



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

CHURCH AT HOME

Announcements:

Welcome to Trinity's worship resource for January 30, 2022, celebrating the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

Bishop Pryse of the Synod has appointed Pastor Jack Dressler (519-250-7210) as our interim Pastor.

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

- **Sunday February 6**
- **Sunday February 13**

We anticipate in-person worship to resume on Sunday February 20 (we will continue to update everyone if we anticipate any further concerns).

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

The glory of God is often revealed when and where it is least expected. God uses our lips to declare that glory, inexperienced and hesitant though they may be. God uses our love to demonstrate that glory and so urges us to exercise it. God uses Jesus of Nazareth, water and the word, bread and wine, to reveal God's glory where and when God chooses. Take heed, lest the glory of God slip through our midst unnoticed.

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

Almighty and ever-living God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and love; and that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10

God calls Jeremiah to be a prophet and consecrates him in the womb. Jeremiah's task is to preach God's word amid the difficult political realities of his time, before the Babylonian exile. He is to make God known not only to Judah, but also to the nations.

⁴Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,

⁵"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

⁶Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy."

⁷But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy';
for you shall go to all to whom I send you,
and you shall speak whatever I command you.

⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD."

⁹Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me,
"Now I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

Psalm: Psalm 71:1-6

From my mother's womb you have been my strength.

¹In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame.

²**In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free;
incline your ear to me and save me.**

³Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe; you are my crag and my stronghold.

⁴**Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the clutches of the evildoer and the oppressor.**

⁵For you are my hope, O Lord GOD, my confidence since I was young.

⁶**I have been sustained by you ever since I was born; from my mother's womb you
have been my strength; my praise shall be always of you.**

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Christians in Corinth prided themselves on their spiritual gifts. Paul reminds them that God gives us many gifts through the Holy Spirit, but the purpose behind all of them is love, the kind of love that God showed us in Jesus Christ.

¹If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Gospel Reading: Luke 4:21-30

People in Jesus' hometown are initially pleased when he says that God will free the oppressed. Their pleasure turns to rage when he reminds them that God's prophetic mission typically pushes beyond human boundaries so that mercy and healing are extended to those regarded as outsiders.

²¹Then [Jesus] began to say to [all in the synagogue in Nazareth,] "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." ²²All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" ²³He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'" ²⁴And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. ²⁵But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe

famine over all the land; ²⁶yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” ²⁸When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

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

The Sermon: One Word, Two Reactions (written by Pastor Joshua Janke, Risen Savior Lutheran Church, McFarland Wisconsin – January 2019)

Our theme this morning is less a theme than it is an assertion, a challenge: when the Word of God is preached, there are only and always two reactions: faith and unbelief. There is no middle ground. There can be no cold, analytical, detached reception of the Word. You either hear the Word and rejoice in God’s mercy to sinners or you reject God’s grace and want to silence it. Whenever the Word of God is preached, it gets results, it always gets a reaction because it is living and active. It is the sharp double edged sword of Law and Gospel that never lays there dead, like a cadaver on an exam table. Try to cut into the Word of God and it will cut into you, dividing your soul and spirit, joints and marrow, the thoughts and attitudes of your heart. (Hebrews 4:12) Whenever the Word of God is proclaimed there are always two reactions, both in Israel and in us.

Now, you might be thinking: I’ve heard many sermons and opened up my Bible and read it many times – and quite often, I’ve had no reaction; nothing has happened. That is symptomatic of one of the biggest issues in the church today: the church has grown weary of the Word. Complacent. Bored even. Both preachers and hearers take the Word for granted and look for new and greater things. As hearers, our ears have been dulled by the noise of the world. Movies and music and media are engineered to make us sit down, turn our brains off and be passively entertained and amused. But hearing the Word of God demands active listening. It’s not like listening to your spouse recount their day while the TV is on, it’s like listening to the doctor tell you if the test results mean that you will live or die. Then there is “itching ear syndrome.” (2 Timothy 4:3) We want the church to have amazing programs and powerful, moving music and messages that are relevant, that give meaning to our lives, that solve all our problems and answer all

our questions, to tell us what we can do to make our lives better – and the Word of God doesn't scratch the itch. Finally, never-ending breaking news and weather alerts and viral videos have changed our brains; shortened our attention spans, weakened our ability to focus and concentrate and meditate. And so, if something can't be expressed in a 30 second video or 144 characters, we turn it off and tune it out. The result is that many Christians are more likely to have a shallow faith based on bumper stickers and clever slogans and Facebook memes than a firm understanding of the deep and unchanging Word of God.

