

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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October 2 & 3, 2021

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Senior Pastor	Alan Kethan	<u>Home:</u> (979)-942-9060	<u>Cell:</u> (830)-708-1200
Deacon of Word and Service			Sandye Fletcher
Youth & Family Specialist			Stephanie Polasek
Music Minister			Robert Eaton
Congregational Chair			David Johnson
St. Paul Christian Learning Academy Director			Briana Bedford
Secretary			Elena Holub
Custodian			O. C. S.
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator			DyAnn Lauzon
Organist			Elena Holub

MISSION STATEMENT: Love God, Love Neighbor

VISION STATEMENT: Showing our love of God and neighbor, we will work to double the number of members that are serving as well as those that are being served from 2018 to 2021.

- *As we enter into a sacred time and space, a friendly reminder to please set your cell phone to vibrate.*
- ***We want to welcome all of our guests today and thank you for worshiping with us. If you have any questions or would like more information regarding our services, programs, day care, or preschool programs at St. Paul, please visit our Welcome Center in the narthex immediately following our service, and an attendant will be more than happy to assist you. If this is your first time at St. Paul, we hope you will take a gift along with you. We also have a gift bag for children.***

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

INTRODUCTION

Today's gospel combines a saying that makes many of us uncomfortable with a story we find comforting. Jesus' saying on divorce is another of his rejections of human legislation in favor of the original intent of God's law. Jesus' rebuke of the disciples who are fending off the children should challenge us as well. What does it mean to receive the kingdom of God as a child does?

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 the holy Trinity, † one God, whose teaching is life, whose presence is sure, and whose love is endless.

C Amen.

P Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart, first privately then together publicly.

Silence for reflection and private confession of personal sins, then join in with combined voices this printed confession.

P God our comforter:

C like lost sheep, we have gone astray. We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity. We turn our faces away from injustice and oppression. We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed. Free us from our sin, gracious God. Listen when we call out to you for help. Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.

P All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. By the gift of grace in † Christ Jesus, God makes you righteous. Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your sins.

C Amen.

* **HYMN ELW - #656 "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"**

1. **Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the unity of heart and mind is like to that above.**
2. **Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers; our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.**
3. **We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear, and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.**
4. **From sorrow, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free; and perfect love and friendship reign through all eternity.**

Words: John Fawcett Music: Johann Hans Georg Nägeli © Words: Public Domain Music: Public Domain
CCLI Song #25369 CCLI License #1729377

* **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 Sovereign God, you have created us to live in loving community with one another. Form us for life that is faithful and steadfast, and teach us to trust like little children, that we may reflect the image of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Genesis 2:18-24

A Our first reading is from Genesis, chapter 2, verses 18-24.

Genesis 2 stresses that people are not meant to live in isolation but in relationship. Out of love for humanity, God creates them male and female, to provide companionship for each other and to become with each other "one flesh." The Hebrew words used here are ish (man) and ishshah (woman).

The reading begins:

¹⁸The LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." ¹⁹So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. ²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." ²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 8

A The Psalm today is Psalm 8. We will read the Psalm responsively. The congregation will please respond by reading the words in bold print.

¹O LORD our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! —

²you whose glory is chanted above the heavens out of the mouths of infants and children; you have set up a fortress against your enemies, to silence the foe and avenger.

³When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,

⁴what are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them, human beings that you should care for them?

⁵Yet you have made them little less than divine; with glory and honor you crown them.

⁶You have made them rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet:

⁷all flocks and cattle, even the wild beasts of the field,

⁸the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatever passes along the paths of the sea.

⁹O LORD our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

SECOND READING: Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

A Our second reading is from Hebrews, chapter 1, verses 1-4 and chapter 2, verses 5-12.

Quoting from the psalms, this passage from Hebrews emphasizes that Jesus, the one through whom God created everything and who sits at God's right hand, is also the one who experienced human suffering and death in order to blaze the path of salvation for us.

The reading begins:

Chapter 1:

¹Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Chapter 2:

⁵Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. ⁶But someone has testified somewhere, "What are human beings that you are mindful of them, or mortals, that you care for them?" ⁷You have made them for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned them with glory and honor, ⁸subjecting all things under their feet." Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, ⁹but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. ¹⁰It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

A Please stand as you are able for the gospel.

