

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

September 10 & 11, 2022

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Senior Pastor Alan Kethan Home: (979)-942-9060 Cell: (830)-708-1200
Deacon of Word and Service Sandye Fletcher
Youth & Family Specialist Stephanie Polasek
Music Minister Robert Eaton
Congregational Chair Donna Maas
St. Paul Christian Learning Academy Director Briana Bedford
Secretary Elena Holub
Custodian Tomasa Rosales
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator DyAnn Lauzon
Organist Joan Hunsicker

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

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

The grumbling of the religious leaders in today's gospel is actually our holy hope: This Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them. That our God seeks and saves the lost is not only a holy hope, it is our only hope. As the writer of 1 Timothy reminds us, "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Thanks be to 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 the holy Trinity, † one God, who is eager to forgive and who loves us beyond our days.

C Amen.

P Dear friends, together let us acknowledge our failure to love this world as Jesus does, 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 of mercy and forgiveness,

C **we confess that sin still has a hold on us. We have harmed your good creation. We have failed to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you. Turn us in a new direction. Show us the path that leads to life. Be our refuge and strength on the journey, through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend. Amen.**

P Beloved of God: your sins are forgiven † and you are made whole. God points the way to new life in Christ, who meets us on the road. Journey now in God's abiding love through the power of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

* HYMN ELW - #807 "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

1. **Come, thou Fount of ev'ry blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace; streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise. While the hope of endless glory fills my heart with joy and love, teach me ever to adore thee; may I still thy goodness prove.**
2. **Here I raise my Ebenezer: "Hither by thy help I've come"; and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home. Jesus sought me when a stranger, wand'ring from the fold of God; he, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.**
3. **Oh, to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be; let that grace now like a fetter bind my wand'ring heart to thee. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love. Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.**

CCLI Song #108389 Words: Robert Robinson Music: John Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part II, 1813
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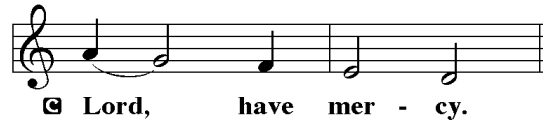
* **GREETING**

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

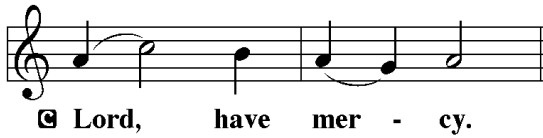
C And also with you.

* **KYRIE** *(Responses Sung)*

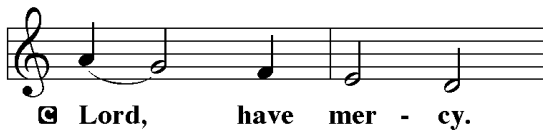
P In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



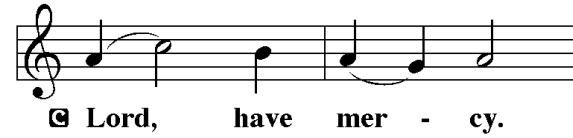
P For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



P For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



P For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.



P Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.



* **HYMN OF PRAISE:**

P This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia.



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us

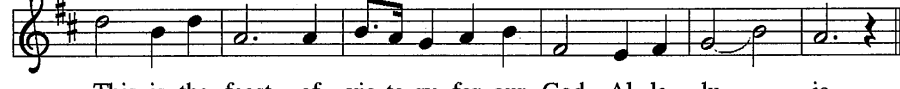


free to be peo - ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P O God, overflowing with mercy and compassion, you lead back to yourself all those who go astray. Preserve your people in your loving care, that we may reject whatever is contrary to you and may follow all things that sustain our life in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Exodus 32:7-14

A Our first reading is from Exodus, chapter 32, verses 7-14.

While Moses is on Mount Sinai, the people grow restless and make a golden calf to worship. Today's reading shows Moses as the mediator between an angry God and a sinful people. Moses reminds God that the Israelites are God's own people, and boldly asks for mercy for them.

The reading begins:

⁷The LORD said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; ⁸they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" ⁹The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. ¹⁰Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation." ¹¹But Moses implored the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹²Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people.

