

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

P. O. Box 267, 201 Veterans Dr., Columbus, TX 78934

PH# (979) 732-2423 Fax (979) 733-0489

E-mail: admin@splctx.org www.splctx.com **Pastor:** pastor.akethan@gmail.com

April 16, 2023 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Second Sunday of Easter

Senior Pastor	Alan Kethan	<u>Home:</u> (979)-942-9060	<u>Cell:</u> (830)-708-1200
Deacon of Word and Service			Sandye Fletcher
Youth & Family Specialist			Stephanie Polasek
Music Minister			Robert Eaton
Congregational Chair			Donna Maas
St. Paul Christian Learning Academy Director			Briana Bedford
Secretary			Elena Holub
Custodian			Tomasa Rosales
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator			DyAnn Lauzon

MISSION STATEMENT: Love God, Love Neighbor (Luke 10:27)

VISION STATEMENT: We will work to strengthen and grow closer in relationship to God and to one another.

- *As we enter into a sacred time and space, a friendly reminder to please set your cell phone to vibrate.*
- ***We want to welcome all of our guests today and thank you for worshipping with us. If you have any questions or would like more information regarding our services, programs, day care, or preschool programs at St. Paul, please visit our Welcome Center in the narthex immediately following our service, and an attendant will be more than happy to assist you. If this is your first time at St. Paul, we hope you will take a gift along with you. We also have a gift bag for children.***
- Hearing Assist devices are available for those who need assistance in hearing worship service better. Please see a person in the Sound Room (Usher Room) to request the use of a device during worship.

* This symbol indicates that the congregation is invited to stand physically or in spirit.

INTRODUCTION

In today's gospel the risen Christ appears to the disciples and offers them the gift of peace. Even amid doubts and questions, we experience the resurrection in our Sunday gathering around word and meal, and in our everyday lives. Throughout the coming Sundays of Easter the first two readings will be from the Acts of the Apostles and the first letter of Peter. Even as the early

Christians proclaimed the resurrection, we rejoice in the new birth and living hope we receive in baptism.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE PADS

(Ushers will be handing out Attendance Pads during the announcements. Please be sure to sign your name and contact information.)

60 SECONDS OF STEWARDSHIP – Worship Team

*** THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

P Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are welcomed, restored, and supported as citizens of the new creation. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism. Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the river of life, you are the everlasting wellspring. In mercy and might you have freed us from death and raised us with Jesus, the firstborn of the dead. In baptismal waters our old life is washed away, and in them we are born anew.

(Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister continues.)

Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams. Honor to you for waters that wash us clean, quench our thirst, and nurture both crops and creatures. Praise to you for the life-giving water of baptism, the outpouring of the Spirit of the new creation.

C Wash away our sin and all that separates us from you. Empower our witness to your resurrection. Strengthen our resolve in seeking justice for all.

P Satisfy the world's need through this living water. Where drought dries the earth, bring refreshment. Where despair prevails, grant hope. Where chaos reigns, bring peace. We ask this through Christ, who with you and the Spirit reigns forever.

C Amen.

GOSPEL SONG: BY YOUR SIDE

**Why are you striving these days? Why are you trying to earn grace?
Why are you crying? Let Me lift up your face - just don't turn away.**

**Why are you looking for love? Why are you still searching as if I'm
Not enough? To where will you go child? Tell Me where will you run?
To where will you run?**

CHORUS 1:

**'Cause I'll be by your side wherever you fall. In the dead of night whenever you call,
And please don't fight these hands that are holding you. My hands are holding you.**

GOSPEL: John 20:19-31

The risen Jesus appears to his disciples, offering them a benediction, a commission, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. But one of their number is missing, and his unbelief prompts another visit from the Lord.

A The holy gospel according to St. John, chapter 20, verses 19-31.

