

We receive forgiveness of sins and become righteous before God by grace, through Christ, through faith. Thanks be given to God!

I worry that the Lutheran understanding that the word is both law and gospel, and that there is a distinction between the law and the gospel, is becoming blurred. Some define the gospel as social justice—feeding the hungry, supporting the poor and marginalized, racial equity, justice for migrants, respect for the dignity of all people. These are all vitally important ministries in which this church must be engaged. But they are not the gospel. Rather, these works of justice and mercy flow from the deliverance that the gospel brings.

In November 1520, Martin Luther wrote his treatise *The Liberty of the Christian*. In it he makes clear the distinction between the law and the gospel and between God's work and our work. The gospel, the gift of God's grace, has set us free. Luther explains it this way: "Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, just as I am your sin. You have assumed what is mine and given me what is yours" (*Works of Luther*, 48:12-13). No one and nothing can take this away from us. No longer crushed by the weight of self-justification, but being gloriously free in being bound to the righteousness of Christ, we are free to serve our neighbor.

Luther wrote, "I will do nothing in this life except that which I believe is necessary, profitable, and wholesome for my neighbor, for through faith I have an abundance of all good things in Christ" (*The Christian's Freedom*).

Lutherans have been accused of quietism in the past. And I feel that the current *blurring* of the law and gospel is motivated by a fervent desire to follow Jesus' command to care for the "least of these." (Matthew 25:1-46). But we are not quietists. Our faith compels us to be active in the public square.

Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). We bring no life or salvation. That is God's work, and it has already been accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is because of this life, this grace, this freedom that we, human creatures, dare to support the marginalized and excluded.



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Wilton, WI

Baptism of Our Lord
January 8, 2023

**Inviting People to
Journey with Christ's Family
in Spreading God's Love and Mercy**

In the waters of the Jordan, Jesus is revealed as the beloved Son of God. Through this great epiphany, Jesus fulfills all righteousness and becomes the servant of God who will bring forth justice and be a light to the nations. In the waters of baptism we too are washed by the Word, anointed by the Spirit, and named God's beloved children. Our baptismal mission is to proclaim good news to all who are oppressed or in need of God's healing.

**(Indicates that the people should stand as they are able.)*

Announcements

Gathering

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

Confession and Forgiveness

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.
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,**

We ask that all members join the Women of ELCA and pray this prayer as you rise in the morning and as you prepare to retire each evening.

Lord, Jesus Christ, I bring to you:

Jada, Myles, & Conner Garske; Britain Hahn, Gracie Brandau; Amara Brandau; Chase Brandau; Avery Brueggen; Riley & Aria Brueggen; Nolan & Logan Buchholz; Thadyn & Ayawyn Conner; Vanessa & Elliott Ornes; Lailah Eckes; Lena Ornes; Porter Sorenson; Kennedy & Josie Ornes; Brooklyn, Madelyn, Kaylin, Emma, Bryce, Marah, Bria, Ava, Katie, & Benjamin Gruen; Brady Zimmerman; Braylee Zimmerman; MaKenzie & Cooper Powell; Wesson Mayne; Vanessa, Mia, & Brek Anderson; Tyler & Jaden Bever; Carlee, Collin, & Camden Neidfeldt; Morgan Speicher; Krista & Sierra Cook; Tyler Brandau; Franklin & Douglas Wildes; Sophia, Derek & Deacon Erdman; Kody Tormoen; Angel Brueggen; Callie Fleming; Miranda, Daphne & Linus Arndt; Emma Elder; Bryson Lamb; Alaina & Braxton Holthaus; Jada Leis; David, Sam & Zachary Ross; Gannon Tormoen; Jase & Margo Picha; Watson Sebranek.

That your spirit will dwell with them according to your will. That they will grow in the knowledge of you and know that they are dearly loved by you. I pray that you will protect them from deception by the evil one and all his darts that would lead them astray. May they do well in school, learning and discerning what direction you have in mind for them. I also pray for all children every where, that you would keep them in your care. In Jesus name I pray.