¹³Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" ¹⁴And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 51:1-10

A The Psalm today is from Psalm 51, verses 1-10. We will read the Psalm responsively. The congregation will please respond by reading the words in bold print.

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

²**Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.**

³For I know my offenses, and my sin is ever before me.

⁴**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

⁵Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my mother's womb.

6Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me, and would have me know wisdom deep within.

7Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

8Let me hear joy and gladness; that the body you have broken may rejoice.

9Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.

10Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

SECOND READING: 1 Timothy 1:12-17

A Our second reading is from 1 Timothy, chapter 1, verses 12-17.

The letters to Timothy and Titus are called the pastoral epistles because they contain advice especially intended for leaders in the church. Here the mercy shown to Paul, who once persecuted the church, is cited as evidence that even the most unworthy may become witnesses to the grace of God.

The reading begins:

12I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, **13**even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, **14**and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. **15**The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the foremost. **16**But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. **17**To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

A Please stand as you are comfortable for the gospel.

* **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** (Sung)



* **GOSPEL:** Luke 15:1-10

Jesus tells two stories that suggest a curious connection between the lost being found and sinners repenting. God takes the initiative to find sinners, each of whom is so precious to God that their recovery brings joy in heaven.

P The holy gospel according to St. Luke, chapter 15, verses 1-10.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

1Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] **2**And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

3So he told them this parable: **4**“Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? **5**When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. **6**And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ **7**Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. **8**“Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? **9**When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ **10**Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

SATURDAY: Pastor Alan Kethan

SUNDAY: Deacon Sandye Fletcher

* **HYMN** ELW - #502 “The King of Love My Shepherd Is”

- 1. The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his and he is mine forever.**
- 2. Where streams of living water flow, my ransomed soul he leadeth
and, where the verdant pastures grow, with food celestial feedeth.**
- 3. Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, but yet in love he sought me,
and on his shoulder gently laid, and home, rejoicing, brought me.**
- 4. In death's dark vale I fear no ill, with thee, dear Lord, beside me,
thy rod and staff my comfort still; thy cross before to guide me.**
- 5. Thou spreadst a table in my sight; thine unction grace bestoweth;
and, oh, what transport of delight from thy pure chalice floweth!**

**6. And so, through all the length of days, thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise within thy house forever.**

CCLI Song #1442453 Words: Henry Williams Baker, 1821-1877 Music: Irish tune
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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 OF INTERCESSION

A As scattered grains of wheat are gathered together into one bread, so let us gather our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of God's good creation.

A brief silence.

A Your people receive mercy and your grace overflows in our lives. Fill your church with faith and love, and give understanding hearts to those who work to strengthen our ecumenical and interreligious commitments. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

A Your work is done in this congregation with our hands, feet, voices, minds, and hearts. Build up the ministries of this community, that we serve our neighbors and welcome the stranger in your name. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

A We pray for peace in Ukraine. Help to end this war and the destruction of lives and your creation. Change hearts, bring peace and show the world your existence. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

A We pray for the families and friends of Larry Poenitzsch and Heather Felty Hobbs who passed away this past week. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time. 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: Jeanette Guasto; Aiden Wicke; Jerry Brown; 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, Jerry Ordner; Michael Yancey; Bubba Bencal; Al Gene Canik; Jane Veghaus Taylor; George Wright; Elrose Kollatschny; Sarah Stancik; Sandy Mosley; Charlene Tesch; Cynthia Coufal; Jeffrey McDaniel; Karen Bailiff; Julian Divin; Nancy Biers; Angie Beggs; Pam Potter; Charlie Hammock; Brad Bryson; Lynette Frnka; Riana Jamison; Jenna Escamilla; Margaret Ortiz; Keith Korth; Jodi Sebesta; Cathy Siglow; Paul Casinger; Fran Gillett; Tiffany Murley; DeQuincy Lister; Angela Mazoch; Lily Presswood; Denise Lange; Doug Mason; Dr. Tom Hancher; Joe Berry; Gracie Brune; Margaret Rogers; Leonard Kahlden; Curtis Wallin; Megan Burch; Jennifer Aleman; Lisa Grazier; Phyllis Behrend; Jessica Mauchlen; Donna Tiner; Libby Divin; Diane Brooks; Bob Loy; Stanley King; Monty Gillett; Dawn Foster; Edward Halcolm; Amber Smith Kutach; Louis Camacho; Melvin Schobel; Janet Greene; Sabrina Galindo; Debbie Grimes; Horst Traub; Margie Fisk; Preston Carter; Penny Miller; Carl Hahn; Megan Cain; Amanda Fuchs; Cyndi Wallace; Karen Broussard; Donna Young; Sharon Heimann; and Brenda Baker.

