

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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

October 1, 2023 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Eighteenth Sunday of Pentecost

Senior Pastor	Alan Kethan	<u>Home:</u> (979)-942-9060	<u>Cell:</u> (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

Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE PADS

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

* **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: Matthew 21:23-32

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

A The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 21, verses 23-32.

²³When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" ²⁴Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer,

then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' ²⁶But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." ²⁷So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁸What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him."

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: BELIEVER**

**I walk a bit different now, now that my heart's been found,
nothing feels the same. I hold my head a bit higher,
I lift my voice a bit louder. Yeah, something inside has changed.**

CHORUS

***I am a mountain mover, water walker,
more than just an overcomer, 'cause I've been set free.
I am a gospel preacher, heart on fire,
Freedom singing testifier, 'cause I've been redeemed!
I am a believer! I am a believer!***

**I know this is not my home, I know I don't walk alone.
No matter what comes my way. I have peace through the trouble,
I have joy through the struggle,
And now my hope's in a brighter day.**

CHORUS

***I am a mountain mover, water walker,
more than just an overcomer, 'cause I've been set free.
I am a gospel preacher, heart on fire,
Freedom singing testifier, 'cause I've been redeemed!
I am a believer! I am a believer!***

BRIDGE x2

**I am a child of the Father, an orphan no longer.
No doubt about who I am. I'm in the hands of the Healer,
The arms of the Savior. His grace makes me who I am.**

LAST CHORUS

**I am a mountain mover, water walker,
more than just an overcomer, 'cause I've been set free.
I am a mountain mover, water walker,
more than just an overcomer, 'cause I've been set free.
I am a gospel preacher, heart on fire,
Freedom singing testifier, 'cause I've been redeemed!
I am a believer! I am a believer!
I am a believer! I am a believer!**

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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 Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

A brief silence.

A Teach us your paths as we pray for this congregation. Be at work in us and unite us in your love as we labor together for the sake of the gospel.

A brief silence.

A We pray for farmers and ranchers as they continue to work hard to bring us food in this time of drought. Bless them as they sow crops and care for livestock. Send us rain to heal the earth and water to quench Your thirsty land. Let faith be born from our doubts, hope from our despair, and compassion from our troubles.

A brief silence.

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

A brief silence.

A We pray for the family, friends and congregation of Pastor Mark Groves who passed away this past week. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time.

A brief silence.

A Trusting your goodness, we pray for all caregivers and people who are sick or suffering in any way. Give them encouragement and consolation in your presence.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Lydia Rojas; Richard Bergfeld; Pam Potter; Butch Bertsch; 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 and especially for:
Darrell Pagel; Sylvia McLelland Teykl; Tom Russell, Jr.; Melda Coleman; Al Gene Canik; Larry Bookout; Mike Wostarek; Elizabeth Frisby; Virginia Fritsch; Kristina Acevedo; George Krenek; Anne Dimas; Carl Geisler; Laura Walla; Dorothy Wicke; Randy Wendt; Heather Deviney; Paul Casinger; Dr. Tom Hancher; Leonard Kahlden; and Bob Loy that they may know comfort and strength.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all expectant mothers and especially for:
Cassidy Zajicek Parks; Courtney Busselman; Nancy Gorman; Camille Stancik; Kyndall Beettner; and Jamee Albert 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.)*
Joey Denby; Edwin Oevermann; Paul Minar, Sr.; Adrian Fritsch; Coy Dell Schindler; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Jane Booker; Pat Brasher; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Ronnie Rogers; Joyce Dehmer; Donna Dehmer; Cherie Moore; and Lauren Lamb.

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: 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; and Evelyn Rojas.

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 Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ.

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 power, God of plenty, all things belong to you. We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed. Form us into the body of your Beloved, 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 sing.

**C Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

* **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P P Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.

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 Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray.

C Amen.

* **BLESSING**

P The God of glory, † Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

* **CLOSING SONG: NOBODY**

Why You ever chose me has always been a mystery.

All my life I've been told I belong at the end of the line.

With all the other "Not-Quites," With all the "Never-Get-It-Rights."

But it turns out they're the ones You were lookin' for all this time.

CHORUS:

'Cause I'm just a nobody, tryin' to tell everybody, all about Somebody

Who saved my soul. Ever since You rescued me, You gave My heart

A song to sing. I'm livin' for the world to see – nobody but Jesus.

I'm livin' for the world to see – nobody but Jesus.

Moses had stage fright. And David brought a rock to a sword fight.

You picked twelve outsiders nobody would've chosen and you changed the world.

