

## ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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February 24 & 25, 2024

Second Sunday in Lent

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Senior Pastor	Alan Kethan	<u>Home:</u> (979)-942-9060	<u>Cell:</u> (830)-708-1200
Youth & Family Specialist			Stephanie Polasek
Congregational Chair			Kevin Page
St. Paul Christian Learning Academy Director			Briana Bedford
Secretary			Elena Holub
Custodian			Tomas Rosales
Lighthouse Coordinator	<a href="mailto:lighthouse.splc@gmail.com">lighthouse.splc@gmail.com</a>		Elizabeth Smith
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator			DyAnn Lauzon
Organist			Joan Hunsicker

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**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

*The second covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them the ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal promise of resurrection life in*

*faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ.*

### 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.)*

### \* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who writes the law on our hearts, who draws all people together through Jesus.

C Amen.

P Held in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another, first privately then together publicly.

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

P Holy God,

C **we confess that we are caught in snares of sin and cannot break free. We hoard resources while our neighbors are hungry and cold. We speak in ways that silence others. We are silent when we should speak up. We keep score in our hearts. We let hurts grow into hatred. For all these things and for sins only you know, forgive us, Lord. Amen.**

P Here is a flood of grace: Out of love for the whole world, God draws near to us, breaks every snare of sin, washes away our wrongs, and restores the promise of life through ☩ Jesus Christ.

C Amen.

### \* HYMN ELW - #812 "Faith of Our Fathers"

1. Faith of our fathers, living still in spite of dungeon, fire and sword.  
Oh, how our hearts beat high with joy where'er we hear that glorious word.

### REFRAIN:

*Faith of our fathers, holy faith, we will be true to thee till death.*

2. The martyrs, chained in prisons dark, were still in heart and conscience free;  
and blest would be their children's fate if they, like them, should die for thee.

### REFRAIN

3. Faith of our fathers! We will love both friend and foe in all our strife;  
proclaim thee, too, as love knows how, by saving word and faithful life.

REFRAIN

Faith of our fathers, holy faith, we will be true to thee till death.

CCLI Song #29011 Words: Frederick William Faber Music: Henri Frederick Hemy; James G. Walton, refrain  
©Words: Public Domain Music: Public Domain CCLI License #1729377

\* 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.

\* PRAYER OF THE DAY

P O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

A Our first reading is from Genesis, chapter 17, verses 1-7 and 15-16.

As with Noah, God makes an everlasting covenant with Abraham and Sarah. God promises this old couple that they will be the ancestors of nations, though they have no child together. God will miraculously bring forth new life from Sarah's womb. The name changes emphasize the firmness of God's promise.

The reading begins:

<sup>1</sup>When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. <sup>2</sup>And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." <sup>3</sup>Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, <sup>4</sup>"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>5</sup>No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>6</sup>I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. <sup>7</sup>I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you." <sup>15</sup>God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. <sup>16</sup>I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 22:23-31

A The Psalm today is from Psalm 22, verses 23-31. We will read the Psalm responsively. The congregation will please respond by reading the words in bold print.

<sup>23</sup>You who fear the LORD, give praise! All you of Jacob's line, give glory. Stand in awe of the LORD, all you offspring of Israel.

**<sup>24</sup>For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither is the LORD's face hidden from them; but when they cry out, the LORD hears them.**

<sup>25</sup>From you comes my praise in the great assembly; I will perform my vows in the sight of those who fear the LORD.

**<sup>26</sup>The poor shall eat and be satisfied, let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts live forever!**

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; all the families of nations shall bow before God.

**<sup>28</sup>For dominion belongs to the LORD, who rules over the nations.**

<sup>29</sup>Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow down in worship; all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel before the LORD.

**<sup>30</sup>Their descendants shall serve the LORD, whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.**

<sup>31</sup>They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying to them, "The LORD has acted!"

SECOND READING: Romans 4:13-25

A Our second reading is from Romans, chapter 4, verses 13-25.