A We pray for those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Kiara Craven; Sandy Cherniss; Walter Guthmann, Jr.; Gallia Honish; Lynette Frnka; Adrian Fritsch; Don Clark; Ruth Pinney; Cami Suchadoll; Julie Kaase; Bobby Hagen; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you (*Pause*). Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A We pray those battling cancer that they may know strength and comfort. (*Pause for those we are praying for.*) Lord, in your mercy,
Charlie Hammock; Brad Bryson; Lynette Franka; Dr. Mazie Leftwich; Riana Jamison; Jenna Escamilla; Margaret Ortiz; Kenny Neuendorff; Victor Bedford; Keith Korth; Cathy Siglow; Susie Lilly; Paul Casinger; Fran Gillett; Tiffany Murley; DeQuincy Lister; Angela Mazoch; Rusty Neuendorff; Lily Presswood; Denise Lange; Doug Mason; Dr. Tom Hancher; Joe Berry; Joyce Templeton; Gracie Brune; Margaret Rogers; Leonard Kahlden; Curtis Wallin; Megan Burch; Jennifer Aleman; Lisa Grazier; Phyllis Behrend; Bill Stolle; Jessica Mauchlen; Larry Guthrie; Donna Tiner; Libby Divin; Tina Barten; Anthony Baumbach; Cindy Masek; Diane Brooks; Bob Loy; Joe Hluchanek; Devon Tiffin; Stanley King; Monty Gillett; Dawn Foster; Edward Halcolm; Amber Smith Kutach; Louis Camacho; Melvin Schobel; Janet Greene; Sabrina Galindo; Debbie Grimes; Horst Traub; Margie Fisk; Preston Carter; Penny Miller; Carl Hahn; Megan Cain; Bob Rutta; Amanda Fuchs; Cyndi Wallace; Karen Broussard; Donna Young; Sharon Heimann; and Brenda Baker.

C hear our prayer.

A We pray for all expectant mothers that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace. (*Pause for those we are praying for.*) Lord, in your mercy,
Nancy Flores Gorman; Ruth Lattimore; Adrienne Fritsch Hamilton; Mary Faith Pruski; and Kristin Zajicek.

C hear our prayer.

A We pray for those who reside in care facilities and the homebound that they receive your caring and compassion. (*Pause for those we are praying for.*) Lord, in your mercy,
Don Morrison; Verna Coufal; Doug Hill; John Zwiengel; Robert Saunders; Mary Bedford; Coy Dell Schindler; Deanna Lee; Dolores Wessels; Doris Poppe; Bill Rodgers; Barbara McMath; Linda Munos Rodgers; Judy Brisco; Barbara Prause; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Delores Purcell; Curtis Berger; Marjorie Brune; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Beatrice Zikuhr; Robert Eaton; James Booker; Adrian Fritsch; Ronnie Rogers; Clemons Venghaus; Sandi Dawson; and Fritz Willms.

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.*) Lord, in your mercy,
Law enforcement officers: Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Marley Mayo; Johnny Kovar; Abbigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; Andrew Lattimore; Luke Kanz; Bruno

Flores; Jessica Dimas; 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; Randy Neuendorff; Pastor Alan Kethan; Kristi Weyand; Eric Weyand; Bradley Berger; Jon Berger; James Chollett; Edward Thraen, Jr.; Garrett Flores; Kyle Burris; Dylan Walcik; Randy Wendt; Travis Neuendorff; Brenda Henkes; and Jan Willette, as well as those active duty military members including Arturo Mares; Keven Rios; Brian Anderson; Michael Graham; Bryan Kubena; Brad Bergfeld; Cody Jowers; Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Ryan Neisner; Anthony D'Angelo; Dalton Kapel; Kindra Dawson; and William Phillips.

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 congregation Cristo Rey and Iglesia Cristiana Camino de Santidad in Peru, all Missionaries, especially St. Paul's supported missionary, Dina Anton de Espinoza, and our companion synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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



bles-sing. 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 abundance, you cause streams to break forth in the desert and manna to rain from the heavens. Accept the gifts you have first given us. Unite them with the offering of our lives to nourish the world you love so dearly; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

* **GREAT THANKSGIVING** *(Responses Sung)*

P The Lord be with you.



