. Give your wisdom and discernment amid heated arguments and differing viewpoints. God of grace, hear our prayer.

We pray for the victims of abuse and violence. Provide safe shelter and new beginnings to those experiencing domestic violence and dangerous situations. Enfold with love all who seek your healing care. God of grace, hear our prayer.

Empower our faith communities to be signs of your gracious love. Bless the local ministries of parish nursing and caregiving, that they will be a voice for those in need in our communities. God of grace, hear our prayer.

We give thanks for the enduring witness of those who have died before us. May their lives in you provide a witness of your everlasting grace. God of grace, hear our prayer.

You are with us in challenging times. Draw near to all who are ill, undergoing treatment, or recovering from surgery especially Greg, Jan, Janet, Joyce, Phyllis, Larry, Bob, Ellie, Mary, John, Pat, Anna, Pat, Susan, Wendy, and Charlie, and all those we name aloud or silently in our hearts. Accompany individuals and families affected by addiction or mental health challenges. Uphold each person as your beloved. God of grace, **hear our prayer.** 

We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people. **Amen.** 

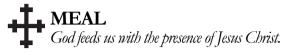
The prayers of intercession are prepared in advance by writers from across the Church based around the scripture for a given week.

## PEACE

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ. The peace of Christ be with you always.

### And also with you.

The congregation is invited to share a sign of God's peace with one another The assembly sits.

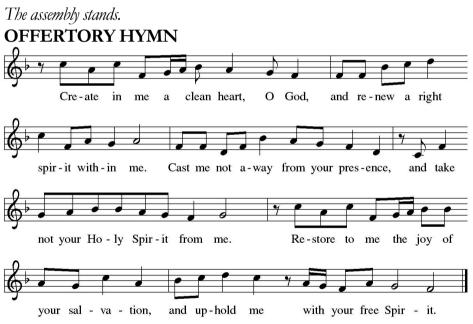


# OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

OFFERTORY

We Walk By Faith by Michael Burkhardt



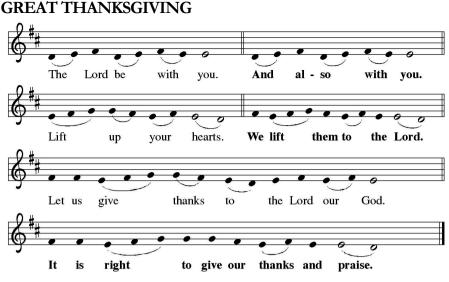
A musical offering is given to God in our worship as the gifts of the assembly are collected. This is a reminder of God's abundance. We offer back to God just a small portion of what God has given us, so that the mission of God can be

realized.

# **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray together.

God of grace, your love reaches to the heavens, and your abundance to the depths of the seas. Bless what we offer to your service: our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts. Let us overflow with gratitude and generosity, now and always. Amen. The passing of the peace is traditionally part of the liturgy, so that anyone in the gathered assembly may have a time to be reconciled to one another before sharing the meal.

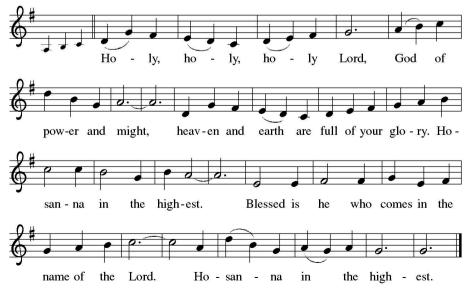


In the meal part of our liturgy we prepare to come to Christ's table. In the Great Thanksgiving we focus on being thankful for all God has done and for all God has given to us. In the Eucharistic Prayer, we ask God to send the Holy Spirit to this meal and we ask that Christ will fulfill his promise to be in the bread and wine.

# PREFACE

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; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. 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



# **EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

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 death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen.** 

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

#### 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;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

# INVITATION TO COMMUNION

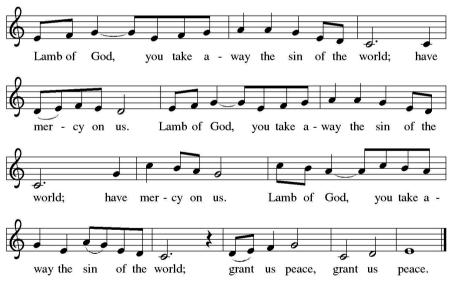
The joy of the Lord is our strength. Come, eat this meal of gladness.

# COMMUNION

This is the Lord's table. Jesus is the host. We are Christ's guests. Jesus welcomes everyone to come, to eat and be nourished, fed and forgiven. Visitors and children are welcome to receive communion. Those who do not receive communion are welcomed forward to receive a blessing. Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are available. The pastor and communion assistant will come to the pews of those unable to come forward.

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you. Each person may respond: Amen. The assembly is seated.