Paul presents Abraham as the example for how a person comes into a right relationship with God not through works of the law but through faith. Though Abraham and Sarah were far too old for bearing children, Abraham trusted that God would accomplish what God had promised to accomplish.

The reading begins:

<sup>13</sup>The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup>If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup>For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. <sup>16</sup>For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup>as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") — in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. <sup>18</sup>Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." <sup>19</sup>He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. <sup>20</sup>No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory

to God, <sup>21</sup>being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup>Therefore his faith “was reckoned to him as righteousness.” <sup>23</sup>Now the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup>but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, <sup>25</sup>who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

A The word of the Lord. **C Thanks be to God.**

A Please stand as you are comfortable for the gospel.

\* **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** (Sung)



\* **GOSPEL:** Mark 8:31-38  
*After Peter confesses his belief that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus tells his disciples for the first time what is to come. Peter’s response indicates that he does not yet understand the way of the cross that Jesus will travel.*

P The holy gospel according to St. Mark, chapter 8, verses 31-38.

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

<sup>31</sup>[Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup>He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup>But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” <sup>34</sup>He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. <sup>36</sup>For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <sup>37</sup>Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? <sup>38</sup>Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation,

of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

P The gospel of the Lord. **C Praise to you, O Christ.**

**CHILDREN'S SERMON**

**SERMON**

\* **HYMN ELW - #798 “Will You Come and Follow Me”**

1. “Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?”
2. “Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare, should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer pray'r in you and you in me?”
3. “Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?  
Will you set the pris'ners free and never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,  
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?”
4. “Will you love the you you hide if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?”
5. Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.  
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

CCLI Song #4668756 Words: John L. Bell Music: Scottish traditional  
©Words & Music: 1987 WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland CCLI License #1729377

\* **APOSTLES' CREED (Saturday only – 7:00 PM)**

- 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.**

**BAPTISM OF Tiegan Mae Parks (Sunday only – 9:00 AM) See Insert**

*(The congregation may be seated during the prayers.)*

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

A Trusting in God’s promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

*A brief silence.*

A We turn to you for meaning, holy God. Nurture in your children the gifts of the Spirit poured out in baptism and let the mind of Christ guide the church. Give wisdom and discernment to our bishops, pastors, deacons, teachers, and leaders. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A We turn to you for healing. Send compassionate helpers to any who suffer because of war and violence. Shelter unhoused people, befriend those who are lonely, bring hope to any in despair, and console the bereaved, especially we pray for those in Ukraine, Sudan, Niger, Israel and the Middle East. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A We give thanks and praise for the birth of Eliza Grace Weathers to Nelma Grace and Isaac Weathers. May God bless them as they begin their new life together. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:  
Madelyn Braden; Kendall Kuhn; Nelda Moore; Heidi Shrader; Kari Stokes; Joey Denby; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you (*Pause*). Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A We pray for all those battling cancer that they may know comfort and strength. (*Pause for those we are praying for.*) Hear us, O God.  
Abby Bankston; Debra Sandell; Noe Vela; Shirley Trahan; Kristen Downing; Ashley Roberts; Michael Yancey; Amanda Aramijo; Zachary Schulke; Herbie Kollatschny; Tom Russell, Jr.; Melda Coleman; Al Gene Canik; Larry Bookout; Mike Wostarek; Kristina Acevedo; George Krenek; Anne Dimas; Laura Walla; Paul Casinger; Dr. Tom Hancher; Leonard Kahlden; and Bob Loy.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A We pray for all expectant mothers and especially for:  
Jamee Albert; Kristen O'Leary Bridges; Abegail Gatzke; Chelsea Gilstrap; Calli Guthmann; Dhara Comans; Rosalinda Rosales; Kelsey Page Bakken; Hailey Johnson; and Holly Fristch that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A We pray for all those who reside in care facilities and the homebound that they receive your caring and compassion. (*Pause for those we are praying for.*) Hear us, O God.  
Clemons Venghaus; Paul Minar, Sr.; Adrian Fritsch; Coy Dell Schindler; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Jane Booker; Pat Brasher; Walter Glaeser, Jr.; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Donna Dehmer; Cherie Moore; Lauren Lamb; and Lydia Rojas.

