

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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E-mail: admin@splctx.org www.splctx.com **Pastor:** pastor.akethan@gmail.com

May 14, 2023 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Sixth 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			Tomasa Rosales
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator			DyAnn Lauzon

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

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

Jesus does not abandon his followers. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus comes to abide with his disciples of every generation. As Pentecost draws near, we are reminded that the risen Christ dwells in us as the Spirit of truth. We receive this Spirit in baptism and pray that in our gathering around the Lord's table the Spirit will transform us to be the body of the risen Christ in 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.)

60 SECONDS OF STEWARDSHIP – Youth & Education Team

*** THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, by whose hand we are given new birth, by whose speaking we are given new life.

C Amen.

P Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are welcomed, restored, and supported as citizens of the new creation. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism. Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the river of life, you are the everlasting wellspring. In mercy and might you have freed us from death and raised us with Jesus, the firstborn of the dead. In baptismal waters our old life is washed away, and in them we are born anew.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister continues.

P Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams. Honor to you for waters that wash us clean, quench our thirst, and nurture both crops and creatures. Praise to you for the life-giving water of baptism, the outpouring of the Spirit of the new creation.

C Wash away our sin and all that separates us from you. Empower our witness to your resurrection.

P Satisfy the world's need through this living water. Where drought dries the earth, bring refreshment. Where despair prevails, grant hope. Where chaos reigns, bring peace. We ask this through Christ, who with you and the Spirit reigns forever.

C Amen.

GOSPEL SONG: IN CHRIST ALONE

**In Christ alone, my hope is found. He is my light, my strength, my song.
This Cornerstone, this solid ground, firm thru the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease,
My Comforter, my All in All, here in the love of Christ I stand.**

**In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe.
The gift of love, and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save.
'Til on that cross, as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied,
For every sin on Him was laid. Here in the death of Christ, I live.**

GOSPEL: John 14:15-21

In final words to his disciples on the night of his arrest, Jesus encourages obedience to his commandments and speaks of the Spirit, who will be with them forever.

A The holy gospel according to St. John, chapter 14, verses 15-21.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. ¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. ¹⁸"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

GOSPEL SONG: IN CHRIST ALONE

**There in the ground His body lay, light of the world by darkness slain.
Then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave He rose again.
And as He stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me.
For I am His and He is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.**

**No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the pow'r of Christ in me.
From life's first cry, to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck me from His hand
'Til He returns, or calls me home, there in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.**

CCLI Song #3350395 Words and Music by Keith Getty and Steward Townsend
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CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

* **SERMON SONG: BECAUSE HE LIVES (AMEN)**

**I believe in the Son. I believe in the Risen One.
I believe I overcome by the power of His blood.**

**Amen! Amen! I'm alive! I'm alive because He lives!
Amen! Amen! Let my song join the one that never ends,
Because He lives!**

**I was dead in the grave. I was covered in sin and shame.
I heard mercy call my name. He rolled the stone away!**

**Amen! Amen! I'm alive! I'm alive because He lives!
Amen! Amen! Let my song join the one that never ends,
Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.
Because He lives, ev'ry fear is gone.
I know He holds my life, my future in His hands.**

**Amen! Amen! I'm alive! I'm alive because He lives!
Amen! Amen! Let my song join the one that never ends,
Amen! Amen! I'm alive! I'm alive because He lives!
Amen! Amen! Let my song join the one that never ends,
Because He lives! Because He lives!**

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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 United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

A God our faithful companion, you promise to never leave us and to send your Spirit to guide us in wisdom and truth. Send your people into the world to serve as mirrors that reflect and magnify your love.

A brief silence.

A You hold us in your loving care. We pray for mothers and mother figures. Console all who long to be mothers, children estranged from their mothers, anyone grieving the death of a mother, and mothers who have lost a child. Support all for whom this day is difficult.

A brief silence.

