

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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

February 11 & 12, 2023

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

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

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

In today's reading from Deuteronomy we are called to choose life by loving and obeying God. Much of today's gospel reading echoes portions of the Ten Commandments. Jesus' instructions to the crowd reveal a pattern of behavior that honors both God and the neighbor, resulting in life

and health for the whole community. We too are invited to embrace these commandments, not out of fear of retribution, but because God has promised that to do so means life for us.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE PADS

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

INSTALLATION OF CHURCH COUNCIL AND CLA BOARD MEMBERS (Sat., 7:00 PM)

* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who makes all things new, whose mercy endures forever.

C Amen.

P Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin, first privately then together publicly.

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

P Holy One, source of our renewal,

C ***we confess that we are wrapped up in sin, and cannot free ourselves. We have not practiced your righteousness. Our hearts, at times, have turned away from you. For the sake of the world you so love, forgive us, that we may be reconciled to one another for the glory of your holy name. Amen.***

P Thus says our God: "The former things have come to pass and new things I now declare." God's mercy makes us new. We are forgiven in the name of ☩ Christ our Savior.

C Amen.

* HYMN ELW - #603 "God, When Human Bonds Are Broken"

1. ***God, when human bonds are broken and we lack the love or skill to restore the hope of healing, give us grace and make us still.***

2. ***Through that stillness, with your Spirit come into our world of stress, for the sake of Christ forgiving all the failures we confess.***

3. ***You in us are bruised and broken: hear us as we seek release from the pain of earlier living; set us free and grant us peace.***

4. ***Send us, God of new beginnings, humbly hopeful into life. Use us as a means of blessing: make us stronger, give us faith.***

5. Give us faith to be more faithful, give us hope to be more true,
give us love to go on learning: God, encourage and renew!

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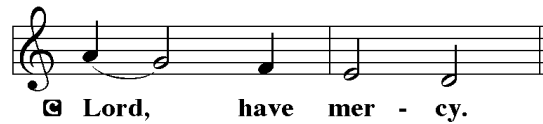
* GREETING

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

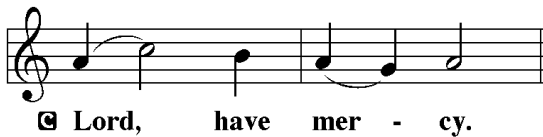
C And also with you.

* KYRIE (Responses Sung)

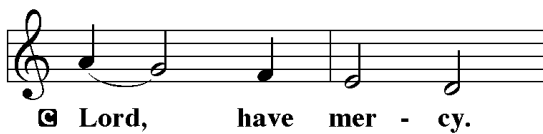
P In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



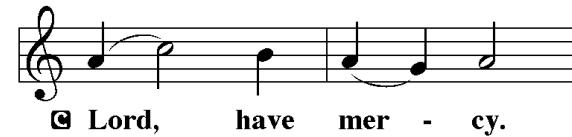
P For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



P For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



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



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



* PRAYER OF THE DAY

P O God, the strength of all who hope in you, because we are weak mortals we accomplish nothing good without you. Help us to see and understand the things we ought to do, and give us grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

A Our first reading is from Deuteronomy, chapter 30, verses 15-20.

The LORD sets before the people of God a clear choice. Life and prosperity will come to the faithful; loss of the land will be the consequence of disobedience. Choosing life entails loving and holding fast to the Lord. Life in God's presence presupposes the promise made to the ancestors.

The reading begins:

[Moses said to the people:] ¹⁵See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. ¹⁶If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. ¹⁷But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, ¹⁸I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 119:1-8

A The Psalm today is from Psalm 119, verses 1-8. We will read the Psalm responsively. The congregation will please respond by reading the words in bold print.

¹Happy are they whose way is blameless, who follow the teaching of the LORD!

²**Happy are they who observe your decrees and seek you with all their hearts,**

³who never do any wrong, but always walk in your ways.

⁴**You laid down your commandments, that we should fully keep them.**

⁵Oh, that my ways were made so direct that I might keep your statutes!

