



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
[www.trinitylutheran.ca](http://www.trinitylutheran.ca)

## CHURCH AT HOME

### **Announcements:**

Welcome to Trinity's worship resource for January 23, 2022, celebrating the Third Sunday after Epiphany.

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

### **REMINDER – NO IN-PERSON WORSHIP ON THE FOLLOWING SUNDAYS:**

- **Sunday January 30**

**We will continue to update everyone as to when we will have in-person worship again (we are hoping for Sunday February 6).**

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](http://www.trinitylutheran.ca)".

### **Introduction**

God's glory is revealed in the reading of scripture. People stand at attention. People weep. People prostrate themselves in prayer. The unity of the church is another reflection of God's glory. Most gloriously, the promises of God are fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Gather round. Listen up. Glimpse the glory of God.

### **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**

Blessed Lord God, you have caused the holy scriptures to be written for the nourishment of your people. Grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that, comforted by your promises, we may embrace and forever hold fast to the hope of eternal life, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **First Reading: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10**

*The exiles have returned and rebuilt Jerusalem. Now Ezra, the priest, reads the law of Moses to them in the public square. When they hear it, they weep for their sins and for the long years in exile, but Ezra reminds them that “the joy of the LORD is your strength.”*

<sup>1</sup>All the people [of Israel] gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. <sup>2</sup>Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. <sup>3</sup>He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. <sup>5</sup>And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. <sup>6</sup>Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. <sup>8</sup>So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

<sup>9</sup>And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. <sup>10</sup>Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

### **Psalm: Psalm 19**

*The teaching of the LORD revives the soul.*

<sup>1</sup>The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims its maker’s handiwork.

<sup>2</sup>**One day tells its tale to another, and one night imparts knowledge to another.**

<sup>3</sup>Although they have no words or language, and their voices are not heard,

**<sup>4</sup>their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message to the ends of the world, where God has pitched a tent for the sun.**

<sup>5</sup>It comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber; it rejoices like a champion to run its course.

**<sup>6</sup>It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens and runs about to the end of it again; nothing is hidden from its burning heat.**

<sup>7</sup>The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.

**<sup>8</sup>The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes.**

<sup>9</sup>The fear of the LORD is clean and endures forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

**<sup>10</sup>More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.**

<sup>11</sup>By them also is your servant enlightened, and in keeping them there is great reward.

**<sup>12</sup>Who can detect one's own offenses? Cleanse me from my secret faults.**

<sup>13</sup>Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me; then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.

**<sup>14</sup>Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.**

### **Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a**

*The apostle and pastor Paul uses the metaphor of the human body to describe how intimately connected we are in the church. For this struggling congregation in Corinth, Paul delivers a vital message of unity that is a mark of the church today.*

<sup>12</sup>For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup>For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

<sup>14</sup>Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where

would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup>But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup>If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many members, yet one body. <sup>21</sup>The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." <sup>22</sup>On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup>and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; <sup>24</sup>whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, <sup>25</sup>that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup>If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

<sup>27</sup>Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. <sup>28</sup>And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup>Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup>Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31a</sup>But strive for the greater gifts.

**Gospel Reading: Luke 4:14-21**

*Near the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, he visits his hometown of Nazareth. In the words of Isaiah, he states and claims his identity, purpose, and mission.*

<sup>14</sup>Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. <sup>15</sup>He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

<sup>16</sup>When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup>and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

<sup>18</sup>"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free,  
<sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."  
<sup>20</sup>And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup>Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

***The Sermon: Good News, Bad News (written by David Schnasa Jacobsen, Bishops Scholar at the Boston University School of Theology – January 2019)***

We like to remember that the word 'gospel' means 'good news.' But the sad truth is that hearing good news doesn't always mean receiving the gospel. Hearing is not necessarily accepting. Seeing doesn't always mean believing.

Our scripture passage for this third Sunday after Epiphany comes from the gospel of Luke. The evangelist places the story immediately after Christ's baptism and temptation in the desert, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Jesus has already been teaching and performing miracles in other towns nearby, and his reputation has returned to his hometown of Nazareth.

This was one of those "hometown kid makes good" stories. You know the kind. Promising young man heads off to college and comes back a multi-millionaire because he invented something called Facebook while he was in school. Or, kid goes off to study engineering and a routine homework assignment becomes a cottage industry to employ homeless people in the manufacture of pop up shelters. That cute girl with the dimples and long hair who played second violin in your high school string quartet becomes chair of the FDIC. It's that sort of thing.

