

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 20, 2023 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Seventh 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
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

In these days between Ascension and Pentecost, we gather with the disciples in the upper room, waiting for the Spirit to transform the church around the world. In today's gospel Jesus prays for his followers and for their mission in his name. Amid religious, social, and economic divisions, we seek the unity that Jesus had with his Father. Made one in baptism, we go forth to live our faith in the world, eager for the unity that God intends for the whole human family.

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

P A reading from the book of Acts, chapter 1, verses 6-14.
Today's reading is part of the introduction to the narrative of the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost. These verses tell of the risen Lord's conversation with his disciples on the eve of his ascension, in which he promises that they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

The reading begins:
⁶When [the apostles] had come together, they asked [Jesus], "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." ¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. ¹³When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

* **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: THE COMMISSION

See my hands, and look at my feet.
It's okay if it's hard to believe.
I have faith that you will do greater things.
It's my time to go, but before I leave,

CHORUS 1

*Go tell the world about me. I was dead but now I live.
I've gotta go now for a little while, but goodbye is not the end.*

GOSPEL: John 17:1-11

On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus prays to his heavenly Father, asking that those who continue his work in this world will live in unity.

A The holy gospel according to St. John, chapter 17, verses 1-11.

¹After Jesus had spoken these words [to his disciples], he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. ⁶"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

GOSPEL SONG: THE COMMISSION

Don't forget the things that I taught you.
I've conquered death, and I hold the keys.
Where I go you will go too, some day.
But there's much to do here before you leave so. . .

CHORUS 2 to BRIDGE

*Go tell the world about me. I was dead but now I live.
I've gotta go now for a little while, but goodbye is not the. . .
. . . end of the journey, the end of the road;
My Spirit is with you wherever you go.
You have a purpose, and I have a plan.
I'll make you this promise – I'll come back again. But until then,*

CHORUS 3

*Go tell the world about me. I was dead but now I live.
I've gotta go now for a little while, but goodbye is not the end.
(Go tell the world) Go tell them about me!
(Go tell the world) I've gotta go.
(Go tell the world) For a little while, but goodbye is not the end.*

CCLI Song #7146623 Words and Music by Blake Neesmith, Carter Frodge, Logan Cain, Madison Cain, and Taylor Cain
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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!**

* **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 of harmony, as you drew your son to your side, you draw us to you and unite us with the planet and one another. Weave your church together in a web of mutual love for the sake of the world.

A brief silence.

A We give thanks that humankind serves as your body in the world, stewarding your abundant gifts. Guide this congregation's leaders as they seek your will. We pray for our staff and council.

A brief silence.

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

A brief silence.

A We pray for the family and friends of Robert Eaton who passed away this past week. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Cher Marino; Jimmy Kansteiner; Catherine Poppe; 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 Welneck; 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; Catherine Poppe; Larry Stolar; Vivian Fortenberry; Rick Davis; Darryl Stancik; Jerry Ordner; Michael Yancey; Al Gene Canik; Jane Venghaus Taylor; George Wright; Sandy Mosley; Charlene Tesch; Karen Bailiff; Julian Divin; Nancy Biers; 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; 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 brief silence.

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; Abbigail 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 know Christ who makes us one.

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 live in the new creation.

C Amen.

*** CLOSING SONG: DAYS OF ELIJAH**

**These are the days of Elijah, declaring the word of the Lord.
And these are the days of Your servant Moses, righteousness
Being restored. And though these are days of great trials,
Of famine and darkness and sword, still we are the voice in the
Desert crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord!"**

CHORUS:

**Behold, He comes, riding on the clouds, shining like the sun,
At the trumpet call! Lift your voice, it's the year of Jubilee,
And out of Zion's hill salvation comes!**

**And these are the days of Ezekiel, the dry bones becoming as flesh.
And these are the days of Your servant David, rebuilding a temple
Of praise. And these are the days of the harvest, the fields
Are as white in the world. And we are the laborers in Your vineyard
Declaring the word of the Lord**

CHORUS TWICE

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*** DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace as Christ has made us one. **C** **Thanks be to God, and we will.**

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USHERS: Gary & Donna Schindler
LAY READER: Debbie Kethan
STREAMING: Chase Brasher
ALTAR GUILD: Kay Wesson

ACOLYTE: Boden Muir
POWER POINT: Kay Wesson

WELCOME: In John 17, Jesus prays that his Father will protect and unify his followers. In confidence that God binds us together as Christ's family, let us join in worship.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Phil & Darlene Schmitt in loving memory of their son Andy Schmitt.

