

## 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](mailto:admin@splctx.org) [www.splctx.com](http://www.splctx.com) **Pastor:** [pastor.akethan@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.akethan@gmail.com)

January 13 & 14, 2024

Second Sunday after Epiphany

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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		Donna Maas	
St. Paul Christian Learning Academy Director		Briana Bedford	
Secretary		Elena Holub	
Custodian		Tomasa Rosales	
Lighthouse Coordinator	<a href="mailto:lighthouse.splc@gmail.com">lighthouse.splc@gmail.com</a>	Elizabeth Smith	
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator		DyAnn Lauzon	
Saturday Organist		Joan Hunsicker	
Sunday Organist		Elena Holub	

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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

*All the baptized have a calling in God's world. God calls not just pastors and deacons but also the youngest child, like Samuel. The story of the calling of Nathanael plays with the idea of place. Nathanael initially dismisses Jesus because he comes from Nazareth. But where we*

*come from isn't important; it's where — or rather whom — we come to. Jesus refers to Jacob, who had a vision in a place he called "the house of God, and . . . the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:17). Jesus says he himself is the place where Nathanael will meet God.*

### 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, creator of darkness and light, word of truth, wind sweeping over the waters.

C Amen.

P 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 God, our rock and refuge,

C **we pour out our hearts before you. We have known you but have not always loved you. We have wounded one another and sinned against you. We have not always recognized the Holy Spirit dwelling in each of us. Remember your covenant. Renew your creation. Restore us, that we might proclaim your good news to all. Amen.**

P The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. God has spoken: The time of grace is now. In Jesus, the reign of God has come near. By the authority of ☩ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. You are God's beloved.

C Amen.

\* HYMN ELW - #696 "Jesus Calls Us; o'er the Tumult"

1. **Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult of our life's wild, restless sea, day by day his clear voice sounding, saying, "Christian, follow me":**

2. **As of old Saint Andrew heard it by the Galilean lake, turned from home and toil and kindred, leaving all for Jesus' sake.**

3. **Jesus calls us from the worship of the vain world's golden store, from each idol that would keep us, saying, "Christian, love me more."**

4. In our joys and in our sorrows, days of toil and hours of ease,  
still he calls, in cares and pleasures, “Christian, love me more than these.”

5. Jesus calls us! By your mercy, Savior, may we hear your call,  
give our hearts to your obedience, serve and love you best of all.

CCLI Song #68900 Words: Cecil Frances Alexander Music: William Herbert Jude  
©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 Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings  
and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you  
more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and  
forever.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: 1 Samuel 3:1-10

A Our first reading is from 1 Samuel, chapter 3, verses 1-10.

*At a time when visions are rare and unexpected, the LORD comes to Samuel and calls him to  
speak the divine word. Though just a boy, Samuel responds to God obediently, as Eli the priest  
has taught him to respond. This marks the beginning of Samuel's prophetic ministry.*

The reading begins:

<sup>1</sup>Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in  
those days; visions were not widespread. <sup>2</sup>At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow  
dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; <sup>3</sup>the lamp of God had not yet gone out,  
and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. <sup>4</sup>Then the  
LORD called, “Samuel! Samuel!” and he said, “Here I am!” <sup>5</sup>and ran to Eli, and said, “Here I am,  
for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down. <sup>6</sup>The  
LORD called again, “Samuel!” Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called  
me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” <sup>7</sup>Now Samuel did not yet know the  
LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. <sup>8</sup>The LORD called Samuel  
again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.”  
Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. <sup>9</sup>Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie  
down; and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel  
went and lay down in his place. <sup>10</sup>Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before,  
“Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

A The Psalm today is from Psalm 139, verses 1-6 and 13-18. We will read the Psalm  
responsively. The congregation will please respond by reading the words in bold print.

<sup>1</sup>LORD, you have searched me out; O LORD, you have known me.

**<sup>2</sup>You know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.**

<sup>3</sup>You trace my journeys and my resting-places and are acquainted with all my ways.

**<sup>4</sup>Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, but you, O LORD, know it altogether.**

<sup>5</sup>You encompass me, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

**<sup>6</sup>Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain to it.**

<sup>13</sup>For you yourself created my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

**<sup>14</sup>I will thank you because I am marvelously made; your works are wonderful, and I know  
it well.**

<sup>15</sup>My body was not hidden from you, while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths  
of the earth.

**<sup>16</sup>Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; all of them were written in your  
book; my days were fashioned before they came to be.**

<sup>17</sup>How deep I find your thoughts, O God! How great is the sum of them!