⁶**Then I should not be put to shame, when I regard all your commandments.**

⁷I will thank you with a true heart, when I have learned your righteous judgments.

⁸**I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me.**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

A Our second reading is from 1 Corinthians, chapter 3, verses 1-9.

Human leaders in the church are not the ones who control ministry. Rather they are coworkers who belong to God, the one who truly controls and continuously empowers the ministry of the church.

The reading begins:

¹Brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. ²I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, ³for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? ⁴For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human? ⁵What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ⁸The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. ⁹For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

A Please stand as you are comfortable for the gospel.

* **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** (Sung)



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

* **GOSPEL:** Matthew 5:21-37

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exhorts his followers to embrace standards of righteousness that exceed legal requirements and traditional expectations.

P The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 5, verses 21-37.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ²¹"You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' ²²But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. ²³So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. ²⁷"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell. ³¹"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' ³²But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. ³³"Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.' ³⁴But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the

great King. ³⁶And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

³⁷Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one."

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

* **HYMN ELW - #772 "Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways"**

1. **Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways to keep his statutes still!
Oh, that my God would grant me grace to know and do his will!**

2. **Order my footsteps by your word and make my heart sincere;
let sin have no dominion, Lord, but keep my conscience clear.**

3. **Assist my soul, too apt to stray, a stricter watch to keep;
and should I e'er forget your way, restore your wand'ring sheep.**

4. **Make me to walk in your commands, 'tis a delightful road;
nor let my head or heart or hands offend against my God.**

Text: Isaac Watts, alt. Music: William Henry Havergal
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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 OF INTERCESSION

A Called together to follow Jesus, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

A Inspire your church that it may be a sign of life throughout the world. From the exploration of faith with children and new believers to missionaries and bishops, shape lives of faithfulness, so that all find abundant life in your ways. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

A Give growth where there seems to be no hope for life. In nations and regions where reconciliation seems impossible, especially in Ukraine, empower peacemakers with your Spirit. Where death holds sway through violence, disease, and hunger, equip relief workers to bring hope. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Chris Thraen; Joey Denby; Leon Dittmar; Carolyn Renz; Billy Hagen; Starla Cupples; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you *(Pause)*. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

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. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer. *{See all those we pray for on page 12.}*

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. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

P We bring to you our needs and hopes, O God, trusting your wisdom and power revealed in Christ crucified.

C Amen.

* **PEACE**

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

C And also with you. *(Share the "Peace of the Lord" with your neighbors.)*

60 SECONDS OF STEWARDSHIP

(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 Receive these offerings in thanksgiving for all your works of merciful power, and shape us as people of your grace and freedom. You we magnify and adore, through Jesus our Savior,
C Amen.

*** EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

*** LORD'S PRAYER**

P Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.
C Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P Come and receive our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
C Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION (Continuous with Individual Cups)

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

*** BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION**

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

*** POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE** (Sung)



☞ Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let ev-'ry-one who seeks the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-calls his prom-is-es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks-giv-ing. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P Holy One, we thank you for the healing that springs forth abundantly from this table. Renew our strength to do justice, love kindness, and journey humbly with you.
C Amen.

*** BLESSING**

P May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. May the Lord look upon you with His favor and grant you His peace. In the name of the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

INSTALLATION OF CHURCH COUNCIL AND CLA BOARD MEMBERS (Sun., 9:00 AM)

*** HYMN ELW - #818 “O Mater, Let Me Walk with You”**

- 1. O Master, let me walk with you in lowly paths of service true; tell me your secret; help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.**
- 2. Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear, winning word of love; teach me the wayward feet to stay, and guide them in the homeward way.**
- 3. Teach me your patience; share with me a closer, dearer company, in work that keeps faith sweet and strong, in trust that triumphs over wrong.**

**4. In hope that sends a shining ray far down the future's broad'ning way,
in peace that only you can give; with you, O Master, let me live.**

CCLI Song #158243 Words: Washington Gladden Music: Henry Percy Smith
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* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

POSTLUDE

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USHERS: SAT: Brent Gorman Family

SUN: David Johnson; Byron Marburger; Brad Hajdik; Debbie Yancey

LAY READERS: SAT: Brent Gorman, Sr.

