

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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July 24, 2022 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Seventh 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

Persistence in prayer is encouraged by Jesus and wins the attention of God when Abraham intercedes for Sodom. The life of the baptized — to be rooted and built up in Christ Jesus — is to be nurtured with prayer. God hears and answers prayer and so strengthens God’s own. “When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me.”

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: SEEK YE FIRST

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.

And all these things shall be added unto you.

Allelu, alleluia.

Ask and it shall be given unto you, seek and you shall find.

Knock, and the door shall be opened unto you.

Allelu, alleluia.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word

That proceeds from the mouth of God.

Allelu, alleluia.

CCLI Song #1352 Words and Music by Karen Lafferty © Maranatha! Music/ CCCM Music. CCLI Lic #1729377

GOSPEL: Luke 11:1-13

In teaching his disciples this prayer, Jesus also reminds them to focus on God’s coming reign, God’s mercy, and the strengthening of the community. Jesus encourages his disciples to childlike trust and persistence in prayer.

A The holy gospel according to St. Luke, chapter 11, verses 1-13.

¹[Jesus] was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” ²He said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. ³Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us

to the time of trial.” ⁵And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’ ⁷And he answers from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ ⁸I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs. ⁹“So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹²Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

The Rev. Dr. Brian Gige

* **SPECIAL MUSIC:** “The Road (Lord) Goes On Forever” – by Pastor Brian Gige

* 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 Trusting in God's extraordinary love, let us come near to the Holy One in prayer.

A brief silence.

A Rooted and built up in Christ, we pray for the church. Embolden church leaders to take risks for the sake of the gospel, and equip the baptized to proclaim your extravagant love for the whole world.

A brief silence.

A Interceding on behalf of the vulnerable, we pray for the peoples of the world. Inspire all rulers and governing authorities with your justice. Guide the work of legislators and public officials, that they advocate for the well-being of those they serve.

A brief silence.

A Persistent in prayer, we pray for our neighbors in need. To all who have hunger, give daily bread. To all who have bread, give hunger for justice. Open us to the cries of those who suffer.

A brief silence.

A Abounding in thanksgiving, we pray for this congregation. Bless the prayer and fellowship ministries in this place. Call us together in times of praise and blessing, trouble and sorrow, in your holy name.

A brief silence.

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.

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 the family and friends of Eric Vinson. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time.

A brief silence.

A We pray for the Columbus Junior Girls softball team, coaches, families and supporters as they travel to Albuquerque for their Regional tournament. Bless them with safe travels, and keep the team safe from injuries.

A brief silence.

A We pray for those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Nelma Strey; Irene Noska; Tiffany Murley; Loretta Mettke Sample; David Kautz; 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; 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.)*
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 Buried with Christ in baptism and raised with him to new life, we give thanks for your saints who rest in your eternal presence. Join our voices with theirs as we sing of your great glory.

A brief silence.

- A Receive the prayers of your children, merciful God, and hold us forever in your steadfast love; through Jesus Christ, our holy Wisdom.

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: WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS**

**What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh, what needless pain we bear;
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!**

**Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.**

**Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge; take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In His arms He'll take and shield you; you will find a solace there.**

CCLI Song #27714 ELW # 742 Words and Music by Charles Crozat Converse and Joseph Medicott Scriven Public Domain CCLI Lic #1729377

*** DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Love your neighbor. **C** Thanks be to God, and we will.

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USHERS: Gary & Donna Schindler

LAY READER: Tiara Flores

STREAMING: Kay Wesson

ACOLYTE: Hudson Muir

ALTAR GUILD: Barbara Brisco

WELCOME: Welcome to this time of worship. Share a word of peace with someone.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Brad & Crystal Hajdik in honor and celebration of their 31st wedding anniversary on July 27.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Charleen Andrus and family for the loss of her nephew Eric Vinson who passed away this past week. May God comfort them during their time of loss.

We are pleased to have the Rev. Dr. Brian Gigea sharing his message and presiding at all three worship services this weekend. Thank you Pastor Brian!! ☺

Congratulations!! The Junior Girls and Junior Boys both won their State softball and baseball tournaments in July. This is the first time Columbus Junior Boys have ever won State! Both teams advanced to Regionals in Albuquerque, NM. **Sydney Shepard** and **Mia Post** are on the softball team. Their tournament is this weekend, July 22-25, 2022. **Devin Oppermann** is on the baseball team. His tournament will be August 5-9, 2022. What an exciting time! Congratulations to Sydney, Mia, Devin and their teammates! We wish you all the best! ☺

**** 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 16 & 17, 2022 – 159 **Contributions:** July 16 & 17 – \$6,749.02
Power of One: July 16 & 17, 2022 – \$47.00 **Building Fund:** July 16 & 17 – \$658.21

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! ☺

◆ **God's Gals:** God's Gals will meet on **today 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 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!