**<sup>18</sup>If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand; to count them all,  
my life span would need to be like yours.**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

A Our second reading is from 1 Corinthians, chapter 6, verses 12-20.

*Paul helps the Corinthians understand that God has claimed the entirety of their lives through  
the death of Christ. Hence Christian relationships and conduct, including areas of human  
sexuality, are to reflect the reality that we belong to Christ and that the Holy Spirit lives within us.*

The reading begins:

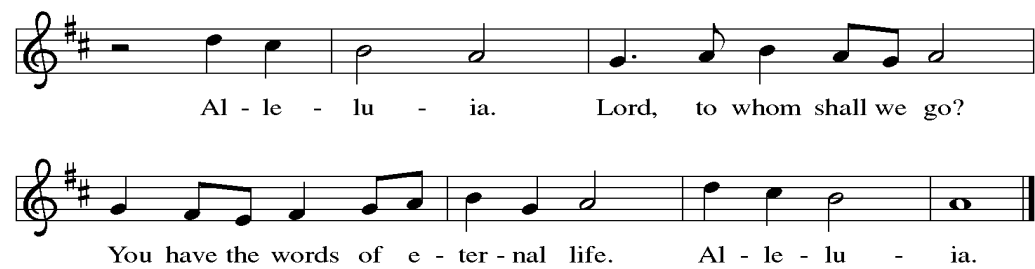
<sup>12</sup>“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are beneficial. “All things are lawful for me,” but  
I will not be dominated by anything. <sup>13</sup>“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food,”  
and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the  
Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup>And God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power.  
<sup>15</sup>Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the  
members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup>Do you not know that  
whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, “The two shall be  
one flesh.” <sup>17</sup>But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. <sup>18</sup>Shun fornication!  
Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body  
itself. <sup>19</sup>Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you  
have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup>For you were bought with a price; therefore  
glorify God in your body.

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:** John 1:43-51

*In John's gospel, Jesus' ministry begins with the call of disciples, who then bring others to Jesus. Philip's friend Nathanael moves from skepticism to faith when he accepts the invitation to "Come and see."*

P The holy gospel according to St. John, chapter 1, verses 43-51.

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

<sup>43</sup>The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."  
<sup>44</sup>Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup>Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." <sup>46</sup>Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." <sup>47</sup>When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" <sup>48</sup>Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." <sup>49</sup>Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" <sup>50</sup>Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." <sup>51</sup>And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

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  
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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 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 Give this congregation the anticipation and excitement of Samuel, so inspired and empowered to do your work in the world, God of unity. God of grace,

**C receive our prayer.**

- A We pray for peace in all the world, especially in war-torn areas of Ukraine, Sudan, Niger and Israel. Bring an end to wars and the destruction of lives and your creation. God of grace,  
**C receive our prayer.**
- A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:  
 Ronnie Supak; Jim Juricia; Tammy Pugh; Zach Janik; Frances Glueck; Traci Neuendorff; Ellis Hajdik; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you (*Pause*). God of grace,  
**C receive our prayer.**
- A We pray for all those battling cancer and especially for:  
 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 Krennek; Anne Dimas; Carl Geisler; Laura Walla; Randy Wendt; Heather Deviney; Paul Casinger; Dr. Tom Hancher; Leonard Kahlden; and Bob Loy that they may know comfort and strength.  
 God of grace,  
**C receive our prayer.**
- A We pray for all expectant mothers that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace. (*Pause for those we are praying for.*) God of grace,  
 Jamee Albert; Kristen O'Leary Bridges; Abegail Gatzke; Chelsea Gilstrap; Calli Guthmann; Dhara Comans; Nelma Grace Weathers; Rosalinda Rosales; and Kelsey Page Bakken.  
**C receive our prayer.**
- A We pray for all those who reside in care facilities and the homebound and especially for:  
 Carolyn Kneller; 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.; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Donna Dehmer; Cherie Moore; Lauren Lamb; and Lydia Rojas that they receive your caring and compassion. God of grace,  
**C receive our prayer.**
- 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.*) God of grace,  
 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; 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; Jan Willette; and Terri Neunendorff, as well as those active duty

military members including Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Dalton Kapel; Kevin Gonzalez; Evelyn Rojas; and Nelson Beettner.

**C receive our prayer.**

- A We pray for the church throughout the world. May we all proclaim the good news of your love effectively. We ask, especially, that you would bless the ministry of our sister congregations Cristo Rey and their 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. God of grace,

**C receive our prayer.**

- A Trusting God who raised Jesus and will also raise us in spirit and truth, we remember all who have died and are at peace among the saints. God of grace,

**C receive our prayer.**

- P 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 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

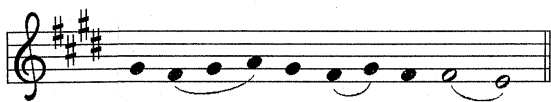
P Blessed are you, Holy One, for all good things come from you. With humility and open hearts accept our time, talent and treasure. Jesus, in whose name we pray.  
C Amen.

