

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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May 6 & 7, 2023

Fifth 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
Organist			Elena Holub

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

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

As we continue to celebrate the fifty days of Easter, today's gospel includes Jesus' promise that he goes to prepare a place for his followers in his Father's house. Our baptism commissions us to share Jesus' mission in the world.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE PADS

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

60 SECONDS OF STEWARDSHIP – Youth & Education Team

* **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another, first privately then together publicly.

Silence for reflection and private confession of personal sins, then join in with combined voices this printed confession.

P Most merciful God,

C we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

* **HYMN ELW - #377 "Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!"**

1. **Alleluia! Jesus is risen! Trumpets resounding in glorious light! Splendor, the Lamb, heaven forever! Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!**

REFRAIN:

**Jesus is risen and we shall arise.
Give God the glory! Alleluia!**

2. **Walking the way, Christ in the center telling the story to open our eyes;
breaking our bread, giving us glory; Jesus our blessing, our constant surprise.**

REFRAIN

3. **Jesus the vine, we are the branches; life in the Spirit the fruit of the tree;
heaven to earth, Christ to the people, gift of the future now flowing to me.**

REFRAIN

4. **Weeping, be gone; sorrow, be silent: death put asunder, and Easter is bright.
Cherubim sing: O grave, be open! Clothe us in wonder, adorn us in light.**

REFRAIN

5. **City of God, Easter forever, golden Jerusalem, Jesus the Lamb,
river of life, saints and archangels, sing with creation to God the I AM!**

REFRAIN

Text: Herbert F. Brokering Music: David N. Johnson
Text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress Music © 1968 Augsburg Publishing House

* **GREETING**

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

C And also with you.

* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Acts 7:55-60

A Our first reading is from Acts, chapter 7, verses 55-60.

Stephen was one of the seven men chosen by the apostles to serve tables so that the apostles could be free to serve the word (Acts 6:1-6). Stephen does more than distribute food, however. For his preaching of God's word, he becomes the first martyr of the faith.

The reading begins:

⁵⁵Filled with the Holy Spirit, [Stephen] gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶"Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" ⁵⁷But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

A The Psalm today is from Psalm 31, verses 1-5 and 15-16. We will read the Psalm responsively. The congregation will please respond by reading the words in bold print.

¹In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness.

²Incline your ear to me; make haste to deliver me.

³Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold; for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.

⁴Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, for you are my tower of strength.

⁵Into your hands I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O LORD, God of truth.

¹⁵My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.

¹⁶Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love."

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 2:2-10

A Our second reading is from 1 Peter, chapter 2, verses 2-10.

Christ is the cornerstone of God's saving work and the foundation of our lives. We are God's chosen, holy people who continuously celebrate and declare the mercy of God we experience through Jesus Christ.

The reading begins:

²Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation — ³if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For it stands in scripture: "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." ⁷To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner," ⁸and "A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. ⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's

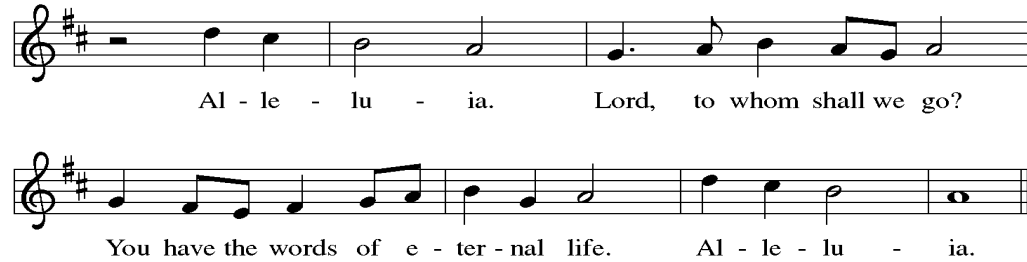
own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

A Please stand as you are comfortable for the gospel.

* **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** (Sung)



* **GOSPEL:** John 14:1-14

On the night that he is to be arrested, Jesus shares final words with his disciples. As the one through whom God is known, he promises to go before them and act on their behalf.

