

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

PH# (979) 732-2423 Fax (979) 733-0489

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

May 7, 2023 Contemporary 11:05 AM

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

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.

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 Using the 31st Psalm, let us confess our sins. In you, O Lord, Have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness.

C I confess to you O Lord, that I have tried to take refuge in you, but I have done things I am shameful of, struggle with, feeling like I am not delivered.

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

C I confess that I have not called out to you, except when I have been in need, in want. Is this why I don't feel delivered?

P Be 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.

C I confess that I doubt your power because I have found myself at times unsafe, and so I doubt your leading and guiding me

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

C But God, I don't feel that I have been delivered from the sin that has bound me, and the consequences of that sin are still with me.

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

C Why do I feel that my enemies, those that wish me harm or have different morals and ideologies than me, seem to have more influence than myself? I confess to you.

P Let your face shine upon your servant, save me in your steadfast love.

C I confess that I don't feel saved or loved; I need your help.

(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 FATHER'S HOUSE

**Sometimes on this journey, I get lost in my mistakes.
What looks to me like weakness is a canvas for Your strength.
And my story isn't over; My story's just begun.
Failure won't define me, 'cuz that's what my Father does.
Yes, failure won't define me, 'cuz that's what my Father does.**

CHORUS:

***Oo-oo-oh, lay your burdens down. Oo-oo-oh, here in the Father's house.
Check your shame at the door, 'cuz it's not welcome anymore.
Oo-oo-oh, you're in the Father's house!***

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.

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

[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.”

GOSPEL SONG: THE FATHER'S HOUSE

***Arrival's not the end game, the journey's where you are.
You never wanted perfect, You just wanted my heart.
And the story's never over, if the story isn't good,
Failure's never final when the Father's in the room.
Failure's never final when the Father's in the room!***

CHORUS:

***Oo-oo-oh, lay your burdens down. Oo-oo-oh, here in the Father's house.
Check your shame at the door, 'cuz it's not welcome anymore.
Oo-oo-oh, you're in the Father's house!***

BRIDGE:

***Prodigals come home, the helpless find hope.
Love is on the move when the Father's in the room.
Prison doors fling wide, the dead come to life.
Love is on the move when the Father's in the room.
Miracles take place, the cynical find faith.
And love is breakin' through when the Father's in the room.
Jericho walls are quakin'! Strongholds now are sh-a-kin'!
Love is breakin' through when the Father's in the room.
Love is breakin' through when the Father's in the room!***

CHORUS TWICE:

***Oo-oo-oh, lay your burdens down. Oo-oo-oh, here in the Father's house.
Check your shame at the door, 'cuz it's not welcome anymore.
Oo-oo-oh, you're in the Father's house!***

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CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

*** SERMON SONG: HEART OF THE FATHER**
***I've never known a love like Yours. So intimate, so powerful.
And I've tasted and I've seen, but nothing comes close.
I've never known a love like Yours.***

CHORUS

***Jesus, Your name is power. It's breath and living water.
And Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.
Let your praise ring louder ev'ry day and ev'ry hour.
'Cause Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.***

***I've never felt at home like this. Just like a child, so innocent.
And I'm safe inside Your arms, 'cause You won't let go.
I've never known a love like Yours.***

CHORUS

***Jesus, Your name is power. It's breath and living water.
And Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.
Let your praise ring louder ev'ry day and ev'ry hour.
'Cause Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.***

BRIDGE

**We sing praise. God, we sing praise.
God, we sing praise. We sing praise.
We sing praise! We sing praise!
We sing praise! We sing praise!**

LAST CHORUS ~

**Jesus, Your name is power. It's breath and living water.
And Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.
Let your praise ring louder ev'ry day and ev'ry hour.
'Cause Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.
Jesus, Your name is power. It's breath and living water.
And Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.
Let your praise ring louder ev'ry day and ev'ry hour.
'Cause Your Spirit guides me to the heart of the Father.**

END

Sing praise. . . Sing praise!

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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 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.

A brief silence.

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.

A brief silence.

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.

A brief silence.

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.

A brief silence.

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.

A brief silence.

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.)*

Kim Moerbe Welneck; Misti Retzer; Zeld 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.

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.

A brief silence.

- 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.

A brief silence.

- 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.)*
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.
- 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, 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 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.**

* **CLOSING SONG: SOUL ON FIRE**

(SING TWICE)

**God, I'm running for Your heart, I'm running for Your heart,
'til I am a soul on fire. Lord, I'm longing for Your ways,
I'm waiting for the day when I am a soul on fire. "Til I am a soul on fire!**

BRIDGE 1

**Lord, restore the joy I had. I have wandered, bring me back.
In this darkness, lead me thru; until all I see is You, yeah!**

**God, I'm running for Your heart, I'm running for Your heart,
'til I am a soul on fire. Lord, I'm longing for Your ways,
I'm waiting for the day when I am a soul on fire. 'Til I am a soul on fire!**

BRIDGE 2

**Lord, let me burn for You again. Let me return to You again.
And Lord, let me burn for You again. Let me return to You again!**

**God, I'm running for Your heart, I'm running for Your heart,
'til I am a soul on fire. Lord, I'm longing for Your ways,
I'm waiting for the day when I am a soul on fire.
God, I'm running for Your heart, I'm running for Your heart,
'til I am a soul on fire. 'Til I am a soul on fire! 'Til I am a soul on fire!**

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* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Show the Christ in you.

C **Thanks be to God, and we will.**

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USHERS: Aaron & Amanda Oppermann; Loraine Gast; Adam Torres

LAY READER: Mia Post

ACOLYTE: Henry Jones

STREAMING: Kay Wesson

POWER POINT: Peggy Geisler

ALTAR GUILD: Kay Wesson

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, today 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.

• **YBS 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 (2nd yr.)
5:00 PM – Meal
5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation (1st 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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OTHER READINGS: Acts 7:55-60

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.

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

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."

OTHER READINGS: 1 Peter 2:2-10

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.

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."