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." ²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." ²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." ²⁸Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." ³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

GOSPEL SONG: BY YOUR SIDE

**Look at these hands - and My side. They swallowed the grave on that night.
When I drank the world's sin, so I could carry you in
And give you life. I want to give you life!**

CHORUS 2:

**'Cause I'll be by your side wherever you fall.
In the dead of night whenever you call,
And please don't fight these hands that are holding you.
'Cause I'll be by your side wherever you fall.
In the dead of night whenever you call,
And please don't fight these hands that are holding you.
Yeah, My hands are holding you.**

BRIDGE:

**'Cause I - I love you! I want you to know
That I - I love you! I'll never let you go.**

CHORUS 2:

**'Cause I'll be by your side wherever you fall.
In the dead of night whenever you call,
And please don't fight these hands that are holding you.
'Cause I'll be by your side wherever you fall.
In the dead of night whenever you call,
And please don't fight these hands that are holding you.
Yeah, My hands are holding you.**

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CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

* **SERMON SONG: I WALK BY FAITH**

CHORUS:

***I walk by faith, each step by faith.
To live by faith, I put my trust in You. (2x)***

**Ev'ry step I take is a step of faith.
No weapon formed against me shall prosper.
And ev'ry prayer I make is a prayer of faith.
If my God is for me, tell me, who can be against me?**

REPEAT from beginning

CHORUS

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* **APOSTLES' CREED**

A With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

C **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

and he will come 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 congregation may be seated during the prayers.)

PRAYERS

A United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

A God of rebirth, the good news of your resurrection brings refreshment to a weary world. Following the women at the tomb, empower us to boldly share your radical love through our words and our work.

A brief silence.

A You prepared the disciples for their ministry by calming their fears and granting them your peace. Equip our communities' leaders. Give them a spirit of peace and hearts that burn for justice and mercy, that their leadership reflects your love.

A brief silence.

A You come among us in unexpected ways. Send us to those who hide in fear or question your love. Be a healing presence for any isolated by addiction, incarceration, mental illness, chronic pain, sickness, or grief.

A brief silence.

A We pray for peace in all the world, especially in war-torn areas of Ukraine. Bring an end to war and the destruction of lives and your creation. Continue to bring relief and help to those suffering from natural disasters

A brief silence.

A We pray for Colby Guthmann and Kasey Bangs who were united in marriage this weekend. Bless them as they begin a new life together as husband and wife.

A brief silence.

A We give you thanks and praise for the birth of Payton Marie Altieri to Willie and Magen Altieri. Bless their family as they begin a new life together.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Jane Darby; Cindy Evelo; Mary Ann Peirsol; George Krenek; Nicole Roybal; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you.

A brief silence.

A We pray for those battling cancer, all expectant mothers, those who reside in care facilities and the homebound, all law enforcement officers, fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers, 9-1-1 dispatchers, and active duty military personnel.

{See all those we pray for on pages 10 & 11.}

A brief silence.

A We pray for the church throughout the world. May we all proclaim the good news of your love effectively. We ask, especially, that you would bless the ministry of our sister congregations Cristo Rey and Iglesia Cristiana Camino de Santidad in Peru, all Missionaries, especially St. Paul's supported missionary, Dina Anton de Espinoza, and our companion synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic.

A brief silence.

A Resurrecting God, you bring us to new life every day. Thank you for blessing us with companions on our faith journey, especially those who now rest in your love. Strengthen us with the eternal peace of your promises.

A brief silence.

A Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

C Amen.

*** PEACE**

P As Jesus shared peace, let us also share His peace with one another. *(Share the "Peace of the Lord" with your neighbors.)*

(We will be collecting offerings before and after worship each week. This includes Power of One dollars.)

OFFERING and POWER OF ONE

"Power of One" is a ministry sponsored by your Stewardship Team. We are asking each and every one of our members to give \$1.00 above what your normal giving would be. We are asking each member to place this \$1.00 bill or change in the offering plate each week. The team is also inviting all children to participate to develop the habit of giving as part of their worship experience. Parents, a penny, nickel, dime, quarter, or dollar bill, any of these will do to help your children develop a habit of giving. These "Power of One" dollars will be used to support local ministries and ministries abroad. The purpose of this ministry is to demonstrate that something as small as one dollar can be used to make a difference in the lives of others.

* **OFFERING PRAYER**

P Merciful Father,

C we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us – our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

* **REMEMBERING JESUS' WORDS, PROMISES, AND COMMANDS**

* **LORD'S PRAYER**

P Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to sing.

**C Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

* **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P Come and know Christ, broken and poured out for you.

C Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION (Continuous with Individual Cups)

{Distribution will be continuous. All are welcome for communion. Please come down the center aisle starting from the front. Follow directions of the ushers, coming up one side at a time. Pastor will hand you the bread. If you wish to have a gluten-free wafer, please tell Pastor "Gluten-free, please." Afterward, you will choose either wine or white grape juice from the individual cups in the tray – white grape juice in the center with wine surrounding. Place the empty cups in the baskets located off to the side. Although communion is continuous, you are welcome to kneel at the rail in prayer after receiving communion. Please return to your seat by the side aisles.}

* **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P Gracious God, in you we live and move and have our being. With your word and this meal of grace, you have nourished our life together. Strengthen us to show your love and serve the world in Jesus' name.

C Amen.

* **BLESSING**

P The God of all, who raised ☩ Jesus from the dead, bless you by the power of the Holy Spirit to live in the new creation.

C Amen.

* **CLOSING SONG: HOLDING NOTHING BACK**

I am chosen, I am free. I am living for eternity. Free now, forever.
You pick me up, turn me around. You set my feet on solid ground.
Yours, now, forever.

PRE-CHORUS:

*And nothin's gonna hold me back. Nothin's gonna hold me back.
Nothin's gonna hold me back...*

CHORUS:

*My chains fell off, my heart was free!
I'm alive to live for You! I'm alive to live for You!
Amazing love, how can it be?
You gave everything for me. You gave everything for me – everything.*

You've washed my sin, and shame away.
The slate is clean, a brand new day. Free now, forever.
Now boldly I approach Your throne,
To claim this crown through Christ my own. Yours now, forever.

(SING **PRE-CHORUS** and **CHORUS** again)

BRIDGE:

**And I'm free to live, free to give. Free to be, I'm free to love You.
Free to live, free to give. Free to be, I'm free to love You.
Free to live, free to give. Free to be, I'm free to love You. Lord....**

CHORUS

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* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace having life in His name!

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

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USHERS: Mike & Gerri Hackfeld; Sandi & Kaldon Roensch

LAY READER: Courtney Busselman

STREAMING: Kay Wesson

ALTAR GUILD: Laura Weido and Terri Brasher

ACOLYTE: Hattie Post

POWER POINT: Dinah Jacobs

WELCOME: Happy Easter! Indeed, the season lasts 50 days. Welcome as we continue celebrating our risen Lord.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Walter & Bethany Guthmann in honor of Colby Guthmann and Kasey Bangs who were united in Holy Matrimony this weekend. God's blessings on their marriage.

Congratulations to Willie and Magen Schindler Altieri on the birth of their daughter Payton Marie Altieri. Payton Marie was born Monday, April 10, 2023 at 7:38 AM. She weighed 7 lbs. 8 oz. and was 20 inches long. Proud grandparents are Gary & Donna Schindler, and proud great-grandmother is Coy Dell Schindler.

Congratulations and best wishes to Colby Guthmann and Kasey Bangs who were united in Holy Matrimony Saturday, April 15, 2023. May God bless them as they begin a new life together as husband and wife!

♥♥ **THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!!!** *National Volunteer Appreciation Week is April 16-22, 2023.* It is that time of year to thank **ALL** of the volunteers who help out at the church. There are **so many!!** There are some volunteers that are seen and those whose volunteer work is done "behind the scenes". Without the tireless work from our volunteers, our everyday church activities and operations would not run as smoothly as they do. **THANK YOU again to our wonderful volunteers for all that you do! We appreciate you! ♥♥**

COLLECTION OF OFFERING: Offering for the worship services is collected before and after worship. Offering bowls are placed in the back entrance and inside the side sanctuary door for you to place your offering in. This includes "Power of One" dollars.

Amount needed for average weekly budgeted expenses: \$8,405.00

Attendance: Thurs., April 6, 2023 – 48 **Contributions:** April 6 – \$1,902.00
Power of One: Thurs., April 6, 2023 – \$13.00 **Building Fund:** April 6 – \$300.00

Attendance: Fri., April 7, 2023 – 153 **Contributions:** April 7 – \$1,532.10
Power of One: Fri., April 7, 2023 – \$20.00

Attendance: April 9, 2023 – 408 **Contributions:** April 9 – \$8,078.56
Power of One: April 9, 2023 – \$62.00 **Building Fund:** April 9 – \$518.23

Thank you to those who contributed to last week's offerings. Loving God/Loving Neighbor.