P The holy gospel according to St. John, chapter 14, verses 1-14.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going.” ⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” ⁸Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” ⁹Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. ¹²Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going

to the Father. ¹³I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

* **HYMN ELW - #389 “Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing!”**

- Christ is alive! Let Christians sing. The cross stands empty to the sky. Let streets and homes with praises ring. Love, drowned in death, shall never die.**
- Christ is alive! No longer bound to distant years in Palestine, but saving, healing, here and now, and touching ev'ry place and time.**
- In ev'ry insult, rift, and war, where color, scorn, or wealth divide, Christ suffers still, yet loves the more, and lives, where even hope has died.**
- Women and men, in age and youth, can feel the Spirit, hear the call, and find the way, the life, the truth, revealed in Jesus, freed for all.**
- Christ is alive, and comes to bring good news to this and ev'ry age, till earth and sky and ocean ring with joy, with justice, love, and praise.**

CCLI Song #68041 Words: Brian Arthur Wren Music: T. Williams, *Psalmody Evangelica*, 1789
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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 OF INTERCESSION

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 Mighty God, your Spirit guides us into all truth. Give wisdom to world and local leaders and organizations as they begin, build, or renew relationships. Strengthen leaders and aid organizations in areas needing to be rebuilt following conflict, unrest, or natural disaster. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Assuring God, you accompany your people amid uncertainty and change. Uphold people in this community who have recently moved, changed jobs or schools, retired, or are going through transitions of any kind. Lead us in your ways. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Peaceful God, 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. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Heavenly God, we pray for the family and friends of Linda Munos Rodgers who passed away this past week. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Healing God, we pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including: George Krenek; Robert Eaton; Ruth Bedford; Dylan Baak; Steven Beettner; Jannet Tilly; Nicole Roybal; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you (*Pause*). Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A God of strength, we pray for all those battling cancer that they may know comfort and strength. (*Pause for those we are praying for.*) Hear us, O God. 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; Catherine Poppe; 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.

C Your mercy is great.

A God of life, we pray for all expectant mothers, and especially for: Katie Pagel Walcik; 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. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A Loving God, we pray for all those who reside in care facilities and the homebound and especially 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 that they receive your caring and compassion. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

A God of courage, 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.*) Hear us, O God. Law enforcement officers: Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; Luke Kanz; Bruno Flores; Zane Weido; Josh Jones; as well as Donnie Templeton and Jason Templeton who are also fire fighters. For all fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers and 9-1-1 dispatchers, especially Brent Gorman, Sr.; Brent Gorman, Jr.; Reid Brasher; Dusty Dittmar; John Maertz; Ron Luedke; Pastor Alan Kethan; Kristi Weyand; Eric Weyand; Bradley Berger; Jon Berger; James Chollett; Edward Thraen, Jr.; Garrett Flores; Kyle Burris; Dylan Walcik; Randy Wendt; Travis Neuendorff; Brenda Henkes; 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.

C Your mercy is great.

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. Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P 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 The peace of the risen Lord be with you always.

C And also with you. *(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.

* OFFERTORY *(Sung)*



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be



fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u -



nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your



pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

* OFFERING PRAYER

P 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.

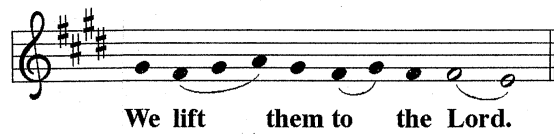
* GREAT THANKSGIVING *(Responses Sung)*

P The Lord be with you.

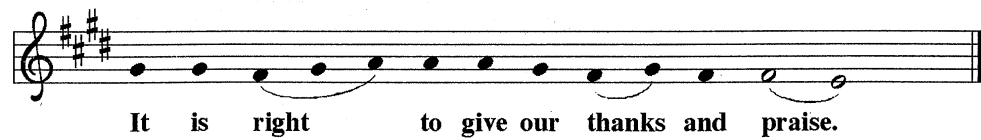


And al - so with you.