**** End of Summer Pool Party!!** St. Paul Families and youth are invited to a **Family Pool Night Wednesday, August 10, 2022 from 7:00-9:00 PM** at the Columbus City Pool. Dinner and drinks will be served. Please sign up in the narthex by Thursday, August 4, 2022. If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858. **

♥ **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:

Today (July 24) – 6:00 PM – God's Gals to Hound Song Brewing Co., Columbus
Mon., July 25 – 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
Tues., July 26 – 9:00 AM-12:00 PM – Quilters (Lighthouse)
12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
6:00 PM – CLA Board
Wed., July 27 – 9:45 AM – CLA Chapel
10:30 AM-12:00 PM – Sewing Camp (Lighthouse)
July 28-31 – High School Beach Retreat (Matagorda)
Fri., July 29 – 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)
Sat., July 30 – 7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship & Healing
Next Sun., July 31 – 9:00 AM – Adult Sunday School
10:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship & Healing
11:00 AM – Pot Luck Lunch & Fellowship (Lighthouse)

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Monday, July 25, 2022 James, Apostle

James and his brother John were the sons of Zebedee, fishermen by trade before their call from Jesus. He was the first of the twelve apostles to be martyred, and his death is the only one recorded in scripture (Acts 12:1-2).

Thursday, July 28, 2022 Johann Sebastian Bach, died 1750; Heinrich Schütz, died 1672; George Frederick Handel, died 1759; musicians

These three German-born musicians have done much to enrich the life of the church. Schütz was an early master who focused on settings of biblical texts. Bach wrote over 300 cantatas along with works for organ and instrumental pieces, and has been called the "fifth evangelist" for the way he proclaimed the gospel in music. Handel's great work, Messiah, is a setting of scriptural texts.

Friday, July 29, 2022 Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany

Friends of Jesus, Mary and Martha are remembered for the hospitality of their home that they offered him—Martha focused on serving their guest, and Mary on listening to him. Their brother Lazarus was raised from the dead as a sign of the greater resurrection to come.

Friday, July 29, 2022 Olaf, King of Norway, martyr, died 1030

Considered the patron saint of Norway, Olaf went from a life of piracy to becoming Christian and declaring himself king of Norway. He revised the laws and tried to administer them fairly. Driven from Norway in a rebellion, he was killed in battle trying to regain his kingdom.

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OTHER READINGS: Genesis 18:20-32

In today's reading, Abraham undertakes the role of a mediator between God and sinful humanity. Appealing to God's justice, Abraham boldly asks for mercy for the city of Sodom for the sake of the few righteous people there, including Abraham's nephew, Lot.

The reading begins:

²⁰Then the LORD said, "How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! ²¹I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know." ²²So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the LORD. ²³Then Abraham came near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" ²⁶And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake." ²⁷Abraham answered, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." ²⁹Again he spoke to him, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." ³⁰Then he said, "Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." ³¹He said, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." ³²Then he said, "Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."

PSALM: Psalm 138

¹I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing your praise. ²I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name, because of your steadfast love and faithfulness; for you have glorified your name and your word above all things. ³When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me. ⁴All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O LORD, when they have heard the words of your mouth. ⁵They will sing of the ways of the LORD, that great is the glory of the LORD. ⁶The LORD is high, yet cares for the lowly, perceiving the haughty from afar. ⁷Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall save me. ⁸You will make good your purpose for me; O LORD, your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon the works of your hands.

OTHER READINGS: Colossians 2:6-15 [16-19]

The writer of this letter warns the congregation in Colossae about "the empty lure" of philosophies and traditions that compromise faith. Through the gift of faith, the church is mystically connected with Christ in his death and resurrection which is enacted in baptism.

The reading begins:

⁶As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. ⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. ¹¹In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; ¹²when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, ¹⁴erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it. [¹⁶Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. ¹⁷These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, ¹⁹and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.]

