

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

PH# (979) 732-2423 Fax (979) 733-0489

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

February 4, 2024 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

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
Lighthouse Coordinator	lighthouse.splc@gmail.com		Elizabeth Smith
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator			DyAnn Lauzon

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

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

In Isaiah the one God who sits above the earth and numbers the stars also strengthens the powerless. So in Jesus' healing work we see the hand of the creator God, lifting up the sick woman to health and service (diakonia). Like Simon's mother-in-law, we are lifted up and healed to serve. Following Jesus, we strengthen the powerless; like Jesus, we seek to renew our own strength in quiet times of prayer.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE PADS

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

* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

(Silence for private confession.)

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

C Amen.

* GOSPEL SONG: BONES

**You can take my dry bones – breathe life into this skin.
You called me by name and raised me to life again.**

CHORUS:

*Oh, Jesus; Oh, Jesus; Oh, Jesus; alive in me!
Breathe in me Your life, I can feel You are close now.
I can never hide, You are here and You know me.
All I need is You and I love You, I love You, I love You, I love You.
Breathe in me your life 'til Your love overtakes me.
Open up my eyes, let me see You more clearly.
Falling on my knees 'til I love like You love like You love me, I love you.*

**You can calm the oceans – speak peace into my soul.
Take me as I am awaken my heart to beat again. CHORUS**

**You move in the unseen. You set the captives free.
As I stand and sing, You're breaking the chains off me. CHORUS**

END:

Oh, Jesus; Oh, Jesus; Oh, Jesus; alive in me!

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GOSPEL: Mark 1:29-39
Everywhere Jesus goes, many people expect him to set them free from oppression. Everywhere he goes, he heals people and sets them free. Disease, devils, and death are running for their lives. The forces that diminish human life are rendered powerless by Jesus.

A The holy gospel according to St. Mark, chapter 1, verses 29-39.

²⁹As soon as [Jesus and the disciples] left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰Now Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. ³¹He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. ³²That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. ³³And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. ³⁵In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷When they found him, they said to him, “Everyone is searching for you.” ³⁸He answered, “Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.” ³⁹And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

* **SERMON 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.*

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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* **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 As we celebrate Christ embodied in human form, we pray for God’s blessing on the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.
A Everlasting God, you bring your healing power to the church. Give your church a spirit of unity and prayer, that we discern your way for us in the world.

A brief silence.

- A Creator of the ends of the earth, you make the grass grow and send rain for the soil. Bring your creation into harmony and balance. Give animals their food and provide healthy shelter for your people. Inspire us to honor the miraculous beauty of all you have made.

A brief silence.

- A God without equal, your steadfast love endures forever. Bring the leaders, elected officials, and peacekeepers of our towns and countries into understanding and unity. Guide them to serve with compassion and understanding.

A brief silence.

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

A brief silence.

- A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Chrystal Ross; Jack Busselman; Jacob Kristen; Eric Supak; Shayne Chumchal; Tammy Pugh; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you.

A brief silence.

- A We pray for those battling cancer, all expectant mothers, those who reside in care facilities and the homebound, all law enforcement officers, fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers, 9-1-1 dispatchers, and active duty military personnel as well as our sister congregations and our missionary in Peru and the Lutheran churches in the Central African Republic. *{See all those we pray for on pages 8 & 9.}*

A brief silence.

- A Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

C Amen.

*** PEACE**

- P As Jesus shared peace, let us also share His peace with one another. *(Share the “Peace of the Lord” with your neighbors.)*

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

OFFERING and POWER OF ONE

“Power of One” is a ministry sponsored by your Stewardship Team. We are asking each and every one of our members to give \$1.00 above what your normal giving would be. We are asking each member to place this \$1.00 bill or change in the offering plate each week. The

team is also inviting all children to participate to develop the habit of giving as part of their worship experience. Parents, a penny, nickel, dime, quarter, or dollar bill, any of these will do to help your children develop a habit of giving. These “Power of One” dollars will be used to support local ministries and ministries abroad. The purpose of this ministry is to demonstrate that something as small as one dollar can be used to make a difference in the lives of others.

