

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

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July 2, 2023 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Fifth Sunday of 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
Congregational Chair			Donna Maas
St. Paul Christian Learning Academy Director			Briana Bedford
Secretary			Elena Holub
Custodian			Tomas Rosales
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator			DyAnn Lauzon

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

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

- *As we enter into a sacred time and space, a friendly reminder to please set your cell phone to vibrate.*
- ***We want to welcome all of our guests today and thank you for worshipping with us. If you have any questions or would like more information regarding our services, programs, day care, or preschool programs at St. Paul, please visit our Welcome Center in the narthex immediately following our service, and an attendant will be more than happy to assist you. If this is your first time at St. Paul, we hope you will take a gift along with you. We also have a gift bag for children.***
- Hearing Assist devices are available for those who need assistance in hearing worship service better. Please see a person in the Sound Room (Usher Room) to request the use of a device during worship.

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

INTRODUCTION

The welcome of baptism is for all God's children. This baptismal gift sets us free from the power of sin and death. In today's gospel, Christ promises that the disciple who gives a cup of cold water to the little ones serves Christ himself. From worship we are sent on our baptismal mission: to serve the little ones of this world and to be a sign of God's merciful welcome.

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.)

60 SECONDS OF STEWARDSHIP – Fellowship Team

* **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P We believe that the Bible contains instruction for us as followers of Jesus Christ to do what he asked of us. He taught the first disciples to help others to confess their sins and to proclaim to them the promise of forgiveness afterwards. So let us take a few brief moments in silence to open our hearts and minds to Jesus, to confess the things that weigh heavy on our hearts and the things we need help with so we might be more in line with what Jesus commands.

(Silence for private confession.)

P If you are truly sorry and asking God for help, here is the promise he commanded the leaders in his church to proclaim, "You are forgiven." May this forgiveness free you and help you to live; to live in Jesus' name.

C Amen.

GOSPEL SONG: HOSANNA (PRAISE IS RISING)

**Praise is rising, eyes are turning to You, we turn to You.
Hope is stirring, hearts are yearning for You, we long for You.**

CHORUS:

***'Cause when we see You, we find strength to face the day.
In Your presence, all our fears are washed away... washed away.
Hosanna! Hosanna! You are the God who saves us, worthy of all our praises.
Hosanna! Hosanna! Come have Your way among us!
We welcome you here, Lord Jesus!***

GOSPEL: Matthew 10:40-42

When Jesus sends his disciples out as missionaries, he warns them of persecution and hardships they will face. He also promises to reward any who aid his followers and support their ministry.

A The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 10, verses 40-42.

[Jesus said to the twelve:] ⁴⁰Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a

righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴²and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple — truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

GOSPEL SONG: HOSANNA (PRAISE IS RISING)

Hear the sound of hearts returning to You, we turn to You.

In Your kingdom broken lives are made new, You make us new.

CHORUS TWICE

'Cause when we see You, we find strength to face the day.

In Your presence, all our fears are washed away... washed away.

Hosanna! Hosanna! You are the God who saves us, worthy of all our praises.

Hosanna! Hosanna! Come have Your way among us!

We welcome you here, Lord Jesus!

END:

Come have Your way among us! We welcome You here, Lord Jesus!

Come have Your way among us! We welcome You here, Lord Jesus!

CCLI Song #4662491 Words and Music by Paul Baloche and Brenton Brown
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CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

St. Paul Youth

*** SERMON SONG: LORD, I NEED YOU**

Lord, I come. I confess. Bowing here, I find my rest.

And without You, I fall apart. You're the One that guides my heart.

CHORUS:

Lord, I need you, oh, I need You. Ev'ry hour I need You.

My one defense my righteousness. Oh, God, how I need You.

Where sin runs deep, Your grace is more. Where grace is found,

Is where You are. And where You are, Lord, I am free.

Holiness is Christ in me. REPEAT CHORUS

BRIDGE (twice)

So teach my song to rise to You when temptation comes my way.

When I cannot stand, I'll fall on You. Jesus, You're my hope and stay.

LAST CHORUS:

Lord, I need you, oh, I need You. Ev'ry hour I need You.

My one defense my righteousness. Oh, God, how I need You.