Well the moral of the story is, ev-erybody's got a purpose.

So when I hear that devil start talkin' to me sayin' "Who DO you think you are?"

CHORUS:

I say, "I'm just a nobody, tryin' to tell everybody, all about Somebody Who saved my soul. Ever since You rescued me, You gave My heart A song to sing. I'm livin' for the world to see – nobody but Jesus. I'm livin' for the world to see – nobody but Jesus."

BRIDGE (sing twice)

So let me go down, down, down in history.
As another blood-bought, faithful member of the family.
And if they all forget my name, well, that's fine with me.
I'm livin' for the world to see no-body but Je-sus.

CHORUS:

'Cause I'm just a nobody, tryin' to tell everybody, all about Somebody Who saved my soul. Ever since You rescued me, You gave My heart A song to sing. I'm livin' for the world to see – nobody but Jesus. I'm livin' for the world to see – nobody but Jesus.

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*** DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. God is at work in you. **C** Thanks be to God, and we will.

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USHERS: Mike & Gerri Hackfeld; Sandi Roensch

LAY READER: Lora Kuenstler

ACOLYTE: McKayla Kahlden

STREAMING: Chase Brasher

POWER POINT: Dinah Jacobs

SOUND: Sydney Eaton and Todd Jacobs

ALTAR GUILD: Edna Bergfeld and Ashlyn Pugh

WELCOME: Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church! God says: "Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth" (Psalm 78:1). Let us listen for God's voice as we worship.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Fay & Marv Ulbricht in honor and celebration of their family birthdays – Fay on October 2, Tim on October 11, Marv on October 13, and Thomas on November 1.

I am so touched by your thoughtfulness – **thank you!** To my church family,

You made my day much more special with your kind wishes, cards & gifts, but especially with your time. A special thank you to Sandye Fletcher for the birthday blessings. I'll treasure the memories. Thanks again. – *Doris Gorman*

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: Sept. 23 & 24, 2023 – 185

Contributions: Sept. 23 & 24 – \$5,308.01

Power of One: Sept. 23 & 24, 2023 – \$58.00

Building Fund: Sept. 23 & 24 – \$21.44

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.*

► **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! 😊

♥♥ Our next **Marriage Course** will be every Sunday, **September 17-October 29, 2023**. On these Sunday nights from **6:00-8:00 PM** in the Lighthouse this seven-week course will take place. We realize that strong marriages make strong families, and strong families make strong communities. The Marriage Course is relevant for any couple wanting to invest in their relationship and make it stronger. Whether you have been married four months, 40 years or cohabitating and not married; you feel your marriage is fine, good, great, struggling or stuck; this course is for you. The course is more like a date night. There will be dinner and dessert mixed in with video presentations and discussion questions for you and your partner. You will not be asked to share anything about your relationship with anyone but your partner. **Cost is \$150** – this includes meals, workbooks and video materials. If you need childcare, the cost is an additional \$35 for the seven weeks. This course is limited to 11 couples. Sign up in the office or call Elena Monday-Friday during business hours to get your name on the list. When you sign up, please indicate if you will need childcare.

+ The **Noon Bible Study group** that meets on Tuesdays in the church library will resume class Tuesday, October 3, 2023. They will be studying I & II Thessalonians and Jude. Everyone is invited to attend! +

► **National Night Out:** National Night Out will be held at **St. Paul Lutheran Church parking lot on Tuesday, October 3, 2023 from 6:00-7:30 PM**. We plan to have: hot dogs for all; cold drinks; Praise Band playing; face painting; the Andrus' mules; Fire Department; EMS; Law Enforcement; Game Wardens and Texas Parks & Wildlife; Boy Scouts; balloons for the children; and more! Come, bring your bag chairs and/or lawn chairs and meet some neighbors!

Men In Mission: Men In Mission is a group of men of all ages who meet each month in The Lighthouse. Breakfast is served, which typically includes conversations pertaining to sports, the arts, entertainment, etc.. We then have a short devotion, discussion, then close with the Lord's Prayer. If you are seeking a closer connection to the men of St. Paul, this is an excellent way to do so. You will make friends for life. Come join us on **Saturday, October 7, 2023 at 8:00 AM!**



**God's work.
Our hands.**

GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS: St. Paul will once again participate in the annual God's Work Our Hands day! This year we will work this event **Sunday, October 22, 2023**. The time will be **12:15-3:00 PM**. This is an opportunity for all ages to work together to bring about positive changes in our community. Please sign up on the sign-up sheet in the narthex (foyer). T-shirts are \$10 if you would like one. The deadline to order T-shirts is Wednesday, October 11, 2023.



