

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 www.splctx.com **Pastor:** pastor.akethan@gmail.com

March 2 & 3, 2024

Third Sunday in Lent

Senior Pastor	Alan Kethan	<u>Home:</u> (979)-942-9060	<u>Cell:</u> (830)-708-1200
Youth & Family Specialist			Stephanie Polasek
Congregational Chair			Kevin Page
St. Paul Christian Learning Academy Director			Briana Bedford
Secretary			Elena Holub
Custodian			Tomas Rosales
Lighthouse Coordinator	lighthouse.splc@gmail.com		Elizabeth Smith
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator			DyAnn Lauzon
Organist			Elena Holub

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

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

- *As we enter into a sacred time and space, a friendly reminder to please set your cell phone to vibrate.*
- ***We want to welcome all of our guests today and thank you for worshiping with us. If you have any questions or would like more information regarding our services, programs, day care, or preschool programs at St. Paul, please visit our Welcome Center in the narthex immediately following our service, and an attendant will be more than happy to assist you. If this is your first time at St. Paul, we hope you will take a gift along with you. We also have a gift bag for children.***
- *Hearing Assist devices are available for those who need assistance in hearing worship service better. Please see a person in the Sound Room (Usher Room) to request the use of a device during worship.*

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

INTRODUCTION

The third covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the central one of Israel's history: the gift of the law to those God freed from slavery. The commandments begin with the statement that because God alone has freed us from the powers that oppressed us, we are to let nothing else claim first place in our lives. When Jesus throws the merchants out of the temple, he is

defending the worship of God alone and rejecting the ways commerce and profit-making can become our gods. The Ten Commandments are essential to our baptismal call: centered first in God's liberating love, we strive to live out justice and mercy in our communities and the world.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE PADS

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

* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who writes the law on our hearts, who draws all people together through Jesus.

C Amen.

P Held in God's mercy, 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.

P Holy God,

C **we confess that we are caught in snares of sin and cannot break free. We hoard resources while our neighbors are hungry and cold. We speak in ways that silence others. We are silent when we should speak up. We keep score in our hearts. We let hurts grow into hatred. For all these things and for sins only you know, forgive us, Lord. Amen.**

P Here is a flood of grace: Out of love for the whole world, God draws near to us, breaks every snare of sin, washes away our wrongs, and restores the promise of life through ☩ Jesus Christ.

C Amen.

* HYMN ELW - #652 "Built on a Rock"

- Built on a rock the church shall stand, even when steeples are falling;
crumbled have spires in ev'ry land, bells still are chiming and calling ----
calling the young and old to rest, calling the souls of those distressed,
longing for life everlasting.**
- Surely, in temples made with hands God the Most High is not dwelling ----
high in the heav'ns his temple stands, all earthly temples excelling.
Yet God who dwells in heav'n above deigns to abide with us in love,
making our bodies his temple.**

3. Christ builds a house of living stones: we are his own habitation;
he fills our hearts, his humble thrones, granting us life and salvation.
Where two or three will seek his face, he in their midst will show his grace,
blessings upon them bestowing.

4. Yet in this house, an earthly frame, Jesus the children is blessing;
hither we come to praise his name, faith in our Savior confessing.
Jesus to us his Spirit sent, making with us his covenant,
granting his children the kingdom.

5. Through all the passing years, O Lord, grant that, when church bells are ringing,
many may come to hear your Word, who here this promise is bringing:
“I know my own, my own know me; you, not the world, my face shall see;
my peace I leave with you. Amen.”

CCLI Song #105571 Words: Nikolai Fredrik Severin Grundtvig; tr. Carl Doving Music: Ludvig Mathias Lindeman
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* **GREETING**

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

C And also with you.


* **KYRIE** *(Responses Sung)*

P In peace, let us pray to the Lord.




Lord, have mer - cy.

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




Lord, have mer - cy.

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



Lord, have mer - cy.

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



Lord, have mer - cy.

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



A - men

* **HYMN OF PRAISE:**

P Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al - might-y God and Fa - ther, we



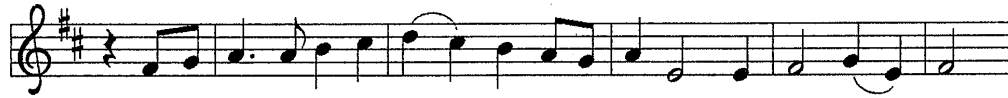
wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer.



