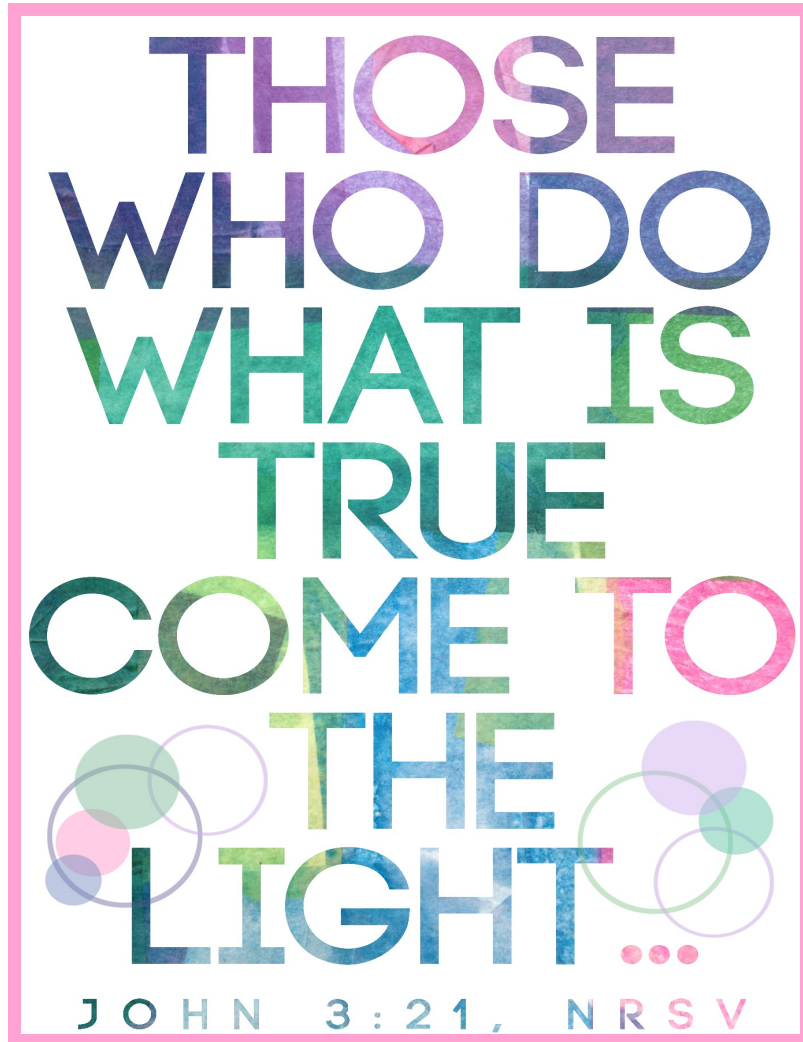


St. Paul's United Church of Christ

301 West Penn Avenue, Robesonia, PA 19551
610-621-5770 -- office@sprucc.org -- www.sprucc.org
Worship 10:30am

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you're welcome here.*



*Welcome to
St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Online Streaming Worship Service*

*May God's loving presence be very real to you,
and may you receive strength and guidance today
that will enable you to handle life's challenges.*

+++

**Sunday, March 14, 2021
Fourth Sunday in Lent
Laetare Sunday**

ORDER FOR WORSHIP

We Gather

*We are coming together as a community of faith to worship our God,
and provide for one another our love, support, and care.*

A TIME OF GATHERING

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE

GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*{To center your hearts and minds,
you are invited to individually offer this prayer silently during or before the Prelude}*

PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP ^②

O God, whose truth extends beyond the range of our questions, and whose mercy reaches farther than our gravest sin, hear today the cries of your people. Have compassion on us and meet us here, lest we be led astray by our own schemes and the false gods we create. Reveal to us once more the light you sent in Jesus, that it may illuminate our earthly journey and help us to see and appreciate the life you intend for us. Amen.