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., March 29 – **69 Total**
BLAST/Confirmation: 69 **Adult Bible Study:** 2 **Support Staff:** 16

Thursday Night BLAST Attendance: – Thurs., April 6 – **73 Total**
BLAST/Confirmation: 55 **Adult Bible Study:** 3 **Support Staff:** 15

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., April 12 – **71 Total**
BLAST/Confirmation: 56 **Adult Bible Study:** 2 **Support Staff:** 13

ATTENTION: *Names on the prayer list in the bulletin will be printed for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks, the names will be removed from the bulletin unless the church office has been notified to keep them.*

KEEP IN OUR PRAYERS: Those Battling Cancer: Pauline Gosnell; Nina Naumann; GayLynn Willms Burk; Carl Norton; Barbara Farley; Laura Harris; Todd Foster; Cher Marino; Cindy Tanner; Joe Reck; Melinda Rodiek; Melda Coleman; Donna Culton; Nancy Hartmann; Lydia Rojas; Catherine Poppe; Larry Stolar; Vivian Fortenberry; Rick Davis; Darryl Stancik; Jerry Ordner; Michael Yancey; Bubba Bencal; Al Gene Canik; Jane Venghaus Taylor; George Wright; Sandy Mosley; Charlene Tesch; Karen Bailiff; Julian Divin; Nancy Biers; Angie Beggs; Pam Potter; Charlie Hammock; Brad Bryson; Lynette Frnka; Riana Jamison; Jenna Escamilla; Margaret Ortiz; Keith Korth; Jodi Sebesta; Cathy Siglow; Paul Casinger; Fran Gillett; DeQuincy Lister; Angela Mazoch; Lily Presswood; Denise Lange; Doug Mason; Dr. Tom Hancher; Joe Berry; Gracie Brune; Margaret Rogers; Leonard Kahlden; Curtis Wallin; Megan Burch; Lisa Grazier; Phyllis Behrend; Jessica Mauchlen; Donna Tiner; Libby Divin; Diane Brooks; Bob Loy; Stanley King; Monty Gillett; Dawn Foster; Edward Halcolm; Amber Smith Kutach; Louis Camacho; Melvin Schobel; Janet Greene; Sabrina Galindo; Debbie Grimes; Horst Traub; Margie Fisk; Preston Carter; Penny Miller; Carl Hahn; Megan Cain; Amanda Fuchs; Cyndi Wallace; Karen Broussard; Donna Young; Sharon Heimann; Brenda Baker.

Expectant Mothers: Katie Pagel Walcik; Kelsey Kethan McNeely; Montana Appelt; Dina Anton de Espinoza; Olivia Leyendecker; Daya Latiolais; Cassidy Zajicek Parks.

Those in Care Facilities and Homebound: Robert Eaton; Linda Frank; Helen Hammack; Joey Denby; Edwin Oevermann; Paul Minar, Sr.; Adrian Fritsch; Doug Hill; John Zwiegel; Robert Saunders; Coy Dell Schindler; Barbara McMath; Linda Munos Rodgers; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Jane Booker; Pat Brasher. **Homebound:** Curtis Berger; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Ronnie Rogers; Joyce Dehmner; Donna Dehmer; Carolyn Renz; Rita Noska.

Those Law Enforcement Officers: Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Donnie Templeton; Jason Templeton; Johnny Kovar; Abigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; Luke Kanz; Bruno Flores; Zane Weido; Josh Jones. **Fire Fighters, First Responders, Healthcare Workers and 9-1-1 Dispatchers:** Brent Gorman, Sr.; Brent Gorman, Jr.; Reid Brasher; Donnie Templeton; Jason Templeton; Dusty Dittmar; John Maertz; Ron Luedke; Pastor Alan Kethan; Kristi Weyand; Eric Weyand; Bradley Berger; Jon Berger; James Chollett; Edward Thraen, Jr.; Garrett Flores; Kyle Burris; Dylan Walcik; Randy Wendt; Travis Neuendorff; Brenda Henkes; and Jan Willette. **Active Duty Military:** Brian Anderson; Michael Graham; Bryan

Kubena; Brad Bergfeld; Cody Jowers; Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Ryan Neisner; Anthony D'Angelo; Dalton Kapel; Kindra Dawson; William Phillips; Kevin Gonzalez.

