

**ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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

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March 5, 2023 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Second Sunday in Lent

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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

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

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

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

*During Lent we journey with all those around the world who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. In today's gospel Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit. At the font we are given a new birth as children of God. As God made a covenant with Abraham, in baptism*

*God promises to raise us up with Christ to new life. From worship we are sent forth to proclaim God's love for all the world.*

**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 In our baptism we have been born from above by the work of the Holy Spirit. However, even after this new covenant that Jesus has made with us and has assured us of who we are now as children of God, we still act contrary to this identity. Now is the time to confess our sins of things we have done and things we have not done. In our time of confession we open our hearts, minds and souls to God.

*(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: HOLY WATER (YOUR FORGIVENESS)**

**God, I'm on my knees again, God, I'm beggin' please again.  
I need You. Oh, I need You. Walking down these desert roads,  
Water for my thirsty soul. I need You. Oh, I need You.**

**CHORUS:**

***Your forgiveness... is like sweet, sweet honey on my lips!  
It's like the sound of a symphony to my ears!  
It's like holy water on my skin...***

**GOSPEL: John 3:1-17**

*A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.*

A The holy gospel according to St. John, chapter 3, verses 1-17.

<sup>1</sup>Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above."  
<sup>4</sup>Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a

second time into the mother's womb and be born?" <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. <sup>6</sup>What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' <sup>8</sup>The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." <sup>9</sup>Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? <sup>11</sup>"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. <sup>12</sup>If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? <sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. <sup>16</sup>"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

**GOSPEL SONG: HOLY WATER (YOUR FORGIVENESS)**

Dead man walkin', slave to sin. I wanna know about bein' born again,  
I need You. Oh, God, I need You.  
So take me to the river side, take me under, baptize!  
I need You. Oh, God, I need You.

**CHORUS:**

*Your forgiveness... is like sweet, sweet honey on my lips!  
It's like the sound of a symphony to my ears!  
It's like holy water on my skin...*

**BRIDGE x3**

I don't wanna abuse Your grace. God, I need it every day!  
It's the only thing that ever really makes me wanna change.

**LAST CHORUS**

Your forgiveness... Oh, is like sweet, sweet honey on my lips!  
It's like the sound of a symphony to my ears! It's like holy water  
Your forgiveness. . . Oh, is like sweet, sweet honey on my lips!  
It's like the sound of a symphony to my ears!  
Oh, it's like holy water on my skin...

**TAG END:**

Yeah, it's like holy water on my skin,  
Yeah, it's like holy water...

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**CHILDREN'S SERMON**

**SERMON**

**\* SERMON SONG: REVELATION**

**My life has led me down the road that's so uncertain.  
Now I am left alone and I am broken – tryin' to find my way  
Tryin' to find the faith that's gone.**

**This time I know that You are holding all the answers.  
I'm tired of losing hope and taking chances  
On roads that never seem to be the ones that bring me home.**

**CHORUS:**

*Give me a revelation! Show me what to do!  
'Cause I've been tryin' to find my way. I haven't got a clue.  
Tell me should I stay here, or do I need to move?  
Give me a revelation! I've got nothing without You.  
I've got nothing without You.*

**My life has led me down this path that's ever-winding.  
Through every twist and turn I'm always finding – that I am lost again.  
Tell me when this road will ever end.**

**CHORUS:**

*Give me a revelation! Show me what to do!  
'Cause I've been tryin' to find my way. I haven't got a clue.  
Tell me should I stay here, or do I need to move?  
Give me a revelation! I've got nothing without You.  
I've got nothing without. . .*

**BRIDGE:**

**I don't know where I can turn. Tell me, when will I learn?  
Won't you show me where I need to go?  
Oh. . . let me follow Your lead.  
I know that it's the only way that I can get back home, OH!**

**LAST CHORUS:**

**Give me a revelation! Show me what to do!**

**'Cause I've been tryin' to find my way. I haven't got a clue.**

**Tell me should I stay here, or do I need to move?**

**Give me a revelation! I've got nothing without You.**

**I've got nothing without You, no. Oh, no. Oh, no.**

**Oh, give me a revelation. . . Oh. . . Oh. . .**

**I've got nothing without You. I've got nothing without You.**

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**RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

**See Insert**

*(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 O God, you so love your church. Continue to raise up leaders who care for your people. Bless lay theologians, seminary and college professors, and all who are called to the ministry of teaching, that they form and inspire us for the work of the gospel.

*A brief silence.*

A O God, you so love the world. Uphold leaders who resist tyranny and oppression. Strengthen organizations that promote peace and harmony. Direct their work to alleviate human suffering and to address its root causes, especially in Ukraine.

*A brief silence.*

A O God, you so love your people. Draw near to all who live with mental illness, depression, or addiction, and accompany them in healing and recovery. Hear the cries of those who look to you in their distress.