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

- P Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

*** REMEMBERING JESUS' WORDS, PROMISES, AND COMMANDS**

*** LORD'S PRAYER**

- P Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to sing.

**C Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

- P At Jesus' table, receive the one who taught us to pray.

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 Giver of every gift, Christ's body is our food, and we are Christ's body. Raise us to life by your power for the benefit of all and to your glory, now and forever.

C Amen.

* **BLESSING**
P God who names you, Christ who claims you, and the Holy Spirit who dwells in you, ☩ bless you and remain with you always.
C **Amen.**

* **CLOSING SONG: HOLDING NOTHING BACK**
I am chosen, I am free. I am living for eternity. Free now, forever.
You pick me up, turn me around. You set my feet on solid ground.
Yours, now, forever.

PRE-CHORUS:
And nothin's gonna hold me back. Nothin's gonna hold me back.
Nothin's gonna hold me back...

CHORUS:
My chains fell off, my heart was free! I'm alive to live for You!
I'm alive to live for You! Amazing love, how can it be?
You gave everything for me. You gave everything for me – everything.
(2nd TIME TO **BRIDGE**)

You've washed my sin, and shame away.
The slate is clean, a brand new day. Free now, forever.
Now boldly I approach Your throne,
To claim this crown through Christ my own. Yours now, forever.

PRE-CHORUS and **CHORUS**

BRIDGE:
And I'm free to live, free to give. Free to be, I'm free to love You.
Free to live, free to give. Free to be, I'm free to love You.
Free to live, free to give. Free to be, I'm free to love You. Lord....

LAST CHORUS
My chains fell off, my heart was free! I'm alive to live for You!
I'm alive to live for You! Amazing love, how can it be?
I give everything for You. I give everything for You – everything.

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* **DISMISSAL**
P Go in peace. Take time to pray. C **Thanks be to God, and we will.**

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USHERS: John, Terri & Chase Brasher; Ryan Thomas
LAY READER: Mia Post
STREAMING: Mike Maas
SOUND: Sydney Eaton and Todd Jacobs
ACOLYTE: Hudson Muir
POWER POINT: Kay Wesson
ALTAR GUILD: Donna Schindler

WELCOME: Welcome to worship. May God’s love be made known to you during your time shared here today.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Al & Roxanne Schindler in honor and celebration of their children's birthdays – Garrett on February 13 and Katilyn on February 15.

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: January 27 & 28, 2024 – 192
Power of One: January 27 & 28, 2024 – \$52.05
Contributions: Jan. 27 & 28 – \$6,475.80
Building Fund: Jan. 27 & 28 – \$493.23

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

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., Jan. 31 – **108 Total**
BLAST/Confirmation: 90 **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.*

KEEP IN OUR PRAYERS: Those Battling Cancer: Debra Sandell; Noe Vela; Shirley Trahan; Kristen Downing; Ashley Roberts; Traci Edman; Michael Yancey; Amanda Aramijo; Zachary Schulke; Herbie Kollatschny; Tom Russell, Jr.; Melda Coleman; Al Gene Canik; Larry Bookout; Mike Wostarek; Elizabeth Frisby; Kristina Acevedo; George Krenek; Anne Dimas; Carl Geisler; Laura Walla; Heather Deviney; Paul Casinger; Dr. Tom Hancher; Leonard Kahlden; Bob Loy.

Expectant Mothers: Jamee Albert; Kristen O'Leary Bridges; Abegail Gatzke; Chelsea Gilstrap; Calli Guthmann; Dhara Comans; Nelma Grace Weathers; Rosalinda Rosales; Kelsey Page Bakken; Hailey Johnson.

Those in Care Facilities and Homebound: Clemons Venghaus; Joey Denby; Paul Minar, Sr.; Adrian Fritsch; Coy Dell Schindler; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Jane Booker;

Pat Brasher; Walter Glaeser, Jr.. **Homebound:** Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Donna Dehmer; Cherie Moore; Lauren Lamb; Lydia Rojas.

