

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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July 10, 2022 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Senior Pastor	Alan Kethan	<i>On Sabbatical</i>
Deacon of Word and Service	<u>Phone:</u> (979)-530-8368	Sandye Fletcher
Youth & Family Specialist		Stephanie Polasek
Music Minister		Robert Eaton
Congregational Chair		Donna Maas
St. Paul Christian Learning Academy Director		Briana Bedford
Secretary		Elena Holub
Custodian		Tomasa Rosales
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator		DyAnn Lauzon

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

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

- *As we enter into a sacred time and space, a friendly reminder to please set your cell phone to vibrate.*
- *We want to welcome all of our guests today and thank you for worshiping with us. If you have any questions or would like more information regarding our services, programs, day care, or preschool programs at St. Paul, please visit our Welcome Center in the narthex immediately following our service, and an attendant will be more than happy to assist you. If this is your first time at St. Paul, we hope you will take a gift along with you. We also have a gift bag for children.*

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

INTRODUCTION

To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind is to reflect God's mercy in responding to one's neighbor. That mercy found its most profound expression in the "gospel that has come to you" — namely the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That gospel mercy comes to us again today: at the font, at the table, and from the pulpit. It is very near to you.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE PADS

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

* **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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

(Silence for private confession.)

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

C Amen.

GOSPEL SONG: REMIND ME WHO I AM

**When I lose my way and I forget my name, remind me who I am.
In the mirror all I see is who I don't wanna be, remind me who I am.
In the loneliest places, when I can't remember what grace is. . .**

CHORUS:

**Tell me once again who I am to You. . . who I am to You (whoa)
Tell me lest I forget who I am to You – that I belong to You. . . to You!**

GOSPEL: Luke 10:25-37

Jesus is challenged to explain what is involved in obeying the greatest commandment. He tells a parable rich in surprises: those expected to show pity display hard hearts while the lowly give and receive unexpected and lavish mercy.

A The holy gospel according to St. Luke, chapter 10, verses 25-37.

²⁵Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." ²⁹But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³²So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him,

passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' ³⁶Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" ³⁷He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

GOSPEL SONG: REMIND ME WHO I AM

**When my heart is like a stone and I'm running far from home, remind me who I am.
When I can't receive Your love – afraid I'll never be enough, remind me who I am.
If I'm Your beloved, can You help me believe it?**

CHORUS:

***Tell me once again who I am to You. . . who I am to You (whoa)
Tell me lest I forget who I am to You – that I belong to You. . . to You!***

BRIDGE:

**I'm the one You love. I'm the one You love,
That will be enough, I'm the one You love!**

LAST CHORUS:

**Tell me once again who I am to You. . . who I am to You (whoa)
Tell me lest I forget who I am to You – that I belong to You.
Tell me once again who I am to You. . . who I am to You (whoa)
Tell me lest I forget who I am to You – that I belong to You... to You... to You!**

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SERMON with the Children

*** SERMON SONG: OCEANS (WHERE FEET MAY FAIL)**

**You call me out upon the waters.
The great unknown, where feet may fail.
And there I find You in the mystery
In oceans deep, my faith will stand.**

CHORUS:

***And I will call upon Your name, and keep my eyes above the waves.
When oceans rise, my soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours, and You are mine...***

**Your grace abounds in deepest waters.
Your sov'reign hand will be my guide.
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me,
You've never failed - and You won't start now.**

CHORUS:

***And I will call upon Your name, and keep my eyes above the waves.
When oceans rise, my soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours, and You are mine...***

BRIDGE: x3

**Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders.
Let me walk upon the waters, wherever You would call me.
Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander
And my faith will be made stronger in the presence of my Savior.**

LAST CHORUS:

**I will call upon Your name, and keep my eyes above the waves.
When oceans rise, my soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours, and You are mine...**

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*** APOSTLES' CREED**

- A** With the whole church, let us confess our faith.
- C** **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

(The congregation may be seated during the prayers.)