You're my one defense my righteousness. Oh, God, how I need You.

My one defense my righteousness. Oh, God, how I need You.

CCLI Song #5925687 Words and Music by Christy Nockels, Daniel Carson, Jesse Reeves, Kristian Stanfill, and Matt Maher.
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*** APOSTLES' CREED**

A With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

C **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;**

he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again;

**he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

(The congregation may be seated during the prayers.)

PRAYERS

A Trusting in God's abundant mercy, let us offer our prayers for a world in need.

A brief silence.

A We pray for this nation and all nations. For presidents, governors, and legislators. For judges, juries, district attorneys, and public defenders. For military personnel. For those who are incarcerated. Guide us in ways of freedom that promote the common good.

A brief silence.

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

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Lydia Rojas; Randy Wendt; Kaci Luedke; Edna Supak; Georgia Wavra; Dwain Dungen;
those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you.

A brief silence.

A We pray for those battling cancer, all expectant mothers, those who reside in care facilities and the homebound, all law enforcement officers, fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers, 9-1-1 dispatchers, and active duty military personnel.

{See all those we pray for on pages 8 & 9.}

A brief silence.

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.

A brief silence.

A Receive our prayers and answer us, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ.

C Amen.

*** PEACE**

P As Jesus shared peace, let us also share His peace with one another. *(Share the "Peace of the Lord" with your neighbors.)*

(We will be collecting offerings before and after worship each week. This includes Power of One dollars.)

OFFERING and POWER OF ONE

"Power of One" is a ministry sponsored by your Stewardship Team. We are asking each and every one of our members to give \$1.00 above what your normal giving would be. We are asking each member to place this \$1.00 bill or change in the offering plate each week. The team is also inviting all children to participate to develop the habit of giving as part of their worship experience. Parents, a penny, nickel, dime, quarter, or dollar bill, any of these will do to help your children develop a habit of giving. These "Power of One" dollars will be used to support local ministries and ministries abroad. The purpose of this ministry is to demonstrate that something as small as one dollar can be used to make a difference in the lives of others.

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

P God of field and forest, sea and sky, you are the giver of all good things. Sustain us with these gifts of your creation, and multiply your graciousness in us, that the world may be fed with your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

*** REMEMBERING JESUS' WORDS, PROMISES, AND COMMANDS**

*** 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 All people are called to Christ's table. Come, eat what is good.

C Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION (Continuous with Individual Cups)

{Distribution will be continuous. All are welcome for communion. Please come down the center aisle starting from the front. Follow directions of the ushers, coming up one side at a time. Pastor will hand you the bread. If you wish to have a gluten-free wafer, please tell Pastor "Gluten-free, please." Afterward, you will choose either wine or white grape juice from the individual cups in the tray – white grape juice in the center with wine surrounding. Place the empty cups in the baskets located off to the side. Although communion is continuous, you are welcome to kneel at the rail in prayer after receiving communion. Please return to your seat by the side aisles.}

*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P We thank you, generous God, for the refreshment we have received at your banquet table. Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world, through the one who is our dearest treasure, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

*** BLESSING**

P The God who calls across the cosmos and speaks in the smallest seed † bless, keep, and sustain you now and to the end of the age.

C Amen.

*** CLOSING SONG: A CUP OF COLD WATER**

**I was hungry and You gave me something to eat,
I was naked and You clothed me.
I was thirsty and You gave me something to drink,
I was sick and You were there for me.
And we say, "When, Lord, did we see You thirsty?
When, Lord, were you sick and cold? When, Lord,
Did we see You hungry? When, Lord? When, Lord?"**

CHORUS:

**“What you have done for the least of these, then you have done for Me.
A piece of bread for the lonely pilgrim, and for the thirsty . . .
A cup of cold water! A cup of cold water!
A cup of cold water! A cup of cold water!”**

Well I was lonely and You were a friend to me.
I was lost and You found me.
I was in prison and You came to sit with me.
I was a stranger and You welcomed me.
And we say, “When, Lord, did we see You lonely?
When, Lord, had You lost your way? When, Lord,
were You a prisoner? When, Lord? When, Lord?” **CHORUS**

BRIDGE:

When we love them, we love Jesus. When we hold them, we hold the Lord.
When we touch them, we're touching Jesus.
We've got to reach out and touch the world!
When we love them, we love Jesus. When we hold them, we hold the Lord.
When we touch them, we're touching Jesus.
Reach out and touch someone!