**C Your mercy is great.**

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.*) Hear us, O God.  
Law Enforcement Officers: Charles Jobb; Joseph Smith; Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abbigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; Zane Weido; Josh Jones; Terri Neunendorff; 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; Nathan Bookout; Brenda Henkes; and Jan Willette; and, as well as those active duty military members including Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Dalton Kapel; Kevin Gonzalez; Evelyn Rojas; Nelson Beettner; and Hugh & Katie Hajdik.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A We thank you for the privilege of walking alongside our brothers and sisters in Peru and the Central African Republic. Bless their leaders and congregations as they pick up their cross and follow Jesus. Bless our Missionary Dina and her family. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

P Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**C Amen.**

**\* PEACE**

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

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

*(We will be collecting offerings before and after worship each week. This includes Power of One dollars.)*

**OFFERING and POWER OF ONE**

*“Power of One” is a ministry sponsored by your Stewardship Team. We are asking each and every one of our members to give \$1.00 above what your normal giving would be. We are asking each member to place this \$1.00 bill or change in the offering plate each week. The team is also inviting all children to participate to develop the habit of giving as part of their worship experience. Parents, a penny, nickel, dime, quarter, or dollar bill, any of these will do to help your children develop a habit of giving. These “Power of One” dollars will be used to support local ministries and ministries abroad. The purpose of this ministry is to demonstrate that something as small as one dollar can be used to make a difference in the lives of others.*

**\* OFFERTORY (Sung)**



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be  
fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u -  
nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your  
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.


**\* OFFERING PRAYER**

P Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name.

**C Amen.**

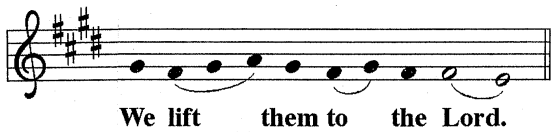
**\* GREAT THANKSGIVING (Responses Sung)**

P The Lord be with you.



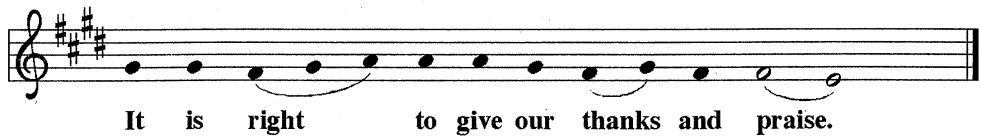
And al - so with you.

P Lift up your hearts.



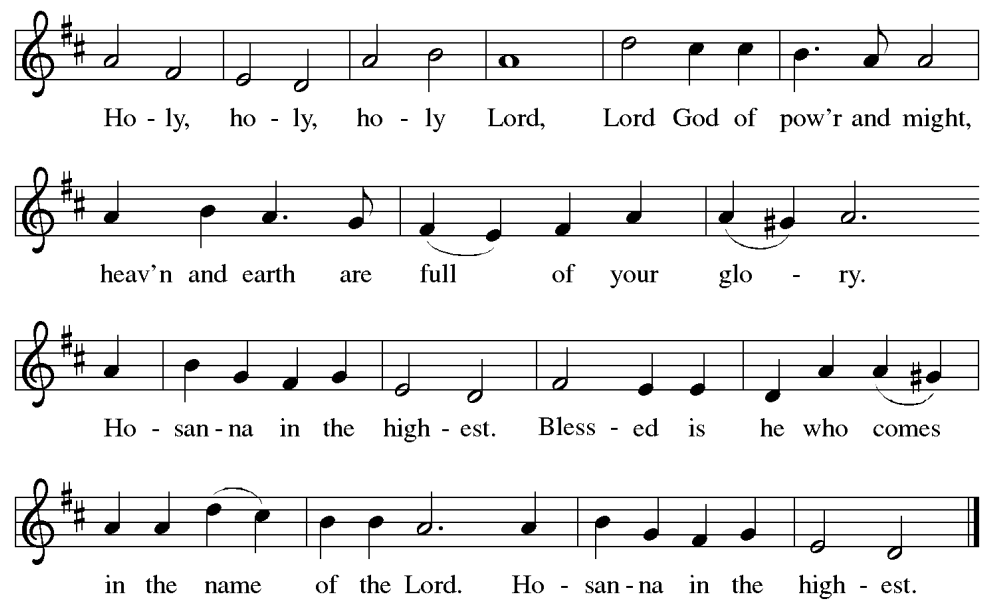
We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy . . . . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

