

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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November 20, 2022 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Christ the King

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

Jeremiah's promise of the execution of "justice and righteousness in the land" finds ironic fulfillment in the execution of Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. It appears utterly contradictory that a king should be crucified with a criminal. This victory appears for all the world as humiliating defeat. Yet through the gate of death Jesus opens the door to paradise.

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: KING OF LOVE

**With the hands that formed the world you washed our feet.
Kneeling down you laid aside your majesty.
And you said for us to go and do the same.
So we serve for the glory of our King.**

**You left heaven's throne to rescue what was lost.
Stretching out your mighty arms to bear the cross.
Then you rolled away the stone the vic'try won.
And you said, "Go and tell the world what love has done."**

CHORUS:

**King of love, let your kingdom come! Reign in us, your daughters and your sons;
Fill us up, let us overflow... with your love, until the whole world knows
You are the King of Love!**

GOSPEL: Luke 23:33-43

Amid scoffing and slander from those who sarcastically call him Messiah and king, Jesus reveals that to be Messiah and king is to give one's life for others. Here he uses his power to welcome a despised sinner to paradise but puts his own death into God's hands.

A The holy gospel according to St. Luke, chapter 23, verses 33-43.

³³When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they

do not know what they are doing.”] And they cast lots to divide his clothing. ³⁵And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.” ³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴²Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

GOSPEL SONG: KING OF LOVE

**Give us hearts that long to see your justice done.
And let the river of Your mercy flow through us.
And let compassion be the loudest song we sing.
'Til the day when every tongue declares you King.**

CHORUS:

***King of love, let your kingdom come! Reign in us, your daughters and your sons;
Fill us up, let us overflow... with your love, until the whole world knows
You are the King of Love!***

~BRIDGE~

**Hallelujah to the King of Love. All praise and glory to the King of Love.
Hallelujah to the King of Love. All praise and glory to the King of Love.
Hallelujah to the King of Love! All praise and glory to the King of Love!
Hallelujah to the King of Love! All praise and glory to the King of Love!**

LAST CHORUS:

**King of love, let your kingdom come! Reign in us, your daughters and your sons;
Fill us up, let us overflow... with your love, until the whole world knows
You are the King of Love!**

**Hallelujah to the King of Love! All praise and glory to the King of Love!
Hallelujah to the King of Love! All praise and glory to the King of Love!**

CCLI Song #7052881 Words and Music by Steven Curtis Chapman
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CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

*** SERMON SONG: REVELATION SONG**

**Worthy is the lamb who was slain. Holy, holy is He.
Sing a new song to Him who sits on heaven's mercy seat.**

CHORUS:

***Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come.
With all creation I sing praise to the King of Kings!
You are my everything, and I will adore You!***

**Clothed in rainbows of living color, flashes of lightning, rolls of thunder.
Blessing and honor strength and glory and power be,
To You the only wise King. CHORUS**

**Filled with wonder, awestruck wonder, at the mention of Your name.
Jesus, Your name is power, breath, and living water!
Such a marv'lous mystery! CHORUS**

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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** We pray for this assembly. Guide our pastor/s, deacon/s, and council members in discernment, and nurture new leaders with fresh ideas. Give this congregation a spirit of discipleship and service.

A brief silence.

- A** 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 We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Macy Miller; Bren Gillespie; Kevin Page; Fritz Willms; Gary Knutson; baby from Peru; Barry Shepard; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you.

A brief silence.

- A We pray for all those battling cancer that they may know comfort and strength. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)*
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; and Brenda Baker.

- A We pray for all expectant mothers, and especially for:
Jessica Johnson; Ashley Dungen; and Magen Schindler Altieri that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace.

A brief silence.

- A We pray for all those who reside in care facilities and the homebound that they receive your caring and compassion. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)*
Paul Minar, Sr.; Bobby Zajicek; 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 Dehmer; and Donna Dehmer.

- A We pray for all law enforcement officers, fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers, 9-1-1 dispatchers, and active duty military personnel that they are protected and kept safe. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)*
Law enforcement officers: Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; 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; and Jan Willette, 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 Accept these prayers, gracious God, and those known only to you; 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 as the King's guest.

