

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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August 14, 2022 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

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.*

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

INTRODUCTION

The word of God is a refining fire. Jesus is the great divide in human history. He invites our undivided attention and devotion. Today in worship we are surrounded by a great “cloud of witnesses.” In the word and in holy communion we are invited yet again to look to Jesus, “the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”

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.)

* **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P We believe that the Bible contains instruction for us as followers of Jesus Christ to do what he asked of us. He taught the first disciples to help others to confess their sins and to proclaim to them the promise of forgiveness afterwards. So let us take a few brief moments in silence to open our hearts and minds to Jesus, to confess the things that weigh heavy on our hearts and the things we need help with so we might be more in line with what Jesus commands.

(Silence for private confession.)

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: ALL THINGS NEW

**I've heard You can take what's broken, and make it whole again.
Well, here's the pieces of my heart, what can You do with them?
'Cause I can't hold them all to-geth-er any-more.
So I let them fall, surrendered, to the floor.**

CHORUS:

***You make all things new. You make all things new!
God of mercy and love, do what only You can do,
And make all things new.***

GOSPEL: Luke 12:49-56

Jesus delivers harsh words about the purifying and potentially divisive effects of obedience to God's call. The way of the cross often leads followers to encounter hostility and rejection, even from those they love.

A The holy gospel according to St. Luke, chapter 12, verses 49-56.

[Jesus said:] ⁴⁹I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! ⁵¹Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! ⁵²From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; ⁵³they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” ⁵⁴He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately

say, 'It is going to rain'; and so it happens. ⁵⁵And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. ⁵⁶You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"

GOSPEL SONG: ALL THINGS NEW

**Only You can take such beauty – from the depths of all my pain.
Only You can take this shattered heart – and make it beat again.
Oh, You hold us all together in Your hands.
I surrender all I have, and all I am.**

CHORUS:

***You make all things new. You make all things new!
God of mercy and love, do what only You can do,
And make all things new.***

BRIDGE:

**From the ashes, from the dust I will rise up, rise up!
Out of darkness, into the light I will rise up, rise up!
From the ashes, from the dust I will rise up, rise up!
Out of darkness, into the light I will rise up, rise up!**

LAST CHORUS:

**You make all things new. You make all things new!
God of mercy and love, do what only You can do.
And make all things, all things, You make all things new!**

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CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

*** SERMON SONG: ONLY JESUS**

**Make it count, leave a mark, make a name for yourself. Dream your dreams,
Chase your heart, above all else. Make a name the world remembers.
But all an empty world can sell is empty dreams. I got lost in the light
When it was up to me, to make a name the world remembers.
But Jesus is the only name to remember. . .**

CHORUS:

***And I – I – I, I don't want to leave a legacy. I don't care if they remember me, only Jesus.
And I – I – I, I've only got one life to live. I'll let every second point to Him, only Jesus.***
(SECOND TIME TO BRIDGE)

**All the kingdoms built – all the trophies won – will crumble into dust
When it is said and done. 'Cuz all that really matters: Did I live the
Truth to the ones I love? Was my life the proof that there is only one
Whose name will last forever?**

CHORUS:

***And I – I – I, I don't want to leave a legacy. I don't care if they remember me, only Jesus.
And I – I – I, I've only got one life to live. I'll let every second point to Him, only Jesus.***

BRIDGE:

**Jesus is the only name. Jesus is the only name. Jesus is the only name to remember.
Oh, Jesus is the only name. Jesus is the only name. Jesus is the only name to remember.**

LAST CHORUS:

**And I – I – I, I don't want to leave a legacy. I don't care if they remember me, only Jesus.
And I – I – I, I've only got one life to live. I'll let every second point to Him, only Jesus.
And I – I – I, I don't want to leave a legacy. I don't care if they remember me, only Jesus.**

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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 Trusting in God's extraordinary love, let us come near to the Holy One in prayer.

A brief silence.