\* 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

A Bread for the journey. A feast for hungry hearts. Come!

C Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION (Continuous with Individual Cups)

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

\* BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

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

C Amen.

\* PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P Generous God, at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace. As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread, now make us one loaf to feed the world; in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.

C Amen.

\* BLESSING

P Beloved, we are God's own people, holy, washed, renewed. God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill you with courage, and ☩ give you peace.

C Amen.

\* HYMN ELW - #802 "Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus"

1. Let us ever walk with Jesus, follow his example pure,  
through a world that would deceive us and to sin our spirits lure.  
Onward in his footsteps treading, trav'lers here, our home above,  
full of faith and hope and love,  
let us do our Savior's bidding. Faithful Lord, with me abide;  
I shall follow where you guide.
2. Let us suffer here with Jesus, and with patience bear our cross.  
Joy will follow all our sadness; where he is there is no loss.  
Though today we sow no laughter, we shall reap celestial joy:  
all discomforts that annoy  
shall give way to mirth hereafter. Jesus, here I share your woe;  
help me there your joy to know.



3. Let us gladly die with Jesus. Since by death he conquered death, he will free us from destruction, give to us immortal breath. Let us mortify all passion that would lead us into sin; and the grave that shuts us in shall but prove the gate of heaven. Jesus, here with you I die, there to live with you on high.

4. Let us also live with Jesus. He has risen from the dead that to life we may awaken. Jesus, you are now our head, we are your own living members; where you live, there we shall be in your presence constantly, living there with you forever. Jesus, let me faithful be; life eternal grant to me.

Text: Sigismund von Birken; tr. Lutheran Book of Worship, alt. Music: Georg G. Boltze

Text ©1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, admin. Augsburg Fortress

\* DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Follow the way of Jesus.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

POSTLUDE

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USHERS: SAT: Brent Gorman Family

SUN: Curtiss Schonenberg; DyAnn Lauzon; Marilyn Yearwood

LAY READERS: SAT: Brent Gorman, Sr.

SUN: Phil Schmitt

ACOLYTE:

SUN: Easton Leopold

STREAMING:

SUN: Janel Barten

SOUND:

SUN: Sydney Eaton

ALTAR GUILD: Carol Ripper and DyAnn Lauzon

WELCOME: Hello! Welcome to worship, Christian education and fellowship among the family of faith.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Ray and Sharon Reno in memory of her daughter Megan Renee Bloecher for her birthday on February 26.

Congratulations to Cody & Cassidy Parks on the baptism of their daughter Tiegan Mae Parks. Tiegan is being baptized Sunday, February 25, 2024 at the 9:00 AM service. Sponsors for Tiegan are Tyler and Brittani Abke.

Nelma Strey is pleased to announce the birth of her first great-grandchild **Eliza Grace Weathers**. Eliza Grace was born Sunday, February 18, 2024 to Nelma Grace and Isaac Weathers at 1:14 PM. She weighed 7 lbs. 13 oz. and was 19¾ inches long. **Congratulations!**

Dear Church Family: **Thank you** for all of the prayers, calls, texts and cards during Carl's cancer journey. Your support, prayers, and encouragement are what got us through. We are so blessed to have such an amazing and loving church family. – *Carl and Peggy Geisler*

**Thank you** to Pastor Alan and to all of you for your prayers, food, cards, and phone calls during my recent hospital stay and return home. Our St. Paul family is indeed a Blessing. With appreciation, *Charlene Morrison*

