

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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August 20, 2023 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Twelfth Sunday of Pentecost

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

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

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

In Isaiah we hear that God’s house shall be a house of prayer for all people and that God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The Canaanite woman in today’s gospel is a Gentile, an outsider, who is unflinching in her request that Jesus heal her daughter. As Jesus commends her bold faith, how might our church extend its mission to those on the margins of society? In our gathering around word and meal we receive strength to be signs of comfort, healing, and justice for those in need.

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 – Property Team

* **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P Even though this service is a contemporary service, there were certain things that God gave to humanity in matters of a worship service. The singing of songs about faith, reading scriptures, lifting prayers, sharing our resources for God to reach the lives of others and confessing our sins. In our gospel today, Jesus says what defiles a person is what comes out of the mouth that proceeds from the heart. Let us confess where we have wronged others, ourselves and not forgiven as we are forgiven. After a brief moment of private confession, we will gather again to hear the promise of absolution and forgiveness.

(Silence for private confession.)

P God is a cup of cold water when we thirst. God offers boundless grace when we fail. Claim the gift of God’s mercy: you are freed and forgiven in the name of ☩ Jesus Christ.

C Amen.

GOSPEL SONG: HEART OF THE FATHER

**I've never known a love like Yours. So intimate, so powerful.
And I've tasted and I've seen, but nothing comes close.
I've never known a love like Yours.**

CHORUS

**Jesus, Your name is power. It’s breath and living water.
And Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.
Let your praise ring louder ev’ry day and ev’ry hour.
’Cause Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 15:[10-20] 21-28

Jesus teaches his disciples that true purity is a matter of the heart rather than outward religious observances. Almost immediately, this teaching is tested when a woman considered to be a religious outsider approaches him for help.

A The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 15, verses 10-28.

[10]Jesus called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and understand: ¹¹it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.” ¹²Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when

they heard what you said?” ¹³He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.” ¹⁵But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.” ¹⁶Then he said, “Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”] ²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” ²³But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” ²⁴He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” ²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” ²⁶He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁷She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

GOSPEL SONG: HEART OF THE FATHER

**I've never felt at home like this. Just like a child, so innocent.
And I'm safe inside Your arms, 'cause You won't let go.
I've never known a love like Yours.**

CHORUS

***Jesus, Your name is power. It's breath and living water.
And Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.
Let your praise ring louder ev'ry day and ev'ry hour.
'Cause Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.***

BRIDGE

**We sing praise. God, we sing praise.
God, we sing praise. We sing praise.
We sing praise! We sing praise!
We sing praise! We sing praise!**

LAST CHORUS ~

***Jesus, Your name is power. It's breath and living water.
And Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.
Let your praise ring louder ev'ry day and ev'ry hour.
'Cause Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.
Jesus, Your name is power. It's breath and living water.
And Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.
Let your praise ring louder ev'ry day and ev'ry hour.
'Cause Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.***

END

Sing praise. . . Sing praise!

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CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

*** SERMON SONG: THERE WAS JESUS**

**Every time I tried to make it on my own,
Every time I tried to stand and start to fall.
All those lonely roads that I have traveled on. . . there was Jesus.
When the life I built came crashing to the ground,
When the friends I had were nowhere to be found.
I couldn't see it then, but I can see it now. . . there was Jesus.**

CHORUS

***In the waiting, in the searching, in the healing and the hurting;
Like a blessing buried in the broken pieces.
Every minute, every moment of where I've been or where I'm going;
Even when I didn't know it, or couldn't see it. . . there was Jesus.***

**For this man who needs amazing kind of grace,
for forgiveness at a price I couldn't pay.
I'm not perfect, so I thank God every day. . . there was Jesus.**

CHORUS

***In the waiting, in the searching, in the healing and the hurting;
Like a blessing buried in the broken pieces.
Every minute, every moment of where I've been or where I'm going;
Even when I didn't know it, or couldn't see it. . . there was Jesus.***

BRIDGE

**On the mountain, in the valleys. . . (there was Jesus)
In the shadows of the alleys. . . (there was Jesus)
In the fire, in the flood. . . (there was Jesus)
Always is and always was, oh. . .
No, I never walk a-lone. You're always there.**

LAST CHORUS ~

In the waiting, in the searching, in the healing and the hurting;

Like a blessing buried in the broken pieces.