And then you have preachers who have lost faith in the power of the Word; who trust their own wit and wisdom, their own personality and likeability to do what only the Word can do. They use the Word as a means to an end rather than the means of grace. An instrument – or weapon – to manipulate and mobilize and organize and patronize. Want to start a community social program? There's a Bible verse for that. Want to raise money? Beat people over the head with Scripture. Want to trumpet your righteous cause and vilify the opposition? Scripture is cited on both sides of almost any social issue. And this misuse and abuse of the Word can infect even our hearts, the hearts of those who stand on the Reformation motto of Scripture alone. Preachers preach and hearers hear the Word expecting it to change the world and the people out there rather than do what God promises it will do: change us. It's stupid really. It's stupid to sit here for an hour and expect it to change the world out there – instead of changing us. As stupid as taking a Tylenol and expecting someone else's headache to go away. And as a result, we become judges and critics of the Word rather than servants and students, measuring it in terms of visible results rather than invisible repentance.

Martin Luther warned his generation that the Word of God is like a passing downpour. It falls for a while in one place and the soil soaks it up. But then the soil becomes saturated and the water runs off and the clouds move on. Luther predicted the day when the Gospel would move on from Europe to other nations and continents – which has in large part happened. And some would say that the Gospel downpour is leaving our country as we speak. But for now, God has blessed us with the downpour of his blessings in the Word – and let us never take that for granted or grow bored with it. Because the Word remains the living and active wisdom and power of God. And whenever it goes out from human lips into human ears and minds and hearts, it does things. It kills and makes alive. It knocks us off our thrones and picks us up off of our knees. It fills the starving

and sends the rich away empty. (Luke 2:53) There is no neutrality when it comes to the Word of God. There is either faith or unbelief.

That was true in Jerusalem at the Water Gate at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (c. 445 BC). The people were assembled as one man (Nehemiah 8:1), packed tightly together, demanding to hear the Word of God. They listened as Ezra read from the books of Moses and the Levites [gave] the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read. (Nehemiah 8:8) Men, women, and children stood – stood! – and listened for six hours, from early morning till noon, to hear words that hadn't been heard in Jerusalem in over 70 years. No comfortably padded chairs. No heating or air conditioning. No roof over their heads. They wept when they heard the Word. It cut them right to the heart. They repented. They believed. They recognized how utterly sinful they were and how incredibly gracious God was. When Ezra praised the LORD...all the people responded, "Amen! Amen!" They wanted to hear more. The Word was working. It was a holy day.

It was also a holy day in Nazareth, when Jesus, the hometown boy turned rock-star, miracle-working rabbi, returned to his hometown synagogue on the Sabbath. The place was packed. They all wanted to hear from Jesus. The attendant handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah to Jesus and he found Isaiah 61. He read it out loud: The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. And then he stopped and sat down. The place went silent. You could have heard a pin drop. What was he going to say? Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. People had wondered for centuries who Isaiah was talking about. Was he talking about himself? (Acts 8:34) Was it John? Was it someone else? Who was this Anointed One? And Jesus tells them: it's me. This prophecy is about me. And they get to hear the good news from his own lips with their own ears. And, at first, they all spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips.

But then the devil elbowed his way into their minds and made reason their master rather than faith. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. They remembered that Jesus had played in their streets with their kids, traveled with them to Jerusalem – that for 30 years Jesus walked and talked and lived like anyone else. Wait a minute...who does this

guy think he is? He leaves home, runs around with that rebel cousin named John, and now he comes back and thinks he's the Messiah? Well, we'll see about that. Prove it, Jesus! You've performed miracles for other people, perform one for us. Prove yourself here and we'll believe you, but until you prove it we are going to reject your message. Jesus knew what they were thinking. I tell you the truth...no prophet is accepted in his own hometown. He reminded them that there were lots of widows in Israel but God sent Elijah to the widow at Zarephath and there were lots of lepers in Israel but Elisha healed Naaman the Syrian. He was sending them both a fact and a warning: if you reject the Word, don't expect miracles. Faith doesn't come from seeing miracles but from hearing the Word. (Romans 10:17) If you continue in your unbelief, God will take his Word away from you and give it to people who want to hear it. And with that, Jesus' hometown congregation had heard enough. They were filled – not with faith, but with rage. Let's get rid of this guy! We don't need to sit here and listen to this Jesus call us unbelievers and tell us that we need him to save us from ourselves. They drove him out of town and tried to throw him off a cliff. If you actually listen to what the Word says to and about you, you can't remain neutral. You either hear it with joy or you try to push Jesus out of your life.