A Arise, O God, and sustain your church. We pray for all who dedicate their lives to serving your people. Renew our commitment to our siblings in faith around the globe, and bless the work of our ecumenical and interfaith partners.

A brief silence.

- A Arise, O God, and sustain your creation. We pray for all places affected by natural disasters. Transform the devastation of floods and fires into fertile ground for new life and growth. Fill heaven and earth with your life-giving Spirit.

A brief silence.

- A Arise, O God, and sustain the nations. We pray for all elected officials. Kindle in them a desire to administer your justice. Strengthen their resolve to defend those who are vulnerable and to stand publicly against all forms of oppression.

A brief silence.

- A Arise, O God, and bring peace in Ukraine. Help to end this war and the destruction of lives and your creation. Change hearts, bring peace and show the world your existence.

A brief silence.

- A Arise, O God, and bring healing to those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Irene Noska; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you.

A brief silence.

- A Arise, O God, and bring strength and comfort to all those battling cancer. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)*
Melda Coleman; Bubba Bencal; Al Gene Canik; Jane Veghaus Taylor; George Wright; Elrose Kollatschny; Sarah Stancik; Larry Poenitzsch; Sandy Mosley; Charlene Tesch; Cynthia Coufal; Jeffrey McDaniel; 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; Tiffany Murley; DeQuincy Lister; Angela Mazoch; Lily Presswood; Denise Lange; Doug Mason; Dr. Tom Hancher; Joe Berry; Joyce Templeton; Gracie Brune; Margaret Rogers; Leonard Kahlden; Curtis Wallin; Megan Burch; Jennifer Aleman; Lisa Grazier; Phyllis Behrend; Jessica Mauchlen; Larry Guthrie; 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; and Brenda Baker.

- A Arise, O God. We pray for all expectant mothers, and especially for:
Mallory Dungen Cook; Madisyn Horndt Neumann; and Jessica Johnson that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace.

A brief silence.

- A Arise, O God, and bring caring and compassion for all those who reside in care facilities and the homebound. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)*
Adrian Fritsch; Don Morrison; Verna Coufal; Doug Hill; John Zwiegel; Robert Saunders;

Coy Dell Schindler; Deanna Lee; Doris Poppe; Barbara McMath; Linda Munos Rodgers; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Delores Purcell; Jane Booker; Curtis Berger; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Robert Eaton; Ronnie Rogers; Joyce Dehmer; and Donna Dehmer.

- A Arise, O God. We pray for all law enforcement officers and especially for Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; Luke Kanz; Bruno Flores; Zane Weido; Josh Jones; as well as Donnie Templeton and Jason Templeton who are also fire fighters. For all fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers and 9-1-1 dispatchers, especially Brent Gorman, Sr.; Brent Gorman, Jr.; Reid Brasher; 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, as well as those active duty military members including 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; and Kevin Gonzalez that they are protected and kept safe.

A brief silence.

- A Arise, O God. 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 Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, we remember the saints who have gone before us. May we run with perseverance the race set before us until we find our rest in you.

A brief silence.

- A Receive the prayers of your children, merciful God, and hold us forever in your steadfast love; through Jesus Christ, our holy Wisdom.

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 God of abundance: you have set before us a plentiful harvest. As we feast on your goodness, strengthen us to labor in your field, and equip us to bear fruit for the good of all. Bless our offerings to continue your work in this world, in the name of Jesus.

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 In Christ's presence there is fullness of joy. Come to the banquet.

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. Please keep 6 feet between those who are not your family members. 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 Life-giving God, through this meal you have bandaged our wounds and fed us with your mercy. Now send us forth to live for others, both friend and stranger, that all may come to know your love. This we pray in the name of Jesus.

C Amen.

* **BLESSING**

P The God of peace, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you, comfort you, and show you the path of life this day and always.

C Amen.

