St. Paul’s Lutheran Church
Second Sunday in Lent
March 12, 2017

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ‘BORN AGAIN’

Rev. Arden Dorn, Transitional Minister
Mary Maddox, Lay Reader

408 S. Davidson Street | Karnes City, TX 78118
Office (830) 780-2251 | Pastor Dorn (602) 565-9793
www.StPaulsLutheranKC.org
www.facebook.com/StPaulsLutheranKarnesCity
Welcome!

We have all come to St. Paul’s by different paths, and from various walks of life. Through worship, study, prayer and fellowship we each seek to deepen our faith, comfort and encourage one another and dedicate our lives more fully to sharing Christ in our homes, our community and the world. All are welcome at St. Paul’s. We are eager to know you, and we invite you to get to know us.

Communion and Visitor Registration Cards are located in the pew racks. We ask that each member and visitor complete a Communion Card when communing, and visitors complete a Visitor card. Completed cards may be placed in the offering plate as it is passed.

A Nursery is located at the rear of the sanctuary in the overflow area.

If you are unable to hear, require a bulletin, or need any other assistance, please signal an usher.

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

CALL TO WORSHIP

During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today’s gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as daughters and sons of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God’s love for all the world.

The assembly stands.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

God of heaven and earth, you come in close and make us yours. Equip us by your Spirit to confess our sin, embrace your forgiveness, and seek the way you set before us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

With honesty of heart, let us confess our sin.

The assembly shall kneel as they are able.
An extended silence is kept.

Merciful God, forgive us. Our will is handcuffed to sin, and we cannot break free. We have spoken when we should have kept quiet.

Silence.

We were silent when we should have said something.

Silence.

We acted when we knew better.

Silence.

We were still when we knew we should have moved.

Silence.

For the wrong we have done, for the good we have failed to do, have mercy on us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.
People of God, look to the ☩ Son, 
given to heal you and set you free 
because God loved the world so much. 
Take hold of life—eternal life! 

Amen.

GATHERING SONG  (ELW p. 335)  Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 
And also with you.

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

This is the feast of victory for our God. 
Al-le-lu-ia,

al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. 1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb
who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo-ple of God.

This is the feast of victory for our God. 
Al-le-lu-ia,

al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. 2 Pow-er, rich-es, wis-dom, and
strength, and hon-or, bless-ing, and glo-ry are his.

This is the feast of victory for our God. 
Al-le-lu-ia,

al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. 3 Sing with all the peo-ple of
God, and join in the hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing, hon-or,
glo-ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.

This is the feast of victory for our God. 
Al-le-lu-ia,

al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. 4 For the Lamb who was
slain has be-gun his reign. Al-le-lu-ia.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.
PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together, 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. Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Genesis 12:1-4a

God’s call of Abram and Sara has a clear purpose—that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.

1 The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s family. Go to the land I will show you.
2 “I will make you into a great nation.
   And I will bless you.
I will make your name great.
   You will be a blessing to others.
3 I will bless those who bless you.
   I will put a curse on anyone who puts a curse on you.
All nations on earth
   will be blessed because of you.”
4 So Abram went, just as the Lord had told him. Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Harran.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

RESPONSIVE PSALM: PSALM 121

R I lift up my eyes to the hills; my help comes from the Lord. (Ps. 121:1, 2)

1 I look up to the mountains.
   Where does my help come from?
2 My help comes from the Lord.
   He is the Maker of heaven and earth.
3 He won’t let your foot slip.
   He who watches over you won’t get tired.
4 In fact, he who watches over Israel
   won’t get tired or go to sleep. R
5 The Lord watches over you.
   The Lord is like a shade tree at your right hand.
6 The sun won’t harm you during the day.
   The moon won’t harm you during the night.
7 The Lord will keep you from every kind of harm.
   He will watch over your life.
8 The Lord will watch over your life no matter where you go,
   both now and forever. R
Second Reading: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God’s promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.

1 What should we say about these things? What did Abraham, the father of our people, discover about being right with God? 2 Did he become right with God because of something he did? If so, he could brag about it. But he couldn’t brag to God. 3 What do we find in Scripture? It says, “Abraham believed God. God accepted Abraham’s faith, and so his faith made him right with God.”

4 When a person works, their pay is not considered a gift. It is owed to them. 5 But things are different with God. He makes ungodly people right with himself. If people trust in him, their faith is accepted even though they do not work. Their faith makes them right with God.

13 Abraham and his family received a promise. God promised that Abraham would receive the world. It would not come to him because he obeyed the law. It would come because of his faith, which made him right with God. 14 Do those who depend on the law receive the promise? If they do, faith would mean nothing. God’s promise would be worthless. 15 The law brings God’s anger. Where there is no law, the law can’t be broken.