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

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Catherine Poppe; Ivy Mueller; Robert Eaton; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those battling cancer that they may know comfort and strength. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)*
Kim Moerbe Welack; Misti Retzer; Zelda Lanford; Michelle Thraen; Pauline Gosnell; Nina Naumann; GayLynn Willms Burk; Carl Norton; Barbara Farley; Laura Harris; Todd Foster; Cher Marino; Cindy Tanner; Joe Reck; Melinda Rodiek; Melda Coleman; Donna Culton; Nancy Hartmann; Lydia Rojas; Larry Stolar; Vivian Fortenberry; Rick Davis; Darryl Stancik; Jerry Ordner; Michael Yancey; Bubba Bencal; Al Gene Canik; Jane Venghaus Taylor; George Wright; Sandy Mosley; Charlene Tesch; 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 We pray for all expectant mothers, and especially for:
Kelsey Kethan McNeely; Montana Appelt; Dina Anton de Espinoza; Olivia Leyendecker; Daya Latiolais; Cassidy Zajicek Parks; and Courtney Busselman that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those who reside in care facilities and the homebound that they receive your caring and compassion. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)*
Helen Hammack; Joey Denby; Edwin Oevermann; Paul Minar, Sr.; Adrian Fritsch; Doug Hill; Robert Saunders; Coy Dell Schindler; Barbara McMath; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Jane Booker; Pat Brasher; Curtis Berger; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Ronnie Rogers; Joyce Dehmer; Donna Dehmer; and Rita Noska.

A We pray for all law enforcement officers, fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers, 9-1-1 dispatchers, and active duty military personnel that they are protected and kept safe. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)*
Law enforcement officers: Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; 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; Jan Willette and Terri Neuendorff, as well as those active duty military members including Brian Anderson; Michael Graham; Bryan Kubena; Brad Bergfeld; Cody Jowers; Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Ryan Neisner; Anthony D'Angelo; Dalton Kapel; Kindra Dawson; William Phillips; and Kevin Gonzalez.

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

A brief silence.

A Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

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 Blessed are you, O God,

C maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. 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 Christ, broken and poured out for you.

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 Gracious God, in you we live and move and have our being. With your word and this meal of grace, you have nourished our life together. Strengthen us to show your love and serve the world in Jesus' name.

C Amen.

* **BLESSING**

P The God of all, who raised ☩ Jesus from the dead, bless you by the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill Christ's commands.

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 doing all that Christ commands.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

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USHERS: Bethany Guthmann; Sandy Cherniss; Fay & Thomas Ulbricht
LAY READER: Walter Guthmann, Jr. **ACOLYTE:** Nate Muir
STREAMING: Mike Maas **POWER POINT:** Kay Wesson
ALTAR GUILD: Kay Wesson

WELCOME: Welcome to worship! Today we acknowledge mothers and special mother-figures in our lives — thank God for you!

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Eugene & Chris Schobel in memory of their mothers and in honor of all mothers.

✿ As you leave worship today, be sure to pick up a carnation in memory of or in honor of the mothers in your life. **Everyone takes home a flower!!** ✿

Congratulations to Dylan and Katie Pagel Walcik for the birth of their son **Weston Pierce Walcik**. Weston Pierce was born Thursday, April 20, 2023. He weighed 6 lbs. 4 oz. and was 20 inches long. Proud grandparents are Darrell and Dana Pagel and Randy Walcik, and proud great-grandfather is Raymond Pagel.

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: May 6 & 7, 2023 – 173 **Contributions:** May 6 & 7 – \$7,620.81
Power of One: May 6 & 7, 2023 – \$60.00 **Building Fund:** May 6 & 7 – \$513.23

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

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., May 10 – **71 Total**

BLAST/Confirmation: 56

Adult Class: 2

Support Staff: 13

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! ☺

● **Columbus Food Pantry:** It is time for our church to help at the Columbus Food Pantry! The dates are **May 18 & 19, 2023**. The Food Pantry is located at the First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 419 Washington Street. On **Thursday, May 18** the food delivery truck will arrive and grocery bags will be prepared; **please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help. **On Friday, May 19 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 Kathy Fleming at 979-732-4930 or Tom Fleming at 979-732-4107.

“Special Service” – Thursday, May 18, 2023 at 6:00 PM we will have an **Ascension Day service**. The what and why of such a service, first and foremost, is to recognize the day Jesus rose up into heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father. We also delve into how the early Christian church took some of the practices of the Jewish synagogue worship service and that of worship in the Temple in Jerusalem, and added to it. We will worship and also discover why these practices were done. From incense burning, to bells ringing, to confession, singing of psalms and hymns, hearing scripture read and interpreted. Along with all of this is the central emphasis of the eucharist. A lot of work is going into helping the worshiper to understand and, at the same time, experience the traditions of nearly over 1800 years of Christianity worship. Following the worship service, join us for a light meal and fellowship in The Lighthouse.