PRAYERS

- A** United in Christ and guided by the Spirit, we pray for the church, the creation, and all in need.

A brief silence.

- A** Good and gracious God, you have placed your word of love in the heart of your church. Fill your church with compassion, that we bear the fruit of your healing mercy to a broken world.

A brief silence.

A You created the earth with seeds sprouting up to new life. We pray for the flourishing of fruit trees and orchards, vines and bushes. Prosper the work of those who plant, tend, harvest, and gather. We pray for farmers and ranchers as they continue to work hard to bring us food in this time of drought. Send us rain to heal the earth

A brief silence.

A Turn this community toward neighbors in need. Bring aid and support to those who are poor, beaten down, abused, forgotten, silenced, or avoided.

A brief silence.

A We pray for peace in Ukraine. Help to end this war and the destruction of lives and your creation. Change hearts, bring peace and show the world your existence.

A brief silence.

A We pray for those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Jerry Ordner; Chris Thraen; Des Townsend; Candi King; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those battling cancer that they may know strength and comfort. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)*
Bubba Bencal; Al Gene Canik; Jane Veghaus Taylor; George Wright; Elrose Kollatschny; Sarah Stancik; Shelly Bowden; Larry Poenitzsch; Sandy Mosley; Charlene Tesch; Cynthia Coufal; Jeffrey McDaniel; Karen Bailiff; Julian Divin; Nancy Biers; Angie Beggs; Pam Potter; Charlie Hammock; Brad Bryson; Lynette Frnka; Riana Jamison; Jenna Escamilla; Margaret Ortiz; Keith Korth; Jodi Sebesta; Cathy Siglow; Paul Casinger; Fran Gillett; Tiffany Murley; DeQuincy Lister; Angela Mazoch; Lily Presswood; Denise Lange; Doug Mason; Dr. Tom Hancher; Joe Berry; Joyce Templeton; Gracie Brune; Margaret Rogers; Leonard Kahlden; Curtis Wallin; Megan Burch; Jennifer Aleman; Lisa Grazier; Phyllis Behrend; Jessica Mauchlen; Larry Guthrie; Donna Tiner; Libby Divin; Anthony Baumbach; Diane Brooks; Bob Loy; Stanley King; Monty Gillett; Dawn Foster; Edward Halcolm; Amber Smith Kutach; Louis Camacho; Melvin Schobel; Janet Greene; Sabrina Galindo; Debbie Grimes; Horst Traub; Margie Fisk; Preston Carter; Penny Miller; Carl Hahn; Megan Cain; Amanda Fuchs; Cyndi Wallace; Karen Broussard; Donna Young; Sharon Heimann; and Brenda Baker.

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.)*
Stephanie Miles; Katie Page; Brooke Dungen Pawlak; Mallory Dungen Cook; and Madisyn Horndt Neumann.

A We pray for all those who reside in care facilities and the homebound that they receive your caring and compassion. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)*
Adrian Fritsch; Don Morrison; Verna Coufal; Doug Hill; John Zwiengel; Robert Saunders; Coy Dell Schindler; Deanna Lee; Doris Poppe; Barbara McMath; Linda Munos Rodgers; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Delores Purcell; Jane Booker; Curtis Berger; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Beatrice Zikuhr; Robert Eaton; Ronnie Rogers; Fritz Willms; Joyce Dehmer; and Donna Dehmer.

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.)*
Law enforcement officers: Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; Luke Kanz; Bruno Flores; 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.; Garrett Flores; Kyle Burris; Dylan Walcik; Randy Wendt; Travis Neuendorff; Brenda Henkes; and Jan Willette, as well as those active duty military members including Brian Anderson; Michael Graham; Bryan Kubena; Brad Bergfeld; Cody Jowers; Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Ryan Neisner; Anthony D'Angelo; Dalton Kapel; Kindra Dawson; William Phillips; and Kevin Gonzalez.