For you a-lone are the Ho - ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



you a-lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir-it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P Holy God, through your Son you have called us to live faithfully and act courageously. Keep us steadfast in your covenant of grace, and teach us the wisdom that comes only through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Exodus 20:1-17

A Our first reading is from Exodus, chapter 20, verses 1-17.

After escaping from slavery, the Israelites come to Mount Sinai, where God teaches them how to live in community. The Ten Commandments proclaim that God alone is worthy of worship.

Flowing from God, the life of the community flourishes when based on honesty, trust, fidelity, and respect for life, family, and property.

The reading begins:

¹God spoke all these words: ²I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me. ⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. ⁷You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. ⁸Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work. ¹⁰But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work — you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. ¹²Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. ¹³You shall not murder. ¹⁴You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵You shall not steal. ¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 19

A The Psalm today is Psalm 19. We will read the Psalm responsively. The congregation will please respond by reading the words in bold print.

¹The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims its maker's handiwork.

²**One day tells its tale to another, and one night imparts knowledge to another.**

³Although they have no words or language, and their voices are not heard,

⁴**their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world, where God has pitched a tent for the sun.**

⁵It comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber; it rejoices like a champion to run its course.
⁶It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of it again; nothing is hidden from its burning heat.
⁷The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.
⁸The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes.
⁹The fear of the LORD is clean and endures forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.
¹¹By them also is your servant enlightened, and in keeping them there is great reward.
¹²Who can detect one’s own offenses? Cleanse me from my secret faults.
¹³Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me; then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.
¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

A Our second reading is from 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, verses 18-25.
The word of the cross is pure foolishness and nonsense to the world because it claims that God is mostly revealed in weakness, humiliation, and death. But through such divine foolishness and weakness, God is working to save us. The center of Paul’s preaching is Christ crucified.


The reading begins:

¹⁸The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” ²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.


A The word of the Lord. **C Thanks be to God.**

A Please stand as you are comfortable for the gospel.

*** GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** (Sung)



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,



slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

*** GOSPEL:** John 2:13-22
Jesus attacks the commercialization of religion by driving merchants out of the temple. When challenged, he responds mysteriously, with the first prediction of his own death and resurrection. In the midst of a seemingly stable religious center, Jesus suggests that the center itself has changed.

P The holy gospel according to St. John, chapter 2, verses 13-22.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!” ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” ¹⁹Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” ²⁰The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?” ²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

P The gospel of the Lord. **C Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

“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)*



C Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

* **OFFERING PRAYER**

P Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name.

C Amen.

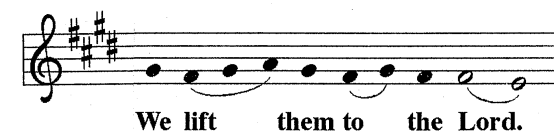
* **GREAT THANKSGIVING** *(Responses Sung)*

P The Lord be with you.



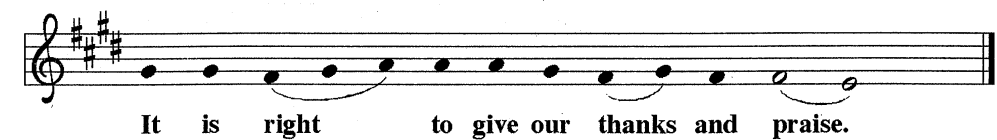
And al - so with you.

P Lift up your hearts.



We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

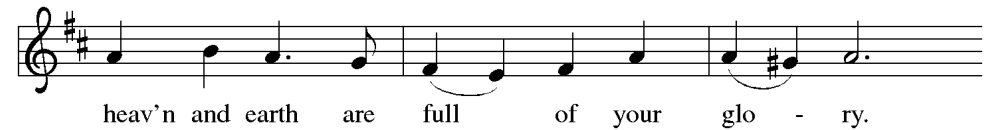


It is right to give our thanks and praise.