Of course, Jesus slips away because it wasn't the time or place for him to die, but this was a bitter foretaste of the rejection to come. He was Anointed by God to save God's people, but God's people rejected him. Three years later they would finally succeed in getting rid of Jesus for good – they would arrest and convict, beat and crucify and kill him as a criminal. But only because he allowed them to. Because only by dying could he pay for the world's sin, death and unbelief. He told them God had sent him to die to save them from their sins – and so they wanted him dead. Do you see how irrational unbelief is?

But today isn't about Ezra and Nehemiah or Jesus' childhood friends. Today is about you...and me. Are we more like those people in Jerusalem or the people in Nazareth? We are both! We have split personalities when it comes to the Word of God; we are both glad hearers and angry despisers. Our old Adam rises up in rebellion against the Word, rejects its demand to rule our hearts and minds, resents the Law that exposes our sin and the Gospel that says God sent a Savior because we couldn't save ourselves. It's our old Adam that just wants to stay in bed on a frigid Sunday morning, that searches for excuses to avoid hearing the Word, that counts the seconds until the "Amen." The

old Adam hates church. He can't wait to get as far away from the Word as possible because he knows that the Word means his death. He must be coerced, compelled, threatened, forced to hear it. He's why you and I do not gladly hear the Word of God and obey it.

But the New Man in you is different. The New Man is a faithful listener. The New Man would gladly stand in a crowd outside the Water Gate in Jerusalem and listen to the Word of God for six hours – and thinks nothing of driving through a little snow and cold to sit in a padded chair in a climate-controlled sanctuary for an hour. That's the real you. The you who was born in Baptism. The you that died and rose with Christ. The you who rejoices at every opportunity to hear and study and read God's Word, who is amazed that God would send his Son to live and die and rise for you, so that he might call you his child.

And so, that means that your life is a never-ending struggle between the old man and the new. It is a weekly struggle to get to church. A minute by minute struggle to pay attention. A daily struggle to open up the Bible at home and read it. An ongoing struggle against the devil's temptations to become bored and complacent with the good news of God's grace for sinners. It means that we need to repent for allowing the Old Adam to gain the upper hand, for treating God's grace as old news or fake news, for refusing to receive the gifts Jesus wants to give us, for treating the Word as something optional or secondary in our lives, even for wanting to shut Jesus up and get rid of him. We need to drag the old Adam here kicking and screaming and repent because that is how God puts him to death.

But then we rejoice. We rejoice that Jesus is the Anointed One of God who continues to send messengers to preach the good news that he lived and died and rose again – for you! Your sins are forgiven. You stand justified before God. You are his child through baptism. You have a place in his heavenly mansion. That's the Word of God. It might make you mad or glad, sad or joyful, you may want to hear more or you might just want me to shut up – because the Word always gets both reactions. In the end, our reaction isn't as important as the fact this Word is God's truth and God's people are made holy by that truth. (John 17:17) Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. **Amen.**

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.

Guide your church in the ways of faith, hope, and love. Cultivate ministries and communities of compassion that bear witness to your enduring presence among us. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Teach us to live in humility on the earth. Curb arrogance that leads to destruction of natural resources and disregard for future generations. Inspire the work of scientists who urge us to live in harmony with your creation. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You are the refuge of all who seek hope and freedom. Accompany immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who cross borders to find safety and opportunity. Embolden leaders to draft compassionate policies on behalf of migrants and those who assist them. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Love bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things. Comfort with your love all who are lonely, fearful, or brokenhearted. Sustain the hope of all those who suffer in body or spirit. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your grace falls upon young and old alike. Bless the gifts of children in this congregation and in this community. Give us humble hearts to follow their leadership. Inspire us with their laughter, their insight, and their curiosity. 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.**

We praise you for those who have gone before us and now see you face to face. Abide with us in this mortal life until we rest in the arms of your neverending love. 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.**