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: THIS IS AMAZING GRACE**

**Who breaks the power of sin and darkness? Whose love is mighty
And so much stronger? The King of Glory, the King above all kings.**

**Who shakes the whole earth with holy thunder? Who leaves us breathless
In awe and wonder? The King of Glory, the King above all kings.**

CHORUS:

***This is amazing grace. This is unfailing love. That You would take my place,
That You would bear my cross. You laid down Your life that I would be set free.
Oh, Jesus I sing for all that You've done for me.***

**Who brings our chaos back into order? Who makes the orphan
A son and daughter? The King of Glory! The King of Glory!
Who rules the nations with truth and justice? Shines like the sun in
All of its brilliance. The King of Glory, the King above all things. **CHORUS****

BRIDGE:

**Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. Worthy is the King who conquered the grave.
Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. Worthy is the King who conquered the grave.
Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. Worthy is the King who conquered the grave.
Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. Worthy, worthy, worthy. . . oh**

**This is amazing grace. This is unfailing love. That You would take my place,
That You would bear my cross. You laid down Your life that I would be set free.
Oh, Jesus I sing for all that You've done for me.
Jesus I sing for all that You've done for me.**

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* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Jesus is your savior.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

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USHERS: Bethany Guthmann; Sandy Cherniss; Fay & Thomas Ulbricht

LAY READER: Terri Brasher

ACOLYTE: Harlie Lewis

STREAMING: Mike Maas

POWER POINT: Kay Wesson

SOUND: Robert & Sydney Eaton

ALTAR GUILD: Amanda Oppermann

WELCOME: In the name of Christ the King, we welcome you to worship on this final Sunday of the church year. Let us together praise and worship our God.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Eugene & Chris Schobel in celebration of their 13th wedding anniversary on November 21.

The St. Paul Quilters completed the year 2022 with great success. We completed 130 quilts, which was a banner year for us, along with readying 25 school kits and 25 personal care kits for shipment. The Blessing of the Quilts was held Saturday, October 29 and Sunday, October 30, 2022. Also on display this year was an example of a dog pillow and a cat pillow, one of many, made by one of the quilters and given to the animal shelter in La Grange. Thank you to everyone that helped us sew and put quilts together from November 2021 to the end of October 2022. This includes everyone that helped us move from the old fellowship hall to the new fellowship hall, The Lighthouse. Also, thanks to the gentlemen who set up our area each time we quilt, took our quilts to Rutersville for delivery to Houston, our newest church member who built the counter top for our storage unit and to everyone that supports us by donating monies, materials and muscle for our projects. We would not be able to do this without your help. – *St. Paul Quilters*

Thank you, St. Paul!! At the Blood Drive held on Sunday, November 13, 2022, twenty-one people came to donate. Out of those people, twenty units of blood went into the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center! Giving blood saves lives, and I (and they) appreciate each of you! **Note:** A phone charger cable was found wrapped in a rubber band next to The Lighthouse. I have it, so let me know if it belongs to you, and I will get it to you! Again, THANK YOU! – *Melinda Zajicek (979)-820-8793*

To all my extended friends at St. Paul: As I approach my last couple of weeks here in Texas, I have so much to be thankful for. The love you have shown to me and Tom has been overwhelming. The church friends, Pastor Alan, Deacon Sandye have helped us through many trying times including Tom's last journey as he prepared to be with the Lord in January. My new life in North Carolina will be an adventure for me alone, but the Lord will guide me. Thank you, and God bless you all. Fondly, *Beverly Decker*

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. 12 & 13, 2022 – 173 **Contributions:** Nov. 12 & 13 – \$6,940.01

Power of One: Nov. 12 & 13, 2022 – \$38.00 **Building Fund:** Nov. 12 & 13 – \$403.23

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

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., Nov. 9 – **74 Total**

BLAST/Confirmation: 56

Adult Bible Study: 3

Support Staff: 15

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., Nov. 16 – **79 Total**

BLAST/Confirmation: 63

Adult Bible Study: 2

Support Staff: 14

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 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! ☺



Community Thanksgiving Worship Service will be held at **First United Methodist Church** 1229 Milam, Columbus, Texas at **6:00 PM today.** 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!! ☺

++ FAMILY ADVENT READINGS: Families are encouraged to sign up for the **Family Advent Litany Reading and Candle Lighting** that will take place at the beginning of services during Advent. A family will come forward to read the Litany and light the candle for that particular Sunday in Advent. **This will begin the first weekend of Advent, November 26 & 27, 2022.** If your family is interested, **please sign up on the sign-up sheet in the narthex.** A different family is needed for each service. **The dates and times are:** Sat., Nov. 26 at 7:00 PM; Sun., Nov. 27 at 9:00 AM; Sun., Nov. 27 at 11:05 AM; Sat., Dec. 3 at 7:00 PM; Sun., Dec. 4 at 9:00 AM; Sun., Dec. 4 at 11:05 AM; Sat., Dec. 10 at 7:00 PM; Sun., Dec. 11 at 9:00 AM; Sun., Dec. 11 at 11:05 AM; Sat. Dec. 17 at 7:00 PM; Sun., Dec. 18 at 9:00 AM; and Sun. Dec. 18 at 11:05 AM. A copy of the reading will be sent to you.

