

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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March 19, 2023 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Fourth Sunday in Lent

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
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 worshipping 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

Baptism is sometimes called enlightenment. The gospel for this Sunday is the story of the man born blind healed by Christ. "I was blind, now I see," declares the man. In baptism God opens our eyes to see the truth of who we are: God's beloved children. As David was anointed king of

Israel, in baptism God anoints our head with oil, and calls us to bear witness to the light of Christ in our daily lives.

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 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.)

D 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: BEAUTIFUL THINGS

**All this pain. I wonder if I'll ever find my way?
I wonder if my life could really change at all?
All this earth. Could all that is lost ever be found?
Could a garden come up from this ground at all?**

CHORUS:

***You make beautiful things. You make beautiful things out of the dust.
You make beautiful things, You make beautiful things out of us.***

GOSPEL: John 9:1-41

Jesus heals a man born blind, provoking a hostile reaction that he regards as spiritual blindness to the things of God.

A The holy gospel according to St. John, chapter 9, verses 1-41.

¹As [Jesus] walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am the man.” ¹⁰But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.” ¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.” ¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” ²⁴So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” ²⁵He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” ²⁶They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” ²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” ³⁰The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” ³⁴They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out. ³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” ³⁷Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” ³⁸He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. ³⁹Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” ⁴¹Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

GOSPEL SONG: BEAUTIFUL THINGS
All around, hope is springing up from this old ground.
Out of chaos life is being found in You.

CHORUS:
You make beautiful things. You make beautiful things out of the dust.
You make beautiful things, You make beautiful things out of us.

BRIDGE:
You make me new, You are making me new.
You make me new, You are making me new.
You make me new, You are making me new.
You make me new, You are making me new.

CHOOSE YOUR VERSE – SING IN A ROUND:
#1 You make beautiful things. You make beautiful things out of the dust.
You make beautiful things, You make beautiful things out of us.
You make me new, You are making me new.
You make me new, You are making me new.

OR #2
You make me new, You are making me new.
You make me new, You are making me new.
You make beautiful things. You make beautiful things out of the dust.
You make beautiful things, You make beautiful things out of us.

CCLI Song #5665521 Words and Music by Michael Gungor and Lisa Gungor
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CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

*** SERMON SONG: CHRIST IN ME**
In this obsession with the things this world says make us happy,
Can't see the slaves we are in all this searching all this grasping.
Like we deserve much more than all the blessings we're holding,
So now I'm running free into an ocean of mercy unending!

CHORUS 1:
So come and empty me so that it's You I breathe, I want my life to be only Christ in me!
So I will fix my eyes 'cause You're my source of life, I need the world to see
That it's Christ in me, yeah! That it's Christ in me, yeah!

**I'm done with what holds me down, the things I once was chasing after,
Throw off these heavy chains that I have let become my master.
Oh, so now I'm running free into an ocean of mercy unending! CHORUS 1**

**In this obsession with the things this world says makes us happy, yeah. . .
Can't see the slaves we are in all this searching, all the grasping, yeah. . .**

CHORUS 2:

**So come and empty me so that it's You I breathe, I want my life to be only Christ in me!
So I will fix my eyes 'cause You're my source of life, I need the world to see
That it's Christ in me, yeah! Only Christ in me, yeah! Only Christ in me. . . Christ in Me.**

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*** APOSTLES' CREED**

A With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

C **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

(The congregation may be seated during the prayers.)

PRAYERS

A Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

A Eternal God, you seal us by the Holy Spirit and mark us with the cross of Christ forever in baptism. Inspire us by your love as together we strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

A brief silence.

A Powerful God, guide the work of heads of state and elected officials. Encourage them to lead with justice and to remove barriers that impede the well-being of all.

A brief silence.

A Shepherding God, you lead us beside still waters and restore our souls. Keep watch over those who weep; tend all who are sick and comfort those who grieve.

A brief silence.