Dear St. Paul Lutheran Church Family, **Thank you** all so very much for the prayers and hugs throughout the past few months during Wayne's hospital stays. Your sweet & kind words have been a comfort to our family. Thank you all, *Brenda Henkes*

**I would like to thank** Pastor Alan and my church family for their prayers. Also, for the telephone calls, get well cards and food that was brought to my house. I appreciate your thoughtfulness. May God bless you always. *Beatrice Jasek*

**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:** February 17 & 18, 2024 – 209

**Contributions:** Feb. 17 & 18 – \$6,991.80

**Power of One:** February 17 & 18, 2024 – \$57.10

**Building Fund:** Feb. 17 & 18 – \$193.23

**Attendance:** Wed., February 21, 2024 – 46

**Contributions:** Wed., Feb. 21 – \$866.00

**Power of One:** Wed., February 21, 2024 – \$12.00

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

**Wednesday Night Attendance:** – Wed., Feb. 21 – 96 Total

**BLAST/Confirmation:** 78

**Support Staff:** 18

**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! ☺

+ **Lenten Devotional:** For Lent this year, we encourage you to pick up a Lenten Devotional written by one of our own members, Elizabeth Smith. You can buy it in the church office. If we run out, there will be a sign-up sheet in the office as well. The cost is \$5 or you can go directly to Amazon and buy one for \$6.99 under the title “Greatest Love: A Lenten Bible Study Journal” by Elizabeth Smith.



**Each Midweek Lenten service** we will be looking more in depth at some of the disciples and how the things that challenged them may be what challenges us and how Jesus addresses them. So, make plans to come and learn more about Peter, James & John, Nathaniel, Thomas and Simon the Zealot. Services are at **4:30 PM** with soup and sandwiches in the Lighthouse afterwards. The meal is a youth service project for our church, so, a goodwill offering is greatly appreciated. We look forward to having you join us for worship during this special time, and enjoy food and fellowship after the services.

\*\* **FIREMEN'S OYSTER/FISH FRY!!** The event will be **Sunday February 25, 2024 at Columbus Hall** (formerly K. of C. Hall) 11:00AM – 1:00 PM. The meal will be dine in or drive-thru. *Tickets at the door are \$35 for the oyster/fish combo ticket.* (If you want only oysters, you need to purchase the combo ticket.) Tickets for fish only are \$25.00 at the door. \*\*

♦ **God's Gals** will be meeting **Sunday, February 25, 2024 at 6:00 PM at Blake's** in Columbus. All women of St. Paul are invited to come enjoy food, fun and fellowship! Questions? Contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127. ♦

\*\* *The next **Peru Team Meeting** will be **Thursday, March 9, 2024 at 6:30 PM** in the church library. Come find out more about our sister congregations and our upcoming trip to Peru!* \*\*

**Save the Date!!** The **Landscape Team** will have a **work day** on **Saturday, March 9, 2024 at 9:00 AM.** We hope to plant trees, Pink Muhly Grass, trim trees, remove dead and unwanted shrubs and plant new shrubs in the flower beds, clean the gutters and more. ***Please bring your shovels, hedge clippers, metal rakes and garden trowels!*** Also, a designated fund has been set up for anyone wishing to contribute money to help cover the cost of purchasing plants, tress, fertilizer, etc.. Just make sure you designate your donation for “Landscaping”. If you have any questions, please contact John Brasher at 979-253-1448. Thank you!

**PERU TEAM FUNDRAISER:** The Peru Team is having their next drive-thru fundraiser on **Tuesday, March 19, 2024 from 5:00-7:00 PM** at the Lighthouse. Werner's will be catering a meal of chicken parmesan with linguini, glazed carrots, green salad and a roll. The cost is **\$13 per ticket.** Tickets may be purchased from any Peru Team member or in the church office. The deadline to purchase tickets is Wednesday, March 13, 2024.

