St. Paul’s Lutheran Church
2nd Sunday in Lent
March 17, 2019

You are loved
with an unquenchable love.
A love that pursues you relentlessly
with unfathomable devotion.
A love that will never, never let you go.

Sergio Rodriguez, Vicar
Mike Tessman, Worship Assistant
Mary Maddox, Lay Reader
Rita Jordan – Musical Accompaniment

408 S. Davidson Street  | Karnes City, TX 78118
Office (830) 780-2251  Vicar Rodriguez (956) 739-9190
www.StPaulsLutheranKC.org
www.facebook.com/StPaulsLutheranKarnesCity
Gathering

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

Though we sometimes doubt and often resist God’s desire to protect and save us, our God persists. In holy baptism, God’s people have been called and gathered into a God-initiated relationship that will endure. Lent provides the church with a time and a tradition in which to seek the face of the Lord again. Lent provides another occasion to behold the God of our salvation in the face of the Blessed One who “comes in the name of the Lord.”

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who gathers us in the wilderness to redeem us, anoint us, and make us new.

Amen.

In these forty days, let us be honest, confess our sin, and receive God’s promise of mercy.

God at the margins,
We have wandered far from your home; again and again, we lose our way.
We turn inward, afraid of the world around us.
We forget that you have saved your people before and promise to do so again.
Do not remember the deeds of our past, but turn our faces toward the future, where your forgiveness is sure, your welcome is clear, and your love overflows. Amen.

Like a hen who gathers her chicks,
God embraces you in tender care.
Like manna in the desert,
God feeds you with surprising mercy.
Like a loving parent,
God runs to meet you again this day,
forgiving your sins for the sake of ☩ Christ, leading you from death into life.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN (ELW p. 735)  Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth

GREETING

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.
KYRIE

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

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

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

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.
Amen.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE
PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. God of the covenant, in the mystery of the cross you promise everlasting life to the world. Gather all peoples into your arms, and shelter us with your mercy, that we may rejoice in the life we share in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The assembly is seated

Word

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

FIRST READING: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

God promises a childless and doubting Abram that he will have a son, that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars, and that the land of Canaan will be their inheritance. Abram’s trust in God is sealed with a covenant-making ceremony, a sign of God’s promise.

1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” 2 But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” 3 And Abram said, “You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.” 4 But the word of the Lord came to him, “This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.” 5 He brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” 6 And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

7 Then he said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.” 8 But he said, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” 9 He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtle dove, and a young pigeon.” 10 He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. 11 And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

12 As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him.

13 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. 14 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.”

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.
RESPONSIVE READING:  Psalm 27

R:  In the day of trouble, God will give me shelter.

1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? 
   The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
2 When evildoers close in against me to devour my flesh, 
   they, my foes and my enemies, will stumble and fall.
3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart will not fear. 
   Though war rise up against me, my trust will not be shaken.
4 One thing I ask of the Lord; one thing I seek; 
   that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life; to gaze upon 
   the beauty of the Lord and to seek God in the temple. R
5 For in the day of trouble God will give me shelter, 
   hide me in the hidden places of the sanctuary, and raise me high upon a rock.
6 Even now my head is lifted up above my enemies who surround me. 
   Therefore I will offer sacrifice in the sanctuary, sacrifices of rejoicing; I will 
   sing and make music to the Lord.
7 Hear my voice, O Lord, when I call; 
   have mercy on me and answer me.
8 My heart speaks your message—“Seek my face.” 
   Your face, O Lord, I will seek. R
9 Hide not your face from me, turn not away from your servant in anger. 
   Cast me not away—you have been my helper; forsake me not, O God of my salvation.
10 Though my father and my mother forsake me, 
   the Lord will take me in.
11 Teach me your way, O Lord; 
   lead me on a level path, because of my oppressors.
12 Subject me not to the will of my foes, 
   for they rise up against me, false witnesses breathing violence.
13 This I believe—that I will see the goodness of the Lord 
   in the land of the living!
14 Wait for the Lord and be strong. 
   Take heart and wait for the Lord! R

SECOND READING:  Philippians 3:17--4:1

Although Paul’s devotion to Christ has caused him to be persecuted, he does not regret the course he has taken. Writing from prison, he expresses confidence in a glorious future and encourages other Christians to follow in his footsteps.

17 Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. 18 For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. 19 Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. 4:1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands
Glory to You, O, Lord.

Neither Herod’s plotting nor Jerusalem’s resistance to maternal love will deter Jesus from his sacrificial mission.

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to [Jesus,] “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY
(ELW p. 566)

When Twilight Comes
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

Seeking the grace, mercy, and love of almighty God, we offer our prayers for the church, for people in need, and for all of creation.