Every minute, every moment of where I've been or where I'm going;

Even when I didn't know it, or couldn't see it. . . there was Jesus. . .

There was Jesus. . . There was 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 Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

A You call leaders to bridge differences and practice generosity. Inspire all in authority to protect people in harm's way, deliver those in bondage, support fair elections, and show mercy to those for whom they have responsibility.

A brief silence.

A We pray for farmers and ranchers as they continue to work hard to bring us food in this time of drought. Bless them as they sow crops and care for livestock. Send us rain to heal the earth and water to quench Your thirsty land. Let faith be born from our doubts, hope from our despair, and compassion from our troubles.

A brief silence.

A We pray for peace in all the world, especially in war-torn areas of Ukraine, Sudan and Niger. Bring an end to wars and the destruction of lives and your creation.

A brief silence.

A We pray for the family and friends of Donna Culton, Gerion Nelson and Juanita Luedecke who passed away this past week. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time.

A brief silence.

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

Edna Supak; Ed Thraen; George Krenek; Virginia Fritsch; Eugene Darden; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those battling cancer and especially for:

Ann Dimas; Carl Geisler; Laura Walla; Dorothy Wicke; Randy Wendt; Heather Deviney; Michelle Thraen; Lydia Rojas; Paul Casinger; Dr. Tom Hancher; Leonard Kahlden; and Bob Loy that they may know comfort and strength.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all expectant mothers, and especially for:

Olivia Leyendecker; Cassidy Zajicek Parks; Courtney Busselman; Nancy Gorman; Camille Stancik; and Kyndall Beettner that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those who reside in care facilities and the homebound and especially for:

Melvin Otto; Joey Denby; Edwin Oevermann; Paul Minar, Sr.; Adrian Fritsch; Coy Dell Schindler; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Jane Booker; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Ronnie Rogers; Joyce Dehmer; Donna Dehmer; and Cherie Moore that they receive your caring and compassion.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all law enforcement officers, fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers, 9-1-1 dispatchers, and active duty military personnel that they are protected and kept safe.

(Pause for those we are praying for.)

Law Enforcement Officers: Charles Jobb; Joseph Smith; Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; 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.; Kyle Burris; Dylan Walcik; Travis Neuendorff; Brenda Henkes; Jan Willette; and Terri Neunendorff, as well as those active duty military members including Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Dalton Kapel; and Kevin Gonzalez.

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 their leader Armando Capcha and Iglesia Cristiana Camino de Santidad and their leaders Pastors Gumer and Naomi Anton 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 We give you thanks for those who now rest from their labors. Motivate us by their lives of dedication to the gospel, until that day when we join with them in our eternal home.

A brief silence.

A Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the name of the one who reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our Savior.

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 field and forest, sea and sky, you are the giver of all good things. Sustain us with these gifts of your creation, and multiply your graciousness in us with what we give back to your work, that the world may be fed with your love, through 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 All people are called to Christ's table. Come and receive Jesus.

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 We thank you, generous God, for the refreshment we have received at your banquet table. Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world, through the one who is our dearest treasure, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

*** BLESSING**

P Go into the world in peace! And take peace to a world that desperately needs it. Go into the world in faith! Trusting God to lead you, trusting people to receive you. Go into the world with hope! With God's presence before you and human dreams to carry you. Go into the world with love! Serving with those in whom Christ lives, and laboring for those for whom Christ died. Go in peace, faith, hope and love!

C Thanks be to God! Amen.

*** CLOSING SONG: I REFUSE**

**Sometimes I, I just want to close my eyes
And act like everyone's alright, when I know they're not.
This world needs God, but it's easier to stand and watch.
I could pray a prayer and just move on.. like nothing's wrong.
But I refuse...**

CHORUS:
Cuz' I don't want to live like I don't care.
I don't want to say another empty prayer.
Oh, I refuse to... sit around and wait for someone else
To do what God has called me to do myself.
Oh, I could choose not to move, but I refuse!

I can hear the least of these, crying out so desperately
And I know we are the hands and feet of You, oh God.
So if You say move, it's time for me to follow through
And do what I was made to do, and show them who You are.

CHORUS

... to stand and watch the weary and lost cry out for help
I refuse... to turn my back and try and act like all is well
I refuse... to stay unchanged, to wait another day to die to myself
I refuse... to make one more excuse...

