

If you would like to give a monetary contribution to St. Paul's UCC and/or Christ Lutheran, Starview to help support their continued ministries please make a note in the memo line of your check or on your envelope, and a single check will be sent with a note of thanksgiving from the entire congregation mid- October. Thus, we will continue to receive your monetary tokens of gratitude through World Communion Sunday.

Also, note - on Sunday, October 8, 2023, Starview UCC, will officially dedicate the electronic church sign. On that day, the hope is to take a congregational picture, following worship, standing on the lawn, in front of the sign.

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Laura Baker

PRELUDE

Mr. Kevin Crone

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Preparing our hearts and minds for worship,
Let us give joyful thanks to the Lord!

Congregation: **YES! We'll sing our praises and rejoice as we call out the wonderful works of God.**

Pastor: Remember the way God brought the Hebrews out of slavery, providing them with food, water, safety and joy!

Congregation: **We remember how God brings us through trials and tough times, too.**

Pastor: Beloved people of God, praise the Lord!

Congregation: **We will praises to the Lord, our God!**

OPENING PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER (Using "sins")

All people: Loving God, we praise your name! We celebrate the ways you are at work in our lives and in this world. Yet we come with so many different attitudes. Some of us are excited, some are weary. Some of us eagerly await joyful moments just around the corner. Some of us live in anxiety and fear, uncertain about what may emerge today. Draw us close to you in this hour. Fill us with your Spirit. Help us to remember your steadfast faithfulness in the past. Help us to find you in the present. Help us to trust in your present with us tomorrow and all the days after tomorrow. Help us to count our blessings and move us to you give thanks for all you have done to bring each of us to this time and place. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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.

HYMN

Count Your Blessings

Bulletin Insert

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All people: You know how fickle we are, O Lord. We proclaim your presence with us and then we behave in ways which run counter to your word. We get caught up in our own needs and whine about the injustices we feel in our lives. Help us to place our trust in your mercy and your compassionate love. Forgive us when we stray from your ways and wander into paths of self-pity and self-destruction. Lift us from the deep mire and put us back on track. Give us confidence in your presence and your direction throughout our lives, for we ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Beloved people of God, feel the comforting power of God’s love and mercy in your lives. God is with us through all our experiences. Though we may try - we can never stray from God’s love. Rejoice! This is the Good News for all of us!

All people: Alleluia and AMEN for Good News!

PRAISE HYMN

Gloria Patri

Red Hymnal, #493

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Pastor: God’s forgiveness and transforming love gives us great peace. Let us Jesus’ words of peace to one another: “Peace be with you...”

Congregation: “And, also with you.”

Page 2

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

DOXOLOGY *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God, all creatures here below.

Praise God above ye heavenly hosts.

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

All people: Holy God, we bless your name as we offer these tithes, offerings, and gifts. Thank you for the abundance with which you bless us, day by day. Thank you for this opportunity to share. Accept our gratitude for all we’ve been given. Receive these signs of our love and help us use them wisely. Strengthen us to be more and more generous even as we recognize it’s impossible to out-give YOU! Amen.

HYMN

Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

Chalice, #613

BENEDICTION

Pastor: Go now and invest your lives in the works of faith. Make a name for yourselves for generosity and compassion. Fulfill God’s holy law by putting love into action as eagerly for others as you would for yourselves.

And may God be your defender and provider,
May Jesus dispel all that disturbs or disables you,
and may the Holy Spirit make you rich in faith
...and loving and merciful in action.

Congregation: **We go with a generous spirit of peace to love and serve the Lord.**

All people: Amen.

POSTLUDE

Page 7

we use these like-new Chalice hymnals and lovely green robes. We will sing ever loudly today, remembering the kindness and generosity of these benevolent saints and ask God's blessing upon them, in the manner they have blessed us.

Pastor: Let us pray together:

All people: Eternal and loving God, we thank you for music and the gift of song through which we offer our praise and thanksgiving, our confessions and petitions, and our sorrows and laments. We give thanks to you for all those who have contributed to these hymnals: the authors, composers, arrangers, and translators who give us the words and music to express the thoughts and emotions that may otherwise have remained silent. We give thanks for the lives and the witnesses of those in whose honor and memory these hymnals and robes were originally given and the congregations who have now given them to us. We pray that these robes and hymnals may be used in worship, in education, in outreach, in evangelism, in nurture, in fellowship, and in faithfulness. We consecrate them, and our lives, to your service, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC *Praise Him with a Psalm* **Chancel Choir**

(An Offering Collection Box is located on the table in the back of sanctuary, by the exit door)

OFFERING INVITATION

Liturgist: In gratitude for all that we have so graciously received, let us offer our generous gifts and tithes back to the Lord this day – accompanying them with the singing of the Doxology and a Prayer of Dedication.

