

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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October 14 & 15, 2023

Twentieth 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
Saturday Organist			Elena Holub
Sunday Organist			Carol Ripper

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

In Isaiah we are given a vision of the great feast to come, when God will wipe away death forever. In Jesus' parable about a great banquet, those invited do not come, so the invitation is extended to others. In our liturgy God spreads a table before us. Even amid anxiety and hardship we rejoice in the peace of God which surpasses all understanding. With great joy we

feast at the table of the Lord, and we go forth to share the wonderful invitation with others hungering and thirsting for the abundant life of God.

PRELUDE

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 Blessed be God, the one who forms us, † Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who makes our joy complete.

C Amen.

P Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin first privately then together publicly.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Steadfast and faithful God,

C you have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you. We are overwhelmed by the world's violence and suffering. We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others. For the harm we have caused, known and unknown, forgive us. For the unjust demands we place on others and your creation, forgive us. For the ways we turn away from you and our neighbor, forgive us. Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

P Beloved in Christ, God's justice stretches beyond all understanding. God's compassion is beyond compare. In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us. In † Christ, you are already and always forgiven.

C Amen.

* **HYMN ELW - #632 "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"**

1. O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.

2. Under the shadow of your throne your saints have dwelt secure; sufficient is your arm alone, and our defense is sure.

3. Before the hills in order stood or earth received its frame, from everlasting you are God, to endless years the same.

4. A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone, short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.

5. **Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all our years away; they fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the op'ning day.**

6. **O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, still be our guard while troubles last and our eternal home.**

CCLI Song #43152 Words: Isaac Watts Music: William Croft
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* **GREETING**

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P Lord of the feast, you have prepared a table before all peoples and poured out your life with abundance. Call us again to your banquet. Strengthen us by what is honorable, just, and pure, and transform us into a people of righteousness and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 25:1-9

A Our first reading is from Isaiah, chapter 25, verses 1-9.

After a hymn of praise acknowledging God as a shelter for the poor, the prophet portrays a wonderful victory banquet at which death — which in ancient Canaan was depicted as a monster swallowing up everyone — will be swallowed up forever. The prophet urges celebration of this victory of salvation.

The reading begins:

¹O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. ²For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt. ³Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. ⁴For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, ⁵the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled. ⁶On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. ⁷And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; ⁸he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. ⁹It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 23

A The Psalm today is Psalm 23. We will read the Psalm responsively. The congregation will please respond by reading the words in bold print.

¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.

²The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.

³You restore my soul, O LORD, and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

⁴Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

SECOND READING: Philippians 4:1-9

A Our second reading is from Philippians, chapter 4, verses 1-9.

Though writing from prison and facing an uncertain future, Paul calls on the Philippians to rejoice and give thanks to God no matter what the circumstance. God's peace is with us and binds together our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ, especially when things around us do not seem peaceful.

The reading begins:

¹My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. ²I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

A Please stand as you are comfortable for the gospel.

* **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** (Sung)

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

* **GOSPEL:** Matthew 22:1-14

Jesus tells a parable indicating that the blessings of God's kingdom are available to all, but the invitation is not to be taken lightly.

P The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 22, verses 1-14.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

¹Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ²"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.' ⁵But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' ¹⁰Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. ¹¹"But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹²and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen."

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

* **HYMN ELW - #462 "Now We Join in Celebration"**

1. Now we join in celebration at our Savior's invitation, dressed no more in spirit somber, clothed instead in joy and wonder; for the Lord of all existence, putting off divine transcendence, stoops again in love to meet us, with his very life to feed us.
2. Lord, as round this feast we gather, fill our hearts with holy rapture! For this bread and cup of blessing are for us the sure possessing of your loving deed on Calv'ry, of your living self, our vict'ry, pledge of your unfailing presence, foretaste here of heav'nly gladness.
3. Lord, we share in this communion as one fam'ly of God's children, reconciled through you, our brother, one in you with God our Father. Give us grace to live for others, serving all, both friends and strangers, seeking justice, love, and mercy till you come in final glory.