► 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**.

The **Noon Bible Study group** that meets on Tuesdays will be taking a fall/holiday break and **will not be meeting the remainder of this year**. Be sure to mark your calendar for *Tuesday, January 10, 2023* which is when they will *resume class*. Everyone is invited to attend. Have a blessed holiday season, and see you next year!



**** Church Council Nominations:** If you are interested in serving on the Church Council, please email a brief bio of yourself to Elena Holub at admin@splctx.org by **Wednesday, December 14, 2022**. Your bio should include, but not be limited to, how long you have been a member of St. Paul, ministry teams you have served on, the reason you want to serve and a brief background description. If you have any questions, please contact John Brasher, David Johnson, Sandi Roensch, DyAnn Lauzon or Curtiss Schonenberg. ******



The Mowing Team is looking for more people to help mow the interior church lawn. Typically it takes an hour and a half, or less, to mow and edge. Please call John Brasher at 979-253-1448 if you are interested or if you have any questions.



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. 20) – 6:00 PM – Community Thanksgiving Service (FUMC)
Mon., Nov. 21 – 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
1:00 PM – Sandye to TLC
Tues., Nov. 22 – 6:00 PM – CLA Board
Wed., Nov. 23 – 7:00 PM – Thanksgiving Eve Worship
8:00 PM – Pie Fest (Lighthouse)
Nov. 24 & 25 – **Office Closed! (Happy Thanksgiving!)**

Sat., Nov. 26 – 9:00 AM – God's Gals *and* Guys Decorate Church for Christmas
7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship
Next Sun., Nov. 27 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Wednesday, November 23, 2022 Clement, Bishop of Rome, died around 100
Clement was the third bishop of Rome. He is best remembered for a letter he wrote to the congregation in Corinth, still struggling with the same problems that led to Paul's letters to them. As did Paul, he focused on the need for love among Christians.

Wednesday, November 23, 2022 Miguel Agustín Pro, martyr, died 1927
Pro grew up in a time when the Mexican revolutionaries accused the church of siding with the wealthy. He became a Jesuit priest, and worked on behalf of the poor and homeless. Falsely accused of throwing a bomb at a government official, he was executed, but not before crying out "Long live Christ the King!"

Thursday, November 24, 2022 Justus Falckner, died 1723; Jehu Jones, died 1852; William Passavant, died 1894; pastors in North America

Not only was Falckner the first Lutheran ordained in North America, but he published a catechism which was the first Lutheran book published on the continent. Jones was the Lutheran church's first African American pastor and carried out missionary work in Philadelphia which led to the formation there of the first African American Lutheran congregation (St. Paul's). William Passavant helped to establish hospitals and orphanages in a number of cities and was the first to introduce deaconesses to the work of hospitals in the United States.

Friday, November 25, 2022 Isaac Watts, hymnwriter, died 1748
Thought by many to be the greatest hymnwriter in the English language, Watts as a youth was critical of the quality of the metrical psalter of the time. He wrote about 600 hymns—many based on the psalms, but others that are not.

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OTHER READINGS: Jeremiah 23:1-6
Today's reading builds on the common, ancient Near Eastern metaphor of the king as shepherd. Judah's unjust rulers have caused their people, their "flock," to be scattered. Nevertheless, God will raise up a new and righteous shepherd who will rule a restored Judah.

The reading begins:

¹Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD.

²Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. ³Then I myself will

gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD. ⁵The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.”

PSALM: Psalm 46

¹God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea; ³though its waters rage and foam, and though the mountains tremble with its tumult. ⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. ⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken; God shall help it at the break of day. ⁶The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake; God speaks, and the earth melts away. ⁷The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. ⁸Come now, regard the works of the LORD, what desolations God has brought upon the earth; ⁹behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world; who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire. ¹⁰“Be still, then, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.” ¹¹The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

OTHER READINGS: Colossians 1:11-20

An early Christian hymn praises the mystery of the political, personal, and mystical Christ, the one who was present at creation and is eternally reigning with God.

The reading begins:

¹¹May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers — all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: WHO IS JESUS?

