

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

July 15 & 16, 2023

Seventh Sunday of Pentecost

Senior Pastor	Alan Kethan	<u>Home:</u> (979)-942-9060	<u>Cell:</u> (830)-708-1200
Deacon of Word and Service			Sandye Fletcher
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

God's word is like the rain that waters the earth and brings forth vegetation. It is also like the sower who scatters seed indiscriminately. Our lives are like seeds sown in the earth. Even from what appears to be little, dormant, or dead, God promises a harvest. At the Lord's table we are fed with the bread of life, that we may bear fruit in the world.

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.)

60 SECONDS OF STEWARDSHIP – Fellowship Team

* **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who greets us in this and every season, whose word never fails, whose promise is sure.

C Amen.

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of our neighbors, 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 In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

* **HYMN ELW - #533 "Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty"**

1. Open now thy gates of beauty, Zion, let me enter there, where my soul in joyful duty waits for God who answers prayer. Oh, how bless-ed is this place, filled with solace, light, and grace!

2. Gracious God, I come before thee; come thou also unto me; where we find thee and adore thee, there a heav'n on earth must be. To my heart, oh, enter thou, let it be thy temple now!

3. Here thy praise is gladly chanted, here thy seed is duly sown;
let my soul, where it is planted, bring forth precious sheaves alone,
so that all I hear may be fruitful unto life in me.

4. Thou my faith increase and quicken, let me keep thy gift divine;
how-so-e'er temptations thicken, may thy word still o'er me shine
as my guiding star through life, as my comfort in all strife.

5. Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done indeed;
may I undisturbed draw near thee while thou dost thy people feed.
Here of life the fountain flows; here is balm for all our woes.

CCLI Song #3701140 Words: Benjamin Schmolck; tr. Catherine Winkworth, alt. Music: Joachim Neander
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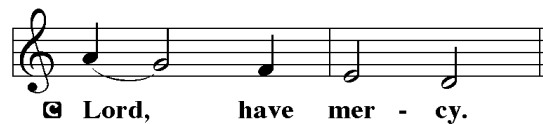
* GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be
with you all.

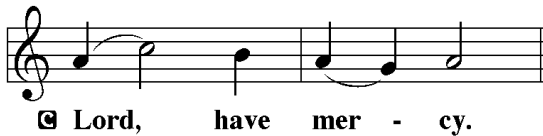
C And also with you.

* KYRIE (Responses Sung)

P In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



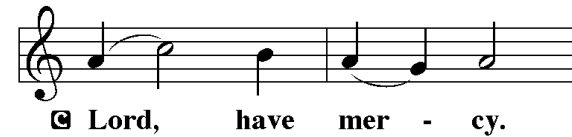
P For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



P For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of
all, let us pray to the Lord.



P For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the
Lord.



P Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.



* PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help
us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through
Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:10-13

A Our first reading is from Isaiah, chapter 55, verses 10-13.

*God's word to Israel's exiles is as sure and effective as never-failing precipitation. Their return to
the Holy Land in a new exodus is cheered on by singing mountains and by trees that clap their
hands.*

The reading begins:

¹⁰For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have
watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the
eater, ¹¹so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it
shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. ¹²For you
shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst
into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. ¹³Instead of the thorn shall come
up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the LORD for a
memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 65:[1-8] 9-13

A The Psalm today is from Psalm 65, verses 1-13. We will read the Psalm responsively. The congregation will please respond by reading the words in bold print.

[1You are to be praised, O God, in Zion; to you shall vows be fulfilled.

2To you, the one who answers prayer, to you all flesh shall come.

³Our sins are stronger than we are, but you blot out our transgressions.

4Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there! They will be satisfied by the beauty of your house, by the holiness of your temple.

⁵Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness, O God of our salvation, O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the oceans far away.

6You make firm the mountains by your power; you are girded about with might.

⁷You still the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples.

8Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your marvelous signs; you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.]

⁹You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; the river of God is full of water. You prepare the grain, for so you provide for the earth.

10You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.

¹¹You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty.

12May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, and the hills be clothed with joy.

¹³May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; let them shout for joy and sing.

