

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

Sunday, January 22, 2023 9:00 AM

Third Sunday after Epiphany

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			Donna Maas
St. Paul Christian Learning Academy Director			Briana Bedford
Secretary			Elena Holub
Custodian			Tomasa Rosales
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator			DyAnn Lauzon
Organist			Elena Holub

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

Jesus begins his public ministry by calling fishers to leave their nets and follow him. In Jesus the kingdom of God has come near. We who have walked in darkness have seen a great light. We see this light most profoundly in the cross — as God suffers with us and all who are oppressed by sickness, sin, or evil. Light dawns for us as we gather around the word, the font, and the holy table. We are then sent to share the good news that others may be “caught” in the net of God’s grace and mercy.

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 makes all things new, whose mercy endures forever.

C Amen.

P Trusting in God’s mercy, let us confess our sin, first privately then together publicly.

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

P Holy One, source of our renewal,

C we confess that we are wrapped up in sin, and cannot free ourselves. We have not practiced your righteousness. Our hearts, at times, have turned away from you. For the sake of the world you so love, forgive us, that we may be reconciled to one another for the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P Thus says our God: “The former things have come to pass and new things I now declare.” God’s mercy makes us new. We are forgiven in the name of ☩ Christ our Savior.

C Amen.

* **HYMN ELW - #661 “I Love to Tell the Story”**

1. I love to tell the story of unseen things above,
of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story, because I know it's true;
it satisfies my longings as nothing else would do.

REFRAIN:

*I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.*

2. I love to tell the story: how pleasant to repeat
what seems, each time I tell it, more wonderfully sweet!
I love to tell the story, for some have never heard
the message of salvation from God's own holy word. **REFRAIN**

3. I love to tell the story, for those who know it best
seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song,
I'll sing the old, old story that I have loved so long.

REFRAIN:

*I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.*

CCLI Song #29413 Words: Katherine Hankey Music: William Fischer
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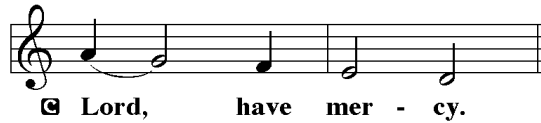
* **GREETING**

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

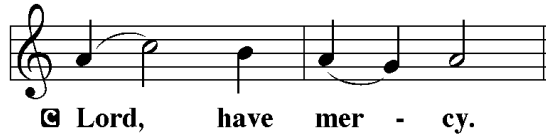
C And also with you.

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

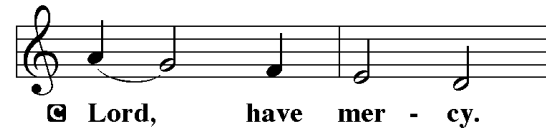
P In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



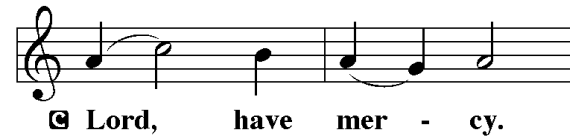
P For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



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 Lord God, your lovingkindness always goes before us and follows after us. Summon us into your light, and direct our steps in the ways of goodness that come through the cross of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:1-4

A Our first reading is from Isaiah, chapter 9, verses 1-4.

The northern tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali experienced the gloom of defeat by Assyrian military forces, but they are assured that their condition will be reversed when God makes a light-filled appearance. The joy they will experience will resemble celebrations of great harvests, because God will deliver them from everything that diminishes or oppresses them.

The reading begins:

¹There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time [the LORD] brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. ²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 27:1, 4-9

A The Psalm today is from Psalm 27, verses 1 and 4-9. We will read the Psalm responsively. The congregation will please respond by reading the words in bold print.

¹The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

⁴**One thing I ask of the LORD; one thing I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life; to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek God in the temple.**

⁵For in the day of trouble God will give me shelter, hide me in the hidden places of the sanctuary, and raise me high upon a rock.

⁶**Even now my head is lifted up above my enemies who surround me. Therefore I will offer sacrifice in the sanctuary, sacrifices of rejoicing; I will sing and make music to the LORD.**

⁷Hear my voice, O LORD, when I call; have mercy on me and answer me.

