

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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May 1, 2022 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Third Sunday of Easter

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			O. C. S.
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator			DyAnn Lauzon

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

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

The disciples make a big splash and eat breakfast with the risen Jesus. Wading in the water (remembering baptism) and eating with Jesus (celebrating holy communion) is our weekly encounter with the risen Christ. Jesus asks us again and again: Do you love me? And Jesus invites us, again and again, to follow him, bringing the Easter life to others.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE PADS

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

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P We believe that the Bible contains instruction for us as followers of Jesus Christ to do what he asked of us. He taught the first disciples to help others to confess their sins and to proclaim to them the promise of forgiveness afterwards. So let us take a few brief moments in silence to open our hearts and minds to Jesus, to confess the things that weigh heavy on our hearts and the things we need help with so we might be more in line with what Jesus commands.

(Silence for private confession.)

P If you are truly sorry and asking God for help, here is the promise he commanded the leaders in his church to proclaim, "You are forgiven." May this forgiveness free you and help you to live; to live in Jesus' name.

C Amen.

GOSPEL SONG: FEED MY SHEEP

CHORUS:

***Feed my sheep. Feed my sheep.
If you really love Me, well just feed my sheep!
Words come so easy, but they're harder to keep.
If you really love Me, well just feed my sheep!***

I asked the Lo - rd, "What can I do
To show You just how much - I love you?"
These are the words that He - spoke to me:
"If you really love Me, well just feed my sheep!" **CHORUS**

If you are wonderin' - what you can do
To show the Lord - your love is true,
Just listen carefully, I know - you'll hear Him speak,
"If you really love Me, well just feed my sheep!" **CHORUS**

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(Please be seated.)

GOSPEL: John 21:1-19

The risen Christ appears again to his disciples by the sea where they were first called. After echoes of the fishing and feeding miracles, he gives a final reminder of the cost of a disciple's love and obedience.

A The holy gospel according to St. John, chapter 21, verses 1-19.

¹After [he appeared to his followers in Jerusalem,] Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. ²Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. ³Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. ⁴Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." ⁶He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. ⁷That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. ⁸But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. ⁹When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. ¹⁰Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." ¹¹So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹²Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. ¹⁵When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." ¹⁷He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." ¹⁹(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

*** SERMON SONG: REMIND ME WHO I AM**

**When I lose my way and I forget my name, remind me who I am.
In the mirror all I see is who I don't wanna be, remind me who I am.
In the loneliest places, when I can't remember what grace is. . .**

CHORUS:

**Tell me once again who I am to You. . . who I am to You (whoa)
Tell me lest I forget who I am to You – that I belong to You. . . to You!**

**When my heart is like a stone and I'm running far from home, remind me who I am.
When I can't receive Your love – afraid I'll never be enough, remind me who I am.
If I'm Your beloved, can You help me believe it? **CHORUS****

BRIDGE:

**I'm the one You love. I'm the one You love,
That will be enough, I'm the one You love!**

LAST CHORUS:

**Tell me once again who I am to You. . . who I am to You (whoa)
Tell me lest I forget who I am to You – that I belong to You.
Tell me once again who I am to You. . . who I am to You (whoa)
Tell me lest I forget who I am to You – that I belong to You... to You... to You!**

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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 Set free from captivity to sin and death, we pray to the God of resurrection for the church, people in need, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

A We pray for the people of Ukraine, the people of Russia and those countries and agencies coming to their help, and bless them. Change hearts, bring peace and show the world your existence.

A brief silence.

A We pray for the families and friends of Gary “Buzz” Hohlt and Harlan Schroeter. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time.

A brief silence.

A We pray for those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Eugene Schobel; Wesley Braden; George Bergfeld, Sr.; Skylar Ordner; those on our Prayer Team’s list; and those we name in our hearts before you.

A brief silence.

A To you God that helps, we pray for the family of Devon Tiffin who’s physical life is coming to an end. We pray for her, her family and friends. Be with them and help them in this time of transition.

A brief silence.

