

## ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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E-mail: [admin@splctx.org](mailto:admin@splctx.org) [www.splctx.com](http://www.splctx.com) **Pastor:** [pastor.akethan@gmail.com](mailto:pastor.akethan@gmail.com)

November 26, 2023 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Christ the King

\*\*\*\*\*  
Senior Pastor Alan Kethan Home: (979)-942-9060 Cell: (830)-708-1200  
Youth & Family Specialist Stephanie Polasek  
Congregational Chair Donna Maas  
St. Paul Christian Learning Academy Director Briana Bedford  
Secretary Elena Holub  
Custodian Tomasa Rosales  
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator DyAnn Lauzon  
\*\*\*\*\*

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

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

- *As we enter into a sacred time and space, a friendly reminder to please set your cell phone to vibrate.*
- ***We want to welcome all of our guests today and thank you for 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

*On this final Sunday of the church year our gospel is Jesus' great story of judgment. In the end, the faithful are those who served Christ by ministering to those who are poor, hungry, naked, sick, or estranged. In the first reading God is the shepherd who seeks the lost, weak, and injured and feeds them with justice. We gather this day to celebrate the reign of Christ and his victory over death, yet we await the consummation of all things yet to come. Acknowledging Christ as our merciful ruler, we go forth that his reign may be known in our loving words and deeds.*

## 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: 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.***

### GOSPEL: Matthew 25:31-46

*Jesus compares himself to a king who moves among his subjects to see how he is treated: what is done for the least of those who belong to his family is truly done for him.*

A The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 25, verses 31-46.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>31</sup>"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup>All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup>and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup>Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup>for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty

and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’  
<sup>37</sup>Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup>And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup>And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ <sup>40</sup>And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me.’ <sup>41</sup>Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; <sup>42</sup>for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup>I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ <sup>44</sup>Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ <sup>45</sup>Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ <sup>46</sup>And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

**GOSPEL SONG: 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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**CHILDREN'S SERMON**

**SERMON**

**\* SERMON 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! 2<sup>nd</sup> time to Bridge*

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**

**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!

\* **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 Let us turn our hearts to God, our breath and life, as we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

A Holy God, from Christ we receive our call to feed, clothe, and welcome. Direct your church to respond to this call with faithfulness and generous love. We pray for the work of ELCA World Hunger and partnerships with global feeding ministries.

*A brief silence.*

A In Christ we are made the people of his pasture. Inspire the outreach and social ministries of this congregation. We pray for all people who serve and attend to the needs of others.

*A brief silence.*

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

*A brief silence.*

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

*A brief silence.*

A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:  
Doyle Noska; Joey Denby; Angela Skow; Ericka Lopez; 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.)*  
Kristen Downing; Ashley Roberts; Traci Edman; Michael Yancey; Amanda Aramijo; Zachary Schulke; Herbie Kollatschny; Darrell Pagel; Tom Russell, Jr.; Melda Coleman; Al Gene Canik; Larry Bookout; Mike Wostarek; Elizabeth Frisby; Kristina Acevedo; George Krenek; Anne Dimas; Carl Geisler; Laura Walla; Randy Wendt; Heather Deviney; Paul Casinger; Dr. Tom Hancher; Leonard Kahlden; and Bob Loy.

A We pray for all expectant mothers and especially for:  
Nancy Gorman; Kyndall Beettner; Jamee Albert; Kristen O'Leary Bridges; Abegail Gatzke; Chelsea Gilstrap; Calli Guthmann; Dhara Comans; and Nelma Grace Weathers 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.)*  
Joyce Dehmer; Paul Minar, Sr.; Adrian Fritsch; Coy Dell Schindler; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Jane Booker; Pat Brasher; Walter Glaeser, Jr.; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Donna Dehmer; Cherie Moore; Lauren Lamb; and Lydia Rojas.

A We pray for all law enforcement officers and especially for Charles Jobb; Joseph Smith; Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; 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.; Kyle Burris; Dylan Walcik; Travis Neuendorff; Nathan Bookout; Brenda Henkes; Jan Willette; and Terri Neunendorff, as well as those active duty military members including Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Dalton Kapel; Kevin Gonzalez; Evelyn Rojas; and Nelson Beettner that they are protected and kept safe.