COLUMBUS FOOD PANTRY: It is time for our church to help at the Columbus Food Pantry! The dates are **October 19 & 20, 2023**. The Food Pantry is located at the First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 419 Washington Street. On **Thursday, October 19** the food delivery truck will arrive and grocery bags will be prepared; **please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help. **On Friday, October 20 the food will be distributed** 9:00 AM-1:00 PM. **Please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help with the food distribution. Please mark your calendars to help with this important community service! If you have any questions, please call Kathy Fleming at 979-732-4930 or Tom Fleming at 979-732-4107.

♪♪ **SENIOR EXPLORERS:** Senior Explorers are heading to La Grange to "Czech" out the **Czech Heritage Fest and Muziky**. We will depart **St. Paul at 3:30 PM on Friday, October 20, 2023**. We will have time to browse in the Heritage Center before heading out to the main deck for the beginning of the festival. Chicken and dumplings will be served at 5:30 PM with Dujka Brothers playing at 6:00 PM. We plan to return to St. Paul by 7:00 PM – just in time for the Columbus football game. Lawn chairs are welcome, but no coolers. Please sign up by Sunday, October 15, 2023 in the narthex. For more information, please contact Kevin Page at 979-732-0845.

◆ **GOD'S GAL'S:** God's Gals are going to **Brookwood** on **Saturday, October 21, 2023** for shopping and lunch. We will **leave the church parking lot at 10:15 AM** and will be taking the

church bus. We will do some shopping, then have lunch at Brookwood Café at 12:15 PM. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex (foyer). The deadline to sign up is Wednesday, October 18, 2023. Questions? Please call or text Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127.

The annual ~~TRUNK-OR-TREAT~~ will be held **Sunday, October 29, 2023** in the church parking lot **around 11:30 AM** (following the annual Reformation Polka Service at 10:00 AM). St. Paul members will have their cars lined up in the church parking lot for kids to come by and collect goodies. ***Congregation members with trunks and treats are wanted!*** *If you would like to be a part of setting up your trunk and handing out treats to our youth, please sign up in the narthex (foyer) or contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858. You will have a parking spot with your name on it on that Sunday. Decorated trunks and dressed up members are encouraged but not necessary to participate.*

♥ **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 choir room**. For questions or more information, contact Peggy Geisler at 979-732-0350.

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Today (Oct. 1) –	6:00-8:00 PM – Marriage Course (Lighthouse)
Mon., Oct. 2 –	9:30 AM – Staff Meeting 1:00 PM – Nursing Home Team & Pastor Alan to TLC 6:00 PM – Evangelism Team (library)
Tues., Oct. 3 –	9:00 AM – Pastor Alan to Deanery 12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library) 6:00-7:30 PM – National Night Out (church parking lot)
Wed., Oct. 4 –	9:00 AM – CLA Chapel 10:00 AM-1:00 PM – Colorado Co. Senior Connections (Lighthouse) 12:00 PM – Ministerial Alliance 1:30-3:00 PM – Continuing Education (library) 5:00 PM – Meal 5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation & HS Youth Stephanie to Youth Ministry Network
Thurs., Oct. 5 –	10:30 PM – Pastor Alan to The Oaks 5:30 PM – Youth & Education Team 6:00 PM – Property Team
Fri., Oct. 6 –	10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)
Sat., Oct. 7 –	8:00 AM – Men In Mission (Lighthouse) 7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

Next Sun., Oct. 8 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship
6:00-8:00 PM – The Gathering
6:00-8:00 PM – Marriage Course (Lighthouse)

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Wednesday, October 4, 2023 Francis of Assisi, renewer of the church, died 1226

Born into the family of a wealthy merchant, Francis gave up his inheritance to serve poor people. He formed the Order of Friars Minor (called Franciscans), who took on poverty and the task of preaching "using words if necessary." Francis had a spirit of gratitude for all of God's creation.

Wednesday, October 4, 2023 Theodor Fliedner, renewer of society, died 1864

Fliedner helped to bring about a revival of the ministry of deaconesses among Lutherans. He was influenced in this by Moravian deaconesses he had met. The motherhouse he founded in Kaiserswerth, Germany, inspired many around the world to take up this ministry.

Friday, October 6, 2023 William Tyndale, translator, martyr, died 1536

Tyndale was ordained a priest in England, and wished to translate the Bible into English. He was opposed in this by King Henry VIII, causing him to flee to Germany. He completed the New Testament in 1525, but before he could finish the Old Testament, he was tried for heresy and burned at the stake.

