ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18, 2026

ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

14 West Pennsylvania Avenue, Walkersville, Maryland 21793

Worship Service—7:00 p.m.

Church Phone: 301-845-4600
E-mail: info@saintpaulslutheranchurch.org
Web Site: http://www.saintpaulslutheranchurch.org

Through Christ, we joyfully feed the body, mind, and spirit of all.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

President—Sheila Kahler
Vice-President—Lauren McCloskey
Treasurer—Patty Rimel
Secretary—Gary Wachter

Jesus sinners doth receive
Savior, Servant, Friend
Service for Ash Wednesday

Forgiver

Order of Service

I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. John 15:15

Invocation and Call to Worship

P We gather together as friends in the presence of the Triune God who has called us friends. We gather together in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P A friend loves at all times,

C And a brother is born for adversity. (Proverbs 17:17)

P The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him,

C And he makes known to them his covenant. (Psalm 25:14)

P A man of many companions may come to ruin,

C But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24)

P What a friend we have in Jesus,

C All our sins and griefs to bear!

P Precious Savior, still our refuge—

C Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Opening Hymn ***God Loved the World*** ELW 323

1 God loved the world so that he gave
his only Son the lost to save,
that all who would in him believe
should everlasting life receive.

2 Christ Jesus is the ground of faith,
who was made flesh and suffered death;
all who confide in Christ alone
are built on this chief cornerstone.

3 If you are ill, if death draws near,
this truth your troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus rescues us from death;
that is the firmest ground of faith.

4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son
forgives all sins that you have done,
and justified by Jesus' blood,
your baptism grants the highest good.

5 All glory to the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To you, O blessed Trinity,
be praise now and eternally!

Text: *Gesangbuch,* Bollhagen, 1791; tr. August Crull, 1846-1923, alt.

Confession and Forgiveness

P Jesus, friend of sinners, hear me as I confess my sins.

C My thoughts have befriended sin and shame, not truth and righteousness.

P O Lord, you have searched me and known me! (Psalm 139:1)

C My words have befriended lies and slander, not love and mercy.

P Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. (Psalm 139:4)

C My deeds have befriended hate and hurt, not peace and kindness.

P You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. (Psalm 139:3)

C Lord, have mercy! Christ, have mercy! Lord, have mercy!

(Please silently reflect on the ways that you have befriended sin— and yet Jesus still calls you a friend.)

P Friends in Jesus: You have a Savior who has lived for you, died for you, and left the tomb empty for you. Your Servant Jesus has humbled himself to care for you. Your Friend, Christ Jesus, has cleansed you from all unrighteousness and washed away your sin. Jesus forgives you and loves you. Jesus is your friend now and for all eternity.

C What a friend we have in Jesus.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:
the early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty–day season of spiritual preparation. During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when people who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to participation in the life of the Church.

In this way the whole congregation of faith was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent: by self–examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self–denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.

To make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now bow before our Creator and Redeemer.

People may come forward for the imposition of ashes.

Pastor will mark the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying:

P Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

During this time silence will be kept for personal reflection

After those who desire ashes have received them, the pastor continues.

P Almighty God have mercy on us, Forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, Strengthen us in all goodness, And by the power of the Holy Spirit keeps us in eternal life.

C AMEN.

Prayer of the Day

P Lord Jesus, you have invited us to take everything to you in prayer. You know our weaknesses and how we are heavy-laden. You know the burdens that we carry in our hearts and minds. Precious Savior, be our refuge. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us this Lent that we may know your friendship and love. We pray through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Old Testament Reading … ***Joel 2:12-17***

Epistle Reading … ***Colossians 1:9-14***

Gospel Reading … ***Luke 7:36-49***

Sermon……Pastor Dahl Drenning

Hymn of the Day *Just As I Am, without One Plea*

Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, And that thou bidd'st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not to rid my soul of one dark blot, To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt, Fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve; Because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Offering

Prayers

P Amid our trials, temptations and troubles, we have a friend who sticks with us. Where else can we find a friend so faithful? And, so, we take it to the Lord in prayer. Jesus, you know our every weakness and have promised to be our friend, so we lift our prayers and raise our petitions.

