

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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November 13, 2022 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

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.*

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

INTRODUCTION

The end is near. There is no doubt about it. The warnings are dire. The tone of today's texts is ominous. But the baptized know how to live in the meantime. The baptized are strengthened for the living of these days in word and sacrament. The baptized rally around the invitation of the apostle: "Do not be weary in doing what is right."

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE PADS

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

* **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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

(Silence for private confession.)

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

C Amen.

GOSPEL SONG: BLESSED BE YOUR NAME

**Blessed be Your name, in the land that is plentiful;
Where Your streams of abundance flow, blessed be Your name.
And blessed be Your name, when I'm found in the desert place;
Though I walk through the wilderness, blessed be Your name.**

PRE-CHORUS:

**Every blessing You pour out I'll turn back to praise!
And when the darkness closes in, Lord, still I will say,**

CHORUS:

**"Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be Your name!
Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be Your glorious name!"**

GOSPEL: Luke 21:5-19

As history moves toward God's fulfillment there will be frightening signs and events. Before the end, believers will draw strength from their relationship to God and will be given the words they need to testify and to endure without fear.

A The holy gospel according to St. Luke, chapter 21, verses 5-19.

⁵When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, [Jesus] said, ⁶"As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down." ⁷They asked him, "Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?" ⁸And he said, "Beware

that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is near!' Do not go after them. ⁹"When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately." ¹⁰Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; ¹¹there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven. ¹²"But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. ¹³This will give you an opportunity to testify. ¹⁴So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; ¹⁵for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. ¹⁶You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷You will be hated by all because of my name. ¹⁸But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹By your endurance you will gain your souls."

GOSPEL SONG: BLESSED BE YOUR NAME

**Blessed be Your name, when the sun's shining down on me;
When the world's all as it should be, blessed be Your name.
And blessed be Your name, on the road marked with suffering;
Though there's pain in the offering, blessed be Your name.**

PRE-CHORUS:

**Every blessing You pour out I'll turn back to praise!
And when the darkness closes in, Lord, still I will say,**

CHORUS:

***"Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be Your name!
Blessed be the name of the Lord, blessed be Your glorious name!"***

BRIDGE:

**You give and take away. You give and take away.
My heart will choose to say, "Lord, blessed be Your name!" (x2)**

CHORUS

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CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

*** SERMON SONG: IN CHRIST ALONE**

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

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

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

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

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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 with your saints across time and place, we pray for our shared world.

A brief silence.

- A** Renewing God, as the northern hemisphere prepares for winter, make us mindful of the ordered beauty of your creation. Teach us to treasure cycles of rest and new life. Help us care for what you have made.

A brief silence.

A Loving God, accompany all who make sacrifices for the sake of others. Safeguard first responders and active duty military personnel. Grant peace to veterans and heal any wounds in body, mind, or spirit.

A brief silence.

A Healing God, your people cry out to you. Sustain doctors, nurses, and hospital personnel in their tireless work. Uphold mental health professionals and those in their care. May the sun of righteousness rise on all who are sick, those who battle cancer, expectant mothers, those in care facilities and the homebound.

A brief silence.

A Uniting God, unite this assembly in its shared mission and ministry for the sake of the gospel. Highlight ways we can better work together and give us patience to work through disagreement.

A brief silence.

A God of refuge and strength, we pray for peace in Ukraine. Help to end this war and the destruction of lives and your creation. Change hearts, bring peace and show the world your existence.

A brief silence.

A Merciful God, we pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Kevin Page; Fritz Willms; Joey Denby; Gary Knutson; baby from Peru; Bobby Tollette; Bobby Zajicek; Barry Shepard; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you.

A brief silence.

A God of mission, 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 Consoling God, abide with all who grieve for loved ones who have died. Comfort us with the promise of resurrection and new life with you.

A brief silence.

A Accept these prayers and the private ones deep within our hearts and souls, gracious God; through Jesus Christ, our 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, Maker of all things. As you have entrusted us with all that you have created, now gather our gifts, nourish us with this sacrament, and send us to those who hunger and thirst, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior.

C Amen.

*** REMEMBERING JESUS' WORDS, PROMISES, AND COMMANDS**

*** LORD'S PRAYER**

P Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**C Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P Christ spreads a table before you. Gather here with all the saints.