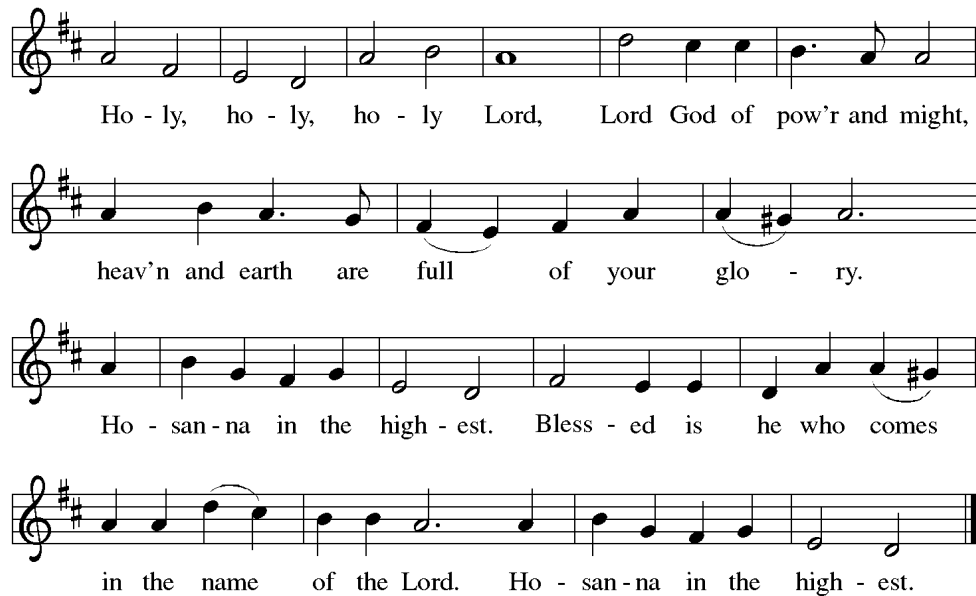
P Lift up your hearts.



P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



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



* **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

* **LORD'S PRAYER**

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

* **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P Come and know Christ, the one going before you to prepare a place for you.
C **Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION (Kneeling at Rail)

*{You will be coming forward to the rail for distribution. **All are welcome for communion.** You will be ushered down the center aisle beginning in the front. Fill in at the railings starting at the side and work your way around to the center, then kneel if you are able. Pastor will hand out the bread. If you wish to have a gluten-free wafer, please tell Pastor "Gluten-free, please."*
Afterward, you will choose either wine or white grape juice from the individual cups in the tray – white grape juice in the center with wine surrounding. An acolyte follows with an empty tray for you to place your empty individual cup. After receiving communion, please remain at the rails until Pastor has dismissed the entire table with a blessing. Please return to your seat by the side aisles.}

* **BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION**

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

* **POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE** (Sung)



C Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let ev-'ry-one who seeks the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-calls his prom-is-es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks-giv-ing. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

* **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 May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. May the Lord look upon you with His favor and grant you His peace. In the name of the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

* **HYMN ELW - #619 "I Know That My Redeemer Lives!" {stanzas 2, 4, 6, & 8}**

2. He lives triumphant from the grave; he lives eternally to save;
he lives exalted, throned above; he lives to rule his church in love.

4. He lives to silence all my fears; he lives to wipe away my tears;
he lives to calm my troubled heart; he lives all blessings to impart.

6. He lives, my kind, wise, heav'nly friend; he lives and loves me to the end;
he lives, and while he lives, I'll sing; he lives, my prophet, priest, and king!

8. **He lives, all glory to his name! He lives, my Savior, still the same;
what joy this blest assurance gives: I know that my Redeemer lives!**

CCLI Song #14180 Words: Samuel Medley Music: attr. John C. Hatton
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* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Show the Christ in you.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

POSTLUDE

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USHERS: SAT: Kenny & JoAnn Venghaus; Emily Frank

SUN: David Johnson; Byron Marburger; Brad Hajdik; Debbie Yancey

LAY READERS: SAT: JoAnn Venghaus

SUN: Deacon Barten

ACOLYTES: SAT: Henry Jones

SUN: Leira Gonzalez

STREAMING:

SUN: Brian Lighthill

ALTAR GUILD: Belle Dungen and Barbara Kautz

WELCOME: You are a royal priesthood, God's own people. Welcome to worship, that we may proclaim the mighty acts of God, who called us into his marvelous light. (Based on 1 Peter 2:9.)

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Carol Lighthill in loving memory of Mahlon Lighthill for his birthday on May 8.

