

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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April 29 & 30, 2023

Fourth 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
Organist			Elena Holub

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 worshiping 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

Today we hear that Jesus is the “Good Shepherd.” Jesus is called the “gate” of the sheep in today’s gospel. The risen Christ opens the way to abundant life. He anoints our heads with oil and guides us beside the still waters of our baptism. Each Sunday he spreads a feast before us

amid the world’s violence and war. We go forth to be signs of the resurrection and extend God’s tender care to all creation.

PRELUDE

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

* **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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

C Amen.

P God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another, first privately then together publicly.

Silence for reflection and private confession of personal sins, then join in with combined voices this printed confession.

P Most merciful God,

C we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

* **HYMN ELW - #619 “I Know That My Redeemer Lives!” {stanzas 1, 3, 5, & 7}**

**1. I know that my Redeemer lives! What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead; he lives, my everliving head!**

3. He lives to grant me rich supply; he lives to guide me with his eye;
he lives to comfort me when faint; he lives to hear my soul's complaint.

5. He lives to bless me with his love; he lives to plead for me above;
he lives my hungry soul to feed; he lives to help in time of need.

7. He lives and grants me daily breath; he lives, and I shall conquer death;
he lives my mansion to prepare; he lives to bring me safely there.

CCLI Song #14180 Words: Samuel Medley Music: attr. John C. Hatton
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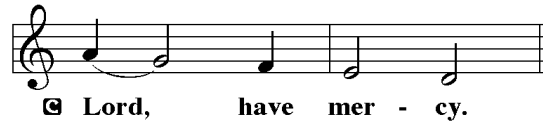
* **GREETING**

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

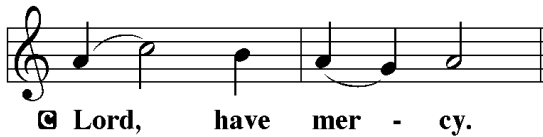
C And also with you.

* **KYRIE** *(Responses Sung)*

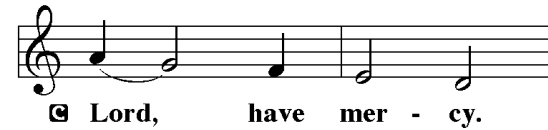
P In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



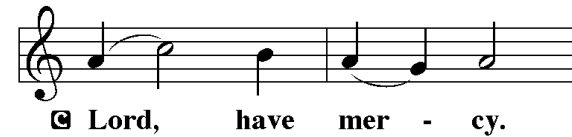
P For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



P 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.



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



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



* **HYMN OF PRAISE:**

P This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia.



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo - ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Acts 2:42-47

A Our first reading is from Acts, chapter 2, verses 42-47.

Today's reading is a description of life in the community following Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out on God's people. The new community is sustained in worship and fellowship, shares what they have, and ensures that everyone has enough.

The reading begins:

⁴²[The baptized] devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 23

A The Psalm today is Psalm 23. We will read the Psalm responsively. The congregation will please respond by reading the words in bold print.

¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

²**The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.**

³You restore my soul, O LORD, and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

⁴**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 2:19-25

A Our second readings is from 1 Peter, chapter 2, verses 19-25.

Doing the right things does not guarantee that one will not experience difficulties, hardships, rejection, or even suffering. Here Christ is presented as the model for our path of endurance and loyalty to God, particularly amid adversity.

The reading begins:

¹⁹It is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. ²⁰If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. ²¹For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

²²"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." ²³When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

A Please stand as you are comfortable for the gospel.

* **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** (Sung)



* **GOSPEL:** John 10:1-10

Jesus uses an image familiar to the people of his day to make a point about spiritual leadership. Those who listen to Jesus are led to abundant life.

P The holy gospel according to St. John, chapter 10, verses 1-10.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] ¹"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate.

Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

P The gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

* **HYMN ELW - #789 "Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us"**

- Savior like a shepherd lead us; much we need your tender care.
In your pleasant pastures feed us, for our use your fold prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us; we are yours.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us; we are yours.**
- We are yours; in love befriend us, be the guardian of our way;
keep your flock, from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear us children when we pray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear us children when we pray.**
- You have promised to receive us, poor and sinful though we be;
you have mercy to relieve us, grace to cleanse, and pow'r to free.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to you.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to you.**
- Early let us seek your favor, early let us do your will;
blessed Lord and only Savior, with your love our spirits fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us, love us still.**

CCLI Song #24078 Words: Dorothy Ann Thrupp Music: William Batchelder Bradbury
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OPPORTUNITY FOR HEALING:

Those who wish may come down the center aisle to the altar rail to receive the laying on of hands, prayer, and anointing with oil. Please respond by saying, "Amen" after the prayer. Please return to your seats by the side aisle.

While those who wish are coming forward for anointing and prayers, we will sing the following hymns:

▪ **ELW - #617 "We Come to You for Healing, Lord"**

- We come to you for healing, Lord, of body, mind, and soul,
and pray that by your Spirit's touch we may again be whole.**

2. **As once you walked through ancient streets and reached toward those in pain, come, risen Christ, among us still with pow'r to heal again.**
3. **You touch us through physician's skills, through nurses' gifts of care, and through the love of faithful friends who lift our lives in prayer.**
4. **When nights are long with wakefulness, through days when strength runs low, grant us your gift of patience, Lord, your calming peace to know.**
5. **We come to you, O loving Lord, in our distress and pain, in trust that through our nights and days, your grace will heal, sustain.**

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr. Music: Hugh Wilson Text ©2002 GIA Publications, Inc.

▪ **ELW - #614 "There Is a Balm in Gilead"**

REFRAIN:

*There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.*

1. **Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work's in vain, but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again. REFRAIN**
2. **If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul, you can tell the love of Jesus and say, "He died for all." REFRAIN**
3. **Don't ever be discouraged, for Jesus is your friend; and if you lack for knowledge, he'll ne'er refuse to lend. REFRAIN**

CCLI Song #234002 Text: African American spiritual Music: African American spiritual
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▪ **ELW - #656 "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"**

1. **Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the unity of heart and mind is like to that above.**
2. **Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers; our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.**
3. **We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear, and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.**
4. **From sorrow, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free; and perfect love and friendship reign through all eternity.**

CCLI Song #25369 Words: John Fawcett Music: Johann Hans Georg Nægeli
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PRAYER AFTER HEALING

- P** Let us pray,
Living God, through the laying on of hands and anointing, grant comfort in suffering to all who are in need of healing. When they are afraid, give them courage; when afflicted, give them patience; when dejected, give them hope; and when alone, assure them of the support of your holy people. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
- C** **Amen.**

*** 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 OF INTERCESSION

- 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** You are the shepherd who gathers us in your mighty and loving arms. Help your church to listen for your voice, especially when the voices of sin, idolatry, and oppression threaten to overpower us. Hear us, O God.
- C** **Your mercy is great.**
- A** You proclaim shepherding love, comfort, and protection for all people and all of creation. Direct leaders in our own time to learn from your example and instruction. Give them servant hearts, that they generously seek the good of all. Hear us, O God.
- C** **Your mercy is great.**
- A** You journey with us wherever our paths may lead. We pray for those feeling overwhelmed by anxiety or depression or suffering in any way. Hear us, O God.
- C** **Your mercy is great.**

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. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Ruth Beford; Dylan Baak; Steven Beettner; Carol Ripper; Kyndall Kuhn; Jannet Tilly; Nicole Roybal; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you
(Pause). Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

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. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great. {See all those we pray for on pages 15 & 16.}

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. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A You call your sheep by name and lead them through the valley of death. We give you thanks for those who have died and now dwell in your house forever. Be with those who mourn, and give them hope in the promise of resurrection. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P 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 The peace of the risen Lord be with you always.

C And also with you. (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.

* **OFFERTORY** (Sung)



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles-sing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be



fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u -



nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your



pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

* **OFFERING PRAYER**

P Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

* **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

* **LORD'S PRAYER**

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

**C 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**

P Come and receive from Jesus abundant life.

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.}

* **BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION**

P Now may the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C Amen.

* **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.