Text: Joel W. Lundeen Music: Johann Crüger Text © Joel W. Lundeen, admin. Augsburg Fortress

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS (Sunday, 9:00 AM only)

See Insert

* **APOSTLES' CREED (Saturday, 7:00 PM only)**

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 OF INTERCESSION

A Trusting in the transformative power of God's loving Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

A For the church of Jesus Christ in this and every land, that all followers of Christ share the mind of Christ and strive to live together in peace, staying firm in the Lord. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

A For green pastures and still waters and all the beauty of the natural world, that creation flourishes and humankind lives in relationship with all you have made. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

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. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:

Becky Collins; Ken Braden; Clara Thraen; Sharon Johnson; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you (*Pause*). God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

A We pray for all those battling cancer that they may know comfort and strength. (*Pause for those we are praying for.*) God of grace,

Michael Yancey; Cindi Tanner; Amanda Aramijo; Zachary Schulke; Herbie Kollatschny; 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; Randy Wendt; Heather Deviney; Lydia Rojas; Paul Casinger; Dr. Tom Hancher; Leonard Kahlden; and Bob Loy.

C hear our prayer.

A We pray for all expectant mothers and especially for:

Cassidy Zajicek Parks; Courtney Busselman; Nancy Gorman; Camille Stancik; Kyndall Beettner; Jamee Albert; and Kristen O'Leary Bridges that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

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.*) God of grace,

Joey Denby; 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; Joyce Dehmer; Donna Dehmer; Cherie Moore; Lauren Lamb; and Lydia Rojas.

C hear our prayer.

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.*) God of grace,

Law Enforcement Officers: Charles Jobb; Joseph Smith; Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abbigail 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.

C hear our prayer.

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. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

P Gracious God, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending love and amazing grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

C Amen.

* **PEACE**

P The peace of the risen Lord be with you always.

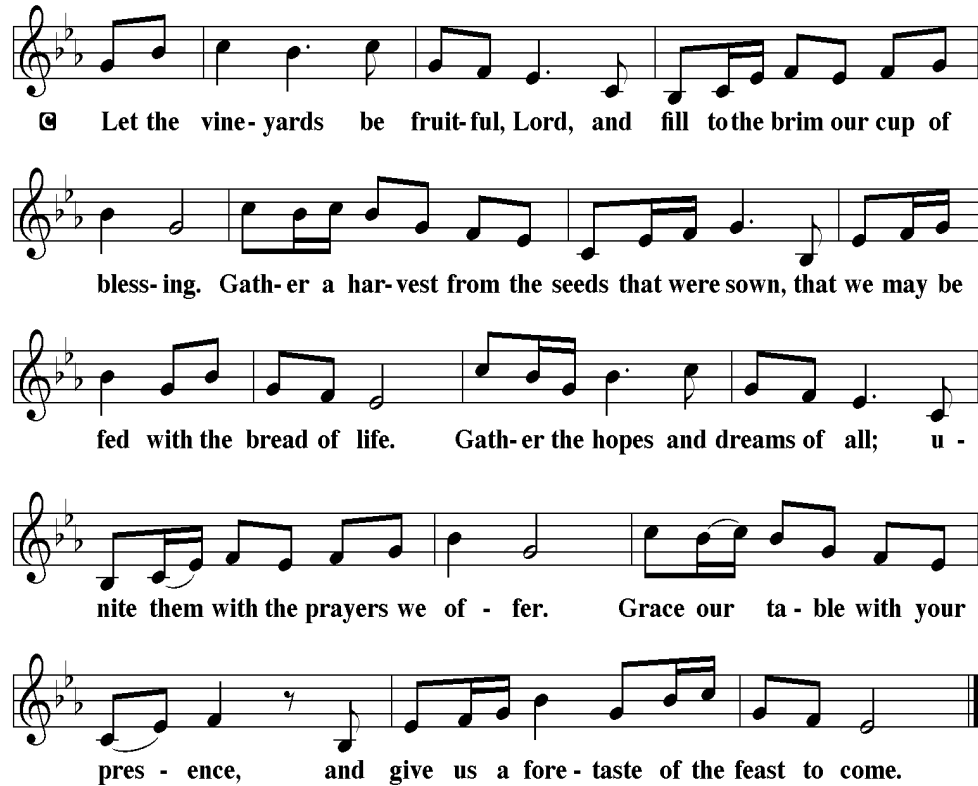
C And also with you. (*Share the "Peace of the Lord" with your neighbors.*)

(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.

* OFFERTORY (Sung)



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

* 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.

* EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

* 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

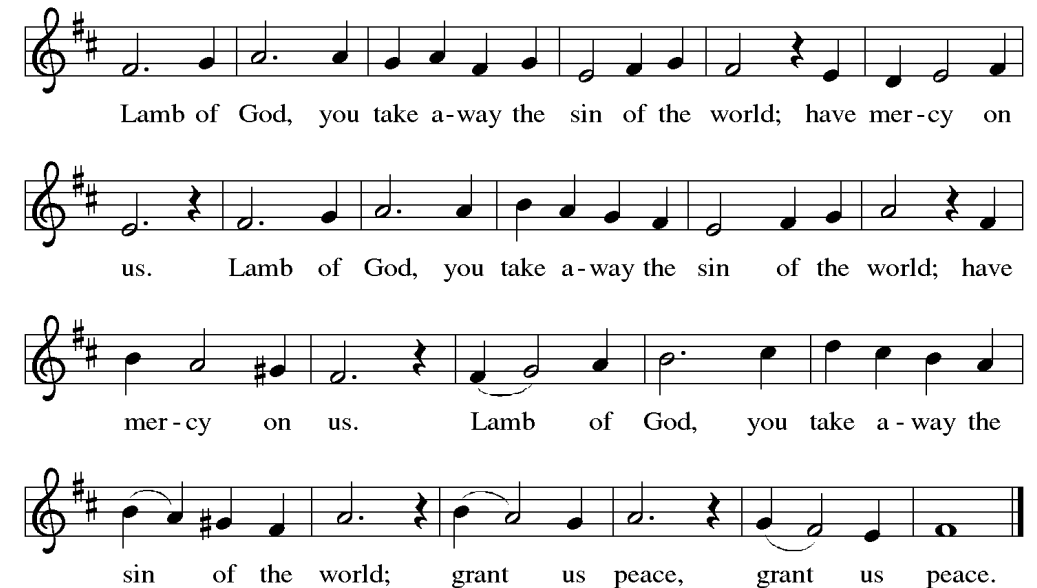
P Jesus invites all to this banquet table; come.

C Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION (Kneeling at Rail)

{You will be coming forward to the rail for distribution. **All are welcome for communion.** You will be ushered down the center aisle beginning in the front. Fill in at the railings starting at the side and work your way around to the center, then kneel if you are able. Pastor will hand out 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. An acolyte follows with an empty tray for you to place your empty individual cup. After receiving communion, please remain at the rails until Pastor has dismissed the entire table with a blessing. Please return to your seat by the side aisles.}

(Sung)



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

(Please be seated.)

* BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

P Now may the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C Amen.

* **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.**

* **HYMN ELW - #856 "How Great Thou Art"**

{This is one of your favorite hymns. Please read the brief history found in the back of the bulletin.}

1. **O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed;**

REFRAIN:

*Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
how great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
how great thou art! How great thou art!*

2. **When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze; REFRAIN**

3. **But when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
that on the cross my burden gladly bearing
he bled and died to take away my sin; REFRAIN**

4. **When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration
and there proclaim, "My God, how great thou art!" REFRAIN**

CCLI Song # 14181 Words: Carl G. Boberg; adapt. Stuart Wesley Keene Hine
Music: Swedish Folk Tune; adapt. Stuart K. Hine ©1949 and 1953 Stuart K. Hine Trust (Administration: USA All rights by Capitol CMG Publishing, except print rights for USA, North, Central and South America administered by Hope Publishing. All other non USA Americas rights by the Stuart Hine Trust. Rest of World – Integritymusic.com.) CCLI License # 1729377

* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Invite others to the banquet.

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

POSTLUDE

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USHERS: SAT: Kenny & JoAnn Venghaus; Janeen Venghaus; Emily Frank

SUN: DyAnn Lauzon; Marilyn Yearwood; Debbie Yancey

LAY READERS: SAT: Audrey Rester

SUN: David Johnson

ACOLYTE: SAT: Henry Jones

SUN: Callen Barten

STREAMING:

SUN: Tiffany Lauzon

SOUND:

SUN: Sydney Eaton

ALTAR GUILD: Janeen Venghaus and Kelly Zajicek

WELCOME: Friends, the King's banquet of life and love is ready! In baptism you have been clothed for the occasion. Welcome to worship.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Carol Lighthill in loving memory of her husband Mahlon Lighthill for what would have been their 58th wedding anniversary on October 16.