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

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 29 & 30, 2023 – 178

Contributions: April 29 & 30 – \$7,081.01

Power of One: April 29 & 30, 2023 – \$39.00

Building Fund: April 29 & 30 – \$233.23

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

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., May 3 – **80 Total**

BLAST/Confirmation: 64

Support Staff: 16

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! ☺

Crawfish Boil and Dessert Auction: This is a reminder that the Annual Crawfish Boil and Dessert Auction is **Sunday, May 7, 2023 at 12:15 PM in the Lighthouse.** **All tickets** (crawfish and hamburger/hot dog) **are dine-in ONLY.** Funds support the confirmation youth attending summer camp at Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp in Colorado and the high school youth summer retreat. Thank you for your support!

This year's **2nd year confirmation students** have decided to help the Gardenia E. Janssen Animal Shelter in La Grange, Texas. The facility cares for the abandoned, neglected, stray dogs and cats in the county. The animal shelter takes in on average 1,400 dogs and cats annually and they work tirelessly to enrich the lives of those in their care until they can find a new loving "forever" home.

It is our hope that we are able to receive donations including collars, toys and cleaning supplies. We are also accepting monetary donations to help fund medical expenses for the animals in the shelter. This organization is primarily funded by donations, grants, and fundraising. Please consider donating to this great cause.

We will collect donations at St. Paul before worship this weekend. On May 13th we will take our donations to the shelter where we will also walk and show love to all of the animals. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely, *Devin, Nate, Leira, Alex and Erich*



St. Paul Senior Explorers are in the "Honey"!! St. Paul Senior Explorers will be going to Bee Weavers of Navasota on **Thursday, May 11, 2023** for a tour and honey tasting. We will depart St. Paul at 9:45 AM, then eat an early Italian lunch at 11:00 AM at Joe's in Hempstead. We will then "buzz" on over to Bee Weavers of Navasota! The tour and tasting cost \$7.50 each. We will return to St. Paul around 3:00 PM. **Please sign up in the narthex by Sunday, May 7, 2023.** If you have any questions, please call Kevin Page at 979-732-0845.

◆ **Meals to Heal** will hold our **next cook session on Monday, May 8, 2023 at 10:00 AM** in The Lighthouse kitchen. We will be making two main dish casseroles, bagging veggies, bagging cookies, and finally assembling meals to go in the freezer. Questions? Contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127.

**** Peru Team:** Our next Peru Team meeting will be **Thursday, May 11, 2023 at 6:30 PM** in the church library. We will be finalizing details for our next fundraiser drive-thru dinner on June 13.

Please join us! **

● **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!

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:

Today (May 7) –	12:15 PM – Crawfish Boil and Dessert Auction (Lighthouse)
Mon., May 8 –	9:30 AM – Staff Meeting 10:00 AM – Meals to Heal Cook Session (Lighthouse)
Tues., May 9 –	9:00 AM-12:00 PM – Quilters (Lighthouse) 10:30 AM – Pastor Alan to TLC 5:30 PM – Stewardship Team (library)
Wed., May 10 –	9:00 AM – CLA Chapel 10:00 AM – Deacon Sandye to Columbus Oaks 2:00 PM – Deacon Sandye to The Oaks 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 11 –	9:45 AM-3:00 PM – SR. Explorers to Bee Weavers (Navasota) 10:00-11:30 AM – Manna for Moms (Lighthouse) 5:00 PM – Worship Team (library) 6:30 PM – Peru Team (library)
Fri., May 12 –	10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)
Sat., May 13 –	7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship
Next Sun., May 14 –	9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship 10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation 11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Monday, May 8, 2023 Julian of Norwich, renewer of the church, died around 1416

When she was about thirty years old, Julian (or Juliana) reported visions that she later compiled into a book, *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*, now a classic of medieval mysticism. The visions declared that love was the meaning of religious experience, provided by Christ who is love, for the purpose of love.

Monday, May 8, 2023 Victor the Moor, martyr, died 303 (TFF)

Also known as Victor Maurus, this native of the northwest African nation of Mauritania was a soldier in the Roman Praetorian Guard. Under the persecution of Maximian, Victor died for his faith at Milan.