\* GREAT THANKSGIVING (Responses Sung)

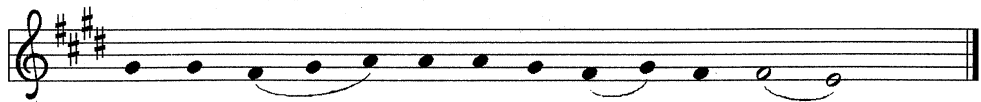
P The Lord be with you.

  
And al - so with you.




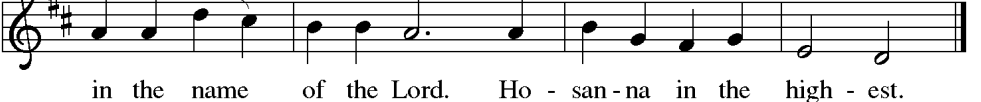
P Lift up your hearts.

  
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

P At Jesus' table, heaven and earth are joined as one. Come and see.

C **Amen.**

**DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION** (Kneeling at Rail)

*{You will be coming forward to the rail for distribution. **All are welcome for communion.** You will be ushered down the center aisle beginning in the front. Fill in at the railings starting at the side and work your way around to the center, then kneel if you are able. Pastor will hand out 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. An acolyte follows with an empty tray for you to place your empty individual cup. After receiving communion, please remain at the rails until Pastor has dismissed the entire table with a blessing. Please return to your seat by the side aisles.}*

(Sung)

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on  
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

(Please be seated.)

\* 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 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.**

\* HYMN ELW - #676 "Lord, Speak to Us, That We May Speak"

1. Lord, speak to us, that we may speak in living echoes of your tone;  
as you have sought, so let us seek your straying children, lost and lone.



2. Oh, lead us, Lord, that we may lead the wand'ring and the wav'ring feet;  
oh, feed us, Lord, that we may feed your hung'ring ones with manna sweet.
3. Oh, teach us, Lord, that we may teach the precious truths which you impart;  
and wing our words, that they may reach the hidden depths of many a heart.
4. Oh, fill us with your fullness, Lord, until our very hearts o'erflow  
in kindling thought and glowing word, your love to tell, your praise to show.

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879, alt. Music: Robert Schumann, 1810-1856

\* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace, called and sent. C Thanks be to God, and we will.

**POSTLUDE**

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**USHERS: SAT:** Kenny & JoAnn Venghaus; Janeen Venghaus; Emily Frank  
**SUN:** Sonny & Tiffany Lauzon  
**LAY READERS: SAT:** Pastor John Husicker **SUN:** Curtiss Schonenberg  
**ACOLYTES: SAT:** Gracelyn Gorman **SUN:** Camdin Barten  
**STREAMING: SUN:** Janel Barten  
**SOUND: SUN:** Sydney Eaton  
**ALTAR GUILD:** Janeen “Tootsie” Venghaus and Kelly Zajicek

**WELCOME:** Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church. We worship as we live — in the name, and under the guidance, of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**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 6 & 7, 2024 – 201 **Contributions:** Jan. 6 & 7 – \$11,725.80  
**Power of One:** January 6 & 7, 2024 – \$54.20 **Building Fund:** Jan. 6 & 7 – \$363.23

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

**Wednesday Night Attendance:** – Wed., Jan. 10 – **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.

► **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! ☺

• The **Annual Congregational Meeting** will be held **Sunday, January 28, 2024 following the 10:00 AM worship service.** This will be a one-service Sunday. There will be regular worship service Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. **Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup>** Adult Sunday School and confirmation class will meet at 9:00 AM; **only one worship service at 10:00 AM.** It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that all voting members attend this annual meeting! Following the meeting, there will be a stew lunch in the Lighthouse. Be on the lookout for a sign-up sheet in the narthex (foyer) if you plan to attend the stew lunch.

**\*\* Church Council Nominations:** If you are interested in serving on the Church Council, please **email a brief bio of yourself** to Elena Holub at [admin@splctx.org](mailto:admin@splctx.org) **as soon as you can.** Your bio should include, but not be limited to, how long you have been a member of St. Paul, ministry teams you have served on, the reason you want to serve and a brief background description. If you have any questions, please contact Judy Sirois (979-732-1920), Shelley Janik, Bradley Polasek, Lora Kuenstler, or Edna Bergfeld. **\*\***

► **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. ◀

▲ **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY:** To all that can help – skilled or unskilled:  
Something for everyone! Group efforts are invited. Contact Ruth Bedford at (281)-703-3124 for any additional information or contact information. Or, just show up! We can also use a hands-on Co-Leader to help Ruth on our Habitat for Humanity Outreach Team.