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 We give you thanks, most gracious God, that you have fed us with the bread of heaven and given us a foretaste of Paradise. Enliven us to be your body in the world and to serve those who are in need; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

* **BLESSING**

P The God of peace, who creates all things and calls them good, who makes us alive in Jesus, and who breathes on us the Spirit of hope, ☩ bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

* **CLOSING SONG: LESS LIKE ME**

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

PRE-CHORUS:

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

CHORUS:

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

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

REPEAT PRE-CHORUS and CHORUS

BRIDGE:

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

LAST CHORUS:

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

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* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace, with hope that overpowers fear. **C Thanks be to God, and we will.**

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USHERS: Gary & Donna Schindler

LAY READER: Ashlyn Pugh

STREAMING: Chase Brasher

SOUND: Robert & Sydney Eaton

ACOLYTE: Hattie Post

POWER POINT: Kay Wesson

ALTAR GUILD: Amanda Oppermann

WELCOME: Welcome to worship this All Saints' weekend. As we remember the faithful who have gone before us, we also rejoice to be called saints of God through baptism.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Joe & Arlene Trojacek in thanks for God's many blessings and in celebration of their 67th wedding anniversary on November 13.

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: Nov. 5 & 6, 2022 – 151

Power of One: Nov. 5 & 6, 2022 – \$56.00

Contributions: Nov. 5 & 6 – \$13,541.83

Building Fund: Nov. 5 & 6 – \$872.12

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.

KEEP IN OUR PRAYERS: Those Battling Cancer: Bob Stiles; Vivian Fortenberry; Rick Davis; Edna Bergfeld; Mack Machacek; Hines Harrison; Darryl Stancik; Jerry Ordner; Michael Yancey; Bubba Bencal; Al Gene Canik; Jane Venghaus Taylor; George Wright; Elrose Kollatschny; Sarah Stancik; Sandy Mosley; Charlene Tesch; Cynthia Coufal; Jeffrey McDaniel; Karen Bailiff; Julian Divin; Nancy Biers; Angie Beggs; Pam Potter; Charlie Hammock; Brad Bryson; Lynette Frnka; Riana Jamison; Jenna Escamilla; Margaret Ortiz; Keith Korth; Jodi Sebesta; Cathy Siglow; Paul Casinger; Fran Gillett; Tiffany Murley; DeQuincy Lister; Angela Mazoch; Lily Presswood; Denise Lange; Doug Mason; Dr. Tom Hancher; Joe Berry; 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; Brenda Baker. **Expectant Mothers:** Jessica Johnson; Ashley Dungen; Magen Schindler Altieri.

Those in Care Facilities and Homebound: Paul Minar; Stan Lawson; John W. Brasher; Lydia Rojas; Adrian Fritsch; Don Morrison; Verna Coufal; Doug Hill; John Zwiengel; Robert Saunders; Coy Dell Schindler; Deanna Lee; Barbara McMath; Linda Munos Rodgers; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Delores Purcell; Jane Booker; Curtis Berger; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Ronnie Rogers; Joyce Dehmner; Donna Dehmer.

Those Law Enforcement Officers: Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Donnie Templeton; Jason Templeton; Johnny Kovar; Abigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; Luke Kanz; Bruno Flores; Zane Weido; Josh Jones. **Fire Fighters, First Responders, Healthcare Workers and 9-1-1 Dispatchers:** Brent Gorman, Sr.; Brent Gorman, Jr.; Reid Brasher; Donnie Templeton; Jason Templeton; Dusty Dittmar; John Maertz; Ron Luedke; Pastor Alan Kethan; Kristi Weyand; Eric Weyand; Bradley Berger; Jon Berger; James Chollett; Edward Thraen, Jr.; Garrett Flores; Kyle Burris; Dylan Walcik; Randy Wendt; Travis Neuendorff; Brenda Henkes; and Jan Willette. **Active Duty Military:** 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; Kevin Gonzalez.

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

Blood Drive: Make plans for St. Paul's Blood Drive on **today until 12:30 PM** in The Lighthouse! Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center will be back. Their goal is to have 40 successful donors. All successful donors will receive a free blanket! Make your appointment online at CommitForLife.org and use **sponsor code P732**. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Also, if anyone is interested and willing to help with this Outreach Ministry, please let me know. Any help is greatly appreciated! Thank you, and God Bless! – *Melinda Zajicek* (979)-820-8793

♠♣♣ **Family Game Night:** Come connect with your family through play **today from 4:00-5:30 PM**. Join us in the Lighthouse for game time with your family. We will provide snacks, many games from Simply fun, and information on why it's important and how to continue Gameplay at home. For more information, contact Stephanie Polasek at 979-732-1858. ♠♣♣



Community Thanksgiving Worship Service will be held at **First United Methodist Church**, 1229 Milam, Columbus, Texas **at 6:00 PM on Sunday, November 20, 2022**. We don't have a lot of opportunities to join in worship of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with other churches in Columbus, however, this event encourages us to show the community that we Christians can worship together.

