

**ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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

PH# (979) 732-2423 Fax (979) 733-0489

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

July 16 & 17, 2022

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

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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
Organist		Elena Holub

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

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

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

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

**INTRODUCTION**

*Perhaps the church, at its best, is "all ears." God urges the faithful, again and again, to "listen up!" — to heed the word that gives life. So it was with Abraham and Sarah, Mary and Martha, and the early church at Colossae. So it is today as we join the assembly to hear the word of God, the word of life.*

**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**

D Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose steadfast love endures forever.

**C Amen.**

D 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.*

D Merciful God,

**C we confess that we have not followed your path but have chosen our own way. Instead of putting others before ourselves, we long to take the best seats at the table. When met by those in need, we have too often passed by on the other side. Set us again on the path of life. Save us from ourselves and free us to love our neighbors. Amen.**

D Hear the good news! God does not deal with us according to our sins but delights in granting pardon and mercy. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. You are free to love as God loves.

**C Amen.**

**\* HYMN ELW - #855 "Crown Him with Many Crowns"**

1. **Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne; hark, how the heav'nly anthem drowns all music but its own. Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee, and hail him as thy matchless king through all eternity.**
2. **Crown him the virgin's Son, the God incarnate born, whose arm those crimson trophies won which now his brow adorn; fruit of the mystic rose, yet of that rose the stem, the root whence mercy ever flows, the babe of Bethlehem.**
3. **Crown him the Lord of love – behold his hands and side, rich wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified. No angels in the sky can fully bear that sight, but downward bend their burning eyes at mysteries so bright.**

4. **Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave and rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save. His glories now we sing, who died and rose on high, who died, eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.**

5. **Crown him the Lord of years, the potentate of time, creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime. All hail, Redeemer, hail! For thou hast died for me; thy praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity.**

CCLI Song #23938 Words: Matthew Bridges (sts. 1-3, 5) and Godfrey Thring (st. 4)

Music: George Job Elvey ©Words: Public Domain Music: Public Domain CCLI License #1729377

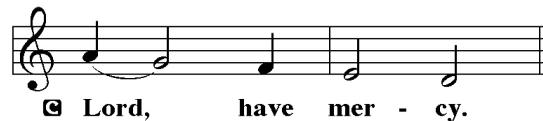
\* **GREETING**

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

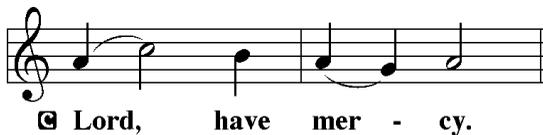
C **And also with you.**

\* **KYRIE** (Responses Sung)

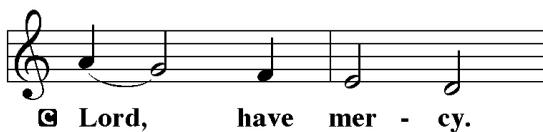
D In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



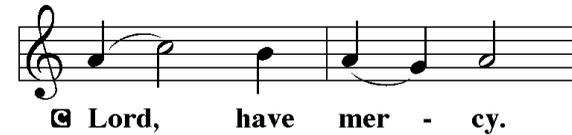
D For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



D 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.



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



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



\* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

D Eternal God, you draw near to us in Christ, and you make yourself our guest. Amid the cares of our lives, make us attentive to your presence, that we may treasure your word above all else, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C **Amen.**

**FIRST READING:** Genesis 18:1-10a

A Our first reading is from Genesis, chapter 18, verses 1-10a.

*The LORD visits Abraham and Sarah to tell them that the long-awaited promise of the birth of a child will be fulfilled for them in their old age.*

The reading begins:

<sup>1</sup>The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup>He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. <sup>3</sup>He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. <sup>4</sup>Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. <sup>5</sup>Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on — since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." <sup>6</sup>And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." <sup>7</sup>Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. <sup>8</sup>Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. <sup>9</sup>They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." <sup>10a</sup>Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son."

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**



**4. O Jesus, be our joy today; help us to prize your love;  
grant us at last to hear you say: "Come, share my home above."**

Words: attr. Bernard of Clairvoaux; tr. Edward Caswall Music: John Bacchus Dykes  
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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 United in Christ and guided by the Spirit, we pray for the church, the creation, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

A Ever-present God, in Christ you fill all things. As your church gathers to hear your word, share your meal, and receive your blessing, teach us to welcome strangers as we have been welcomed by you. God of grace,

**C hear our prayer.**

A Through Christ you bring peace. Assure all who are worried and distracted by many things of your constant presence. Soothe those suffering in mind, body, or spirit. Sustain all who are afflicted and those who serve as caregivers. God of grace,

**C hear our prayer.**

A In Christ you make your word fully known. Inspire this worshiping community to abide fully in your word as we sit at the feet of Jesus. Bless the ministry of teachers and Bible study leaders. God of grace,

**C hear our prayer.**

A We pray for farmers and ranchers as they continue to work hard to bring us food in this time of drought. Bless them as they sow crops and care for livestock. Send us rain to heal the earth and water to quench Your thirsty land. Let faith be born from our doubts, hope from our despair, and compassion from our troubles. God of grace,

**C hear our prayer.**

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. God of grace,

**C hear our prayer.**

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

Eric Vinson; David Kautz; Janet Rydell; Sue Lyle; Candi King; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you (*Pause*). God of grace,

**C hear our prayer.**

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

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.