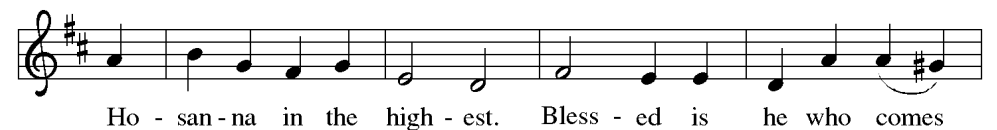
P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



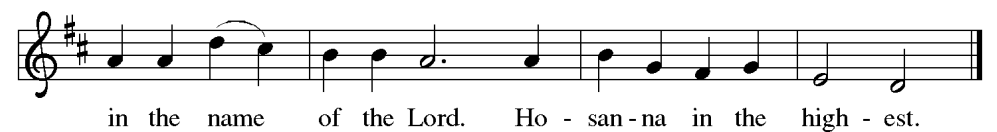
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes



in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

* EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

* LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

C Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

* INVITATION TO COMMUNION

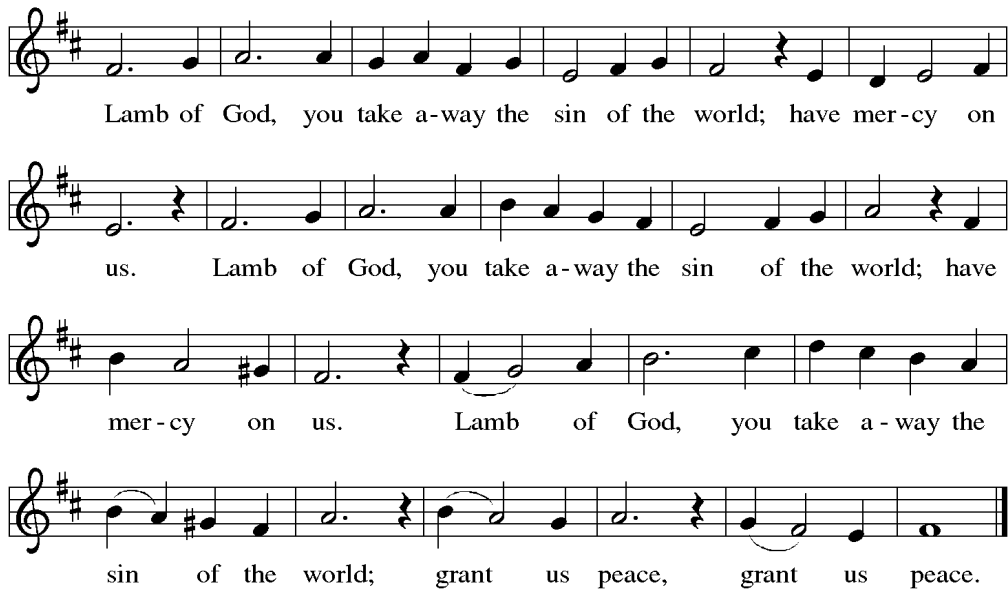
P Come and receive the resurrected Christ!

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)



(Please be seated.)

* BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

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

C Amen.

* PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P Generous God, at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace. As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread, now make us one loaf to feed the world; in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.

C Amen.

* BLESSING

P Beloved, we are God’s own people, holy, washed, renewed. God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill you with courage, and give you peace. ☩ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

- * HYMN ELW - #705 “God of Grace and God of Glory”

1. God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your pow'r:
crown your ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flow'r.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

2. Lo! The hosts of evil round us scorn the Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

3. Cure your children's warring madness; bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

4. Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore.

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Music: John Hughes

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- * DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Share the good news.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.
- POSTLUDE

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

SUN: Robin Maertz; Ruth Bedford; Emily Brod

LAY READERS: SAT: Audrey Rester

SUN: Deacon Barten

ACOLYTE: SUN: Calleigh Barrett

STREAMING: SUN: Janel Barten

SOUND: SUN: Sydney Eaton

ALTAR GUILD: Dyana Booker, JoAnn Venghaus and Emily Brod
- WELCOME: Welcome to worship as we continue in the season of Lent. May we listen for Jesus’ voice, rest in his care and share his love with others.
- ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Sandy and Ken Cherniss in celebration of their 43rd wedding anniversary on March 7.
- The rose on the altar is placed by Nelma and Glen Strey in honor of the birth of Eliza Grace Weathers on February 18, 2024.
- Congratulations to Lance and Camille Stancik on the baptism of their daugther Sophie Paige Stancik. Sophie is being baptized at the 7:00 PM service on Saturday, March 2, 2024. Sponsors for Sophie are Meredith McAuliffe, Mandy Schlauch, and Trey & Taryn Staff.
- Lelda Peschel is pleased to announce the birth of her sixth great-grandchild Naomi Linda Poncik. Naomi Linda was born to Casey and Ashley Poncik Monday, February 26, 2024 at 2:58 PM and weighed 7 lbs.. Proud grandparents are Marliece and Ardene Poncik.