*A brief silence.*

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 their Pastor Armando Capcha and Iglesia Cristiana Camino de Santidad and their leaders Pastors Gumer and Naomi Anton 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 We offer our spoken prayers and those held in our hearts trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior and 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 God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance, and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant.

**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 Come to the table of the one who loves 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 Lord Jesus, in this simple meal you have set a banquet. Sustain us on the journey, strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children, and give us glad and generous hearts as we meet you on the way.

**C Amen.**

**\* BLESSING**

P May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad! The blessing of God, Sovereign, ☩ Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always.

**C Amen.**

**\* CLOSING SONG: A CUP OF COLD WATER**

**I was hungry and You gave me something to eat,**

**I was naked and You clothed me.**

**I was thirsty and You gave me something to drink,**

**I was sick and You were there for me.**

**And we say, “When, Lord, did we see You thirsty?**

**When, Lord, were you sick and cold? When, Lord,**

**Did we see You hungry? When, Lord? When, Lord?”**

**CHORUS:**

***“What you have done for the least of these, then you have done for Me.***

***A piece of bread for the lonely pilgrim, and for the thirsty . . .***

***A cup of cold water! A cup of cold water!***

***A cup of cold water! A cup of cold water!”***

**Well I was lonely and You were a friend to me.**

**I was lost and You found me.**

**I was in prison and You came to sit with me.**

**I was a stranger and You welcomed me.**

**And we say, “When, Lord, did we see You lonely?**

**When, Lord, had You lost your way? When, Lord,**

**were You a prisoner? When, Lord? When, Lord?” **CHORUS****

**BRIDGE:**

When we love them, we love Jesus. When we hold them, we hold the Lord.  
When we touch them, we're touching Jesus.  
We've got to reach out and touch the world!  
When we love them, we love Jesus. When we hold them, we hold the Lord.  
When we touch them, we're touching Jesus.  
Reach out and touch someone!

**CHORUS:**

*“What you have done for the least of these, then you have done for Me.  
A piece of bread for the lonely pilgrim, and for the thirsty . . .  
A cup of cold water! A cup of cold water!  
A cup of cold water! A cup of cold water!”*

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**\* DISMISSAL**

**P** Go and meet the Jesus in others.

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

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**USHERS:** John, Terri & Chase Brasher

**LAY READER:** Ashlyn Pugh

**STREAMING:** Chase Brasher

**SOUND:** Sydney Eaton and Todd Jacobs

**ACOLYTE:** Hattie Post

**POWER POINT:** Kay Wesson

**ALTAR GUILD:** Amanda Oppermann

**WELCOME:** Welcome, one and all, as we worship Christ the King in song and speech, prayer and praise.

**ALTAR WALL FLOWERS** are placed by Ed and Michelle Thraen in thanks for God's many blessings.

We extend our Christian sympathy to the Bonnie Klump and family for the loss of her son-in-law Arlen Brune 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:** November 18 & 19, 2023 – 159

**Contributions:** Nov. 18 & 19 – \$7,474.01

**Power of One:** November 18 & 19, 2023 – \$35.00

**Building Fund:** Nov. 18 & 19 – \$761.44

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

**Wednesday Night Attendance:** – Wed., Nov. 15 – **106 Total**

**BLAST/Confirmation:** 88

**Support Staff:** 18

**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! ☺

**\*\* 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](mailto:admin@splctx.org) **as soon as you can.** 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 Judy Sirois (979-732-1920), Shelley Janik, Bradley Polasek, Lora Kuenstler, or Edna Bergfeld. **\*\***



God's Gals will **decorate the church for Christmas after the 11:05 AM service today!** We need muscles, too, so guys are invited to come help us! Thanks in advance for your help! Questions? Contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127.