{Those who are able, please rise}

***PROCESSIONAL HYMN** *"Lift High the Cross"* refrain, vs 1, refrain, vs 2, refrain **♩Blue # 450**
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*INVOCATION

Leader: In the name of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of God the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

*CALL TO WORSHIP ^②

Leader: Let those whom God has redeemed rejoice!
Let them tell the world of God's good news!

**People: We will thank God for wonderful works.
We will rejoice in God's love for all humankind.**

Leader: By God's word, we are delivered from destruction.
By God's mercy, we are healed and made whole.

**People: Our voices will join in songs of joy.
Our lives will offer sacrifices of thanksgiving.**

Virtual Worship Service

Online: [Live Stream](#) at www.sprucc.org - Live or Watch & Listen on [St. Paul's UCC YouTube Channel](#) Later
[Phone Stream](#) at 1-888-649-5770 - Live or Listen Later

[Zoom](#): Meeting ID: 104 401 368; Passcode: 301301 (or call 1-646-558-8656) - Live Only

If you have any access problems, please let us know at 610-621-5770 or Office@sprucc.org

450 Lift High the Cross

I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself. John 12:32

Refrain in unison

Lift high the cross; the love of Christ pro-claim, Till

all the world a-dore His sa-cred name.

Harmony optional

1. Come, Chris-tians, fol-low where our Sav-ior trod,
 2. Led on their way by this tri-um-ph'ant sign,
 3. O Lord, once lift-ed on this glo-ri-ous tree,
 4. Set up Thy throne, that earth's de-spair may cease
 5. For Thy blest cross which doth for all a-tone,

Our King vic-to-ri-ous, Christ, the Son of God.
 The hosts of God in con-quer-ing ranks com-bine.
 As Thou hast prom-ised, draw men un-to Thee.
 Be-neath the shad-ow of its heal-ing peace.
 Cre-a-tion's prais-es rise be-fore Thy throne.

TEXT: George W. Kitchin and Michael R. Newbold
 MUSIC: Sydney H. Nicholson

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CRUCIFER
 10.10.10.10.

We Repent

This is a time to confess our wrongdoings and neglects, ask for God's mercy, admit our need for God's forgiving grace, hear the assurance of our forgiveness, and then give God our thanks and praise.

*CALL TO CONFESSION[®] (Leader)

Our time of penitence before God gives us the opportunity to rid ourselves of the weights we carry, the lingering sense that we have not lived up to our full potential, that we have cheated others, that we are disoriented and mired down in troubles of our own making. Let our individual confessions be gathered up in the confessions of the church.

*CONFESSION OF SIN[®] (Unison)

Healing God, we are sick through our sinful ways. We are impatient, complaining, and troubled. We love the night because it hides the evil we have done and the doubt that shows on our faces. By our self-indulgent habits, we are destroying ourselves and depriving others. As a church, we seem content to be dead in our trespasses, for we are afraid to embrace the changes that come with the new life you offer. We cry out to you in our trouble. Save us from our distress. Amen.

*SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

{A time to silently offer our personal prayers of confession}

*PRAYER FOR MERCY

"Kyrie"

♪ Red # 518

Leader (*spoken*): Lord, have mercy upon us.
People (*sung*): Lord, have mercy upon us.
Leader (*spoken*): Christ, have mercy upon us.
People (*sung*): Christ, have mercy upon us.
Leader (*spoken*): Lord, have mercy upon us.
People (*sung*): Lord, have mercy upon us.

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*ASSURANCE OF PARDON[®] (Leader)

God loved the world so much that Jesus Christ was sent to show us the way to eternal life. We are not condemned, but offered saving grace. Come to the light. Let its warmth melt away our resistance to God's truth. We are re-created in Jesus Christ that we may do the good that God intends and make that goodness our way of life. Praise God! **Amen.**

{Please be seated}

We Hear the Word of God

We seek to learn more about God's love and grace, and how we are to live our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Bible is our primary text on faith, which we consider to be scripture - sacred writings.