16 The promise is based on God’s grace. The promise comes by faith. All of Abraham’s children will certainly receive the promise. And it is not only for those who are ruled by the law. Those who have the same faith that Abraham had are also included. He is the father of us all. 17 It is written, “I have made you a father of many nations.” God considers Abraham to be our father. The God that Abraham believed in gives life to the dead. Abraham’s God also creates things that did not exist before.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO: John 3:1-17

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus experiences anew the temptations that Israel faced in the wilderness. As the Son of God, he endures the testing of the evil one.

1 There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus. He was one of the Jewish rulers. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. We know that God is with you. If he weren’t, you couldn’t do the signs you are doing.”

3 Jesus replied, “What I’m about to tell you is true. No one can see God’s kingdom unless they are born again.” 4 “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “They can’t go back inside their mother! They can’t be born a second time!” 5 Jesus answered, “What I’m about to tell you is true. No one can enter God’s kingdom unless they are born with water and the Holy Spirit. 6 People give birth to people. But the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised when I say, ‘You must all be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wants to. You hear the sound it makes. But you can’t tell where it
comes from or where it is going. It is the same with everyone who is born with the Spirit.”

9 “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. 10 “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus. “Don’t you understand these things? 11 What I’m about to tell you is true. We speak about what we know. We are witnesses about what we have seen. But still you people do not accept what we say. 12 I have spoken to you about earthly things, and you do not believe. So how will you believe if I speak about heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven. He is the Son of Man. 14 Moses lifted up the snake in the desert. In the same way, the Son of Man must also be lifted up. 15 Then everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” 16 God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. 17 God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, O Christ!

The assembly is seated.

SERMON
Pastor Arden Dorn

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY (ELW p. 765) Lord of All Hopefulness

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the  
Virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the  
Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the  
living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION
Lifting our voices and turning toward God, let us pray for the church, the earth, and all who are in need. God of Abraham and Sarah, God of all earth’s families, bless your church to be a blessing and bestow your grace to a hurting world. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

O God, you love the entire cosmos. Help us to love all of the creatures and life within it. Banish bigotry, neglect, and extremism. Replace them with acceptance, tolerance and love. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

O God, our help is in you. Keep the nations, their governments, and their people from all evil. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

O God, your promises ease our pain and sorrow. Grant comfort, healing, and joy to all who are in need, especially Michael, Pauline, Shane, Dave, Justin, Lorene, Ella, Johnny, Mike, Hope, Tom, Lawrence, Sally, Mary Ruth, Kyle, Cody, and Norma and strengthen their caretakers. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

O God, lead this assembly in its Lenten journey toward faith, works of love, and prayer. Let those gathered here be fed and nourished by your word. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

O God, we give thanks for the faithful departed who have joined your saints in light. Let their lives be guides to our own. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

Into your hands, merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast love; through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE
The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

Peace is shared among the assembly, and then the assembly is seated.
MEAL
God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

The assembly stands.

OFFERING HYMN (ELW 186) Create in Me a Clean Heart

OFFERING PRAYER
Merciful God, receive the sacrifice of our praise and thanksgiving and the offering of our lives, that following in the way of the cross, we may know the joy of the resurrection; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING
The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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.
You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace.
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:
THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God. You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory.

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.

We give you thanks for his coming into the world to fulfill for us your holy will and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

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 for the 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 for the 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. Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command, his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and the promise of his coming again, we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty, not as we ought but as we are able; we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants, and these your own gifts of bread and wine, so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace, and, receiving the forgiveness of sin, may be formed to live as your holy people and be given our inheritance with all your saints. To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever.
Amen.

**LORD’S PRAYER**
Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

*The assembly joins hands to pray:*

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.

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

We who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Come. Be filled with light and life.

*The assembly is seated.*

**DISTRIBUTION – All are WELCOME at the table of the Lord.**

No matter what you have done or what your present condition, Christ invites to His table all who love Him, and earnestly repent of their sin and who seek to live in peace with one another. Children or anyone choosing not to commune, but wishing to be blessed, may indicate this by folding their arms across their chest. Anyone who is unable to come forward may indicate to an usher that you wish to receive communion where you are seated.

*Following Communion, the assembly stands.*
PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice, our alms, a making of peace, and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The assembly is seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

The assembly stands.

BLESSING

May God who has called us forth from the dust of the earth, and claimed us as children of the light, strengthen you on your journey into life renewed. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord’s face shine upon you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you ☩ peace. Amen.

SENDING SONG (ELW p. 759)  My Faith Looks Up to Thee

DOXOLOGY (ELW p. 884)  Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

The assembly is seated.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ. Thanks be to God!