* **HYMN ELW - #764 "Have No Fear, Little Flock"**

1. **Have no fear, little flock; have no fear, little flock,
for the Father has chosen to give you the kingdom;
have no fear, little flock!**

2. **Have good cheer, little flock; have good cheer, little flock,
for the Father will keep you in his love forever;
have good cheer, little flock!**

3. **Praise the Lord high above; praise the Lord high above,
for he stoops down to heal you, uplift and restore you;
praise the Lord high above!**

4. **Thankful hearts raise to God; thankful hearts raise to God,
for he stays close beside you, in all things works with you;
thankful hearts raise to God!**

Text: Luke 12:32, stanza 1; Marjorie Jillson, stanzas 2-4 Music: Heinz Werner Zimmermann
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* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Follow your Shepherd Jesus.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

POSTLUDE

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USHERS: SAT: Harvey Poenitzsch; Bob Poenitzsch; Audrey Rester

SUN: Terrel & Robin Maertz; Ruth Bedford; Emily Brod

LAY READERS: SAT: Rhanda Lattimore

SUN: Debbie Yancey

ACOLYTES: SAT: Erich Cox

SUN: Calleigh Barrett

STREAMING:

SUN: Janel Barten

ALTAR GUILD: Gloria Ilse, Emily Brod and Charleen Andrus

WELCOME: With the psalmist we proclaim, "You prepare a table before me ... my cup overflows" (Psalm 23:5, NRSV). Welcome to worship as we praise and thank the Lord our Shepherd.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Nelma Strey and family in thanks for God's birthday blessings and in memory of Norman Strey.

● A big **THANK YOU** to all who purchased tickets and/or made a donation to our **Peru Team fundraiser dinner** held March 21, 2023. It was another huge success! We sold a total of 444 tickets – our total profit was \$2,508 counting ticket sales and donations. This money is earmarked for major improvements at our sister congregation's church in Cañete, Peru. We will be having another drive-thru dinner on Tuesday, June 13, 2023. Watch for more information in the coming weeks! Thank you again for your support. – *Peru Team* ☺

St. Paul Family, **Thank you all so much** for everything you have done and continue to do for us during Robert's hospitalization and time at home with this new challenge. Prayers, gifts, meals, lawn care, pet care – everything is so appreciated! We love you all! – ♥ *Robert & Sydney Eaton*

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: April 22 & 23, 2023 – 178

Contributions: April 22 & 23 – \$7,252.51

Power of One: April 22 & 23, 2023 – \$45.00

Building Fund: April 22 & 23 – \$465.73

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

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., April 26 – **84 Total**

BLAST/Confirmation: 70

Support Staff: 14

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: Kim Moerbe Welack; Misti Retzer; Zelda Lanford; Michelle Thraen; 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; Courtney Busselman.

Those in Care Facilities and Homebound: Robert Eaton; Linda Frank; Helen Hammack; Joey Denby; Edwin Oevermann; Paul Minar, Sr.; Adrian Fritsch; Doug Hill; 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; 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; Jan Willette; and Terri Neuendorff. **Active Duty Military:** Brian Anderson; Michael Grahm; 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.

♦ **DINNER & A MOVIE:** You are invited to Dinner & A Movie featuring “Jesus Revolution” **Sunday, April 30, 2023** at St. Paul Lighthouse. Dinner begins at 5:30 PM; the movie starts at 6:00 PM. **Please text your RSVP to Sammy at 281-513-8584 or sign up in the narthex (foyer).**

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 and after worship services or from the church office. **Deadline to purchase tickets is Sunday, April 30, 2023!!** 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!

* The **2023 National Day of Prayer** will take place **Thursday, May 4, 2023 at 12:00 PM** on the Colorado County Courthouse lawn. Please join in this opportunity to pray for our government, military, media, business, education, church, and family with local Christian leaders. *

Men In Mission: Men In Mission is a group of men of all ages who meet at **7:00 AM** on the first Saturday of each month in The Lighthouse. Breakfast is served, which typically includes conversations pertaining to sports, the arts, entertainment, and occasionally politics. We then have a short devotion, discussion, then close with the Lord's Prayer around 8:00 AM. If you are seeking a closer connection to the men of St. Paul, this is an excellent way to do so. You will make friends for life. Come join us on **Saturday, May 6!**

This year's **2nd year confirmation students** have decided to help the Gardenia E. Janssen Animal Shelter in La Grange, Texas. The facility cares for the abandoned, neglected, stray dogs and cats in the county. The animal shelter takes in on average 1,400 dogs and cats annually and they work tirelessly to enrich the lives of those in their care until they can find a new loving "forever" home.

