

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

January 6 & 7, 2024

Baptism of Our Lord

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	
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator		DyAnn Lauzon	
Organist		Elena Holub	

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

Our re-creation in baptism is an image of the Genesis creation, where the Spirit of God moved over the waters. Both Mark's gospel and the story in Acts make clear that it is the Spirit's movement that distinguishes Jesus' baptism from John's. The Spirit has come upon us as upon Jesus and the Ephesians, calling us God's beloved children and setting us on Jesus' mission to re-create the world in the image of God's vision of justice and peace.

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 all things.

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 - #423 "Shall We Gather at the River"

1. Shall we gather at the river, where bright angel feet have trod,
with its crystal tide forever flowing by the throne of God?

REFRAIN:

***Yes, we'll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river;
gather with the saints at the river that flows by the throne of God.***


2. On the margin of the river, washing up its silver spray,
we will walk and worship ever, all the happy golden day. **REFRAIN**


3. Ere we reach the shining river, lay we ev'ry burden down;
grace our spirits will deliver, and provide a robe and crown. **REFRAIN**


4. Soon we'll reach the shining river, soon our pilgrimage will cease;
soon our happy hearts will quiver with the melody of peace. **REFRAIN**

C And also with you.

* **KYRIE** *(Responses Sung)*






Lord, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy.



C Amen.

C Thanks be to God.

⁹The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare. And in the temple of the LORD all are crying, "Glory!"

10The LORD sits enthroned above the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forevermore.
11O LORD, give strength to your people; give them, O LORD, the blessings of peace.

SECOND READING: Acts 19:1-7

A Our second reading is from Acts, chapter 19, verses 1-7.
In Ephesus, Paul encounters people who had received John’s baptism of repentance but had never heard of the Holy Spirit or of baptism in the name of Jesus. After Paul baptizes them, the Holy Spirit comes upon them and empowers them with gifts of the Spirit.


The reading begins:

¹While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. ²He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” They replied, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” ³Then he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They answered, “Into John’s baptism.” ⁴Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied — ⁷altogether there were about twelve of them.

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 1:4-11

Mark’s gospel reports the story of Jesus’ baptism with some irony: the one on whom the Spirit descends is himself the one who will baptize others with the Holy Spirit.

P The holy gospel according to St. Mark, chapter 1, verses 4-11.
C Glory to you, O Lord.

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of

Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” ⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”
P The gospel of the Lord. **C Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

* **HYMN ELW - #305 “When Jesus Came to Jordan”**
{sing to tune ELW - #542 “O Living Bread from Heaven”}

1. **When Jesus came to Jordan to be baptized by John,**
he did not come for pardon but as the Sinless One.
He came to share repentance with all who mourn their sins,
to speak the vital sentence with which good news begins.
2. **He came to share temptation, our utmost woe and loss,**
for us and our salvation to die upon the cross.
So when the dove descended on him, the Son of Man,
the hidden years had ended, the age of grace began.
3. **Come, Holy Spirit, aid us to keep the vows we make;**
this very day invade us, and ev’ry bondage break.
Come, give our lives direction, the gift we covet most:
to share the resurrection that leads to Pentecost.

“When Jesus Came to Jordan” – CCLI Song #5441501
Text: Fred Pratt Green Text © 1980 Hope Publishing Company CCLI License #1729377
“O Living Bread from Heaven” – Music: Samuel Sebastian Wesley © Music: Public Domain CCLI License #1729377

* **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 Inspire wisdom and a spirit of proclamation in your church, God of forgiveness. Uplift leaders to share the truth of your word in community. Encourage us to live into the promises of baptism, working for justice and peace in all the world. God of grace,

C receive our prayer.

A Encourage this congregation, God who calls and sends disciples. Guide us in accompanying, learning from, and serving our neighbors, following the example of Jesus. 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 give you thanks and praise for the births of Owen Neal Beettner to Nelson and Kydall Beettner and Ellis Bradley Hajdik to Remington and Becca Hajdik. Bless their families as they begin new lives together. 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: Ellis Hajdik; Joey Denby; Carolyn Kneller; 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, 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; Randy Wendt; 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; and Kelsey Page Bakken 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; 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 the assurance of the Holy Spirit, we remember all who have died and rest in God's care. Give hope to those who grieve even as we rest in your eternal promise of resurrection. God of grace,

C receive our prayer.