CHORUS:
Cuz' I don't want to live like I don't care.
I don't want to say another empty prayer.
Oh, I refuse to... sit around and wait for someone else
To do what God has called me to do myself.
Oh, I could choose not to move, but I refuse!

I refuse... I refuse...

CCLI Song #5910135 Words and Music by Josh Wilson and Ben Glover.
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*** DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. You are loved

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

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USHERS: Mike & Gerri Hackfeld; Sandi Roensch
LAY READER: Courtney Bussleman
STREAMING: Kay Wesson
SOUND: Todd Jacobs & Sydney Eaton

ACOLYTE: Hudson Muir
POWER POINT: Peggy Geisler
ALTAR GUILD: Lora Kuenstler

WELCOME: Paul writes: "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29, NRSV). God has called you, so receive his gifts for you today: his love, his forgiveness, his life.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Charlene Morrison in loving memory of husband Don Morrison for the anniversary of his August 18th birthday and in honor of daughter Linda Morrison for her August 3rd birthday.

ADDITIONAL FLOWERS are placed by George & Edna Bergfeld in thanks for God's many blessings and in celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary on August 18.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Debbie Hernandez and family for the loss of her brother-in-law Gerion Nelson. May God comfort them during their time of loss.

We also extend our Christian sympathy to the family and friends of Juanita Luedecke who passed away August 17, 2023. May God comfort them during their time of loss.

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. 12 & 13, 2023 – 215

Contributions: Aug. 12 & 13 – \$8,177.01

Power of One: Aug. 12 & 13, 2023 – \$34.00

Building Fund: Aug. 12 & 13 – \$233.23

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.*

► **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! ☺



PRAYER LISTS: As you know from recent church and bulletin announcements as well as the August newsletter, we asked for your help to update our prayer lists. As of August 15, our lists have been cut down considerably. If you would like to have someone added back to the lists, please contact the church office. You can stop by in person, call at 979-732-2423 or send an email to admin@splctx.org. Thank you!



A Trip to the Ball Game
ST. PAUL SENIOR EXPLORERS ARE GOING TO THE ASTROS! The Astros will be playing the Boston Red Sox on **Thursday, August 24, 2023**. Game time is 1:10 PM. We will **depart St. Paul at 10:00 AM**, stop and eat brunch at Cracker Barrel, and arrive comfortably at Minute Maid Park before game time. The grey area is that we think we can get pretty good tickets for \$30-\$50, depending on how many are going and the Astros' performance. We will call everyone before buying tickets if they are going to cost more than that. Call Kevin Page with any questions at 979-732-0845.

► **New Members/Informational Class:** Are you interested in joining St. Paul Lutheran Church or just getting more information about the ministries here? If so, come to the next New Members/Informational Class on **Saturday, August 26, 2023 from 9:00-11:30 AM**. We will meet in the church library. Please let the church office (979-732-2423) know that you are planning to attend.

◆ **God's Gals** will meet **Sunday, August 27, 2023 at 6:00 PM at Los Cabos** in Columbus for food, fellowship, and visiting!! All women of St. Paul Lutheran are invited. Bring a friend! Questions? Please contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127. ◆

Men In Mission: Men In Mission is a group of men of all ages who meet each month in The Lighthouse. Breakfast is served, which typically includes conversations pertaining to sports, the arts, entertainment, etc.. We then have a short devotion, discussion, then close with the Lord's Prayer. 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, September 9, 2023 at 8:00 AM!**



Colorado County Fair Concessions!! The St. Paul Lutheran Youth and St. Paul Christian Learning Academy once again have been given the opportunity to take on the concession stand this year at the Colorado County Fair. This is such a beneficial fundraiser and a lot of fun working with everyone! 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 carnival and rodeo will be **September 14, 15, & 16, 2023**, and we will cover all three days from **3:00 PM to 10:00 PM**. A shift and cooker schedule is posted in the narthex (foyer) as well as 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.