*A message of request for help from the Colorado County Habitat Director, Charmaine:*  
“We are starting construction on our 30<sup>th</sup> house Fridays and Saturdays from 8:00 AM till whenever you prefer – 12:00 PM or 2:00 PM. We need help December 15 & 16 and then January 5 & 6 and so on.” *Thank you Charmaine and Ruth for all you do for this very worthwhile endeavor of love.* ☺

► **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 **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:** 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.splc@gmail.com](mailto:ighthouse.splc@gmail.com).

**SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:**

<b>Mon., Jan. 15 –</b>	<b>Office Closed! (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Observance)</b> 1:00 PM – Nursing Home Team & Pastor Alan to TLC 6:00 PM – Church Council
<b>Tues., Jan. 16 –</b>	8:30 AM – Staff Meeting 10:00 AM – Pastor Alan to Columbus Oaks 12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library) 5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library)
<b>Wed., Jan. 17 –</b>	9:00 AM – CLA Chapel 9:00 AM – Morning Circle (library) 10:00 AM-1:00 PM – Seniors Together (Lighthouse) 1:30 PM – Neighbor-to-Neighbor Meeting (library) 5:00 PM – Meal 5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation and HS Youth
<b>Thurs., Jan. 18 –</b>	5:30 PM – Grief Support Group (old choir room)
<b>Jan. 19-21 –</b>	Mother/Daughter Retreat at Lutherhill, La Grange
<b>Sat., Jan. 19 –</b>	7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

<b>Next Sun., Jan. 20 –</b>	9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship 10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation 11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship
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**UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS**

**Monday, January 15, 2024     Martin Luther King Jr., renewer of society, martyr, died 1968**  
An American prophet of justice among races and nations, King was an eloquent preacher, a leader of the nonviolent resistance to race-segregated society, and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Born on this date, he was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

**Wednesday, January 17, 2024     Antony of Egypt, renewer of the church, died around 356**  
One of the earliest of the Egyptian desert fathers, Antony gave away his sizeable inheritance and became a hermit. Later he became leader of a group of monks who devoted themselves to prayer, worship, and labor.

**Wednesday, January 17, 2024     Pachomius, renewer of the church, died 346**  
Born in Egypt, Pachomius became a Christian while a soldier. He became a hermit (a solitary monk) and organized others into a religious community. His rule for monasteries influenced later ones in both the Eastern and Western churches.

**Thursday, January 18, 2024     Confession of Peter**  
Today the church remembers the apostle Peter's great acknowledgement of Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God." This festival serves as a fitting beginning to the week in which we particularly pray that all Christians might be united in faith and witness.

**Friday, January 19, 2024     Henry, Bishop of Uppsala, martyr, died 1156**  
When Erik, King of Sweden, determined to invade Finland for the purpose of converting the people there to Christianity, Henry went with him. Henry is recognized as the patron saint of Finland.  
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**SERVICE OVERVIEW: COME AND SEE. FOLLOW ME.**  
We live in a culture of invitation. Television invites us to join complicated story arcs so that we feel connected to the characters. Commercials invite us to see their product as a new movement and invite us to join it. We are invited to join groups on Facebook and invited into chat rooms and blog responses. The number of social networks is exploding as we are invited into ever expanding ways to connect.

Invitation is an essential part of our walk of faith, but here we frequently see ourselves not as the invited but rather the one who is supposed to be doing the inviting. We can misuse invitation, maybe using the phrase “invite Jesus into your heart,” which often results in the misunderstanding that we are carrying a little bit of Jesus wherever we go. But today’s gospel emphasizes not invitation as our call to others to join the walk of faith but rather Jesus’ invitation to us to follow him. Jesus’ invitation is not that we carry him with us but rather that we follow



where he would lead. When Christ invites Philip to “follow me,” may we hear that invitation in our own ears!

**THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:**

Last week was Jesus’ baptism, and this week he calls the disciples. Just like the disciples, after our baptism we are called to follow Him. Listen to the scripture as it presents the meaning and presence of Christ. John’s presentation of several Christological titles (son of Joseph, Rabbi, Son of God, King of Israel, and Son of Man) is tied to the call of the disciples. Welcome to worship! Respond to the call! Explore the meaning of each of these titles and the salvation to which each name points. Come and see!