The assembly shall kneel, as they are able

Compassionate God, call your people to stand firm as citizens of heaven. As we are humbled by your wondrous love, nurture such mercy in our hearts and ministries. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Display your faithfulness to creation in the changing of the seasons. Orchestrate the great song of praise that comes from rivers, birds, mountains, livestock, and wind. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Drown out the terror in the world with acts of lovingkindness and generosity. Comfort the loved ones of those that lost their lives in the mass shooting in New Zealand. Release political leaders from pride and fear to act justly and to serve citizens. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Rush to answer those who cry out to you in time of trial, especially Mitch, Laquita, Mary Louise, Francis, Lynda, Elfren, Leroy, John, as well as those that we name out loud or in our hearts... give shelter to your vulnerable children, and cover them in the comfort of your mothering wings. Have mercy on those affected by the flooding in the Plains and the Midwest, especially in Nebraska. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

As we sow Seeds of Hope, we pray for St. John Lutheran in Westhoff. Guide them to new opportunities and abilities to draw younger people into the congregation. We pray also for St. Peter’s in Elgin that they may have vision, direction, and that God would use them as an instrument of grace in their community. We pray for St. Paul’s – Karnes City and St. Paul’s – Nordheim as the congregations grow their ministries through the St. Paul’s Squared opportunity. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

With all churches in the Southwestern Texas Synod we pray for each other and also for ELCA member congregations such as those in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, Ebenezer Lutheran Church in Maxwell, and Grandview University. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

Grant solace to people who long to be parents, but have faced difficulty in bearing or adopting children. Build life-giving parent and child relationships for the sake of all. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Build up your holy community of saints through the work of bishops and missionaries like Patrick, whom we commemorate today. Spread your word through your people for the sake of the world. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Reveal your will as you receive our prayers, and conform our ways to your ways; through the saving work of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.
**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.

(ELW p. 186)  
*Create in Me a Clean Heart*

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.  Generous God,  
you feed us with the harvest of the land,  
and you provide for our every need.  
Receive our gifts of money, imagination, and labor,  
and transform them into a feast that welcomes all,  
in Jesus Christ, our host and our guest.  **Amen.**

Lasset uns beten.  Großzügiger Gott,  
Sie füttern uns mit der Ernte des Landes,  
und Sie sorgen für jeden Bedarf.  
Erhalten Sie unsere Geschenke von Geld,  
Phantasie und Arbeit,  
und verwandeln Sie in ein fest, das alle  
begrüßt, in Jesus Christus, unser Gastgeber  
und unser Gast.  **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

Blessed are you, O God of the universe.
Your mercy is everlasting
and your faithfulness endures from age to age.
Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.
Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.
Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.
Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness
to the land of milk and honey.
Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.
Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.
Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.
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.
With this bread and cup
we remember our Lord’s passover from death to life
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.
O God of resurrection and new life:  
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us  
and on these gifts of bread and wine.  
Bless this feast.  
Grace our table with your presence.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.  
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.  
Breathe new life into us.  
Send us forth,  
burning with justice, peace, and love.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

With your holy ones of all times and places,  
with the earth and all its creatures,  
with sun and moon and stars,  
we praise you, O God,  
blessed and holy Trinity,  
now and forever.  
**Amen.**

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**LORD’S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

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**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Christ has prepared the feast.  
Come to the table where all are welcomed home.
The assembly is seated.

COMMUNION SONG

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

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

This meal gives you strength for your journey of faith & life. Go forward as the body of Christ in your family, community and the world. 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.

TABLE BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Tender and merciful one, at your feast, you fed us who brought nothing, turning our emptiness into joy. Filled with your abundant grace, send us now to be ministers of reconciliation, mending broken hearts, working for justice, and striving for peace among all people, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.
Sending

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

BLESSING

God, who fills the creation with abundance,  
Christ, who spreads his arms in forgiveness,  
Holy Spirit, who draws ever near to us,  
‡ bless you and bring you to life everlasting.  
Amen.

SENDING SONG (ELW p. 796) How Firm a Foundation

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Remember the poor.  
Thanks be to God.

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

For Prayerful Consideration

**Ill, Injured or Otherwise Struggling:** Mitch Dorn, Shane Edens, Norma Foreman, Laquita Gibbens, Linda Henning, Jack Hockey, Raymond Jenkins, Mary Louise Jonas, Steve Kelly, Evalina, Francis Kempe, Lynda Lathrop, Khloe Martinez, Elfren Moczygemba, John Moczygemba, Leroy Polderick, Carly Rosenboon, John Tackitt, Dallas Thompson, Yvonne Watkins, Joyce Witte, Kyle Worthy, Cody Zaiontz, and Norma Zamzow

**For those in the military:** Nick Adams, Anthony Alvarez, Allen Bowles, Justin Chandler, Justin Elkins, Rodney Foreman, Jamaica Goodhue, Jacob Jones, Felipe Leal, Jr., Garrett Peterson, Jon Wayne Schulz, James Skinner, Chris Sustaita, Kassie Thompson, John Vasquez, and Delmiro Villanueva

**Anniversary & Birthday:** Jake & Holly Polasek (Mar 22), Cody Huwe (Mar 23)
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. **If you are unable to hear, require a bulletin, or need any other assistance**, please signal an usher.

Dear Friends at St. Paul’s!