SECOND READING: Romans 8:1-11

A Our second reading is from Romans, chapter 8, verses 1-11.

There is no condemnation for those who live in Christ. God sent Christ to accomplish what the law was unable to do: condemn sin and free us from its death-dealing ways. The Spirit now empowers proper actions and values in our lives and gives us the promise of resurrected life.

The reading begins:

¹There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law — indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of

righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

A Please stand as you are comfortable for the gospel.

* **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** (Sung)



* **GOSPEL:** Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

In Matthew's gospel, both Jesus and his disciples "sow the seed" of God's word by proclaiming the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near." Now, in a memorable parable, Jesus explains why this good news produces different results in those who hear.

P The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 13, verses 1-9 and 18-23.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹Let anyone with ears listen!" ¹⁸"Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of

wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²³But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

P The gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

* **HYMN ELW - #679 “For the Fruit of All Creation”**

1. **For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.**

For these gifts to ev'ry nation, thanks be to God.

**For the plowing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safekeeping, thanks be to God.**

2. **In the just reward of labor, God's will is done.**

In the help we give our neighbor, God's will is done.

**In our worldwide task of caring for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.**

3. **For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God.**

For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God.

**For the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us,
most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.**

CCLI Song #5072547 Words: Fred Pratt Green Music: Welsh traditional; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams
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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 Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

A Guide your church, O God, to sow seeds of forgiveness and righteousness on good soil. Direct your people to proclaim your love in this congregation and throughout the world. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A Sustain your creation, O God, by sending favorable weather, causing trees and fields to grow. If it be your will, we ask you to bring us rain. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A We pray for peace in all the world, especially in war-torn areas of Ukraine and Sudan. Bring an end to wars and the destruction of lives and your creation. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A We pray for the family and friends of Sharon Hanzelka who passed away this past week. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time. Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:

Ronnie Huebel; Rose Goebel; Dorothy Wicke; George King; Madelyn Braden; Arlin Brune; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you (*Pause*). Hear us, O God.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A We pray for all those battling cancer that they may know comfort and strength. (*Pause for those we are praying for.*) Hear us, O God.

Pam Parker; Debbie Herzik; Randy Wendt; Susan Chandler; Heather Deviney; Jaime Sawyer; Kim Moerbe Welack; Misti Retzer; Zelda Lanford; Michelle Thraen; Pauline Gosnell; Nina Naumann; GayLynn Willms Burk; Carl Norton; Laura Harris; Todd Foster; Cindy Tanner; Joe Reck; Melinda Rodiek; Melda Coleman; Donna Culton; Nancy Hartmann; Lydia Rojas; Larry Stolar; Vivian Fortenberry; Rick Davis; Darryl Stancik; Jerry Ordner; Michael Yancey; Al Gene Canik; Jane Venghaus Taylor; George Wright; Sandy Mosley; Charlene Tesch; Karen Bailiff; Julian Divin; Nancy Biers; Pam Potter; Charlie Hammock; Brad Bryson; Lynette Frnka; Riana Jamison; Jenna Escamilla; Margaret Ortiz; Keith Korth; Jodi Sebesta; Cathy Siglow; Paul Casinger; DeQuincy Lister; Lily Presswood; Denise Lange; Doug Mason; Dr. Tom Hancher; Joe Berry; Gracie Brune; Margaret Rogers; Leonard Kahlden; Curtis Wallin; Megan Burch; Lisa Grazier; Phyllis Behrend; Jessica Mauchlen; Donna Tiner; Libby Divin; Diane Brooks; Bob Loy; Stanley King; 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.

C **Your mercy is great.**

A We pray for all expectant mothers, and especially for:
Dina Anton de Espinoza; Olivia Leyendecker; Daya Latiolais; Cassidy Zajicek Parks;
Courtney Busselman; Nancy Gorman; Camille Stancik; and Kyndall Beettner that they have
healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A We pray for all those who reside in care facilities and the homebound and especially for:
Dr. Cecil Marburger; Joey Denby; Edwin Oevermann; Paul Minar, Sr.; Adrian Fritsch; Doug
Hill; Robert Saunders; Coy Dell Schindler; Barbara McMath; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt;
Helen Perrard; Jane Booker; Pat Brasher; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Ronnie
Rogers; Joyce Dehmer; Donna Dehmer; Rita Noska; and Cherie Moore that they receive
your caring and compassion. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

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.) Hear us, O God.

