

# Spring Plant Order Form

This year you have the opportunity to order an Easter Lily and/or a Spring Plant. The cost is \$13.00 for a Lily; \$10.00 for a Spring Plant.

These plants will adorn the Altar on Easter morning and will be available for you to take home if you wish following worship.

The deadline to order is March 22.

Please fill out this order form, choose what plant you would like to order and place in an envelope along with the appropriate amount and turn it in to the church office. You may also put it in the offering plate.

Easter Lily \_\_\_\_\_  
Tulip \_\_\_\_\_  
Daffodil \_\_\_\_\_  
Hyacinth \_\_\_\_\_



Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_



# Signs & Wonders

**Sunday, March 15, 2026  
9:00 a.m.**

## Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church

It is a joy to gather together for worship!

### St. Paul Purpose Statement

Living Christ centered lives so we may love all, serve our community, and share the Word.

### Sunday Worship Schedule

9:00 a.m. In-person worship with Holy Communion

10:15 a.m. In-person Sunday School – September – May

### Communion

We celebrate Jesus' presence each week in Holy Communion. This is the Lord's Supper and Jesus invites us: whether you are a lifelong Lutheran, or just considering Christianity; if you are an infant or elderly; if your family has been in the United States for generations, or has only recently arrived; if you are LGBTQIA+ or straight; if you live with disabilities, chronic illness, or are able-bodied and currently healthy; if you are home-blessed or homeless; ... YOU are welcome at God's meal of grace at St. Paul.

### Accessibility

Handicap parking, entrance, wheelchair, and restrooms are available. Sound amplifiers and large print bulletins are available. Please ask an usher for assistance.

### Children's Offering

The March Children's offering will go to towards The Buddy Bag program. Be assured that every penny donated goes only to the cost of purchasing the food. All administrative costs are covered separately.

Pastor Mark Luepke, Part-time Interim

[pastormark@stpaulsterling.com](mailto:pastormark@stpaulsterling.com)

1701 16th Ave. Sterling, IL 61081

815-625-3069

Church email: [stpaulsterling@comcast.net](mailto:stpaulsterling@comcast.net)

[www.stpaulsterling.com](http://www.stpaulsterling.com)

## Fourth Sunday in Lent

Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. "I was blind, now I see," declares the man. In baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God's beloved children. As David was anointed king of Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

### Prelude

*"God of Grace with Grace Greater than Our Sin"*

arr. Tom Fettke

### Welcome/Announcements

### Confession and Forgiveness

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

### Amen.

Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt and blots out all offenses.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For failing to recognize your coming reign, and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition, and for disdain the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For disregarding voices from the margin, and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world: Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent, and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life: Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.**

God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound. Through faith, the free gift of God, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts, and gives you life and peace.  
**Amen.**

## Gathering Hymn

### "Dearest Jesus, at Your Word"

ELW #520



1 Dear - est Je - sus, at your word we have come a -  
2 All our knowl - edge, sense, and sight lie in deep - est  
3 Ra - diance of God's glo - ry bright, Light of Light from  
4 Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost, praise to you and



gain to hear you; let our thoughts and hearts be stirred  
dark - ness shroud - ed till your Spir - it breaks the night,  
God pro - ceed - ing, Je - sus, send your bless - ed light;  
ad - o - ra - tion! Grant us what we need the most:



and in glow - ing faith be near you as the prom - is -  
fill - ing us with light un - cloud - ed. All good thoughts and  
help our hear - ing, speak - ing, heed - ing, that our prayers and  
all your gos - pel's con - so - la - tion while we here on



es here giv - en draw us whol - ly up to heav - en.  
all good liv - ing come but by your gra - cious giv - ing.  
songs may please you, as with grate - ful hearts we praise you.  
earth a - wait you, till in heav'n with praise we greet you.

Text: Tobias Clausnitzer, 1619–1684, sts. 1–3; *Gesangbuch*, Berlin, 1707, st. 4; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, adapt.  
Music: LIEBSER JESU, WIR SIND HIER, Johann R. Ahle, 1625–1673

## GREETING

P: 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.**

# Kyrie

*Refrain*



Ky-ri-e e-lei-son, on our world and on our way.



Ky-ri-e e-lei-son, ev-'ry day.