* **CLOSING SONG: BLESSED BE YOUR NAME**

**Blessed be Your name, in the land that is plentiful;
Where Your streams of abundance flow, blessed be Your name.
And blessed be Your name, when I'm found in the desert place;
Though I walk through the wilderness, blessed be Your name.**

PRE-CHORUS:

**Every blessing You pour out I'll turn back to praise!
And when the darkness closes in, Lord, still I will say,**

CHORUS:

***"Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be Your name!
Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be Your glorious name!"***

**Blessed be Your name, when the sun's shining down on me;
When the world's all as it should be, blessed be Your name.
And blessed be Your name, on the road marked with suffering;
Though there's pain in the offering, blessed be Your name.**

PRE-CHORUS:

**Every blessing You pour out I'll turn back to praise!
And when the darkness closes in, Lord, still I will say,**

CHORUS:

***"Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be Your name!
Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be Your glorious name!"***

**You give and take away. You give and take away.
My heart will choose to say, "Lord, blessed be Your name!" (x2)**

CHORUS

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* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace, with God's help.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

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USHERS: Gary & Donna Schindler
LAY READER: Walter Guthmann, Jr.
STREAMING: Mike Maas

ACOLYTE: Devin Oppermann
ALTAR GUILD: Lora Kuenstler

WELCOME: The Lord is a God nearby, not far off, Jeremiah tells us. Welcome, to each of you! God delights to draw near to you and rejoices when you come near to him.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Adrian & Virginia Fritsch in honor of their 66th wedding anniversary on August 12, Bill and Rhanda Lattimore's 37th wedding anniversary on August 17, and Bill Lattimore's birthday on August 8.

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: Aug. 6 & 7, 2022 – 146

Contributions: Aug. 6 & 7 – \$11,255.83

Power of One: Aug. 6 & 7, 2022 – \$48.00

Building Fund: Aug. 6 & 7 – \$855.33

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

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.*

**** NOTICE REGARDING BULLETINS:** Please take your bulletin home after worship. We will **not** be reusing them. Thank you! **

► **Children's Activity Bags** are available once again 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! ☺

♥ **From St. Paul Christian Learning Academy:** Hello, everyone! Our nursery is working on putting together **personal picture books** for each of our little ones. **We are currently in need of donations for scrap fabric materials.** We are needing material with different textures and colors, as well as any low loft batting and fusible material paper. We greatly appreciate anything that you are able to donate. We thank you so much for your help. Thank you, and God bless,

Mrs. Trisha {Please turn in your fabric donations to the St. Paul Christian Learning Academy office. Thank you!} ♥

CONFIRMATION INFORMATIONAL MEETING: Incoming 7th and 8th graders and their parents are invited to register their child for confirmation on **Thursday, August 18, 2022 at 6:00 PM in the sanctuary.** We will start off with information about confirmation and go over the calendar and requirements to become a confirmed member of St. Paul Lutheran Church. Confirmation is a two-year program designed to educate students on the Bible and small catechism as well as facilitate growth in a student's relationship with Christ. This meeting is for second-year confirmands as well and is an important meeting to attend. Please contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858 if you have questions before the meeting.

Back-to-School Blessing: We are sending our students and educators back to school with our prayers and blessings on **Saturday, August 20 and Sunday, August 21, 2022 at each worship service.** All children from pre-school through college are invited to bring their backpacks to worship and join us for the special time of blessing. All educators are encouraged to attend worship and join us in prayer for the new school year. The Youth & Education Team will also be presenting each student entering 3rd grade (and has not received a Bible) with a student Spark Bible and students beginning confirmation with a Here We Stand Study Bible and Student Book. Please join us on this weekend at worship to send each student and teacher into the school year with the support of our church family.



Acolyte Training: Becoming an acolyte is a wonderful way to serve God and your church. This year we would like to open up this opportunity to serve for youth of all ages able to reach the altar, able to pay attention to the flow of service and capable of assisting with communion trays. Typical age is 9-10 years old or third grade. Acolyte training will be held on **Sunday, August 21, 2022 at 10:00 AM in the sanctuary.** *Parents, please plan to attend this training with your child so that you may be able to help if there are questions later on. Please sign up in the narthex (foyer) or let Stephanie know you will be attending.* If your child is interested in becoming an acolyte but cannot make it to this training, please contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858.