Law enforcement officers: Charles Jobb; Joseph Smith; Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob
Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abbigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; 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; Jan Willette and Terri Neuendorff, 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; Kevin Gonzalez; and Cody Goolsby.

C Your mercy is great.

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. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the name of the one who
reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our Savior.

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



bles-sing. 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 God of field and forest, sea and sky, you are the giver of all good things. Sustain us with these gifts of your creation, and multiply your graciousness in us with what we give back to your work, that the world may be fed with your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

* **EUCCHARISTIC 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 All people are called to Christ's table. Come and receive that which will grow in you.

C Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION (Kneeling at Rail)

*{You will be coming forward to the rail for distribution. **All are welcome for communion.** You will be ushered down the center aisle beginning in the front. Fill in at the railings starting at the side and work your way around to the center, then kneel if you are able. Pastor will hand out the bread. If you wish to have a gluten-free wafer, please tell Pastor "Gluten-free, please."*
Afterward, you will choose either wine or white grape juice from the individual cups in the tray – white grape juice in the center with wine surrounding. An acolyte follows with an empty tray for you to place your empty individual cup. After receiving communion, please remain at the rails until Pastor has dismissed the entire table with a blessing. Please return to your seat by the side aisles.}

* **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. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

* **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P We thank you, generous God, for the refreshment we have received at your banquet table. Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world, through the one who is our dearest treasure, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

* **BLESSING**

P May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. May the Lord look upon you with His favor and grant you His peace. In the name of the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

* **HYMN ELW - #547 "Sent Forth by God's Blessing"**

1. Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The supper is ended. Oh, now be extended
the fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of Christ's teaching, receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.
Your grace shall incite us, your love shall unite us
to work for your kingdom and answer your call.

2. **With praise and thanksgiving to God everliving,
the tasks of our ev'ryday life we will face –
our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,
embracing God's children, the whole human race.
With your feast you feed us, with your light now lead us;
unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving
give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.**

Text: Omer Westendorf, 1916-1997, alt. *Music:* Welsh folk tune Text ©1964 World Library Publications

* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. You are good seed.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

POSTLUDE

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

SUN: David Johnson; Byron Marburger; Brad Hajdik; Debbie Yancey

LAY READERS: SAT: Rhanda Lattimore

SUN: Curtiss Schonenberg

ACOLYTE:

SUN: Cambry Barten

STREAMING:

SUN: Janel Barten

SOUND:

SUN: Todd Jacobs

ALTAR GUILD: Janeen Venghaus and Sandye Fletcher

WELCOME: The psalmist proclaims that God's word is a lamp for our feet (Psalm 119:105).
May you experience the light of God's guidance on your path today. Welcome to worship.

ALTAR FLOWERS are placed by Nelda Hajdik in loving memory of her husband Leroy whose
birthday was July 12.

Thank you! Sandye and I would like to express our sincere thanks to all who sent flowers, cards
and prayers for our family during the passing of my mother, Alma Lee Fletcher, recently. She
lived a long life and will be missed by her family and friends. Thank you all, *Randy and Sandye
Fletcher*

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 8 & 9, 2023 – 157

Power of One: July 8 & 9, 2023 – \$35.00

Contributions: July 8 & 9 – \$8,862.56


Building Fund: July 8 & 9 – \$423.23

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! ☺

♪♪♪ **Why Can't We Sing Some of the "Old" Songs?** The Worship Team has heard your
requests. We are going to sing some of those favorite hymns! **Throughout July, you can**
make suggestions. Then, during the four weeks of August, we will try to sing as many of them
as possible. We will even give you a little background as to why. . . when. . . by whom. . . the
songs were written. (The story behind the hymn is often as interesting as the words of the
hymn!) Did you know that most hymns are scripture based? **How Do I Make Suggestions?**
Write your suggestion(s) on the paper provided in the narthex and place it in the offering bowls
before or after worship. Let's make a joyful noise singing those favorite hymns!