We believe the Bible to be the "inspired word of God."

Gospel (which means "Good News") refers to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which are Christians' most central books of the Bible.

PROCLAMATION OF SCRIPTURE

Girl Scout Troop 122 will be reading the scripture lessons.

First Lesson: [Numbers 21:4-9](#)

Second Lesson: [Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22](#)

Gospel: [John 3:14-21](#)

HYMN

"Amazing Grace"

vs 1, 2, 3

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CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

ASSURANCE

Amazing Grace

378

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 fall, 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.

We Respond with Thanks

We have heard God's call and have come and worshiped, we have confessed our sins and been assured of our forgiveness, we have learned more about God's grace and God's will. We now respond by re-affirming our faith in God, praying with and for one another, trusting in God's providence in our world, and giving of ourselves for the sake of the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ.

{Those who are able, please rise}

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *(Unison)* *The Apostle's Creed*

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended to the dead;
on the third day he rose again,
ascended into heaven,
and is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
He will come again 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.**

* The word "catholic" means "relating to the church universal" and was the word used in the original version of the Creed. It does not mean the Roman Catholic Church, but the church, the body of Christ, as a universal fellowship.

{Please be seated}

CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray....

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE - A SCOUT SUNDAY PRAYER ³⁶

Scout BSA Troop 190 will be leading the Scout Sunday prayer.

Leader: Everlasting God, you give strength to the weak and power to the faint. Make us agents of your healing and wholeness, that your good news may be made known to the ends of your creation.

Called to know, love, and follow you, O God, we pray for the church, the world, Scouts, youth organizations, and all in need.

{silent prayer}

Leader: Everlasting God, deepen your church's commitment to proclaiming the gospel, that many will hear, respond, and share in its blessings. Lord, in your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Because we have failed in the trust others placed in us, we pray for forgiveness and for renewal to be trustworthy. Lord, in your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: For strength to be loyal to our calling in baptism as his disciples in the world. Lord, in your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: For forgiveness when we saw the need to help and passed that need by, when we failed to ask if we could be helpful to a friend or a stranger. Lord, in your mercy,
People: Hear our prayer.
 Leader: For the spirit to be friendly to all people and even to those who are unfriendly to us. Lord, in your mercy,
People: Hear our prayer.
 Leader: For the gift of courtesy to all people but especially to the elderly, the disabled, and little children. Lord in your mercy,
People: Hear our prayer.
 Leader: For a heart that rejoices in being kind to people, to animals, and to earth on which we live. Lord, in your mercy,
People: Hear our prayer.
 Leader: For the will to discipline ourselves to be obedient to the will of our God, and not to our selfish desires. Lord, in your mercy,
People: Hear our prayer.
 Leader: For a cheerful spirit to see us through disappointing events in our lives, for a faith that believes God will bring some good even from events that cause us pain and sadness. Lord, in your mercy,
People: Hear our prayer.
 Leader: For an appreciation that all that we have is the gift of our gracious God, for a mind and a heart that will be thrifty in managing the resources God has entrusted to our care. Lord, in your mercy,
People: Hear our prayer.
 Leader: For the courage not to be afraid of doing what is right and to be brave in working for justice. Lord, in your mercy,
People: Hear our prayer.
 Leader: For the will to work to keep clean our minds, our hearts, and our land. Lord, in your mercy,
People: Hear our prayer.
 Leader: For the gift of reverence for God who values all that He has created; for reverence for people, for animal life, for the earth and all its resources—all precious in God's sight. To reverently follow the teachings of our faith. Lord, in your mercy,
People: Hear our prayer.
 Leader: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all the people and all the needs we bring before you in our prayers, trusting in your mercy, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, who taught us when we pray to say....