⁸**My heart speaks your message — “Seek my face.” Your face, O LORD, I will seek.**

⁹Hide not your face from me, turn not away from your servant in anger. Cast me not away — you have been my helper; forsake me not, O God of my salvation.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

A Our second reading is from 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, verses 10-18.

Paul calls on the Corinthians to end their dissensions and share the unified outlook of the gospel. Discord arises when we forget that we belong not to human leaders or institutions but to Christ. Indeed, the unifying word of the cross of Christ is the center of the gospel and the power of God's salvation.

The reading begins:

¹⁰Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. ¹¹For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. ¹²What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." ¹³Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. ¹⁸For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

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:** Matthew 4:12-23

Jesus begins his public ministry shortly after John the Baptist is imprisoned by Herod. He proclaims the nearness of God's reign and calls four fishermen to be his first disciples.

P The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 4, verses 12-23.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

¹²Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: ¹⁵"Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles — ¹⁶the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." ¹⁷From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ¹⁸As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. ²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

* **HYMN ELW - #798 "Will You Come and Follow Me"**

1. "Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?"

Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?"

2. "Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?"

Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare, should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer pray'r in you and you in me?"

3. "Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?"

Will you set the pris'ners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?"

4. "Will you love the you you hide if I but call your name?"

Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?"

5. **Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.**

CCLI Song #4668756 Words: John L. Bell Music: Scottish traditional
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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 Called together to follow Jesus, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

A Make your church one in purpose, proclaiming the message of the cross. Help us to work together across differences. Energize ecumenical partnerships, including the World Council of Churches and Lutheran World Federation. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

A We rejoice at the bounty of your creation. Fill the land and sea with your abundance. Bless harvests in the southern hemisphere and fallow fields in the northern hemisphere. Equip farmers to till and keep the earth sustainably. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

A In Christ your reign comes near and calls all to repentance. Break the rod of the oppressor in every nation. Dispel the shadow of death in places of war and persecution. Grant us leaders who lift the yokes that burden those in need. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

A Be a stronghold for those in trouble and a rock for all who are afraid. Rouse communities to care for neighbors who need shelter, are facing maltreatment, or are isolated and lonely. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

A Sustain the ministries of this congregation and all churches in this community. Nurture each congregation's unique witness to your presence; foster mutual respect; inspire our cooperation in loving our neighbors. Merciful God,

C receive 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. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

A We pray for the family and friends of Deanna Lee. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

A We pray for Bennett Ross Gorman who was baptized in our church this weekend. Bless his parents, godparents, and family. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

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

Marilyn Oevermann; Margaret Miller; Deacon Sandye Fletcher; Debbie Yancey; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you *(Pause)*. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

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

Lydia Rojas; Catherine Poppe; Rodney Hackemack; Larry Stolar; Vivian Fortenberry; Rick Davis; Mack Machacek; Hines Harrison; Darryl Stancik; Jerry Ordner; Michael Yancey; Bubba Bencal; Al Gene Canik; Jane Venghaus 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; 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; 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 receive our prayer.

A We pray for all expectant mothers, and especially for:
Ashley Dungen; Magen Schindler Altieri; Katie Pagel Walcik; Kelsey Kethan McNeely; and
Montana Appelt that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find
comfort and peace. Merciful God,
C receive 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.)* Merciful God,
Paul Minar, Sr.; Bobby Zajicek; Stan Lawson; John W. Brasher; Adrian Fritsch; Verna Coufal;
Doug Hill; John Zwiegel; Robert Saunders; Coy Dell Schindler; Barbara McMath; Linda
Munos Rodgers; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Delores Purcell; Jane
Booker; Curtis Berger; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Ronnie Rogers; Joyce Dehmer;
and Donna Dehmer.
C receive 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.) Merciful God,
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 receive 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. Merciful God,
C receive our prayer.

P We bring to you our needs and hopes, O God, trusting your wisdom and power revealed in
Christ crucified.
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.