SERVICE OVERVIEW: OUR PERSISTENT, NEGOTIATING PRAYER LIFE

Today's readings incorporate several themes: negotiation, commands, persistence, and expectation. And surrounding all these themes is a bigger theme: boldness. Abraham is bold in speaking with God, so bold in fact that he not only negotiates with the Almighty, the Almighty willingly grants his request. Abraham had no fear in speaking in such a way to God, because he knew that God was listening and appreciating his concern. The disciples, too, speak with boldness. They don't ask Jesus to teach them how to pray, they *tell* him to teach them how to pray. Their imperative sets up a pattern of imperatives as Jesus teaches them the prayer that has been prayed unceasingly in the church catholic. These themes continue in boldness as persistence is encouraged, even to the extent of being able to ask, search, and knock, knowing that the Lord says we will receive what we ask for. And God wants to give to those who ask. We are to ask in boldness, which comes from being *rooted and built up in Christ*. Strengthened by the Lord's supper, we are filled with God's Spirit to speak boldly and to be persistent in our prayers, ready to receive the things for which we ask. The question becomes, then, what is it we want and need?

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

We are the body of our risen Lord. We continue to read through Luke, reminded that we are always learning. Today, we learn to pray and to receive the Holy Spirit. Welcome to worship! Join with the assembly in one of our most beloved prayers. Be nurtured at the table. *God feeds us good food!*

Jesus encourages the disciples to ask and search, providing examples of good gifts and of people given what they need. The text seems to point to a certainty that what is asked for will be received, but the gift God gives is named specifically as the Holy Spirit. How might our searching and asking be met by the Holy Spirit to grow us in different ways than we may have asked for or expected?

The requests in today's texts carry varying levels of intensity. The stakes in Abraham's back-and-forth with God are high. The psalmist remembers God answering a call for help even as there is persistent trouble in the present. Jesus tells a story that includes a locked door and presumably some knocking by the neighbor seeking bread very late at night. Jesus follows this with a threefold invitation for people to ask, to search, and to knock.

What postures and body language might accompany these requests? What tone of voice? How are our whole selves present in our cries for help? How might our desperation itself be a cry for help? How is our silence a question put before God?

In the New Testament, "the kingdom" of God is not heaven after death, but the enacted will of God on earth, made possible through the death and resurrection of Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Thus the petition for the kingdom includes our prayer for the earth itself, its waters and forests, plants and animals. We ask that God's will be done in all the created universe.

KID STUDY:

One day, Jesus was teaching the disciples how to pray. He told a story about someone going to their friend's house late at night. They said, "I need to borrow some bread. I have friends visiting and I have nothing to feed them." What if the friend says no? What if the friend says, "I can't help you right now. It's late and we're already in bed." If you keep knocking on the door and asking the friend for what you need, eventually the friend will give you some.

Jesus used this story to tell His friends (and us) about how important it is to pray! When we pray, we are knocking on God's door, asking for what we need. Jesus says, "Everyone who asks will get what they ask for. Everyone who looks will find what they seek. Everyone who knocks will have the door opened to them." Jesus said prayer is a way to ask, seek, and knock. Jesus even taught His disciples a way to pray. We call this prayer the Lord's prayer.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

Jeremiah lay in squalor, and the Lord hearkened to his prayer. Job prayed from his dunghill, and the Lord was gracious to him. Jonah was in the belly of a whale, and the Lord listened to his

prayer. And you, even if you are in the baths, pray; wherever you are, pray. Do not seek for a place to pray in: you yourself are a temple. And what is the meaning of stretching out hands in prayer? They have been the instrument of many iniquities, and because of this we are bidden to lift them up, that the ministry of prayer may serve them as a withdrawal from iniquity. Thus should you be on the point of committing a theft, or oppressing or striking someone, you may remember that you must raise those hands in pleading before God. - John Chrysostom [John Chrysostom, in Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers, II, 395.]

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Next Week's Theme (July 30 & 31): Parable of the Rich fool (Healing service)

Next Week's Scriptures (July 30 & 31):

First Reading: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23

"Search out wisdom, for all is vanity."

Psalm: Psalm 49:1-12

"My mouth shall speak of wisdom." (Ps. 49:3)

Second Reading: Colossians 3:1-11

"Clothed in Christ, your life is hidden with him in God."

Gospel: Luke 12:13-21

"Jesus says: Be on guard against greed; be rich toward God, your treasure."