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

Elrose Kollatschny; Sarah Stancik; Irving Schneider; Shelly Bowden; Larry Poenitzsch; Sandy Mosley; Charlene Tesch; Cynthia Coufal; Jeffrey McDaniel; Karen Bailiff; Julian Divin; Nancy Biers; Angie Beggs; Pam Potter; Charlie Hammock; Brad Bryson; Lynette Frnka; Riana Jamison; Jenna Escamilla; Margaret Ortiz; Kenny Neuendorff; Keith Korth; Jodi Sebesta; Cathy Siglow; Paul Casinger; Fran Gillett; Tiffany Murley; DeQuincy Lister; Angela Mazoch; Lily Presswood; Denise Lange; Doug Mason; Dr. Tom Hancher; Joe Berry; Joyce Templeton; Gracie Brune; Margaret Rogers; Leonard Kahlden; Curtis Wallin; Megan Burch; Jennifer Aleman; Lisa Grazier; Phyllis Behrend; Jessica Mauchlen; Larry Guthrie; Donna Tiner; Libby Divin; Anthony Baumbach; Diane Brooks; Bob Loy; Devon Tiffin; Stanley King; Monty Gillett; Dawn Foster; Edward Halcolm; Amber Smith Kutach; Louis Camacho; Melvin Schobel; Janet Greene; Sabrina Galindo; Debbie Grimes; Horst Traub; Margie Fisk; Preston Carter; Penny Miller; Carl Hahn; Megan Cain; Amanda Fuchs; Cyndi Wallace; Karen Broussard; Donna Young; Sharon Heimann; and Brenda Baker.

A We pray for all expectant mothers, and especially for:
Miranda Wright; Stephanie Miles; Eileen Yearwood; Katie Page; Brooke Dungen Pawlak; Mallory Dungen Cook; and Madisyn Horndt Neumann that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace.

A brief silence.

A We pray for those who reside in care facilities and the homebound that they receive your caring and compassion. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)*
Robert Eaton; Adrian Fritsch; Don Morrison; Verna Coufal; Doug Hill; John Zwiengel; Robert Saunders; Coy Dell Schindler; Deanna Lee; Dolores Wessels; Doris Poppe; Barbara McMath; Linda Munos Rodgers; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Delores Purcell; Jane Booker; Curtis Berger; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Beatrice Zikuhr; Ronnie Rogers; and Fritz Willms.

A We pray for all law enforcement officers, including 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 Arturo Mares; Keven Rios; Brian Anderson; Michael Grahm; 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 that they are protected and kept safe.

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 Join our voices with angels, creatures, and all the saints in praising Christ and bestowing upon him all blessing and honor and glory. Reveal Christ’s glory to us and through us in our worship.

A brief silence.

A In your mercy, O God, respond to these prayers, and renew us by your life-giving Spirit; 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.)

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 Living God, bless these offerings we place before you for the work of the church. As you gather the wolf and the lamb to feed together in your peaceable reign, welcome us all at your table. Reach out to us through this meal that we may be nourished and believe in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

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 The risen Christ dwells with us here. All who are hungry, all who are thirsty, are welcome.

C Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION (Continuous with Individual Cups)

{Distribution will be continuous. All are welcome for communion. Please come down the center aisle starting from the front. Follow directions of the ushers, coming up one side at a time. Please keep 6 feet between those who are not your family members. Pastor will hand you the bread. If you wish to have a gluten-free wafer, please tell Pastor “Gluten-free, please.” Afterward, you will choose either wine or white grape juice from the individual cups in the tray – white grape juice in the center with wine surrounding. Place the empty cups in the baskets located off to the side. Although communion is continuous, you are welcome to kneel at the rail in prayer after receiving communion. Please return to your seat by the side aisles.}

*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P We give you thanks, generous God, for in this bread and cup we have tasted the new heaven and earth where hunger and thirst are no more. Send us from this table as witnesses to the resurrection, that through our lives, all may know life in Jesus' name.

C Amen.