♦ The **Adult Bible Study** group that **meets on Fridays** in the church library **will now meet at 11:00 AM.** With the upcoming holidays, they will only meet on **December 1 and December 8, 2023.** They will then take a brief winter break and resume in January, 2024. Everyone is welcome! ♦

**++ 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, December 2 & 3, 2023.** 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., Dec. 2 at 7:00 PM; Sun., Dec. 3 at 9:00 AM; Sun., Dec. 3 at 11:05 AM; Sat., Dec. 9 at 7:00 PM; Sun., Dec. 10 at 9:00 AM; Sun., Dec. 10 at 11:05 AM; Sat., Dec. 16 at 7:00 PM; Sun., Dec. 17 at 9:00 AM; Sun., Dec. 17 at 11:05 AM; and Sun. Dec. 24 at 10:00 AM. A copy of the reading will be sent to you.





Please donate blood at our last blood drive of 2023. During the holidays, the demand for blood increases. **St. Paul's blood drive is Sunday, December 3, 2023 from 8:00 AM-12:30 PM in the Lighthouse.** All donors get a free gift! Sign up with the QR code on the poster or go to [https://www.commitforlife.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/353849](https://www.commitforlife.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/353849). When signing up, please use **sponsor code P732**. You may also contact Melinda Zajicek at 979-820-8793, and she will get you signed up. *If you are interested in helping with this event, please let Melinda know.*



If you are interested in placing **Poinsettias** in church for Christmas or donating money for decorations, please fill out the enclosed form! ***Turn in your completed form to the church office by Wednesday, December 6, 2023!!*** **If you purchase your own poinsettia, please bring it to the church Thursday, December 21, 2023.** We ask that you do not bring it any earlier since there will not be any place to store the poinsettia or keep it watered. Extra forms will be available in the church office and the narthex (foyer) if you need one for yourself or someone you know.

► **New Members/Informational Class:** Are you interested in joining St. Paul Lutheran Church or just getting more information about the ministries here? If so, come to the next New Members/Informational Class on **Saturday, December 9, 2023 from 9:00-11:30 AM**. We will meet in the church library. Please let the church office (979-732-2423) know that you are planning to attend and if you need babysitting services.

♪♪♪ The **Columbus Community Choir** will be presenting their **Christmas program** "Jesus! The Advent of the Messiah" **Sunday, December 10, 2023 at 4:00 PM** at the Columbus High School Auditorium. They will be recognizing and honoring all pastors and ministers who serve our communities. Share the joy of the season with our local performers!

- The **Noon Bible Study group that meets on Tuesdays** in the church library is taking a **brief winter break**. They will resume on Tuesday, January 9, 2024.  
Have a safe and happy holiday season! •

**ST. PAUL QUILTERS:** The St. Paul Quilters will be taking a brief fall & winter break as a group to relax and rejuvenate for next year. **They will be taking off all of November and December and resume quilting as a group Tuesday, January 9, 2024.** The quilters meet the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month in the Lighthouse. If anyone is interested in getting fabric to cut blocks at home or to sew quilt tops at home during that time, please contact Carol Lighthill at 832-371-3308. She will be happy to meet you and get you the fabric you need.



**NOTICE!!** We are **looking for a person** to take over the business of the **rental of the Lighthouse**. That person will be responsible for checking what dates are available, handling the paper work and collecting fees & deposits, contacting the custodian, and contacting

the person who would open and close the Lighthouse for an event, as well as training additional members to open and close. If you are interested, please contact the church office at (979)-732-2423.

- **Women of JOY Bible Study:** The Women of JOY Bible Study group meets on Mondays to cook and have interesting Bible study and discussions. The **first Monday** of the month we **meet in the Lighthouse to cook** for BLAST. The **2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays** of the month we meet in the **high school room (old choir room) for Bible Study**. We are currently reading The Story. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Gerri Hackfeld at 979-732-4711.

♥ **Grief Support Group:** The Grief Support Group is for anyone who has lost a loved one, either recently or a few years ago. We share and support each other. Come join us and get support from others walking this journey. We meet at **5:30 PM** in the youth room (formerly the choir room) the **third Thursday of the month**. **NOTE:** You do not have to share or talk until you are ready! If you have questions, please contact Peggy Geisler at 979-732-0350.