BLAST Registration for 2022-2023 School Year is OPEN!!
Wednesday, August 24, 2022 will kick off our school year BLAST program! That means that every Wednesday night you and your family can come have a meal, have fun with your friends and grow closer to Christ. A meal will be served starting at 5:00 PM followed by classes from 5:30-6:30 PM in the Lighthouse. High School Youth Group will meet from 6:00-7:00 PM. Classes are divided by age group: PreK; K-1st; 2nd-3rd; 4th-6th; confirmation (7th-8th); high school; and adult Bible study. Bring your friends and strengthen your Belief in God, learn to Live a Christian life, and Share the Truth about the love of Jesus Christ! To register your student for BLAST, please visit <http://www.splctx.com> and click on the BLAST Registration link.

► **God' Gals:** Calling all women of St. Paul!! On **Sunday, August 28, 2022 at 6:00 PM** join us for our first ever **potluck salad supper at the St. Paul Lighthouse!** Bring your favorite salad and your recipe to share. Your salad can be veggie, fruit, gelatin, chicken, etc. – whatever you call a salad! Hope to see you there! Questions? Contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127.

● **Sr. Explorers Jumping Out of Airplanes!!** Hey, Explores! Anybody want to jump out of a perfectly fine airplane? I'm looking at Tandem Parachute Jumps at "SkyDive" at Fentress Airport between Luling and San Marcos. With training and jumping, we will be there about 4 hours. I'm thinking we leave early and get done before bad heat sets in sometime during the week in later August. **I'm polling the audience for interest of jumpers and supporters.** Hoping for 6-10 jumpers. It will cost about \$230 per parachuter. We're also looking for an Astro game in August. We've been fighting the heat with our event planning. The bus has the AC all fixed now. **Please call Kevin Page with questions or to RSVP a response of interest at 979-732-0845.**

** **Volunteers, please step forward!** We need volunteers to comprise the reestablished **St. Paul Lutheran Financial Review Team.** We need at least three congregational members to make this happen. The term is for three years, but we will start up again with a 1-year term member, a 2-year term member and a 3-year term member. You do not have to have a background in finances, but a sincere desire to serve the best interests of the congregation of St. Paul is highly recommended. If you have any questions, please contact Donna Maas at 713-775-6408 or any council member. To submit your interest to serve, please contact Donna Maas, any council member or Elena in the church office. God bless all of our many volunteers, and thank you! **

Colorado County Fair Concession Stand: The St. Paul Lutheran Youth and St. Paul CLA again have been given the opportunity to take on the concession stand this year at the Colorado County Fair. Last year was so much fun and such a beneficial fundraiser! We are excited to again be a part of this community event. However, it is a big task, and we will need your help. The fair is **September 8-10, 2022**, and **we will cover all three days from 7:00 AM-10:00 PM.** A shift and cooker schedule is posted in the narthex (foyer) along with other ways you can volunteer to help with this fundraiser. If you are a good cook, cashier, organizer, supply runner or just have a heart for serving, we need you! All proceeds will go to support the St. Paul Lutheran Youth programs and the St. Paul Christian Learning Academy. If you would like to know more or be a part of the planning team, please contact Stephanie Polasek at 979-732-1858.

Women of JOY: The Women of JOY Bible study group will start back **Monday, September 12, 2022.** We will meet every Monday at **6:00 PM in the Hackfeld Gathering Room.** Our topic will be "Living a Chocolate Life", and it is a 6-8 week study. Only the book by Deb Burma is needed for the group and can be purchased from Christianbook.com or Amazon. A daily devotional is optional to purchase for your personal use. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Gerri Hackfeld at 979-732-4711.



The **Noon Bible Study group** that meets on Tuesdays will be **taking a brief summer break during the month of August.** The group will resume meeting Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at noon in the church library. Hope to see you there!