The neighbors and relatives who knew Jesus as a boy are eager to see him now, a grown man who has achieved some fame for doing remarkable things, especially in nearby Capernaum. So, on the Sabbath, everyone flocks to the synagogue, to hear this young preacher and to see if maybe he might perform one of those healing miracles they've heard about.

And, as was his custom on the Sabbath day, Jesus also goes to the synagogue to worship. The local religious leaders approach him the minute he comes through the door.

Would he be willing to read from a book of the Prophets, and perhaps share some insight into those words with the people?

Sure, he says. And they bring him a large scroll, which he carefully places on the reading desk. As he starts to unroll the scroll, all eyes are on him. Mary is trying hard not to show any emotion, but this is her boy up there in front of everyone. It's a long scroll, and it takes a while for Jesus to find the passage he has in mind, near the very end.

Ah, here it is.

*Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.*

*When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:*

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

*And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*

This is the season after Epiphany. Epiphany is when we celebrate how God has been revealed to us in the person of Jesus Christ, who came in human form and lived among us, Emmanuel.

We have used familiar symbols during this season such as water, to remember our own baptism, as we remember how John baptized Jesus. On Epiphany Sunday, we lit only the Christ candle, recalling that Jesus is the Light of the World. We hear once again Christ's call to carry that light into the world around us.

But symbols can sometimes distract us from the very things of which they are supposed to remind us. Our focus during this season after Epiphany needs to move from flame and water to what they represent: God revealed as present among us, and the evidence of that presence through the living power of the Holy Spirit.

Luke liked to talk about the Holy Spirit, In fact, Luke referred to the third person of the Trinity more than all the other evangelists combined. The name “Holy Spirit” appears 13 times in Luke’s gospel, and 41 times in Acts. Compare that to 5 occurrences in Matthew’s gospel, 4 in Mark’s, and only three in the Gospel of John.

In this chapter alone, we see Jesus:

- being filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism,
- led by the Spirit into the wilderness,
- returning to Galilee in the power of the Spirit,
- and proclaiming the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy that “the Spirit of the Lord” was upon him.

Clearly, the evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work in the life of Jesus was something Luke wanted to be sure his readers would notice.

So why didn’t the good people of Nazareth, Jesus’ own neighbors, see it?

They were obviously looking for some evidence of God’s Spirit. They’d heard the rumors from other towns in the area, especially up in Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee. This Jesus they thought they knew so well, had already gained quite a reputation as a teacher, so it isn’t surprising that they give him the scroll to read when he enters the local synagogue.

It was common practice for the teacher of the day to stand while reading the Scripture, then sit down to teach from it, and no one seems surprised when Jesus does this. In fact, they all seem to be eagerly listening to what Jesus might have to say about this ancient prophecy, which most people at that time thought probably referred to the year of Jubilee. The description of Jubilee back in Leviticus 25 sounded very much like “the year of the Lord’s favor.”

But let's go back to Isaiah for a moment. The original audience for this prophetic scripture was a group of people who had returned to Jerusalem after many years in exile. Rather than trusting and obeying God, the nations of Judah and Israel had become entangled in political struggles for power, and they had paid the price.

First Babylon, then Assyria, and finally Persia had overtaken them. Their cities had been destroyed, their temple had been demolished, and their people had been carried away into captivity. Generations had come and gone. Many of them had given up hope of ever seeing the land of Israel.

The remnant that had been left behind represented the poorest of the poor. Eventually, some of the Jewish exiles had been allowed to return to Israel, but those who had come to Jerusalem over the last hundred years or so weren't much better off than the ones who had stayed behind.

The Persian King had ordered the work of rebuilding to begin again, but not much had been accomplished. The temple was still in ruins, and the walls of the once-great city of Jerusalem were piles of broken stone.

Those who traveled from what was now Persia to what had once been Jerusalem were the descendants of Jews who had been taken into captivity centuries before. They had no real memory of the Temple, or of the city itself. All they had to go on were the stories that had been handed down to them. What they found when they arrived in Jerusalem must have been a shock. It didn't match their expectations, by any means.