Jesus’ true identity seems to remain a mystery for most of the disciples. Jesus can teach, preach, heal, cast out demons, challenge authority and more, but still they do not comprehend. You might say it is a case of mistaken identity as the disciples and other followers seem to be

hoping to discover something very different from the real Jesus. It is the criminal executed with Jesus who in his dying desperation says, “*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*” Clearly, the criminal has no other hope. Still, in this moment, he acknowledges Jesus’ true identity.

Modern followers of Jesus resemble those ancient followers in many ways. Everyone has their own image of Jesus, the gifts we want Jesus to bring us, the ways we want Jesus to fix those things in our lives that cause pain or suffering. In our anxiety, we want Jesus to be our magical savior. It can be frustrating when we discover a very different Jesus. Instead of one who fixes everything in an instant, Jesus is the one who walks with us through the darkest valleys. Jesus is the one who calls us to lives of service. Again and again, as we care for the needs of others, we discover the face of Jesus himself in the lost, the last, and the least.

Our sin gets in the way, yet those who profess Jesus as Christ the King - the one in whom the fullness of God was pleased to dwell – forever seek to be clear in heart, mind, and soul about the true nature of his identity and how we can share that identity with others.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

On this day, the end of the liturgical year, we recognize Christ as our king. Welcome to worship! Together we encounter Christ reigning from the cross with mercy for us all.

What sort of king chooses to lay down his life? The world around us anoints as pop-culture royalty people whose wealth, power, and ambition are their crowns. Jesus’ choice to submit shows us that his kingship rejects worldly adulation as some stand by and mistake his *intentional* nonviolence for weakness. We thank God for Jesus Christ, who rules in our hearts with good, and we hope to be like the good monarchs who care more for those in need than for their own castles and palaces.

Against all our images of stern authority and capricious power, we hear the Lord’s voice, the voice of the shepherd who tends the scattered sheep of the flock. In Jesus, this image of shepherd-king is turned upside down in that mysterious wisdom of God. The shepherd becomes the very lamb who is led to the slaughter. This Jesus whom today we praise as king, is, in fact, like no other king that has ever reigned. The gospel and the holy meal proclaim him king where we least expect it: in the depth of our yearning for life, our suffering, and our need. And in this he is no ordinary king. Here in our struggle and desire to be witnesses to his life and his love for us, he reigns. And here in the world, hidden in the struggle for justice and peace, he reigns.

How might the image of Christ as King be represented visually? Consider the sacraments of baptism and communion. In the waters of baptism, the most essential and common building block of biological life envelops us as the grace of God, giving life like rainwater to a thirsty garden. In communion, grain and grapes - nurtured by human hands, given growth by the gifts of rain, soil, and sun - become the embodied presence of God. We discover the powerful reign of Christ at work through connection, forgiveness, and belonging.

Both natural disasters and human-created tragedies can bring out the best in us. We can find healing and hope in acts of unity and hospitality. Our lives can become much more fulfilling and take on more sacred meaning when we accept that we depend on not only Christ, but on one another. Our lives contain both bitterness and sweetness, but throughout, God is present with us, God's presence is always what we need to remain upright and strong. We make the world a better place through acts of kindness.

KID STUDY:

The kingship of Jesus is unlike any other in history. His ways Jesus as king may not match up with how we understand the meaning of what makes a king. How does a king dress? How does a king speak to people and treat other people? How does a king travel? Does a king have to use manners? How you answer these questions describing a typical king do not fit when you think about Jesus. What makes Jesus such a surprising king? Instead of starting fights, he makes peace. Instead of trying to get everything for himself, he gives all he can to others. One of the best ways for people to get to know Jesus is through *our* words and actions because we are Jesus's hands and feet. How can our example help others to know our unusual King?

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty" (Rainbow in the Cloud: The Wisdom and Spirit of Maya Angelou. [New York: Random House, 2014]).

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Next Week's Theme (Wed., Nov. 23): Thanksgiving Eve – Give thanks

Next Week's Scriptures (Wed., Nov. 23):

First Reading: Deuteronomy 26:1-11
"The offering of the first fruits."

Psalm: Psalm 100
"Enter God's gates with thanksgiving." (Ps. 100:4)

Second Reading: Philippians 4:4-9
"Do not worry about anything."

Gospel: John 6:25-35
"Jesus is the bread of life."

Next Week's Theme (Nov. 26 & 27): You can't know when Jesus will return = what can you do to be ready

Next Week's Scriptures (Nov. 26 & 27):

First Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5
"Weapons of war transformed into instruments of peace."

Psalm: Psalm 122
"I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." (Ps. 122:1)

Second Reading: Romans 13:11-14
"Salvation is near; time to wake from sleep."

Gospel: Matthew 24:36-44
"The sudden coming of the Son of Man."