♥ **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., Aug. 15 – 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Church Council

Tues., Aug. 16 – 5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library)
6:30-8:00 PM – The Gathering

Wed., Aug. 17 – CISD First Day of School!!
9:00 AM – Morning Circle (library)
9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
Newsletter Deadline!!

Thurs., Aug. 18 – 5:30 PM – Grief Support Group (library)
6:00 PM – Confirmation Meeting (sanctuary)

Fri., Aug. 19 – 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)

Sat., Aug. 20 – 7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship & Back-to-School Blessing

Next Sun., Aug. 21 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship & Back-to-School Blessing
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship & School Blessing

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Sunday, August 14, 2022 **Maximilian Kolbe, died 1941; Kaj Munk, died 1944; martyrs**
Father Kolbe was a Franciscan priest arrested by the Nazis and confined in Auschwitz. Kolbe gave generously of his meager resources, and finally volunteered to be starved to death in place of another man. A Danish Lutheran pastor and playwright, Munk strongly denounced the Nazis who occupied Denmark in the Second World War. His sermons and articles helped to show the anti-Christian nature of the movement.

Monday, August 15, 2022 **Mary, Mother of Our Lord**

The church (including Martin Luther) honored Mary with the title theotokos, meaning "God-bearer," for her role in giving birth to the Son of God. Her song, the Magnificat, speaks eloquently of God's lifting the lowly and feeding the hungry.

Saturday, August 20, 2022 Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, died 1153

Bernard, a Cistercian monk, was a man of great spirituality who wrote mystical works and criticized those whom he thought took an overly intellectual approach to the faith. He became an abbot, and wrote several hymns that are still beloved today.

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OTHER READINGS: Jeremiah 23:23-29

Because Jeremiah preaches the unpopular message of God's judgment, he suffers rejection. Today's reading distinguishes between the true prophet, like Jeremiah, who speaks God's word, and the false prophet who misleads the people through dreams. One is like wheat; the other like worthless straw.

The reading begins:

²³Am I a God near by, says the LORD, and not a God far off? ²⁴Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD. ²⁵I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, "I have dreamed, I have dreamed!" ²⁶How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back — those who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart? ²⁷They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. ²⁸Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the LORD. ²⁹Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

PSALM: Psalm 82

¹God stands to charge the divine council assembled, giving judgment in the midst of the gods: ²"How long will you judge unjustly, and show favor to the wicked? ³Save the weak and the orphan; defend the humble and needy; ⁴rescue the weak and the poor; deliver them from the power of the wicked. ⁵They do not know, neither do they understand; they wander about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. ⁶Now I say to you, 'You are gods, and all of you children of the Most High; ⁷nevertheless, you shall die like mortals, and fall like any prince.' " ⁸Arise, O God, and rule the earth, for you shall take all nations for your own.

OTHER READINGS: Hebrews 11:29 -- 12:2

The author of Hebrews presents us with rich stories of faith. In a long list of biblical heroes, we find examples of trust in God that enabled them to face the trials of life faithfully. In addition to this "cloud of witnesses," we have Jesus, the perfect model of faithful endurance.

The reading begins:

Chapter 11:

²⁹By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. ³⁰By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were

disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace. ³²And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets — ³³who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented — ³⁸of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. ³⁹Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

Chapter 12:

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: THE REALITY OF DIVISION

Throughout the Gospel of Luke, Jesus calls on his hearers to turn their hearts away from greed and instead to generosity, to turn away from anxious self-preservation and instead to faithful self-giving. But such practice rubs against humanity's deepest-seated sin, so conflict is born out of Jesus' peace-filled activity. Jesus' words and actions had already pitted him against the religious leaders and will lead him to the cross. Now, in today's gospel, Jesus speaks to the reality of that division.