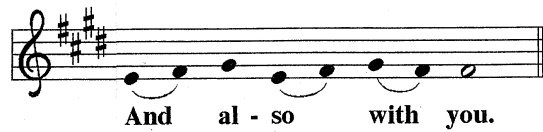
* **OFFERING PRAYER**

P Liberating God, you break the bonds of injustice and let the oppressed go free. Receive these offerings in thanksgiving for all your works of merciful power, and shape us as people of your justice and freedom. You we magnify and adore, through Jesus our Savior,

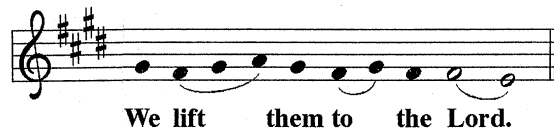
C **Amen.**

* **GREAT THANKSGIVING** (Responses Sung)

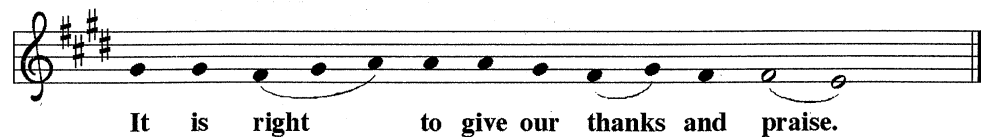
P The Lord be with you.



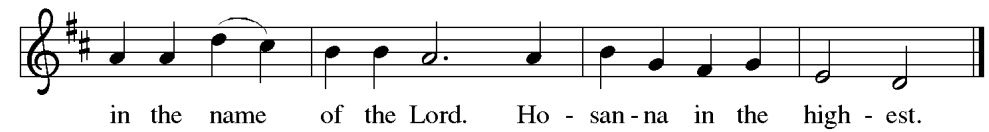
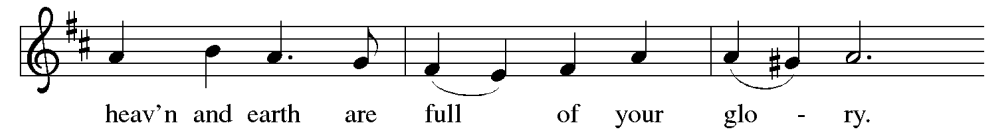
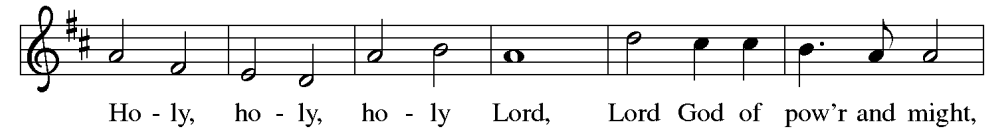
P Lift up your hearts.



P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



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



* **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**

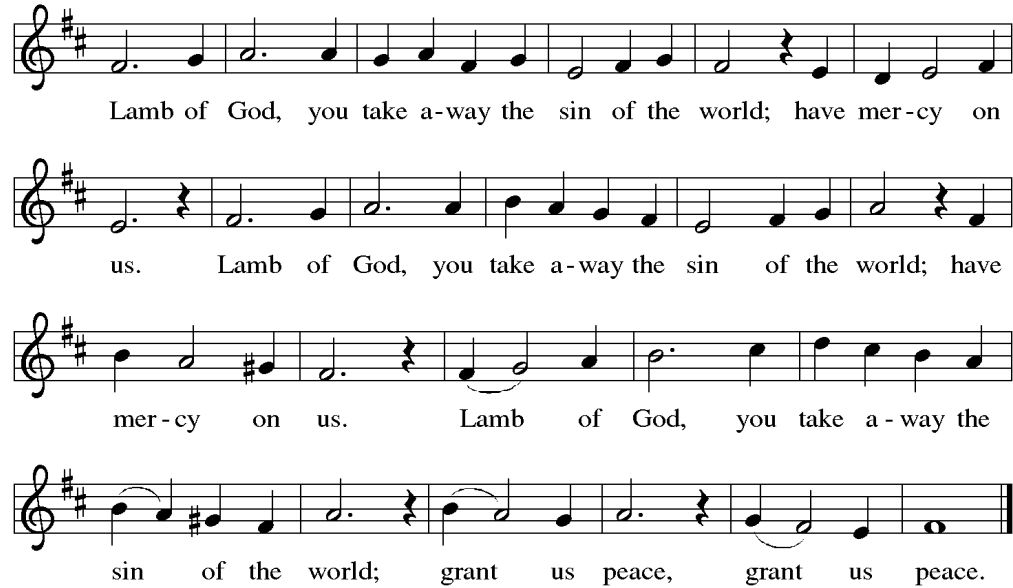
P Come and receive the one who calls you to follow.

