

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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

Sunday, January 28, 2024 10:00 AM

Fourth 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
Organist			Joan Hunsicker

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

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

In Deuteronomy God promises to raise up a prophet like Moses, who will speak for God; in Psalm 111 God shows the people the power of God's works. For the church these are ways of pointing to the unique authority people sensed in Jesus' actions and words. We encounter that

authority in God's word, around which we gather, the word that prevails over any lesser spirit that would claim power over us, freeing us to follow Jesus.

PRELUDE – performed by St. Paul Praise Band:

1. “Open the Eyes of My Heart”
2. “Refiner's Fire”
3. “No Matter What”
4. “Heart of the Father”
5. “Spirit Song”
6. “The Way”

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 begin our worship in the name of the Triune God in which we are baptized, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

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 Most merciful God,

C we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P 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 - #434 “Jesus Shall Reign”

1. **Jesus shall reign where'er the sun does its successive journeys run;
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more.**

- 2. To him shall endless prayer be made, and praises throng to crown his head; his name like sweet perfume shall rise with ev'ry morning sacrifice.
- 3. People and realms of ev'ry tongue dwell on his love with sweetest song; and infant voices shall proclaim their early blessings on his name.
- 4. Blessings abound where'er he reigns; the pris'ners leap to lose their chains, the weary find eternal rest, and all who suffer want are blest.
- 5. Let ev'ry creature rise and bring peculiar honors to our king; angels descend with songs again, and earth repeat the loud amen.

CCLI Song #1510 Words: Isaac Watts Music: attr. John Hatton
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* PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 18:15-20

A Our first reading is from Deuteronomy, chapter 18, verses 15-20.

Today's reading is part of a longer discourse in Deuteronomy, an updating of the law for the Israelite community as the people wait to enter the promised land. Here Moses assures the people that God will continue to guide them through prophets who will proclaim the divine word.

The reading begins:

[Moses said:] ¹⁵The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. ¹⁶This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die." ¹⁷Then the LORD replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. ¹⁹Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. ²⁰But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak — that prophet shall die."

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 111

A The Psalm today is Psalm 111. We will read the Psalm responsively. The congregation will please respond by reading the words in bold print.

¹Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

²**Great are your works, O LORD, pondered by all who delight in them.**

³Majesty and splendor mark your deeds, and your righteousness endures forever.

⁴**You cause your wonders to be remembered; you are gracious and full of compassion.**

⁵You give food to those who fear you, remembering forever your covenant.

⁶**You have shown your people the power of your works in giving them the lands of the nations.**

⁷The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice; all of your precepts are sure.

⁸**They stand fast forever and ever, because they are done in truth and equity.**

⁹You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever; holy and awesome is your name.

¹⁰**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who practice this have a good understanding. God's praise endures forever.**

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

A Our second reading is from 1 Corinthians, chapter 8, verses 1-13.

Paul is concerned about the way some Corinthian Christians use their freedom in Christ as license to engage in non-Christian behavior that sets a damaging example to other, impressionable believers. Christians have a responsibility to each other that their behavior does not cause another to sin.

The reading begins:


¹Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ²Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; ³but anyone who loves God is known by him. ⁴Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "no idol in the world really exists," and that "there is no God but one." ⁵Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth — as in fact there are many gods and many lords — ⁶yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. ⁷It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸"Food will not bring us close to God." We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? ¹¹So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. ¹²But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

A The word of the Lord.


C Thanks be to God.

A Please stand as you are comfortable for the gospel.

* **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** (Sung)



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



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

* **GOSPEL:** Mark 1:21-28

Forces that would bring death and disease have taken hold of a man, yet they recognize Jesus and know what his power means for them. Jesus commands these forces to leave and people are amazed at his authority.

P The holy gospel according to St. Mark, chapter 1, verses 21-28

C Glory to you, O Lord.

²¹[Jesus and his disciples] went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching — with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

* **HYMN ELW - #785 "When Peace like a River" – a cappella – Led by St. Paul Trio**

1. When peace like a river attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll,
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
it is well, it is well with my soul.

REFRAIN:

*It is well (It is well) with my soul, (with my soul,)
it is well, it is well with my soul.*

2. Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
let this blest assurance control,
that Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
and hath shed his own blood for my soul. **REFRAIN**
3. He lives – oh, the bliss of this glorious thought;
my sin, not in part, but the whole,
is nailed to his cross and I bear it no more.
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! **REFRAIN**
4. Lord, hasten the day when our faith shall be sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
the trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall descend;
even so it is well with my soul. **REFRAIN**

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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 Loving God, we pray that your example of teaching with confidence and authority builds up your church in love. May all church leaders and teachers honor your instruction and model your inclusive ways. God of grace,
C receive our prayer.