Those Law Enforcement Officers: Charles Jobb; Joseph Smith; Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Donnie Templeton; Jason Templeton; Johnny Kovar; Abigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; Zane Weido; Josh Jones. **Fire Fighters, First Responders, Healthcare Workers and 9-1-1 Dispatchers:** Brent Gorman, Sr.; Brent Gorman, Jr.; Reid Brasher; Donnie Templeton; Jason Templeton; Dusty Dittmar; John Maertz; Ron Luedke; Pastor Alan Kethan; Kristi Weyand; Eric Weyand; Bradley Berger; Jon Berger; James Chollett; Edward Thraen, Jr.; Kyle Burris; Dylan Walcik; Travis Neuendorff; Nathan Bookout; Brenda Henkes; Jan Willette; and Terri Neuendorff. **Active Duty Military:** Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Dalton Kapel; Kevin Gonzalez; Evelyn Rojas; Nelson Beettner; Hugh & Katie Hajdik.

Bless the Ministry of our sister congregations Cristo Rey and their Pastor 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.

► **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! ☺

♥ **Annual Valentine's Dinner Fundraiser:** The St. Paul Confirmation Youth will be hosting their annual Valentine's Dinner on **Friday, February 9, 2024 from 6:00-8:00 PM** in the Lighthouse. This year's meal will be catered by Werner's of Shiner. The menu will consist of Grilled Seasoned Chicken Breast with a Cajun Cream Sauce (not spicy), Seasoned Green Beans, Twice Baked Potatoes, Salad, Roll and Dessert. Grab a group of people or just you and a guest and come have dinner with us! Tables can seat 10 people, however, tables can be made to fit a bigger group if needed. Contact Stephanie for special reservations. **Tickets are \$17 each** and can be purchased before or after worship from a student or from the church office. Can't dine in? We have To-Go tickets so you can enjoy the meal on the go. Thank you for your support. **Deadline to purchase tickets is Sunday, February 4th.**



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING: Each year our youth participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring during the month of February in conjunction with the Super Bowl. 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 270 households, and St. Paul Youth raised just over \$800 for the Food Pantry on Souper Bowl of Caring weekend. **This year our**

5th-6th grade BLAST students will be collecting before each worship service on Saturday, February 10 and Sunday, February 11 and at BLAST on Wednesday, February 14, 2024. So bring your change or bills and fill their pots! All donations will go to the Columbus Food Pantry.

It's movie time for Senior Explorers!! Join us on **Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 10:00 AM** for a movie and lunch in the St. Paul Lighthouse. Our movie will be "The Boys in the Boat", an inspiring, uplifting true story with biblical, moral and patriotic themes. The movie tells the story of how nine boys from the American West showed the world at the 1936 Olympics what true grit really meant. There will be a catered lunch immediately following the movie. *Please sign up in the narthex by Sunday, February 11, 2024.* If you have any questions, please contact Kevin Page at 979-732-0845.

+ **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.



The season of Lent begins with **Ash Wednesday** which, this year, is **Wednesday, February 14, 2024**. The Ash Wednesday service is a service with Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes. **Ash Wednesday** worship will be at **4:00 PM and 6:30 PM**. *The remainder of the Wednesdays during Lent we will have worship services at 4:30 PM only.* Following the Wednesday evening services and in between the Ash Wednesday services, the youth will provide a meal of soup, sandwiches, and desserts in the Lighthouse. Ash Wednesday the meal will be 5:00-6:30 PM. The remainder of the meals during Lent will be served from 5:00-6:00 PM. 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.

ASH WEDNESDAY – ASHES AT LIGHTHOUSE: Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2024, we will have two services, one at 4:00 PM and one at 6:30 PM. If you are *not able to make the services that evening* and would like to receive the imposition of ashes, we are providing this opportunity for you to drive through from **7:00-8:00 AM** under the Lighthouse porte cochere.

** **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 25, 2024 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.* **

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! 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!

• **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

► **Offering Envelopes:** 2024 Offering Envelopes are ready to be picked up in the narthex (foyer). They are in alphabetical order. If you want a box of offering envelopes and do not see your name, please notify the church office, and we will have a box for you next week. ◀



The 2024 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!