 **Attention Graduating Seniors and Current College Students:** This is a reminder that if
you are planning to or are currently pursuing a degree in education *or* nursing, you are
encouraged to apply for the Frank & Ann Derr Scholarship here at St. Paul. For an application,
please see Ms. Stephanie or stop by the church office. Complete your application and return it to
the church office **as soon as possible.**

**** Colorado County Senior Connections ** –**

A place for Seniors, 65 years and older, to socialize with others.

The group meets at the Stafford Opera House – Columbus in the Buddy Rau Room from
10:00 AM-1:00 PM the **1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month.** Lunch will be provided. Various
activities will include: Card games/board games; Bingo; Movies; Educational Speakers; Field
trips; and Social gathering time!



Fresh Produce Distribution for the Columbus Community: St. Paul has an
opportunity to serve our community by being the distribution site for boxes of fresh
produce. This produce will be provided at no cost by The Common Market using
grant money obtained by Methodist Healthcare Ministries. The Columbus Food Pantry will no
longer provide any fresh produce, so, this may be the only chance for many families in our
community to have access to some fresh, healthy foods. The boxes of produce will be delivered

to us twice a month. **We would like to distribute the boxes of produce to families on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month from 8:00-10:00 AM at The Lighthouse. *We are looking for volunteers to help with this distribution. If you would be interested in joining this community outreach team, please sign up in the narthex (foyer). If you have any questions, please contact Kay Wesson at 713-851-6282.***



Newman's Castle for 2nd & 3rd Graders! St. Paul students entering 2nd and 3rd grade this fall are invited to experience Newman's Castle in Bellville, Texas. On **Tuesday, July 25, 2023 we will leave** the church parking lot **at 9:30 AM and return by 2:30 PM.** After exploring the castle and cataput, students will be served lunch and hear the story of Queen Esther. *Please RSVP to Stephanie by Monday, July 17, 2023 at 979-732-1858.*

♣ **Day Camp at Lutherhill!** Youth completing K-5th grade are invited to experience a week at camp without the over-night stay during the week of **July 30-August 4, 2023.** Camp starts each day at 8:00 AM and will end at 5:15 PM. Stephanie Polasek will shuttle youth each day to and from camp. We will leave the church at 7:20 AM and will return at 5:50 PM. **Cost is \$195 for the week.** Register online at lutherhill.org and then contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858 for transportation. It's always a great time for the kiddos!



ST. PAUL SENIOR EXPLORERS ARE GOING TO THE ASTROS! The Astros will be playing the Boston Red Sox on **Thursday, August 24, 2023.** Game time is 1:10 PM. We will **depart St. Paul at 10:00 AM,** stop and eat brunch at Cracker Barrel, and arrive comfortably at Minute Maid Park before game time. The grey area is that we think we can get pretty good tickets for \$30-\$50, depending on how many are going and the Astros' performance. We will call everyone before buying tickets if they are going to cost more than that. *Please sign up in the narthex (foyer) by Sunday, August 13, 2023.* Call Kevin Page with any questions at 979-732-0845.

♥ **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:

July 17-19 – High School Beach Retreat
Mon., July 17 – 9:30 AM – Staff Meeting
1:00 PM – Deacon Sandye to TLC
6:00 PM – Church Council

Tues., July 18 – 10:00 AM – Pastor Alan to Columbus Oaks
12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library)

Wed., July 19 – ***Newsletter Deadline!!***

9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
9:00 AM – Morning Circle (library)

Thurs., July 20 – 5:30 PM – Grief Support Group (library)

Fri., July 21 – 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)

Sat., July 22 – 7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

Next Sun., July 23 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship

10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School

11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Monday, July 17, 2023 **Bartolomé de Las Casas, missionary to the Indies, died 1566**

A native of Spain, Las Casas first came to the Western hemisphere while serving in the military. Upon arriving in the West, Las Casas was granted a large estate with Indigenous enslaved people whom he freed after he was ordained a priest. He worked in the Caribbean and Central America to improve the lives of the native peoples.