C hear our prayer.

A We pray for all expectant mothers, and especially for: Mallory Dungen Cook; Jessica Johnson; and Ashley Dungen 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, Lydia Rojas; Adrian Fritsch; Don Morrison; Verna Coufal; Doug Hill; John Zwiengel; Robert Saunders; Coy Dell Schindler; Deanna Lee; Barbara McMath; Linda Munos Rodgers; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Delores Purcell; Jane Booker; Curtis Berger; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Robert Eaton; Ronnie Rogers; Joyce Dehmer; and Donna Dehmer.

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: Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; Luke Kanz; Bruno Flores; Zane Weido; Josh Jones; as well as Donnie Templeton and Jason Templeton who are also fire fighters. For all fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers and 9-1-1 dispatchers, especially

Brent Gorman, Sr.; Brent Gorman, Jr.; Reid Brasher; Dusty Dittmar; John Maertz; Ron Luedke; Pastor Alan Kethan; Kristi Weyand; Eric Weyand; Bradley Berger; Jon Berger; James Chollett; Edward Thraen, Jr.; Garrett Flores; Kyle Burris; Dylan Walcik; Randy Wendt; Travis Neuendorff; Brenda Henkes; and Jan Willette, as well as those active duty military members including Brian Anderson; Michael Graham; Bryan Kubena; Brad Bergfeld; Cody Jowers; Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Ryan Neisner; Anthony D'Angelo; Dalton Kapel; Kindra Dawson; William Phillips; and Kevin Gonzalez.

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 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. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

A Your blessed saints who have died now rest in your presence. Give us thankful hearts for those who have been examples of faith in our lives, and receive us with joy when we come to share eternal life with you. God of grace,

C hear our prayer.

P Gathered together in the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit, gracious God, we offer these and all our prayers to you; 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 Gracious God, in your great love you richly provide for our needs. Make of these gifts, our offerings, a banquet of blessing, and make us ready to share with all in need; through Jesus Christ, who sets a table for all.

C Amen.

* **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 Christ invites you to this table. Come, taste and see.

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.}

*** 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 God of the abundant table, you have refreshed our hearts in this meal with bread for the journey. Give us your grace on the road that we might serve our neighbors with joy; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

*** BLESSING**

P God, who gives life to all things and frees us from despair, bless you with truth and peace. And may the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, guide you always in faith, hope, and love.

C Amen.

*** HYMN ELW - #676 "Lord, Speak to Us, That We May Speak"**

1. Lord, speak to us, that we may speak in living echoes of your tone;
as you have sought, so let us seek your straying children, lost and lone.
2. Oh, lead us, Lord, that we may lead the wand'ring and the wav'ring feet;
oh, feed us, Lord, that we may feed your hung'ring ones with manna sweet.
3. Oh, teach us, Lord, that we may teach the precious truths which you impart;
and wing our words, that they may reach the hidden depths of many a heart.
4. Oh, fill us with your fullness, Lord, until our very hearts o'erflow
in kindling thought and glowing word, your love to tell, your praise to show.

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879, alt. Music: Robert Schumann, 1810-1856

*** DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. You're never lost because of Jesus. C Thanks be to God, and we will.