LORD'S PRAYER *(Unison)*

**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 debts as we forgive our debtors,
 and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
 For thine is the kingdom and the power,
 and the glory forever. Amen.**

PRAYER RESPONSE “O Lord, Hear My Prayer ”

vs 1

**Oh, Lord hear my prayer,
Oh Lord, hear my prayer
When I call answer me.**

**Oh Lord, hear my prayer,
Oh Lord, hear my prayer,
Come and listen to me.**

Artist: Taizé
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OFFERTORY INVITATION ②

Leader: In joyous thanksgiving, we offer sacrifices of time and resources to announce God’s healing grace to the world.

People: **It is our privilege to participate in God’s wonderful works to humankind, to share the steadfast love that is saving us, and to offer life to those who are perishing.**

RETURNING GOD’S TITHES AND PRESENTING OUR OFFERINGS

Online Giving

*{As we share in worship, there is no passing of the plate in person.
A plate is placed in the rear of the sanctuary for offerings to be placed
when arriving or departing from the sanctuary, or mailed in to the church.*

*Whether worshipping in person or online,
the safest way to offer your tithe and offering to God through his church
is through our secure [Online Giving](#) option on our website at [sprucc.org](#). [Click Here](#)
Offerings may also be mailed to St. Paul’s UCC; 301 West Penn Ave; Robesonia, PA 19551}.*

{Those who are able, please rise}

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE** “In the Lord I’ll Be Ever Thankful ”

**In the Lord I’ll be ever thankful,
In the Lord I’ll rejoice.
Look to God, do not be afraid,
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near;
Lift up your voices the Lord is near.**

Artist: Taizé
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***OFFERTORY PRAYER** ②

Gracious God, for life-sustaining gifts that we so often take for granted—for shelter, food, and meaningful tasks to do; for your steadfast love that awakens us and raises us from our sinful ways; for your word that guides and heals us—we give you thanks. As we invest a part of all you entrust to us to further the ministries of the church, may we show to others the immeasurable riches of your grace in Jesus Christ. Make this church a beacon of hope for the world. **Amen.**

We Are Sent Out

*In response to God's love and grace,
we go out into the world to share God's Good News
through our words and actions.*

*COMMISSION ²

Leader: God sent Jesus that the world may believe.
God sends us into the world to share that good news.
**People: In Christ, we are not condemned to perish.
Christ came to offer us abundant life.**
Leader: Let everyone see the light you have received.
Live openly as people enjoying the love of God.
**People: By grace, we have been saved through faith.
We will live in the light and thus share good news.**
ALL: Amen.

*BENEDICTION

*SENDING HYMN

"Amazing Grace"

vs 4, 5, 6

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*{Acolyte carries the light back into the world, leading us,
as we now go to carry God's light and love back into the world}.*



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² *Led by Love* by Lavon Bayler. (1996). Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.

³ *Occasional Services; A Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship*. (1995). Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis and Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, Philadelphia.

⁴ Reprinted with permission from *Sundays and Seasons*. (2020). Augsburg Fortress.

⁵ Reprinted with permission from the *Order of Worship for the Reformed Church in the United States*. and/or *The Hymnal of the Evangelical and Reformed Church*. (1985) New York: United Church Press.

⁶ Reprinted with permission from *Sourcebook of Worship Services*

⁷ *scouting.org* - resources for Boy Scouts of America

⁸ Reprinted with permission from *Worship Ways of the United Church of Christ*. (2020).

⁹ *Lecturn Resource*. (2014). Logos Productions, Inc.; Grove Heights, MN.

¹⁰ Sunday Sermons Preaching Resources. (2017). Margate, NJ.

¹¹ Edmonds, Robert Lee (Editor). (2008). *In Our Own Way; Living a Scouting Life Through Faith; A Handbook of Prayer and Devotion*. Dallas, TX: Red Honor Press

¹² Reprinted with Permission from *Lecturn Resource*. 2014. Logos Productions, Inc., Inver Grove Heights, MN.

¹³ Miller, Earl D. (1994). *Consecrating Stewards*. Ohio Conference, United Church of Christ.