1 For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the  
 2 That we may live out your im-passioned re-sponse to the  
 3 For peace in our hearts, . . . for peace in our homes, . . for  
 4 For your Spir-it to guide; that you cen-ter our lives in the



u-ni-ty of all; for  
 hun-gry and the poor; that  
 friends and fam-i-ly; for  
 wa-ter and the word; that you



this ho-ly house, for all who wor-ship and praise,  
 we may live out . . . truth and jus-tice and grace,  
 life and for love, . . . for our work and our play,  
 nour-ish our souls . . . with your bod-y and blood,

*Refrain*



let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

## Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray together:

**All: Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us.**

**By your gracious life and death for us, bring light into the darkness**

**of our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” <sup>2</sup>Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’” <sup>3</sup>Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do, and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.” <sup>4</sup>Samuel did what the LORD commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?” <sup>5</sup>He said, “Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup>When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely his anointed is now before the LORD.” <sup>7</sup>But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” <sup>8</sup>Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” <sup>9</sup>Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” <sup>10</sup>Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any of these.” <sup>11</sup>Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes here.” <sup>12</sup>He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. The LORD said, “Rise and anoint him, for this is the one.” <sup>13</sup>Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the spirit of the

LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

R: Word of God, Word of Life,

**All: Thanks be to God.**

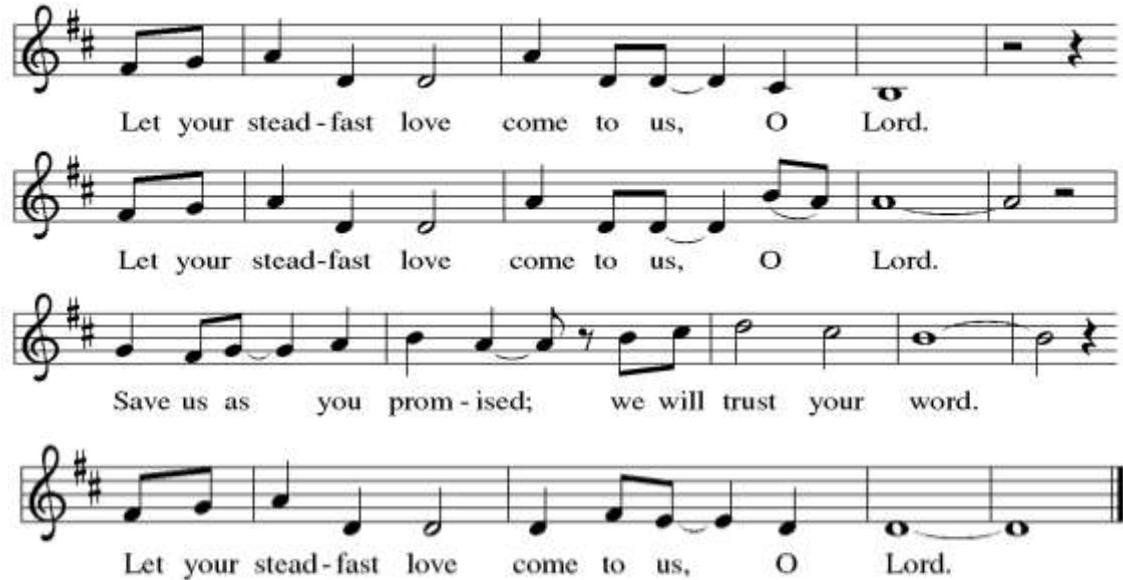
**Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14**

<sup>8</sup>Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, <sup>9</sup>for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. <sup>10</sup>Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness; rather, expose them. <sup>12</sup>For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly, <sup>13</sup>but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, <sup>14</sup>for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

R: Word of God, Word of Life,

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation**



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

Save us as you prom-ised; we will trust your word.

Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

**Gospel: John 9:1-41**

P: The Holy Gospel according to John the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter.

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

<sup>1</sup>As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. <sup>4</sup>We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." <sup>6</sup>When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, <sup>7</sup>saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. <sup>8</sup>The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" <sup>9</sup>Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am he." <sup>10</sup>But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" <sup>11</sup>He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." <sup>12</sup>They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

<sup>13</sup>They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. <sup>14</sup>Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup>Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." <sup>16</sup>Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. <sup>17</sup>So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

<sup>18</sup>The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight <sup>19</sup>and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" <sup>20</sup>His parents answered, "We know that this is

our son and that he was born blind, <sup>21</sup> but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” <sup>22</sup> His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup> Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

<sup>24</sup> So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.”

<sup>25</sup> He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” <sup>26</sup> They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” <sup>27</sup> He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” <sup>28</sup> Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. <sup>29</sup> We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” <sup>30</sup> The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.