► **Children's Activity Bags** are available for use by our young members and guests! You can find them on the coat hooks in the coat area of the narthex. After worship, **please place the used activity bags and their contents in the receptacle in the narthex.**

Thank you! ☺

** **Thank you** for wearing your name tag! If you would like a magnet version of the name tag instead of the alligator clip, please sign up on the sheet in the narthex, and your Evangelism Team will convert it over. **

Attendance Pads Reminders: Thank you to everyone for doing such a good job signing the attendance pads each week when you attend worship! Our records are more accurate when you sign the attendance pads. Here are a couple of things that will help get our records even more accurate and up-to-date: **1) When signing in, please write everyone in your family who is attending worship.** When you write "John Doe Family", we do not know how many people that is and we don't know who exactly attended worship. Was it John, Sue and Sally Doe, or the whole family of John, Sue, Jim, Tom and Sally Doe? **2) Please include your address and phone number.** This is helpful especially when we have guests signing in. When they see the members writing addresses and phone numbers, guests are more likely to do the same. We like to welcome our guests by sending them a card after their visit. That is hard to do when we do not have contact information. It is also a way for us to keep up with our members when they have a change of address or phone number. Thank you for taking the time to do these items. Our staff and volunteers who take care of the personal records and oversee attendance records greatly appreciate your help.

★ **NOTICE!!** The **Women of JOY Bible Study Group** is **not meeting during the month of April.**

There are lots of events and activities taking place this month. The group will begin meeting again in May. Watch upcoming bulletins and newsletter for more details. For more information about Women of JOY, please contact Gerri Hackfeld at 979-732-4711. ★

WESTERN CLUSTER SPRING GATHERING: Let's get together again now that Covid is behind us. The Gathering will be **Saturday, April 22, 2023** at **St. Paul Lutheran Church of Shelby**, 6814 Skull Creek Rd., Fayetteville, Texas. *(Use Fayetteville for nav, church is in Shelby).* With this Gathering, we will not have a formal program. Rather, we want to emphasize getting together to re-energize and catch up on what is going on throughout our Cluster. We will have **brunch, beginning at 8:30 AM**, and socializing along with an abbreviated business meeting. Let's get things rolling again and share what our individual units have been doing and suggestions for future gatherings. All women of the ELCA



are invited! Please **RSVP by Saturday, April 15, 2023** to Betty Huebner at 979-277-5303 (call or text) or Lana Aschenbeck at ланаасченбек@gmail.com.



Wharton County Junior College Colorado County Senior Citizen Program is hosting a stuffed baked potato **fundraiser Wednesday, April 19, 2023 from 11:00 AM-2:00 PM**. The meal includes one baked potato with chopped beef, shredded cheese, sour cream, chives and butter. **Cost is \$12.00 per meal.** *Tickets are pre-sale only* and can be purchased by calling 979-532-6430. The location for the drive-thru / to-go orders only meal will be **Noah's Ark Coffee House** located at 816 Wallace Street, Columbus, Texas. Your purchase will help provide meals and services to local senior citizens.

♦ **Lutherhill Serve Day:** St. Paul Lutheran Church's day to serve will be **Saturday, April 22, 2023** from 8:30 AM-2:30 PM. Adults and youth are invited to come help. Mike Hackfeld will be trimming trees, and we will help clear them away as well as help with clearing of worship sites. Lunch will be served. Please sign up in the narthex or contact Stephanie to **sign up by Friday, April 21, 2023.** Stephanie will also drive the van for anyone that would like to ride along. We will leave at 8:00 AM from the church.



Make plans for St. Paul's Blood Drive on **Sunday, April 23, 2023** from **8:00 AM-12:30 PM** in The Lighthouse! Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center will be back. All successful donors will receive a free t-shirt! Make your appointment online at CommitForLife.org and use **sponsor code P732**. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (979-820-8793) or at mzschielack@gmail.com. Also, if anyone is interested and willing to help with this Outreach Ministry, please let me know. Any help is greatly appreciated! Thank you, and God Bless! – *Melinda Zajicek*

God's Gals: God's Gals will meet **Sunday, April 23, 2023** at **6:00 PM** at **Blake's Kitchen and Kocktail** in Columbus for food, fellowship and visiting!! All women of St. Paul Lutheran are invited. Bring a friend! Questions? Please contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127.