SUN: Debbie Yancey

ACOLYTES: SAT: Alex Rester

SUN: Erich Cox

STREAMING:

SUN: Tiffany Lauzon

SOUND: Robert & Sydney Eaton

ALTAR GUILD: Carol Ripper and DyAnn Lauzon

WELCOME: Paul tells us, "We are co-workers in God's service" (1 Corinthians 3:9, NIV). So we gather to be fed for a new week of ministry. Welcome to St. Paul!

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by John, Terri, Chase, Reid and Chelsea Brasher in loving memory of John's dad, John William Brasher, who was laid to rest on February 11.

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: Feb. 4 & 5, 2023 – 200

Contributions: Feb. 4 & 5 – \$9,664.56

Power of One: Feb. 4 & 5, 2023 – \$46.00

Building Fund: Feb. 4 & 5 – \$473.23

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

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., Feb. 8 – **89 Total**

BLAST/Confirmation: 67

Adult Bible Study: 3

Support Staff: 19

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: Joe Reck; Melinda Rodiek; Melda Coleman; Donna Culton; Nancy Hartmann; Lydia Rojas; Catherine Poppe; Rodney Hackemack; Larry Stolar; Vivian Fortenberry; Rick Davis; Mack Machacek; Darryl Stancik; Jerry Ordner; Michael Yancey; Bubba Bencal; Al Gene Canik; Jane Venghaus Taylor; George Wright; 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; 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: Ashley Dungen; Magen Schindler Altieri; Katie Pagel Walcik; Kelsey Kethan McNeely; Montana Appelt; Dina Anton de Espinoza.

Those in Care Facilities and Homebound: Edwin Oevermann; Paul Minar, Sr.; Bobby Zajicek; Adrian Fritsch; Verna Coufal; Doug Hill; John Zwiengel; Robert Saunders; Coy Dell Schindler; Barbara McMath; Linda Munos Rodgers; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Delores Purcell; Jane Booker; Pat Brasher. **Homebound:** Curtis Berger; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Ronnie Rogers; Joyce Dehmner; Donna Dehmer.

Those Law Enforcement Officers: 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. **Fire Fighters, First Responders, Healthcare Workers and 9-1-1 Dispatchers:** 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 Burriss; Dylan Walcik; Randy Wendt; Travis Neuendorff; Brenda Henkes; and Jan Willette. **Active Duty Military Personnel:** Brian Anderson; Michael Graham; Bryan Kubena; Brad Bergfeld; Cody Jowers; Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Ryan Neisner; Anthony D'Angelo; Dalton Kapel; Kindra Dawson; William Phillips; Kevin Gonzalez.

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

place the used activity bags and their contents in the receptacle in the narthex.

Thank you! ☺

Offering Envelopes are HERE!! Our offering envelopes *finally* arrived! You can find them in the narthex in alphabetical order according to your last name. If you have any questions, please let the church office know. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we waited for the envelopes. ☺



The 2023 Flower Calendar is up in the narthex! It is hanging by the glass entrance doors. If you would like to have flowers in church on a certain weekend, please sign your name next to the date for that special weekend and write your phone number. Elena will call you the beginning of that week to remind you that you signed up for flowers and will ask for the occasion (such as birthday, wedding anniversary, in memory of someone, etc.) to put in the bulletin. The monthly newsletter will also have who signed up for flowers for the month. Thank you for adding beauty to our sanctuary and worship services!

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.



SOUPER BOWL

Each year our youth participate in the **Souper Bowl of Caring** on the weekend of Super Bowl Sunday. The Souper Bowl of Caring empowers youth and unites communities to tackle hunger using the energy of the Big Game. Its vision is to transform the Big Game into a nationwide movement inspiring people to give locally and make a collective impact on hunger. This past year our Columbus Food Pantry served an average of 250 households, and St. Paul Youth raised \$773.30 for the food pantry on Souper Bowl of Caring weekend. This year our 4th-6th grade BLAST students will be collecting before each worship service **this weekend** and at BLAST on Wednesday, February 15, 2023. So bring your change or bills and fill their pots! All donations will go to the Columbus Food Pantry. Thank you!