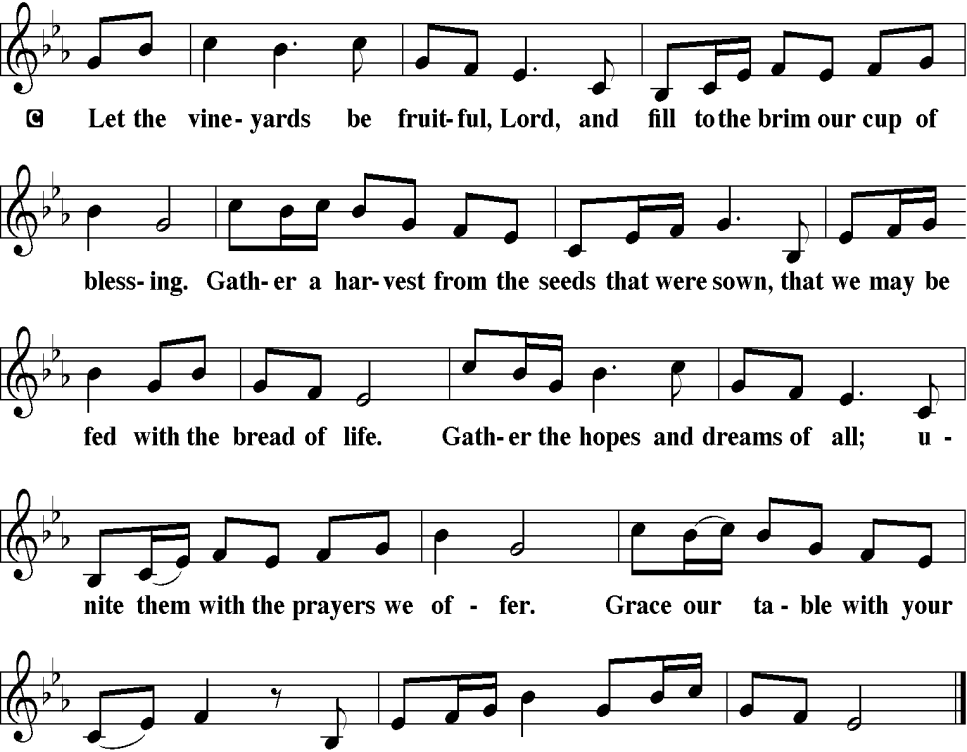
P Knowing the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we offer these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.
C **Amen.**

* **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.

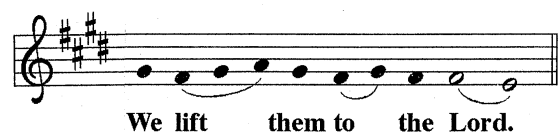
* **OFFERING PRAYER**
P Blessed are you, Holy One, for all good things come from you. With humility and open hearts accept our time, talent and treasure. Jesus, in whose name we pray.
C **Amen.**

* **GREAT THANKSGIVING** (Responses Sung)
P The Lord be with you.



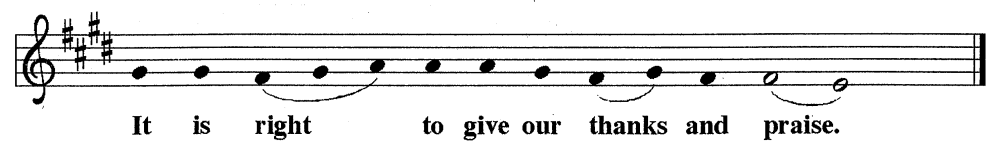
And al - so with you.

P Lift up your hearts.