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 Iglesia Cristiana Camino de Santidad 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.

A brief silence.

A God of every time and place, in Jesus' name and filled with your Holy Spirit, we entrust these spoken prayers and those in our hearts into your holy keeping.

C Amen.

*** PEACE**

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

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

OFFERING and POWER OF ONE

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

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

P God of abundance: you have set before us a plentiful harvest. As we feast on your goodness, strengthen us to labor in your field, and equip us to bear fruit for the good of all, in the name of Jesus.

C Amen.

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

*** 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 In Christ's presence there is fullness of joy. Come to the banquet.

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. Please keep 6 feet between those who are not your family members. Pastor will hand you the bread. If you wish to have a gluten-free wafer, please tell Pastor “Gluten-free, please.” Afterward, you will choose either wine or white grape juice from the individual cups in the tray – white grape juice in the center with wine surrounding. Place the empty cups in the baskets located off to the side. Although communion is continuous, you are welcome to kneel at the rail in prayer after receiving communion. Please return to your seat by the side aisles.}

*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P Life-giving God, through this meal you have bandaged our wounds and fed us with your mercy. Now send us forth to live for others, both friend and stranger, that all may come to know your love. This we pray in the name of Jesus.

C Amen.

*** BLESSING**

P The God of peace, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you, comfort you, and show you the path of life this day and always.

C Amen.

*** CLOSING SONG: NOBODY**

Why You ever chose me has always been a mystery.

All my life I've been told I belong at the end of the line.

With all the other “Not-Quites,” With all the “Never-Get-It-Rights.”

But it turns out they're the ones You were lookin' for all this time.

CHORUS:

***'Cause I'm just a nobody, tryin' to tell everybody, all about Somebody
Who saved my soul. Ever since You rescued me, You gave My heart
A song to sing. I'm livin' for the world to see – nobody but Jesus.
I'm livin' for the world to see – nobody but Jesus.***

Moses had stage fright. And David brought a rock to a sword fight.

You picked twelve outsiders nobody would've chosen and you changed the world.

Well the moral of the story is, ev-erybody's got a purpose.

So when I hear that devil start talkin' to me sayin' “Who DO you think you are?”

CHORUS:

***I say, “I'm just a nobody, tryin' to tell everybody, all about Somebody
Who saved my soul. Ever since You rescued me, You gave My heart
A song to sing. I'm livin' for the world to see – nobody but Jesus.
I'm livin' for the world to see – nobody but Jesus.”***

BRIDGE: (sing twice)

So let me go down, down, down in history.

As another blood-bought, faithful member of the family.

And if they all forget my name, well, that's fine with me.

I'm livin' for the world to see no-body but Je-sus.

CHORUS:

**'Cause I'm just a nobody, tryin' to tell everybody, all about Somebody
Who saved my soul. Ever since You rescued me, You gave My heart
A song to sing. I'm livin' for the world to see – nobody but Jesus.
I'm livin' for the world to see – nobody but Jesus.
I'm livin' for the world to see – nobody but Jesus.**

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*** DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Love your neighbor.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

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USHERS: Youth; Mike & Gerri Hackfeld; Sandi & Kaldon Roensch

LAY READER: Youth

ACOLYTE: Devin Oppermann

STREAMING: Garrett Chollett

ALTAR GUILD: Barbara Brisco

WELCOME: Welcome to worship in Jesus' name. As we pray today that God bless America, may the whole world know God's goodness and live in peace and love.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Nelda Hajdik in loving memory of husband Leroy's birthday on July 12.