POSTLUDE

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USHERS: SAT: Harvey Poenitzsch; JoAnn Venghaus; Emily Frank

SUN: Danny Kautz; David Stancik

LAY READERS: SAT: Pastor John Hunsicker

SUN: Curtiss Schonenberg

ACOLYTES: SAT: Henry Jones

SUN: Madison McRee

STREAMING:

SUN: Janel Barten

SOUND: Robert & Sydney Eaton

ALTAR GUILD: Dyana Booker and Tina Morrow

WELCOME: We welcome everyone to St. Paul Lutheran Church, where all my share in worshipping God and growing in faith.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by the Lighthill Family in loving memory of Mahlon Lighthill who passed away September 14, 2021.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Lawrence Dungen and family for the loss of his niece Heather Felty Hobbs. May God comfort them during their time of loss.

COLLECTION OF OFFERING: Offering for the worship services is collected before and after worship. Offering bowls are placed in the back entrance and inside the side sanctuary door for you to place your offering in. This includes "Power of One" dollars.

Amount needed for average weekly budgeted expenses: \$8,405.00


Attendance: Sept. 3 & 4, 2022 – 190 **Contributions:** Sept. 3 & 4 – \$8,562.28
Power of One: Sept. 3 & 4, 2022 – \$51.00 **Building Fund:** Sept. 3 & 4 – \$1,827.12

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.

**** NOTICE REGARDING BULLETINS:** Please take your bulletin home after worship. We will **not** be reusing them. 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! ☺

 **Senior Explorers to the Astros!!** Hey, Sr. Explorers! Let's go cheer on our Houston Astros at their last home game before playoffs. We'll depart from St. Paul on **Wednesday, October 5, 2022** at 11:00 AM for a 3:10 PM game against the Phillies. **Tickets should be \$25-\$40.** We will stop for lunch or pie along the way. We plan to take our new bus with great A/C. Drop off and pick up will be as close to Minute Maid as possible. Please sign up by Sunday, September 11, 2022 so we can lock in and purchase tickets. Sign-up sheet is in the narthex. Please call Kevin Page at 979-732-0845 with any questions.

Women of JOY: The Women of JOY Bible study group will start back **Monday, September 12, 2022.** We will meet every Monday at **6:00 PM in the Hackfeld Gathering Room.** Our topic will be "Living a Chocolate Life", and it is a 6-8 week study. Only the book by Deb Burma is needed for the group and can be purchased from Christianbook.com or Amazon. A daily devotional is optional to purchase for your personal use. **Wait!! Don't start reading yet!** We will meet the first

week with a light-hearted discussion and a chocolate surprise provided by the host – that's me! Looking forward to our weekly studies. – Gerri (979-732-4711)



The **Noon Bible Study group** that meets on Tuesdays will resume meeting Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at noon in the church library. Hope to see you there!

Manna for Moms: Every mom experiences a myriad of emotions – joy, love, the frightening, yet terrific reality that you are responsible for a little dependent. This new small group is for moms to come together for devotion and support. *Every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month,* moms are invited to meet in the **Lighthouse from 10:00-11:30 AM.** **The next meeting will be Thursday, September 22, 2022.** Child care for non-school aged children will be provided by our "Church Moms/Grandmas". For more information or to RSVP, please contact Courtney Busselman at 361-894-4050.



THE MARRIAGE COURSE: 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 4 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. **The Course will run seven Sundays in a row, beginning October 2, 2022 and concluding November 13, 2022. It runs from 6:30-8:30 PM.** Cost for materials, workbook and seven meals is \$150 a couple. Scholarships are available. In order to offer this course to our community, I am in need of Team members to help in the following areas: Advertising; Course Hosts; Administrator; Room Stylist; Technical Team; Caterer – Meals; Additional hosts – Servers; Set Up and Take Down; Registration; and Child Care. See the sign-up sheet in the narthex hallway. Thank you! – *Pastor Alan*

► **Thrivent Choice Dollars:** A friendly Lutheran reminder and request. If you are a Thrivent member and are eligible to have Choice Dollars, you have the ability to designate those funds to your choice of organizations. **Please make St. Paul Lutheran Church your choice.** We actually use these funds for very meaningful church endeavors. But, *you* must call or mail in this choice **every year between January and March 31** or they will send your dollars to the charity of *their* choice. Please call them at 800-847-4836 each year and ask them to direct your Choice Dollars to St. Paul. Thank you!