It is our hope that we are able to receive donations including collars, toys and cleaning supplies. We are also accepting monetary donations to help fund medical expenses for the animals in the shelter. This organization is primarily funded by donations, grants, and fundraising. Please consider donating to this great cause.

We will collect donations at St. Paul before worship on Saturday, May 6th and Sunday, May 7th. On May 13th we will take our donations to the shelter where we will also walk and show love to all of the animals. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely, *Devin, Nate, Leira, Alex and Erich*



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. We will return to St. Paul around 3:00 PM.

Please sign up in the narthex by Sunday, May 7, 2023. If you have any questions, please call Kevin Page at 979-732-0845.

◆ **Meals to Heal** will hold our **next cook session on Monday, May 8, 2023 at 10:00 AM** in The Lighthouse kitchen. We will be making two main dish casseroles, bagging veggies, bagging cookies, and finally assembling meals to go in the freezer. Questions? Contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127.

**** Peru Team:** *Our next Peru Team meeting will be Thursday, May 11, 2023 at 6:30 PM in the church library. We will be finalizing details for our next fundraiser drive-thru dinner on June 13. Please join us! ***

● **Columbus Food Pantry:** It is time for our church to help at the Columbus Food Pantry! The dates are **May 18 & 19, 2023**. The Food Pantry is located at the First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 419 Washington Street. On **Thursday, May 18** the food delivery truck will arrive and grocery bags will be prepared; **please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help. **On Friday, May 19 the food will be distributed 9:00 AM-1:00 PM.** **Please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help with the food distribution. Please mark your calendars to help with this important community service! If you have any questions, please call Kathy Fleming at 979-732-4930 or Tom Fleming at 979-732-4107.



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:

Today (April 30) – 5:30 PM – “Dinner & A Movie” dinner (Lighthouse)
6:00 PM – Movie Jesus Revolution (Lighthouse)

Mon., May 1 – 9:30 AM – Staff Meeting
1:00 PM – Deacon Sandye to TLC
6:00 PM – Evangelism Team (library)

Tues., May 2 – 9:00 AM – Pastor Alan to Deanery
5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library)
6:30-8:00 PM – The Gathering

Wed., May 3 – 9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
12:00 PM – Ministerial Alliance
1:30-3:00 PM – Continuing Education (Lighthouse)
4:30 PM – Confirmation (2nd yr.)
5:00 PM – Meal
5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation (1st yr.), Adult Class & HS Youth

Thurs., May 4 – Stephanie to Youth Ministry Network
10:30 AM – Pastor Alan to The Oaks
12:00 PM – National Day of Pray (courthouse lawn)
5:30 PM – Youth & Education Team (library)
6:00 PM – Property Team (choir room)

Fri., May 5 – 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)

Sat., May 6 – 7:00 AM – Men In Mission (Lighthouse)
7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

Next Sun., May 7 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship
12:15 PM – Crawfish Boil & Dessert Auction (Lighthouse)

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Monday, May 1, 2023 Philip and James, Apostles

Philip was one of the first disciples of Jesus, and called Nathanael to "come and see." He later responded to an Ethiopian official's request for teaching and baptism. Little is known of James, the son of Alphaeus, called "the Less" to distinguish him from another apostle named James.

Tuesday, May 2, 2023 Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, died 373

Best remembered for defending the teaching that Christ was fully God against those who taught otherwise, Athanasius was an influential church leader around the time of the Council of Nicea. He was banished from Alexandria five times for his forthright views.

Thursday, May 4, 2023 Monica, mother of Augustine, died 387

Monica was married to a pagan husband who was ill-tempered and unfaithful, but whom she helped bring into the Christian faith. She repeated the influence on her son Augustine, who went on to become one of the greatest church teachers.

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SERVICE OVERVIEW: AN ABUNDANT LIFE

Abundant life is promised to those who follow Jesus. But what is meant by abundant life? Some Christians, and much of contemporary American culture, interpret an abundant life to mean the “good life” of many fine things, an opulent lifestyle. Much of our economy and leisure time

revolves around consumerism - shopping and buying things which we hope will make us happier and our lives better. But an abundance of things does not necessarily lead to an abundant life.