Saturday, July 22, 2023 **Mary Magdalene, Apostle**

Sometimes called "the apostle to the apostles" because she told them of her encounter with the risen Lord, Mary was a woman of Galilee who followed Jesus throughout his ministry. She was present at Jesus' crucifixion and his burial.

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SERVICE OVERVIEW: *LIFE IN EVERY DIRECTION*

We can identify death in every direction. We see war, hunger, addiction, poverty, a dying planet, and broken hearts. This is not a new story. The children of Israel surely saw death in every direction, wandering in the desert and at least occasionally wondering about their next meal. Paul looks at his own life and, at first, sees nothing beyond spiritual death. He reminds us that death is not just physical, but also spiritual. Then, in the parable of the sower, three-fourths of the seeds die and three-fourths of the sections of the field are inhospitable to flourishing life. Sometimes, life isn't even given a chance. We might look at the world and ourselves and only see the places that are absent and inhospitable to God's love.

The parable of the sower elicits reflection, repentance, and, ultimately, new life from its readers and hearers in considering the sort of spiritual life they practice. Are we hospitable or inhospitable to God's word? This parable is a vivid reminder of all God has overcome - rocks, scorching sun, thorns, and snatching - to bring life to the world. God brings forth life in places where people see only death.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Today's parable likens the word of God to seed that Christ sows into the field that we are,

honoring the preaching of the word and encouraging right and fruitful reception of that word. Welcome to worship! Receive the seed of the word. At the table, be nourished for a fruitful life.

Parables are like riddles: they challenge us to think in unconventional ways and to explore possibilities outside of our usual way of thinking. Jesus uses parables to invite us to expand views and consider possibilities about the kingdom of heaven that are beyond our familiar and comfortable perspectives.

The church often operates out of a sense of frugality; However, there is no frugality in the action of the seed sower in today's parable! The sower throws the seed with a devil-may-care extravagance, scattering the seed in every direction without attention to whether the seed is falling on the prepared soil or not. What are the implications of that kind of missional extravagance?

The imagery of growth recurs throughout the Bible, and today we are asked to consider the seed and the different growing environments as our ever-changing and varying levels of commitment. The man represents God and the seed is God's message. Just as a planted seed begins to grow, the Word starts to deepen and grow within us. A crop is produced in our lives by living as the word of God teaches. We all have different abilities and talents, and we use what we've been given. Just as it takes time for a crop to grow from seed, it will take time for us to develop the fruits we will produce.

KID STUDY:

Just like the seeds in today's story, God's gifts multiply. The cold weather we get in the winter helps to produce good fruit in the spring. Rain gives life, and is especially welcome during the dry seasons just like last week's welcome showers. A seed, good soil, and water produce what we need to live. God also provides lots of other good things that give us what we need to live: family that provides love and safety, health that provides the strength to do fun things, a brain that learns. God's gifts provide more than one thing but multiply in their goodness.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

*Beginners in prayer are those who draw the water from the well. This is very hard work, for it will fatigue them to keep their sense recollected, which is extremely difficult because they have been accustomed to a life of distraction. God grant that there may be water in the well! But that, at least, does not depend on us: our task is to draw it and to do what we can to water the flowers. What, then, will a person do who finds for many days nothing but aridity, dislike, and distaste? The gardener will rejoice and take new heart and consider it the greatest of favors to work in the garden of so great an Emperor. Let not the gardener wish to have God's kingdom on earth or ever cease from prayer, but rather resolve, even if this aridity should persist a whole life long, not to let Christ fall with his cross. - Teresa of Ávila [Teresa of Ávila, in *The Mystics of Spain*, ed. Allison Peers (London: Allen and Unwin, 1951), 81-83.]*

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Next Week's Theme (July 22 & 23): Parable of the weeds in the field

Next Week's Scriptures (July 22 & 23):

First Reading: Isaiah 44:6-8

"There is no other God than the LORD."

Psalm: Psalm 86:11-17

"Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth." (Ps. 86:11)

Second Reading: Romans 8:12-25

"The revealing of the children of God."

Gospel: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

"The parable of the weeds."