Congratulations!!
- 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: February 24 & 25, 2024 – 209

Contributions: Feb. 24 & 25 – \$6,533.40

Power of One: February 24 & 25, 2024 – \$41.00

Building Fund: Feb. 24 & 25 – \$3,213.23
- Attendance: Wed., February 28, 2024 – 50

Contributions: Wed., Feb. 28 – \$1,875.00

Power of One: Wed., February 28, 2024 – \$10.00

Building Fund: Wed., Feb. 28 – \$1,020.00
- Thank you to those who contributed to last week's offerings. Loving God/Loving Neighbor.
- Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., Feb. 28 – 105 Total

BLAST/Confirmation: 84

Support Staff: 21
- 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: Abby Bankston; Debra Sandell; Noe Vela; Shirley Trahan; Kristen Downing; Ashley Roberts; Michael Yancey; Amanda Aramijo; Zachary Schulke; Herbie Kollatschny; Tom Russell, Jr.; Melda Coleman; Al Gene Canik; Larry Bookout; Mike Wostarek; Kristina Acevedo; George Krenek; Anne Dimas; Laura Walla; Paul Casinger; Dr. Tom Hancher; Leonard Kahlden; Bob Loy.
- Expectant Mothers: Jamee Albert; Kristen O'Leary Bridges; Abegail Gatzke; Chelsea Gilstrap; Calli Guthmann; Dhara Comans; Rosalinda Rosales; Kelsey Page Bakken; Hailey Johnson; Holly Fritsch.

Those in Care Facilities and Homebound: Nelda Moore; Clemons Venghaus; Joey Denby; Paul Minar, Sr.; Adrian Fritsch; Coy Dell Schindler; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Jane Booker; Pat Brasher; Walter Glaeser, Jr.. **Homebound:** Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Donna Dehmer; Cherie Moore; Lauren Lamb; Lydia Rojas.

Those Law Enforcement Officers: Charles Jobb; Joseph Smith; Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Donnie Templeton; Jason Templeton; Johnny Kovar; Abigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; Zane Weido; Josh Jones; Terri Neuendorff. **Fire Fighters, First Responders, Healthcare Workers and 9-1-1 Dispatchers:** Brent Gorman, Sr.; Brent Gorman, Jr.; Reid Brasher; Donnie Templeton; Jason Templeton; Dusty Dittmar; John Maertz; Ron Luedke; Pastor Alan Kethan; Kristi Weyand; Eric Weyand; Bradley Berger; Jon Berger; James Chollett; Edward Thraen, Jr.; Kyle Burris; Dylan Walcik; Travis Neuendorff; Nathan Bookout; Brenda Henkes; and Jan Willette. **Active Duty Military:** Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Dalton Kapel; Kevin Gonzalez; Evelyn Rojas; Nelson Beettner; Hugh & Katie Hajdik.

► **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! ☺

+ **Lenten Devotional:** For Lent this year, we encourage you to pick up a Lenten Devotional written by one of our own members, Elizabeth Smith. You can buy it in the church office. If we run out, there will be a sign-up sheet in the office as well. The cost is \$5 or you can go directly to Amazon and buy one for \$6.99 under the title “Greatest Love: A Lenten Bible Study Journal” by Elizabeth Smith.



Each Midweek Lenten service we will be looking more in depth at some of the disciples and how the things that challenged them may be what challenges us and how Jesus addresses them. So, make plans to come and learn more about Peter, James & John, Nathaniel, Thomas and Simon the Zealot. Services are at **4:30 PM** with soup and sandwiches in the Lighthouse afterwards. The meal is a youth service project for our church, so, a goodwill offering is greatly appreciated. We look forward to having you join us for worship during this special time, and enjoy food and fellowship after the services.