*A brief silence.*

A O God, we pray for the families and friends of Claude Jacobs, Joe Gonzalez, Jason Elston and Chris Thraen. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time.

*A brief silence.*

A O God, we pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:  
Helen Hammack; Zelda Lanford; Donna Green; Rita Noska; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you.

*A brief silence.*

A O God, we pray for all those battling cancer that they may know comfort and strength.

*(Pause for those we are praying for.)*

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; Mack Machacek; 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; and Brenda Baker.

A O God, we pray for all expectant mothers, and especially for:

Magen Schindler Altieri; Katie Pagel Walcik; Kelsey Kethan McNeely; Montana Appelt; and Dina Anton de Espinoza that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace.

*A brief silence.*

A O God, 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.)*

Joey Denby; Edwin Oevermann; Paul Minar, Sr.; Bobby Zajicek; Adrian Fritsch; Verna Coufal; Doug Hill; John Zwiengel; Robert Saunders; Coy Dell Schindler; Barbara McMath; Linda Munos Rodgers; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Delores Purcell; Jane Booker; Pat Brasher; Curtis Berger; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Ronnie Rogers; Joyce Dehmer; Donna Dehmer; and Carolyn Renz.

A O God, 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 O God, 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 O God, you so love your saints. As our ancestors in the faith have been a blessing to us, so inspire us by their example of holy living to be a blessing to those who come after 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**

- 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.)***

## **60 SECONDS OF STEWARDSHIP**

### **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 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**

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 one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire.

**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**

P 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**

P 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: ALL THE PEOPLE SAID, "AMEN!"**

**You are not alone if you are lonely. When you feel afraid you're not the only.  
We are all the same in need of mercy... to be forgiven and be free.  
It's all you got to lean on but thank God it's all you need!**

**CHORUS:**  
**And all the people said Amen! Whoa – oh – oh;**  
**And all the people said Amen!**  
**Give thanks to the Lord for His love never ends.**  
**And all the people said Amen! (2<sup>nd</sup> time to BRIDGE)**

**If you're rich or poor it doesn't matter. Weak or strong you know love's what we're after.**  
**We're all broken but we're all in this together... God knows we stumble and fall.**  
**And He so loved the world, He sent His Son to save us all. CHORUS**

**BRIDGE:**  
**Blessed are the poor in spirit who are torn apart.**  
**Blessed are the persecuted and the pure in heart.**  
**Blessed are the people hungry for another start.**  
**For theirs is the kingdom, the kingdom of God.**

**CHORUS TWICE**

**TAG END**

**And all the people said, "Amen!"**

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\* **DISMISSAL**

**P** Go in peace born again in baptism.                      **C** Thanks be to God, and we will.

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**USHERS:** Mike & Gerri Hackfeld; Sandi & Kaldon Roensch

**LAY READER:** Courtney Busselman

**STREAMING:** Chase Brasher

**SOUND:** Robert & Sydney Eaton

**ACOLYTE:** Hattie Post

**POWER POINT:** Peggy Geisler

**ALTAR GUILD:** Marilyn Yearwood

**WELCOME:** No matter our circumstances, "[our] help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2, NRSV). We gather to worship our loving Creator. Welcome to St. Paul.

**ALTAR WALL FLOWERS** are placed by Sandy and Ken Cherniss in thanks for God's many blessings and in celebration of their 42<sup>nd</sup> wedding anniversary on March 7.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Todd Jacobs and family for the loss of his father Claude Jacobs who passed away this past week. May God comfort them during their time of loss.

**Welcome to our New Members!** This weekend we are receiving the following new members into our St. Paul Lutheran Church family: Tiara Flores and daughter Lilly; Eddie & Debbie Hernandez; Chuckie and Hollie Jobb and daughter Calleigh Barrett; and Joseph & Elizabeth Smith and daughters Hannah & Aimee. Be sure to introduce yourself and give them a big St. Paul welcome! ☺

**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:** Feb. 25 & 26, 2023 – 187

**Power of One:** Feb. 25 & 26, 2023 – \$36.00

**Contributions:** Feb. 25 & 26 – \$5,316.58

**Building Fund:** Feb. 25 & 26 – \$98.23

**Attendance:** Wed., March 1, 2023 – 50

**Power of One:** Wed., March 1, 2023 – \$15.00

**Contributions:** Wed., March 1 – \$1,215.00

**Building Fund:** Wed., March 1 – \$50.00

*Thank you to those who contributed to last week's offerings. Loving God/Loving Neighbor.*

**Wednesday Night Attendance:** – Wed., March 1 – **69 Total**

**BLAST/Confirmation:** 48

**Adult Bible Study:** 2

**Support Staff:** 19

**ATTENTION:** *Names on the prayer list in the bulletin will be printed for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks, the names will be removed from the bulletin unless the church office has been notified to keep them.*