Welcome to our New Members! This weekend we are receiving new members into our St. Paul Lutheran Church family at 9:00 AM service Sunday. Be sure to introduce yourself and give them a big St. Paul welcome! ☺

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: October 7 & 8, 2023 – 161

Contributions: Oct. 7 & 8 – \$9,980.56

Power of One: October 7 & 8, 2023 – \$43.00

Building Fund: Oct. 7 & 8 – \$553.23

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

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., Oct. 11 – **92 Total**

BLAST/Confirmation: 72

Support Staff: 20

* **FAVORITE HYMN: “How Great Thou Art” by Karl Gustav Boberg**

“How Great Thou Art” has a very complicated history. The original poem was written in 1885 by a young Swedish pastor Karl Gustav Boberg. He was caught in a severe thunderstorm walking home, and he almost died! He wrote the poem “O Mighty God” and published it in a local newspaper.

A few years later, he heard his poem being sung by a group using an old Swedish folk tune, which is not the tune we use today.

Through several translations the song became known by several different names: “O Store Gud” in Swedish, then translated into German, Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, and Polish. It is in the 1957 translation that it became “How Great Thou Art”. Ultimately, Billy Graham began using it in his crusades. During a 1957 Billy Graham revival in Madison Square Gardens, it was sung 100 times because the people wouldn't let them stop.

The poem had nine verses. However, the hymn had only three stanzas until Stuart K. Hine passed a home and heard a group of people loudly repenting. He immediately added another verse: “And when I think that God, his son not sparing, Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in.”

The original tune was in a waltz tempo. When Stuart K. Hine translated the poem, he wrote the tune we use today which is also named HOW GREAT THOU ART.

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! ☺



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.

► **God's Gals:** *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.



**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).

♪♪ **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.

♥ **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**. Our next meeting will be Thursday, October 19, 2023. **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.

♪♪♪ St. Paul will be celebrating Reformation during Reformation Weekend with *regular holy communion worship on Saturday, October 28, 2023 at 7:00 PM* and an **“Oktoberfest” on Sunday, October 29, 2023 at 10:00 AM**. Be sure to wear red for Reformation at each service! On **Sunday** for the “Oktoberfest”, participate in singing hymns to the tunes of Polkas. Guest musicians will be joining us again this year to add that “something extra” to the service. Following the service on Sunday, join the youth in the parking lot for Trunk-or-Treat, either as a youth collecting the treats or as the one with the trunk of treats. There will be a German-style lunch including sausage and sauerkraut in The Lighthouse for all to enjoy after worship and all of the trunk-or-treating! The main course will be provided, and everyone is asked to bring either a side dish or dessert to accompany the main course. **Please sign the sign-up sheet in the narthex if you plan to attend the meal and indicate what you will bring (side dish and/or dessert).** Come join us! It will be wunderbar!!

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Today (Oct. 15) – 12:30 PM – New Member Luncheon
6:00-8:00 PM – Marriage Course (Lighthouse)

Mon. Oct. 16 – 9:00 AM – Staff Meeting
1:00 PM – Nursing Home Team & Pastor Alan to TLC
6:00 PM – Church Council

Tues., Oct. 17 – 10:00 AM – Pastor Alan to Columbus Oaks
 12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
 1:00 PM – Pastor Alan in Stewardship Class
 5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library)

Wed., Oct. 18 – **Newsletter Deadline!!**
 9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
 9:00 AM – Morning Circle (library)
 10:00 AM-1:00 PM – Senior Connections (Lighthouse)
 5:00 PM – Meal
 5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation and HS Youth

Thurs., Oct. 19 – 8:30 AM – Work at Columbus Food Pantry (FUMC Family Life Center)
 5:30 PM – Grief Support Group (old choir room)

Fri., Oct. 20 – 8:30 AM – Work at Columbus Food Pantry (FUMC Family Life Center)
 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)
 3:30 PM – Senior Explorers to Czech Heritage Fest, La Grange

Sat., Oct. 21 – 10:15 AM – God's Gals to Brookwood in Brookshire
 7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

Next Sun., Oct. 22 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
 10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
 11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship
 12:15-3:00 PM – God's Work Our Hands Day
 6:00-8:00 PM – The Gathering
 6:00-8:00 PM – Marriage Course (Lighthouse)

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Sunday, October 15, 2023 Teresa of Avila, teacher, renewer of the church, died 1582

A mystical writer and reformer of the monastic order (Carmelites) to which she belonged, Teresa may also be commemorated with John of the Cross on December 14. Latino Christians traditionally remember her on this date.