<sup>31</sup> We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. <sup>32</sup> Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” <sup>34</sup> They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” <sup>36</sup> He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” <sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” <sup>38</sup> He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.” <sup>40</sup> Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” <sup>41</sup> Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord,  
**All: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Children’s Message

### Sermon

“Chapter Nine of John: A Play in Seven Acts”

### Hymn of the Day

**“Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound”**

ELW #779

1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that  
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and  
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I  
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his  
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright  
 saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but  
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that  
 have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me  
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and  
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to  
 now am found; was blind, but now I see.  
 grace ap - pear the hour, I first be - lieved!  
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.  
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt., sts. 1–4; anonymous, st. 5  
 Music: NEW BRITAIN, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

## **Installation of Council Members**

Greg Zeigler, President

Julie Woessner DeJonge, Vice-President

Stacey Avelar, Secretary

Chrissy Zollinger, Treasurer

David Carrillo

Rayce Gale

Dawn Waite

## **Apostles Creed**

P: Trusting in Christ's life, death, and resurrection, let us profess our faith through the words of the Apostles' Creed:

**All: 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 power of 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**

P: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

*A brief silence.*

P: Hear us, O God.

**All: Your mercy is great.**

P: Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

**All: Amen.**

## **Peace**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**All: And also with you!**

P: Let us share a sign of Christ's peace in whatever way you are comfortable.

## **Offering**

*"At the Foot of the Cross"*

Derek Bond

*This song is the Sending Song this morning. You are invited to listen as Linda sings it to familiarize you with the melody.*

## **Offering Prayer**

P: O God, maker of heaven and earth, your steadfast love embraces all creation. You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth and bring forth its bounty. Through these gifts of bread and wine, draw us into the death and life of your Son, who calls us to bear witness to his saving work. We ask this in Jesus' name.

**All: Amen.**

## The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

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

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

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

P: 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:

### *“Holy, Holy, Holy”*

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry, full of your glo - ry. Ho -  
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.  
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## The Words of Institution

### Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**All: 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 to the table. Feast on God's goodness and mercy

### Communion

#### *“Lamb of God”*

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the  
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the



### Communion Music

*“Shepherd Me, O God”*  
stg. David Lasky

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God’s grace.

**All: Amen.**

P: Let us pray.

God of our salvation, we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls, reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey. Through the body and blood of your Son, may we become Christ’s body in the world, bearing witness to your love for all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**All: Amen.**

P: I invite you to rise in body or spirit to receive a blessing.

### Blessing

P: Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity: God, who calls all things into existence, Jesus Christ, who redeems us, and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation, † bless you now and always.

**All: Amen.**

### Sending Song *“At the Foot of the Cross”*

At the foot of the cross, I can hard - ly take it in,  
that the King of all cre - a - tion was  
dy - ing for my sin; and the pain and ag - o - ny,  
and the thorns that pierced your head, and the  
hard-ness of my sin - ful heart that left you there for dead.  
And, oh, what mer - cy I have found at the  
cross of Cal - va - ry; I will nev - er know your lone -  
li - ness, all on ac - count of me. And I will  
bow my knee be - fore your throne, 'cause your love has set me

free; and I will give my life to you, dear Lord, and  
 praise your maj - es - ty, and praise your  
 maj - es - ty, and praise your maj - es - ty.

Text: Derek Bond  
 Music: AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS, Derek Bond  
 Text and music © 1978 Sovereign Music UK

**Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

“Open the Eyes of My Heart”

Paul Baloche

**We Remember in Prayer;** those on our Home Visitation list and those on our prayer list: Brock Woessner, Jeff Waite, Dianne Miller, Lori Dewey, Maggie N., the Woodworth family, Michelle Klinger, Matt Friel, Sandy Julifs, Mike, Dylan Wescott, Phyllis Jacobson, and Betty Steinke

**Worship Assistants:**

- Opener/Head Usher/Closer – David Carrillo
- Acolytes – Altar Guild
- Greeters – Diane Yoeckel, Gary Fields
- Ushers – Ruben & JoAnn Garcia
- Reader – JoAnn Garcia
- Sound – Greg Zeigler
- Communion Assistant – JoAnn Garcia
- Altar Guild – Ann Beswick, JoAnn Garcia

**Musicians:**

- Linda VonHolten
- Dawn Zeigler

**Wednesday, March 18**

- Worship Assistants
- Opener/Closer – *Volunteer needed*
- Greeter – *Volunteer needed*
- Sound – Greg Zeigler

**Next Week – March 22**

**Worship Assistants**

- Opener/Head Usher/Closer – David Carrillo
- Acolytes – Arians family
- Greeters – Bob & Judy Bartel
- Ushers – Bill & Carolyn Duncan
- Reader – Carolyn Duncan
- Sound – Bradyn Arians
- Communion Assistant – Nancy Eilers
- Altar Guild – Ann Beswick, JoAnn Garcia
- Coffee Fellowship – Audrey & Cathy Cox