**C hear our prayer.**

A We pray for all expectant mothers, and especially for:

Stephanie Miles; Brooke Dungen Pawlak; Mallory Dungen Cook; and Madisyn Horndt Neumann that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace. God of grace,

**C hear our prayer.**

A We pray for all those who reside in care facilities and the homebound and especially 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 that they receive your caring and compassion. God of grace,

**C hear 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: Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abbigail 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.

**C hear 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 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. God of grace,

**C hear our prayer.**

A In Christ you brought forth the firstborn from the dead. We give thanks for the saints you have gathered at your table. Gather us with them in your eternal glory. God of grace,

**C hear our prayer.**

D 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**

D 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**

D 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**

D 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**

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

**C Amen.**

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

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

(Sung)

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

us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have

mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the

sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

(Please be seated.)

**\* BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION**

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

**C Amen.**

**\* PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

D 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**

D 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.**

**\* HYMN ELW - #793 "Be Thou My Vision"**

**1. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
thou my best thought both by day and by night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**

**2. Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.  
Thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tow'r,  
raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.**

**3. Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,  
thou mine inheritance, now and always;  
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,  
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.**

**4. Light of my soul, after victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

CCLI Song #30639 Words: Irish, 8<sup>th</sup> cent; vers. Eleanor Henrietta Hull, alt; tr. Mary Elizabeth Byrne  
Music: Irish traditional ©Words: Public Domain Music: Public Domain CCLI License #1729371

**\* DISMISSAL**

D Go in peace. Love your neighbor.

**C Thanks be to God, and we will.**

## POSTLUDE

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**USHERS: SAT:** Kenny & JoAnn Venghaus; Janeen Venghaus; Emily Frank

**SUN:** Robin Maertz

**LAY READERS: SAT:** JoAnn Venghaus

**SUN:** Brad Hajdik

**ACOLYTE:**

**SUN:** Madison McRee

**STREAMING:**

**SUN:** Janel Barten

**ALTAR GUILD:** Janeen Venghaus, Emily Brod and Sandye Fletcher

**WELCOME:** Welcome to worship! Here may you find rest for your souls, challenge and comfort alike, and inspiration to share Christ's love as you go forth in faith.

**ALTAR WALL FLOWERS** are placed by Richard & Ruth Poncik in celebration of their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on July 17. Congratulations!

We are pleased to have Deacon Sandye Fletcher sharing her message and presiding at all three worship services this weekend. Thank you Deacon Sandye!! ☺

**\*\* 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 9 & 10, 2022 – 168

**Contributions:** July 9 & 10 – \$8,196.72

**Power of One:** July 9 & 10, 2022 – \$42.00

**Building Fund:** July 9 & 10 – \$782.10

*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! ☺

**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 5<sup>th</sup> 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](https://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!

◆ **God's Gals:** God's Gals will meet on **Sunday, July 24, 2022 at 6:00 PM** at *Hound Song Brewing Company*. All women of St. Paul are invited, and guests are always welcome! Hope to see you there for food, fellowship, and laughter! Come check out Hound Song's new kitchen and menu. Questions? Contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127. ◆



**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 5<sup>th</sup> 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:**

<b>Today (July 17) – Mon., July 18 –</b>	<b>Deadline to register for Vacation Bible School!</b> 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting 5:30 PM – VBS Meal 6:00 PM – Church Council 6:00-8:30 PM – Vacation Bible School
<b>Tues., July 19 –</b>	12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library) 5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library) 5:30 PM – VBS Meal 6:00-8:30 PM – Vacation Bible School
<b>Wed., July 20 –</b>	<b>Newsletter Deadline!!</b> 9:00 AM – Morning Circle (library) 9:45 AM – CLA Chapel 10:30 AM-12:00 PM – Sewing Camp (Lighthouse) 5:30 PM – VBS Meal 6:00-8:30 PM – Vacation Bible School
<b>Thurs., July 21 –</b>	5:30 PM – Grief Support Group (library) 5:30 PM- VBS Meal 6:00-8:30 PM – Vacation Bible School
<b>Fri., July 22 –</b>	10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library) 5:30 PM – VBS Meal 6:00-8:30 PM – Vacation Bible School
<b>Sat., July 23 – Next Sun., July 24 –</b>	7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship 10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School 11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship 6:00 PM – God's Gals to Hound Song Brewing Co., Columbus

## **UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS**

**Sunday, July 17, 2022    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.

**Friday, July 22, 2022    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.

**Saturday, July 23, 2022    Birgitta of Sweden, renewer of the church, died 1373**  
Birgitta married at age thirteen and had four daughters. Widowed at age thirty-eight, she gave all that she owned to the poor, and founded a community of monks and nuns led by a woman. Her work is continued today by the Society of St. Birgitta.