► **The Mowing Team is looking for more people to help mow the interior church lawn.** 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.

♪♪♪ **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 **2nd and 4th 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: The coordinator for the Lighthouse is **Elizabeth Smith**. If you wish to rent the Lighthouse for an event, you will need to contact her. You can email her at lighthouse.spkc@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:

Mon., Feb. 5 –	9:00 AM – Staff Meeting
	1:00 PM – Nursing Home Team & Pastor Alan to TLC
	6:00 PM – Evangelism Team (library)
Tues., Feb. 6 –	9:00 AM – Pastor Alan to Deanery
	12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
	5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library)
Wed., Feb. 7 –	9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
	10:00 AM-1:00 PM – Seniors Together (Lighthouse)
	12:00 PM – Ministerial Alliance
	1:30-3:00 PM – Continuing Education
	1:30 PM – Neighbor-to-Neighbor Meeting (library)
	5:00 PM – Meal
	5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation and HS Youth
Thurs., Feb. 8 –	10:00-11:30 AM – Manna for Moms (Lighthouse)
	5:00 PM – Worhsip Team (libraray)
	5:30 PM – Operation Prom Dress (Lighthouse)
	6:30 PM – Peru Team Meeting (library)
Fri., Feb. 9 –	6:00-8:00 PM – Valentine's Dinner Fundraiser (Lighthouse)
Feb. 10 & 11 –	Souper Bowl of Caring
Sat., Feb. 10 –	7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship
Next Sun., Feb. 11 –	9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
	10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
	11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship
	6:00-8:00 PM – The Gathering

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Monday, February 5, 2024 The Martyrs of Japan, died 1597

Christianity was brought to Japan in the sixteenth century by Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries. The religion was suppressed, however, and in 1597 twenty-six missionaries and converts were crucified. Nevertheless, Christianity survived and later prospered.

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OTHER READINGS: Isaiah 40:21-31

The Judeans in exile have a good reason to be hopeful: the one who will bring them to freedom is the God who created the world, the God who subdues the rulers of the earth and gives strength to those who are weary.

The reading begins:

²¹Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? ²²It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; ²³who brings princes to naught, and makes the

rulers of the earth as nothing. ²⁴Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. ²⁵To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. ²⁶Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing. ²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God”? ²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. ³⁰Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; ³¹but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

PSALM: Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

¹Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises to our God! How pleasant it is to honor God with praise! ²The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem, and gathers the exiles of Israel. ³The LORD heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. ⁴The LORD counts the number of the stars and calls them all by their names. ⁵Great is our LORD and mighty in power; there is no limit to God’s wisdom. ⁶The LORD lifts up the lowly, but casts the wicked to the ground. ⁷Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make music upon the harp to our God, ⁸who covers the heavens with clouds and prepares rain for the earth, making grass to grow upon the mountains. ⁹God provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they cry. ¹⁰God is not impressed by the might of a horse, and has no pleasure in the speed of a runner, ¹¹but finds pleasure in those who fear the LORD, in those who await God’s steadfast love. ^{20c}Hallelujah!

OTHER READINGS: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

God entrusted Paul with the responsibility of bringing the gospel to diverse people. Hence the focus of Paul’s ministry is not his own rights or privileges as an apostle but the privilege of serving God by freely sharing the good news of Christ with others.

The reading begins:

¹⁶If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. ¹⁸What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel. ¹⁹For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. ²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. ²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law) so that I might win those outside the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. ²³I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: GOD HEALS PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

When Jesus heals us, we are empowered to serve others. At first glance, we may view Jesus’ healing of Peter’s mother-in-law as self-serving, on further reflection we see the same result in nearly all of his signs and miracles: the object of Jesus’ compassion now has new responsibilities. Any meaningful encounter with Jesus will result in our being changed, which in turn alters the way we see our relationship to the needs of others and the world.