♣ **Magnolia Days Festival!!** The Columbus Chamber of Commerce is seeking additional volunteers for the Magnolia Days Festival **Fri., May 19 – Sat. May 20, 2023**. Our biggest need is taking tickets for our games. Each volunteer receives a free meal from the Lions Club and a t-shirt. We greatly appreciate any help. **For those that wish to sign up, please call the Chamber at 979-732-8385.** Thanks in advance!



Worship Schedule Change!!! There will be a slight change in our worship schedule the **last weekend of May!** There will be regular worship at 7:00 PM on Saturday, May 27, 2023 with a service of Holy Communion. **Sunday, May 28, 2023 will be a one-service Sunday.** We will have only **one worship service at 10:00 AM** to celebrate **confirmation** of our youth. We will also be honoring our high school and college graduates at this service. Please note the Sunday worship time change on your calendar and join us in the celebration!



CRAFTING CAMP: Students that enjoy making art and crafting are invited to this summer's Crafting Camp. Children who have completed the 2nd grade up to 8th grade are invited to come craft on **Thursdays starting June 1 to July 6, 2023 from 1:00-2:30 PM** in the Lighthouse. Led by Debbie Eaton and her crew, students will have the opportunity to make a different craft each week. *Space is limited to 10 students, and the cost is \$10 per student*, which will cover the cost of their crafting supplies. Register online at

form.jotform.com/spolasek21/craftcamp or contact Stephanie Polasek at 979-732-1858. **For the Crafting Camp, we are in need of the following items:**

- *Cardboard tubes from paper towels and toilet paper*
- *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!

**** Colorado County Senior Connections ****

A place for Seniors, 65 years and older, to socialize with others.

Beginning Wednesday, June 7, 2023, the group will meet at the Stafford Opera House- Columbus in the Buddy Rau Room from **10:00 AM-1:00 PM** the **1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month**. Lunch will be provided. Various activities will include: card games/board games; Bingo; Movies; Educational Speakers; field trips; and social gathering time! If you have any questions, please contact John Jones at 979-733-6610.

◆ **Our Peru Mission Trip Team** will be having a **drive-thru dinner fundraiser** on **Tuesday, June 13, 2023** at The Lighthouse from **5:00-7:00 PM**. The menu will be: hamburger steak, twice baked potatoes, corn casserole, broccoli salad, dinner roll, and banana pudding. *Tickets are \$13 and pre-sale ONLY.* Tickets are available for purchase from any Peru Team member or in the church office. Deadline to purchase tickets is Wednesday, June 7, 2023.

Stellar VBS!! Mark your calendars for “Stellar” VBS! Join us at Vacation Bible School **July 10-14, 2023** as kids go on a cosmic quest and have a blast shining Jesus' light to the world! A meal will be served 5:30-6:00 PM, and VBS will be held 6:00-8:30 PM. VBS is open to children in preschool up to students who have completed 5th grade. Registration is free, however, t-shirts will be available to purchase for \$8 each. *Space is limited so register early!* Parents may register their students online by visiting vbspro.events/p/spfu2023. If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858 or by email at stephaniepolasek@yahoo.com.

Be a Vacation Bible School Volunteer!! 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. Last year we hit our capacity of 100 students! This year we have increased our capacity to 125 students, but, in order to accomplish this, more volunteers are needed. We all have gifts to give no matter what age, and we invite you to join our team. You may register online by visiting vbspro.events/p/spfu2023. If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858 or by email at stephaniepolasek@yahoo.com.

● **VBS FOOD DONATIONS:** To help defray the cost, we are asking for donations to help with the meals served each evening before Vacation Bible School. We served about 200 kids and

volunteers *each night* of VBS last year. If you would like to help, you can either give a **monetary donation or donate specific food items**. For monetary donations, an envelope will be on the table in the narthex (foyer) that can be placed in the offering bowl. If you wish to donate specific food items, just pull a slip off the board and return it with the donation on the date specified to the St. Paul Lighthouse. If you have any questions, please contact Loraine Gast at 979-732-1296. Each donation is and will be greatly appreciated. Thank you!

♣ **Day Camp at Lutherhill!** Youth completing K-5th grade are invited to experience a week at camp without the over-night stay during the week of **July 30-August 4, 2023**. Camp starts each day at 8:00 AM and will end at 5:15 PM. Stephanie Polasek will shuttle youth each day to and from camp. We will leave the church at 7:20 AM and will return at 5:50 PM. **Cost is \$195 for the week**. Register online at lutherhill.org and then contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858 for transportation. It's always a great time for the kiddos!