• **Neighbor-to-Neighbor:** The Neighbor-to-Neighbor volunteers will be having **two workdays** this month – **Wednesday, March 6 and Wednesday, March 13, 2024**. The group will meet at 1:30 PM both days in the church library. If you have questions about the group, please contact Peggy Geisler at 979-732-0350. We will be happy to have you join us!

**** The next Peru Team Meeting will be Thursday, March 7, 2024 at 6:30 PM in the church library. Come find out more about our sister congregations and our upcoming trip to Peru! ****

Save the Date!! The **Landscape Team** will have a **work day** on **Saturday, March 9, 2024 at 9:00 AM**. We hope to plant trees, Pink Muhly Grass, trim trees, remove dead and unwanted shrubs and plant new shrubs in the flower beds, clean the gutters and more. ***Please bring your shovels, hedge clippers, metal rakes and garden trowels!*** Also, a designated fund has been set up for anyone wishing to contribute money to help cover the cost of purchasing plants, tress, fertilizer, etc.. Just make sure you designate your donation for “Landscaping”. If you have any questions, please contact John Brasher at 979-253-1448. Thank you!

PERU TEAM FUNDRAISER: The Peru Team is having their next drive-thru fundraiser on **Tuesday, March 19, 2024 from 5:00-7:00 PM** at the Lighthouse. Werner's will be catering a meal of chicken parmesan with linguini, glazed carrots, green salad and a roll. The cost is **\$13 per ticket**. Tickets may be purchased from any Peru Team member or in the church office. **The deadline to purchase tickets is Wednesday, March 13, 2024.**

Columbus Food Pantry: It is time for our church to help at the Columbus Food Pantry! The dates are **March 14 & 15, 2024**. The Food Pantry is located at the First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 419 Washington Street. On **Thursday, March 14** the food delivery truck will arrive and grocery bags will be prepared; **please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help. On **Friday, March 15** the food will be distributed 9:00 AM-1:00 PM. **Please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help with the food distribution. Please mark your calendars to help with this important community service! If you have any questions, please call 979-500-4292 or 979-732-2643.


► The **Boys and Girs! Clubs of Champion Valley** (Columbus, Schulenburg and Weimar) are holding a **BINGO fundraiser** on **Sunday, March 17, 2024** at The Oaks at High Hill, Schulenburg, Texas. Doors open at 2:00 PM; Bingo from 3:00-7:00 PM. ***Presale tickets are \$25*** for one Bingo card – additional cards can be purchased fro \$5 each at the event. Day of event tickets ar \$30. Questions or want to purchase tickets, please contact Tina Robinson at 254-715-6206 or Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127. Thank you!!

♦ **SR. Explorers:** ***We will be seeking bluebonnets and Blue Bell Ice Cream on our March Senior Explorers trip!*** On **Thursday, March 28, 2024** we will **depart from St. Paul at 10:00 AM** and travel down part of the Texas Bluebonnet Trail to Chappel Hill, where we will enjoy lunch at Bevers Kitchen. We will then head to Brenham for dessert at the Blue Bell Creamery. Our goal is to **return to St. Paul around 3:00 PM**. **Please sign the sign-up sheet in the narthex by Sunday, March 24, 2024.** If you have any questions, please call Kevin Page at 979-732-0845.


• **Elementary Explore Retreat at Lutherhill:** Calling all happy campers! **Students in grades 1-6** are invited to come out to the Hill to explore all that camp has to offer – from the giant swing to slingshot, arts & crafts to campfire worship. This retreat will be **March 22-24, 2024** at Lutherhill in La Grange, Texas. This is a great opportunity for anyone that is anxious to get to

Lutherhill, wants to do a trial run before summer, or to simply have an adventure outside of their regular weekend routine. Seasoned and new campers alike will explore all that camp has to offer. It's always a fun weekend! Stephanie Polasek will transport our group to Lutherhill on Friday, March 22 and stay the weekend with the students. Please register your child at Lutherhill.org/explore. **Cost is \$95 per camper.** Let Stephanie know once your student is registered. For more info, visit Lutherhill.org/explore or contact Stephanie.