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.}

(Sung)



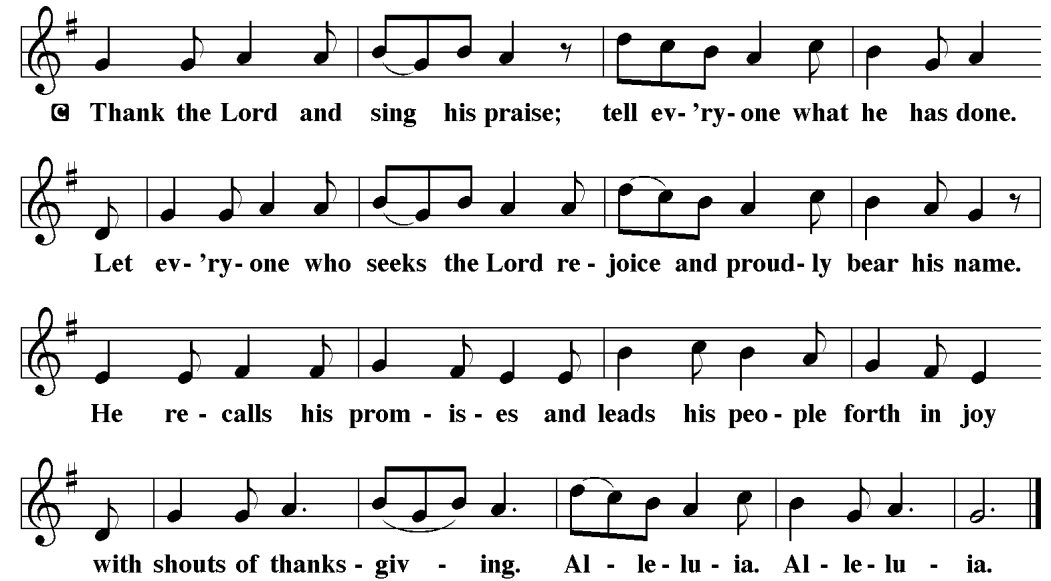
Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

(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 Holy One, we thank you for the healing that springs forth abundantly from this table. Renew our strength to do justice, love kindness, and journey humbly with you.

C Amen.

* **BLESSING**

P The God who faithfully brings forth justice and breaks the oppressor's rod † bless, strengthen, and uphold you, today and always.

C Amen.

* **HYMN ELW - #574 "Here I Am, Lord"**

1. "I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?"

REFRAIN:

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.*

2. “I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?”

REFRAIN:

**Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.**

3. “I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?” **REFRAIN**

Text and Music: Daniel L. Schutte Text and Music ©1981 OCP Publications, Inc.

*** DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Follow the way of Jesus.

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

POSTLUDE

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USHERS: Robin Maertz; Ruth Bedford; Emily Brod

LAY READER: David Johnson

ACOLYTE: Camdin Barten

STREAMING: Brian Lighthill

SOUND: Robert & Sydney Eaton

ALTAR GUILD: Janeen Venghaus and Kelly Zajicek

WELCOME: Family of God, welcome to worship, Christian education and fellowship at St. Paul Lutheran Church! Please extend a word of friendship to those sitting near you.

Congratulations to Jacon and Nancy Gorman on the baptism of their son Bennett Ross Gorman. Bennett was baptized Saturday, January 21, 2023 at the 7:00 PM service. Sponsors for John are Abel and Angela Gorman.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Joyce Dehmer and family for the loss of Joyce's sister Deanna Lee who passed away this past week. May God comfort them during their time of loss.