{NOTE: There will be no God's Gals in May due to Memorial Day.}



Attention all graduates!! If you or a family member (child, grandchild) is graduating from high school, college or trade school, please contact Stephanie or the church office for a graduation form to fill out. The form asks for information about the graduate – name, place graduating from, degree, activities, awards, future goals, etc. We would like to congratulate you and share your wonderful accomplishments in the upcoming newsletter! Once again, please contact Stephanie or the church office for a form, and **return the completed form as soon as possible.** Thank you!

Crawfish Boil and Dessert Auction: We are excited to bring back our Annual Crawfish Boil and Silent Dessert Auction. It will be **Sunday, May 7, 2023** at **12:15 PM** in the Lighthouse.

Tickets are \$30 each for crawfish, potatoes and corn. Tickets for hamburger/hot dog & chips are \$9 each. Tea, water and lemonade will be served. **All tickets** (crawfish and hamburger/hot dog) **are dine-in ONLY.** Tickets may be purchased before worship starting Sunday, April 16, 2023 or from the church office. If you would like to send a dessert for the silent auction, please bring it to the Lighthouse that morning (May 7). Funds support the confirmation youth attending summer camp at Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp in Colorado and the high school youth summer retreat. Thank you for your support!



St. Paul Senior Explorers are in the “Honey”!! St. Paul Senior Explorers will be going to Bee Weavers of Navasota on **Thursday, May 11, 2023** for a tour and honey tasting. We will depart St. Paul at 9:45 AM, then eat an early Italian lunch at 11:00 AM at Joe's in Hempstead. We will then “buzz” on over to Bee Weavers of Navasota! The tour and tasting cost \$7.50 each. Please sign up in the narthex by Sunday, May 7, 2023. If you have any questions, please call Kevin Page at 979-732-0845.



CRAFTING CAMP: Students that enjoy making art and crafting are invited to this summer's Crafting Camp. Children who have completed the 2nd grade up to 8th grade are invited to come craft on **Thursdays starting June 1 to July 6, 2023 from 1:00-2:30 PM** in the Lighthouse. Led by Debbie Eaton and her crew, students will have the opportunity to make a different craft each week. *Space is limited to 10 students, and the cost is \$10 per student, which will cover the cost of their crafting supplies.* Register online at form.jotform.com/spolasek21/craftcamp or contact Stephanie Polasek at 979-732-1858. **For the Crafting Camp, we are in need of the following items:**

- Cardboard tubes from paper towels and toilet paper
- Crayons – broken pieces are great! (no matter the size)

Items may be dropped off in the church office between now and the end of May. If you have any questions, please contact Debbie Eaton at 512-757-2251. Thank you!

Stellar VBS!! Mark your calendars for “Stellar” VBS! Join us at Vacation Bible School **July 10-14, 2023** as kids go on a cosmic quest and have a blast shining Jesus' light to the world! A meal will be served 5:30-6:00 PM, and VBS will be held 6:00-8:30 PM. VBS is open to children in preschool up to students who have completed 5th grade. Registration is free, however, t-shirts will be available to purchase for \$8 each. *Space is limited so register early!* Parents may register their students online by visiting vbspro.events/p/spfu2023. If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858 or by email at stephaniepolasek@yahoo.com.

Be a Vacation Bible School Volunteer!! VBS is a wonderful way to connect with the youth and to share how God has worked in your life. Sharing your love for Christ with the younger generation can be a humbling and rewarding experience and can impact the youth in so many ways. Last year we hit our capacity of 100 students! This year we have increased our capacity to

125 students, but, in order to accomplish this, more volunteers are needed. We all have gifts to give no matter what age, and we invite you to join our team. You may register online by visiting vbspro.events/p/spfu2023. If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858 or by email at stephaniepolasek@yahoo.com.

• **VBS FOOD DONATIONS:** To help defray the cost, we are asking for donations to help with the meals served each evening before Vacation Bible School. We served about 200 kids and volunteers *each night* of VBS last year. If you would like to help, you can either give a **monetary donation or** donate **specific food items**. For monetary donations, an envelope will be on the table in the narthex (foyer) that can be placed in the offering bowl. If you wish to donate specific food items, just pull a slip off the board and return it with the donation on the date specified to the St. Paul Lighthouse. If you have any questions, please contact Loraine Gast at 979-732-1296. Each donation is and will be greatly appreciated. Thank you!