#### **SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:**

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Today (Nov. 26) –</b>   | 12:00 PM – God's Gals & Guys Decorate Church   |
| <b>Mon., Nov. 27 –</b>     | 9:00 AM-1:30 PM – Pastor Alan in Continuing Ed. Class<br>6:00 PM – Pastor Alan in Stewardship Class<br>6:00 PM – Women of JOY Bible Study (old choir room)                           |
| <b>Tues., Nov. 28 –</b>    | 6:00 PM – CLA Board  |
| <b>Wed., Nov. 29 –</b>     | 9:00 AM – CLA Chapel<br>5:00 PM – Meal<br>5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation and HS Youth   |
| <b>Thurs., Nov. 30 –</b>   | 5:30 PM – Nominating Team (library)  |
| <b>Fri., Dec. 1 –</b>      | 11:00 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)   |
| <b>Dec. 1 &amp; 2 –</b>    | Advent Retreat, Lutherhill (La Grange)   |
| <b>Sat., Dec. 2 –</b>      | 8:00 AM – Men In Mission (Lighthouse)<br>7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship  |
| <b>Next Sun., Dec. 3 –</b> | 8:00 AM-12:30 PM – Blood Drive (Lighthouse)<br>9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship<br>10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation<br>11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship |

#### **UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS**

**Thursday, November 30, 2023     Andrew, Apostle**

The first of the disciples to be called by Jesus, Andrew quickly began to bring others to the Savior, including Simon Peter. The Bible also shows him leading some Greeks to meet Jesus, and he brought forward the boy with five loaves and two fish, with which Jesus fed thousands.

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**OTHER READINGS:** Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

*Because Israel's kings proved to be bad shepherds, Ezekiel declares that the LORD will assume the role of shepherd in Israel. The LORD will also set over them a shepherd-messiah, "my servant David," who will feed and care for the people.*

The reading begins:

<sup>11</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup>As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup>I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. <sup>14</sup>I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup>I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice. <sup>20</sup>Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup>Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, <sup>22</sup>I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. <sup>23</sup>I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup>And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

**PSALM:** Psalm 95:1-7a

<sup>1</sup>Come, let us sing to the LORD; let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation. <sup>2</sup>Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to the LORD with psalms. <sup>3</sup>For you, LORD, are a great God, and a great ruler above all gods. <sup>4</sup>In your hand are the caverns of the earth; the heights of the hills are also yours. <sup>5</sup>The sea is yours, for you made it, and your hands have molded the dry land. <sup>6</sup>Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our maker. <sup>7a</sup>For the LORD is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep of God's hand.

**OTHER READINGS:** Ephesians 1:15-23

*In this passage, God is praised for revealing ultimate divine power in raising Jesus from the dead. The resurrected, exalted Christ is Lord of both the church and the entire universe, now and in the age to come.*

The reading begins:

<sup>15</sup>I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason <sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup>I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and

revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup>so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. <sup>20</sup>God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. <sup>22</sup>And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

**SERVICE OVERVIEW: *WE EMBODY THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST***

All of the shepherding stories in today's texts outline the shape of God's intimate love of creation. The parable even suggests that being merely intentional about ministry in the name of Jesus is not the point. After all, both "sheep" and "goats" groups are equally shocked at the news that Jesus was present in those relationships involving thirst, imprisonment, and so forth. Instead, Jesus seems to invite us to wonder what's at the deepest foundation of our presence and purpose - and perhaps even walk away faithfully bewildered at the possibilities of God's kingdom being practiced on earth as it is in heaven. What if we really *do* embody the presence of Christ?

**THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:**

On this final week of the liturgical year entitled "Christ The King," we receive a parable from Jesus challenging and inspiring our imaginations to grasp our whole vocation that is celebrated in baptism. Welcome to worship! Embody Christ in every moment. Engage every part of our world as Christ's redeemed creation.

The parable of the sheep and the goats has sometimes been used to instill fear of God's judgment. However, is it possible that Jesus' point here is to urge his disciples to share God's generous saving grace with all? Jesus' parables consistently offer a simple setting and story, but behind them lie a world of rich meaning that takes a lifetime to unpack. For this reason, Jesus' parables are important texts for those of us who remain hungry for story, for connection, and for meaning for our faithful lifelong questions.