REPEAT CHORUS

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*** DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace with your reward.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

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USHERS: Kevin & Wendy Page; Youth

LAY READER: Youth

STREAMING: Janel Barten

SOUND: Todd Jacobs

ACOLYTE: McKayla Kahlden

POWER POINT: Dinah Jacobs

ALTAR GUILD: Barbara Brisco

WELCOME: As our nation prepares to celebrate its independence, we praise God for the freedom to gather for worship. Welcome to all.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Carol Lighthill in honor of her sons' birthdays – Brian on June 18 and Mark on June 27.

We are pleased to have St. Paul youth presiding over worship and sharing their message with us this morning. Thank you, youth!! ☺

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: June 24 & 25, 2023 – 144

Contributions: June 24 & 25 – \$16,235.18

Power of One: June 24 & 25, 2023 – \$50.00

Building Fund: June 24 & 25 – \$4,168.23

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.*

KEEP IN OUR PRAYERS: Those Battling Cancer: Debbie Herzik; Randy Wendt; Susan Chandler; Heather Deviney; Jaime Sawyer; Kim Moerbe Welack; Misti Retzer; Zelda Lanford; Michelle Thraen; Pauline Gosnell; Nina Naumann; GayLynn Willms Burk; Carl Norton; Laura Harris; Todd Foster; Cindy Tanner; Joe Reck; Melinda Rodiek; Melda Coleman; Donna Culton; Nancy Hartmann; Lydia Rojas; Larry Stolar; Vivian Fortenberry; Rick Davis; Darryl Stancik; Jerry Ordner; Michael Yancey; Al Gene Canik; Jane Venghaus Taylor; George Wright; Sandy Mosley; Charlene Tesch; Karen Bailiff; Julian Divin; Nancy Biers; Pam Potter; Charlie Hammock; Brad Bryson; Lynette Frnka; Riana Jamison; Jenna Escamilla; Margaret Ortiz; Keith Korth; Jodi Sebesta; Cathy Siglow; Paul Casinger; DeQuincy Lister; 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; Brenda Baker.

Expectant Mothers: Montana Appelt; Dina Anton de Espinoza; Olivia Leyendecker; Daya Latiolais; Cassidy Zajicek Parks; Courtney Busselman; Nancy Gorman; Camille Stancik; Kyndall Beettner.


Those in Care Facilities and Homebound: Alma Fletcher; Dr. Cecil Marburger; Joey Denby; Edwin Oevermann; Paul Minar, Sr.; Adrian Fritsch; Doug Hill; Robert Saunders; Coy Dell Schindler; Barbara McMath; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Jane Booker; Pat Brasher. **Homebound:** Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Ronnie Rogers; Joyce Dehmner; Donna Dehmer; Rita Noska; Cherie Moore.

Law Enforcement Officers: Charles Jobb; Joseph Smith; Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Donnie Templeton; Jason Templeton; Johnny Kovar; Abbigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; Bruno Flores; Zane Weido; Josh Jones. **Fire Fighters, First Responders, Healthcare Workers and 9-1-1 Dispatchers:** Brent Gorman, Sr.; Brent Gorman, Jr.; Reid Brasher; Donnie Templeton; Jason Templeton; 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; Jan Willette; and Terri Neuendorff. **Active Duty Military:** 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; Kevin Gonzalez; Cody Goolsby.

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

● **Notice:** The Adult Bible Study that meets on Fridays with Deacon Sandye is taking a brief summer break. Be sure to check upcoming weekly bulletins for when they will resume!

♪♪♪ **Why Can't We Sing Some of the "Old" Songs?** The Worship Team has heard your requests. We are going to sing some of those favorite hymns! **Throughout July, you can make suggestions.** Then, during the four weeks of August, we will try to sing as many of them as possible. We will even give you a little background as to why. . . when. . . by whom. . . the songs were written. (The story behind the hymn is often as interesting as the words of the hymn!) Did you know that most hymns are scripture based? **How Do I Make Suggestions?** Write your suggestion(s) on the paper provided in your bulletin and/or in the narthex and place it in the offering bowls before or after worship. Let's make a joyful noise signing those favorite hymns!