♣ **Day Camp at Lutherhill!** Youth completing K-5th grade are invited to experience a week at camp without the over-night stay during the week of **July 30-August 4, 2023**. Camp starts each day at 8:00 AM and will end at 5:15 PM. Stephanie Polasek will shuttle youth each day to and from camp. We will leave the church at 7:20 AM and will return at 5:50 PM. **Cost is \$195 for the week.** Register online at lutherhill.org and then contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858 for transportation. It's always a great time for the kiddos!

♥ **Grief Support Group:** Are you experiencing grief from the loss of a loved one, loss of a job, loss of friend who has moved? The Grief Support Group is a place to share and discuss these issues with other individuals. The group meets the **third Thursday of each month from 5:30-6:30 PM in the church library.** For questions or more information, contact Peggy Geisler at 979-732-0350.

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Mon., April 17 –	9:30 AM – Staff Meeting 1:00 PM – Deacon Sandye to TLC 6:00 PM – Church Council
Tues., April 18 –	10:00 AM – Pastor Alan to Columbus Oaks 12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library) 5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library) 6:30-8:00 PM – The Gathering
Wed., April 19 –	9:00 AM – CLA Chapel 9:00 AM – Morning Circle (library) 4:30 PM – Confirmation (2 nd yr.) 5:00 PM – Meal 5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation (1 st yr.), HS Youth
Thurs., April 20 –	5:30 PM – Grief Support Group (library)
Fri., April 21 –	10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)

Sat., April 22 – 8:30 AM-2:30 PM – Lutherhill Serve Day, Lutherhill (La Grange)
8:30 AM – Western Cluster WELCA Spring Gathering (Shelby)
7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

Next Sun., April 23 – 8:00 AM-12:30 PM – Blood Drive (Lighthouse)
9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship
6:00 PM – God's Gals at Blake's Kitchen & Kocktailz, Columbus

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Wednesday, April 19, 2023 **Olavus Petri, priest, died 1552; Laurentius Petri, Bishop of Uppsala, died 1573; renewers of the church**

These two brothers studied with Luther at the University of Wittenberg and then returned to their native Sweden to introduce the Lutheran reforms. Olavus published a catechism and hymnal; Laurentius was a professor who defended the office of bishop and later became one.

Friday, April 21, 2023 **Anselm, Bishop of Canterbury, died 1109**

This eleventh-century monk was one of the greatest theologians of the Middle Ages. He is remembered for emphasizing the maternal aspects of God, and for the theory that the Son of God became human in order to make the necessary payment for our sin.

Saturday, April 22, 2023 **Day of the Creation (Día de la Creación) (LLC)**

This observance invites us to notice and give God thanks for the wonders of the created universe. As stewards of that creation, we are also challenged to be careful in our use of it.

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OTHER READINGS: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

After the Holy Spirit comes to the apostles on Pentecost, Peter preaches the gospel to the gathered crowd. He tells them that Jesus, who obediently went to his death according to God's plan, was raised from the dead by God. Finally, he appeals to scripture, quoting Psalm 16:8-11, to show that Jesus is the Messiah: though crucified, the risen Jesus is now enthroned.

The reading begins:

^{14a}Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd], ²²“You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know — ²³this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. ²⁴But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. ²⁵For David says concerning him, ‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; ²⁶therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope. ²⁷For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. ²⁸You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness

with your presence.’ ²⁹“Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, ‘He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.’ ³²This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.”

PSALM: Psalm 16

¹Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you; I have said to the LORD, “You are my Lord, my good above all other.” ²All my delight is in the godly that are in the land, upon those who are noble among the people. ³But those who run after other gods shall have their troubles multiplied. ⁴I will not pour out drink offerings to such gods, never take their names upon my lips. ⁵O LORD, you are my portion and my cup; it is you who uphold my lot. ⁶My boundaries enclose a pleasant land; indeed, I have a rich inheritance. ⁷I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel; my heart teaches me night after night. ⁸I have set the LORD always before me; because God is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. ⁹My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spirit rejoices; my body also shall rest in hope. ¹⁰For you will not abandon me to the grave, nor let your holy one see the pit. ¹¹You will show me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy, and in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

OTHER READINGS: 1 Peter 1:3-9

This epistle was written to encourage Christians experiencing hardships and suffering because of their faith in Christ. The letter opens by blessing God for the living hope we have through Christ's resurrection even amid difficult circumstances and surroundings.