Saturday, October 7, 2023 Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, pastor in North America, died 1787

Divided Lutherans in America asked leaders in Europe to send someone who could take charge and unite their work. Muhlenberg was sent, and was effective in organizing the American Lutherans. Among other accomplishments, his liturgical principles became the basis for the Common Service of 1888.

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OTHER READINGS: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

The reading begins:

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? ³As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die. ⁵Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ⁶When the righteous

turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. ⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ⁹Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ¹⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ¹¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ¹²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-9

¹To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. ²My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. ³Let none who look to you be put to shame; rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous. ⁴Show me your ways, O LORD, and teach me your paths. ⁵Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long. ⁶Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting. ⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD. ⁸You are gracious and upright, O LORD; therefore you teach sinners in your way. ⁹You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way.

OTHER READINGS: Philippians 2:1-13

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

The reading begins:

¹If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹²Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and

trembling; ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: AN INVITATION TO GRACE

It is so easy and so tempting to build ourselves up at the expense of others. Have you ever heard yourself saying, “I can’t imagine ever doing that!” or, “How can people live like that?” or, “Who would do such a thing?” At some point we all think or say these sorts of things. Like it or not, we use these words to comfort ourselves at the expense of others. These words are a reminder that all people stand in need of God’s grace. All of the readings today show us this reality. In the gospel, called the parable of the two sons, Jesus invites us to choose between two sons when neither fully does the will of their father. Here Jesus makes the point that we are all equally in need of God’s grace.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Have you ever said no to God, then later regretted it? Today is a day of confession and forgiveness! Confess your need for God, acknowledge your distance from God, and admit your failures before God. In response, to our surprise and joy, we discover again the grace of God outpoured. Welcome to worship! All of us need God’s grace, and it is extended to all. Hear God’s welcome and accept the invitation to the table of holy communion.

Two sons are asked to do their father’s bidding to work in the vineyard. Though the first son’s initial response is “I will not,” he changes his mind in light of his relationship with the father, obeying the request. The second son, prefers to employ the right words at the right time and place, saying what his father would like to hear but then not acting on his words. Broken promises do not matter to him. It shows us that speech devoid of truth and love is hollow.

The two sons hear the same request and respond differently both in speech and in action. There is a direct link between listening, obeying, and following. Listening begins with the heart. The ear is what hears, but the fact is that the whole body participates in receiving a message, an understanding, and an action. The heart discerns what is heard. So also, the mouth may be the part of the body that speaks, yet the mouth does not function independently. Production of words is the work of the heart, the mind, the mouth, and the whole body.

Fear takes center stage for the religious authorities. They’re afraid of popular opinion turning against them if their answer does not meet the approval of the crowd. What challenging question is Jesus asking of you or your community today? Are you afraid to answer honestly? Do you feel like you’re in a catch-22, or that your community is, depending on how you respond? Has there been a time when you felt caught between two answers to a difficult question? Does your answer fulfill God’s call in Jesus? Why or why not?

KID STUDY:

Doing the right thing can take unexpected forms. This week we hear Jesus tell chief priests and church leaders that people from all walks of life can do their part to share the good news of

God’s love for all. Like the son in Jesus’ story who eventually goes to work in the vineyard, all of us – no matter how old we are - might feel reluctant about doing the right thing because it isn’t what we wanted to do. Jesus’ life and death teach us that doing God’s will is about serving in love for the benefit of our whole community.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

It may be that you say to yourself, God has promised me forgiveness whenever I reform; so I am safe. Tomorrow, when I amend my life, God will pardon me my sins. You are right; what you say is true. That God has promised you pardon when you amend your life, I cannot deny. But tell me, I pray: who has promised you tomorrow? Where you read that you will receive forgiveness, read for me also how much longer you have to live! Ah, it is not there, you say. Therefore you do not know how long more you have to live. Then reform your life, and be always prepared.
- Augustine [Augustine, in *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers, III, 102.*]

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Next Week’s Theme (Oct. 7 & 8): God’s expectations of us. Parable of the Vineyard

Next Week’s Scriptures (Oct. 7 & 8):

First Reading: Isaiah 5:1-7
“The song of the vineyard.”

Psalm: Psalm 80:7-15
“Look down from heaven O God; behold and tend this vine.” (Ps. 80:14, 15)

Second Reading: Philippians 3:4b-14
“Nothing surpasses the value of knowing Christ.”

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-46
“The parable of the vineyard owner’s son.”