We are pleased to have Pastor John Hunsicker and the St. Paul Youth sharing their messages with us this weekend. Pastor John is presiding over worship and sharing his message Saturday, July 9, and the St. Paul Youth will be sharing their message and presiding at both services Sunday, July 10. The youth participating in Sunday's **9:00 AM service** are: Callen Barten; Cambry Barten; Cort Barten; Lilly Flores; Leira Gonzalez; Rhonda Schonenberg; Landry Stancik; Paisley Stancik; and Tucker Stancik. The youth participating in Sunday's **11:05 AM service** are: George Bergfeld III; Harlie Lewis; Elliot Polasek; and Micah Polasek. Thank you Pastor John and youth!! ☺

**** REMINDER!!** Pastor Alan continues to be on sabbatical during the month of July, 2022. In case of an emergency, please contact Deacon Sandye Fletcher at 979-530-8368. ******

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: July 2 & 3, 2022 – 124

Contributions: July 2 & 3 – \$13,950.18

Power of One: July 2 & 3, 2022 – \$44.00

Building Fund: July 2 & 3 – \$806.44

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.

**** NOTICE REGARDING BULLETINS:** Please take your bulletin home after worship. We will not be reusing them. Thank you! ******

► **Children's Activity Bags** are available once again 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! ☺

Water Slides & Messy Art!! Students entering Kindergarten and 1st Grade are invited to come play on the water slides and get a little messy creating some art on **Tuesday, July 12, 2022** on the church lawn from **5:30-7:00 PM**. Bring your bathing suits and towels and learn about "What Love Is. . ." Pizza and drinks will be served. Please RSVP by Monday, July 11, 2022 to Stephanie at 979-732-1858.



Columbus Food Pantry: It is time for our church to help at the Columbus Food Pantry! The dates are **July 14 & 15, 2022**. The Food Pantry is located at the First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 419 Washington Street. On **Thursday, July 14** the food delivery truck will arrive and grocery bags will be prepared; **please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help. **On Friday, July 15 the food will be distributed 9:00 AM-1:00 PM. Please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help with the food distribution. Please mark your calendars to help with this important community service! If you have any questions, please call Kathy Fleming at 979-732-4930 or Tom Fleming at 979-732-4107.

Register for Vacation Bible School – July 18-22, 2022!! Mark your calendars for this year's Vacation Bible School! Join us as we "Go off-road for a Monumental adventure through the colorful canyons and sunbaked trails of the Southwest. By exploring God's awesomeness, kids form a rock-solid faith for the road ahead!" **VBS dates are July 18-22, 2022 from 6:00-8:30 PM each evening** and is open up to children who have completed 5th grade. Registration is free, however, t-shirts will be available for \$7 each. Parents may register their students online by visiting vbspro.events/p/events/stpaul2022. **Deadline to register is Sunday, July 17, 2022!!**

● **VBS FOOD DONATIONS:** Due to the cost of groceries, we are asking for donations to help with the meals served each evening before Vacation Bible School. We serve about 150 kids and volunteers *each night* of VBS. If you would like to help, you can either give a **monetary donation** or donate **specific food items**. For monetary donations, an envelope will be on the table in the narthex (foyer) that can be placed in the offering bowl. If you wish to donate specific food items, just pull a slip off the board and return it with the donation on the date specified. If you have any questions, please contact Loraine Gast at 979-732-1296. Thank you!



TAKE NOTE

Worship Schedule Change!! The last weekend of July there will be a change in our worship schedule. Since the **weekend of July 30 & 31, 2022** is a 5th Sunday weekend, our worship services will be services of healing. We will have worship with healing on Saturday, July 30 at 7:00 PM. For **Sunday, July 31**, we will have **only one healing service at 10:00 AM**. Following that service we will have a pot luck meal in The Lighthouse to enjoy good food and good fellowship! **A sign-up sheet for the pot luck is in the narthex (foyer). Please sign-up if you are planning to attend!** Be sure to make note of the worship time change for Sunday, July 31 (10:00 AM), and mark your calendar for fellowship and pot luck immediately following the service!

♥ **Grief Support Group:** Are you experiencing grief from the loss of a loved one, loss of a job, loss of friend who has moved? The Grief Support Group is a place to share and discuss these issues with other individuals. The group meets the **third Thursday of each month from 5:30-6:30 PM in the church library**. For questions or more information, contact Peggy Geisler at 979-732-0350.