- A Renewing God, we pray for all of creation. Thank you for the rains we have received. God of grace,
C receive our prayer.
- A Still-speaking God, we pray for our congregation, for its artists and musicians, for its educators and caregivers, that all gifts are used to care for those in need and to live out your example of accompaniment, gospel witness, and love. 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 Israel and the Middle East. Bring an end to wars and the destruction of lives and your creation. God of grace,
C receive our prayer.
- A We pray for the family and friends of Wayne Henkes who passed away this past week. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time. 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:
 Chrystal Ross; Jack Busselman; Lee Goebel; Ronnie Supak; Jacob Kristen; Pat Brasher; Melanie Pennington; Eric Supak; Susan Thraen; Beatrice Jasek; Shayne Chumchal; Tammy Pugh; 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 that they may know comfort and strength. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)* God of grace,
 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; and Bob Loy.
C receive our prayer.
- A We pray for all expectant mothers and especially for:
 Jamee Albert; Kristen O'Leary Bridges; Abegail Gatzke; Chelsea Gilstrap; Calli Guthmann; Dhara Comans; Nelma Grace Weathers; Rosalinda Rosales; Kelsey Page Bakken; and Hailey Johnson that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace. God of grace,
C receive our prayer.

- A We pray for all those who reside in care facilities and the homebound and especially for:
 Clemons Venghaus; Joey Denby; Paul Minar, Sr.; Adrian Fritsch; Coy Dell Schindler; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Jane Booker; 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; Nelson Beettner; and Hugh & Katie Hajdik.
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.
- 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.

* 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.

* 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 find healing.

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.}*

Special Music during Distribution: “Beautiful Things” performed by St. Paul Praise Band

* BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

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

C Amen.

* POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE (Sung)



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



Let ev-'ry-one who seeks the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name.



He recalls his promises and leads his people forth in joy



with shouts of thanks - giving. Alleluia. Alleluia.

* 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 - #638 “Blessed Assurance” – Led by St. Paul Praise Band

1. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

REFRAIN:

*This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.*

2. Perfect submission, perfect delight, visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

REFRAIN:
*This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.*

3. Perfect submission, all is at rest; I in my Savior am happy and blest,
watching and waiting, looking above, filled with his goodness, lost in his love.

REFRAIN

CCLI Song #22324 Words: Fanny Jane Crosby Music: Phoebe Palmer Knapp
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* **DISMISSAL**
P Go in peace, healed to heal. C Thanks be to God, and we will.

POSTLUDE

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USHERS: Gary & Donna Schindler; Cindy Kahlden
LAY READER: David Johnson
STREAMING: Janel Barten
SOUND: Syndey Eaton and Todd Jacobs
ACOLYTE: McKayla Kahlden
POWER POINT: Dinah Jacobs
ALTAR GUILD: Emily Brod

WELCOME: Welcome to worship. “Praise the Lord! ... He sent redemption to his people. ... Holy and awesome is his name” (Psalm 111:1, 9, NRSV).

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Curtiss & Marian Schonenberg in celebration of their wedding anniversary on January 30th.

We extend our Christian sympathy to the family and friends of Wayne Henkes who passed away this past week. May God comfort them during their time of loss.

COLLECTION OF OFFERING: Offering for the worship services is collected before and after worship. Offering bowls are placed in the back entrance and inside the side sanctuary door for you to place your offering in. This includes “Power of One” dollars.

Amount needed for average weekly budgeted expenses: \$8,405.00

Attendance: January 20 & 21, 2024 – 215
Power of One: January 20 & 21, 2024 – \$45.00
Contributions: Jan. 20 & 21 – \$7,735.43
Building Fund: Jan. 20 & 21 – \$441.25

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


ATTENTION: Names on the prayer list in the bulletin will be printed for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks, the names will be removed from the bulletin unless the church office has been notified to keep them.

► **Children's Activity Bags** are available for use by our young members and guests! You can find them on the coat hooks in the coat area of the narthex. After worship, **please place the used activity bags and their contents in the receptacle in the narthex.**
Thank you! ☺

• 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. **Sunday, January 28th 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. Please sign the sign-up sheet in the narthex (foyer) if you plan to attend the stew lunch.

* **MEN IN MISSION:** This is just a reminder that Men In Mission will meet **Saturday, February 3, 2024** in the Lighthouse. Breakfast will be served at **8:00 AM** followed by a devotion and business meeting, then dismiss around 9:00 AM. Please come join us! *

♥ **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.

+ 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.

**** 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!

► **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!

▲ 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. Construction has begun on their 30th house, and they can use your help Fridays and Saturdays from 8:00 AM till whenever you prefer – 12:00 PM or 2:00 PM.

► **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.***

<u>SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:</u>	
Today (Jan. 28) –	11:00 AM – Annual Congregational Meeting (sanctuary) 12:00 PM – Stew Meal (Lighthouse) 4:00 PM – Meals to Heal & God's Gals Cook Session (Lighthouse) 6:00 PM – God's Gals & Meals to Heal to Los Cabos, Columbus 6:00-8:00 PM – The Gathering
Mon., Jan. 29 –	9:00 AM-1:30 PM – Pastor Alan in Continuing Ed. Class 6:00 PM – Pastor Alan's Mutual Ministry Meeting

Tues., Jan. 30 – 9:00 AM – Staff Meeting
12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)

Wed., Jan. 31 – 9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
12:00 PM – Pastor Alan has Zoom Meeting
5:00 PM – Meal
5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation and HS Youth

Thurs., Feb. 1 – Stephanie to Youth Ministry Network
5:30 PM – Youth & Education Team
6:00 PM – Property Team

Sat., Feb. 3 – 8:00 AM – Men In Mission (Lighthouse)
7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

Next Sun., Feb. 4 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Sunday, January 28, 2024 Thomas Aquinas, teacher, died 1274
One of the most brilliant and creative theologians in the church's history, Aquinas worked to bring together scripture and the philosophy of Aristotle. A member of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), Aquinas was also a hymnwriter.