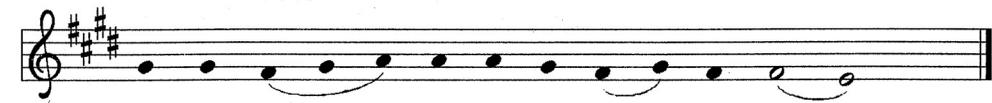
And al - so with you.

P Lift up your hearts.



We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes



in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

* **EUCCHARISTIC 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 welcomes all to the table.

C Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION (Kneeling at Rail)

{You will be coming forward to the rail for distribution. 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.

* **POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE** *(Sung)*



☩ Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let ev-'ry-one who seeks the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-calls his prom-is-es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks-giv-ing. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

* **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P Lord of life, in the gift of your body and blood you turn the crumbs of our faith into a feast of salvation. Send us forth into the world with shouts of joy, bearing witness to the abundance of your love in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

* **BLESSING**

P People of God, you are Christ's body, bringing new life to a suffering world. The holy Trinity, ☩ one God, bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

* **HYMN ELW - #543 “Go, My Children, with My Blessing”**

1. “Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you, you are my own.
In my love’s baptismal river I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.”
2. “Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son’s story, here you touched him, saw his glory.
Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.”
3. “Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me.
Grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.
Here my Spirit’s power filled you, here my tender comfort stilled you.
Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.”

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda *Music:* Welsh traditional; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams
Text ©1983 Concordia Publishing House Arr. © Oxford University Press

* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. You have been blessed to bless others.

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

POSTLUDE

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USHERS: SAT: Gloria Ilse; Richard & Ruth Poncik

SUN: David Johnson; Byron Marburger; Brad Hajdik; Debbie Yancey

LAY READERS: SAT: Rhanda Lattimore **SUN:** Brad Hajdik

ACOLYTE: **SUN:** Cambry Barten

ALTAR GUILD: Ruth Poncik and Gloria Ilse

WELCOME: Welcome to worship this early October weekend! It’s an honor to have you with us today.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Fay & Marv Ulbricht in honor and celebration of their 35th wedding on September 13 and in honor of their family birthdays: Fay on October 2; Timothy on October 11; Marv on October 13; and Thomas on November 1.

Congratulations and best wishes to Kameron Page and Jordan Graves who will be joined in Holy Matrimony in College Station, Texas Sunday, October 3, 2021. May God bless them as they begin a new life together as husband and wife!

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: September 25 & 26, 2021 – 147 **Contributions:** Sept. 25 & 26 – \$5,725.66
Power of One: September 25 & 26, 2021 – \$36.00 **Building Fund:** Sept. 25 & 26 – \$2,189.24

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

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., September 29 – 68 **Total**

BLAST/Confirmation: 51

Adult Class: 2

Support Staff: 15

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.*

♦ **GLUTEN-FREE WAFERS:** For those who are allergic to gluten, we will have a few gluten-free wafers available at communion. Please tell Pastor when coming forward, “Gluten-free, please.”

** **NOTICE REGARDING BULLETINS:** Please take your bulletin home after worship. If you do not wish to take your bulletin home, please place it in the recycling container after worship. We will **not** be reusing them for the next service. Thank you! **

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

♥ **Women of JOY:** Women of JOY Bible Study will meet **Monday, October 4, 2021** 6:00-7:30 PM in the Gathering Place of Gerri Hackfeld's home, 3234 FM 109, Columbus, to **begin a new study** on Discerning the Voice of God by Priscilla Shirer. You can purchase the bible study book on any christian website or amazon. *Jesus Others Yourself.*

+ **FALL BIBLE STUDY:** Are these really the end of times? Are we witnessing the biblical times leading up to the Apocalypse? How do we interpret The Revelation of John? What is the difference between Apocalyptic and Prophetic Literature in the Bible? **This year's mid-week Fall Bible Study series will be led by Pastor Alan in the sanctuary on Wednesday October 6, 13 and 20 from 5:30-6:30 PM.** It is my prayer and encouragement for at least 100 of our members to attend these three classes. Not predicting like a prophet, just hopeful. – *Pastor Alan*



ZACH'S HOPE: Zach's Hope CureSearch Run/Walk will be held October 9, 2021 from 8:00-10:00 AM at Columbus Memorial Stadium. All funds raised will be donated to CureSearch, whose mission is to end children's cancer with targeted and innovative research. If you would like to participate and have questions, contact Wendy Page at 979-732-1756.