THANKSGIVING EVE & PIE FEST: It is that time of year again. Yahoo! Thanksgiving Eve Worship and the awesome Pie Fest that follows! Our festive **worship** will begin at **7:00 PM on Wednesday, November 23, 2022**. We will then move to the Lighthouse afterwards to enjoy fellowship around a variety of pies. Join us in fellowship and thanksgiving of our many blessings and appreciate the creativity of our members and their baking skills as we begin our Thanksgiving weekend.



**** Calling all God's Gals AND Guys!!** It's that time of year already!! We will **decorate the church for Christmas on Saturday, November 26, 2022 starting at 9:00 AM**. The first Sunday in Advent is November 27, 2022. We need helpers and muscles!! Questions? Contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127. Hope to see you there!! ☺

► The St. Paul Quilters will **not be meeting the remainder of this year**. They will be taking a well-deserved holiday break! They will **resume quilting** the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month beginning **Tuesday, January 10, 2023**.



WANTED – POWER POINT OPERATORS: *We need people to run the Power Point at the 11:05 AM service.* You only have to operate the computer that day. The program is set up for you. Plus, easy step-by-step directions with visuals are provided. If you are interested, contact Peggy Geisler (text or call) at 979-732-0350.



Habitat for Humanity: The Outreach Team is in search of a Team Leader to represent St. Paul Lutheran Church for Habitat for Humanity. The churches in our community coordinate and build a couple of houses a year for our neighbors in need. **We need someone to represent St. Paul and be the liaison between Habitat for Humanity and our congregation.** You do not have to build the house yourself, but help coordinate our efforts. Please let Kevin Page know (979-732-0845) if you are interested or have any questions. Thank you, and thank you, God, for our most generous church family!

♥ **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 (Nov. 13) –** 8:00 AM-12:30 PM – Blood Drive (Lighthouse)
4:00-5:30 PM – Family Game Night (Lighthouse)
6:00-8:00 PM – The Marriage Course (Lighthouse)
- Mon., Nov. 14 –** 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
5:30 PM – Church Council
- Tues., Nov. 15 –** 10:00 AM – Pastor to Columbus Oaks
12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library)
6:30-8:00 PM – The Gathering
- Wed., Nov. 16 –** **Newsletter Deadline!!**
9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
9:00 AM – Morning Circle (library)
5:00 PM – Meal
5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation & Wed. Night Adult Bible Study
6:00 PM – High School Youth
- Thurs., Nov. 17 –** 11:30 AM – CLA Preschool Thanksgiving Program
5:30 PM – Grief Support Group (library)
- Fri., Nov. 18 –** 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)
4:30 PM – Confirmation Retreat Begins (church)
- Sat., Nov. 19 –** 8:15-11:30 AM – Courageous Women of the Bible (FUMC)
12:00 PM – Confirmation Retreat Ends
7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship
- Next Sun., Nov. 20 –** 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship
6:00 PM – Community Thanksgiving Service (FUMC)

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Thursday, November 17, 2022 Elizabeth of Hungary, renewer of society, died 1231

Born in Hungary, Elizabeth was betrothed to the son of the Landgrave of Thuringia, and at age four was taken to be raised with him at the Wartburg Castle. Ten years later they were married. She was very generous to the poor, and after her husband's death she lived in cruel hardship until her own death at age twenty-four.

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OTHER READINGS: Malachi 4:1-2a

Malachi, whose name means “my messenger,” warns that “the day is coming.” On that day, the evil will be destroyed like stubble in a fire, but the “sun of righteousness” will shine on those who honor God.

The reading begins:

¹See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ^{2a}But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings.

PSALM: Psalm 98

¹Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done marvelous things, whose right hand and holy arm have won the victory. ²O LORD, you have made known your victory, you have revealed your righteousness in the sight of the nations. ³You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God. ⁴Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands; lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing. ⁵Sing to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the voice of song. ⁶With trumpets and the sound of the horn shout with joy before the king, the LORD. ⁷Let the sea roar, and all that fills it, the world and those who dwell therein. ⁸Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD, who comes to judge the earth. ⁹The LORD will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity.

