

**LENTEN MIDWEEK SERVICE  
MARCH 11, 2026**

**IN THE NAME OF JESUS, WELCOME TO ST. PAUL'S!**

**VESPERS**

7:00 p.m.



*PRELUDE*

*ENTRANCE VERSE (Stand)*

LSB 229

*PSALMODY*

Psalm 80:1-7

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
you who lead Joseph like a flock!  
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.  
Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,  
stir up your might  
and come to save us!

Restore us, O God;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved!

O LORD God of hosts,  
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?  
You have fed them with the bread of tears  
and given them tears to drink in full measure.  
You make us an object of contention for our neighbors,  
and our enemies laugh among themselves.

Restore us, O God of hosts;  
let your face shine, that we may be saved!

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.  
Praise to You, O Christ. Alleluia.**



And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ.**

HYMN

*O Love, How Deep* Sts. 1, 4, 7

LSB 544

**1 O love, how deep, how broad, how high,  
Beyond all thought and fantasy,  
That God, the Son of God, should take  
Our mortal form for mortals' sake!**

**4 For us He prayed; for us He taught;  
For us His daily works He wrought,  
By words and signs and actions thus  
Still seeking not Himself but us.**

**△ 7 All glory to our Lord and God  
For love so deep, so high, so broad;  
The Trinity whom we adore  
Forever and forevermore.**

SERMON (*Be seated*)

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen. Dear friends in Christ:

"For us He prayed; for us He taught; For us His daily works He wrought." So begins tonight's stanza from our series hymn.

These words align well with the Gospel lesson read earlier – one which comes from the early days of Jesus’ ministry. The reading tells us that Jesus prayed and preached, so the only difference in the hymn is a substituting of the word “teaching” for “preaching.” These two activities are closely related anyway, and Jesus did both of them frequently.

In examining these descriptions of Jesus’ work, let’s begin by noting how his work sounds so very ordinary. When Jesus gets up early and prays, we commend him for this of course, but we also don’t consider this to be anything remarkable or flashy. Likewise, when Jesus heads off to a desolate place, this sounds like he just needs a little time away from his people – something that we need too.

After his time of prayer, Jesus then picks up his lunch pail and heads out for a day of preaching, just like the rest of us do when we go out to our jobs. And yes, his work of preaching is very important. But we also know that the world is filled with preachers, so his job seems ordinary too.

But then we get to the end of the reading. And there we discover something that reminds us just how unique and special Jesus’ work is.

In his work, Jesus also casts out demons. And this brief mention in our reading is not some kind of afterthought or simple addition. Rather, as we see from the preceding verses, it is a major part of his work. Those verses give us both a specific story of a man being cleansed from an unclean spirit and a general reference to many such healings taking place.

When we hear these mentions of healing and cleansing from evil in the scriptures, we tend to think of the sudden and immediate healing that Jesus was able to work in so many cases. One of these is detailed just a few verses before our text, where we hear about Simon’s mother-in-law lying ill with a fever. We’re told that

when the disciples relayed this to Jesus, *“he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.”* Just like that.

But such stories are primarily meant to illustrate the power of Jesus’ efforts, not to suggest that this power always brings about full healing immediately. Some of the healing Jesus brings takes time.

And, yes, there is always a miraculous and moving effect to Jesus’ work. But that doesn’t mean this effect is seen right away.

In the scriptures, Jesus’ healings always come in concert with his preaching, which is very important for us to note. Jesus does these activities together because there is a connection. The connection is that Jesus’ preaching leads to healing too.

This is why Jesus’ routine – although it seemed ordinary – was anything but. Yes, he prayed, preached, taught, healed, and went on to someplace else to do these same things the next day, but each day brought many blessings

In this seemingly ordinary routine of Jesus, we have a model for our lives too. Jesus teaches us to follow his routine of prayer and work. When we begin our days with prayer, we are renewed and refreshed for the day ahead. When we begin our weeks with worship, we are better equipped to go off into the world and earn our daily bread.

Likewise, Jesus is also a model of how we are to do our work selflessly. Jesus didn’t go about his travels to sightsee or seek pleasure. Rather, he approached people to teach them and heal them. We, too, will bring blessings as we learn to roll up our sleeves, sacrifice some opportunities, and work to help others.

Sadly, we are not always so good at these ways Jesus models. We have trouble staying disciplined – succumbing to life’s temptations instead. And we often fail in our efforts to sacrifice on behalf of others – preferring our own success and happiness.

Some say that people will always act according to their own self-interest. Every time. According to this belief, people spend their time, their energy, and their resources only in ways that benefit them or their family.

And it's true that this is the very heart of our economic system. A capitalist society functions by the belief that people will always buy what they consider to be the best deal for themselves.

That, however, is not how our God works. As our hymn puts it: "For us He prayed; for us He taught; For us His daily works He wrought, By words and signs and actions thus, Still seeking not Himself but us."