Hard economic times, natural disasters, and political strife can make us feel helpless and hopeless, as if we have been abandoned by God. Even the church may feel fear and panic in the face of declining numbers and revenues, loss of loyalty from members, indifference from the surrounding culture, and internal sniping among factions. The exiled people of Israel in Babylon experienced all of this and more, so our condition is neither unique *nor beyond the reach of our God*. There is some irony indeed that God’s church, entrusted with God’s salvation history and the gospel, still panics, doubts, and worries. We indeed are “clay jars” carrying the message but not understanding, preaching salvation but not believing that God cares or will act to save.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

During the season of Epiphany we hear and see Jesus revealed as divine. Today, Jesus shows his power by healing Peter’s mother-in-law, but he also chooses to have his power hidden from others. Jesus, although hidden from many, is revealed as Christ to believers. Welcome to worship! Recognize Jesus. Receive his power. Rise from your sickbed to serve others. Proclaim the kingdom as you share holy communion.

Jesus meets with his disciples, and he escapes alone to pray. He heals, and he hides. He displays power, and he orders demons to keep silent. Mark’s account of the meaning of Jesus’ ministry alternates between his being hidden in the crucifixion and being acclaimed risen within the believing community. Like Peter’s mother-in-law, we have been raised from illness and now serve one another.

Any time someone calls a tech support line, the first thing the technician usually says to do is restart the device. Such a simple thing, and yet it can fix many issues in technology. Your keyboard isn’t responsive? Restart. Your camera keeps flickering? Restart. Technology needs rest just like humans do, restarting devices periodically keeps them running smoothly. Jesus frequently takes rests to restart to keep him running smoothly for ministry. We all need rest to recharge and reset to do our best ministry to continue this work of Jesus’ healing and proclamation.

The Greek word describing Peter’s mother-in-law’s activity after being healed is the familiar diakonia in which we rise to serve others. Even Jesus leaves the “deserted place” to spread the good news and heal others. God calls us to diaconal ministry. The gospel of Jesus invites all to this ministry: to offer compassion and accompaniment, to work for liberation and justice, and to act as advocates of creative transformation. Commit yourself to Spirit-filled enrichment and learning. Humbly offer yourself. See God’s abundance and be brave. Take

risks. You are capable of bringing joy, meaning, love, and respect to a hungry world - wherever the Spirit may lead.

KID STUDY:

The Where’s Waldo? books invite readers to search for Waldo in elaborately detailed pictures. Waldo wears a bright red-and-white-striped outfit. He shouldn’t be that hard to find, but sometimes it takes a while to find Waldo! Searching for Jesus seems like this sometimes. Simon and his companions “hunt” for Jesus when he goes to a deserted place. After Jesus had healed Simon’s mother-in-law, the news spread and the people in the city were searching for him too. We seek Jesus with impatiently with our whole body and mind when we need healing or comfort. Sometimes when we are searching for Jesus, it seems like Jesus should be easy to find, like a person in a bright red-and-white outfit. When we are lost or in pain, Jesus’ presence may not seem that obvious, but he is always right in front of us.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

Healing is a sacrament because its purpose or end is not health as such, the restoration of physical health, but the entrance of man into the life of the kingdom, into the “joy and peace” of the Holy Spirit. In Christ everything in this world—and this means health and disease, joy and suffering—has become an ascension to, and entrance into, this new life, its expectation and anticipation. In this world, suffering and disease are indeed “normal,” but their “normalcy” is abnormal. They reveal the ultimate and permanent defeat of man and of life, a defeat which no partial victories of medicine, however wonderful and truly miraculous, can ultimately overcome. But in Christ, suffering is not “removed”: it is transformed into victory. The defeat itself becomes victory, a way, an entrance into the kingdom, and this is the only true healing. - Alexander Schmemmann [Alexander Schmemmann, For the Life of the World (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s, 1973), 102-03]

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Next Week’s Theme (Feb. 10 & 11): Transfiguration

Next Week’s Scriptures (Feb. 10 & 11):

First Reading: 2 Kings 2:1-12
“Elijah taken up to heaven and succeeded by Elisha.”

Psalm: Psalm 50:1-6
“Out of Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth in glory.” (Ps. 50:2)

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6
“God’s light seen clearly in the face of Christ.”

Gospel: Mark 9:2-9
“Revelation of Christ as God’s beloved Son.”