His words unsettle us, yet they are spoken for a reason. In the reading from Jeremiah, God challenges the prophets who dole out lies and deceit and asks, how long until they turn their hearts back to me? This is a question of compassion and yearning for a restored relationship. Likewise, although Jesus' words are incendiary and speak of broken relationships, they are meant to prompt the people's faithful response: to lay aside anxiety and greed and to turn their hearts to the treasures of God's promised kingdom, where Christ takes division upon himself on the cross.

While fully aware of the realities of conflict and division, we are to live as hopeful people, praying fervently for God's compassion and for the restoration of right relationships.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Over the last weeks we have encountered lots of forgiveness in Luke's gospel, but today it is surprisingly harsh: being a believer brings not peace, but dissension. Welcome to worship! Listen. Pray. The bread and wine will strengthen us for our future, no matter what comes.

Jesus, at a clear breaking point, lashes out in this week's gospel - raging about how he is bringing "fire to the earth" and rebuking his most loyal supporters as "hypocrites" unable to perceive the implications of their mission. Our responses to breaking points reveal who we really are. Faithfulness to Christ and to the community of the baptized can be counter-cultural, unpopular, even divisive.

Luke is uncharacteristically severe about the need to remain faithful, no matter how long the wait or how intense the conflict. The early Christian movement brought about much family divisiveness. Many baptized members in the early Christian movement came as individuals, not in family units, and devotion to Christ might well mean dissension in the family. How would you feel if your husband or brother was a fisherman, providing much needed food, then one day simply picked up and left? Devotion to Christ can also mean dissension in the Church family itself – each denomination with their own set of beliefs and practices.

Luke's picture of the divided family contradicts many dreams about happy families united in faith. But have hope! Look around you. You likely know people in your congregation or broader community whose lives have been similarly fraught with challenge and strength. Is that person you? Remember this simple truth - the mighty ones of scripture were exactly the same as the mighty ones among us today. We are everyday people who hear and respond to God's call. It is that simple. It is that glorious.

KID STUDY:

Soon many of you will return to school, where you will be subjected to division upon division upon division. You may be judged on what clothes you wear, how your hair looks, what you say, how you walk, whether you are too smart, not smart enough, athletic enough, the list goes on and on. Even grown ups are constantly dividing each other into groups, the insiders and the outsiders, the good guys and the bad guys, Republicans and Democrats.

But Jesus is teaching us something about our identity – that means who we understand ourselves to be. We are children of God – fully loved by God and fully known by God. When we are touched with this kind of love we are no longer strangers, no longer slaves, no longer sinners, but sons and daughters. Then we can share the good news that God's love is for all people.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

God's love is inclusive enough and wide enough to upset those who want to limit love to a chosen few who follow a few cherry-picked and misconstrued rules and regulations about beliefs mixed with politics. God's love is radical enough and dangerous to threaten our own safety and security. It forces us to confront who we are, the evil we have done, left undone and done on our behalf. Not to make us feel guilty but to show us a way forward through our privilege and oppression of others and into right relationship with all of God's beloved children, our neighbors. It asks us to see our worth not in our wealth or in what we acquire, but in what we give away and in how much we love. God calls us to go out into the world and proclaim that this unconditional and unbounded love of God is for all. You are God's beloved, whoever you are, wherever you

are, however you are. This good news does indeed cause division. Will it cause division to stand with those our dominant society deems unworthy: the marginalized, the poor, the oppressed? Will it cause division to go out into the world and proclaim this unconditional and unbounded love of God for all? Most certainly. - David Roberts

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Next Week's Theme (Aug. 20 & 21): Jesus heals on the Sabbath day; breaks Jewish Law

Next Week's Scriptures (Aug. 20 & 21):

First Reading: Isaiah 58:9b-14

"Do not trample the sabbath, but feed the hungry."

Psalm: Psalm 103:1-8

"The LORD crowns you with mercy and steadfast love." (Ps. 103:4)

Second Reading: Hebrews 12:18-29

"You have come to the city of the living God and to Jesus."

Gospel: Luke 13:10-17

"Jesus heals a crippled woman on the sabbath and is condemned."