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

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Mon., May 15 –	9:30 AM – Staff Meeting 1:00 PM – Deacon Sandye to TLC 6:00 PM – Church Council
Tues., May 16 –	10:00 AM – Pastor Alan to Columbus Oaks 5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library) 6:30-8:00 PM – The Gathering
Wed., May 17 –	9:00 AM – CLA Chapel 9:00 AM – Morning Circle (library) 4:30 PM – Confirmation (2 nd yr.) 5:00 PM – Meal 5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation (1 st yr.), Adult Class & HS Youth
Thurs., May 18 –	8:30 AM – Work at Columbus Food Pantry 5:30 PM – Grief Support Group (library) 6:00 PM – Ascension Worship Service 7:00 PM – Light Meal & Fellowship (Lighthouse)
May 19 & 20 –	Synod Assembly
Fri., May 19 –	8:30 AM – Work at Columbus Food Pantry 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library) 11:30 AM – CLA Preschool Graduation (sanctuary)
Sat., May 20 –	5:00-11:00 PM – Shuttle Service to Magnolia Festival (parking lot) 7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

Next Sun., May 21 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Sunday, May 14, 2023 Matthias, Apostle

Matthias was the apostle added to the Twelve after Jesus' resurrection, as a replacement for the dead Judas Iscariot. He had traveled among the followers of Jesus throughout the Lord's ministry. Formerly commemorated on February 24, Matthias's celebration is moved to May 14 in agreement with most Western calendars.

Thursday, May 18, 2023 Erik, King of Sweden, martyr, died 1160

Erik is considered the patron saint of Sweden. As king of that nation, he tried to bring peace in the region, and to spread Christianity in Scandinavia. He was also known for his attempts to make fair laws and to protect those who were poor or sick.

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OTHER READINGS: Acts 17:22-31

In Athens, Paul faces the challenge of proclaiming the gospel to Greeks who know nothing of either Jewish or Christian tradition. He proclaims that the “unknown god” whom they worship is the true Lord of heaven and earth who will judge the world with justice through Jesus, whom God has raised from the dead.

The reading begins:

²²Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. ²³For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him — though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’ ²⁹Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. ³⁰While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

PSALM: Psalm 66:8-20

⁸Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of praise be heard. ⁹Our God has kept us among the living and has not allowed our feet to slip. ¹⁰For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us just as silver is tried. ¹¹You brought us into the net; you laid heavy burdens upon our backs. ¹²You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us out into a place of refreshment. ¹³I will enter your house with burnt offerings and will pay you my vows — ¹⁴those that I promised with my lips and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble. ¹⁵I will offer you burnt offerings of fatlings with the smoke of rams; I will give you oxen and goats. ¹⁶Come and listen, all you who believe, and I will tell you what God has done for me. ¹⁷I called out to God with my mouth, and praised the Lord with my tongue. ¹⁸If I had cherished evil in my heart, the Lord would not have heard me; ¹⁹but in truth God has heard me and has attended to the sound of my prayer. ²⁰Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, nor withheld unfailing love from me.

OTHER READINGS: 1 Peter 3:13-22

The author of 1 Peter encourages Christians to remain faithful even in the face of defamation and persecution. In baptism we are made clean to act in accordance with what is right.

The reading begins:

¹³Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, ¹⁵but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; ¹⁶yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil. ¹⁸For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. ²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you — not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: NOT ORPHANED

Many life experiences can leave us feeling orphaned or abandoned. Family can ease that feeling but also magnify it if our family relationships are strained or if our families live far away. Think of those in your congregation who count deployed soldiers among their loved ones in recent years, or who live away from their loved ones to support their families. The Internet, webcams, Skype, and social networking can link people across the miles but can further aggravate loneliness and isolation when these substitute for real intimacy in our highly connected world. How do you

experience this loneliness - this longing for home and belonging? How does Jesus' promise that he will not leave you orphaned speak to these real-life concerns?