A God our host, you fill us at your table with more than we could ever ask. Feed us with hunger for justice. Equip the feeding ministries of this congregation and community. Nourish us so we can nourish our neighbors.

A brief silence.

A God of peace, we pray for peace in all the world, especially in war-torn areas of Ukraine. Bring an end to war and the destruction of lives and your creation.

A brief silence.

A Heavenly God, we pray for the friends and family of Veronica Morrow who passed away this past week. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Jane Brugh; Barbara Hartley; Elrose Kollatschny; Wayne Rester; Robert Eaton; Rita Noska; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you.

A brief silence.

A Loving and compassionate God, we pray for those battling cancer, all expectant mothers, those who reside in care facilities and the homebound, all law enforcement officers, fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers, 9-1-1 dispatchers, and active duty military personnel. *{See all those we pray for on pages 10 & 11.}*

A brief silence.

A We pray for the church throughout the world. May we all proclaim the good news of your love effectively. We ask, especially, that you would bless the ministry of our sister congregations Cristo Rey and Iglesia Cristiana Camino de Santidad in Peru, all Missionaries, especially St. Paul's supported missionary, Dina Anton de Espinoza, and our companion synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic.

A brief silence.

A God of history, with thanksgiving we remember our ancestors in faith who cared for your people. We praise you for the ways they formed the faith of others and continue to inspire us.

A brief silence.

A We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C Amen.

* **PEACE**

D 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.)

60 SECONDS OF STEWARDSHIP – Evangelism Team

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**

D God of good gifts, receive these and all our offerings as we present them in faithful service for the sake of your gospel. Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal as you pour out your very presence through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life.

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 Come and receive Jesus, our strength in the wilderness.

C Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION (Continuous with Individual Cups)

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

* **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

D Embodied God, at your table, we have tasted the goodness of Jesus. With the eyes of our hearts open to your promise, empower us to hear the needs of our neighbors and touch the world with your love.

C Amen.

* **BLESSING**

D God, the giver of love, ☩ Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey.

C Amen.

* **CLOSING SONG: NEW CREATION**

Oh, oh oh... Oh, oh oh...

Oh, oh oh... Oh, oh...

I thought I knew what I was talkin' about when I testified of Your great love.

Well I was a soul on fire, there was no doubt.

Bible-believin', saved, and washed in the blood.

But it wasn't 'til I stumbled, and made my mistakes

That I could know in my soul how amazing is grace!

CHORUS:

You brought me blessings out of a tragedy.

You turned my old song into a symphony.

And with Your spirit living inside of me,

I'm a new creation! I'm a new creation!

And now I know what You were talkin' about.

Went from my head into my heart.

When I was broken at the bottom I found,

You're my Healer and Redeemer, Jesus, that's who You are! CHORUS

Oh, oh oh. . . Oh, oh oh. . .
Oh, oh oh. . . Oh, oh. . .
Well it wasn't 'til I stumbled, and made my mistakes
That I could know in my soul how amazing is grace!

LAST CHORUS:

*You brought me blessings out of a tragedy.
You turned my old song into a symphony.
And with Your spirit living inside of me,
I'm a new creation! Oh, oh oh oh. . .*

*You brought me blessings out of a tragedy.
You turned my old song into a sym-phony.
And with Your spirit living inside of me,
I'm a new creation! I'm a new creation!*

Oh, oh oh. . . Oh, oh oh. . .
Oh, oh oh. . . Oh, oh. . .

**And with Your spi-rit living inside of me,
I'm a new creation! I'm a new creation!**

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*** DISMISSAL**

D Go in peace. Serve in love.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

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USHERS: John, Terri & Chase Brasher

LAY READER: Terri Brasher

STREAMING: Mike Maas

SOUND: Stephanie Polasek

ACOLYTE: Boden Muir

POWER POINT: Peggy Geisler

ALTAR GUILD: Marilyn Yearwood

WELCOME: Welcome to worship. May God's Word help us each see something or someone in a new way today.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed to the glory of God by Ruth Bedford and in honor of Victor and his twin brother Sylvester Bedford for their birthday on March 14.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Joe Morrow and his family for the loss of his mother Veronica Morrow who passed away this past week. May God comfort them during their time of loss.