*** BLESSING**

P God, the Author of life, Christ, the living Cornerstone, and the life-giving Spirit of adoption, ☩ bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

*** CLOSING SONG: LESS LIKE ME**

**Oh, I have days I lose the fight; Try my best but just don't get it right.
Where I talk a talk that I don't walk, and miss the moments right before my eyes.**

PRE-CHORUS:

**Somebody with a hurt that I could have helped,
Somebody with a hand that I could have held.
When I just can't see past myself, Lord, help me be. . .**

CHORUS:

**A little more like mercy, a little more like grace.
A little more like kindness, goodness, love and faith.
A little more like patience, a little more like peace.
A little more like Jesus, a little less like me. (2nd TIME TO BRIDGE)**

**Yeah, there's no denying I have changed. I've been saved from who I used to be.
But even at my best, I must confess, I still need help to see the way You see.**

REPEAT PRE-CHORUS and CHORUS

BRIDGE:

**Oh, to feed the beggar on the street, love to be Your hands and feet;
Freely give what I receive, Lord, help me be!
I want to put You first above all else. Love my neighbor as myself;
In the moments no one sees, Lord, help me be. . . One, two, three!**

LAST CHORUS:

**A little more like mercy, a little more like grace.
A little more like kindness, goodness, love and faith.
A little more like patience, a little more like peace.
A little more like Jesus, Oh, a little less like me.
A little more I'm living everything I preach.
A little more like Jesus, a little less like me.
Oh, a little less like me.**

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*** DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. You have been fed to feed others. **C** Thanks be to God, and we will.

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USHERS: Aaron & Amanda Oppermann; Loraine Gast; Adam Torres
LAY READER: Walter Guthmann, Jr. **ACOLYTE:** Nate Muir
STREAMING: Chase Brasher **ALTAR GUILD:** Kay Wesson

WELCOME: “To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” (Revelation 5:12, NRSV). Welcome to worship.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Nelma Strey in loving memory of Norma Strey, Sr., in celebration of the family's April birthdays (Nelma, Glenn, Wanda Jean, and Nelma Grace), and in thanks to the church for all of the support given to the family recently.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Courtney Busselman and her family for the loss of her grandfather Harlan Schroeter. May God comfort them during their time of loss.

 **Thank you** to everyone who came out on Sunday, April 24, 2022 for our semi-annual community-wide blood drive that was held in The Lighthouse. According to the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center Coordinator, this event was a great success! We ended up having 47 donors with 5 deferrals, 11 Auto, and 31 Whole Blood donations totaling 53 PRODUCTS!! A special Thank You to Cordero, Pam and Grace Cardenas and Colby and Walter Guthmann for all your help in getting everything set up for this event! Also to Sandy Neuendorff for being on “standby”. Thanks for helping Save Lives, and God Bless. –
Bethany Guthmann ☺

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: April 23 & 24, 2022 – 184 **Contributions:** April 23 & 24 – \$7,055.76
Power of One: April 23 & 24, 2022 – \$50.00 **Building Fund:** April 23 & 24 – \$121.44

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

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., April 27 – **66 Total**
BLAST/Confirmation: 51 **Support Staff:** 15

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

**** NOTICE REGARDING BULLETINS:** Please take your bulletin home after worship. We will **not** be reusing them. Thank you! ******

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

**** Worship Schedule Change!!!** There will be a slight change in our worship schedule the **third weekend of May!** There will be regular worship at 7:00 PM on Saturday, May 21, 2022 with a service of Holy Communion. **Sunday, May 22, 2022 will be a one-service Sunday.** We will have only **one worship service at 10:00 AM** to celebrate **confirmation** of 4 of our youth. We will also be honoring our high school, college and trade school graduates at this service. Please note the Sunday worship time change on your calendar and join us in the celebration!



Register for Vacation Bible School – July 18-22, 2022!!
Mark your calendars for this year's Vacation Bible School! Join us as we “Go off-road for a Monumental adventure through the colorful canyons and sunbaked trails of the Southwest. By exploring God's awesomeness, kids form a rock-solid faith for the road ahead!” **VBS dates are July 18-22, 2022 from 6:00-8:30 PM each evening** and is open up to children who have completed 5th grade. Registration is free, however, t-shirts will be available for \$7 each. Parents may register their students online by visiting vbspro.events/p/events/stpaul2022.

