



THE 25TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
ELDERS' SERVICE
NOVEMBER 19, 2023

SAINT PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

4660 West 94th Street, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453

(708) 423-1040
Pastor John Moeller

www.stpauloaklawn.org
Director of Music Ruth Sievers

As We Gather

The Last Day may come soon, but even so, many are neglecting to use their abilities and opportunities for God's purposes. Zephaniah writes that that day will be a day of wrath and mourning. But for those who have realized God's blessings over the years, even in these troubled times each day is an opportunity to "encourage one another and build one another up" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Today we have another opportunity to hear God's very gracious Word and be strengthened to respond by using the talents He has loaned each of us.

Prelude
stand

"Prelude in G"

D. Buxtehude

Opening Hymn

"O Worship the King"

#804 sts. 1-2, 4-5

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 O worship the King,
all-glorious above.
O gratefully sing
His pow'r and His love;
Our shield and defender,
the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor
and girded with praise.</p> <p>2 O tell of His might,
O sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light,
whose canopy space;
His chariots of wrath
the deep thunderclouds form,
And dark is His path
on the wings of the storm.</p> | <p>4 Thy bountiful care
what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air,
it shines in the light,
It streams from the hills,
it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills
in the dew and the rain.</p> <p>5 Frail children of dust
and feeble as frail,
In Thee do we trust,
nor find Thee to fail.
Thy mercies, how tender,
how firm to the end,
Our maker, defender,
redeemer, and friend!</p> |
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Invocation

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**
- P** Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.
- C** **You have been our good and faithful Master.**
- P** You have poured out blessings upon us.
- C** **You have given us all we need to support this body and life.**
- P** We meditate on all that You have done.
- C** **We ponder the work of Your hands.**
- P** On account of Your name, O Lord, preserve our lives.
- C** **In Your righteousness, bring us out of trouble.**

Confession and Absolution

- P** Indeed, our heavenly Father has done wonderful things for us. He has given us more than we could ever ask or imagine. Yet, there have been times when we have been ungrateful for God's gifts, times when we have been lazy and selfish with what He has given us, times when we have been unfaithful servants. Yet, our heavenly Father invites us to return to Him and ask for His forgiveness.

We pause to remember our unfaithfulness before our ever-faithful God.

P Heavenly Father,

C **we confess that we have not been faithful with all of the good gifts You have entrusted to us, especially Your precious Word. We have sinned in our thoughts, words, and actions and failed by our inactivity in sharing that Word. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, O Lord, so that we may be restored as Your servants and Your gifts may be multiplied among us.**

P God hears our confession and has promised to be with us always. In the mercy of Almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake, God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C **Amen. We are forgiven. We are restored in Jesus.**

✠ Word ✠

Introit

Psalm 143:2, 5–6, 10–11; antiphon: v. 1

P Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!
In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

C **Enter not into judgment with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.**

P I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done;
I ponder the work of your hands.

C **I stretch out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.**

P Teach me to do your will, for you are my God!
Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!

C **For your name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life!
In your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!**

P Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;

C **as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy!

In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray together.

C **Heavenly Father, You are our good and faithful Master. Thank You for the abundance of blessings You have poured into our lives. Strengthen us by Your mighty power, that we might serve You well and faithfully; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

sit

Old Testament Reading

✠ The Day of the Lord is Near ✠

Zephaniah 1:7–16

Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests. And on the day of the LORD's sacrifice—"I will punish the officials and the king's sons and all who array themselves in foreign attire.

On that day I will punish everyone who leaps over the threshold, and those who fill their master's house with violence and fraud. "On that day," declares the LORD, "a cry will be heard from the Fish Gate, a wail from the Second Quarter, a loud crash from the hills.