We extend our Christian sympathy to the family and friends of Robert Eaton who passed away this past week. May God comfort them during their time of loss.

St. Paul Quilter's News: Charlene Morrison and I, Shirley Frers, wish to let you know that we are stepping down as co-chairs of the St. Paul Quilters. We want to say a large "THANK YOU" to everyone that has supported our group for the past many years whether it be by monetary donations, material donations, donations of sewing notions, etc.. These quilts are made specifically for the Lutheran World Relief Organization of our church, however, if the need arises, we use them locally as well. We have two of our ladies that have volunteered to take the

co-chair position – Carol Lighthill and Debbie Eaton. Thank you, ladies. We know that you will continue to support them in the future.

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 13 & 14, 2023 – 182 **Contributions:** May 13 & 14 – \$7,226.01
Power of One: May 13 & 14, 2023 – \$44.00 **Building Fund:** May 13 & 14 – \$456.44


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


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

► **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! 😊

 **Notice – BACCALAUREATE SERVICE!!** A Baccalaureate service for the graduating Columbus High School Class of 2023 will be held **tonight at 6:00 PM at First Baptist Church, 1700 Milam St., Columbus.** Students are asked to arrive by 5:40 in cap and gown and meet in the fellowship hall.

*** Noon Bible Study:** *The Noon Bible Study group that meets on Tuesdays in the library with Carol Ripper will resume meeting Tuesday, May 23, 2023. Everyone is invited to attend! **

 **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*
- *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!

◆ 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 22 –	9:30 AM – Staff Meeting 6:00 PM – Women of JOY Bible Study (Hackfeld Family Room)
Tues., May 23 –	9:00 AM-12:00 PM – Quilters (Lighthouse) 6:00 PM – CLA Board
Wed., May 24 –	9:00 AM – CLA Chapel 10:00 AM – Deacon Sandye to Columbus Oaks 2:00 PM – Deacon Sandye to The Oaks 6:00 PM – Confirmation Practice
Thurs., May 25 –	10:00-11:30 AM – Manna for Moms (Lighthouse) 8:30 PM – CHS Graduation (Memorial Stadium)
Fri., May 26 –	10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)
Sat., May 27 –	7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship
Next Sun., May 28 –	9:00 AM – Adult Sunday School 10:00 AM – Confirmation and Graduate Recognition Service
Next Mon., May 29 –	Office Closed! (Memorial Day)

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Sunday, May 21, 2023 Helena, mother of Constantine, died around 330

Influenced by her son to become Christian, Helena (or Helen) lived an exemplary life of faith. She is also remembered for traveling through Palestine building churches on the sites she believed to be associated with Christ's life.

Wednesday, May 24, 2023 Nicolaus Copernicus, died 1543; Leonhard Euler, died 1783; scientists

These two men were both scientists who helped to explain the wonders of God's universe. Copernicus is best known for promoting the idea that the sun, not the earth, is at the center of our solar system. Euler was one of the founders of pure mathematics, and contributed to many other fields.

Saturday, May 27, 2023 John Calvin, renewer of the church, died 1564

Gifted both as a systematic theologian and as an interpreter of scriptures, Calvin embraced the Reformation, and as a preacher in Geneva, Switzerland, brought a theocratic government to it. He is regarded as the father of the Reformed churches.

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PSALM: Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

¹Let God arise, and let God's enemies be scattered; let those who hate God flee. ²As smoke is driven away, so you should drive them away; as the wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. ³But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; let them also be merry and joyful. ⁴Sing to God, sing praises to God's name; exalt the one who rides the clouds; I AM is that name, rejoice before God! ⁵In your holy habitation, O God, you are a father to orphans, defender of widows; ⁶you give the solitary a home and bring forth prisoners into freedom; but the rebels shall live in desert places. ⁷O God, when you went forth before your people, when you marched through the wilderness, ⁸the earth quaked, and the skies poured down rain, at the presence of God, the God of Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel. ⁹You sent a bountiful rain, O God; you restored your inheritance when it languished. ¹⁰Your people found their home in it; in your goodness, O God, you have made provision for the poor. ³²Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth; sing praises to the Lord. ³³You ride in the heavens, O God, in the ancient heavens; you send forth your voice, your mighty voice. ³⁴Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel; whose strength is in the skies. ³⁵How wonderful you are in your holy places, O God of Israel, giving strength and power to your people! Blessed be God!