**Columbus Food Pantry:** It is time for our church to help at the Columbus Food Pantry! The dates are **March 14 & 15, 2024.** The Food Pantry is located at the First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 419 Washington Street. On **Thursday, March 14** the food delivery truck will arrive and grocery bags will be prepared; **please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help. On **Friday, March 15** the food will be distributed 9:00 AM-1:00 PM. **Please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help with the food distribution. Please mark your calendars to help with this important community service! If you have any questions, please call 979-500-4292 or 979-732-2643.

► The **Boys and Girls Clubs of Champion Valley** (Columbus, Schulenburg and Weimar) are holding a **BINGO fundraiser** on **Sunday, March 17, 2024** at The Oaks at High Hill, Schulenburg, Texas. Doors open at 2:00 PM; Bingo from 3:00-7:00 PM. ***Presale tickets are \$25*** for one Bingo card – additional cards can be purchased fro \$5 each at the event. Day of event tickets ar \$30. Questions or want to purchase tickets, please contact Tina Robinson at 254-715-6206 or Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127. Thank you!!

♦ **SR. Explorers:** *We will be seeking bluebonnets and Blue Bell Ice Cream on our March Senior Explorers trip!* On **Thursday, March 28, 2024** we will **depart from St. Paul at 10:00 AM** and travel down part of the Texas Bluebonnet Trail to Chappel Hill, where we will enjoy lunch at Bevers Kitchen. We will then head to Brenham for dessert at the Blue Bell Creamery. Our goal is to **return to St. Paul around 3:00 PM.** Please sign the sign-up sheet in the narthex by Sunday, March 24, 2024. If you have any questions, please call Kevin Page at 979-732-0845.

• **Elementary Explore Retreat at Lutherhill:** Calling all hapy campers! **Students in grades 1-6** are invited to come out to the Hill to explore all that camp has to offer – from the giant swing to slingshot, arts & crafts to campfire worship. This retreat will be **March 22-24, 2024** at Lutherhill in La Grange, Texas. This is a great opportunity for anyone that is anxious to get to Lutherhill, wants to do a trial run before summer, or to simply have an adventure outside of their regular weekend routine. Seasoned and new campers alike will explore all that camp has to offer. It's always a fun weekend! Stephanie Polasek will transport our group to Lutherhill on Friday, March 22 and stay the wekend with the students. Please register your child at Lutherhill.org/explore. **Cost is \$95 per camper.** Let Stephanie know once your student is registered. For more info, visit Lutherhill.org/explore or contact Stephanie.





**Bus Drivers Needed!!** Our St. Paul Bus Driver Team needs some volunteer reinforcement. We can use a handful of additional drivers to occasionally chip in and transport some of our church family to and fro. No CDL required, but a CDL doesn't hurt the possibilities! No big strength requirements or much of anything else other than being a caring person, a responsible driver and a little free time occasionally. We can also always work in pairs. *We will train and support you all the way and only use your time and love when it fits in for you.* **Contact Kevin Page at 979-732-0845 (call or text) if interested or if you have any questions.** Thank you for considering this!

♥ **Help Us Meet Our Neighbors!** *We need a Team Leader for our annual National Night Out in October,* coordinating the participants and carrying on this very worthy National effort to bring communities together. We have experience to share and lists of previous event participants. Lots of help and support. Please let Kevin Page (979-732-0845) or Pastor Alan know if you are interested or have questions. Thanks for considering this very worthwhile endeavor. – Kevin



**God's Work, Our Hands: Team Leader Needed** – Our once-a-year work day has a huge impact on our community as it is a part of the yearly nation-wide effort. The nation-wide date for this event is in September. However, due to the heat, the last few years we moved our date to late October-early November for cooler weather. We need a coordinator for our service projects that day. If you feel inspired to step up and help in this role, please contact Kevin Page at 979-732-0845 or Pastor Alan. There will be much support and help available! Thank you so much for your consideration. – Kevin

► **Welcome Aboard!** *The **Mowing Team** would like to welcome new member Phil Schmitt to our team!* However, we could always use more. Typically it takes an hour and a half, or less, to mow and edge. Please call John Brasher at 979-253-1448 if you are interested or if you have any questions. Again, welcome aboard, Phil! ☺