Amen

Isaiah 42:1-9

- ¹Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
- ²He will not cry or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
- ³a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
- ⁴He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.
- ⁵Thus says God, the LORD,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk in it:
- ⁶I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations,
- ⁷to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.
- ⁸I am the LORD, that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to idols.
- ⁹See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth,
I tell you of them.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 29

¹Ascribe to the LORD, you gods,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

²**Ascribe to the LORD the glory due God's name;
worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.**

³The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders;
the LORD is upon the mighty waters.

⁴**The voice of the LORD is a powerful voice;
the voice of the LORD is a voice of splendor.**

⁵The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees;
the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

⁶**the LORD makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

⁷The voice of the LORD
bursts forth in lightning flashes.

⁸**The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

⁹The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe and strips
the forests bare.

And in the temple of the LORD all are crying, "Glory!"

¹⁰**The LORD sits enthroned above the flood;
the LORD sits enthroned as king forevermore.**

¹¹O LORD, give strength to your people;
give them, O LORD, the blessings of peace.

Second Reading

Peter crosses the sharp religious boundary separating Jews from Gentiles and proclaims the good news of God's inclusive forgiveness in Jesus' name to Cornelius, a Roman centurion. As a result of Peter's preaching, Cornelius and his family become the first Gentiles to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 10:34-43

³⁴Peter began to speak to [Cornelius and his household]: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone

IN OUR PRAYERS

Katie Wallace, Gloria Meltesen, Florence Dougherty, Darlene Babbitt, John Acker, Lois Reineke, Judy Bever, Craig King, Wynn Liersch, Mary Leis, Tracie Herman, Don Schreier, Debra Welch, Patrick Reardon

IN THE MILITARY

Jacob Picha, Dylan Dougherty, Seth Tormoen, Danelle Dougherty, Robert Cale, Matthew Dutton.

CALENDAR

Jan. 11	Confirmation	6:30pm-8:00 pm
Jan. 15	Sunday School	9:00 am
	Worship	10:15 am
Jan. 18	Confirmation	6:30pm-8:00 pm
Jan. 22	Sunday School	9:00 am
	Worship	10:15 am
Jan. 25	Confirmation	6:30pm-8:00 pm
Jan. 29	Sunday School	9:00 am
	Worship	10:15 am
	Annual Meeting	11:15 am
Feb. 1	Confirmation	6:30pm-8:00 pm

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRANSITION COMMITTEE SURVEY

Please, if you have not completed the congregational survey with regard to the future of St. Paul's, **DO NOT** put it off any longer. Your input is needed. Copies of the survey are in the narthex, along with the drop box, for your completed survey.

Distribution

Everyone who believes in Jesus is welcome at Christ's table.

"Lamb of God"

ELW p.191

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

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.

Sending

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

*Benediction

Hymn "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise"

ELW #310

P Go in peace. Follow the way of Jesus.

C **Thanks be to God.**

THOSE SERVING TODAY

Ministers: All God's People; Pastor: Chris Hallemeier; Organist: Nalani Bever; Reader: Barb Bever

IN THE MILITARY

Jacob Picha, Dylan Dougherty, Seth Tormoen, Danelle Dougherty, Robert Cale, Matthew Dutton.

who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

***Gospel Acclamation**

"Alleluia"

ELW p. 188

GOSPEL READING

Before Jesus begins his ministry, he is baptized by John, touched by the Spirit, and identified publicly as God's child.

The holy gospel according to Matthew 3:13-17

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Reverend Chris Hallemeier

Hymn "Christ, When for Us You Were Baptized" **ELW #304**

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.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (Merciful God, receive our prayer)

***PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

*Offertory Hymn "Lord, Let My Heart be Good Soil" **ELW #513**

OFFERTORY PRAYER

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,
Amen.

Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW p. 152

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

ELW p. 190

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Words of Institution

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

P: Come and taste the joy of God!