Children Activity Bags: Our St. Paul Activity Bag Team could use some volunteer reinforcements! While Mary, Elizabeth and I get it done, we would love to have more back-up. It is easy and can be done any time the church office is open Monday-Friday. If you are willing, give me a call at 281-797-7152 for details. Thank you! – *Patsy Kopecky*

 ***Bus Drivers Needed!!*** Our St. Paul Bus Driver Team needs some volunteer reinforcement. We can use a handful of additional drivers to occasionally chip in and transport some of our church family to and fro. **No CDL required, but a CDL doesn't hurt the possibilities!** No big strength requirements or much of anything else other than being a caring person, a responsible driver and a little free time occasionally. We can also always work in pairs. *We will train and support you all the way and only use your time and love when it fits in for you.* **Contact Kevin Page at 979-732-0845 (call or text) if interested or if you have any questions.** Thank you for considering this!

♥ **Help Us Meet Our Neighbors!** *We need a Team Leader for our annual National Night Out in October,* coordinating the participants and carrying on this very worthy National effort to bring communities together. We have experience to share and lists of previous event participants. Lots of help and support. Please let Kevin Page (979-732-0845) or Pastor Alan know if you are interested or have questions. Thanks for considering this very worthwhile endeavor. – *Kevin*

 **God's Work, Our Hands: Team Leader Needed** – Our once-a-year work day has a huge impact on our community as it is a part of the yearly nation-wide effort. The nation-wide date for this event is in September. However, due to the heat, the last few years we moved our date to late October-early November for cooler weather. We need a coordinator for our service projects that day. If you feel inspired to step up and help in this role, please contact Kevin Page at 979-732-0845 or Pastor Alan. There will be much support and help available! Thank you so much for your consideration. – *Kevin*

♪♪♪ ***Musicians Wanted for Praise Band!!*** The St. Paul Praise Band is in need of a keyboard player. They would also like to add at least one guitarist, a bass guitarist and singers. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Tracy Baker at 713-516-8017. ♪♪♪

- **Women of JOY Bible Study:** The Women of JOY Bible Study group meets on Mondays to cook and have interesting Bible study and discussions. The ***first Monday*** of the month we **meet in the Lighthouse to cook** for BLAST. The **2nd and 4th Mondays** of the month we meet in the

high school room (old choir room) for Bible Study. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Gerri Hackfeld at 979-732-4711.

♥ **Grief Support Group:** The Grief Support Group is for anyone who has lost a loved one, either recently or a few years ago. We share and support each other. Come join us and get support from others walking this journey. We meet at **5:30 PM** in the youth room (formerly the choir room) the **third Thursday of the month.** **NOTE:** You do not have to share or talk until you are ready! If you have questions, please contact Peggy Geisler at 979-732-0350.

♦ **Lighthouse Coordinator:** **Elizabeth Smith** is our coordinator for the Lighthouse! If you wish to rent the Lighthouse for an event, you will need to contact her. You can email her at lighthouse.splc@gmail.com or call or text her at (713)-799-3484. Also, ***if you are interested in opening and closing the Lighthouse whenever the Lighthouse is rented out for various events, please contact Liz.***

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Mon., March 4 –	9:00 AM – Staff Meeting 1:00 PM – Nursing Home Team & Pastor to TLC 6:00 PM – Evangelism Team (library) 6:00 PM – Women of JOY Cook (Lighthouse)
Tues., March 5 –	9:00 AM – Pastor to Deanery Meeting 12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library) 5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library)
Wed., March 6 –	9:00 AM – CLA Chapel 10:00 AM-1:00 PM – Seniors Together (Lighthouse) 12:00 PM – Ministerial Alliance 1:30 PM – Neighbor-to-Neighbor Work Day (library) 1:30-3:00 PM – Continuing Education { <i>Pastor teaching local Pastors</i> } 4:30 PM – Lenten Worship 5:00 PM – Soup & Sandwiches (Lighthouse) 5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation and HS Youth
Thurs., March 7 –	Stephanie to Youth Ministry Network 10:30 AM – Pastor Alan to The Oaks 5:30 PM – Youth & Education Team 6:00 PM – Property Team 6:30 PM – Peru Team Meeting (library)
Sat., March 9 –	9:00 AM – Landscape Team Work Day 7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship
Next Sun., March 10 –	9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship 10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School 11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship 6:00-8:00 PM – The Gathering

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS
Thursday, March 7, 2024 Perpetua and Felicity and companions,
martyrs at Carthage, died 202