► ***Worship. Lead. Serve.*** – This retreat gathers together **6th-12th grade youth** from Texas, Louisiana and beyond for a weekend to explore discipleship in our daily lives. What does it look like to follow Jesus at work and home? We will practice discipleship as we eat community meals, explore our faith and engage in meaningful conversations. Oh. . . and there will be plenty of time for all your favorite camp activities! This retreat takes place **February 17-19, 2023 at Lutherhill** in La Grange, Texas. Stephanie will be taking a group and staying the weekend. Register at lutherhill.org and then let Stephanie know you are attending so we call all ride together as a group to Lutherhill.

** **OYSTER/FISH FRY TICKETS!!** If you are in need of tickets for the annual Columbus Volunteer Fire Department's Oyster & Fish Fry, please **see Pastor Alan** – or a fireman of your choice. The event will be **Sunday February 26, 2023 at Columbus Hall** (formerly K. of C. Hall) 11:00AM – 1:00 PM. The meal will be dine in or drive-thru. Advance tickets are \$30 for the oyster/fish combo ticket; at the door are \$35. (If you want only oysters, you need to purchase the combo ticket.) Advance tickets for fish only are \$20.00; at the door are \$25.00. **



Calling all actors, actresses and play production folks! It is time, once again, to sign up for the Good Friday drama. The drama will be performed **Good Friday, April 7, 2023** at the **7:00 PM** service. Please see the sign-up sheet in the narthex (foyer). We need actors and actresses (22 cast parts) as well as people to help with lighting, set design/props, costumes and set construction. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Alan.

♪♪♪ If you have a child interested in being part of the **Children's Choir** for **Easter Sunday** April 9, 2023 **at the 9:00 AM service**, please sign the sign-up sheet in the narthex (foyer). If you have any questions about the choir, please contact Robert Eaton at 281-881-4497. ♪♪♪



Habitat for Humanity: The Outreach Team is in search of a Team Leader to represent St. Paul Lutheran Church for Habitat for Humanity. The churches in our community coordinate and build a couple of houses a year for our neighbors in need. **We need someone to represent St. Paul and be the liaison between Habitat for Humanity and our congregation.** You do not have to build the house yourself, but help coordinate our efforts. Please let Kevin Page know (979-732-0845) if you are interested or have any questions. Thank you, and thank you, God, for our most generous church family!

♥ **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:

Tues., Feb. 14 – 9:00 AM-12:00 PM – Quilters (Lighthouse)
10:30 AM – Pastor Alan to TLC
12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
5:30 PM – Stewardship Team (library)

Wed., Feb. 15 – ***Newsletter Deadline!!***
9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
9:00 AM – Morning Circle (library)
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
12:00 PM – Ministerial Alliance
4:30 PM – Confirmation (2nd yr.)
5:00 PM – Meal
5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation (1st yr.), Adult Class & HS Youth

Thurs., Feb. 16 – 5:30 PM – Grief Support Group (library)

Fri., Feb. 17 – 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)

Feb. 17-19 – Worship. Lead. Serve at Lutherhill, La Grange

Sat., Feb. 18 – 7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

Next Sun., Feb. 19 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Tuesday, February 14, 2023 **Cyril, monk, died 869; Methodius, bishop, died 885; missionaries to the Slavs**

These two brothers from Thessalonika, Greece, were monks and were sent to bring Christianity to the Slavic people. In the course of their work they created a written language, inventing the Cyrillic alphabet for it, and translated the Bible and the liturgy.

Saturday, February 18, 2023 **Martin Luther, renewer of the church, died 1546**

Though he began his adult church life as a simple Augustinian monk, Luther challenged the abuses he saw in the church, and his work eventually led to the Protestant Reformation. Luther's accomplishments included liturgical reform, translation of the Bible, and creation of the Small and Large Catechisms.