BE A VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL VOLUNTEER! Volunteers are Needed . . . VBS is a wonderful way to connect with the youth and to share how God has worked in your life. Sharing your love for Christ with the younger generation can be a humbling and rewarding experience and can impact the youth in so many ways. We all have gifts to give no matter what age, and we invite you to join our team. You may register on line by visiting vbspro.events/p/stpaul2022. Questions? Contact Stephanie Polasek at 979-732-1858 or stephaniepolasek@yahoo.com.

● **THE GATHERING:** The Gathering, a young adult group, meets twice a month for food, fellowship and devotions led by Stephanie and Bradley Polasek. **They meet on the first and third Tuesday of the month from 6:30-8:00 PM** at the Polasek Residence and different venues in town. For more information, contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858.

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

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Today (May 1) – 12:15 PM – Crawfish Boil and Silent Dessert Auction (Lighthouse)
Mon., May 2 – 9:30 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Evangelism Team (library)
6:00-7:30 PM – Women of JOY Bible Study (Hackfeld Family Room)
Tues., May 3 – 12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library)
6:30-8:00 PM – The Gathering
Wed., May 4 – 9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
12:00 PM – Ministerial Alliance
1:30-3:00 PM – Continuing Education
5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation & Wed. Night Adult Bible Study
6:00 PM – High School Youth
Thurs., May 5 – Stephanie to Youth Ministry Network (Lutherhill)
12:00 PM – National Day of Prayer (Courthouse)
6:00 PM – Youth & Education Team (library)
6:00 PM – Property Team (choir room)
Fri., May 6 – 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)
Sat., May 7 – 7:00 AM – Men In Mission
7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship
Next Sun., May 8 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Sunday, May 1, 2022 Philip and James, Apostles

Philip was one of the first disciples of Jesus, and called Nathanael to "come and see." He later responded to an Ethiopian official's request for teaching and baptism. Little is known of James, the son of Alphaeus, called "the Less" to distinguish him from another apostle named James.

Monday, May 2, 2022 Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, died 373

Best remembered for defending the teaching that Christ was fully God against those who taught otherwise, Athanasius was an influential church leader around the time of the Council of Nicea. He was banished from Alexandria five times for his forthright views.

Wednesday, May 4, 2022 Monica, mother of Augustine, died 387

Monica was married to a pagan husband who was ill-tempered and unfaithful, but whom she helped bring into the Christian faith. She repeated the influence on her son Augustine, who went on to become one of the greatest church teachers.

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OTHER READINGS: Acts 9:1-6 [7-20]

Saul (later called Paul) was an ardent persecutor of all who followed the Way of Christ. This reading recounts the story of his transformation beginning with an encounter with Jesus Christ on the way to Damascus.

The reading begins:

¹Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ²and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. ³Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." [⁷The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. ¹⁰Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, ¹²and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." ¹³But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; ¹⁴and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." ¹⁵But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; ¹⁶I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of

my name.” ¹⁷So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, ¹⁹and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, ²⁰and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”]

PSALM: Psalm 30

¹I will exalt you, O LORD, because you have lifted me up and have not let my enemies triumph over me. ²O LORD my God, I cried out to you, and you restored me to health. ³You brought me up, O LORD, from the dead; you restored my life as I was going down to the grave. ⁴Sing praise to the LORD, all you faithful; give thanks in holy remembrance. ⁵God’s wrath is short; God’s favor lasts a lifetime. Weeping spends the night, but joy comes in the morning. ⁶While I felt secure, I said, “I shall never be disturbed. ⁷You, LORD, with your favor, made me as strong as the mountains.” Then you hid your face, and I was filled with fear. ⁸I cried to you, O LORD; I pleaded with my Lord, saying, ⁹“What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you or declare your faithfulness? ¹⁰Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me; O LORD, be my helper.” ¹¹You have turned my wailing into dancing; you have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy. ¹²Therefore my heart sings to you without ceasing; O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever.

OTHER READINGS: Revelation 5:11-14

The vision of John recorded in Revelation offers a glimpse of cosmic worship around the throne. At its center is “the Lamb who was slain.”

The reading begins:

¹¹Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹²singing with full voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” ¹³Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, “To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” ¹⁴And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: DO YOU LOVE ME? FOLLOW ME.