Communion Instruction: Youth in the 5th grade are invited to attend the next milestone in their Christian education. Communion Instruction is a formal teaching on the Sacraments of the Altar and will begin the process of getting students ready for confirmation ministry. Students will meet on **Sunday, October 17, 2021 from 12:15-2:00 PM** in the fellowship hall. Lunch will be served. Whether you are already taking communion or have waited for this class, all 5th graders are encouraged to attend. Parents are invited to attend with their child as well so they may continue the conversations at home. Please let Stephanie Polasek know if you plan to attend by contacting her at 979-732-1858 or stephaniepolasek@yahoo.com.



Kids are invited to wear their costume to church on **Sunday, October 31, 2021** to the 10:00 AM worship service. Following worship (around 11:20 AM), kids will be invited down to the fellowship hall to get read for Trunk or Treating while our trunks get ready. 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 candy are wanted!**** If you would like to be a part of setting up your trunk and handing out candy to our youth, please sign up in the narthex or contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858. *Decorated trunks and dressed up members are encouraged but not necessary to participate.*



Church Robo-Calls: Our church uses a Robo-Call system occasionally when we have to get a message out to the congregation on very short notice (like canceling worship because of icy weather) or as a reminder about important congregational meetings. The **phone number associated with the service we use is 888-996-3623**. When you see that number, it is a call from St. Paul Lutheran Church. Please answer/listen to the message. It would be a good idea to list this number as one of your contacts in your phone or write it down and keep it close to your landline phone so that you know it is a call from one of the church staff or council members of St. Paul. Thank you!

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Mon., Oct. 4 – 9:30 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Evangelism Team (library)
6:00-7:30 PM – Women of JOY Bible Study (Hackfeld Family Room)

Tues., Oct. 5 – 12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
5:30 PM – Prayer Team (library)
6:30-8:00 PM – The Gathering

Wed., Oct. 6 – 9:00 AM – Chapel
12:00 PM – Ministerial Alliance
5:30 PM – BLAST & Confirmation Class
5:30 PM – Pastor Alan's Fall Bible Study (sanctuary)
6:00 PM – High School Youth

Thurs., Oct. 7 – Stephanie to Youth Ministry Network
6:00 PM – Youth & Education Team (library)
6:00 PM – Property Team (choir room)

Fri., Oct. 8 – 11:00 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)
6:00 PM – Wedding Rehearsal

Sat., Oct. 9 – 8:00-10:00 AM – Zach's Hope (Memorial Stadium)
2:00 PM – Wedding
7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

Next Sun., Oct. 10 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

Next Mon., Oct. 11 – Office Closed! (Columbus Day)
6:00-7:30 PM – Women of JOY Bible Study (Hackfeld Family Room)

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Monday, October 4, 2021 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.

Monday, October 4, 2021 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.

Wednesday, October 6, 2021 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.

Thursday, October 7, 2021 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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SERVICE OVERVIEW: WHO WOULD JESUS BLESS TODAY?

Many Bibles call today’s service theme “Blessing the Children” or “Jesus Welcomes the Children.” In reading such a heading, we might begin to imagine a sentimental scene in which Jesus is surrounded by adorable children. When we think about children being blessed in our churches today, we might imagine children gathering around the altar or at the front of the worship space for a children’s time, in which the pastor or worship leader would say a prayer with them and give them a blessing. The parents and others may also be gathered just behind the children, smiling in adoration of these young ones.