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## **SERVICE OVERVIEW: UNEXPECTED AND INTENTIONAL DISTRACTION**

Most of us are always busy and on the go, but today's gospel reminds us of a struggle: when are we to set aside our busy calendars, duties, and to-do lists and simply rest in God's presence, listening to what God has to say to us? This tension mounts in our gospel as Jesus addresses Martha's busyness, worry, and distraction, juxtaposed with Mary's contemplation, focus, and desire to sit at the feet of the great teacher. Is "quietly sitting" easy or possible for you? Perhaps we can find helpful advice in our first reading, as Abraham rests in the heat of the day. In that time of rest, he was ready to receive the three guests who came bearing the news that Sarah would have a son, fulfilling God's promise given years earlier. With the heat keeping him from moving on to other things (and us in the middle of a very hot summer), the guests had Abraham's undivided attention. These readings remind us how crucial it is to set aside time to spend with God. We might even wonder what sort of things Jesus was saying to Mary. Were they profound words, akin to the "mystery" the author of Colossians addresses in the epistle? Jesus was the person in whom God was pleased to dwell, that same one who is "the hope of glory."

## **THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:**

Today, Jesus attends a dinner party at Martha's home. Think of our church as Martha's home. Every time we worship, we sit at the table with Jesus. Welcome to worship! The mysterious and the mundane mingle in the readings today. In the everyday activities of preparing meals, welcoming guests, and engaging in conversation, the "fullness of God" is revealed.

Martha works while Mary contemplates. Martha's actions demonstrate those who serve, and Mary's actions are of those who listen. We are to do both. *Their* home is *our* table. Jesus does not say Martha's work is not necessary; he simply says that Mary's act of faithful contemplation is better. Many people today are far more comfortable with work than they are with the life of interior prayer and introspection. Contemplation can make many people nervous or uncomfortable. If anything, it is *this* aspect of our spiritual lives - listening closely, deeply, and carefully - that needs development and practice.

Have you ever hosted a dinner party? The Greek verb used in today's story, *perispao*, indicates that there was "simply too much to do" as an objective fact, rather than Martha being stubborn. Even so, setting aside the things that "must be done" in favor of an intimate, contemplative life is often a challenge in Christian spirituality. There is always something that *must* be done, but the "must" is often a matter of perspective in which *WE* decide what *MUST* be done. In the Christian life, the things that *must* be done are simple: gather with the community around word and sacrament, love God, and love neighbor.

In sharing the bread and wine, we are eating with Jesus himself, and in eating with Jesus, we are sharing a meal with the Triune God. Although we cannot see God in this room, God is here, welcoming us to hear the word, for we believe that we see God in each other.

**KID STUDY:**

Today we hear a story where Martha welcomes Jesus into her home. Have you ever had company at your house? The welcome and caring you provide to your guests is called hospitality. You probably give them a drink and something to eat, provide some fun activities, and even a comfortable place to rest. Preparing for guests in your home can be a lot of work. You may have to clean your room! What about receiving guests in your *church* home? It is also very important to provide guests at church with a comfortable space to restore their bodies and spirits. To love God and love our neighbor means we invite, greet, and share God's love with everyone. How do we learn to do this? We sit at Jesus' feet and listen, just like Mary. Here, week after week, we are fed by Jesus, who is both our host and our guest.

**INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:**

*Jesus rebukes Martha, and we need to rediscover the revolutionary potential of the concept of ministry suggested in this gospel reading. Service is not a code word for a new power trip, nor a sanctimonious way of justifying the servitude of the enslaved. It is a revolution that overthrows all these models of relationship. It means the self-emptying of alienated male power, even alienated divine power. It is God who begins the kenosis, or emptying, of power projected on the throne of heaven. It is God who becomes a servant, pulling out the foundations of all other kings and lords to use the divine as the model of hierarchy. Only by becoming one with the liberation of all the poor and oppressed do all of us, female and male, black and white, poor and rich, discover our own wholeness, in ourselves and with each other. - Rosemary Radford Ruether [Rosemary Radford Ruether, in Women and the Word: Sermons, ed. Helen Gray Crotwell (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 94, 98.]*

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**Next Week's Theme (July 23 & 24):** Jesus teaches the Lord's Prayer

**Next Week's Scriptures (July 23 & 24):**

**First Reading:** Genesis 18:20-32

*"Abraham bargains with God for the righteous of Sodom and Gomorrah."*

**Psalm:** Psalm 138

*"Your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon the works of your hands." (Ps. 138:8)*

**Second Reading:** Colossians 2:6-15 [16-19]

*"Buried with Christ in baptism, raised with him through faith."*

**Gospel:** Luke 11:1-13

*"Jesus teaches the disciples to pray."*