



Saint Paul's United Methodist Church
"A Compassionate Community Led and Transformed by the Spirit."
Sunday, March 22nd, 2026 - 10:30 AM Service
Fifth Sunday in Lent



We welcome you, trusting that this time of worship will open our hearts to experience the Spirit's movement among us. Together, we seek peace, health, and wholeness as we gather in God's presence.

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**Indicates a standing portion of the service. Please stand as you are able.*

GATHERING

Gathering Music

"The Justice Song"
by Selorm Tamakloe

Molly MacMillan, piano

Greetings & Welcome

Centering Music

"Your Grace & Mercy"
by Franklin D. Williams

Molly MacMillan, piano & vocals

***Call to Worship**

Welcome to the weary and the worn.

Welcome to the wiggly and the eager.

Welcome to the skeptical and the seeking.

Welcome to the early risers and those still trying to wake up.

Welcome to the rule followers and the rule breakers.

Welcome to those hungry for justice and those desperate for mercy.

Welcome to the sinners and the saints.

This is God's house.

You can make yourself at home here.

Let us worship our just, merciful, and faithful God!

***Opening Hymn**

"Welcome"

Insert

***Passing the Peace**

PROCLAIMING

A Message for All God's Children

Pastor Alicia Wood

Call to Confession

Pastor Alicia Wood

Prayer of Confession

Holy God, we love to live our lives by the rules.

We love clear answers.

We love right and wrong.

We love swift justice.

We love to pick up stones, but you show us another way.

You welcome shades of gray and nuanced conversation.

You prioritize mercy over legality.

You prioritize people over tradition.

**You prioritize love over everything.
Forgive us for losing sight of what truly matters.
Forgive us for clinging tighter to laws than to each other or to you.
Forgive us. Soften our hearts.
Root us in mercy, justice, and love.
With hope for a better tomorrow, we pray.
Amen.**

Word of Forgiveness

Church family, Jesus saw a crowd ready to throw stones and invited them to choose another way. Jesus offered them grace, mercy, and compassion, and the same can be said for us. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

Our God is a God of mercy.

Our God is a God of compassion.

Our God is a God of grace.

We are forgiven, loved, and invited to choose another way.

Thanks be to God for yet another second chance.

Amen.

Special Music

“The Times They Are A’Changin’”
by Bob Dylan, arr. by Kirby Shaw

Chancel Choir

Scripture

Matthew 23: 23 (NLT)

David McElrath

“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.

Hear What the Spirit is Saying to the Church!

Thanks Be to God!

Message

“The Good News Is...Rooted in Justice, Mercy, & Faithfulness” *Pastor Alicia Wood*

***Hymn of Response**

“Let Us Remember”

Insert

Prayers of the People & The Lord’s Prayer

UMH #895

Jami Breedlove-Crouch

Mission Moment

Laurie Konwinski

Laurie will be speaking to us today about Immigration Solidarity, a grassroots group that she chairs. Our action for this month will be to provide stamps for this group that will enable refugees to send letters to the appropriate people helping them with their cases. A box marked stamps will be on a table in the narthex where you can deposit them each week.

Offering Our Gifts to God

Offertory

“Menuetto”
by Haydn

Molly MacMillan, piano

***Doxology**

“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”

UMH #94

***Prayer of Dedication**

Pastor Alicia Wood

Holy One, when you speak, we don’t want to miss it.

When you bend down and write in the dirt, when you move through the trees, when you wake with the dawn, when you tug on our heart, or whisper into our dreams, we don’t want to miss it.

So today we pray, clear out the cobwebs in our ears.

Quiet the steady stream of thoughts marching through our minds.
Open up space in our hearts so that we can receive your word for us today.
With hope we give and pray.
Amen.

GOING FORTH

*Affirmation of Faith

Jami Breedlove-Crouch

**I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.
It sounds like welcome and feels like home.
It sounds like laughter and feels like mercy.
It sounds like love and feels like a seat at the table, so I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ.
I have seen it alive in the world.
And even when my heart aches, even when wars rage, even when mercy feels out of reach, I remember the one who welcomed the children and led with nonviolence.
I remember the one who cared for the vulnerable and inspired those around him.
I remember that the good news really is good news, for I have seen it alive in the world.
Thanks be to God!
Amen.**

Announcements

*Closing Hymn

“Amazing Grace”

UMH #378

*Dismissal with Blessing

Postlude

“Ain’t a That Good News”
(spiritual)

Molly MacMillan, piano

-----PRAYERS-----

For Prayer Chain Requests, confidential concerns seen only by those who participate in the Prayer Chain, please contact Jami Breedlove-Crouch at lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org.

Prayer Requests: We thank God for the healing in the lives of people we’ve been praying for. If you would like to be added to the Prayer Chain or the Prayer List, contact Jami Breedlove-Crouch at: lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org. Your requests will be listed in the bulletin for one month before being deleted. Please let us know of your improved condition or if you desire visitation.

