

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, HANOVER, PA

Rev. E. Robert Burkhart, Senior Pastor

Rev. Jack R. Hoffman, Pastor Emeritus

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Prayer of the Day

Leader: Lord God, with endless mercy you receive the prayers of all who call upon you. By your Spirit show us the things we ought to do, and give us the grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Cong.: Amen.

The First Reading: Isaiah 58:1-12

¹Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. ²Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. ³"Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. ⁴Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. ⁵Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? ⁶Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? ⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? ⁸Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. ^{9a}Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. ^{9b}If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, ¹⁰if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. ¹¹The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

¹²Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

The Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

¹When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. ²For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. ³And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God. ⁶Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. ⁷But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"—
¹⁰these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. [¹³And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

¹⁴Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny. ¹⁶"For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.]

The Gospel: Matthew 5:13-20

[Jesus said:] ¹³"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

¹⁷"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Prayers of the People

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their need.

(A brief silence.)

Leader: Eternal God, strengthen the ministries of the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation, and strengthen our ecumenical partnerships as we work with you to break the bonds of injustice and set the prisoners of oppression free. Hear us, O God.

Cong.: Your mercy is great.

Leader: Send us to be servants of your grace and relief where storms and floods have left our neighbors homeless and hungry. Make us stewards of all that you have made and love. Hear us, O God.

Cong.: Your mercy is great.

Leader: Ignite the world with the spirit of your justice. Enlighten the nations and our leaders to seek your will and your ways of economic justice and liberty for all. Hear us, O God.

Cong.: Your mercy is great.

Leader: Comfort the afflicted, compassionate God. Comfort the lost and lonely, abide with the hungry and thirsty, and send your Holy Spirit to look to the care of all who suffer in body, mind, and spirit. Especially we ask your presence with all those we lift before you now in the earnest prayers of our hearts.

(P A U S E) Hear us, O God.

Cong.: Your mercy is great.

Leader: Bless pastors and missionaries with wisdom and energy for shepherding, and multiply by your great mercy the fruit of their labors. Grow disciples eager to feast on your living word that they may embody your love every day of their lives. Hear us, O God.

Cong.: Your mercy is great.

(Here other intercessions may be offered.)

Leader: We thank you for all the saints who dared to shine with you the light of Christ into the darkness of this world. Teach us to shine your truth freely wherever you call us to serve, and make us faithful witnesses to your abundant grace. Hear us, O God.

Cong.: Your mercy is great.

Pastor: Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Cong.: Amen.