THANK YOU!! A big THANK YOU to all who purchased tickets and/or made a donation to our Peru Team fundraiser dinner. It was a huge success! We sold a total of 525 tickets – our total profit was \$3,353.72 counting ticket sales and donations. This money is earmarked for major improvements at our sister congregation's church in Cañete, Peru. We will be having another

drive-thru dinner on Tuesday, March 21, 2023. Watch for more information in the coming weeks! Thank you again for your support. – *Peru Team*

Thanks so much! Deacon Sandye had shoulder replacement surgery on Thursday, January 12. The surgery went well, and she is recovering at home. Sandye and Randy wish to acknowledge and “Thank” everyone who offered prayers, thanksgiving, support and food. She is in good spirits and progressing/healing well. Again, thank you for all your prayers prior to the surgery, during and following. – *Deacon Sandye* ☺

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: Jan. 14 & 15, 2023 – 213

Contributions: Jan. 14 & 15 – \$9,173.06

Power of One: Jan. 14 & 15, 2023 – \$71.00

Building Fund: Jan. 14 & 15 – \$450.02

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

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., Jan. 18 – **88 Total**

BLAST/Confirmation: 71

Adult Bible Study: 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.*



The 2023 Flower Calendar is now up in the narthex! It is hanging by the glass entrance doors. If you would like to have flowers in church on a certain weekend, please sign your name next to the date for that special weekend and write your phone number. Elena will call you the beginning of that week to remind you that you signed up for flowers and will ask for the occasion (such as birthday, wedding anniversary, in memory of someone, etc.) to put in the bulletin. The monthly newsletter will also have who signed up for flowers for the month. Thank you for adding beauty to our sanctuary and worship services!

**** YEARLY CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS:** The yearly Contribution (Giving) Statements for 2022 are ready! If you have not yet gotten your statement, please come by the church office to pick it up. They are in a box on the counter in alphabetical order. ******

God's Gals: God's Gals will meet **tonight at 6:00 PM at Los Cabos.** All women of St. Paul are invited for food, fellowship and laughter! Guest are always welcome!! Contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127 for more details. ☺

► The **Annual Congregational Meeting** will be held **Sunday, January 29, 2023 following the 10:00 AM worship service.** This will be a one-service Sunday. There will be regular worship service Saturday, January 29th at 7:00 PM. **Sunday, January 29th** Adult Sunday School and confirmation class will meet at 9:00 AM; **only one worship service at 10:00 AM.** It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that all voting members attend this annual meeting! ◀



Stew Meal: Following the annual congregational meeting, bring your family to The Lighthouse and enjoy a wonderful stew meal! **Members are asked to bring a large side dish, cornbread or dessert** to accompany the main course. If you and your family are planning to attend the meal, please sign the sign-up sheet in the narthex (foyer). We want to be sure there will be enough stew for everyone who attends. Deadline to sign up is Wednesday, January 25, 2023!!

► **New Members/Informational Class:** Are you interested in joining St. Paul Lutheran Church or just getting more information about the ministries here? If so, come to the next New Members/Informational Class on **Saturday, January 28, 2023 from 9:00-11:00 AM.** We will meet in the church library. Please let the church office (979-732-2423) or Pastor Alan (830-708-1200) know that you are planning to attend.

Men In Mission: Men In Mission is a group of men of all ages who meet at 7:00 AM on the first Saturday of each month in The Lighthouse. Breakfast is served, which typically includes conversations pertaining to sports, the arts, entertainment, and occasionally politics. We then have a short devotion, discussion, then close with the Lord's Prayer around 8:00 AM. If you are seeking a closer connection to the men of St. Paul, this is an excellent way to do so. You will make friends for life. Come join us on **Saturday, February 4!**



The St. Paul confirmation youth and high school youth will be attending Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp in Colorado this summer! They will be hosting their **annual Valentine Dinner on Friday, February 10, 2023 from 6:00-8:00 PM** in The Lighthouse. The students and their parents will prepare and serve chicken marsala on a bed of rice, salad, green beans, a roll and dessert. Grab a group of people, and come have dinner with us! Tables can seat 10 people, however, tables can be made to fit a bigger group if needed. Contact Stephanie Polasek for special reservations. Ticket are \$15 each and can be purchased before or after worship services from a student or can be purchased in the church office during the week. Can't dine in? We have To-Go tickets so you can enjoy the meal on the go. Deadline to purchase tickets is Sunday, February 5, 2023. Thank you for your support!

** **PERU TEAM:** Our next Peru Team meeting will be **Thursday, February 9, 2023 at 6:30 PM** in the church library. We will be finalizing dates for our trip and planning our next fundraiser. Please join us! **

♣ **Senior Explorers:** Mark your calendars for these **upcoming events:** February 9, 2023 we will be visiting the San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site and Museum. On March 22, 2023 our plan is to visit Reach Unlimited. Reach Unlimited provides programs and services for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Stay tuned to future weekly bulletins and monthly newsletters for more information!