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: March 11 & 12, 2023 – 176

Contributions: March 11 & 12 – \$12,521.26

Power of One: March 11 & 12, 2023 – \$50.00

Building Fund: March 11 & 12 – \$428.23

Attendance: Wed., March 15, 2023 – 37

Contributions: Wed., March 15 – \$661.00

Power of One: Wed., March 15, 2023 – \$13.00

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.*

KEEP IN OUR PRAYERS: Those Battling Cancer: GayLynn Willms Burk; Carl Norton; Barbara Farley; Laura Harris; Todd Foster; Cher Marino; Cindy Tanner; Joe Reck; Melinda Rodiek; Melda Coleman; Donna Culton; Nancy Hartmann; Lydia Rojas; Catherine Poppe; Larry Stolar; Vivian Fortenberry; Rick Davis; Darryl Stancik; Jerry Ordner; Michael Yancey; Bubba Bencal; Al Gene Canik; Jane Venghaus Taylor; George Wright; 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; DeQuincy Lister; Angela Mazoch; 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; 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; Brenda Baker.

Expectant Mothers: Magen Schindler Altieri; Katie Pagel Walcik; Kelsey Kethan McNeely; Montana Appelt; Dina Anton de Espinoza; Olivia Leyendecker; Daya Latiolais.

Those in Care Facilities and Homebound: Linda Frank; Helen Hammack; Joey Denby; Edwin Oevermann; Paul Minar, Sr.; Bobby Zajicek; Adrian Fritsch; Verna Coufal; Doug Hill; John Zwiegel; Robert Saunders; Coy Dell Schindler; Barbara McMath; Linda Munos Rodgers;

Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Delores Purcell; Jane Booker; Pat Brasher.
Homebound: Curtis Berger; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Ronnie Rogers; Joyce Dehmner; Donna Dehmer; Carolyn Renz.

Those 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. **Fire Fighters, First Responders, Healthcare Workers and 9-1-1 Dispatchers:** 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. **Active Duty Military Personnel:** 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.

► **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! ☺

Attendance Pads Reminders: Thank you to everyone for doing such a good job signing the attendance pads each week when you attend worship! Our records are more accurate when you sign the attendance pads. Here are a couple of things that will help get our records even more accurate and up-to-date: **1) When signing in, please write everyone in your family who is attending worship.** When you write "John Doe Family", we do not know how many people that is and we don't know who exactly attended worship. Was it John, Sue and Sally Doe, or the whole family of John, Sue, Jim, Tom and Sally Doe? **2) Please include your address and phone number.** This is helpful especially when we have guests signing in. When they see the members writing addresses and phone numbers, guests are more likely to do the same. We like to welcome our guests by sending them a card after their visit. That is hard to do when we do not have contact information. It is also a way for us to keep up with our members when they have a change of address or phone number. Thank you for taking the time to do these items. Our staff and volunteers who take care of the personal records and oversee attendance records greatly appreciate your help.

Don't forget – Peru Team Drive-Thru Fundraiser!! Our Peru Mission Trip Team drive-thru dinner fundraiser on **Tuesday, March 21, 2023** at The Lighthouse from **5:00-7:00 PM.**

SR. EXPLORERS ARE REACHING OUT: On **Wednesday, March 22, 2023**, we will adventure to Reach Unlimited in Cypress, Texas. Reach Unlimited is for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Their mission is to provide a home where these individuals can live a life full of joy, purpose and accomplishment in a safe and caring environment. Founded in 1983,

they give tours one day per month. We will dine for a lite lunch at the facility with some of the residents. We will have some time for their gift shop. We may stop on the way home for a second course or dessert. That extra food stop would be your only expense. We will depart the church at 10:30 AM and should return around 3:30 PM. **Please sign up in the narthex (foyer) by Sunday, March 19, 2023.** Please call Kevin Page with any questions at 979-732-0845.