♪♪♪ **Musicians Wanted for Praise Band!!** The St. Paul Praise Band is in need of a keyboard player. They would also like to add at least one guitarist, a bass guitarist and singers. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Tracy Baker at 713-516-8017. ♪♪♪

- **Women of JOY Bible Study:** The Women of JOY Bible Study group meets on Mondays to cook and have interesting Bible study and discussions. The **first Monday** of the month we **meet in the Lighthouse to cook** for BLAST. The **2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays** of the month we meet in the **high school room (old choir room) for Bible Study**. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Gerri Hackfeld at 979-732-4711.

♥ **Grief Support Group:** The Grief Support Group is for anyone who has lost a loved one, either recently or a few years ago. We share and support each other. Come join us and get support from others walking this journey. We meet at **5:30 PM** in the youth room (formerly the choir

room) the **third Thursday of the month**. **NOTE:** You do not have to share or talk until you are ready! If you have questions, please contact Peggy Geisler at 979-732-0350.

♦ **LIGHTHOUSE COORDINATOR:** **Elizabeth Smith** is our coordinator for the Lighthouse! If you wish to rent the Lighthouse for an event, you will need to contact her. You can email her at [lighthouse.splc@gmail.com](mailto:lighthouse.splc@gmail.com) or call or text her at (713)-799-3484. Also, *if you are interested in opening and closing the Lighthouse whenever the Lighthouse is rented out for various events, please contact Liz.*

#### **SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:**

<b>Today (Feb. 25) –</b>	11:00 AM-1:00 PM – CVFD Oyster/Fish Fry, Columbus Hall 6:00 PM – God's Gals to Blake's, Columbus 6:00-8:00 PM – The Gathering
<b>Mon., Feb. 26 –</b>	9:00 AM-1:30 PM – Pastor Alan in Continuing Education Class 6:00 PM – Women of JOY Bible Study (old choir room)
<b>Tues., Feb. 27 –</b>	9:00 AM – Staff Meeting 9:00 AM-12:00 PM – Quilters (Lighthouse) 12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library) 6:00 PM – CLA Board
<b>Wed., Feb. 28 –</b>	9:00 AM – CLA Chapel 10:00 AM – Nursing Home Team & Pastor to Columbus Oaks 2:00 PM – Nursing Home Team & Pastor to The Oaks 4:30 PM – Lenten Worship Service 5:00-6:00 PM – Soup & Sandwiches (Lighthouse) 5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation & HS Youth
<b>Sat., March 2 –</b>	8:00 AM – Men In Mission (Lighthouse) 7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship
<b>Next Sun., March 3 –</b>	9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship 10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation 11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

#### **UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS**

**Sunday, February 25, 2024 Elizabeth Fedde, deaconess, died 1921**

Born in Norway and trained there as a deaconess, Fedde was asked to come and minister to the poor and to seamen in New York City. She established the Deaconess House in Brooklyn as well as Deaconess Hospital in Minneapolis.

**Friday, March 1, 2024 George Herbert, hymnwriter, died 1633**

An excellent scholar, Herbert served briefly in the English parliament, then became a parish priest. He was known for devoted care of his parishioners, as well as for writing poetry and hymns, including "Come, my way, my truth, my life." He died at age 40.

**Saturday, March 2, 2024      John Wesley, died 1791; Charles Wesley, died 1788; renewers of the church**

These brothers led a revival originally intended to remain within the Church of England, one that involved frequent communion and advocacy for the poor. Except for a brief time in America, they worked in England. Charles was also a prolific hymn writer. After their deaths, their work led to the formation of the Methodist Church.

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**SERVICE OVERVIEW: *PROMISES, PROMISES***

The story of God’s relationship with God’s people is a story of promises fulfilled. We hear about God’s covenant with Sarah and Abraham in today’s Genesis reading, then about the fulfillment of that covenant in the New Testament texts. As Paul reminds us in Romans, we are the multitude of nations that were promised to Abraham! *We* are his descendants in faith! *We* are “Kings of peoples” descended from Sarah’s offspring. Jesus Christ, the King of kings, is Lord of all through his death and resurrection.

**THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:**

Today Jesus predicts his own death. He calls all of his disciples, including us, to follow him. We are likened to Abraham and Sarah, who are called to have faith in the promises of God. The season of Lent is the time for the renewal of our baptismal covenant. Welcome to worship! Together we renew our communal covenant of grace by our faith. Follow Christ to the cross and into the resurrection.

From generation to generation, God is steadfast. No matter how many ages pass or how often we turn away, God remains faithful. This is the great hope of our faith: no matter how often we stray or how great our sin, God persists in loving us. Jesus Christ binds us to God through our baptism into his death. In worship, confession, affirmation of baptism, and communion, we continually remember the lengths to which God goes to keep covenant with us. The promise of salvation extends even into the future. The psalmist reminds us: that our children and our children’s children will proclaim God’s salvation to generations yet unborn. Jesus’ descendants are not biological but social and theological, grafted into God’s family through the inclusiveness of grace.

We are given the opportunity to either remain faithful to God’s word and promise, or to concede to the world’s way of doing things. When Jesus calls Peter “Satan” in the gospel text today, he is not labeling Peter as the embodiment of ultimate evil, as the term is so often applied in contemporary culture, but instead naming Peter’s action of “*setting your mind not on divine things but on human things*” as a temptation to choose the world’s path. Jesus will have to renounce this temptation multiple times throughout his ministry, if not as clearly as he does here. United with Christ in our baptismal covenant, like Jesus we also face the ongoing temptation of having our calling subverted by the way the world expects us to behave.

Abraham’s faithfulness was centered in his willingness to trust God for the parts of God’s promise to him that he could not control, and to claim agency for the parts of the covenant that

he had power over through obedience. This discernment is a crucial part of faithfulness, but is something we often struggle with in a culture that encourages us to control other people’s actions and choices while refusing to accept full responsibility for our own. Discernment and balance are necessary within the covenant God has made with us.

**KID STUDY:**

Jesus announced to his disciples that he was going to suffer and die. The disciples did not like hearing that. Peter tried to tell Jesus that He was wrong, but Jesus explained to Peter that it was God’s plan for this to happen. Jesus was a servant who knew that glorifying God would only come through suffering and pain. The disciples didn’t understand this part of the plan, and had a hard time accepting it.

There are a lot of things in our lives that are difficult or challenging for us to accept. We might question what God is doing, but Jesus promises to be with us and always help us get through. As God’s servants, we are called to act in the world even though we do not know what will happen. We will have many experiences, good and bad. Through our faith, we can go out into the world with bravery. We will receive the courage we need when we believe that God is leading and supporting us.

**INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:**

*There is no other way to life and real inward peace except the way of the holy cross, and of daily dying to self. Go where you like, look for what you like, you will not find a higher way above or a safer way below than the way of the holy cross. The cross is always close by and waits for you everywhere. You cannot escape it, wherever you may run. If you carry your cross with gladness, it will carry you and lead you to that longed-for goal where there will be no more suffering. If you carry it grudgingly, you will make it a burden and weigh yourself down, but all the same you will have to bear it. If you throw one cross aside, you will certainly find another, and possibly one that is heavier to bear. - Thomas á Kempis [Thomas á Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, ed. Betty I. Knott (London: Collins, 1973), 103-104.]*

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**Next Week’s Theme (March 2 & 3):** Cleansing the Temple, destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days

**Next Week’s Scriptures (March 2 & 3):**

**First Reading:** Exodus 20:1-17    *“The commandments are given at Sinai.”*

**Psalm:** Psalm 19    “The commandment of the LORD gives light to the eyes.” (*Ps. 19:8*)

**Second Reading:** 1 Corinthians 1:18-25    *“Christ crucified, the wisdom of God.”*

**Gospel:** John 2:13-22    *“The cleansing of the temple.”*