In other words, everything that Jesus did on earth was not for himself but for you and me. His teaching, his preaching, his defeat of Satan, and his overthrowing of death and the grave – all of it was done for us.

In this goal of his, and through his works, we see that Jesus is far more than just our example. He is also our savior. Jesus did these things to earn our forgiveness and send his Spirit to help us do better.

In many respects, this is what makes studying the life of our Lord so worthwhile. Who else's life can you look at and say that it is completely and utterly selfless in every way?

That is why the seeming ordinariness of Jesus' life is actually so important. In his ordinary work, he performs miracles.

His greatest miracle is that he forgives our sins. And this is something that he does not just once, but over and over again.

Knowing this, the church's work is to proclaim this forgiveness, over and over again. Martin Luther stated this in his Large Catechism by saying: "Everything, therefore, in the Christian Church is ordered toward this goal: we shall daily receive in the

Church nothing but the forgiveness of sin through the Word and signs, to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live here” (Part 2 – the Creed – paragraph 55).

God’s daily work – done for us and echoed by the church – is to forgive our sins in Jesus’ name. Repeatedly.

To the world, this seems ordinary—even boring. “They’re just words,” people will say.

But this is why God sent his Son in the first place. He sent his Son so that he might seek us out, find us where we are, and care for us when we need it most.

It’s sometimes hard for us to accept the ordinary work God does in Jesus Christ. And it’s hard for us to believe that God works through simple words and ordinary objects to point us to who he is and what he does for us in his Son. Our sinful nature rejects this as too easy, too obvious.

Yet everything in the church is ordered so that you receive the forgiveness of sins and new life in his name, here and now. The Messiah seeks you out. He does this in “words and signs and actions thus,” as the hymn points out. He seeks you out so that you will repent of your sins and turn to him in faith.

All of this may seem simple. But it is the power and spirit of God.

Come, receive this grace, given here, for us. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

*CANTICLE (Magnificat) (Stand)*

LSB 231

**My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior;**

for He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden.

For behold, from this day all generations will call me blessed.

For the Mighty One has done great things to me, and holy is His name;

and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has exalted the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away.

He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

*VESPER PRAYERS (Kneel)*

LSB 233-234

O Lord, hear my prayer.

**And let my cry come to You.**

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your Word; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*COLLECT FOR PEACE*

*Stand*

*BENEDICAMUS*

LSB 234

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*BENEDICTION*

LSB 234

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

**Amen.**

- 1**    **Now rest beneath night's shadow**  
**The woodland, field, and meadow;**  
      **The world in slumber lies.**  
**But you, my heart, awaking**  
**And prayer and music making,**  
      **Let praise to your Creator rise.**
- 2**    **The radiant sun has vanished,**  
**Its golden rays are banished**  
      **From dark'ning skies of night;**  
**But Christ, the Sun of gladness,**  
**Dispelling all our sadness,**  
      **Shines down on us in warmest light.**
- 3**    **Now all the heav'nly splendor**  
**Breaks forth in starlight tender**  
      **From myriad worlds unknown;**  
**And we, this marvel seeing,**  
**Forget our selfish being**  
      **For joy of beauty not our own.**
- 4**    **Lord Jesus, since You love me,**  
**Now spread Your wings above me**  
      **And shield me from alarm.**  
**Though Satan would devour me,**  
**Let angel guards sing o'er me:**  
      **This child of God shall meet no harm.**
- 5**    **My loved ones, rest securely,**  
**For God this night will surely**  
      **From peril guard your heads.**  
**Sweet slumbers may He send you**  
**And bid His hosts attend you**  
      **And through the night watch o'er your beds.**

## THOSE SERVING:

Greeter: Jason Starck

Reader: Dan Buuck

*Offerings support the church's mission work – both here and through our many partners. Offerings may be placed in the box at the sanctuary entrance or sent to the church through our website or the mail. **Fellowship Cards** help us welcome new people and track participation. Please fill one out and place it in the offering box following the service.*

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**ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
7426 IDYLWOOD ROAD  
FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA 22043**

A member congregation of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod

**CHURCH STAFF**

**The Rev. Mark Shaltanis, Pastor**

**The. Rev. Wayne Lehrer, Pastor Emeritus**

Kantor Aaron Jansen, Dir. of Parish Music	Jill Cha, Preschool Director
Tawni Harrell, Director of Youth	Norm Williams, Business Manager
Linda Fekete, Parish Secretary	Richard Irwin, Building Manager

**CONTACT US**

Web site: [www.stpaulsfallchurch.org](http://www.stpaulsfallchurch.org)

Office e-mail and phone:

[secretary@stpaulsfallchurch.org](mailto:secretary@stpaulsfallchurch.org); 703-573-0295

Business Manager e-mail: [businessmanager@stpaulsfallchurch.org](mailto:businessmanager@stpaulsfallchurch.org)

Pastor's e-mail: [pastormark@stpaulsfallchurch.org](mailto:pastormark@stpaulsfallchurch.org)

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