• **Habitat for Humanity Homeowner Application Workshop** – The next Habitat for Humanity Homeowner Application Workshop will be held on **Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 6:00 PM** and again on **Saturday, March 25, 2023 at 9:00 AM.** Both of these meetings will be held at First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 419 Washington St., Columbus, Texas. *Attendance needed at ONE session to receive an application for a Habitat home.* If you have any questions, please contact Colorado County Habitat for Humanity at 979-732-5677 or at chfh96@gmail.com.

♥ **GATHERING FOR CAREGIVERS:** Neither *caregiving* nor *care receiving* are "easy" places to be. And, as we age, there are and will be new challenges and journeys for each of us. Are you in the role of caregiving for a loved one? Do you know of someone or is someone in your own family in need of a little extra care? Do you need more information about caregiving and need to know just where to get that information? Or, would you just like to be able to share your thoughts, your questions, your griefs and your joys with other caregivers within a safe space of those in a similar situation? Leah King will be facilitating a **Gathering for Caregivers** at **Nesbitt Memorial Library** on **Friday, March 24, 2023 at 10:00 AM.** This will be a time of discerning the needs and wishes for our community. **All are welcome** to come, ask questions, and help our community get a sense of just what the needs of our community might be.

♣ **Explore Retreat at Lutherhill!!** Whether your **1st-6th grader** is anxious to get back to Lutherhill, wants to do a trial run before summer, or you simply want them to adventure outside of their regular weekend routine, the Explore Retreat is the PERFECT opportunity! **March 24-26, 2023** seasoned and new campers alike will explore all that camp has to offer. Register at www.lutherhill.org/explore. **Cost is \$95 per camper.** Andy & Danielle Jones will serve as chaperones for this event and will drive the bus to Lutherhill on Friday, March 24. Once you have registered your child online, please contact Stephanie to let her know. Also, please contact Stephanie if you have any questions.

** **God's Gals:** God's Gals will meet **Sunday, March 26, 2023 at 6:00 PM at Schobel's Restaurant** in Columbus for food, fellowship, and visiting!! All women of St. Paul Lutheran are invited. Bring a friend! Questions? Contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127. **

♪♪ The **Columbus Community Choir** will be presenting their annual Easter cantata on **Sunday, April 2, 2023 at 5:00 PM** at **Columbus High School Auditorium.** The title of this year's cantata is The Body of Christ: Glorified, Anointed, and Sacrificed by Pepper Choplin. Support your fellow neighbors as they share the "retelling of the final days of Jesus' life, focusing on the meaning of His words and actions leading to the cross".



Calling all actors, actresses and play production folks! It is time, once again, to sign up for the Good Friday drama. The drama will be performed **Good Friday, April 7, 2023** at the **7:00 PM** service. Please see the sign-up sheet in the narthex (foyer). We need actors and actresses (22 cast parts) as well as people to help with lighting, set design/props, costumes and set construction. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Alan.

♪♪♪ If you have a child ages 2nd grade – high school interested in being part of the **Children's Choir for Easter Sunday** April 9, 2023 at the **9:00 AM service**, please sign the sign-up sheet in the narthex (foyer). Practice will be held after BLAST from 6:30-7:00 PM. If you have any questions about the choir, please contact Robert Eaton at 281-881-4497. ♪♪♪

♦ **Lutherhill Serve Day:** The annual Lutherhill Serve Day will be **Saturday, April 22, 2023** from 8:00 AM-2:00 PM. Time will be spent clearing brush and limbs around the camp. Lunch will be served. Interested in helping? Sign the **sign-up** sheet in the narthex **by Friday, April 21, 2023**. If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858.



SUMMER CRAFTING CAMP: This summer we will be having a Summer Crafting Camp the first week of June. **We are in need of the following items:** 1) *Cardboard tubes from paper towels;* 2) *Crayons – broken pieces are great! (no matter the size).* Items may be dropped off in the church office between now and the end of May. If you have any questions, please contact Debbie Eaton at 512-757-2251. Thank you!