 **Attention Graduating Seniors and Current College Students:** This is a reminder that if you are planning to or are currently pursuing a degree in education *or* nursing, you are encouraged to apply for the Frank & Ann Derr Scholarship here at St. Paul. For an application, please see Ms. Stephanie or stop by the church office. Complete your application and return it to the church office **as soon as possible.**

◆ **LANDSCAPING:** St. Paul is in the process of forming a landscaping team with the purpose of making our campus more attractive and welcoming by planting an assortment of trees and shrubs in various locations. If you have knowledge of what trees and shrubs to recommend that would survive in our environment, we would welcome your expertise. If interested, there is a sign-up sheet in the narthex (foyer). If you have any questions, please contact John Brasher at 979-253-1448.

**** Colorado County Senior Connections ** –**

A place for Seniors, 65 years and older, to socialize with others.

The group meets at the Stafford Opera House – Columbus in the Buddy Rau Room from **10:00 AM-1:00 PM** the **1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month.** Lunch will be provided. Various activities will include: Card games/board games; Bingo; Movies; Educational Speakers; Field trips; and Social gathering time!

★ **VBS Decorating Work Days:** *Decorating for Vacation Bible School is quite a task and takes quite a bit of time. We are having another **work day every Monday in July 3 from 9:00 AM-1:00 PM.** We will be working **in the Lighthouse.** Please feel free to come and go. Sunday, July 2, 2023 we will decorate in the sanctuary from 1:00-5:00 PM following the 11:05 service. Any touch-ups and last-minute details will be done on Wednesday, July 5, 2023. Questions? Please contact Wendy Page at 979-732-1756. Your help would be greatly appreciated! ☺*



Senior Explorers are going on a cruise! We will **depart** from St. Paul at **7:30 AM** on Thursday, July 6. We will board the ship before 10:00 AM for a 90-minute Sam Houston Boat Tour. It will be a narrated, educational ride along the Houston Ship Channel. There is an outside deck and inside air conditioned area. Free tour and ride. One free beverage provided mid-cruise. Walkers are OK. **PHOTO ID REQUIRED.** You may bring water, but you cannot bring any other food or drink on board. We will stop for lunch on the way home and expect to be home about 3:00 PM. **We currently have 24 spots reserved.** Please sign up in the narthex (foyer) by Sunday, July 2, 2023. Please call Kevin Page at 979-732-0845 with any questions.

► **Escape Room Trip:** St. Paul **youth entering grades 6, 7 & 8** are invited to test their skills as a group at Armadillo Escape Room Adventures in Katy on **Monday, July 3, 2023.** We will **leave the church at 10:00 AM.** After our Escape Room experience we will have lunch and devotion before returning home. Come join us in learning how, even though we are different, we all have gifts and are a part of one body, the Body of Christ. **Cost per student is \$25.** RSVP by Monday, June 26, 2023 by contacting Stephanie at 979-732-1858.

Stellar VBS!! Mark your calendars for "Stellar" VBS! Join us at Vacation Bible School **July 10-14, 2023** as kids go on a cosmic quest and have a blast shining Jesus' light to the world! A meal will be served 5:30-6:00 PM, and VBS will be held 6:00-8:30 PM. VBS is open to children in preschool up to students who have completed 5th grade. Registration is free, however, t-shirts will be available to purchase for \$8 each. *Space is limited so register early!* Parents may register their students online by visiting vbspro.events/p/spfu2023. If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858 or by email at stephaniepolasek@yahoo.com.

● **VBS FOOD DONATIONS:** To help defray the cost, we are asking for donations to help with the meals served each evening before Vacation Bible School. We served about 200 kids and

volunteers *each night* of VBS last year. If you would like to help, you can either give a **monetary donation** or donate **specific food items**. For monetary donations, an envelope will be on the table in the narthex (foyer) that can be placed in the offering bowl. If you wish to donate specific food items, just pull a slip off the board and return it with the donation on the date specified to the St. Paul Lighthouse. If you have any questions, please contact Loraine Gast at 979-732-1296. Each donation is and will be greatly appreciated. Thank you!