I can’t believe it is already four weeks ago that we were in worship together and then feasted on delectable food as you presented a ‘farewell’ to Roxanne and me in St. Paul’s style for our just shy of four years in ministry with you and a ‘welcome’ for Vicar Sergio Rodriguez. The time together with you prior and on that day will always be a cherished memory.

Your ministry is moving forward to exciting new adventures!

Thank you so much for your gifts to The Mortuary Project on that day! The totals are more than $1500 and will be a great boost for the total project! Thanks also for the cards, well wishes and expressions of gratitude. They are all most appreciated.

Sincerely and all God’s BEST!
Pastor Dorn & Roxanne

Coming Events

Let’s join together and PARTICIPATE

**Lent & Easter Worship Schedule**

Weekly Lenten Worship will be each Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.
Soup & Sandwiches will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday, April 18 – 7:30 p.m.

Good Friday, April 19 – 7:30 p.m.

Easter Celebration
Christian Fellowship & Education – 9:30 a.m.
Worship – 11:00 a.m.
Texas Lutheran University Spring Choir Tour

A message of peace, hope and love fills the Texas Lutheran University Choirs spring tour program, What the Light Shines Through. The Treble Choir, Kantorei Chamber Choir and the Texas Lutheran University Choir will perform works by various composers, including two newly commissioned works. Performances in the SWT Synod will be: March 29 at 7 p.m., St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, 400 N Esplanade St., Cuero, TX 77954 AND April 2 at 7 p.m., Chapel of the Abiding Presence, Texas Lutheran University, 1000 W Court St., Seguin, TX 78155. The event is free and open to the public; no tickets are required.

Karnes County officials are seeking volunteers:

Quarterly mobile ‘food fair’ schedule announced

Contributed information

KARNES COUNTY — The food distribution in Karnes County has issued a schedule for the 2019 mobile food bank.

The first date is Wednesday, March 20, at the Karnes County show barn, beginning at 10 a.m. The secondary distribution will happen on a quarterly basis as the next date is set for Wednesday, June 19, followed by those on Wednesday, Sept. 18, and then Wednesday, Dec. 18, to close out the year.

These are additional dates of distribution to the monthly dates already in use for the food distribution from the San Antonio Food Bank: Every first Monday of the new month is set for distribution in that schedule, with the next date being Monday, April 1, at the county show barn at 351 W. Old Seguin Road.

In a release for the commissioners court and the food policy committee, they presented the following:

“We are currently serving approximately 185 food insecure families. We would like to bridge the gap from the number we currently serve to the estimated 500 food insecure families here in the county.

“We are looking to share the word with our network of friends, businesses and other organizations here in our community to help those in need.”

The quarterly “food fair” operates in the same manner as the regularly scheduled monthly distributions.

The county and the food policy committee are also asking for volunteers; other citizens or businesses to help distribute food on the scheduled dates.

Volunteers are usually asked to show up at the Karnes County show barn at 9 a.m. and usually finish food distribution by noon.

“If your business or organization would like to help, participate or donate to our organization, please contact Justin Meyer with the Karnes County Judge’s office for more information.”

Call Justin at 780-3732 if you’d like to volunteer.
Dear friends in Christ:

We woke this morning to the pain of more mosque shootings, this time in New Zealand at Christchurch. I urge you to reach out to your Muslim siblings to let them know we stand with them against hate, bigotry and violence.

Let us pray. Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may move every human heart; that the barriers dividing us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; and that, with our divisions healed, we might live in justice and peace; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Evangelical Lutheran Worship p. 79)

- Bishop Sue Briner

ELCA presiding bishop pastoral message on Christchurch mosque shootings

Dear Church,

Today we awoke to the devastating news of the mass shootings at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. We join in mourning for the people who were killed and wounded, for their families, for the first responders and grief counselors, and for all whose lives have been shattered today. We know that God is present in the midst of their suffering.

We know that our own Muslim neighbors here in the U.S. are also experiencing grief and fear. Many will wonder whether it is safe to attend Friday prayers today. These are not the kinds of questions that any of us should have to ask ourselves as we seek to live out our religious commitments. Yet, devastatingly, this is also a reality that binds us together as people of faith. As I wrote last November in the wake of the Tree of Life shooting: “Hate-filled violence knows no bounds - whether a Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, a Christian church in Charleston, a Jewish synagogue in Pittsburgh” - and now these mosques in New Zealand.

Together with our ecumenical and inter-religious partners, we stand shoulder to shoulder in condemning hatred, bigotry, racism and violence whenever and wherever it occurs. We do so because all people are made in the image of God. Therefore, as an act of neighborly love, I urge you to reach out to your Muslim neighbors today and in the days to come to ask how you might offer solidarity and support - joining whenever possible with other ecumenical and inter-religious neighbors.

I leave you with the words of Psalm 16:1: “Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.” This is my prayer - for our Muslim neighbors, for the people of Christchurch, and for all who mourn and are afraid. May we see in this devastation the possibility to be Christ’s presence with our neighbors in this world - to be present in their suffering and to be partners in God’s justice and peace.

In peace,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop, ELCA