



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

## CHURCH AT HOME

### Announcements:

Welcome to Trinity's worship resource for February 20, 2022, celebrating the Seventh Sunday after Epiphany.

Pastor Jack Dressler (**519-250-7210**) is our interim Pastor. Please contact him for any pastoral needs.

### Upcoming services:

March 2 - Ash Wednesday Service 10 a.m.

\*\* No Wednesday Lenten Service \*\*

### Pastor Jack will be leading the following services:

February 27

March 2 Ash Wednesday

March 13 and March 27

Palm Sunday April 10

Good Friday April 15

Easter April 17

Honoring the wishes of Pastor Mike and adhering to COVID restrictions, there will be no farewell service or farewell send-off. If you wish to call him, send him a letter or arrange a pre-approved visit, please do so.

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**

Mercy. Mercy. Mercy. Joseph lives it in Egypt. Jesus preaches it in the gospel. The Spirit guides us into merciful lives with the power of forgiveness to reconcile what is fractured and divided. Such merciful living is the baptismal blessing of having put on Christ. It is the gift of the life-giving Spirit. It is a reflection of God's glory revealed in Christ.

### **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**

O Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### **Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia. Love your enemies, and you will be children of the Most High; forgive, and you will be forgiven. Alleluia.

### **First Reading: Genesis 45:3-11, 15**

*Many years after being sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, Joseph reveals himself to them. Now the second-in-command in Egypt, Joseph reassures his brothers that God has used their evil intentions for good to preserve life during a devastating famine, and Joseph forgives them.*

<sup>3</sup>Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

<sup>4</sup>Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup>And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup>For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. <sup>7</sup>God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. <sup>8</sup>So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord

of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup>Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. <sup>10</sup>You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. <sup>11</sup>I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.’” <sup>15</sup>And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

**Psalm: Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40**

*The lowly shall possess the land; they will delight in abundance of peace.*

<sup>1</sup>Do not be provoked by evildoers;  
do not be jealous of those who do wrong.

<sup>2</sup>**For they shall soon wither like the grass,  
and like the green grass fade away.**

<sup>3</sup>Put your trust in the LORD and do good;  
dwell in the land and find safe pasture.

<sup>4</sup>**Take delight in the LORD,  
who shall give you your heart’s desire.**

<sup>5</sup>Commit your way to the LORD; put your trust in the LORD,  
and see what God will do.

<sup>6</sup>**The LORD will make your vindication as clear as the light  
and the justice of your case like the noonday sun.**

<sup>7</sup>Be still before the LORD and wait patiently.

Do not be provoked by the one who prospers, the one who succeeds in evil schemes.

<sup>8</sup>**Refrain from anger, leave rage alone;  
do not be provoked; it leads only to evil. R**

<sup>9</sup>For evildoers shall be cut off,  
but those who hope in the LORD shall possess the land.

<sup>10</sup>**In a little while the wicked shall be no more;  
even if you search out their place, they will not be there.**

<sup>11</sup>But the lowly shall possess the land;  
they will delight in abundance of peace.

<sup>39</sup>**But the deliverance of the righteous comes from you, O LORD;**

**you are their stronghold in time of trouble.**

<sup>40</sup>You, O LORD, will help them and rescue them;  
you will rescue them from the wicked and deliver them, because in you they seek  
refuge.

**Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50**

*In the Apostles' Creed, we speak of the "resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting." Using the metaphor of a planted seed and the story of Adam, Paul preaches passionately about the mystery of following Christ's perfect life into eternity.*

<sup>35</sup>But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" <sup>36</sup>Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. <sup>37</sup>And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. <sup>38</sup>But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

<sup>42</sup>So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. <sup>43</sup>It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup>It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup>Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup>But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. <sup>47</sup>The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. <sup>48</sup>As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. <sup>49</sup>Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

<sup>50</sup>What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

**Gospel Reading: Luke 6:27-38**

*Jesus continues to address a crowd of his disciples. He invites his followers to shower radical love, blessing, forgiveness, generosity, and trust even on enemies and outsiders. Living in harmony with God's intent brings the reward of overflowing blessing.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>27</sup>"But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup>bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup>If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do

not withhold even your shirt. <sup>30</sup>Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. <sup>31</sup>Do to others as you would have them do to you.

<sup>32</sup>“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup>If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup>If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. <sup>35</sup>But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. <sup>36</sup>Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

<sup>37</sup>“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; <sup>38</sup>give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

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

***The Sermon: Loving our Enemies (written by Rev. Dr. Christa Compton, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Chatham New Jersey, February 2019)***

*“But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.”* Luke 6:35

Two drivers – one man, one woman – are in a hospital parking garage. They’re both going for the same parking space, but the woman manages to whip into it first, ignoring the turn signal that the guy has had on before she got there. They exchange some heated words there in the parking garage. She insists that the space is hers. He questions her moral character. She calls him a jerk. It gets pretty ugly.

What neither of them stops to consider is why they’re both at the hospital. The woman – Patricia – is there because her daughter is having surgery to remove a cancerous tumor. The man – Gary – is there because his girlfriend is also having major surgery. They’re both terrified of losing someone they love, and so neither of them is behaving well.

And of course, because this is actually a TV show, they discover that they love the same person. Patricia’s daughter Maggie is also Gary’s girlfriend. So now they find

themselves in the same waiting room, holding on to their resentments from the parking garage when what they really need to do is focus on Maggie.

So much of our lives is built on the expectation of reciprocity. I help you now so that you might help me later. You scratch my back; I scratch yours. Give and take. Favors are exchanged back and forth. Transactions, both emotional and practical, form the foundation of many of our relationships.