TASTE OF COLUMBUS: Looking for something to do to beat the heat on a Friday night? Come support a great cause for your local community! The Boys & Girls Clubs of Champion Valley are hosting our Taste of Columbus fundraiser on **Friday, July 14, 2023** at the Columbus club, aka **The Southern Oaks Event Center**. **Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under**. Great local food, fun, music, silent and live auctions AND a raffle (even if you can't attend, you can still support our clubs and possibly win a great prize!). If interested in getting tickets in advance, please contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127 or you can purchase tickets at the door! HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!



Newman's Castle for 2nd & 3rd Graders! St. Paul students entering 2nd and 3rd grade this fall are invited to experience Newman's Castle in Bellville, Texas. On **Tuesday, July 25, 2023 we will leave** the church parking lot at **9:30 AM and return by 2:30 PM**. After exploring the castle and catapult, students will be served lunch and hear the story of Queen Esther. Please RSVP to Stephanie by Monday, July 17, 2023 at 979-732-1858.

♣ **Day Camp at Lutherhill!** Youth completing K-5th grade are invited to experience a week at camp without the over-night stay during the week of **July 30-August 4, 2023**. Camp starts each day at 8:00 AM and will end at 5:15 PM. Stephanie Polasek will shuttle youth each day to and from camp. We will leave the church at 7:20 AM and will return at 5:50 PM. **Cost is \$195 for the week**. Register online at lutherhill.org and then contact Stephanie at 979-732-1858 for transportation. It's always a great time for the kiddos!

♥ **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., July 3 – 10:00 AM – 6th-8th grade to Escape Room, Katy
1:00 PM – Deacon Sandye to TLC
6:00 PM – Evangelism Team (library)
Tues., July 4 – Office Closed!! (Happy Independence Day!)

Wed., July 5 – 9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
Thurs., July 6 – 7:30AM-3:00 PM – Senior Explorers to Ship Channel, Houston
10:30 AM – Pastor Alan to The Oaks
1:00-2:30 PM – Summer Craft Camp (Lighthouse)
5:00 PM – Worship Team (library)
5:30 PM – Youth & Education Team (library)
6:00 PM – Property Team (choir room)
Sat., July 8 – 7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship
Next Sun., July 9 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Monday, July 3, 2023 Thomas, Apostle

Though frequently remembered as "doubting Thomas," this apostle also demonstrated a willingness to suffer and die with Jesus (John 11:16), and finally claimed the risen Christ as "my Lord and my God!" By tradition, he later worked as a missionary in India. Long commemorated on December 21, Thomas's celebration is moved to July 3 in agreement with ecumenical calendars.

Thursday, July 6, 2023 Jan Hus, martyr, died 1415

Hus was a Bohemian (present-day Czech Republic) priest who spoke against abuses in the church, and was seen by Martin Luther as his predecessor in the reforming movement. He was found guilty of heresy by a council of the church, and burned at the stake.

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OTHER READINGS: Jeremiah 28:5-9

Through a symbolic action Jeremiah insisted that Judah and all the surrounding nations should submit to the king of Babylon (Jer. 27). Hananiah contradicted the word of Jeremiah, who in reply insisted that Hananiah's rosy prediction should not be believed until it came true. God confirmed the word of Jeremiah and sentenced the false prophet Hananiah to death (vv. 16-17).

The reading begins:

⁵The prophet Jeremiah spoke to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD; ⁶and the prophet Jeremiah said, "Amen! May the LORD do so; may the LORD fulfill the words that you have prophesied, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the LORD, and all the exiles. ⁷But listen now to this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. ⁸The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. ⁹As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes true, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet."

PSALM: Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18

¹Your love, O LORD, forever will I sing; from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness. ²For I am persuaded that your steadfast love is established forever; you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens. ³"I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn an oath to David my servant: ⁴"I will establish your line forever, and preserve your throne for all generations.'" ⁵Happy are the people who know the festal shout! They walk, O LORD, in the light of your presence. ⁶They rejoice daily in your name; they are jubilant in your righteousness. ⁷For you are the glory of their strength, and by your favor our might is exalted. ⁸Truly, our shield belongs to the LORD; our king to the Holy One of Israel.

