



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

CHURCH AT HOME

Announcements:

Welcome to Trinity's worship resource for December 26, 2021, celebrating the First Sunday of Christmas.

Pastor Mike is currently on a medical leave of absence. If you have a pastoral emergency, please contact Pastor Jack Dressler - **519-250-7210**.

NOTE – There will be NO in-person service on Sunday January 2, 2022.

Thank you again for your support for Trinity. Please continue to mail in cheques, or drop them off in the church's mailbox or make your donation either through PAR or through the Donate button on the church's website, at "www.trinitylutheran.ca".

Introduction

On the first Sunday of Christmas we find the boy Samuel and the boy Jesus, both in the temple, both growing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and humankind. We too have returned to the house of God "to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God," who has gifted us with a savior. As the festival continues, "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." It is Christmas, still.

Worship

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all! **And also with you!**

Prayer of the Day

Shine into our hearts the light of your wisdom, O God, and open our minds to the knowledge of your word, that in all things we may think and act according to your good will and may live continually in the light of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading: 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Having dedicated her son Samuel to God's service, Hannah visits him every year when she and her husband Elkanah come to the temple to offer sacrifices. God grants Hannah more children, and Samuel himself gains favor in the sight of all.

¹⁸Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁹His mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year, when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. ²⁰Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the LORD repay you with children by this woman for the gift that she made to the LORD"; and then they would return to their home.

²⁶Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and with the people.

Psalm: Psalm 148

¹Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise God in the heights.

²**Praise the LORD, all you angels;
sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

³Praise the LORD, sun and moon;
sing praise, all you shining stars.

⁴**Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens,
and you waters above the heavens.**

⁵Let them praise the name of the LORD,
who commanded, and they were created,

⁶**who made them stand fast forever and ever,
giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

⁷Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps;

⁸**fire and hail, snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

⁹mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars;

¹⁰**wild beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds;**

¹¹sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the world;

¹²**young men and maidens,
old and young together.**

¹³Let them praise the name of the LORD,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

¹⁴**The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-17

Just as newly baptized Christians in the early church were clothed with new garments upon arising from the baptismal waters, so all who have received God's gift of life in Jesus Christ are covered with the character of Christ.

¹²As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:41-52

Jesus grew up in a family that went to the Passover festival each year. It was in this environment of faithful adherence to the law that Jesus grew into spiritual maturity and an understanding of his identity and mission.

⁴¹Now every year [Jesus'] parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look,

your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.”⁴⁹ He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he said to them.⁵¹ Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.
The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

The Sermon: Focus on a Godly Family (written by Rev. Paul Rydecki of the Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Las Cruces, New Mexico)

In these times, when we’re surrounded by so many lies, so much propaganda, when so many things happening to us and around us are totally out of our control, what do you do? What do you do, as Christians? Well, first, you trust God, because nothing is out of His control. And then, you turn your attention toward the little things God has called you to do according to your vocations. First and foremost, you turn toward the vocation of attending to your family, whatever your family situation may be, whether you’re parents or children or brothers or sisters, or even as part of a church family, since, as Paul said in today’s Epistle, **we who are many are one body in Christ, and we are, each one, members of one another.** So even if there’s nothing else you can do to heal this world in its death spiral, there is something useful you can do. You can focus on a godly family. We learn some things about that today from the holy family: Mary, Joseph, and the boy Jesus at age 12.

Luke tells us that Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem every year at the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the festival. We learn something very important here about godly parenting from Mary and Joseph, from their own faithful attendance at the Jewish festivals, at very least the Passover, which required a journey that no one listening to this sermon today has ever undertaken to get to a church service, I guarantee it. They traveled, on foot, for four days—four roughly ten-hour days of walking—one way, just to get from Nazareth to Jerusalem. And although the text only mentions this journey when Jesus was 12, I think the context suggests that He went along with them before that. Either way, they faithfully attended and participated and made sure Jesus also participated. And that also certainly included their weekly attendance at the synagogue, every Sabbath Day, since we’re told that, when Jesus was older, it was “His custom” to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath. And, when He eventually preached His one sermon at the

synagogue in Nazareth, everyone there in the synagogue knew Him and His mother and father and brothers and sisters, by name. We'll say more about that in a moment.