Today we welcome Pastor Craig Sagebiel to our pulpit! Pastor Sagebiel entered ministry as a "second career" -- after first joining his Dad and brother in their family travel agencies in Seguin and New Braunfels. Pastor Sagebiel was blessed to serve congregations in Bradley, IL; Mathis, Taft, Maxwell and Lubbock, TX, before retiring in the summer of 2015. Currently, he serves St. Andrew Lutheran, Canyon Lake as their "quarter time" visitation pastor. He and his wife, Pam, now live on the family farm between Seguin and Kingsbury. Pastor Sagebiel is delighted to return to the site of his baptism in October 1949, officiated by his grandfather, Rev. E A Sagebiel.
COMING UP

Opportunities to Learn, Share, Worship, Pray, and Serve

Lenten Worship Schedule

**Wednesday, March 15:** 6:00 p.m. Soup & Sandwiches; 7:00 Worship Service – *Judgment*
An interview with Pontius Pilate

**Wednesday, March 22:** 6:00 p.m. Soup & Sandwiches; 7:00 Worship Service – *Compassion*
An Interview with Malchus

**Wednesday, March 29:** 6:00 p.m. Soup & Sandwiches; 7:00 Worship Service – *Declaration*
An interview with Peter

**Wednesday, April 5:** 6:00 p.m. Soup & Sandwiches; 7:00 Worship Service – *Obedience*
An Interview with John

**Palm Sunday, April 9:** 10:30 a.m. Worship Service – *Suffering*
An Interview with Simon the Zealot

**Maunday Thursday, April 13:** 7:00 p.m. Worship Service – *Forgiveness*
An Interview with Marie and Tom

**Good Friday, April 14:** 7:00 p.m. Worship Service – *Death*
An Interview with Mary, the Mother of Jesus

**Easter Sunday, April 16:** 7:00 a.m. Worship Service – *Life*
An Interview with Mary Magdalene

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**Sunday, March 19 Immediately following Worship:** There will be a brief Congregational Meeting to discuss funding for replacement of the organ that was irreparably damaged in the recent electrical storm.

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**Lay Readers for March**

March 19 – Randy Witte  March 26 – Rita Jordan

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**Submit Bulletin items** to Dale Tessman at 780-3513 or Dale@AtTheFarm.us prior to noon each Wednesday
**Greeting Card Ministry:** Each Sunday we make an effort to have prepared greeting cards acknowledging birthdays, anniversaries, illness or injury, and/or expressing our sympathies. Everyone is asked to jot down a brief note and signature on each card.

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**FOR PRAYERFUL CONSIDERATION**

**Ill or Injured**
Michael Braudway, Pauline Davidson, Shane Edens, Dave Frazier, Lorene Janek, Ella Manka, Johnny Perez, Mike Salvagno, Hope Segura, Tom Shockome, Lawrence Waltersdorf, Sally Wiatrek, Mary Ruth Witte, Kyle Worthy, Cody Zaiontz, Norma Zamzow and all those ill, injured, in nursing homes or shut-in.

**For those in the military**
Nick Adams, Allen Bowles, Justin Chandler, Justin Elkins, Rodney Foreman, Jamaica Goodhue, Taylor Griffin, Jacob Jones, Felipe Leal, Jr., Garrett Peterson, Michael Rosales, James Skinner, Kassie Thompson, John Vasquez, and Delmiro Villanueva.

**Birthdays**
Merlene Rippstein and Dallas Thompson (March 14), Courtney Witte (March 18)
Living Simply with God: A 40-Day Hunger Calendar

Day 9
Stop saving items to "read later." Read them now or recycle them.

Day 10
Teach your children—or the children of your congregation—how to fix things rather than throwing them away.

Day 11
Drink water instead of soft drinks; eat smaller portions of food.

Day 12
Think of a gift you would like for yourself; now purchase and give it to someone who really needs it.

Day 13
For each angry or sad person you encounter today, help another one laugh. Laughter heals!

Day 14
Every time you drive your car today, put $1.00 in your collection bank to help combat global climate change.

Day 15
Don't worry about small things; try to do something about bigger problems today.

Day 16
Think about the first thing you touch today. How much value does it have compared with everything else (including people) you touch today?
Hand wash dishes for an entire week, starting today. Donate the money you saved—electricity and water for a dishwasher—to ELCA World Hunger.

Take time to walk with your friends or family after dinner. Make it a "walk with God."

For dinner or a snack, eat a food (vegetable/fruit) native to another country. Pray for the well-being of those who grew and harvested the food for your benefit.

Pray that others—your family, people at school or work—will understand your feelings about living more simply.

Weigh what you throw away today. How much was truly not usable, and how much did you discard without thinking?

Buy used clothing from thrift shops. Put the money saved—compared to new clothing from a catalog or store—into your collection bank for ELCA World Hunger.

Plan sabbatical time, with a rest-to-work ratio of 1 to 6. Use the one hour, day, or week of rest (for every six you work) to engage in restful meditation, retreat or significant volunteer opportunity.

Write notes today to encourage your loved ones. Remind them (and yourself!) how special they are.