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Mon., July 11 – **Deadline to register for Water Slide & Messy Art!!**
10:00 AM – Staff Meeting

Tues., July 12 –
9:00 AM-12:00 PM – Quilters (Lighthouse)
12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
5:30 PM – Stewardship Team (library)
5:30-7:00 PM – K-1st Grade Water Slide & Messy Art (church lawn)

Wed., July 13 –
9:45 AM – CLA Chapel
10:30 AM-12:00 PM – Sewing Camp (Lighthouse)

Thurs., July 14 –
8:30 AM – Work at Columbus Food Pantry, FUMC
5:00 PM – Worship Team (library)

Fri., July 15 –
8:30 AM – Work at Columbus Food Pantry, FUMC
10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)

Sat., July 16 –
7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

Next Sun., July 17 –
9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship
Deadline to register for Vacation Bible School!!

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Monday, July 11, 2022 Benedict of Nursia, Abbot of Monte Cassino, died around 540
Benedict is known as the father of the Western monastic movement. Educated in Rome, he went to live as a hermit, and eventually gathered a community of monks around him. He wrote a rule for living in monasteries that is used by Benedictines and adapted by others.

Tuesday, July 12, 2022 Nathan Söderblom, Bishop of Uppsala, died 1931
A winner of the Nobel Prize for peace for his efforts to unite peoples after the First World War, Söderblom also called attention to the revival of early church worship principles, and helped to lay the groundwork for the World Council of Churches.

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OTHER READINGS: Deuteronomy 30:9-14
Moses calls the people who are about to enter the promised land to renew the covenant God made with their ancestors. Through this covenant God gives life and asks for obedience. God's commandment is neither burdensome nor too far off, but dwells in the people's hearts.

The reading begins:

⁹The LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all your undertakings, in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your soil. For the LORD will again take delight in prospering you, just as he delighted in prospering your ancestors, ¹⁰when you obey the LORD your God by observing his commandments and decrees that are written in this book of the law, because you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹¹Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. ¹²It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" ¹³Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?" ¹⁴No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-10

¹To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. ²My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. ³Let none who look to you be put to shame; rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous. ⁴Show me your ways, O LORD, and teach me your paths. ⁵Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long. ⁶Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting. ⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD. ⁸You are gracious and upright, O LORD; therefore you teach sinners in your way. ⁹You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way. ¹⁰All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast love and faithfulness to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies.

OTHER READINGS: Colossians 1:1-14

The letter to the Colossians was written to warn its readers of various false teachings. The first part of the letter is an expression of thanks for the faith, hope, and love that mark this community, including a prayer for strength and courage.

The reading begins:

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ²To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. ³In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel ⁶that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. ⁷This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ⁸and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit. ⁹For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. ¹¹May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: WHO ARE YOU?

Who do you identify with in the parable? This is part of what makes parables so powerful. Some days we read the story through the eyes of the priest or the Levite. Some days we feel like the Samaritan. And then there are those days when we are the man in the ditch. Some days you are the windshield and some days you are the bug, as the saying goes.

It is easy to miss the shocking nature of this parable if we start to think that this story only teaches us to imitate the Samaritan. The parable says so much more about God, our relationship to God, and the lengths to which God will go to reach out to us.

Through the image of the Samaritan, Jesus lifts up a surprising rescuer as an image of the God who relentlessly cares for those in need. Could it be that we are meant to identify not with the Samaritan or even the lawyer to whom Jesus speaks the parable, but rather with the man who is hopeless and left for dead? Could it be that Christ is the good Samaritan who embraces us with the tender compassion of God?