However, we cannot view the scene from Mark’s gospel with only our modern understanding of the role and place of children in society. The life of many children in North America is one of relative privilege, with carefree days in which they often experience the care and love of grown-ups. Jesus, by bringing the children to him, identifies himself with those who were among the most vulnerable and helpless in society. In ancient times, children often were treated like property. They had few protections from those who would treat them badly. But Jesus came into the world for ones such as these children. Who, in our communities, is in the place of the children of ancient times? As Christ’s church, do we provide a place of welcome and care for the most vulnerable and weak in our society?

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Most of us are so accustomed to the feel-good passage about little children that we sometimes miss the shock of its counter-cultural assertion that God’s kingdom belongs to its weakest members. Welcome to worship! Hear both law and gospel. We who cannot seem to fully obey continue to receive a welcome at the table.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer tells us that we, too, belong to those whom Jesus loved, and loves, and will love. Love is not a private affair but is at the center of the world. It is easy to ruminate on Jesus’ judgments and any private shame they may engender, but remember that Jesus’ standard for human relationships is a circle that goes beyond words and laws to child-centered actions of faithfulness. In what ways do you see Jesus’ love at the center of our faith community? In the biblical world, a child was the least and had no independent status. Jesus takes children seriously, and as his followers we are called into the big work of clearing a path for their spiritual development. One of the most welcoming things we can do for children, indeed for all people, is to call them by name. This assures them that we see them, we remember them, and we connect them in the web of community.

The phrase “exact imprint” referenced in the reading from Hebrews can be translated as “engraving” or “stamp.” Its root word in English is “character.” What experiences are engraved, or stamped upon, believers? How is God’s glory imprinted on Jesus of Nazareth? How is God’s glory imprinted on us?

True partnership is our goal, and a goal of many of today’s readings, but for many of us it’s elusive. It’s a hard place to get to because of the way we see the world. Children are open, trusting and receptive to instruction. They have little experience, but their hearts are aimed at

pleasing those who care for them. We must make an effort to approach Jesus, and be careful not to stand in the way of those trying to reach out. Receive the kingdom of God as a child: helpless, without claim, without merit.

KID STUDY:

Someone loves and cares so much for you that they brought you to church today! You have people in your life that want you to learn about Jesus and His love for you, and people who want to help you develop your spiritual gifts so you’ll learn how to care for your neighbor. One day Jesus was teaching his disciples, and a large crowd of other people were following Him to hear what He was saying. As Jesus was teaching, people started to bring their children to Him so He could touch them. The disciples didn't like these children interrupting Jesus. They told the people to get their children away. Jesus was very upset. "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them," Jesus said. "The kingdom of heaven belongs to these little ones." Then Jesus took the children in His arms and blessed them. We should love all people just as Jesus loves us. Always remember how Jesus loved the children, took them into His arms, and blessed them. Nobody is more important or less important to Jesus when it comes to loving each other. We’re thankful for each of you here today and thankful for the love shown to you that brought you here.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

For the morally conscious, all divorce, particularly divorce in a marriage, is an experience of one’s weakness and finitude and death. Particularly when people have striven so hard to find life and strength in their promises, divorce becomes so intensely a painful death, for divorce is the failure of the future. Both partners are cut through; the victims are the whole people involved. The Pharisees were tested in their testing. Faithfulness is suddenly much more than a matter of acceptable times and appropriate rituals. Faithfulness and adulterated partnership intertwine at the creation of one humankind, male and female. But turning aside from the Pharisees, Jesus blesses the children. The powerless, the least, those without means to secure passage, the ones whose lives are sundered from the society, those who stand under the experience of their own brokenness, all these hearts dried up, Jesus takes into and under the waters of death and blesses them. - Jann Esther Boyd [Jann Esther Boyd Fullenwieder, in Homilies for the Christian People, 344.]

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Next Week’s Theme (October 9 & 10): The challenge of following Jesus

Next Week’s Scriptures (October 9 & 10):

First Reading: Amos 5:6-7, 10-15 *“Turn from injustice to the poor, that you may live.”*

Psalm: Psalm 90:12-17
“So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.” (Ps. 90:12)

Second Reading: Hebrews 4:12-16 *“Approach the throne of grace with boldness.”*

Gospel: Mark 10:17-31 *“Teaching on wealth and reward.”*