When Jesus makes this string of promises, saying that he will remain with us in the Holy Spirit as our Advocate, it's hard to envision how this support comes to us sometimes. When we do not get to see or hear those we love, the simple gifts Jesus offers in body and blood, have great power. Even when life keeps delivering bad news about how far apart we are from another, how broken our relationships are, "I will not leave you orphaned" is the godly reassurance that we are not alone. There is always a table at which to receive that connection.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Today and every day, Jesus says that he will not leave us as orphans. One of the places where we are washed, fed, embraced and sustained by God is at worship. Welcome! Join with all the baptized to receive the Spirit of the Risen Christ.

"I will not leave you orphaned," Jesus promises us in today's gospel. God comes to love us in Jesus, singularly loving and accepting, seeking our trust, promising to be ever-present with us in the Holy Spirit. This Holy Advocate moves us even when we don't recognize its power, even when it seems "an unknown God" as the Greeks describe in the first reading. Though we might battle an elemental loneliness, we have not been abandoned.

Martin Luther rightly said that it's our neighbors, rather than God, who need our good works. For centuries, the Christian church was a dominant force in the worlds of politics, academics, and culture. One of the most difficult forms of truth-telling is of the church's own broken past and present. Do you see examples of our congregation speaking on behalf of creation and vulnerable people? Do YOU speak on behalf of creation and vulnerable people?

Jesus reframed the ancient forms of sacrifice that included live animals, food, wine, and valuables. In his life given on the cross, we are called to sacrifice in a different way: acts of loving kindness toward others. Listening to the vast examples our ministry teams bring to you at each worship service this year, you can see where your stewardship provides outreach and advocacy! We believe Jesus's promise to remain with the community in the person of God the Advocate. The Spirit is on our side, calling us to a life of love. Do you hear the call?

KID STUDY:

Do you have challenges in your life? Saying them out loud and asking for help takes a lot of courage. During the challenges you experience, are you still able to see God is at work in your life? You can still be a blessing to others, and even to yourself, when you are going through a difficult time. This is what the Holy Spirit does for us. Think of your connection to Spirit as a magnet. Magnets hold together. In the same way, you are connected to God in your own personal relationship, and at the same time you are connected to others. Through these connections, the Holy Spirit reaches through the church into the wider world.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, the Spirit of virtue, a commanding Spirit. When we hear of the Spirit, the mind must form to itself an idea of an intelligent Being, infinite in power, of greatness without measure, bounded neither by time nor by ages, bountiful of its own goodness, to whom all turn who need sanctification, to whom all aspire who live in holiness, as though watered and assisted by its breath to arrive at their due perfection. This is a Being who perfects others, itself needing nothing; existing, as not needing to be renewed, yet giving life abundantly; enlarging through no addition, but at once complete; at rest within itself, yet in all places; the source of holiness, the light of the mind, and providing light from itself to every faculty of the soul that searches for truth. So the Spirit, to each one who receives it, as though given to that believer alone, pours forth sufficient and perfect grace to each one, and so is enjoyed by each one. - Basil [Basil, in The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers, II, 8.]

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Next Week's Theme (Thurs., May 18): Ascension Day

Next Week's Scriptures (Thurs., May 18):

First Reading: Acts 1:1-11
"Jesus sends the apostles."

Psalm: Psalm 47
"God has gone up with a shout." (Ps. 47:5)

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:15-23
"Eyes to see the risen and ascended Christ."

Gospel: Luke 24:44-53
"Christ present in all times and places."

Next Week's Theme (May 20 & 21): Called to be one like the Father and Son are one

Next Week's Scriptures (May 20 & 21):

First Reading: Acts 1:6-14 *"Jesus' companions at prayer after his departure."*

Psalm: Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 *"Sing to God, who rides upon the clouds." (Ps. 68:4)*

Second Reading: 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11 *"God will sustain and restore those who suffer."*

Gospel: John 17:1-11 *"Christ's prayer for his disciples."*
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A Mother's Prayer

Make me a wise mother, O Lord. Keep me calm and give me patience to bear the small, irritating things in the daily routine of life. Give me tolerance and understanding to bridge the gulf between my generation and that of my children.

Let me not be too ready to guide my children's stumbling feet, but allow me to be ever near to bind their bruises. Give me a sense of humor that I may laugh with them but never at them. Let me refrain from preaching with words; let me show by example instead.

Keep me from forcing their confidences, but give me a sympathetic ear when my children come to me. Make me humble. Keep my children close to me, O Lord, though miles may separate us. And let Thy light so shine upon me that they, too, will perceive Thy glory. Amen.

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