¹⁴ The Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz

¹⁵ The Love Feast liturgy was primarily designed and written by United Methodist pastor, the Rev. Dr. Cynthia A. Wilson (2018) at umdiscipleship.org, with adaptations from: the Rev. Tamie Scalise, Richard Stowe (author of *The Love Feast*), moravianmusic.org, moravian.org, and the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz.

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The Flow of the Worship Service

Our worship service has an intentional order to it. The flow of worship is called the liturgical movement. The movement reminds us weekly of our journey in faith of moving from being separated from God by sin, to being restored by God's grace as disciples of Christ. It is based on the sixth chapter of the Biblical book of Isaiah.

- (1) God welcomes us and invites us
- (2) We respond to God's call by worshipping Him
- (3) We confess our need for God's forgiveness and grace
- (4) We are assured of God's forgiveness and grace
- (5) We learn more about God's will through scripture, song, and sermon
- (6) We grow closer to God and one another through prayer
- (7) We give God thanks by offering our time, talent, and treasure
- (8) God sends us into the world to share His love and grace with others

† Prayer List †

Please lift up those listed here in your prayers this week.

"Pray for one another, so that you may be healed.

The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective." ~ James 5:16b

Sam B.	Terry O.
Rich D.	Rev. David K.
Deb D.	Diane M.
Linda L.	Lori & Ryan B.
Rob & Jodi S.	Ann H.
Jim S.	Lenna H.
George M.	Mildred U.
Starr M.	Julie R.
Paul P.	Jim & Donna K.
Marianne M.	Family & Friends of Marilyn W.
Robin L.	Family & Friends of Barb B.
Alex	Family & Friends of Rev. Bill W.
Jacob E.	Family & Friends of Elaine R. (mother of Barb D.)
Fred R.	Those impacted by COVID-19
Ella L.	Those working on a vaccine for COVID-19

Please let us know if we can be in prayer with you.

All are welcome to add names to the prayer list.

Names are generally left on the list for about four weeks.

Please let us know if you would like a name to remain longer or shorter.

*If you would like someone's name added to the prayer list,
please contact the church office at 610-621-5770 or office@sprucc.org.*

††† General Announcements †††

Welcome!

We are glad that you are here to worship with us virtually. May you find the worship and message meaningful and satisfying to your soul. May your week be blessed.

In Person AND Virtual Sunday School Options

Due to the increase in the number of people affected by COVID, *in-person Sunday school* for children and adults has been suspended until further notice.

However, [The Wired Word](#) is still available for adults. This is a virtual option which you may join via Zoom. For Zoom you can join either with a computer or smart device (if you do not yet have the Zoom app, click on this [Zoom](#) link), or call 1-301-715-8592 with a landline or cell phone. Meeting ID: 860 8980 7220; Passcode: 195152.

Although not in-person, the youth can still continue to learn about God's Word through the information available on our website. We have Sunday school music, videos, and an assortment of other materials that are available for downloading. Click on this link for [Sunday school for youth](#).

We also have devotional music for all ages on our website, courtesy of Pastor Bob. Click on this link for [Devotional Music](#).

For our Sunday school [COVID-19 Safety Precautions](#) click on the following link:

<http://www.sprucc.org/news-a-events.html#COVID19Precautions>

To have a copy of the precautions mailed to you, please call 610-621-5770.

Telephone Live Streaming & Playback Worship

This service is being offered to those who do not have internet access. You may call us at our toll free number **1-888-649-5770** and listen to the worship service live using a landline or cell phone. (No internet, smartphone, tablet, or computer is necessary - this works with a standard corded phone, cell phone, or even with a rotary phone). You also have the option for the church to automatically call you when the live stream worship begins (rather than you calling the church); which you can sign up for at the above toll free number, or you can call the church office, and we can add you to the call list. If you have any questions, difficulties, or issues, please let us know by calling the office at 610-621-5770. There is no charge to you for this service. If you know of someone who does not have internet access, please let them know of this feature, especially as they cannot log onto the website and find out about this themselves.