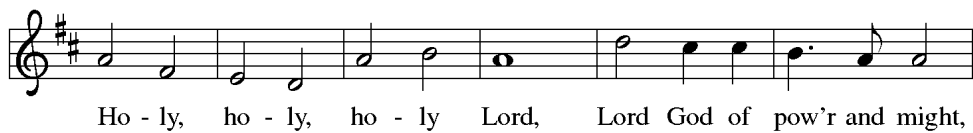
We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

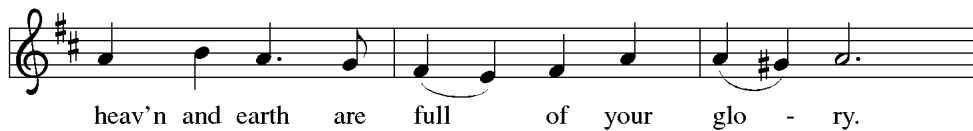


It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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



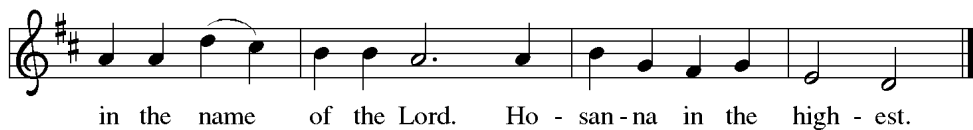
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



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 receive.
C Amen.

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

* BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

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

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



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



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



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



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

* **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P 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 EWL - #673 "God, Whose Almighty Word"**

1. God, whose almighty word chaos and darkness heard
and took their flight:
hear us, we humbly pray, and where the gospel day
sheds not its glorious ray, let there be light.

2. Christ, who once came to bring, on your redeeming wing,
healing and sight;
health to the troubled mind, sight where illusions blind;
oh, now to humankind let there be light.

3. Spirit of truth and love, life-giving, holy dove,
speed forth your flight;
move on the water's face bearing the lamp of grace,
and in earth's darkest place let there be light.

4. Holy and blessed three, glorious Trinity,
Wisdom, Love, Might:
boundless as ocean's tide, rolling in fullest pride,
through the earth, far and wide, let there be light.

CCLI Song #300376 Words: John Marriott Music: Felice de Giardini
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* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. You are God's beloved.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

POSTLUDE

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USHERS: SAT: Harvey Poenitzsch; Bob Poenitzsch; Audrey Rester

SUN: Curtiss Schonenberg; DyAnn Lauzon; Marilyn Yearwood

LAY READERS: SAT: JoAnn Venghaus

SUN: Phil Schmitt

ACOLTYES: SAT: Henry Jones

SUN: Brooks Schindler

STREAMING:

SUN: Janel Barten

SOUND: Sydney Eaton

ALTAR GUILD: Janeen Venghaus and Kelly Zajicek

WELCOME: Welcome to worship, dear family of God. As we celebrate the Baptism of Our Lord, may God enlighten us all.

Congratulations to Nelson and Kydall Wick Beettner on the birth of their son **Owen Neal Beettner**. Owen Neal was born Tuesday, December 26, 2023 at 8:09 AM. He weighed 6 lbs. 5.4 oz. and was 19 inches long. Proud grandparents are Susie Wick and Steven & Patsy Beettner.

Brad & Crystal Hajdik are pleased to announce the arrival of their grandson **Ellis Bradley Hajdik**. Ellis Bradley was born to Remington and Becca Hajdik in Tulsa, Oklahoma Wednesday, January 3, 2024. He weighed 6 lbs. 10 oz. and was 18 inches long. Proud great-grandmothers are Nelda Hajdik and Dessie Steinhauer. **Congratulations!**

Congratulations to Dalonna Vanskike who is being baptized Sunday, January 7, 2024 at the 11:05 AM service. Congratulations also to Mark Garcia and Dalonna on the baptism of their

daughters Lilyana Garcia and Zoey Garcia who are being baptized Sunday, January 7, 2024 at the 11:05 AM service as well. Sponsors for Lilyana are Lisa Galabeas and Tomas Ramirez, and sponsors for Zoey are Joe & Raquel Sosa.