♥♥ Our next **Marriage Course** will be every Sunday, **September 17-October 29, 2023**. On these Sunday nights from **6:00-8:00 PM** in the Lighthouse this seven-week course will take place. We realize that strong marriages make strong families, and strong families make strong communities. The Marriage Course is relevant for any couple wanting to invest in their

relationship and make it stronger. Whether you have been married four months, 40 years or cohabitating and not married; you feel your marriage is fine, good, great, struggling or stuck; this course is for you. The course is more like a date night. There will be dinner and dessert mixed in with video presentations and discussion questions for you and your partner. You will not be asked to share anything about your relationship with anyone but your partner. **Cost is \$150** – this includes meals, workbooks and video materials. If you need childcare, the cost is an additional \$35 for the seven weeks. This course is limited to 11 couples. Sign up in the office or call Elena Monday-Friday during business hours to get your name on the list. When you sign up, please indicate if you will need childcare.



CONNECTED TO CHRIST: It's the beginning of a new school year, and we need **names and addresses for all of our 2023 high school graduates and all others that are still in college!** Connected to Christ is a ministry of St. Paul that keeps our new graduates and college students connected to St. Paul with fun, Christian-based mailings four times a year. So students and/or family members, please send the name and address of your student to either Terri Brasher at (979)-732-1127, Stephanie Polasek at (979)-732-1858 or the church office. Thank you!



Pictures Needed!! I am in the process of changing all song backgrounds to royalty-free pictures for Power Point. Please send me any pictures of backgrounds (trees, rivers, oceans, mountains, etc.) you may have taken on your vacation. You can email them to peggeisler@gmail.com. Thanks! – *Peggy Geisler*

♥ **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 (Aug. 20) – 10:00 AM – Acolyte Training (sanctuary)
Mon., Aug. 21 – **CLA Preschool Begins!!**
 9:30 AM – Staff Meeting
 1:00 PM – Deacon Sandye's Group to TLC
 6:00 PM – Church Council
Tues., Aug. 22 – 9:00 AM-12:00 PM – Quilters (Lighthouse)
 12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
 6:00 PM – CLA Board

Wed., Aug. 23 – 9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
10:00 AM – Deacon Sandye's Group to Columbus Oaks
2:00 PM – Deacon Sandye's Group to The Oaks
5:00 PM – Meal
5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation & HS Youth

Thurs., Aug. 24 – 10:00 AM – SR. Explorers to Astros Game, Houston
10:00-11:30 AM – Manna for Moms (Lighthouse)

Fri., Aug. 25 – 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)

Sat., Aug. 26 – 9:00-11:30 AM – New Member Class (library)
7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

Next Sun., Aug. 27 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship
6:00 PM – God's Gals to Los Cabos, Columbus

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Sunday, August 20, 2023 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.

Thursday, August 24, 2023 Bartholomew, Apostle

Mentioned as one of Jesus' disciples in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Bartholomew's name is replaced in John's gospel by Nathanael, leading many to believe that the two are different names for the same person. Little is known about his work, though some traditions place him later in India or Armenia.

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OTHER READINGS: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

The prophet calls upon Israel to do justice in view of God's imminent intervention to save. Righteousness and obedience define who belongs to the Israelite community — not race, nationality, or any other category.

The reading begins:

¹Thus says the LORD: Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. ⁶And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant — ⁷these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. ⁸Thus says the Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered.

PSALM: Psalm 67

¹May God be merciful to us and bless us; may the light of God's face shine upon us. ²Let your way be known upon earth, your saving health among all nations. ³Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. ⁴Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the nations on earth. ⁵Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. ⁶The earth has brought forth its increase; God, our own God, has blessed us. ⁷May God give us blessing, and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

OTHER READINGS: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

God has not rejected Israel. Rather, the call and gifts of God are irrevocable so that, while all have been disobedient, God has mercy upon all.

The reading begins:

[Paul writes:] ¹I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ^{2a}God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. ²⁹For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. ³²For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: PERSISTENT BEGGARS

Marginalized like the Canaanite woman or not, we are all beggars before God. Paul reminds the Romans that all are “imprisoned in disobedience” and dependent on God. In light of that stark truth, our sense of “insider” and “outsider” should crumble in the face of our common need and God's abundant mercy to all. Instead of dividing people between those who have a place at the table and those who get crumbs, we have an opportunity to share hospitality with our fellow beggars.

It can be challenging to see ourselves as beggars. Today the Canaanite woman becomes our model, as she persists with both humility and audacity. As disciples of Jesus and “beggars” for God's grace, we live the same paradox of humility and audacity, boldly coming to Jesus and humbly acknowledging our need. Even though crumbs from God's table would be enough for us, we are offered instead the abundance of Jesus' own self in bread and wine and invited to share this abundance with insider and outsider alike.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

A beggar's faith focuses not on what is accomplished or believed, but rather on what is *received*: *the healing and sustenance desperately longed for and needed*. Today, an outsider argues her case before Jesus. In the end, she is blessed. Welcome to worship! Join all the other beggars for mercy at the Master's table.