(The congregation may be seated, as the children & youth come forward)

JESUS SAID, "LET THE CHILDREN COME"

HYMN *Rise Up, O Saints of God* *Chalice, #611*

OLD TESTAMENT READING – 1 Samuel 10:17-24; 12:1-5, 16-25

EPISTLE READING – Philippians 1:21-30

GOSPEL READING – Matthew 20:1-16

SERMON & PASTORAL PRAYER **Rev. Laura Baker**

DEDICATION OF HYMNALS, CHOIR ROBES, AND CHRIST CANDLE

Pastor: "May the light of Jesus Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds." Each year at many Christian churches, those words pierce the darkness on Easter morning, as Christians gather around the lighting of a large candle. This candle is the paschal candle, sometimes called the Easter candle or Christ candle. Its name comes from *pasach*, the Hebrew word for Passover – the night when God's Spirit moved in Egypt, which led the enslaved people to freedom. It is the festival Jesus was celebrating at his Last Supper and one we remember on Maundy Thursday, as we move to the good news of freedom from death and sin, on Easter Morning. Congregations may have different Easter celebrations and very different-looking paschal candles, but the meaning and symbols are universal.

Liturgist: This tall white candle represents Christ's steadfast presence in our midst, and its flickering flame dances with light and warmth, illuminating our shadowed world. It is a symbol of Christ's resurrection light which banishes death and darkness forever. The paschal candle is lit each Sunday throughout the Easter season, with most congregations continuing to light it until Ascension Day.

Pastor: This special candle is also lit for baptisms, signifying the Holy Spirit and fire that John the Baptist promised to those baptized in Christ. From this flame then, a member of the congregation lights another candle, which is given to the newly baptized along with these words: “Let *your* light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Liturgist: Just as we light the paschal candle at the beginning of our baptized life, so, too we light it at the end of life. Its presence at the head of a casket or beside an urn reminds us again that Christ triumphed over darkness and death and that even in death, there is brilliant life.

Pastor: The gift of this paschal candle, the symbol of Christ’s eternal light, was originally a gift from the Donald Mae family, well over a quarter century ago to Salem Lutheran Church. Earlier this year, in 2023, a vote was taken to close her doors. Today, some of Salem Lutheran Church’s saints are here among us. Their presence and the presence of this Paschal Candle remind us that Christ’s light cannot be held back, contained nor snuffed out – not by death or buildings. We are reminded that Christ’s light is not restricted or enclosed by time but shines eternally.

Liturgist: We now dedicate this generous gift of a Paschal Candle which lit the sanctuary of Salem Lutheran Church, Dover for many years. We dedicate it and remember how it marked both the baptismal beginnings and end of her members’ lives. We now light this candle here at Starview United Church of Christ, as a symbol of the eternal light of Christ, which continues to shine in and through each one of us, wherever the Lord places us, no matter the season of our personal or congregational lives.

All people:

It is our desire, O, Lord, to honor you with the lighting of this Paschal candle. May this flame, which represents your eternal love, your resurrection power, and creative nature, burn bright in us, and shine through us so that our neighbors, and the world may know the wonder of your love. May the light of your Word live in us and always kindle our desire to walk with you, serve you, and to be a witness for you. Amen.

Pastor: Music, like light, is an integral part of the worship of God’s people.

Congregation: When the Israelites left Egypt, Moses sang. When Samuel was born, Hannah sang. When the exiles were in Babylon, they wondered whether their song was gone. It wasn't. They still sang.

Pastor: Here at Starview United Church of Christ, the singing God’s people continue, as we remember and give thanks for whom and from out of the circumstances the Chalice Hymnals and lovely green robes were generously gifted to us. As the congregational number of weekly worshippers at St. Paul’s United Church of Christ and Christ Lutheran, Starview, have decreased, those congregations made the decision that instead of boxing and tucking these sacred worship items away in a closet or allowing them to sit idle, collect dust, or mold – they chose instead to share them – giving generously to the music ministry and life of this congregation.

Congregation: Should God’s good and faithful people of St. Paul’s UCC and Christ Lutheran ever wonder if their song of love for our Savior has dimmed to the point of no longer being audible, may our praise to God reverberate so loudly, that they are reminded that in their act of selfless giving, the song goes on. Their continued praise to God joins ours, as