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SERVICE OVERVIEW: RISKY BUSINESS

Time after time we are called through the scriptures to leave behind familiar and predictable ways of life, risking a journey into the unknown and unknowable. Risks often have a very big and exciting “upside” which is matched by an equally steep and daunting “downside.” Many good and faithful people have a healthy fear of risk, but taking a risk with God is a very different venture. If God's call to follow is risky, and we succeed, we can experience both God's presence and promise in profound new ways. It can be hard to remember, though, that if we follow God's call to risk and it seems to fail, we still follow in the footsteps of the one who formed us, loves us, and calls us by name.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Today, Jesus lays out some tough, risky teachings. They are not intended to justify your judgment of another person, though. They are for you. Take a deep breath. Listen. Dig deep. Let the Word crack open your tough exterior to experience the grace-filled message of hope and new life rooted in God's love. God's steadfast presence is with all who faithfully follow regardless of the outcome. Welcome to worship! Pray for strength to live God's ways. Share in the meal of forgiveness.

Jesus moves the focus of the law from the Old Testament's outward behavior to interior attitudes. He asks the crowd to consider a familiar teaching, something so obvious that one might struggle to find anything surprising in it: “You shall not murder.” His approach focuses not on literal murder and its consequences, but on the volatility of anger in relationships. The key message of this passage is that anger is reconcilable. Jesus is teaching a transforming initiative. Rather than presenting a set of high ideals to perform, he points toward the movement of grace. In this example, he explains the transformation of a relationship of anger into part of the peacemaking process, the transformation of enemy into friend. If they were a friend in the first place, if the relationship had been reconciled, there would be no need for murder.

Do you acknowledge your personal relationship barriers? Anger? Jealousy? Faction-forming? Finger pointing? These obstructions also require our time, attention, skills, fortitude, and practice – so why not err on the side of grace? Relationship and communication barriers are inevitable. Be aware of your own pattern of behavior that leads to spiritual roadblock. When we take the focus off of separation and instead see through a lens of grace, we are able to honor, love, and be reconciled to one another.

Barriers prevent growth. Sometimes we need someone to hold up a mirror so we can see ourselves honestly. Reconciliation is rarely a straightforward process. It requires honesty, listening, and the possibility of a good deal of struggle. In the end, we are encouraged to do the difficult work of healing, and the growth that results from it, for the sake of living as God's people.

KID STUDY:

One day Jesus was teaching his friends, and they asked about God's rules for living called “The Ten Commandments.” The commandments had already been part of their teachings for a long time. Jesus told them that the commandments they were following went a lot further than just the written rule. The things they were expected to do were even more difficult than what the rules said! To share Jesus' message they would have to treat people like Jesus treated people. They would have to accept and forgive. People need to hear what *you* have to say about Jesus, too. If you want someone to believe that Jesus honors, loves, and forgives them, you have to treat people that way, too. It's not always easy, but it's the way Jesus teaches us to live.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

So, brethren, we have asked the Lord who is to dwell in his tent, and we have heard his commands to anyone who would dwell there; it remains for us fulfill those duties. Therefore we

must prepare our hearts and our bodies to do battle under the holy obedience of his commands; and let us ask God that he be pleased to give us the help of his grace for anything which our nature finds hardly possible. And if we want to escape the pains of hell and attain life everlasting, then we must hasten to do now what will profit us for eternity. And so we are going to establish a school for the service of the Lord. In founding it we hope to introduce nothing harsh or burdensome... As we advance in the religious life and in faith, our hearts expand and we run the way of God's commandments with unspeakable sweetness of love. - Benedict of Nursia [The Rule of Saint Benedict, trans. Leonard Doyle (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001).]

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Next Week's Theme (Feb. 18 & 19): Transfiguration

Next Week's Scriptures (Feb. 18 & 19):

First Reading: Exodus 24:12-18

"Moses enters the cloud of God's glory on Mount Sinai."

Psalm: Psalm 2

"You are my son; this day have I begotten you." (Ps. 2:7)

Second Reading: 2 Peter 1:16-21

"The apostle's message confirmed on the mount of transfiguration."

Gospel: Matthew 17:1-9

"Revelation of Christ as God's beloved Son."