The holy family spent the customary number of days in Jerusalem, observing the feast, as the Law required them to do, and then the caravan of people—relatives, friends, neighbors—that had traveled down from Nazareth together left Jerusalem and started the days-long journey back to Nazareth. Joseph and Mary assumed that Jesus was in their company, hanging out with relatives or friends, but, in fact, He had stayed behind in Jerusalem, and it took them until the end of the first day's walk to realize that He wasn't there.

Now, did they make a parenting mistake in accidentally leaving Jesus behind in Jerusalem, in not making sure He was with them when they left? Maybe. But consider this: Jesus was the perfect Son, sinless in every way, completely trustworthy, and probably extremely predictable. (And this is one reason I think Jesus had gone with them to the Passover for several years before He was twelve, since, if it were His first trip there, they would reasonably be more cautious about His whereabouts.) But in any case, it's clear that Mary and Joseph were not like modern "helicopter parents," hovering around and doting on their children every moment, obsessing about their children's whereabouts at all times. And that's a good thing. They showed their Son an appropriate amount of trust for His age, and then stood back and allowed Him a degree of freedom. Even more importantly, they commended Him to the care of God the Father and didn't spend every moment worrying about Him.

When they did go to check on Him, though, they didn't find Him, and you parents can imagine the panic they must have felt, made even worse, because they probably had to wait till the next morning to turn back to Jerusalem, not daring to travel at night, and then it still took them till the third day to find Him, since they looked all over Jerusalem first, before finally retracing their steps back to the Temple.

There Jesus was at the Temple, no family or friends or relatives around, just Him and the rabbis. They found Him there, **sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions**, and obviously also answering their questions, since we're told that **all who heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers**.

Now, I've known twelve-year-old boys. In fact, I'm about to have another twelve-year-old boy in my house, in just a few weeks. It's hard to picture any of them doing this, and rightly so, because this is really the first epiphany of today's Gospel, a revelation of the hidden divinity of that particular twelve-year-old boy, who had such astonishing understanding of God and His Word because the worlds were made through Him, because He

was the Word who was with God in the beginning and who was God, because He had come from the bosom of God the Father to reveal God to mankind more brightly and more intimately than any prophet had ever done or could ever do. Even as a twelve-year-old boy, it was clear to all that He was no ordinary child.

But beyond Jesus' great, supernatural understanding of God and His Word, which can't be imitated, we see something else, something that can be imitated by twelve-year-old boys but rarely is—it's barely imitated by any of us. We see a zeal for knowing God and discussing the things of God, a deep, heartfelt love in Jesus for His Father's house and for His Father's teaching. The boy Jesus was the perfect embodiment of what the Psalmist once wrote, **Oh, how I love Your law. It is my meditation all day long.** Or again, **LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your glory dwells.** Or again, **How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God...For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.** Or again, **I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the LORD."**

It was in that setting that Mary and Joseph finally found Jesus. **When they saw him, they were amazed, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? See, your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." And he said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I had to be doing my Father's business?" And they did not understand what he said to them.**

Was it sinful for Jesus to remain in Jerusalem without His parents' knowledge or permission? Of course not. Scripture says He committed no sin. Why was there no sin involved here? First, we don't know exactly how things went down, but they obviously didn't tell Him to leave, so there was no rebellion or disobedience involved. Second, because young, 12-yr-old Jesus, as God, had a lesson to teach His earthly parents: Yes, He was their Son, but they needed to be reminded of His other identity and of His mission. And this is really the second epiphany in this account, as Jesus reminded His parents that He was the only-begotten Son of God, that, unlike other children, He had come to earth for a specific, God-given purpose: to do His Father's business. They needed to accept that in humility, even from their twelve-year-old Son, although they didn't understand what He meant at the time.