► **Children's Activity Bags** are available for use by our young members and guests! You can find them on the coat hooks in the coat area of the narthex. After worship, **please place the used activity bags and their contents in the receptacle in the narthex.**

Thank you! ☺

**Offering Envelopes are HERE!!** Our offering envelopes *finally* arrived! You can find them in the narthex in alphabetical order according to your last name. If you have any questions, please let the church office know. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we waited for the envelopes. ☺

**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.

+ The **Women of JOY Bible Study** group will begin a **new study** on **Monday, March 6, 2023 at 6:00 PM** at the Hackfeld Family Room (3234 FM 109, Columbus, Texas). They will be studying Bold: A Study of Praying Bible Women: Six Praying Women, One Faithful God by Rachel Risner. You can purchase the paperback book on Amazon for \$14.97. For more information about the group, please contact Gerri Hackfeld at 979-732-4711. +

**Peru Team Drive-Thru Fundraiser!!** Our Peru Mission Trip Team is having a drive-thru dinner fundraiser on **Tuesday, March 21, 2023** at The Lighthouse from **5:00-7:00 PM**. The menu will be: Chicken Fried Steak; Twice Baked Potatoes; Broccoli Salad; Grilled Vegetables (green beans, carrots, yellow & zucchini squash); Dinner Roll; and Pineapple Upside Down Cake. Tickets are \$13 each and are **pre-sale only**. They are available from any Peru Team member or at the church office. **Deadline to purchase tickets is Wednesday, March 15, 2023.**

**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.



***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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. ♪♪♪

**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:**

<b>Today (March 5) –</b>	12:00 PM – Evangelism Team New Member Lunch
<b>Mon., March 6 –</b>	9:30 AM – Staff Meeting
	1:00 PM – Deacon Sandye to TLC
	6:00 PM – Evangelism Team (library)
	6:00 PM – Women of JOY Bible Study (Hackfeld Family Room)
<b>Tues., March 7 –</b>	9:00 AM – Pastor Alan to Deanery
	12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
	5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library)
	6:30-8:00 PM – The Gathering

**Wed., March 8 –** 9:00 AM – CLA Chapel  
 10:00 AM – Deacon Sandye to Columbus Oaks  
 2:00 PM – Deacon Sandye to The Oaks  
 4:30 PM – Lenten Worship  
 4:30 PM – Confirmation (2<sup>nd</sup> year)  
 5:00-6:30 PM – Soup & Sandwich Meal (Lighthouse)  
 5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation (1<sup>st</sup> yr.), Adult Class, & HS Youth

**Thurs., March 9 –** 10:00-11:30 AM – Manna for Moms (Lighthouse)  
 5:00 PM – Worship Team (Lighthouse)  
 6:30 PM – Peru Team (library)

**Fri., March 10 –** 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)

**Sat., March 11 –** 7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

**Next Sun., March 12 –** 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship  
 10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School  
 11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

### UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

**Wednesday, March 1, 2023 George Herbert, hymnwriter, died 1633**

An excellent scholar, Herbert served briefly in the English parliament, then became a parish priest. He was known for devoted care of his parishioners, as well as for writing poetry and hymns, including "Come, my way, my truth, my life." He died at age 40.

**Thursday, March 2, 2023 John Wesley, died 1791; Charles Wesley, died 1788; renewers of the church**

These brothers led a revival originally intended to remain within the Church of England, one that involved frequent communion and advocacy for the poor. Except for a brief time in America, they worked in England. Charles was also a prolific hymn writer. After their deaths, their work led to the formation of the Methodist Church.

**Tuesday, March 7, 2023 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.

**Friday, March 10, 2023 Harriet Tubman, died 1913; Sojourner Truth, died 1883; renewers of society**

Harriet Tubman, born into slavery, helped about 300 others to escape slavery until the institution was abolished. Sojourner Truth, whose birth name was Isabella, was freed after slavery was abolished, and discerned a call to be a preacher. Taking the name Sojourner Truth, she set out on an evangelistic journey, where people found her testimony to be deeply moving.

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**OTHER READINGS:** Genesis 12:1-4a

*God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose — that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.*

The reading begins:

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." <sup>4a</sup>So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him.

**PSALM:** Psalm 121

<sup>1</sup>I lift up my eyes to the hills; from where is my help to come? <sup>2</sup>My help comes from the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth. <sup>3</sup>The LORD will not let your foot be moved nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep. <sup>4</sup>Behold, the keeper of Israel will neither slumber nor sleep; <sup>5</sup>the LORD watches over you; the LORD is your shade at your right hand; <sup>6</sup>the sun will not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. <sup>7</sup>The LORD will preserve you from all evil and will keep your life. <sup>8</sup>The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth forevermore.