The Canaanite woman is desperate. She begs for Jesus' healing for her daughter. She is denied a place at the table at first, but she will accept even “crumbs” in the faith that Jesus' healing power and love are intended even for her. As an outsider, she is stuck in the margins of Jesus'

mission to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Jesus’ eventual response to her beggar’s faith reveals that the love of God encompasses *even* the margins.

Jesus says, “It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.” Reflect on a time you said something you wished you hadn’t said. How might you have spoken differently? Next time you encounter a similar situation, how might you approach your speech with more care? As baptized children of God, we are called to stretch ourselves beyond our comfort zones to radically love and advocate for the care and respect of all God’s creation. As a church, we are to reach out to those on the margins of society.

“For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples” (Isaiah 56:7). It is always tempting to find ways to keep people out. We find reasons for those on the inside to belong and those on the outside to be kept at a distance. Isaiah offers this reminder throughout the second reading: God’s intention is a blessing for all the peoples of the earth. Jesus forces us all to take a good hard look at our own actions. We are all responsible for the words coming out of our mouths and the decisions we make. Thanks be to God that our hope is not in our own righteousness but in the grace of God coming to us through the cross!

KID STUDY:

Do you have a dog? Do you ever feed them scraps from the table? Most veterinarians say that you should not feed your dog table scraps. Why? They say that table scraps are not intended for dogs and may not provide what a dog needs. That may be true, but just try to convince your dog of that as they sit by the table watching you enjoy a cheeseburger. The meal was not intended for your dog, but that doesn’t keep them from sitting by the table, begging for a little scrap, hoping that just one small bite might fall on the floor. Keep that picture in your mind as you listen to our Bible lesson today.

When Jesus came to earth, he came to preach and teach first to the Jewish people. That does not mean that He didn’t love the other people of the world, but the first priority in his ministry on earth was to reach out to the Jewish people, who were considered to be chosen. When other people saw Jesus healing the sick and lame, they also followed him wherever he went. One day a woman who was not Jewish came to Jesus and asked him to heal her daughter. Jesus explained to the woman that his first mission on earth was to preach to the people of Israel. The woman refused to give up. She came closer, knelt down, and begged, *“Please help me, Lord!”* Jesus was so touched by her faith, he healed her daughter. Even though Jesus came first to the Jew, he loved us so much that he shared his love with all of us. Give thanks today that God shared Jesus with the whole world!

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

Be faithful in prayer, and in the fulfillment of this duty, you will find all the rest sustained and rendered easy. If you are a sinner, pray: it was through prayer alone that the publican and the sinful woman obtained the grace of a thorough penitence. If you are righteous, still pray: by prayer Job and David persevered to the end. If you live amid sinners, and your duty does not permit you to withdraw yourself from the sight of their irregularities, pray; the three children in the

flames, and Jonah in the belly of a monster, found safety only through prayer. If you live in retirement, pray: solitude itself becomes a rock if a continual intercourse with God does not defend us against ourselves. If established in the church for the instruction of the people, pray: all the power and success of your ministry depends upon your prayers. However you are, in prosperity or in indigence, in joy or in affliction, in trouble or in peace, in fervency or in despondency, pray. Prayer is the safety of all stations, the consolation of all sorrows, the duty of all conditions, the soul of piety, the support of faith, the grand foundation of religion. - Jean Massillon [Jean Massillon, in 20 Centuries of Great Preaching, ed. Clyde E. Fant, Jr. and William M. Pinson, Jr. (Waco, TX: Word, 1971), II, 446-447.]

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Next Week's Theme (Aug. 26 & 27): Peter's confession / Jesus is the Christ

Next Week's Scriptures (Aug. 26 & 27):

First Reading: Isaiah 51:1-6

“The enduring foundation of God's salvation.”

Psalm: Psalm 138

“O LORD, your steadfast love endures forever.” (Ps. 138:8)

Second Reading: Romans 12:1-8

“One body in Christ, with gifts that differ.”

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

“The profession of Peter's faith.”