Friday, February 2, 2024 Presentation of Our Lord
Forty days after the birth of Jesus we mark the day Mary and Joseph presented him in the temple in accordance with Jewish law. There they were greeted by Simeon, an aged priest who offered the song "Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace," as well as by the prophet Anna, who spoke of the redemption of Israel.

Saturday, February 3, 2024 Ansgar, Bishop of Hamburg, missionary to Denmark and Sweden, died 865

A monk who helped bring Christianity to Scandinavia, Ansgar returned to Germany where he was named bishop of Hamburg. He is remembered for his love for poor people.

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SERVICE OVERVIEW: DO YOU WANT TO BE RIGHT, OR DO YOU WANT TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP?

Do you want to be right, or do you want to have a relationship? This theme continues in the gospel. The laws prohibiting work on the sabbath carry deep meaning for many people of faith, and yet on this sabbath Jesus does work: he rebukes an unclean spirit and frees a man. Jesus chooses to care for the man and to free him, rather than worry over the details of the law. In this instance Jesus is not condemned for his choice, but he will be later. His fame begins to spread throughout the region, which eventually will prove dangerous. It is the evangelical nature of the faith, committed to the message that Jesus is Lord. This is not a private faith, held closely and kept hidden. Rather it is an outgoing faith spread from person to person throughout the world.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Christ was hidden, and even today for many people remains hidden. We hear Jesus' words of authority proclaimed on this day not only from the pulpit, but from the table. Welcome to worship! Filled with the Holy Spirit, we too are able to recognize Jesus as the Holy One of God.

Throughout the Gospel of Mark, we encounter stories of Jesus moving in and out of villages, teaching on the scriptures. The people are astonished at the way he teaches with an authority they have not previously witnessed. In today's gospel, while teaching in the synagogue, Jesus is confronted by a man "with an unclean spirit." While the people in the crowd are just starting to become aware of who Jesus is, the unclean spirit recognizes Jesus' holy authority immediately: "I know who you are, the Holy One of God."

Jesus does exactly what the unclean spirits knew he'd do: destroy them. The crowd is amazed. Why do you think the people were amazed after Jesus did this? Sometimes we believe something only partially until we receive further proof. Is it possible that the crowd was still questioning Jesus' authority until he called out the spirits? Think about times in which you may have trouble recognizing God. What stumbling blocks might be getting in the way of your honoring God's authority?

Explore the concept of authority. What does authority look and sound like to you? Where does it come from? Name those who have authority in society and within our congregation. Is their authority readily accepted or questioned? What dynamics are at play when authority is or is not given? What might our insights lead us to reconsider or change?

To this day people continue to place barriers and restrictions on the faith. Congregations do this in intentional ways, for example, by setting rules for receiving holy communion. Churches also create unintentional barriers. Is anyone less worthy if they are wearing jeans or shorts to a worship service? Would a visitor, who may be searching and hungry for a connection to God, come back again if nobody welcomed or spoke with them? What are some of the ways people might be kept from a relationship with Jesus by the barriers we create?

KID STUDY:

Have you ever played the game Rock, Paper, Scissors? It's a game about being stronger. Rock is stronger than scissors, Paper is stronger than rock, Scissors are stronger than paper. Rock, Paper, Scissors is only a game, but in real life some kids may try to show that they are stronger than others by acting tough, saying mean things, and picking on people they think are weak. Have you ever done this to someone at school? Have you ever done this to your brothers or sisters?

Jesus shows us in today's gospel story that he has power over evil. He showed that he is stronger than our worst enemy. But the best thing about Jesus is that he never uses his strength to hurt people. Instead of taking what he wants by force, he uses his power to help people. That's because Jesus came to earth to show God's love for us. When you and I follow Jesus' example, we will use our strength in a loving way to help others rather than to hurt them.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

Before we do anything wrong and before we do anything right, God has named and claimed us as God’s own. But almost immediately, other things try to tell us who we are and to whom we belong... they all have a go at telling us who we are. But only God can do that. Everything else is temptation. Maybe demons are defined as anything other than God that tries to tell us who we are. - Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber

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Next Week's Theme (Feb. 3 & 4): Jesus gets away in private to pray

Next Week's Scriptures (Feb. 3 & 4):

First Reading: Isaiah 40:21-31
“The creator of all cares for the powerless.”

Psalm: Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
“The LORD heals the brokenhearted.” *(Ps. 147:3)*

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23
“A servant for the sake of the gospel.”

Gospel: Mark 1:29-39
“The healing of Peter's mother-in-law.”