The reading begins:

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, ⁷so that the genuineness of your faith — being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire — may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: WELCOMED WITH OPEN ARMS

We are not told why Thomas is missing, but he asks for nothing more than the same experience of the risen Christ that the rest of the disciples had. By the grace of God, Jesus returns a second time and offers his body as living proof to Thomas.

In the presence of Jesus, Thomas discovers he did not need the proof he demanded. Thomas' story is our story. We are not always where we need to be. Sometimes we even find ourselves in places we should not be at all. But Jesus comes to us, seeking us out and giving us the gift of faith.

The resurrection promise can be heard through Peter's powerful preaching in the reading from Acts as well. Jesus will triumph over death. Peter points to Jesus' death on the cross, but what of the little ways we die? The loss of relationships, the ending of friendships, the pain of being alone and left out, the despair of losing a job, the doubt that comes on the heels of a negative diagnosis. Jesus comes to bring a holy peace and resurrection into the world in these times as well. This Sunday is an opportunity to proclaim the power of the resurrection and the grace of God, who welcomes both Thomas *and us*, with open arms.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

It is still Easter! The church keeps Easter for eight Sundays. The fifty days of the Easter season lead up to Pentecost. Each time we worship, individually and communally, we meet the risen Christ in word and sacrament, celebrating the resurrection. Welcome to worship! Come and rejoice with the disciple Thomas! Now, in one another, we encounter the Risen Christ.

Today's gospel reading is a transition story. Just like the first disciples, we also need help through our own transitions. We rely on a community of Christian friends and our shared stories to help us discover meaning. We learn to face our fears and greet renewed purpose. The resurrection of Jesus reorders human relationships.

The disciples were locked away. They withdrew out of fear. What makes you lock yourself away to withdraw from everyday life? While there is a wisdom and solitude in retreat, there becomes a turning point when you have to again join the larger community. Today's gospel is a turning point. Jesus, being "revealed" to the community, gives us strength through our belief and allows us to have "life in His name." Thomas is not criticized, he is not condemned. Instead Jesus loves Thomas back into a relationship and shows the disciples what the words "*Peace be with you*" mean when lived out.

Writer Seth Godin tells us that there are two kinds of skills, resources and tools: ones that get used up as you use them, and ones that get better when you use them. Because Jesus brings peace and Spirit-guided discernment, one believer's skepticism is turned to trust, and the followers are inspired toward mission in the world. When belief becomes practice, it builds and becomes more effective. If you've got something that benefits from use, from practice and community, use it and share it. When you do that, the gospel, by definition, will never get used up as you are made new in Christ.

KID STUDY:

Today, Jesus tells the disciples, "*Peace be with you. As the Father sends me, so I send you.*" Why do we share this greeting in worship? Why is that phrase such a big part of our faith expression? It is not meant to be just a greeting. Like Thomas and the other disciples, WE are

also disciples gathered around the Risen Christ. WE also share with one another the "peace that passes understanding" which we have received from Christ himself. No punishment, no criticism. When we believe in God and trust him we will have peace. Christ welcomes us with open arms, and asks that we do the same for other people.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

O Lord, I acknowledge and give thanks that you created in me your image so that I may remember, contemplate, and love you. But this image has been so effaced by the abrasion of transgressions, so hidden from sight by the dark billows of sin, that unless you renew and refashion it, it cannot do what it was created to do. Lord, I do not attempt to comprehend your sublimity, because my intellect is not at all equal to such a task. But I yearn to understand some measure of your truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand in order to believe, but I believe in order to understand. For I believe even this: that I shall not understand unless I believe. - Anselm [Anselm, Anselm of Canterbury, ed. Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1974), 93.]

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Next Week's Theme (April 22 & 23): Road to Emmaus – Jesus made known in breaking of bread

Next Week's Scriptures (April 22 & 23):

First Reading: Acts 2:14a, 36-41
"Receiving God's promise through baptism."

Psalm: Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19
"I will call on the name of the LORD." (Ps. 116:13)

Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:17-23
"Born anew through the living word of God."

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35
"Eating with the risen Christ."