

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: O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Cong.: Amen.

The First Reading: Genesis 12:1-4a

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

⁴So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.

The Second Reading: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." ⁴Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. ⁵But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

¹³For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to

Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

¹⁶For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") — in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

The Gospel: John 3:1–17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." ³Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." ⁴Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Prayers of the People

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

(A brief silence.)

Leader: God of Abraham and Sarah, bless your people to be a blessing to others, and share your grace into all the world. Lord, in your mercy,

Cong.: Hear our prayer.

Leader: O God, you love all things that you have made. Help us to love creation as you do, and make us faithful stewards. Lord, in your mercy,

Cong.: Hear our prayer.

Leader: O God, our help is in you. Keep the nations and people everywhere safe from the power of evil, and show us the way of Your peace. Lord, in your mercy,

Cong.: Hear our prayer.

Leader: O God, your promises fill us with hope and comfort us in our trials. Be present with all who suffer in body, mind, and spirit, and especially with all those we lift before you now in the earnest prayers of our hearts. (P A U S E) Lord, in your mercy,

Cong.: Hear our prayer.

Leader: O God, lead this assembly in its Lenten journey toward greater faith, works of love, and earnest prayer. Show us your will and your ways and nourish us with your holy word. Lord, in your mercy,

Cong.: Hear our prayer.

(Here other intercessions may be offered.)

Leader: O God, we give thanks for the faithful departed who have joined the ranks of your saints in light. Let the witness of their fruitful lives guide us in our own journeys of faith to know you better. Lord, in your mercy,

Cong.: Hear our prayer.

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.