OTHER READINGS: 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

Our faith in Christ does not make us immune from the scorn of others. Nevertheless, we are to resist the designs of evil when we experience disparagement from others because we trust God's grace will strengthen and guide us.

The reading begins:

Chapter 4:

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed.

¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

Chapter 5:

⁶Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ⁸Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.

⁹Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. ¹⁰And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: CALLED TO BE ONE

Jesus has ascended into heaven, and like the disciples in today's reading in Acts, we are left looking at the sky. As we overhear Jesus's prayer to the Father we hear him from two perspectives: both as the Word of God made flesh *and* as the risen and ascended one.

As we overhear Jesus, we learn that God's character and motive are identical to those of Jesus, who has now, fully and completely, "made God's name known." We no longer have to speculate about the nature of God. God's purposes and love are made known in Jesus. But we also learn about ourselves. Jesus' prayer frequently mentions the "world"—the world at once hostile to God and God's anointed, and yet also beloved of God. With Jesus' commissioning today we have our work to do, to make God known in and through Christ Jesus. The Living One works through us as "words within the world," who no longer seek meaning among the dead, but are empowered to make known the vibrant, new reality of Easter.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

It is the 7th week of Easter, and Christ's ascension moves to the establishment of the church in Jerusalem. The disciples are left looking at the sky in contemplation of Christ's ascension and are then led to the faithful devotion of the praying community described in Acts. Welcome to worship! Experience the presence of Christ in God, in the baptized community, and throughout the cosmos.

We are one, but many times we ignore the notion of difference as a dynamic human force. Those who are different than you should be viewed as enriching rather than threatening to the defined self. Those who are different than us can still have shared goals. There is still much work to be done and much room to grow in our understanding of connectivity and unity. Look at the

diversity of our congregation and of our community. How do you hear Jesus' prayer for oneness among his early followers in the gospel? How can reflection on the gift of differences better inform your understanding of unity?

Consider the importance of unity among the disciples in today's gospel reading, as demonstrated by Jesus' prayer for them. Jesus has already talked about the possibility of their being scattered. Testifying on Jesus' will result in them being thrown out of their synagogues. To embrace unity, to be "one" is what will give them community and identity. From our homes, to our communities, to the nation, to the world, people feel scattered and disjointed. How might this prayer help them hear Jesus' care for them? How might our call to the devoted community help them hear Jesus' care for them?

Jesus' prayer for unity is as true and bold as it gets. He prays that all may be one. Work toward unity – first by trusting God, then by reaching into a world you don't understand. Ask others to teach you something true about a part of life in which you might stand in judgment. Oneness is seeing beyond division and recognizing that we are a part of the same human tribe. We may think of ourselves as one drop of water, but together we are all part of the whole that makes an ocean.

KID STUDY:

Jesus' prayer today is for oneness. But "oneness" doesn't mean everyone is exactly the same. Oneness means we all love God and commit our lives to service. The fact that everyone is so different is something to celebrate! We are all made in God's image. We all have God-given gifts to share. What is the thing you do the best? What is the thing you enjoy the most? These are your gifts that will help you be the hands and feet of Jesus. They are the things with which you honor God. They are your gifts of service. Don't just listen and agree... go and do! Experience the living Lord. See what God has done and what God is doing. Don't just hear about it in a bible story, see it in your own life. And don't worry – you have a helper... tune in next week!

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

"And this is eternal life - that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." We want to know God, and so we attend classes, we read theology, we think and talk and argue. We support educational ministry in our church, so that our children, too, may know God. Intellectual grasp of Christian teachings does play a role in faith, but it is not all there is. "To know" as Hebrew uses the verb involves direct experience and intimacy. It is not enough simply to be in agreement with the teachings of the Christian faith. Eternal life also entails an encounter with the living Lord, and experience of what God has done and is doing, not just in history, but in our own lives. To know Jesus is to live in relationship with God. It means being a part of the community of believers. To know is to share in the life of God's people.-Catherine A. Ziel [Catherine A. Ziel, in Homilies for the Christian People, 97-98.]

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Next Week's Theme (May 27 & 28): Pentecost

Next Week's Scriptures (May 27 & 28):

First Reading: Acts 2:1-21

"Filled with the Spirit to tell God's deeds."

Psalm: Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

"Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth." (Ps. 104:30)

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

"Varieties of gifts from the same Spirit."

Gospel: John 20:19-23

"The Spirit poured out."