Today we celebrate the reign of Jesus, and yet another reversal is shared: our actions in support of the least among us are things we do to God, our king, who is with us and not far away. We should not only think of ways to help make life better for people in need, but understand and allow God's love to flow through our actions. Perhaps there are times when you feel you are the least in your community, church, or household. How might you not only serve, but be served?

**KID STUDY:**

Sometimes people say that they want to see Jesus, to meet him, talk with him, and take care of him. In the story we hear in today's gospel, Jesus says that when we act in a kindly way to anyone who is in need, we helped him. That's because Jesus is always with us - in every one and every thing needing our kindness and assistance. We all have kindness in our hearts and we can all help, even in small ways, that will make the world a better place.

**INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION: THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF A GOAT**

*A reflection on Matthew 25:31-46 by William Loader*

*I dreamt a dream. I dreamt a parable. I was a goat, a billy goat. The goats around me who knew my name thought that was amusing. Goats are special. Sometimes people confuse us with sheep. But sheep are very stupid. Goats are intelligent. Sheep produce wool, but goat hair is much stronger. We also produce milk. Who has ever heard of milking sheep! We can run faster than sheep and we can climb higher. One day I was climbing up a high mountain with my family, higher than I had ever climbed before, so high that I could look out and see the future. There on a cloud I saw lots of human beings. Some were wearing red clothes; some were wearing blue. In front of them was another human being, shining white. He said to the red people who were on his left: ‘Come and live with me in my father’s city. For I was an outcast and you welcomed me into your home; I was in Orissa and you sent me help; I was trying to bring change through politics and you supported me; I was a child labourer and you found me another way for me to live; I was a woman burnt by her husband and you gave me refuge.’ They all said, ‘When did we see you as an outcast, or in Orissa, or a politician, or a child labourer or a burnt woman and come to your aid?’ He said, ‘You did it to them; it was like you did it to me.’ Then he turned to the people in blue who also called him, ‘Lord’, but the situation was much less happy. They had kept themselves pure and had not helped the outcaste, the people in Orissa, the politician, the child labourer, the burnt woman at all – or anyone else for that matter. There was no room for them in the city. Just then it started to rain and the vision went away. We were left to ponder what we had seen. Nanny, who was standing beside me, said, ‘I know. If I am a human being in my next life, I shall pretend I see the shining one in everyone I see. I shall help all those needy people like I’m helping him. That way he will reward me with a place in his father’s city.’ I was thinking about that when from the other side her sister – they always used to argue – said, ‘No, no, no! Don’t you see it was all a surprise. They didn’t care for people because they saw the shining one in them. They cared for people because they were people. They did it naturally. It was their way. Only later were they surprised to learn that they had also cared for him.’ That made me think still further. I spent so much time thinking that when the others skipped off down the mountain – as only goats can do – I made my way slowly. As I passed one of the ridges covered with bushes, I heard a cry. As I got closer, I saw a sheep, a ram caught in the thicket. ‘Stupid sheep!’ I thought. I was about to walk on past when something made me stop. I had strong horns, I thought. I could free that poor sheep. I climbed to the ridge and began to push and pull and finally the ram was free. Off he trotted into the setting sun. Then something strange occurred. As I watched the ram make its way across the valley, it seemed to change into a small child. It then began to grow up and by the time it reached the stream at the bottom of the valley was fully grown. It stumbled across the stream. At one point it was fully submerged. Then it climbed up into the sun, just a silhouette, until finally all I could see was the figure of a fully grown man standing out against the red sky, shaped like a cross on the horizon. I turned to move on, to return to the pastures below. As I reached a resting place, I looked out. There were goats; there were sheep. I lay down with head on a great stone. My body was filled with light and I knew that I knew. I knew that I knew. I opened my eyes. Someone had come into my room and turned on the light. It was time to get up and eat. It was time to begin a new day.*

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**Next Week's Theme (Dec. 2 & 3):** Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> return

**Next Week's Scriptures (Dec. 2 & 3):**

**First Reading:** Isaiah 64:1-9

*“Prayer that God would come with power and compassion.”*

**Psalm:** Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

*“Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.” (Ps. 80:7)*

**Second Reading:** 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

*“Gifts of grace sustain those who wait for the end.”*

**Gospel:** Mark 13:24-37

*“The sudden coming of the Son of Man.”*