Tuesday, October 17, 2023 Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, martyr, died around 115

Ignatius was the second bishop of Antioch in Syria, the city where the name "Christians" originated. Ignatius is known to us from his letters, which encouraged Christians to live in love, yet stand firm in true doctrine.

Wednesday, October 18, 2023 Luke, Evangelist

Identified as the author of both Luke and Acts, Luke was careful to place the events of Jesus' life in their social and religious contexts. His gospel gives us some of the most beloved parables, as well as the songs of Zechariah, Mary, the angels, and Simeon.

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SERVICE OVERVIEW: YOU'VE BEEN INVITED

Jesus tells a story about a wedding invitation, a banquet, and God's grace. A king ultimately invites all people to a wedding banquet. At first this parable seems to portray a wide open and gracious invitation to a wedding celebration. However, by the end it is hard not to feel sorry for the poor guy who gets a last-minute invitation but ends up getting thrown out.

This story teaches us that receiving God's grace changes people. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer taught, God's grace is not cheap, it comes at a great cost upon the cross. Once we receive this costly grace, our lives are never the same. This grace compels us to act – calling us to bear fruit with our very lives. Ultimately we are led to share this grace with others. To continue to live in the same way after receiving this gracious invitation is not an option. So what are we to do? We simply receive the gracious invitation to the banquet and find a changing room—it's time to live a new life.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

We normally don't invite strangers to our wedding banquets... but God does! Readings for the last few weeks have taught us some hard truths, and today is no exception. What a blessing to go from these lessons to the table of holy communion. Welcome to worship! Join with millions of strangers all around the world who come to be filled with God's mercy.

In today's parable, one of the conclusions reached by the king is that the invited who scorn the invitation are not worthy, so he instructs everyone else (the good *and* the bad) to be invited instead. If we, as God's people, act as the bearers of the invitation to know God, does our inviting reflect the openness God envisions? Do some perceived expectations of worthiness accompany your invitations?

The first round of wedding banquet guests completely ignores the invitation. The second round, however, "makes light" of the invitation. Both responses are equally problematic. By the end of the parable sincere acceptance of the invitation becomes important. It is often difficult for us as individuals to identify what we make light of in our own lives. What should you be taking more seriously when we consider the invitation to live out our faith?

KID STUDY:

Have you ever been to a wedding? Who doesn't love a big party with lots of great food and drink? In today's story, a king throws a huge banquet for his son who is getting married, but the guests he invited did not come! In the place of those guests who did not show up, the king decides to invite anyone and everyone. This is like God, who invites anyone and everyone to eat and drink at the banquet table of holy communion. At this table of grace, we celebrate the good things God has done and continues to do in our lives. We will also get what we need to serve as Jesus's hands and feet.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

One early, cloudy morning when I was forty-six, I walked into a church, ate a piece of bread, took a sip of wine. This was my first communion. It changed everything. The mysterious sacrament

turned out to be not a symbolic wafer at all but actual food - indeed, the bread of life. I realized that what I'd been doing with my life all along was what I was meant to do: feed people. And so I did. I took communion, I passed the bread to others, and then I kept going, compelled to find new ways to share what I'd experienced. I started a food pantry and gave away literally tons of fruit and vegetables and cereal around the same altar where I'd first received the body of Christ. I organized new pantries all over my city to provide hundreds and hundreds of hungry families with free groceries each week... Holy communion knocked me upside down and forced me to deal with the impossible reality of God. - Sara Miles [Sara Miles, Take This Bread: A Radical Conversion (NY: Ballantine Books, 2007), xiii-xiv.]

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Next Week's Theme (Oct. 21 & 22): What belongs to Caesar what belongs to God / Give it

Next Week's Scriptures (Oct. 21 & 22):

First Reading: Isaiah 45:1-7

"An earthly ruler as the instrument of God's will."

Psalm: Psalm 96:1-9 [10-13]

"Ascribe to the LORD honor and power." (Ps. 96:7)

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

"Thanksgiving for the church at Thessalonica."

Gospel: Matthew 22:15-22

"A teaching on giving to the emperor and to God."