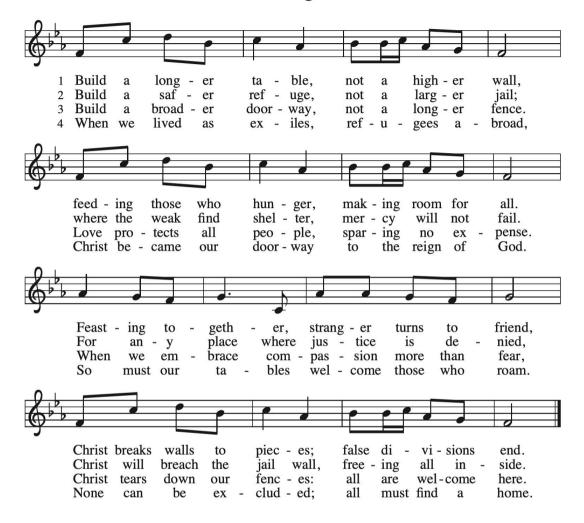
# LAMB OF GOD



The Lamb of God is a title for Jesus that appears in John 1:29. It is here that we are reminded that our Lord is present and we are to behold his glory.

#### COMMUNION HYMN ACS #1062

Build a Longer Table



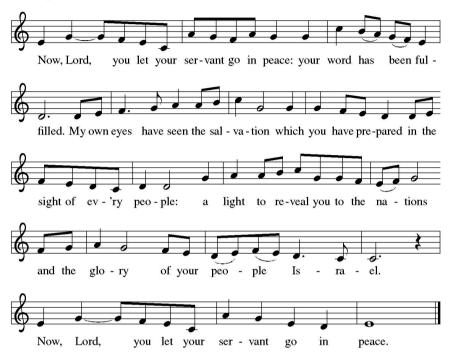
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# The assembly stands.

### TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in his grace. Amen.



# PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together. Nourishing God, at this table you have refreshed us with holy gifts of food and drink. Strengthen us for service, and send us out to embody your good news of liberation and healing for the sake of the world. In the name of Christ we pray, Amen.

# **T** SENDING

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

# BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ± give you peace. **Amen.**  Our final part of our liturgy is the sending. We are sent out into the world reminded of God's mission and strengthened by the presence of Christ and one another through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## SENDING HYMN #547 Sent Forth by God's Blessing



#### DISMISSAL

The assembly is sent into mission.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

#### Thanks be to God.

#### POSTLUDE

Let All Things Now Living by Dale Wood

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# "The Mission of St. Paul's Lutheran Church as a part of the family of God is to share God in Christ with the World by equipping one another through worship, learning, witness, service and support."

Congregation Council		
President	Katie Benjamin	
Vice-President	Ken Knudsen	
Secretary	Jonathan Hodges	
Co-Treasurers	John Foreman, Mike Mauriello	
<b>Co-Financial Secretaries</b>	Rod Runestad, Phil Hart	
Council Members	Katie Benjamin, Jayce Getz, Emily Pauline, Ken Knudsen, Michelle Meadors, Steve	
	Myzk, Jonathan Hodges, Bill Gresham, Nicolina Strom Jensen	

# Welcome to St. Paul's

In celebrating God's beauty and strength created through diversity, we welcome, value, and include all of God's children regardless of race, culture, age, sexual orientation, gender expression, ability, appearance, or citizenship. St. Paul's is committed to racial equality.

Admission to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is by invitation of our Lord, presented through the Church to those who are baptized. If you are unable to receive Holy Communion at the altar, please notify an usher to receive communion at your seat. All are welcome at the table for a blessing. We use red wine and bread at communion, and offer grape juice and gluten-free wafers. Inform your server at the rail if you desire either.

#### Distribution of the Communion Elements take place as follows:

Exit the pew to the side aisles. Empty cups are obtained from the trays located by the front exit. Proceed to the altar. Persons on the right side (lectern side) proceed to the back of the altar rail and fill forward towards the front. The left side (pulpit side) proceed to the front of the altar rail and fill towards the back. After communing, depart down the center aisle to your seat. Please place your cup in one of the baskets.

#### St. Paul's Live Stream Policy

- 1.St. Paul's Lutheran Church live streams the 11:00 AM service every Sunday. The service is posted to Vimeo and Facebook. In addition, special services may be live streamed.
- 2. The 8:30 AM service is not live streamed and is available for attendance by those who do not wish to be recorded. For live streamed services there will be a "No Video Zone" designated in the Narthex.
- 3. It is recommended that all livestream services include a disclaimer about the service being recorded, posted on a visible location at the entrance of the sanctuary and written in the bulletin.
- 4. Children must have a signed waiver from their parent or guardian before being recorded.
- 5. We will not share personal or identifying information while a service is being live streamed, this includes during announcement, prayer requests, or the sermon.

Staff of St. Paul's		
Pastor	Rev. Scott Anderson	pastor@stpaulsdurham.org
Duke Lutherans Pastor/		
Associate Pastor	Rev. Amanda Highben	Amanda.highben@duke.edu
Vicar	Ashley Bowman	vicar@stpaulsdurham.org
Church Secretary	Heather Cain	assistant@stpaulsdurham.org
Minister of Music	Susan Beschorner	music@stpaulsdurham.org
Bookkeeper	Alan Rigsbee	bookkeeper@stpaulsdurham.org
Preschool Director	Candace King	preschool@stpaulsdurham.org
Property Manager	Clark Brunner	property@stpaulsdurham.org

# St. Paul's Lutheran Church

1200 W. Cornwallis Rd., Durham, NC https://www.stpaulsdurham.org/ (919) 489-3214

A member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, North Carolina Synod