Visitation Care Team

Our Visitation Care Team (VCT) is composed of lay members who have been trained for visitation. If you are in need of prayer, a visit, or just a listening ear, they are here to be of support to you. To contact the Visitation Care Team with a visitation request or to share information about a potential care need, call the church office at 610-621-5770 or email the office at office@sprucc.org. For more information, go to our "[Visitation Care Ministries](#)" page at www.sprucc.org under the "ministries" tab.

Lenten Bible Study Series

This year, St. Paul's UCC in Robeson and Zion UCC in Womelsdorf, has a combined study series during the Sundays in Lent. The topic is "*Making Sense of the Bible*". It is held via Zoom on Sunday evenings (Feb. 21, 28, March 7, 14, & 21) at 6:30pm. There is no cost, no minimum number of sessions that you must attend, and you need not be a member of either church. All are welcome. Detailed information may be found [here](#).

Weekly Lectionary Bible Study

Every Tuesday morning Zion UCC of Womelsdorf offers a Zoom Bible Study based on the scripture passages for the coming Sunday. You may use any version of the Bible. The study goes from 9:00 to 9:45am. They would be happy to have you join them! Zoom login information may be found on our [website](#).

About Today

Church Season: Lent - 40 days and six Sundays before Easter; a season of penitence as we reflect upon our personal sins, which led to the need for the sacrifice of Jesus' life for us upon the cross. The root word of "Lent" means "to lengthen", referring to the lengthening of days as we anticipate spring and the new life granted through the resurrection - moving from darkness to light.

Color of the Paraments (cloths on the altar and pulpit):

Purple - Symbolizing the passion (suffering) of Christ our King that led to his crucifixion.

Laetare Sunday - is the mid-point in Lent, and means "rejoice." This is also known as "Refreshment Sunday," as penitential observances can be relaxed, including the use of rose-pink colored paraments (the color of joy) instead of purple.

The suggested scripture lessons are from the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), which selects passages throughout the Bible over a three year cycle. The RCL is the most common lectionary used by Christian churches. We are in **Year B**, which emphasizes the Gospel of Mark.

The Bible is in two sections: Old Testament - OT (scripture prior to Christ's birth), located in the first 2/3 of the Bible; and New Testament - NT (about Christ & early church).

This Sunday, March 14, 2021, Lectionary Reading for the Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21.

Numbers

The book of Numbers (OT) is the fourth book in the Pentateuch (first five books of the OT, or Torah, or one of the five most central books in Judaism). The title of the book in Greek is *Arithmoi*, referring to the many census "numbers" found in chapters 1 and 2. The book's title in Hebrew is *Bemidbar*, which means "in the wilderness", as this book begins with the Israelite nation in the wilderness of Sinai after fleeing Egyptian slavery, spans the 40 years of wanderings in the wilderness - struggling with a lack of faith, and ends as they are about to enter the land of Canaan.

Psalm 107

This OT song gives thanks to God for steadfast love, redemption, and rescue from four situations of distress: desert, darkness, illness, and sea.

The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians

The Epistle (letter) to the Gentile church in Ephesus is attributed to the Apostle Paul, written in the first century A.D. This is an open letter to many churches in response for the life-changing radical transformation in our personal and social life as we become a part of Christ's family. Paul was a Christian, Jew, Pharisee, Roman citizen, and leader in the Christian church, who had a direct encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus after Jesus' ascension into heaven. He wrote more of the NT than any other person. The title of this letter "Hebrews" presumably refers to the original audience of this letter as primarily Jewish-Christian.

The Gospel According to John

John is the latest of the four Gospels, written around 80-90 A.D. probably in Ephesus, and attributed to John the son of Zebedee, the beloved disciple of Jesus. This Gospel was "written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and through believing you may have life in his name" (20:31).

Next Sunday, March 21, 2021, Lectionary Reading for the Fifth Sunday in Lent.

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12 *or* Psalm 119:9-16; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33.