As the scene with Gary and Patricia reminded me, our hostilities are also built on the principle of reciprocity. You hurt my feelings, so I try to hurt yours. You have done harm to me, so I look for a chance to retaliate. Soon we find ourselves separated by a series of small antagonisms that make reconciliation seem impossible. And yet Gary and Patricia also remind me that we seldom know the full story of what people are going through. So often our resentments and retaliations are driven by something else – fear, insecurity, grief. Most of us are doing the best we can to get through the day; we just don't always behave in the best way.

Into our hatreds and resentments intrudes today's gospel, in which we hear Jesus telling us to love our enemies. Right, Jesus. I'll work on that right after I return from my trip to Mars and win my gold medal at the Olympics. At least **those** things seem possible.

Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who abuse you. It's a tall order. It means first admitting that we have enemies. Call them what you will – enemies, rivals, antagonists, nemeses. We all have people in our lives who bring out the worst in us. It's hard enough to summon the restraint not to engage in conflict with those people, and now Jesus is asking us to love them, do good to them, bless them?

Notice that Jesus doesn't seem to care how we feel about the enemy. You can see it in this passage. Jesus doesn't talk about our emotional response. He instead identifies some concrete actions. He tells us to pray for our enemies. Give them what they need – a shirt, a coat, money. In other words, we are to act generously toward our antagonists in spite of how we might feel about them.

Let me be clear about what Jesus does **not** mean. He does not intend for us to remain in abusive relationships. Turning the other cheek should not relegate us to perpetual victimhood. This text has often been misused to pressure people to stay in relationships that do not reflect God's intentions of mutual love and support. Following Jesus' directives here do not keep us from holding someone accountable for harmful be-

havior. What it does keep us from doing is poisoning ourselves with long-held resentments toward those who have harmed us.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., gave many powerful sermons during his life as a preacher and civil rights leader. One of his most compelling sermons is about Jesus' instruction to love our enemies. In that sermon he offers three reasons we should love our enemies.

The first is this, in his words: "Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars...Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction. The chain reaction of evil – hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars – must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation."

We've all seen that reality unfold – in our lives and in our world.

The second reason Dr. King says we must love our enemies is that "hate scars the soul and distorts the personality." He acknowledges the terrible harm done to those on the receiving end of oppression and hatred, citing as examples the Holocaust, the violence inflicted on African-American citizens in this country, and the horrors of war. But Dr. King reminds us that hate also harms the person who hates: "Like an unchecked cancer," he says, "hate corrodes the personality and eats away its vital unity." He observes that "modern psychology recognizes what Jesus taught centuries ago: hate divides the personality, and love in an amazing and inexorable way unites it."

Dr. King adds still a third reason: "Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend...By its very nature, hate destroys and tears down; by its very nature, love creates and builds up. Love transforms with redemptive power."

The transformative power of love. It all comes back to that overwhelming force – a love that we have because God first loved us. Thankfully God does not operate with a sense of reciprocity. Because if God were to treat us as we deserve, we'd be in some trouble. God instead extends mercy to us far beyond our deserving.

Why does God treat us so generously? God desires our freedom. Freedom from the back and forth, freedom from the accumulation of grievances that harm both ourselves and others, freedom from retaliations and recriminations that erode relationships and our very souls. God wants us to be free from all of it – to live as people who don't have to have the last word because we have what is first and foremost: an unfailing love.

The poet John O'Donohue has written a poem titled "For Lost Friends" in which he reflects on close relationships that have ruptured and are no longer the same. The final stanza of the poem is a prayer that fits any broken relationship. As I read it, I encourage

you to think of someone with whom you have a difficult relationship. May God give us the courage to live this prayer:

Though a door may have closed,  
Closed between us,  
May we be able to view  
Our lost friends with eyes  
Wise with calming grace;  
Forgive them the damage  
We were left to inherit;  
Free ourselves from the chains  
Of forlorn resentment;  
Bring warmth again to  
Where the heart has frozen  
In order that beyond the walls  
Of our cherished hurt  
And chosen distance  
We may be able to  
Celebrate the gifts they brought,  
Learn and grow from the pain,  
And prosper into difference,  
Wishing them the peace  
Where spirit can summon  
Beauty from wounded space. **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.*

You teach us to love our neighbors and enemies alike. Encourage your church to follow the leading of your love, especially when it is risky or difficult. Help us to show mercy just as we have first received mercy. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Nurture fields that lie dormant, resting until it is time to bloom again. Bless farmers and all who cultivate fields and urban gardens. Give favorable weather for planting. Bring



forth from buried seed an abundant harvest, and guard against famine and disease. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Look upon our world with mercy, that we delight in an abundance of peace. Protect all whose lives are marred by war and civil unrest. Release political prisoners and amplify the voices that challenge us to seek forgiveness and pursue nonviolence. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your people cry out for mercy. Console hearts that long for forgiveness. Mend broken relationships. Heal bodies that suffer chronic pain or illness. Strengthen and deliver all whose spirits are troubled. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You bind us together into one family. Teach us to forgive one another and to resolve conflicts with humility and patience. Bless families of all shapes and sizes, and show love to those who are lonely or grieving. 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

***Needing our prayers:*** Peter; Brenda; Doug; Dorothy; Bill; Bev; Ed; Marilyn; Jordan; Audrey; John; John; Greg; Sam; Katie; Walter; Hart; Frank; Pastor Mike & Patti, Donna, Paul, Hilda; Sharon B

***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 the saints who have inherited the fullness of your kingdom. As you have raised them to imperishable and eternal life, sustain us in faith by the promise of resurrection. 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.**