Finish this sentence: “Can anything good come out of \_\_\_\_\_?” The way we fill in the blank reveals the implicit biases we carry toward certain places and the people who come from them. In honest reflection, what part of town, part of the country, or part of the world flashes to mind with that question? For the disciple Nathanael, the answer is the small backwater village of Nazareth. Yet Nathanael is amazed as he encounters God in Jesus the Nazarene. Throughout scripture, God is revealed in unlikely people and places, challenging biases and crumbling prejudices. What is a bias of yours that needs challenging today?

Philip invites Nathanael to come and see for himself who Jesus is, and the trajectory of Nathanael’s life is changed forever. In Philip we have a model for Christian evangelism. Like the boy Samuel in our first reading, we are messengers who are given God’s word in order to bear it to others. First Samuel reads, “The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.” Why? What kept people from encountering God? Could it be that those charged with bearing God’s word stopped saying, “Come and see”? How does worship invite the us to come and see Jesus? More importantly, how do we bear the invitation to encounter God to our wider community? The text says that Samuel did not yet know the Lord, yet he receives and bears God’s word to the seasoned priest Eli. How do we in the church, who presume ourselves the mediators of the holy, stay open to receiving God’s word from those we assume do not yet know God?

Jesus heralds Nathanael as “an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.” When Nathanael asks how Jesus knows him, Jesus says he saw him under the fig tree before Phillip called him. But it was under the fig tree where Nathanael expressed extreme skepticism about Jesus’ prospects as the Messiah, and even disparaged his hometown. Is Jesus commending Nathanael for his honesty? Is he saying that a healthy dose of skepticism is something he wants on his team? Jesus does not scold Nathanel, but praises him! His initial reaction and concerns about Jesus are not disqualifying to his discipleship. That is great news for anyone who expresses doubt and even cynicism along on their journeys of faith. Not all of Christ’s disciples immediately follow without some convincing. When Nathanael comes to Jesus, despite his doubts, he encounters something that captures him enough to believe.

**KID STUDY:**

Nathaniel is minding his own business when his friend Philip tells him that they have found the Messiah. At that time, everyone had been waiting for hundreds of years for the Messiah, who was supposed to be the champion God promised to save Israel. Philip runs up to Nathanel saying, “We’ve found him! This is the guy Moses wrote about. This is the guy God promised through the prophets. He’s here! His name is Jesus, and he’s from Nazareth!” Instead of being excited, though, Nathanel seems cynical. He replies, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Nazareth was a small, ordinary village of about 400 people, nowhere of any importance. It’s not even mentioned in the Old Testament. It’s not somewhere heroes come from, is it? It’s certainly not somewhere Nathanel would expect to find God. It’s not an accident that when God chooses to break into our world, it’s in a small town, through regular people like us.

As followers of Jesus, we are invited to see people the way God sees them - as beloved children no matter where they’re from, to see all people as we see ourselves. We are called to stand up for the rights and dignity of all of God’s children. We are called to invite people to rethink the way they see other people that are different from them. That is what God is doing in the world. When we don’t place limits on who other people are, we are part of the good things God is doing.

**INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:**

*Every one of us forms an idea of Christ that is limited and incomplete. It is cut according to our own measure. We make him not only the incarnation of God, but also the incarnation of the things we and our society and our part of society happen to live for. Therefore, it is not enough merely to imitate the Christ we have in our imagination. We read the gospels not merely to get a picture or an idea of Christ, but to enter in and pass through the words of revelation to establish, by faith, a vital contact with the Christ who dwells in our souls as God. If we depend on our own ideas, own judgment and our own efforts to reproduce the life of Christ, we will only act out some kind of pious charade which will ultimately scare everybody we meet because it will be so stiff and artificial and so dead. It is the Spirit of God that must teach us who Christ is and form Christ in us and transform us into other Christs. For me to become Christ is to enter into the life of the whole Christ, the mystical body made up of the head and the members, Christ and all who are incorporated in him by his Spirit. - Thomas Merton [Thomas Merton, New Seeds of Contemplation (New York: New Directions, 1961), 155-57]*

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**Next Week's Theme (Jan. 20 & 21):** Repent and believe, I'll make you fishers of men (people)

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

**First Reading:** Jonah 3:1-5, 10

*“Repentance at Nineveh.”*

**Psalm:** Psalm 62:5-12

“God alone is my rock and my salvation.” (*Ps. 62:6*)

**Second Reading:** 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

*“Living in the end times.”*

**Gospel:** Mark 1:14-20

*“The calling of the disciples at the sea.”*