What does Jesus mean when he says that he came so that we may have an abundant life? Psalm 23 provides us with a good illustration of what Jesus is promising to his followers. The psalm imagines an abundant life not in material terms but in relational terms. An abundant life is one lived in the presence of God, in the company of the Lord. Whether one is in green pastures or the darkest valley, there is nothing to want, because God is present. We are in the gracious and generous care of our Lord through times of material abundance and in times of want and scarcity. This relationship between our Lord and us who are his followers is a relationship with one who knows us abundantly, who knows us by name, and who knows what we truly need to be fulfilled. The image of Jesus as our shepherd reminds us that he is with us at all times, and our relationship with him provides us all we need.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

It is the 4th week of the Easter season and today we hear how Jesus is the Good Shepherd. OUR shepherd. In this “figure of speech” as used in the Bible, shepherds represent the archetypal Israelite past, and sheep, far from being dirty and stupid, are gifts from God that give life to the community. Welcome to worship! Join the rest of the sheep to honor our good Shepherd, Jesus the Christ.

Modern times use the metaphor of people as sheep as derogatory, but in the bible, sheep signified the communal life of the people, constituted a source of food and clothing, and functioned as the primary sacrificial gifts to God. The single wandering lamb from the parable of the lost sheep is not the image in John 10. Nor is a bare-footed white-robed man a realistic depiction of the shepherd, who by the first century was thought of as lower-class and religiously unclean.

Jesus said, “I am the gate.” The theological significance of “I am” is profound in John’s gospel. It highlights the significance of God’s name as revealed to Moses in Exodus. What does Jesus mean when he says “I am the gate,” or even “I am the way, and the truth, and the life?” Unfortunately, these statements of Jesus have been weaponized at times against those who do not confess the name of Jesus. However, there is a wideness in God’s mercy, which embraces the whole of creation in love. Diversity and plurality are God’s gifts of grace for the world. No one can claim privilege or higher status in the name of Jesus. Neither can anyone deny another their right to human dignity and worth, because the equalizing fact is that we are all created in the image of God! Jesus’ interpretation during his earthly ministry was Love. When we prioritize this as our core theological principle and practice, we inch closer to the heart of God, in and through Christ.

Have you ever been someplace filled with lots of people and heard a child’s voice yell, “Mom!” or “Dad!” You might see a couple of heads turn the first time, but when the child yells a second time, often only the actual parent of the child turns their head. They all might be called Mom or Dad, but they know the voice of their child. This is the promise of the shepherd, the one who

calls us by name with a voice we recognize in spite of the cacophony and chaos and noisiness of the world.

This world can be hard and unfair. God does not promise an easy and smooth life. What God offers is a holy presence, walking with us through these days.

KID STUDY:

In ancient Israel, sheep were seen as a gift from God. They were as good as money. They served as a primary source of food - milk and meat - and of wool for clothing. Herded in large flocks, sheep needed the protection of a good shepherd, since predators like wolves liked to catch and eat them. Because sheep were so prized, they served as an offering (like we give our money, time, and talents to serve) to show gratitude to God. WE are like these sheep! WE are gifts from God who are ready to give of ourselves to serve our communities in some way.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

This true and good shepherd is calling your name. And has been since you drew your first breath. You know the voice. If you tilt your head and place your hand on your tender, broken, beautiful heart, you know the voice. It has always been there, under the clamor of insecurity and the cry of wolves and the murmurs of your own internal High Commission on Worthiness. The voice of the one who lays down his life for us who lays down his love is always right there saying: “you belong to me” “you belong” “you” The Lord is your shepherd; you shall not be in want. - Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber

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Next Week's Theme (May 6 & 7): No one comes to the Father but by me – Believe and do greater works than Jesus?

Next Week's Scriptures (May 6 & 7):

First Reading: Acts 7:55-60
“The martyrdom of Stephen.”

Psalm: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
“Into your hands, O LORD, I commend my spirit.” (Ps. 31:5)

Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:2-10
“God's people chosen to proclaim God's mighty acts.”

Gospel: John 14:1-14
“Christ the way, truth, and life.”