Habitat for Humanity: The Outreach Team is in search of a Team Leader to represent St. Paul Lutheran Church for Habitat for Humanity. The churches in our community coordinate and build a couple of houses a year for our neighbors in need. **We need someone to represent St. Paul and be the liaison between Habitat for Humanity and our congregation.** You do not have to build the house yourself, but help coordinate our efforts. Please let Kevin Page know (979-732-0845) if you are interested or have any questions. Thank you, and thank you, God, for our most generous church family!

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

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

- Mon., March 20 –** 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
1:00 PM – Deacon Sandye to TLC
6:00 PM – Church Council
6:00 PM – Women of JOY Bible Study (Hackfeld Family Room)
- Tues., March 21 –** 10:00 AM – Pastor Alan to Columbus Oaks
12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
5:00-7:00 PM – Peru Team Drive-Thru Dinner (Lighthouse)
5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library)
6:30-8:00 PM – The Gathering
- Wed., March 22 –** 9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
10:00 AM – Deacon Sandye to Columbus Oaks
10:30 AM-3:30 PM – Sr. Explorers to Reach Unlimited, Cypress, TX
2:00 PM – Deacon Sandye to The Oaks
4:30 PM – Lenten Worship
4:30 PM – Confirmation (2nd year)
5:00-6:30 PM – Soup & Sandwich Meal (Lighthouse)
5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation (1st yr.), Adult Class & HS Youth
- Thurs., March 23 –** 10:00-11:30 AM – Manna for Moms (Lighthouse)
- March 24-26 –** Explore Retreat, Lutherhill (La Grange)
- Fri., March 24 –** 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)
6:00 PM – Werland/Zajicek Wedding Rehearsal
- Sat., March 25 –** 3:00 PM – Werland/Zajicek Wedding
7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship
- Next Sun., March 26 –** 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Sunday, March 19, 2023 Joseph, Guardian of Jesus
Though the Bible tells us little about the husband of Jesus' mother Mary, we know that he was a carpenter or builder by trade. He is also shown as being devoted both to God and to Mary and Jesus. It is assumed that he died before Jesus became an adult.

Tuesday, March 21, 2023 Thomas Cranmer, Bishop of Canterbury, martyr, died 1556
Cranmer's lasting achievement is contributing to and overseeing the creation of the Book of Common Prayer, which remains (in revised form) the worship book of the Anglican Communion. He was burned at the stake under Queen Mary for his support of the Protestant Reformation.

Wednesday, March 22, 2023 Jonathan Edwards, teacher, missionary to American Indians, died 1758
A Puritan minister in Connecticut, Edwards is remembered as being a great preacher. Though his most famous sermon talks at length about hell, he was more concerned with God's love. He

served both as missionary to the Housatonic people in Massachusetts, and as president of the future Princeton University.

Friday, March 24, 2023 Oscar Arnulfo Romero, Bishop of El Salvador, martyr, died 1980

Romero was deeply concerned with injustices evident toward the poor and powerless in El Salvador, and worked forthrightly against political repression. He was assassinated while presiding at the eucharist in a chapel near the cathedral in San Salvador.

Saturday, March 25, 2023 Annunciation of Our Lord

Nine months before Christmas we celebrate the annunciation, in which the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God. The ancient church believed that this was also the date of the world's creation and of Jesus' death on the cross.

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OTHER READINGS: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Samuel anointed David even though he was the eighth-oldest son of Jesse and did not match his brothers in height or other physical characteristics. With the anointing came endowment with the Spirit of the LORD, designating David as the LORD's chosen successor to Saul.