Vibia Perpetua, a noblewoman, and Felicity, an enslaved woman, were catechumens at Carthage, northern Africa. They, with four other catechumens, had defied the Roman emperor who had forbidden conversions to Christianity, and were put to death in the amphitheater. From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS006327.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: *CLEARING A PATH TO WORSHIP*
In the gospel for today, Jesus discovers that the temple has been turned from a place of worship into a marketplace. The predominance of the selling of animals and the exchanging of money for profit overshadow what is supposed to be the main activity in the temple, worshiping God. The vendors and money changers seem to be more interested in serving their own interests and greedily filling their purses with coins than in serving God and God’s people. Instead of helping people worship God, they are getting in the way. The commercialization of worship means that those who cannot afford the costs are unable to offer their worship to God, and money becomes a god more valued than the God to whom the temple was dedicated.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:
During Lent, the church prepares some for baptism and renews its members in the meaning of baptism. Today’s readings highlight the difference between first-century Judaism and the Christian gospel: Christ is a replacement for the Jewish religious rituals. Welcome to worship! Christ is our temple. Coming to church is coming to Christ, whose body is raised from death and who lives now in the community of believers. Our Passover is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The merchants in the temple made money off of people who came to worship, and Jesus finds this situation unacceptable. Nothing, especially money, should be given more devotion than God. Jesus’ purpose in coming to earth was to take away the barriers between humans and God, so that all people might be reconciled to God through him. Jesus has come to replace the temple. No longer will God’s presence be confined to a place, the temple, but instead, God’s presence is now embodied in the person of Jesus. Jesus welcomes all to him, and erects no barriers or limits on who can be his follower. Can you identify some tables in our place of worship that Jesus might want to overturn?

The translation of Torah as “law” invariably leads people to think of the commandments as a set of rules that must not be broken, rather than the teaching or instruction for a way of living well. Martin Luther begins each of his explanations of the commandments with the phrase “*We are to fear and love God, so that...*” the idea that God seeks out rule-breakers for punishment can unintentionally be reinforced. While fear is not an inappropriate response to disobeying God, it might be helpful to reflect on that fear as the fear of what we become when we disregard God’s teaching, rather than the fear of what God will do to us for breaking the rules.

Luther reminds us that we are freed from sin and death so that we can be freed for loving and serving the neighbor. Reflect on the ten commandments. Focus on what they free you for rather than on what they forbid. Following the commandments/way/teaching that God gives is meant to provide us blessing and a deep peace that the world cannot provide. With all the forces demanding our allegiance (and stressing us out), reminding ourselves of this can offer clarity and strength.

KID STUDY:
In today’s gospel, Jesus travels to Jerusalem for the annual Passover celebration. When He goes to the temple, He becomes angry. People were selling cattle, sheep, and doves to be used as sacrifices in the temple. Some were even charging people to convert their money so they could pay a tax to the temple. It looked more like a flea market than a place to worship God. Jesus was so angry, He made a whip from rope, and drove the cattle, sheep, and those who were selling them out of the temple. He also flipped all the money changers’ tables upside down! To the ones who were selling the doves, He said, "Get out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" As we think about Jesus cleansing the temple, we can also be reminded that there is some other cleaning that needs to be done. The Bible tells us that we are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in us. This season of Lent is a good time for us to think about how our hearts might need cleansing. Our bodies are holy temples where the Spirit lives. We should always stay focused on keeping ourselves ready to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:
The soul, the conscience of the faithful, is also the temple and house of God. Should this soul bring forth wicked thoughts, towards the injuring of our neighbor, these will settle there like robbers in a cave, slaying one by one those who pass by. The faithful soul is now no longer a house of prayer, but a den of thieves; scorning the innocence and simplicity of holiness, it tries to injure its neighbor. But through the sacred pages, we are instructed without ceasing against all such perversities of conduct by the words of the Redeemer. For Truth teaches daily in the temple when it carefully instructs the mind of the faithful. - Gregory the Great [Gregory the Great, The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers, III:351-352.]
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Next Week's Theme (March 9 & 10): Darkness vs. Light (John 3:14-21)

Next Week's Scriptures (March 9 & 10):
First Reading: Numbers 21:4-9 *“The lifting up of the serpent.”*

Psalm: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 *“You deliver your people from their distress.” (Ps. 107:19)*

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10 *“Saved by grace through faith for good works.”*

Gospel: John 3:14-21 *“The lifting up of the Son of Man.”*