All of the sudden the parable is turned on its head. Jesus is not just giving us a comfortable morality tale reminding us to be nice, helpful, generous people. Instead Jesus is proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. God's grace comes to us through the cross. God's grace comes to us even — and especially — when we are at our worst, when we struggle in the depths and cry

out for help. Even when we cannot or will not cry out, mercy and grace come into our lives through Jesus. So whether you are on the road or in the ditch, Jesus even now is coming for you.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Today is the well-known parable of the Good Samaritan. Do we have the capacity to embody such mercy? Welcome to worship! The oil of our baptism is given to us for our healing. The bread and wine of the table will strengthen us for a life of service.

Today's gospel reading provides an opportunity for reflection on relationships between and among neighbors. What do people in our town know about our community of faith? Nothing? Something? What do they say? How do our neighbors perceive our parish? What does that suggest about how our congregation can better engage with our neighbors? If we are serious about reaching out to our neighbors in service, we should begin with how they view us. Do we welcome? Do we engage? Do we care?

The priest and the Levite who pass by the man were restricted from touching ritually impure people. Luke tells us that the Samaritan saw the beaten man, had compassion, and then came closer. Compassion dictated the proximity of care. Likewise, the risen Christ comes close to us in the eucharist. Our definition of "neighbor" has perhaps for too long been far too narrow. "Neighbor" does not just mean someone that lives next door. "Neighbor" does not mean someone who looks like us and believes as we do.

What does it look like to love and care for those we don't consider the same as us? Jesus' story about the person who was hurt and the person who was merciful in spite of differences illustrates an expansive, borderless, selfless kind of love that reaches across boundaries for the good of the other. This kind of love is not reserved solely for our family and friends but is also offered beyond that narrow circle to those who are vulnerable and alienated. No one is beyond this far-reaching love.

From the Samaritan's perspective, the only qualification for neighbor-ness was the suffering and need of the beaten man. All other lines, walls, hierarchies, and divisions fell away.

KID STUDY:

Jesus tells a story about a Jewish man who was traveling from Jerusalem. He was attacked by robbers and left to die. A Jewish religious leader saw him, but walked right on by. Another Jewish man walked right on by, too, without giving him a second thought. But another man, a foreigner from another place, saw the hurt man and had compassion for him. Jews and Samaritans did not get along. The two lands and cultures did not regard each other as friends. The Samaritan man stopped, helped take care of the man's wounds, and took him to a hotel. He even paid those who helped the man get better. After the story, Jesus asked, "*Which of these three men was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by the robbers?*" The neighbor was the Samaritan. Then Jesus said, "*Now go and love your neighbor.*" Jesus wants us to know that all people in this

world - people we know, and people we've never met, are *all* our neighbors. We are called to love and care for them. Be a good neighbor to everyone you meet!

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

Why didn't Jesus tell the lawyer whom we are to love? Why concentrate instead on how we are to love? It seems to me that it would be so much easier if I only knew who it is I have been called to love. It would better if I could know the names of those for whom I bear such awesome responsibility, but I don't. We don't. We are called by Jesus to an expansive love, to a love without limit that is potentially there for all. No one is eliminated in advance... We are to love not only the disenfranchised and alienated, the marginalized and oppressed, those needy strangers whom we read about on the front page or pass by in the subway station, but our friends, our relatives, and all those at the center of our political, social, and economic power structures. If we love like the Samaritan loved, we will be compassionate and generous to each person upon whom we stumble. - Barbara Finan [Barbara Finan, in Homilies for the Christian People, 499.]

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Next Week's Theme (July 16 & 17): Mary and Martha welcome Jesus; Martha complains Mary is not helping

Next Week's Scriptures (July 16 & 17):

First Reading: Genesis 18:1-10a

"The hospitality of Abraham and Sarah to three visitors of the LORD."

Psalm: Psalm 15

"LORD, who may abide upon your holy hill?" (Ps. 15:1)

Second Reading: Colossians 1:15-28

"Hymn to Christ, the firstborn of all creation."

Gospel: Luke 10:38-42

"Jesus says: Martha, your sister Mary has chosen the better part."