Each year our youth participate in the **Souper Bowl of Caring** on the weekend of Super Bowl Sunday. The Souper Bowl of Caring empowers youth and unites communities to tackle hunger using the energy of the Big Game. Its vision is to transform the Big Game into a nationwide movement inspiring people to give locally and make a collective impact on hunger. This past year our Columbus Food Pantry served an average of 250 households, and St. Paul Youth raised \$773.30 for the food pantry on Souper Bowl of Caring weekend. This year our 4th-6th grade BLAST students will be collecting before each worship service on **Saturday, February 11 and Sunday, February 12, 2023** and at BLAST on Wednesday, February 15, 2023. So bring your change or bills and fill their pots! All donations will go to the Columbus Food Pantry. Thank you!

Offering Envelope Update!! In case you are looking for your 2023 Offering Envelopes or are wondering where they are, we have not yet received them. We usually receive them late in the fall so that we have them ready for you to pick up during Christmas. When asking about our order, the company has informed us that there have been production issues, such as difficulty getting rolls of paper, presses breaking down, and a long time to get parts to fix them. The company is hoping to have all orders out this month. It could possibly be into February. As soon as we get the envelopes, we will get them ready for you to pick up and let you know when and where to get them. In the meantime, please use the pew envelopes for your offering. You can also put your offering in a regular letter envelope. Which ever way you choose, we ask that you please put your name on the envelope, the date and designate if it is regular offering, communion offering, capital improvement, building fund, etc.. Thank you for your patience and understanding. – *Elena, offering counters, and Treasury Team*



Habitat for Humanity: The Outreach Team is in search of a Team Leader to represent St. Paul Lutheran Church for Habitat for Humanity. The churches in our community coordinate and build a couple of houses a year for our neighbors in need. **We need someone to represent St. Paul and be the liaison between Habitat for Humanity and our congregation.** You do not have to build the house yourself, but help coordinate our efforts. Please let Kevin Page know (979-732-0845) if you are interested or have any questions. Thank you, and thank you, God, for our most generous church family!

♥ **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., Jan. 23 – 10:00 AM – Staff Meeting
Tues., Jan. 24 – 9:00 AM-12:00 PM – Quilters (Lighthouse)
12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
6:00 PM – CLA Board
Wed., Jan. 25 – 9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
10:00 AM – Deacon Sandye to Columbus Oaks
2:00 PM – Deacon Sandye to The Oaks
4:30 PM – Confirmation (2nd yr.)
5:00 PM – Meal
5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation (1st yr.), Adult Class & HS Youth
Thurs., Jan. 26 – 10:00-11:30 AM – Manna for Moms (Lighthouse)
Fri., Jan. 27 – 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)
Sat., Jan. 28 – 9:00-11:00 AM – New Member Class (library)
7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship
Next Sun., Jan. 29 – 9:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
10:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
11:00 AM – Annual Congregational Meeting
12:00 PM – Stew Meal (Lighthouse)

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Wednesday, January 25, 2023 Conversion of Paul

The week of prayer begun by the remembrance of Peter's confession now comes to an end as we recall the pivotal moment in the life of the other pillar of the early church, the apostle Paul. His encounter with the risen Christ turned him from persecutor of the followers of Christ to one of their leaders.

Thursday, January 26, 2023 Timothy, Titus, and Silas, missionaries

These three early Christian men were missionary companions of the apostle Paul. Timothy became bishop of Ephesus, Titus bishop of Crete, and Silas was imprisoned with Paul at Philippi until they were delivered by an earthquake.

Friday, January 27, 2023 Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe, witnesses to the faith

Women as well as men were important Christian leaders from the beginning, as demonstrated by these coworkers of the apostle Paul. Lydia, a seller of purple goods, lent her home for a church; Dorcas was known for charitable works; and Phoebe was a deacon in the church at Cenchrae.

Saturday, January 28, 2023 Thomas Aquinas, teacher, died 1274

One of the most brilliant and creative theologians in the church's history, Aquinas worked to bring together scripture and the philosophy of Aristotle. A member of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), Aquinas was also a hymnwriter.