Wail, O inhabitants of the Mortar! For all the traders are no more; all who weigh out silver are cut off. At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are complacent, those who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good, nor will he do ill.' Their goods shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them." The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there. A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Anthem of Praise Solo

"Great Is the Lord"

M. Smith

Epistle

✠ The Day of the Lord ✠

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. ²For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

stand

Holy Gospel

✠ The Parable of the Talents ✠

Matthew 25:14-30

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹⁴[Jesus said:] "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' ²¹His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

²²And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' ²³His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' ²⁶But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

✠ Confession of Faith ✠

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.**

**He ascended into heaven and sits at the
right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life ✠ everlasting. Amen.**

sit

Sermon Hymn

"The Day Is Surely Drawing Near"

#508 sts. 1-2, 5-6

1 The day is surely drawing near
When Jesus, God's anointed,
In all His power shall appear
As judge whom God appointed.
Then fright shall banish idle mirth,
And flames on flames shall ravage earth
As Scripture long has warned us.

2 The final trumpet then shall sound
And all the earth be shaken,
And all who rest beneath the ground
Shall from their sleep awaken.
But all who live will in that hour,
By God's almighty, boundless pow'r,
Be changed at His commanding.

5 My Savior paid the debt I owe
And for my sin was smitten;
Within the Book of Life I know
My name has now been written.
I will not doubt, for I am free,
And Satan cannot threaten me;
There is no condemnation!

6 May Christ our intercessor be
And through His blood and merit
Read from His book that we are free
With all who life inherit.
Then we shall see Him face to face,
With all His saints in that blest place
Which He has purchased for us.

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Sermon

stand

Prayer of the Church

sit

Offering—*may be left in the offering plates near the doors as you leave. Those worshipping at home may continue to mail or drop off offerings at the church office, and on-line giving is available to everyone on our website at www.stpauloaklawn.org. For information about regular electronic giving, please contact the church office.*

Offertory Hymn

“We Give Thee But Thine Own”

#781

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 We give Thee but Thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee. | 4 To comfort and to bless,
To find a balm for woe,
To tend the lone and fatherless
Is angels' work below. |
| 2 May we Thy bounties thus
As stewards true receive
And gladly, as Thou blessest us,
To Thee our firstfruits give! | 5 The captive to release,
To God the lost to bring,
To teach the way of life and peace,
It is a Christ-like thing. |
| 3 Oh, hearts are bruised and dead,
And homes are bare and cold,
And lambs for whom the Shepherd bled
Are straying from the fold. | 6 And we believe Thy Word,
Though dim our faith may be:
Whate'er for Thine we do, O Lord,
We do it unto Thee. |

stand

Text: Public domain

The Lord's Prayer

C Our Father, who art in Heaven...

Closing Prayer

P Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have graced us with Your presence through Your Word, and we pray that You would keep us all in the one true faith until life everlasting, when by Your grace we enter into the joy of our Master; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Benediction

P Go in peace as you serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

Closing Hymn

“What Is the World to Me”

#730

1 What is the world to me
With all its vaunted pleasure
When You, and You alone,
Lord Jesus, are my treasure!
You only, dearest Lord,
My soul’s delight shall be;
You are my peace, my rest.
What is the world to me!

2 The world seeks to be praised
And honored by the mighty
Yet never once reflects
That they are frail and flighty.
But what I truly prize
Above all things is He,
My Jesus, He alone.
What is the world to me!

3 The world seeks after wealth
And all that mammon offers
Yet never is content
Though gold should fill its coffers.
I have a higher good,
Content with it I’ll be:
My Jesus is my wealth.
What is the world to me!