**** Volunteers, please step forward!** We need volunteers to comprise the reestablished **St. Paul Lutheran Financial Review Team.** We need at least three congregational members to make this happen. The term is for three years, but we will start up again with a 1-year term member, a 2-year term member and a 3-year term member. You do not have to have a background in finances, but a sincere desire to serve the best interests of the congregation of St. Paul is highly

recommended. If you have any questions, please contact Donna Maas at 713-775-6408 or any council member. To submit your interest to serve, please contact Donna Maas, any council member or Elena in the church office. God bless all of our many volunteers, and thank you! **

♥ **Grief Support Group:** Are you experiencing grief from the loss of a loved one, loss of a job, loss of friend who has moved? The Grief Support Group is a place to share and discuss these issues with other individuals. The group meets the **third Thursday of each month from 5:30-6:30 PM in the church library.** For questions or more information, contact Peggy Geisler at 979-732-0350.

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Mon., Sept. 12 – 10:30 AM – Staff Meeting
6:00 PM – Women of JOY Bible Study (Hackfeld Family Room)

Tues., Sept. 13 – 9:00 AM-12:00 PM – Quilters (Lighthouse)
12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
5:30 PM – Stewardship Team (library)

Wed., Sept. 14 – 9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
1:30 PM – Neighbor-to-Neighbor Quarterly Meeting (library)
5:00 PM – Meal
5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation, & Wed. Night Adult Bible Study

Thurs., Sept. 15 – 5:30 PM – Grief Support Group (library)

Fri., Sept. 16 – 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study

Sat., Sept. 17 – 7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship

Next Sun., Sept. 18 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School & Confirmation
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Tuesday, September 13, 2022 John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, died 407
John was a priest in Antioch and an outstanding preacher. His eloquence earned him the nickname "Chrysostom" ("golden mouth"). Appointed bishop of Constantinople, seat of the empire, he criticized corruption in the court. As a result, he was exiled by the empress.

Wednesday, September 14, 2022 Holy Cross Day

Helena, mother of Constantine, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and found what may be the actual site of Jesus' crucifixion. Her son built two churches there, and the dedication of one of them gave rise to this celebration of our Lord's victory on the cross.

Friday, September 16, 2022 Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, martyr, died around 258

Cyprian served as a bishop during a time of great persecution of Christians. He insisted on receiving back those who had left the faith under duress. He also provided medical care during a severe epidemic.

Saturday, September 17, 2022 Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, died 1179

A mystic who was widely influential within the church, Hildegard advised and reproved kings and popes, wrote poems and hymns, and produced treatises in medicine, theology, and natural history. She was also a musician and artist.

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SERVICE OVERVIEW: LOST AND FOUND

Today's readings give witness that God has a heart for losers. God reconciles with the idol-worshipping people of Israel. The risen Lord calls the violent, blasphemous persecutor, Paul. The faithful shepherd rescues the wandering sheep and carries it home. The woman who lost one of her ten silver coins searches for it until she finds it. Similarly, God doesn't abandon people even when people abandon God. The cross and resurrection testify to God's faithfulness in that regard. God rescues strays one by one, making the first move to find the lost and create new hearts in them. In the first reading, when Moses holds God to promises already made in the covenant, the breathtaking picture emerges of a God so committed to relationship that God is influenced (changed) by what people need and ask. This faithfulness of God, shared with overflowing grace in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus, is patient, forgiving, energetic, and ready to celebrate. Take the bread and cup! Jesus hosts the worshiping assembly again this week to welcome sinners and eat with them! Suddenly, "sinner" is no longer the best name for us. Try "guest," "graced," "gifted," "loved," and "empowered." Then it's time to follow Jesus out of the gathered assembly and into the world as apprentices for the work of finding missing persons. We find the lost and the broken and give them an invitation to come home.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Today we hear about things that receive God's merciful attention: the ancient Israelites, St. Paul, a lost sheep, and a lost coin. Welcome to worship! We are the lost sheep and the lost coin. We celebrate as a gathered community that we have been found in Christ. Ask for forgiveness and receive it. All are welcome at the table.

