

**St. Paul Lutheran Church**

**Pontiac, IL**

**March 7, 2021**

**Third Sunday in Lent**

**We gather to worship, reach out, and serve the Lord.**

**Welcome**

Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church. Whether you have worshipped with us many times, or this is your first time, there is a place for you here. Your presence among us is a gift.

God’s Peace be with you.

**Introduction to the day**

**Introduction**

The third covenant in this year’s Lenten readings is the central one of Israel’s history: the gift of the law to those God freed from slavery. The commandments begin with the statement that because God alone has freed us from the powers that oppressed us, we are to let nothing else claim first place in our lives. When Jesus throws the merchants out of the temple, he is defending the worship of God alone and rejecting the ways commerce and profit-making can become our gods. The Ten Commandments are essential to our baptismal call: centered first in God’s liberating love, we strive to live out justice and mercy in our communities and the world.

**Prelude**

**GATHERING**

### Confession and Forgiveness

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

L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,

The keeper of the covenant,

The source of steadfast love,

Our rock and our redeemer.

**A: Amen.**

L: God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who

is full of compassion.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

L: Fountain of living water,

**A: Pour out your mercy over us.**

**Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free.**

**Rebuild what we have ruined**

**And mend what we have torn.**

**Wash us in your cleansing flood.**

**Make us alive in the Spirit**

**To follow in the way of Jesus,**

**As healers and restorers of the world you so love.**

**Amen.**

L: Beloved, God’s word never fails.

The promise rests on grace:

By the saving love of Jesus Christ,

The wisdom and power of God,

Your sins are ☩ forgiven, and God remembers them no more.

Journey in the way of Jesus.

**A: Amen.**

**Greeting**

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the

Holy Spirit be with you all**.**

**A: And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day**

L: Holy God, through your Son you have called us to live faithfully and act courageously. Keep us steadfast in your covenant of grace, and teach us the wisdom that comes only through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**A: Amen**.

**Children’s Message**

**WORD**

**First Reading –** **Exodus 20: 1-17**

L: A reading from Exodus.

L: God spoke all these words:  
  2I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; 3you shall have no other gods before me.  
  4You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, 6but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.  
  7You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.  
  8Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. 9Six days you shall labor and do all your work. 10But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. 11For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.  
  12Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.  
  13You shall not murder.  
  14You shall not commit adultery.  
  15You shall not steal.  
  16You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.  
  17You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

L:Word of God, word of life.

A**: Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm Reading- Psalm 19**

L: A reading from Psalm.

1The heavens declare the glory of God,  
  and the sky proclaims its maker’s handiwork.  
 2**One day tells its tale to another,**  
  **and one night imparts knowledge to another.**  
 3Although they have no words or language,  
  and their voices are not heard,  
 4**their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world,**  
  **where God has pitched a tent for the sun.**  
 5It comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber;  
  it rejoices like a champion to run its course.  
 6It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of it again;  
  nothing is hidden from its burning heat.  
 7The teaching of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul;  
  the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.  
 8**The statutes of the Lord are just and rejoice the heart;**  
  **the commandment of the Lord is clear and gives light to the eyes.**  
 9The fear of the Lord is clean and endures forever;  
  the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.  
 10**More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold,**  
  **sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.**  
 11By them also is your servant enlightened,  
  and in keeping them there is great reward.  
 12**Who can detect one’s own offenses?**  
  **Cleanse me from my secret faults.**  
 13Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me;  
  then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.  
 14**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight,**  
  **O Lord, my strength and my redeemer**

L: Holy Wisdom. Holy word.

**A: Thanks be to God.**

**Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25**

L: A reading from 1 Corinthians.

18The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19For it is written,  
 “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
  and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”  
20Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. 22For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, 23but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

L: Word of God, word of life.

**A: Thanks be to God.**

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*Please rise as you are able for the reading of the Holy Gospel.*

**Gospel Acclamation**

(spoken responsively)

L: We proclaim Christ crucified,

**A: the power of God and the wisdom of God.**

**Gospel–John 2: 13-22**

L: The Holy Gospel according to John.

**A: Glory to you, O Lord.**

3The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. 15Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. 16He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!” 17His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” 18The Jews then said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” 19Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” 20The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?” 21But he was speaking of the temple of his body. 22After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

L: The gospel of the Lord.

**A: Praise to you, O, Christ.**

**Sermon Pastor Mathew Berger**

**Hymn of the Day Canticle of the Turning ELW 723**

**Apostle’s Creed**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day, he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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.

**Prayers of Intercession**

Throughout our prayers, we will use words from today’s Psalm. Each petition ends “O Lord, hear our prayer”. The congregation is invited to respond, **“Your mercy endures forever.”**

**Sharing the Peace**

L: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**A: And also with you.**

*You are invited to share a sign of God’s peace with your neighbors by saying or typing, “Peace be with you.”*

**MEAL**

**Offering**

*Offerings can also be placed in the offering box at the back of the sanctuary, made by mail or online. You can send a check to St. Paul Lutheran Church 210 Deerfield Rd Pontiac, IL 61764 or give online at* [*stpaulpontiac.org*](http://www.stpaulpontiac.org/)

**Offertory Music There in God’s Garden ELW 342**

**Offering Prayer**

L: Faithful God,

You walk beside us in desert places,

And you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven.

Accompany us in this meal,

That we may pass over from death to life

With Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**A: Amen.**

**Great Thanksgiving**

L: The Lord be with you.

**A: And also with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts.

**A: We lift them to the Lord.**

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

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

**Preface**

L: 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 call your people to cleanse their hearts

and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,

that, renewed in the gift of baptism,

we may come to the fullness of your grace.

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 saying

**A: Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**Lord God of power and might,**

**heaven 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.**

**Thanksgiving at the Table**

L: Blessed are you O God,

for you made the earth and all that is, and declared it good.

Blessed are you,

for in Christ you entered into creation,

into our humanity, into our vulnerability, into our mortality.

You stayed with us through conflict, through suffering, through death.

Blessed are you for raising Jesus from the dead,

in him promising new life to us 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.

Come, Lord, Jesus, in this meal,

and make us alive again.

By your Spirit,

bind us to that holy communion of saints in every time and place,

and make us your body in the world,

bringing light and healing to all.

**Amen.**

**Lord's Prayer**

L: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us,

**A: 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**

L: Jesus draws the whole world to himself. Come to this meal and be fed.

**Communion Hymn We Eat the Bread of Teaching ELW 518**

**Prayer After Communion**

*a blessing is given, a prayer follows*

L: God of steadfast love,

at this table you gather your people

into one body for the sake of the world.

Send us in the power of your Spirit,

That our lives bear witness to the love that has made us new

In Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Announcements**

**SENDING**

**Blessing**

L: You are what God made you to be:

Created in Christ Jesus for good works,

Chosen as holy and beloved,

Freed to serve your neighbor.

God bless you ☩ that you may be a blessing,

In the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

**A: Amen.**

**Dismissal**

L: Go in peace. Share the good news.

**A: Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

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Thank you to all those who contributed to today’s service: Worship Slides: Julie Mehlberg, Lector: Judy Sykes, Ushers: Brad Solberg, Musician: Sandy Erickson, Livestream: Louis Kehinde, Sound: John Mehlberg