The reading begins:

¹The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." ²Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' ³Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." ⁴Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" ⁵He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. ⁶When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is now before the LORD." ⁷But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." ⁸Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ⁹Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ¹⁰Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." ¹¹Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." ¹²He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." ¹³Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

PSALM: Psalm 23

¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. ²The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters. ³You restore my soul, O LORD, and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake. ⁴Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over. ⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

OTHER READINGS: Ephesians 5:8-14

Because we now live in the divine light which is Jesus Christ, we conduct our lives in ways that reflect the light of Christ, so that our activity is truly pleasing to God.

The reading begins:

⁸Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light — ⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; ¹³but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

SERVICE OVERVIEW: GOD'S EYES ARE NOT OUR EYES

The theme of sight runs throughout today's texts, both in terms of how God does not see as we see and also in Jesus' healing of a man born blind. Jesus chooses to heal a blind man on the sabbath with dirt and saliva, much to the dismay of the "good" religious people who were certain they knew the only way such a miracle could have taken place. Lent is a time to reevaluate. Let it also be a time to examine the ways in which we are blind to what God is doing around us because we think we know better. Bottom line: God uses the unexpected to accomplish redemption.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

It is the fourth week of Lent, and we continue to focus on baptism as a key to the Christian life. Last week, the salvation that Christ offers the world was likened to wate. Today God's mercy is likened to light. What is the "darkness" in your life? Welcome to worship! Renew your life to live more fully in the light of baptismal grace and celebrate the light that is Christ in you.

Jesus' physical healing of the blind man functions as a metaphor for spiritual awakening. Lent used to be the time to give up desserts, alcohol, or other indulgences as a sign of penitence and preparation for the events of Holy Week. Somewhere along the line, "giving up" something changed to "taking on" something, such as a spiritual practice. Today, we may find ourselves understanding Lent as a time to search out "what is pleasing to the Lord," and that which is "good and right and true," (Eph. 5:9). What are changes you could make in your life this Lent to improve your wellness, relationships, and happiness? What attitudes or ideas no longer fit who

you are and are holding you back? Lent can be a time for searching out what good things God has in store for you.

Some people in the early church held to the belief that the sacraments were only effective if administered by priests who were sinless. It didn't take the church long to realize that if it held to this policy there would be no sacraments for anyone. The point is, if the gospel can be proclaimed through the preaching of a sinner, then we must allow for the possibility that God's healing may be accomplished through means that we may find inadequate or lacking based on our own ideas of what is "holy."

In the first reading, God chooses a boy too young to be taken seriously to anoint as one chosen to lead Israel. When the prophet Samuel is sent by God to find the new king who will replace Saul, Samuel goes through a long line of all Jesse's tall, strapping, competent-looking sons of appropriate age. When none of them are chosen, Jesse finally sends for young David. All of the obvious choices were declined in favor of a boy. What we may see as authoritative, respectable, and trustworthy may not always align with God. The Lord does not see as we see.

KID STUDY:

Today's service reminds us that God's actions can be surprising. People who are called into God's service do not always look like we expect. Not just in physical appearance like what clothes or jewelry you wear or what your hair looks like, but all people are used by God – EVEN YOU! No matter how young or old, what abilities you have, or where you were born, you are also called to serve. Everyone has something they can do to be Jesus' hands and feet.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

One thing I see in your light: this will, which you have given us as free, seems to receive its strength from the light of faith, for by this light we come in your light to know your eternal will, and we see that your will wants nothing else but that we be made holy. You, light, are also the fuel for the fire, since it is you that makes the fire grow in the soul. - Catherine of Siena [Catherine of Siena, The Prayers of Catherine of Siena, ed. Suzanne Noffke, OP (NY: Paulist, 1983), 121.]

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Next Week's Theme (March 25 & 26): Bringing Lazarus back to life

Next Week's Scriptures (March 25 & 26):

First Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14 "The dry bones of Israel brought to life."

Psalm: Psalm 130 "I wait for you, O LORD; in your word is my hope." (Ps. 130:5)

Second Reading: Romans 8:6-11 "Life in the Spirit."

Gospel: John 11:1-45 "Baptismal image: the rising of Lazarus."