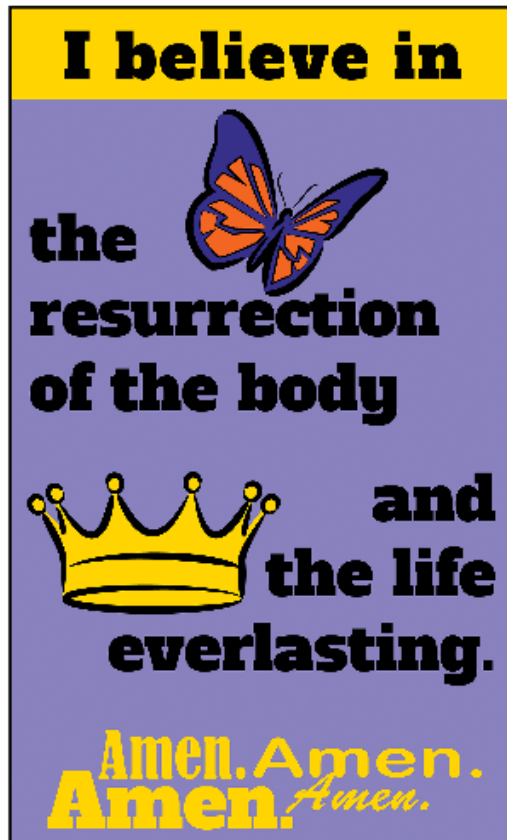
4 What is the world to me!
My Jesus is my treasure,
My life, my health, my wealth,
My friend, my love, my pleasure,
My joy, my crown, my all,
My bliss eternally.
Once more, then, I declare:
What is the world to me!

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Postlude

“Postlude in C”

G. Handel



Announcements & Notes:

Thanksgiving Eve Communion Service is this Wednesday, November 22 at 7pm. Thank offering donations of non-perishable food items will be received at the altar during the service, which will then be distributed by our Faith in Action team to families in need. **There is NO Thanksgiving Day service.**

Christmas Cards will be available in the narthex after services today through December 10th. This is a fund raiser in support of our Ladies Guild.

The Ladies Guild will meet for its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 28th at 1pm in the Timothy Room. After devotions, a short meeting, and refreshments, we will collate the Advent Devotion Booklets which will be available for all St. Paul members and friends on the first Sunday in Advent, December 3rd. Please come for an afternoon of service and fellowship!

The next Voters' Meeting is Tuesday, November 28th at 7pm in the sanctuary. Information Packets will be available in the narthex on Sunday, November 26th for your review before the meeting.

Bible Classes continue each Sunday Morning in the Timothy Room after our worship service. Currently we are doing a video-based study based on Martin Luther. Grab a cup of coffee and something to eat and join us! Thursday evening Bible Study is on break until December 14.

Faith in Action's Food Pantry is preparing for their Thanksgiving and Christmas food distributions. If you'd like to help with donations to the pantry, there's a flyer on the table in the narthex and on the counters that details what they need to prepare for holiday bags for families in need.

As we help support the work of Missionaries Rev. Dave and Joyce Erber in Ghana, Gloria Dei Lutheran in Chicago supports Pastor James and Angela Sharp, serving as missionaries in Uruguay. If you'd like to hear about their work, they'll be at Gloria Dei (5259 South Major Avenue, Chicago) on Wednesday, 11-29-2023 at 2:00PM. Please RSVP at (773) 767-2771.

Volunteers are Needed to cook and serve the supper before our Midweek Advent Service on Wednesday, December 20th. If you'd like to help, please call the church office.

Worth Township is collecting NEW toys and clothing for children ages newborn through 14 years old for their Christmas Care Program until December 7th. A box for your donations will be out in the narthex on Sunday mornings. For more information, call (708) 972-7835 or email youthcommission@worthtownship.com.

Remembering our homebound friends is a caring ministry of St. Paul meant to help us stay in touch with our members who aren't able to be with us for worship. Please remember them in your prayers. You may also like to send a note or a card. This week our homebound friend is Lorraine Moses, 5236 S. Christiana, Chicago, IL 60632.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & THANKS

Elders: Bill Leise and Curtis Simonson

Organist: Ruth Sievers

Vocalists: Sandy Barry & Mandy Signorelli

Lector: Sunday: Marilyn Bitner

Altar Care: Wednesday: Sandy Barry

Altar Flowers are from Terry Hornburg in celebration of her father's 99th birthday.