**OTHER READINGS:** Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

*In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.*

The reading begins:

<sup>1</sup>What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? <sup>2</sup>For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup>For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." <sup>4</sup>Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. <sup>5</sup>But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness. <sup>13</sup>For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup>If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup>For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. <sup>16</sup>For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, <sup>17</sup>as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") — in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

**SERVICE OVERVIEW: QUESTIONS COME TO LIGHT**

What is it about the night that invites questions? As our head rests on the pillow and shadows stretch out on the bedroom wall, questions, like field mice, begin to emerge from the nooks and crannies of our mind. At first, the questions are utilitarian: Did someone let the dog out this evening? Are the kids' lunches packed for school? When am I going to get to the grocery store this week? And then, without warning, the questions morph: Is Grandma going to recover from this illness? Why are my prayers so short these days? Does Jesus really care about us—about me? At this point we know that night has truly descended. Truth uttered in darkness. Naked honesty feels much safer, much less exposed when light's reach seems a day way.

Maybe that is why we can relate to Nicodemus. He visited Jesus at night. With shadows dancing in the torchlight, Nicodemus makes his way to Jesus, beset by questions he can ask only under cover of darkness. Though the darkness is Nicodemus' security blanket, he is irresistibly drawn to the light. Not just any light: Jesus, the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome. As people filled with our own questions, we follow in the furtive footsteps of Nicodemus, falsely believing our naked honesty will remain hidden in the gloom of night. But the Spirit, through the light of Christ, calls us out from the shadows, and in fact, exposes us to the brilliance of God's love - a love that meets our questioning hearts with nothing less than life eternal.

**THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:**

Today, we sneak away with with Nicodemus as he visited Jesus in the night. It's dark, and we are unsure of what we will discover, but we know we are headed for the light of Easter. Welcome to worship! Join the people of God in prayer, in praise, in word, and in meal.

Nicodemus wants to know what it means to be born again. Until the nineteenth century, the church understood this term as referring to baptism. During Lent, some are prepared for Easter baptism. We as the community, as Martin Luther says, daily crawl back to the font to be renewed in the promises of this second birth.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, which meant he was extremely well educated. In fact, he was an esteemed Pharisaic leader, extensively trained to be called upon when holy interpretations needed to be made. Still, he needed more. He traveled in the dead of night to meet with the rabbi who had been causing a stir. Their conversation is the gospel's first discourse about the identity and significance of Jesus. The exchange leaves Nicodemus speechless. In discussing the Spirit of God, Jesus is presented to a Jewish religious authority as the Son of God who brings life to the world.

Being a religious authority with a lot of clout is one thing, but what about us? Do you see yourself as being called by Jesus to minister to others? What do you do for a living? How can you assess your call in light of your career, gifts, and skills? The point is that no matter how much we learn, there is always room to grow when it comes to life in Christ.

What does all of this mean for you? If you have not yet started a Lenten discipline, consider starting one. Do not let "holy time" be dictated by "human time." In other words, it doesn't matter

if you can't attend St. Paul's Wednesday Lent services or participate in a formal bible study. The theme of Lent is Lent! Jesus told us on Ash Wednesday to be with God in private. Spend time. Ask questions. Pray. Even if you've never done anything like that outside of a church service, the invitation is there. Jesus reveals himself to all and asks all of us to follow Him. The same call is extended to everyone – everywhere – of every ability.

**KID STUDY:**

In the Bible today, we learn about a man named Nicodemus who came to Jesus late one night, because he was hungry. No, he wasn't looking for a late night snack; he was hungry for spiritual food. He was hungry for the truth about the kingdom of God. He came to Jesus because he had questions and he knew that Jesus would have the answers. He was confused when Jesus told him he could be born again. How can a grown man be born again? Jesus went on to explain to Nicodemus that a person is "born again" when the Spirit of God enters into his heart. The Holy Spirit lets us have spiritual life, and we are born again in Christ. And that's what it means to be born again. God loved the world so much that He sent Jesus! The blessed and beautiful truth of the Gospel is that we do not have to do anything special in order to receive new life. We only have to believe.

**INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:**

*This is the faith of Nicodemus, maybe like the faith of you and me, and it is in a God who saves us despite what we think we know. Who works despite our disbelief, beyond our best logical arguments, to bring the dead to life, call into existence that which does not yet exist, and to make all things, everywhere, new. - Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber*

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**Next Week's Theme (March 11 & 12):** Woman at the well

**Next Week's Scriptures (March 11 & 12):**

**First Reading:** Exodus 17:1-7

*"Water from the rock in the wilderness."*

**Psalm:** Psalm 95

*"Let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation." (Ps. 95:1)*

**Second Reading:** Romans 5:1-11

*"Reconciled to God by Christ's death."*

**Gospel:** John 4:5-42

*"Baptismal image: the woman at the well."*