When we encounter Jesus, we are changed and will never be the same. Jesus can be revealed in a blinding light on the road, in an abundance of fish, in breakfast on the beach. God uses all sorts of surprising things: bread, wine, water, even words of forgiveness to convert us. Like baptism, this conversion is both a once-in-a-lifetime, life-changing event *and* a daily process. It’s a change that comes again and again, like Jesus’ question to Peter: “Do you love me?” Again and again, Jesus calls us to follow him. For Saul, the journey doesn’t end with the blinding light on the road. For Peter, the journey doesn’t end with breakfast on the beach. Conversion sets

each of them, and each of us, on a path that continues for the rest of our life on earth leading into life eternal.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

It is the 3rd week of Easter, which lasts fifty days. Jesus continues to make himself known. He appears to Saul on the road as a blinding light, to John the seer as an enthroned Lamb, and to five disciples as a man serving breakfast. Which is your favorite? Welcome to worship! Encounter Jesus here and now: hear the word, eat with him, connect to his body of believers.

Throughout the ages, we have gathered over meals, trusting that Christ is revealed to us in the breaking of the bread. Simple elements become holy as we are united with Christ and each other in the Lord’s supper. We share potlucks and picnics and bring food to families in times of grief and celebration. Food unites us. Where has Christ been revealed to you in the breaking of bread? Jesus feeds his disciples, and us, before being sent into the world to feed and care for others. We are nourished with the gifts of word and sacrament, into the world for service to our neighbors and all of creation. When have you experienced God’s tender care through a meal?

It’s no secret that Peter has messed up. He denied Jesus three times. His behavior was often erratic and boisterous. He hasn’t exactly been the model disciple. And yet, in today’s gospel, Jesus meets Peter with love, compassion, and affirmation. Jesus sees Peter’s need, meets Peter in his source of shame, and gently offers a new narrative. He asks the questions Peter needs to reclaim his identity as a follower of Christ. Christ appears to his followers, both the loyal and the disloyal, while they are at work, and like them, we realize his presence especially in the breaking of the bread.

Sometimes God’s calls on our lives are sudden and dramatic, like Paul’s experience from Acts. Sometimes it feels more like a long blustering journey with lots of twists, turns, and setbacks, like in the case of Peter. For many of us, it might be difficult to know who God is calling us to be. Either way, God calls you by inviting you to listen to your innermost desires. The most fundamental vocation is to become the person whom God created. It’s both the person you already are and the person that God calls you to be.

KID STUDY:

Jesus was crucified. He rose from the dead, and appeared to his disciples. Last week, he appeared to them when they were hiding in fear. He appeared to them again to make sure Thomas knew that even though he didn’t see Jesus when the other disciples did, what they said was true. Today, Jesus appears on the shore when 3 of the disciples are out fishing. They had fished all night and hadn’t caught a thing. Then, they saw a man, not knowing it was Jesus, on the shore. He told them to cast their fishing nets on the right side of the boat, and when they did, they had so many fish in the net they could hardly pull it onto the boat. That’s when Peter realized Jesus was the man yelling to them from the shore. Peter was so excited when he realized Jesus had appeared to them again that He jumped into the water and swam to the shore! The disciples got to see Jesus and spend time with Him. He even made them breakfast

over a campfire. He told them to continue to follow Him. He told them to keep caring for and taking care of people in need, just like he had taught them to do before he died.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

“The impulse to feed is innate. Food is a language of care, the thing we do when traditional language fails us, when we don’t know what to say, when there are no words to say. And food is what we offer in celebration - at weddings, at anniversaries, at happy events of every kind. It’s the thing that connects us, that bears our traditions, and, on a practical level, our ability to live and breathe each day. Food matters” - Shauna Niequist Bread and Wine: A Love Letter to Life around the Table (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013)

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Next Week's Theme (May 7 & 8): Jesus our Shepherd

Next Week's Scriptures (May 7 & 8):

First Reading: Acts 9:36-43

“Peter raises Tabitha/Dorcas from the dead.”

Psalm: Psalm 23

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.” (Ps. 23:1)

Second Reading: Revelation 7:9-17

“A white-robed multitude sings before the Lamb.”

Gospel: John 10:22-30

“Jesus promises eternal life to his sheep.”