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**Please pray for these
members of our St.
Paul family**

George Oberg
Rich & Jan Przybycien
Rev. Paul and Judy
Anderson
Sue & Bill Volk
Arthur Gerth
Ingrid Lesko
Jan Briede
Roy Hodgeman
Katherine Hice
Kurt Seehofer
Flora Jones
Graham Jackson
Kevin Hickey
Gloria Meyer
Elaine Lebron
Melva Smith
Delores Stegemann
Carol Small
Mike Degidio
Norma Silinski
Beverly Sellers
Betty Beegle
Warren Miller
Delphine Cherry
Ron Klingensmith
Louis Frank
Betty Kruckow
Herta Iversen
Loretta Frank
George Dodaro, Sr.

Barbara Prendergast
Nancy Bundley
Rosa Richardson
Carl Hoppe

**Please pray for these
friends and family of
our members:**

Roberta & Carlos Owens
Roy Strassner
Dorothy Kroll
Emily Feehan
LeRoy Bitner
Georgiana Easton
Jackie Plichta
Patricia Paulsen
Ken Kruckow
Janet Trierweiler
Vicki Warren
Rhonda Scott
Michelle Mitchell
Al Silinski
Pam Palhegyi
Carol Milazzo
Rich Huscher
The Lamberth Family
Jerry Gross
Louise Hrynkow
Gloria Folsom
Mary Beth Pasqua
Shirley Fairchild
Simeon Hoppe
Ron Lunt
Christopher Kosary

Sandy Plath
Iris McCoy
Shirley Demyres
Raquel Rameriz
Nick & Bridget
DeAngelo
Henry Bonder
Kim & Shawn Skelton, Sr.
Kyle Hughes
Elaine Hoffstetter
Fred Raddatz
Allyson Seehofer
Selma Carmichael
Bernadette & Rich Trusk
Dana Kahn
Donald Hakanson
Guillermo Ramirez
Paul Noffke
Vern Howe
Shawn Harland
Ann Herold
Barb Potter
Wayne Volk
Lance Barrientos
Linda Shuman
Doris Potts
Doreen Holford
Judy Collins
Luke Pajowski
Phyllis Hicks
Jimmy Kennedy, Jr.
Monica Iversen
Cathy Becker
Ken Matz
Jean & Al Zirbel

Carol Loecherbach
Charley Heitz
Sophia Salus
Justin & Ashley Fasel
Frank Coglina
Gene Wawrzynikowski
Kimberly Rooney
Helena Hoffman
Evelyn & Ron Konieski
Audrey Metes
Richard DeSaga
Ken Went
Margaret Lundgreen
Julie King
Sharon Bryant
Anika Seger
Monica Kato
Herb Kleeman
Debra Kleeman
Sarah Skelton
Barbara Apt
Bob & Gloria Freeman
Carrie Aspan
Lisa Anglin
Devon Apt
Tristan Ferry
LaNell Mauler Koenig
Todd, Sofia & Grace Lynum
Hillary Pittelko
Marge Schmidt
Sue Berg
Carol Jean McPhillips
Donna Santi
Jim Scherer

We pray for those who grieve:

For Ruth, John, Andrew, and Paul Mrochen and all of the family and friends of Rev. George Mrochen, called from this life to his eternal rest with Jesus on November 13th. Lying in state at Kosary Funeral Home in Evergreen Park on Sunday, Nov. 19, 2:00 – 8:00 PM; Also Monday, Nov. 20, 9:00 - 10:45 at St Peter Lutheran Church, 86th & Kedvale. Service at 11:00 AM.

We pray for those celebrating birthdays:

*Frank Laos, who celebrated a special birthday on 11-14
Herbert Kleeman, who celebrated his 99th birthday on 11/15
Martha Moeller on 11/22
Sandy Barry on 11/25*

**Please let the church office know when your need for our congregational prayers is over.
(708) 423-1040**