Sheep are a familiar image for Christians, but comparing ourselves to a lost coin and that Christ is the woman sweeping is a far less common metaphor making us consider (possibly with discomfort) the image of God as female. The religious leaders in today's gospel are concerned about purity, division, and appearance. Jesus responds to the religious leaders' condemnation of who he keeps company with by asking them to see through the eyes of a shepherd and a woman, helping them to break free from their place of condemnation to a place of empathy.

Do *you* grumble at God's welcome of the outsider? All people have value, even people you may describe as "lost." Our culture of individual freedom and our individual attitudes of what constitutes piety or worthiness makes it uncomfortable for many in the church to "sweep" with great care and perseverance for those who are lost. Are *you* also concerned about purity and appearance? Why? How can *you* break free from a place of condemnation to a place of empathy?

Jesus shows us through his life on earth what it means to be the kind of shepherd portrayed in today's parable. Jesus seeks the sinner, the sick, the oppressed, and those on the margins of society. His life is an invitation for us to have this same disposition toward the world. We should be constantly working to identify our own biases so we can see the world as others see it without judgment. We should be constantly trying to understand another person's feelings based on their experiences, not our own opinions.

As usual, Jesus's parables turn our conventional way of thinking on its head. If we were financial managers, it would hardly make sense to throw a party for finding a lost coin that likely exceeds the value of the coin itself. But the coin is not lost just anywhere – it is lost *within the house!* Without that one lost sheep, our community is incomplete. The sheep's return means restoration for the whole community. It does not make sense to devote such effort for such a small ratio of return until you understand that *wholeness is part of holiness*. In the seeking and finding, wholeness is restored. Holiness is manifest.

KID STUDY:

Today, Jesus tells two stories about people who have lost something very important to them. The first story Jesus told was about a man who had a hundred sheep. One of his sheep strayed away from the flock and became lost. Every single one of the man's sheep was important to him, so he left the ninety-nine others and went to search for the one lost sheep. When he found it, he was so happy that he called all of his friends together and said, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep." Next, Jesus told a story about a woman who had ten silver coins. Each of the coins was worth a day's wages. The woman counted her coins, "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. Oh no! I have lost one of my coins," she cried. Do you know what she did? She turned on every light in the house, swept the floor, and searched until she found the one lost coin. When she found the lost coin, she called all of her friends and neighbors together and said, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin."

Jesus told these two stories to demonstrate God's love for us. We are God's children, but sometimes we get lost. When that happens, God doesn't give up on us. God searches for us and won't stop until we are found. In fact, the Bible tells us that God sent his son, Jesus, to seek and save the lost. Do you feel lost sometimes? Ask for help from your family or your church family. Do you know anyone who feels lost? Reach out to that person and be their friend. Let them know that Jesus loves them.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

Loving God, finder of lost sheep, Friend to sinners and rejects; We look to your son, Jesus, the embodiment of perfect Love. We confess that we have been so preoccupied with the ninety-nine that we have overlooked the one. We confess that we have judged and marginalized, pushed to the fringes those beloveds whom society has rejected. If we have been the one rejected or lost, Help us to forgive the ninety-nine. If we have rejected our own selves, or deemed ourselves unworthy of your attention, let your love find us. If we, in our pain, have been resistant to your love, blaming you for our rejection, open our eyes to the truth of your welcome. Grant us now hearts of compassionate mercy, full of lovingkindness. May we go out into the world, offering

hope, offering mercy, offering love, offering an invitation to a joyful feast: The Kingdom of God, open to all. - "Litany For Lost And Found" by Fran Pratt

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Next Week's Theme (Sept. 17 & 18): The dishonest steward

Next Week's Scriptures (Sept. 17 & 18):

First Reading: Amos 8:4-7

"Warnings to those who trample on the needy and poor."

Psalm: Psalm 113

"The LORD lifts up the poor from the ashes." (Ps. 113:7)

Second Reading: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

"One God, one mediator – Christ Jesus – who gave himself for all people."

Gospel: Luke 16:1-13

"A shrewd manager: faithful in little, faithful in much; serving God/wealth."