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: Sun., Dec. 24, 2023 – 455	Contributions: Sun., Dec. 24 – \$13,896.01
Power of One: Sun., Dec. 24, 2023 – \$152.00	Building Fund: Sun., Dec. 24 – \$353.23

Attendance: December 30 & 31, 2023 – 127	Contributions: Dec. 30 & 31 – \$4,787.01
Power of One: December 30 & 31, 2023 – \$36.00	Building Fund: Dec. 30 & 31 – \$170.02

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! ☺

**** 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@spletx.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 30th 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.* ☺

► **God's Gals** will be **undecorating the church on Sunday, January 7, 2024 after the 11:05 AM service.** The guys are invited to come help us. We need lots of muscles! Thanks in advance your help! If you have questions, please contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127. ◀

🎵🎵 **THE 11TH NIGHT CONCERT:** This beautiful concert is one last chance to hear lovely Christmas and Advent music from the Lutheran churches and musicians in our area. The concert will be held at **St. Paul Lutheran Church**, 201 N. Rusk, **Fayetteville on Sunday, January 7, 2024 at 2:00 PM** and will be led by Pastor Ivy Schulz of Frelsburg/New Ulm. A freewill offering will be collected and used to support the Turtle Wing Foundation. Light refreshments will be provided after the concert. 🎵🎵

ST. PAUL QUILTERS: The St. Paul Quilters are took a brief winter break as a group and are ready for the new year! They will **resume quilting as a group Tuesday, January 9, 2024.** The quilters meet the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month in the Lighthouse from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM. Anyone interested in learning more about what this group does, please join us or contact Carol Lighthill at 832-371-3308.

● The Noon Bible Study group that meets on Tuesdays in the library *will resume on Tuesday, January 9, 2024.* All are welcome! ●

► **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.splc@gmail.com. You can also text or call her at 713-799-3484.

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Today (Jan. 7) –	12:00 PM – God's Gals Undecorate the Church 2:00 PM – 11 th Night Concert, St. Paul Lutheran, Fayetteville
Mon., Jan. 8 –	9:00 AM – Staff Meeting 5:30 PM – Evangelism Team (library) 6:30 PM – Women of JOY Bible Study Cooking (Lighthouse)
Tues., Jan. 9 –	9:00 AM-12:00 PM – Quilters (Lighthouse) 10:30 AM – Pastor Alan to TLC 12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library) 5:30 PM – Stewardship Team (library)
Wed., Jan. 10 –	9:00 AM – CLA Chapel 9:30 AM-2:00 PM – Garden Club (Lighthouse) 10:00 AM – Nursing Home Team & Pastor Alan to Columbus Oaks 2:00 PM – Nursing Home Team & Pastor Alan to The Oaks 5:00 PM – Meal 5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation & HS Youth
Thurs., Jan. 11 –	10:00-11:30 AM – Manna for Moms (Lighthouse) 5:00 PM – Worship Team (library) 6:30 PM – Peru Team Meeting (library)
Sat., Jan. 13 –	7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship
Next Sun., Jan. 14 –	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
Next Mon., Jan. 15 –	Office Closed! (Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance) 1:00 PM – Nursing Home Team & Pastor Alan to TLC 6:00 PM – Church Council

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Tuesday, January 9, 2024 Adrian of Canterbury, teacher, died around 710 (TFF)
African by birth, Adrian (or Hadrian) worked with Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury, in developing the church in England. He was director of a school at which church leaders were trained.

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SERVICE OVERVIEW: BREATH OF GOD

Breath figures frequently in Scripture. God’s breath or Spirit hovers over the chaos in creation in Genesis. Breath or Spirit enters the nostrils of the created in the story. Breath and Spirit is breathed on to the disciples by Jesus when he appears to them after his resurrection. In the gospel text, as Jesus rises from the waters, the Spirit, the breath of God, descends like a dove. Jesus, having held his breath under the water, rises as a model of death and life for us, breathing in the life of the Spirit. He is a risen and claimed by God as the beloved with whom God is pleased.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Today’s gospel is about Jesus being baptized by John the baptizer. The voice of God speaks from heaven, and the Spirit descends like a dove. Welcome to worship! This story is also about us: we too have been baptized, we have heard God’s loving call, and we have received the Holy Spirit.