But then, this prophet Isaiah started proclaiming the word of the Lord, and hope began to rise. Isaiah preached comfort to God's people, and they responded with eagerness to that message. When Jesus chooses this particular passage to read to the people of Nazareth, it was a reminder to all of them to hope again. They were living under Roman oppression, just as their ancestors had lived under oppression from the Babylonians and the Assyrians. They were ready for some good news.

These words have meaning for us now, just as they did for those exiles returning to Jerusalem, and for the people of Nazareth who heard Jesus say, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." And just as Christ offers us hope with these words, he al-



so calls us to be the ones who bring good news to the oppressed, who bind up the broken-hearted, who proclaim liberty and release, and who announce the Lord's favor and grace, available to all. Not just in the future, but now. **Today.**

Good news for some can mean bad news for others, especially in our current culture, where the gulf between those who have much and those who have little continues to grow. When it comes down to it, all the rhetoric we hear from politicians, all the arguments we see on social media, amount to nothing more than questions of justice. And justice almost always has to do with who has how much of what – whether it's wealth, or property, or power, or acceptance.

So, good news for the poor may mean bad news for the rich. Going back to the “year of the Lord's favor,” jubilee sounds great if it means you get your land back that was taken from you 40 years ago, but if you are the one accumulating wealth by buying up that land, not so much. This brings the gospel, the good news, to a whole new level. Good news for the oppressed almost always means bad news for the oppressor.

The hard part for most of us, is realizing that we actually participate in much of the oppression happening around the world today – by the things we buy, the privileges we enjoy, and the way we ignore suffering. Ouch.

But Luke shows us how to face this dilemma. Luke tells us in verse 20 that the people of Nazareth were listening intently as Jesus sat down to teach. “The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him,” Luke writes.

Imagine what it might be like to fix our eyes on Jesus! Because when we focus our attention completely on Him, we can also see our place in the world more clearly. Instead of letting our gaze settle on those things that irritate us, anger us, or cause us pain when we ponder them, we would see only Jesus, and the disagreements that divide us would lose their importance.

We would see the ways our lives impact others with greater clarity. When our eyes are fixed on Jesus, we can recognize our part in the systems that send out the false message that some people have more value than others, that some people deserve more than others – and we can start to do something to change those systems.

We can demonstrate in real and powerful ways that every human being has value and worth to God. “There are no disposable people in the kingdom of God.”

When our eyes are fixed on Jesus, good news is good news. We engage with Christ in the work of making what’s wrong with the world right. Issues of mercy and justice are no longer just issues we talk about – mercy and justice become real in the person of Jesus Christ, working through us.

Next week, we will hear how the people of Nazareth responded to this good news. We will hear them say, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” and it’s hard to tell if they are patting each other on the back for raising up such a fine kid in their village, or ... something else.

This is the season after Epiphany, when Christ is revealed as God among us. As we recognize the Savior’s presence, and fix our eyes and hearts on Him, may we point others toward Jesus and say to them, not ‘Isn’t this Joseph’s son?’ but rather, “Look, let me show you God’s Son. Believe the good news.”

### **Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

### **The Prayers of Intercession**

*The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.*

You reveal yourself to us in the reading of scripture. Fulfill your word through the faithful witness of your church. Send us out to bring your liberating good news to all people. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

All creation proclaims your handiwork. Teach us to love the intricate and beautiful bodies that you have created. Bless tiny insects, enormous whales, and every creature in between. Sustain species at risk of extinction. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You desire that there be no dissension among us. Where we are divided in our society, nation, or world, come quickly to reunite us into one body. Ease conflict, dispel violence, and bring an end to war. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Anoint with your Spirit all who seek your favor. Grant provision and justice for people living in poverty, people living with disability, those living with pain, or those living under oppression. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Build up the body of Christ in this place. Bless the variety of ministries in this congregation. Empower us to freely welcome and deeply value each person who enters into worship and ministry among us. God of grace, **hear 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

***In Hospital:*** Sharon B

***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; Mary

And all those we name in our hearts...

God of grace, **hear our prayer..**

In thanksgiving we lift before you the saints for whom the promise of salvation has now been fulfilled. Tend to those who mourn. Bring us together in your everlasting glory.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through 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**

God, who leads you in pathways of righteousness, who rejoices over you, and who calls you by name, bless your going out and your coming in, today and forever. **Amen.**

### **Dismissal**

Go with Christ into a weary world. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**