

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 30, 2023 Contemporary 11:05 Am

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

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.

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 The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not be in want.

C Yet our wants never seem to be satisfied.

P The Lord makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me besides still waters.

C Yet my life is not at peace and feels like I'm caught in raging waters, trying to stay afloat.

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

C Yet I seem to find myself lost and off the beaten path and not always doing the right thing.

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

C Yet in this valley, I do fear, even though I believe you are with me.

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

C Yet it seems that I have poured out of my cup and it seems empty, I'm tired and worn out.

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

C Yet surely, it feels like goodness and mercy seem to have given way to evil and past mistakes. We confess we need your help, your forgiveness.

P If you are truly sorry and asking God for help, here is the promise he commanded the leaders in his church to proclaim, "You are forgiven." May this forgiveness free you and help you to live; to live in Jesus' name.

C Amen.

GOSPEL SONG: WONDERFUL, MERCIFUL SAVIOR

Wonderful, merciful Savior. Precious Redeemer and friend;

Who would have thought that a Lamb could rescue the souls of men?

OH, You rescue the souls of men!

CHORUS:

***You are the one that we praise, You are the one we adore.
You give the healing and grace our hearts always hunger for.
Oh, our hearts always hunger for.***

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.*

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

[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.”

GOSPEL SONG: WONDERFUL, MERCIFUL SAVIOR

**Counselor, Comforter, Keeper. Spirit we long to embrace;
You offer hope when our hearts have hopelessly lost the way.
Oh, we've hopelessly lost the way!**

CHORUS:

***You are the one that we praise, You are the one we adore.
You give the healing and grace our hearts always hunger for.
Oh, our hearts always hunger for.***

**Almighty, infinite Father, faithfully loving Your own;
Here in our weakness You find us falling before Your throne.
Oh, we're falling before Your throne! CHORUS**

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CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

*** SERMON SONG: SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD**

**Spirit of the Living God, Spirit of the Living God
We only want to hear Your voice... we're hanging on ev'ry word.
Spirit of the Living God, Spirit of the Living God
We want to know You more and more... we're hanging on ev'ry word.**

CHORUS:

***'Cuz when You speak, and when You move, when You do what only You can do,
It changes us! It changes what we see... and what we seek.
When You come in the room, when You do what only You can do
It changes us! It changes what we see... and what we seek.***

**Spirit of the Living God, Spirit of the Living God
We're leaning into all You are... everything else can wait.
Spirit of the Living God, Spirit of the Living God
Come now and breathe upon our hearts... come now and have Your way.**

REPEAT CHORUS TO BRIDGE

BRIDGE:

**When You move, You move all our fears. When You move, You move us to tears.
When You move, You move all our fears. When You move, You move us to tears.
When You fall, we fall on our knees. When You fall, we fall at Your feet.
And when You fall, we fall on our knees. And when You fall, we fall at Your feet.**

LAST CHORUS:

***'Cuz when You speak, and when You move, when You do what only You can do,
It changes us! It changes what we see... and what we seek.
When You come in the room, when You do what only You can do,
It changes us! It changes what we see... and what we seek.
It changes everything!***

**Spirit of the Living God, Spirit of the Living God
We only want to hear Your voice... we're hanging on ev'ry word.**

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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.

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

- 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.

A brief silence.

- 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.

A brief silence.

- 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.

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.

A brief silence.

- A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Ruth Bedford; 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.

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 9 & 10.}

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 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.

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 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.

* **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 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.}

* **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: YES, HE CAN!**

**Sometimes I wonder, "Is He faithful? Does He see me in my trou-ble?
Does He understand?" Some-times I question if He's able.
Can He rescue? Can He save me again and again? But when I look back. . .**

CHORUS:

**Did He move every mountain? Did He part every sea? Yes, He did! So yes, He can!
(Oh, oh, oh) Did He defeat the darkness? Did He deliver me?
Yes, He did! So yes, He can! Whoa. . . Yes, He did! So yes, He can!
[2nd TIME TO BRIDGE]**

'Cause some-times those voices try to tell me I'm for-gotten,
and I've fallen too far from His hands. But I know what kind of God He is,
And I'm trusting in His promises. I'm believing and I'm singing, "Yes, He can!" **CHORUS**

BRIDGE

'Cause I've seen too much now I can't deny.
He's come through every single time.
From the beginning until the end. He did. . . He will. . . He can!

LAST CHORUS

**Did He move every mountain? Did He part every sea? Yes, He did! So yes, He can!
(Oh, oh, oh) Did He defeat the darkness? Did He deliver me?
Yes, He did! So yes, He can!
Did He move every mountain? Did He part every sea? Yes, He did! So yes, He can!
(Oh, oh, oh) Did He defeat the darkness? Did He deliver me?
Yes, He did! So yes, He can! Whoa. . . Yes, He did! So yes, He can!
Yes, He did! Yes, He can!**

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* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Follow your Shepherd Jesus. C **Thanks be to God, and we will.**

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USHERS: Kevin & Wendy Page
LAY READER: Wendy Page
STREAMING: Mike Maas
ALTAR GUILD: Laura Weido and Terri Brasher

ACOLYTE: McKayla Kahlden
POWER POINT: Dinah Jacobs

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 – **Contributions:** April 22 & 23 – \$
Power of One: April 22 & 23, 2023 – \$ **Building Fund:** April 22 & 23 – \$

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 Welneck; 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
Stephanie to Youth Ministry Network

Thurs., May 4 – 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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OTHER READINGS: Acts 2:42-47

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.

PSALM: Psalm 23

¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. ²The 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. ⁴Though 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. ⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

OTHER READINGS: 1 Peter 2:19-25

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.

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."