Then they all left together, and we're told that **He was subject to them.** Even though He was God, even though He was sinless and they weren't, Jesus submitted to them, because His Father had placed Him in their care and under their authority. We're also told

that **Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man**. Not by pandering to people or flattering people. Not by putting on a good show. But by being a genuinely pleasant young man, eager to help, respectful, kind, merciful, and devoted to God's Word, with a genuine love for God that showed in how He spoke and in how He acted.

This is part of what we call Jesus' "active obedience" as our Substitute. He did perfectly what God has commanded us all to do, except that we haven't. This is what saves us, together with Jesus' passive obedience—the things He suffered in our place. This is what earned our salvation, that Christ was righteous for us, even as a child, and now the Father counts His righteousness and obedience to all who believe in Him, as if it were our obedience, as if we had been perfect parents or perfect children.

But that doesn't mean that we are now free to disobey. On the contrary, we have a holy calling, as those whom God has counted as righteous, to **offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God**, as Paul wrote in today's Epistle.

So parents, be the fathers and mothers God has called you to be. As Paul writes, **fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord**. Spend time with them. Teach them whatever you can, including the chief parts of the Small Catechism. Admit your sins and mistakes and ask for forgiveness. Keep urging them, by word and by example, to grow into godly men and women who don't just attend church regularly, but who show a genuine interest in God's Word, a firm commitment to sound doctrine, and zeal for knowing God and discussing the things of God. And finally, commend your children to God and know that He loves them even more than you do.

Children, as Paul writes, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with a promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." Learn obedience. Learn to honor your parents, not just outwardly, but with your attitude and in your heart.

Children, young people, even adults, ask yourself is it your goal to imitate Jesus, to grow in wisdom as well as stature? To grow in favor with God and man? Not the favor of the cool crowd or of your friends, but of all people? In favor with your parents, your brothers and sisters, your fellow church members, your teachers, your classmates, your neighbors? You do that by being good, honest, dependable, humble, caring, and kind, by humbly admitting your sins and mistakes and asking for forgiveness, by devoting yourself to living as children of God in a godless world, who are eager to hear their Father's Word and do their Father's business.

You see, we all have plenty to work on, don't we?, no matter what else we can't work on or fix in this world. **Don't be conformed to this world**, as Paul says, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind**. May God help you to focus on a godly family during these trying times, even as He has brought you into His family through faith in Christ Jesus and loves and cares for you as a perfect Father. **Amen.**

Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

The Prayers of Intercession

Joining our voices with the heavenly host and Christians throughout time and space, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

You come to us in gatherings of your church across the globe. Unite us with those who celebrate your birth even when they are weighed down by grief, loss, poverty, hunger, or injustice. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You come to us in the diverse splendor of the universe. Grant us the humility to trust our place in the network of creation, that we live in service to you and the natural world. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You come to us through relationships of many kinds: families, friendships, communities, and nations. Guide us in these relationships, that we recognize the Christ child in one another and show your love to those most vulnerable. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You come to us through people whom the world forgets. Poor shepherds and an imprisoned Paul announced your good news. Send your Spirit to all who are imprisoned, struggling with addiction, unwell, or in any need this day. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You come to us in acts of justice and forgiveness. Open our hearts to forgive one another, without permitting injustice. Supply us with the wisdom to be clothed with love, binding all things together in perfect harmony. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of presence, bless those of this community who cannot be with us this morning, and those who walk with them, especially:

In Residence: Margaret; Maria; Stan; Katie; Katherine; Cordelle;

Needing our prayers: Peter; Brenda; Doug; Dorothy; Bill; Bev; Ed; Marilyn; Jordan; Audrey; John; John; Greg; Sam; Katie; Walter; Hart; Frank; Pastor Mike & Patti

Recovering: Katherine; Carol; Betty; Greg; Kati; Bill; Sharon; Mary;

And all those we name in our hearts...

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You come to us through those who have died yet live with you forever. We give thanks for Stephen, deacon and martyr, who gave his life to tell the story of your love. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Rejoicing in your Word made flesh among us, we commend these prayers to you, confident of your grace and love made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

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.

Benediction

The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Rejoice in Christ our Savior. **Thanks be to God!**