Breathing is two things: breathing in and breathing out. You can hold your breath, but there is no way to hold it forever. Consider how this reflects the Spirit’s power in Jesus and then in our baptism. In baptism, the gift is not just one of repentance and forgiveness, but, as the Acts text emphasizes, also involves the Spirit living and acting in the baptized. While it is a gift for our own lives, like the gift of breathing in, it is also encouragement and life, a breathing out of the Spirit into the world. Baptism is both for our own sake and for the world. In our baptism, we breathe in forgiveness and reconciliation and breathe out the Spirit in our life and works. That’s the full life of the baptized disciple.

People from the whole Judean countryside and “all the people of Jerusalem” were going out to the wilderness to be baptized by John and to confess their sins. What were they drawn to? What was it about this prophet in camel hair that compelled the masses to spiritual revival? John took the symbolic act of cleansing and did something new with it to provide a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The word “sin” often gets tossed around as an abusive threat, but it can also be a gift that leads to repentance and restoration of relationship. We have this gift in our liturgy. At worship, you are invited to confess sin in the form of things done and left undone, and then hear the promise of God’s forgiveness. How can we share this gift in a way that inspires instead of threatens?

Our baptismal liturgy is a road map for discipleship. It is no accident that on so many occasions in the life of our congregation, we affirm the promises made in our baptism. Our lives are modeled after what it means to live among God’s faithful people; hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s Supper; proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed; serve all people; and strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

The most consistent connection running through the readings is Spirit. In the original Hebrew and Greek, the word for Spirit also means “wind” and “breath.” As the wind swept over the

waters of Genesis (the first reading), how is the wind from God moving around you right now? Is it blowing gently as a breeze or making you zip up your jacket? The wind within you may move past your vocal cords in a loud shout, a song of praise, or a gentle whisper.

KID STUDY:

The Christmas season is over, and now we are in the season of Epiphany when Jesus comes into the world to do his work. Jesus’ cousin John had been preaching in the wild lands by the River Jordan. John told everyone to get their lives ready because God was sending the Messiah. John helped them get ready by bringing them down into the Jordan River and dipping them in the water. It was a kind of special bath. The water reminded them that they could start over, living the way God asked them to live. And they would be ready when God’s Messiah came. One day, Jesus himself came out to the wild lands around the River Jordan. He came to John, just like everybody else. He went down into the river, just like everybody else. He had John dip him into the waters of the Jordan, just like everybody else. When Jesus came out of the water, his heart was all full of big thoughts and big feelings. He knew he would now start his work of teaching about God’s Kingdom. Soon he would be healing sick people, feeding hungry people, and teaching people about God so they could be free.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

You were led to the holy pool of divine baptism. And each of you was asked, whether you believed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. You made that saving confession, and descended three times into the water, and ascended again - here also, in a hidden and figurative way, pointing at the three-day burial of Christ. For as our Savior passed three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, so you also, in your first ascent out of the water, represented the first day of Christ in the earth, and by your descent, the night. For as they who are in the night see no more, but they who are in the day remain in the light, so in descending you saw nothing, as in the night, but in ascending again, we were as in the day. Let no one suppose that baptism is merely the grace of remission of sins, as was John’s baptism. No: baptism conveys to us the gift of the Holy Spirit, and God, who has presented you, as it were, alive from the dead, is able to grant you to walk in newness of life. - Cyril of Jerusalem [Cyril of Jerusalem, Lectures on the Christian Sacraments, ed. F. L. Cross (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1977), 60-63]

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Next Week’s Theme (Jan. 13 & 14): Come and see / a call to evangelize

Next Week’s Scriptures (Jan. 13 & 14):

First Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20] *“The calling of Samuel.”*

Psalm: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 *“You have searched me out and known me.” (Ps. 139:1)*

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 *“Glorify God in your body.”*

Gospel: John 1:43-51 *“The calling of the first disciples.”*