St. Paul’s Ministries ~ Week of March 22nd, 2026

Sunday, March 22nd

10:30am – Worship – Sanctuary
10:45am – Faith Explorers – Rm. 115, Main Floor
11:30am – Coffee/Fellowship Time – Memorial Room
12:00pm – Church Council Strategic Planning Meeting – Memorial Room

Monday, March 23rd

7:00pm – Lenten Bible Study “The Last Supper” – ZOOM

Tuesday, March 24th

10:00am – Staff Meeting - ZOOM

Wednesday, March 25th

9:45am – Coffee w/the Pastor – Durham Room

Thursday, March 26th

11:00am – Crafters Group – Durham Room
11:00am – Women in Faith Meeting – Memorial Room
6:00pm – Festival Chimes – Sanctuary
7:15pm – Chancel Choir Rehearsal – Dining Room

Friday, March 27th

Church Offices Closed

Sunday, March 29th – Palm Sunday

10:30am – Worship – Sanctuary
10:45am – Faith Explorers – Rm. 115, Main Floor
11:30am – Coffee/Fellowship Time – Memorial Room

Children and Worship – Children are always welcome in worship! To help keep small hands busy, we have books and toys on the black cart near the main sanctuary door. **Children ages 4 through 11 are invited to participate in “Faith Explorers” following the “Message for Children” segment during worship (except on Communion Sundays).**

Meeting about Creating a Dynamic Strategic Plan for St. Paul’s Future id Today

We’re excited to share that the Church Council is beginning the process of creating a Strategic Plan for the vibrant future of St. Paul's UMC! Rev. Aaron Bouwens, from the Annual Conference, will facilitate the process. Our first gathering is today **from 12pm-4pm.**

Upcoming United Women in Faith Meeting

United Women in Faith will hold their next gathering on **March 26 at 11am** in the Memorial Room to discuss the possibility of presenting the historical play "When the Clergy Went Underground," written by local historian Carol Kammen. Please attend!

No Kings Rally on March 28th

Please let the Pastor know if you plan to attend.

A Note about the Sunrise Easter Service

If you plan on attending the Sunrise Service on Easter morning, please bring a dish-to-pass. Sign up outside the Sanctuary and/or reach out to Jami.

Pastor Alicia’s Ordination

Pastor Alicia’s ordination will be held **Friday, May 29th at 7pm** in Syracuse. Watch this space for further details.

Quarterly Newsletter Now Digital

An era at St Paul’s has ended: our quarterly seasonal newsletter will now be solely digital.

Donations Needed for Code Blue Breakfast Program

Donations like breakfast bars, fruit cups, juice boxes, cereal, and instant oatmeal ensure that participants start their day with a nutritious meal. Items can be placed in the Code Blue bin outside the Sanctuary. Thank you for your continuing generosity!

Lent 2026 Schedule

**Please Note: Lenten Bible Study meets every Monday at 7pm via Zoom; Lenten Wednesday Devotional meets every Wednesday at 9:45am in the Durham Room.*

Sunday, March 29th: Palm Sunday Service 10:30am – Sanctuary

Thursday, April 2nd: Maundy Thursday Service 7pm – Sanctuary

Friday, April 3rd: Good Friday Service 7pm – Sanctuary

Easter Sunday

7:30am - Sunrise Service - Tenney's

10:30am – Easter Sunday Service w/Communion - Sanctuary

Welcome



1. Let's walk to- geth - er for a while and
 2. Let's talk to- geth - er of a time when
 3. Let's dream to- geth - er of the day when



ask where we be - gin — to build a world where
 we will share a feast, — where pride and pow - er
 earth and heaven are one, — a ci - ty built of



love can grow and hope can en - ter in, — — to
 kneel to serve the lone - ly and the least, — — and
 love and light, the new Je - ru - sa - lem, — where our



be the hands of heal - ing and to
 joy will set the ta - ble as we
 mourn - ing turns to danc - ing, ev - ery

*Refrain*

plant the seed of peace, — sing - ing wel - come,
 join our hands to pray, — sing - ing wel - come,
 crea - ture lifts its voice, — cry - ing wel - come,



wel - come to this place. You're in - vit - ed to



come and know God's grace. All are wel - come the

FROM THE RITUAL OF THE FORMER
METHODIST CHURCH

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. Amen.

94 Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Unison

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise

Harmony

God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!

Unison

Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise

Harmony

Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!

WORDS: Thomas Ken, 1674; adapt. by Gilbert H. Vieira, 1978

MUSIC: *Geistliche Kirchengesänge*, 1623; harm. by Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

88.44.88 with Refrain

Unison

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

The image shows a musical score for a unison setting of 'Alleluia'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in a simple, homophonic style. The lyrics 'Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!' are centered between the two staves. The first staff ends with a double bar line, and the second staff also ends with a double bar line.

Amazing Grace

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. Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail, and
 6. 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 hath brought me
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
 mor - tal life shall cease, I shall pos - sess, with -
 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.
 in the veil, a life of joy and peace.
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Cherokee

OOH NAY THLA NAH, HEE OO WAY GEE.
 E GAH GWOO YAH HAY EE.
 NAW GWOO JOE SAH, WE YOU LOW SAY,
 E GAH GWOO YAH HO NAH.

Navajo

NIZHÓNÍGO JOOBA' DIITS' A'
 YISDÁSHÍINÍGÍ,
 LAH YÓÓFYÁ, K'AD SHÉNÁHOOSDZIN,
 DOO EESH'ÍÍ DA NT'ÉÉ.

Kiowa

DAW K'EE DA HA DAWTSAHY HE TSOW'HAW
 DAW K'EE DA HA DAWTSAHY HEE.
 BAY DAWTSAHY TAW, GAW AYM OW THAH T'AW,
 DAW K'EE DA HA DAWTSAHY H'EE.

Creek

PO YA FEK CHA HE THLAT AH TET
 AH NON AH CHA PA KAS
 CHA FEE KEE O FUNNAN LA KUS
 UM E HA TA LA YUS.

Choctaw

SHILOMBISH HOLITOPA MA!
 ISHMINTI PULLA CHA
 HATAK ILBUSA PIA HA
 IS PI YUKPALASHKE.

WORDS: John Newton, 1779; st. 6 anon.; phonetic transcription Cherokee, Kiowa, AMAZING GRACE
 Creek, Choctaw as sung in Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference; Navajo phonetic CM
 transcription by Albert Tsosie (1 Chr. 17:16-17)
 MUSIC: 19th cent. USA melody; harm. by Edwin O. Excell, 1900