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SERVICE OVERVIEW: A NEW WAY TO FOLLOW

Nations wage war, gangs battle each other, families quarrel, communities of faith divide. We hear others say and even hear ourselves saying, "There is no other way." But in Jesus, the light of God's kingdom draws near and a new way shines for us to follow.

In today's gospel, Jesus first withdraws. The word *anachoreo* (to withdraw) is used ten times in Matthew's gospel - each time as Jesus' response to violence or conflict. John the Baptist has been arrested. The way of God is colliding with the way of the world's rulers, and tension is beginning to build.

In Jesus, a new kingdom has drawn near, a kingdom of nonviolence and non-retaliation. Jesus' withdrawal is not simply passivity but points to a vision of an alternate way of reigning as king. Jesus rules not with violence, abusive power, or through division but through voluntarily emptying himself of power, identifying with the oppressed and burdened, and healing that which is broken. Into this new reign, Jesus calls the disciples to follow him. This way appears foolish and weak to those who cannot discern it. To those God calls, it is the wisdom and strength, the light and power of God.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Jesus' call is like light shining into the darkness for his disciples. Rejoice in the light who is Christ! Around the table, the kingdom of God draws near; Jesus' broken body announces forgiveness, healing, peace, and unity. Many bodies are nourished and formed into the one body of Christ, called and sent to follow in the way of Jesus. Welcome to worship! Will you allow yourself to also be broken and shed for the sake of the world? Listen! Hear the call again.

When we follow, it implies someone is leading the way. The way God calls us to follow has already been filled with the loving kindness and mercy of Jesus who has gone before us and who leads us to the foot of the cross. There, in the shadow of the cross, God makes a way for unity in the midst of division, for healing in the midst of brokenness, for peace in the midst of violence, for forgiveness in the midst of betrayal.

The response many of us have to the invitation to discipleship is not so much "Yes" or "No," but "How?" We need guidance on how to follow Jesus. Guess what? You have leaders and mentors within the church to help with that. Sit down with Pastor Alan or Deacon Sandye if you are unsure of what you should be doing. St. Paul's Time and Talents sheet is chock full of things to do to get you started with the basics, but above all, regardless of your task, is to love God and love neighbor.

Think about the reading from 1 Corinthians in a more modern way: what is the contemporary version of announcing “I belong to Paul,” or “I belong to Apollos,” or “I belong to Cephas,” or “I belong to Christ?” Is it to say, “I was baptized Lutheran,” or “I was baptized Presbyterian?” Is it “I’m Christian and you’re not?” Paul invites us to remember we belong to the triune God.

KID STUDY:

Have you ever received an invitation to a party or to stay at someone’s house? Have you ever received an invitation to lunch? It’s special and exciting to be asked to be part of a group that shares an activity together. Jesus gives an invitation today, and it’s an invitation to serve. An invitation to serve is called a “call.” All of God’s people are called to do something. Some serve through their jobs. Some serve as volunteers in their churches and in their communities. Some people are called to serve as parents. No matter what you are called to do, you can make a difference in the world. We are all called by God to serve, no matter how old we are. Accept Jesus’ invitation to serve! Learn what special gifts you have to offer and use them to love God and love your neighbor.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

The saints will be within their Creator just as the fish are in the sea. They will drink all they want, without becoming tired and without lessening the amount of water. The more they receive of this sweetness, the more will be their hunger for it. For just as the waves all go toward the sea and all come back, just so the beauty and the sweetness of our Lord, even though they are poured forth everywhere, always return to him. And for that, they can never diminish. - Marguerite d’Oingt [Marguerite d’Oingt, trans. Richard J. Pioli, in Medieval Women’s Visionary Literature, ed. Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff (NY: Oxford, 1986), 292.]

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Next Week’s Theme (Jan. 28 & 29): Sermon on the Mount/Beatitudes

Next Week’s Scriptures (Jan. 28 & 29):

First Reading: Micah 6:1-8

“The offering of justice, kindness, humility.”

Psalm: Psalm 15

“LORD, who may abide upon your holy hill?.” (Ps. 15:1)

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

“Christ crucified, the wisdom and power of God.”

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

“The teaching of Christ: Beatitudes.”