OTHER READINGS: Romans 6:12-23

Sin is an enslaving power which motivates us to live self-serving, disobedient lives. Sin's final payoff is death. We, however, have been set free from sin's slavery to live obediently under God's grace, whose end is the free gift of eternal life.

The reading begins:

¹²Do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. ¹³No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. ¹⁵What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, ¹⁸and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. ²⁰When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. ²²But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: THE REWARDS OF RECEIVING

God does not always give us lives of joy and ease. Jesus' own faith journey included challenges: moments of sadness, grief, and betrayal. For us, a full life in Christ also includes these things. When we can acknowledge God's presence in every circumstance, our faith becomes integrated and sustainable through a lifetime. When our lives are identified with Christ, as disciples we can name the challenges in our own faith journeys as dimensions of Christ's story and purpose.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

A true prophet is not a fortune teller but rather the mouthpiece of God - proclaiming not what will be, but what is. Today's gospel is often called "The Sermon To The Sent Ones" offering words of encouragement to the disciples as they (and we) prepare to proclaim the gospel in new communities. Welcome to worship! Be inspired about the good news of life in Christ, then be a mouthpiece for God!

Can you identify with the readings today? In Jeremiah we encounter a community that knows its failures well and has at times felt far removed from God. In Paul's letter to the Romans, sin and the need to be good enough come to the fore. The gospel lifts up the disciples' fear of not being welcomed. In each scenario, insecurities come into play. These texts offer opportunities to delve into our personal and congregational insecurities. How do peace, grace, hospitality, and God's transforming presence move us forward in living fully as people of God?

The gospel proclaims welcome described as the gift of a cold cup of water to little ones. How can we as a congregation view ourselves as a place of respite for people striving to hear God's word in the world? In the midst of all that people experience, in what ways do you show "thirsty" that there is a place for them?

Today, our youth are leading worship! What an incredible gift to us, to the church, and to the world! Christian education at St. Paul is a weekly experience that touches many children and families in this community that are not even members of our church. The Wednesday BLAST program creates a real sense of community, encouraging our youth to develop a willingness to step out in faith. They learn to embody God's compassion for others, giving a voice and service to their faith. These children and their families set a great example for the rest of us as we are sent from worship to live the gospel.

KID STUDY:

Wow! Is it ever hot outside! What really refreshes us on a hot, sunny, summer day? Cold water! A dip in the pool, a spraying water hose or sprinkler, or a nice tall glass of ice water can make us feel great. Today Jesus reminds us that people need to be cared for. We need the same refreshment in our hearts that a cup of cold water provides to our bodies. Remember also that Jesus is the "living water" that refreshes our souls. He tells the disciples that when they welcome and care for everyone, they are speaking for God. What can you do to share with other people the good news that Jesus loves them to refresh their hearts? When we welcome and care for each other, we welcome Jesus.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

I told them I was like Jonah; for it had been then nearly eight years since the Lord had called me to preach his gospel to the fallen sons and daughters of Adam's race, but that I had lingered like him, and delayed to go at the bidding of the Lord, and warn those who are as deeply guilty as were the people of Nineveh. My sermon applied wholly to myself, and added an exhortation. God made manifest his power among the people. Some wept, while others shouted for joy. Here by the instrumentality of a poor colored woman, the Lord poured forth his spirit among the

people. Though there were lawyers, doctors, and magistrates present, to hear me speak, yet there was mourning and crying among sinners, for the Lord scattered fire among them of his own kindling. The Lord gave his handmaiden power to speak for his great name, for he arrested the hearts of the people, and caused a shaking amongst the multitude, for God was in the midst. - Jarena Lee [Jarena Lee, "The Religious Experience and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee, 1849" in *Spiritual Narratives*, ed. Sue E. Houchins (NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), section 2, 17-18.]

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Next Week's Theme (July 8 & 9): Come to me and I'll give you rest – Take my Yoke, it's easy and light

Next Week's Scriptures (July 8 & 9):

First Reading: Zechariah 9:9-12

"The king will come in humility and peace."

Psalm: Psalm 145:8-14

"The LORD is gracious and full of compassion." (Ps. 145:8)

Second Reading: Romans 7:15-25a

"The struggle within the self."

Gospel: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

"The yoke of discipleship."