OTHER READINGS: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Some members of the Thessalonian community, because of their belief in the nearness of Christ's return, had ceased to work, living off the generosity of other members of the community. The writer of this letter warns them bluntly that if they want to eat, they need to work.

The reading begins:

⁶Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labor we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. ⁹This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. ¹¹For we hear that some of

you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. ¹²Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. ¹³Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: FROM LIFE TO DEATH AND DEATH TO LIFE

In our baptisms we move spiritually from death to life. In baptism, we are freed from sin and death by becoming joined to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We begin in death, and grace raises us to life. We hear the words of promise and trust in the gifts and blessings of baptism, often but overlook the accompanying responsibility. Like a teenager with a brand new driver’s license, we relish our newfound freedom and may forget all those other drivers on the road whose safety depends upon the new driver.

The new life we receive in baptism is a life that is lived to God each day. On any given day we may be called upon to renounce, in some way, the God we serve and love. On any given day, we may be called upon to stand up for life, freedom, safety, or love – our own or someone else’s - perhaps even under threat of death. Many around the world live that kind of life every day for the sake of the gospel. Jesus encouraged disciples to always be ready for the tests and trials that will somehow surely come. We grow in the obedience, courage, patience, and love we need to keep the faith in difficult times.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

As we near the end of the church year, we turn to the end times. Today the gospel presents examples of human suffering next to the word of Christ, who will save us. Our fear of future terror is a never-ending cycle. Welcome to worship! Not breath-taking buildings, nor stunning art, nor religious affiliation, nor national pride, nor the stability of the earth, nor what our society likes to call “family values” will save: *Christ is the one.*

In every generation, people identify prominent individuals as the Antichrist, sharing vivid ideas of the end times, and especially current events that surely foretell its arrival. It is vital (and reassuring) to point people to other occasions on which Jesus tells his followers that it is not for them - or even Jesus himself - to know the time of these events.

The first reading from the prophet Malachi contrasts those who will be burned and those for whom “the sun of righteousness shall rise.” It is easy for us to become complacent about salvation while overlooking occasions when we have displayed arrogance or done evil, particularly by omission. Martin Luther’s Small Catechism explains each of the ten commandments both as words and actions from which we should refrain, and *also* as words and actions in which we have a duty to engage, to love, and to listen.

We are constantly bombarded with the narrative that cheaters and con artists are triumphant, while those who quietly go about doing the right thing get swept underfoot. But real life is seldom as clear-cut in dividing right from wrong. Paul reminds us that rather than fret over others’ actions, we profit most by going steadily about doing all the good we can that will benefit all people. Do you consider any group of people unworthy of your good? Why?

KID STUDY:

One day Jesus was with his disciples in the temple. The disciples were commenting on how beautiful the temple was when Jesus began to tell them about some scary things that were going to happen. He told them that the temple would one day be destroyed and that there would be wars, earthquakes, and people starving. He also told them that they were going to be hated some people would throw them into prison. Those are pretty scary things, aren't they? It would be understandable for the disciples to be afraid, but Jesus told them not to be afraid. He promised that he would be with them and that not a hair on their heads would be harmed if they put their trust in him.

There are so many things we can be afraid of: the dark, flying in an airplane, clowns, heights, spiders, and thunder are just a few. Jesus has promised to help us when we are afraid. Everyone is afraid of something, but we should not let our fears keep us from enjoying the life that Jesus wants us to have, and we should not let our fear keep us from being Jesus’s hands and feet! Put your faith and trust in God. Love and serve your neighbors even when you are afraid.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

Let us turn in continual prayer toward you, our only hope, O Lord. Our heart is filled with sadness: bring joy to our sadness, Lord, and give refreshment to our burning hearts. Day and night sorrow and affliction surround us: cool, O Lord, the flame of our hearts. For apart from you we have no hope to comfort us in our grief. Place your finger, that gives life to all things, on the pain concealed in our heart. Let our soul not be robbed of your strengthening, O Savior, so that we may not be plunged into the waves of despair. - Ephraem [Ephraem, in Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers, IV, 350.]

Next Week's Theme (Nov. 19 & 20): Christ the King

Next Week's Scriptures (Nov. 19 & 20):

First Reading: Jeremiah 23:1-6

“Coming of the shepherd and righteous Branch who will execute justice.”

Psalm: Psalm 46

“I will be exalted among the nations.” (Ps. 46:10)

Second Reading: Colossians 1:11-20

“Hymn to Christ, firstborn of all creation; peace through his blood.”

Gospel: Luke 23:33-43

“Jesus is crucified between two thieves: you will be with me in Paradise.”