Tuesday, May 9, 2023 Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, renewer of the church, hymnwriter, died 1760

When he was 22, a group of Moravians asked permission to live on Zinzendorf's land. He agreed, and eventually worldwide Moravian missions emanated from this community. Zinzendorf participated in these missions, and is also remembered for writing hymns characteristic of his Pietistic faith.

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SERVICE OVERVIEW:

The words of today's gospel are most often heard during a funeral service. It is a popular choice of scripture for that occasion because the words provide wonderful assurance that the one who has died in Christ has now taken up residence in their heavenly home. The gospel begins by Jesus saying that he will prepare a place for each one of us. But as the text continues, we can see that our place is not an isolated room of our own in a giant heavenly mansion. Jesus' words are less about a place than a relationship: our relationship with Jesus and God the Father. They tell us that in Jesus we know all we need to know about God, and just as we can have a relationship with another human person, we can also have a relationship with God that will one day be as real and obvious as are our relationships with one another. The hope of one day being with Christ fully and forever is as real as the works we are called to do in his name today. This text allows us the opportunity to contemplate what is ultimately unknowable, yet is also a central part of our faith: what heaven will be like.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Today's readings unfold the meaning of the resurrection. Easter lasts for several more weeks. All of us in the post-resurrection community continue to be comforted by numerous encounters with Son. In those encounters, we also see the Father. Welcome to worship! Together we will receive the Spirit of the Risen Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life.

As we are reminded of the fragility of life in today's readings, we are also made aware of the inspiration we see in the lives of others. Do you have a memory of someone in your past who was a powerful witness to the love and grace of God in their life? Do you have someone currently in your life that gives that witness? Today's dialogue between Jesus and his disciples lifts up ways God is given flesh and bone in our experience through the loving actions of other people.

For centuries, we as Christians have heard references to heaven and the hereafter as Jesus' "dwelling places." Apply that to the church – the body of Christ – US. We encounter the risen Lord each week in worship. How do you see God in worship? Where do you see God in your everyday life outside of our worship space?

Do you ever read the appointed gospel and get turned around at the confusion of words? Getting lost in a maze of words can be disorienting. Don't be afraid to be confused. Try to remain permanently confused. Anything is possible. Sometimes, confusion can lead to possibility! Stay open to God's word, however confusing. Look at Jesus's life. Contemplate and embrace the

inspiration his life has generated in our lives and the lives of others. Trust. Be a powerful witness to someone else to give God flesh and bone as the Spirit works through you.

Take in the wideness of God's mercy. Recognize the Way, the Truth, and the Life as the good news that God loves the whole world.

KID STUDY:

Do you have any keys? Keys unlock all kinds of things for us – cars, houses, mailboxes, locks of every kind. Will keys get me into Heaven? Will a key show me how to be close to God? No, these keys won't do that...but what will? There is something, or rather someONE who is the way to God's kingdom. Of course... it's Jesus! He describes Himself as being the way, the truth, and the life. He told the disciples that He was going to go to Heaven and prepare a place for them – and us! His disciples asked Him to show the way, and asked what God the Father was like. Jesus told them that HE was the way, and that He was one with God. Those who know Jesus know God.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

Jesus is trying desperately to tell his disciples in about 600 ways that the Father has sent him, that if they want to see the heart of the Father they need look no further than to him, that he and the Father are one. To which Phillip replies "Lord, just show us the Father and we will be satisfied" Jesus was literally standing right in front of him, in that present moment, and Phillip was too in his head to be satisfied by that. The present moment is exactly where God is to be found. Jesus said, I AM the way the truth and the life. Not I was the way, or at some point I will be the way. No. There is an I am-ness to the Lord. Which means now. I need the I Am-ness of God. The right here-ness of God. The right now-ness of God. - Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber

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Next Week's Theme (May 13 & 14): Holy Spirit as Counselor

Next Week's Scriptures (May 13 & 14):

First Reading: Acts 17:22-31
"Paul's message to the Athenians."

Psalm: Psalm 66:8-20
"Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of praise be heard." (Ps. 66:8)

Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:13-22
"The days of Noah, a sign of baptism."

Gospel: John 14:15-21
"Christ our advocate."