C Lord, hear our prayer.

P Deliver us from the mess of our sin, and let us never be defined by the messes that we make.

C Lord, hear our prayer.

P Deliver this world from the mess of evil and injustice, and befriend the vulnerable, the sojourner and all who need a friend.

C Lord, hear our prayer.

P Deliver the self-righteous from their delusions, and teach us to never underestimate the debts that you have forgiven on our behalf.

C Lord, hear our prayer.

P Deliver us from death, and remind us that friendship with you means that we are more than mere dust.

C Lord, hear our prayer.

P Deliver us from sorrow, discouragement and pain by the power of your abiding friendship.

C Lord, hear our prayer.

P Deliver us from apathy and malaise so that we can befriend our neighbors with your love.

C Lord, hear our prayer.

P Jesus, deliver us from isolation, and give us a seat at your table where we receive your body and blood.

C Jesus, what a privilege it is to be your friend. Amen.

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (ELW, p.152)

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

***The Preface**:

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; who on this day overcame death and the grave and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. 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."

***(ELW, p. 153)**
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.

***Words of Institution**:

P 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 in 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 in remembrance of me. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

C: Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again. Amen

Lord's Prayer

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.

*P May the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C Amen.

***Post Communion Prayer**:

O God, our life, our strength, our food, we give you thanks for sustaining us with the body and blood of your Son. By your Holy Spirit, enliven us to be his body in the world, that more and more we will give you praise and serve your earth and its many peoples, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**.

Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you his peace. Your Father has, indeed, forgiven you. **Amen.**

P Jesus has called you friends and made known to you all that he has heard from the Father. Go now as friends of Jesus befriending others in the name of Jesus. Amen.

C What a friend we have in Jesus!

Closing Hymn … ***What a Friend We Have in Jesus*** ……**ELW 742**

What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Ev'rything to God in prayer! Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Ev'rything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged, Take it to the Lord in prayer! Can we find a Friend so faithful Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness— Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our Refuge— Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer; In his arms he'll take and shield thee, Thou wilt find a solace there.

By A. Trevor Sutton. © 2025 Creative Communications for the Parish, a division of Bayard, Inc., 1564 Fencorp Dr., Fenton, MO 63026. 800-325-9414. www.creativecommunications.com. All rights reserved.

SERVING TODAY

Minister.....Pastor Dahl Drenning
Lector.....Kate Stottlemyer
Organist.....Jeff Gentry
Ushers.....Marcia Gupta and Nancy Cochran
Acolyte.....Camden Plog & Kay Wachter

Staff

Minister:.....Pastor Peter Roy
Office Admin:301-845-4600 (officeadministrator@saintpaulslutheranchurch.org)....Joann Valainis
Music Coordinator .....Jeff Gentry
Flower Coordinator.....Patty Rimel
Administration/Purchasing .....Ed Chaney
Sexton .....Larry Beard
Stephen Ministry.....Linda Yopp
Property Coordinator.....
Financial Secretary.....Troy Keeney

Announcement regarding livestreaming of the worship services:
St. Paul's intends to continue offering online worship services to share the Gospel through Facebook and YouTube. With the inclusion of in-person attendance during the service, we need to inform you that your presence may be captured in the recording and broadcast through St. Paul's social media platforms. Your comfort and privacy are of utmost importance, if you prefer not to have your image broadcast please contact the office by phone or email or inform the usher as you arrive. The office will keep a list of those wishing NOT to appear in the recording and convey that information to the Media and Technology Ministry. From sundaysandseasons.com | Copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved | License # SAS103410, Used with permission under ONE LICENSE #736745-A. All rights reserved
CCLI Copyright © 2026 License 21412874, Streaming 21412867 All rights reserved