



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

CHURCH AT HOME

Announcements:

Welcome to Trinity's worship resource for March 13, 2022, celebrating the Second Sunday in Lent.

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

**** No Wednesday Lenten Service **** and
**** There will be NO Maundy Thursday service ****

Pastor Jack will be leading the following services:

March 27

Palm Sunday April 10

**** There will be NO Maundy Thursday service ****

Good Friday April 15

Easter April 17

The University Food Bank is struggling to keep their shelves full for their students. During our Lenten journey, let us reach out in love. For the season of Lent, please bring canned food items (beans, fruit, tuna, soup), granola/energy bars, crackers, juice boxes, any other nonperishable food items to church with you. They need our help. We can show God's love to them through our actions.

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

Though we sometimes doubt and often resist God's desire to protect and save us, our God persists. In holy baptism, God's people have been called and gathered into a God-initiated relationship that will endure. Lent provides the church with a time and a tradition in which to seek God's face again. Lent provides another occasion to behold the God of our salvation in the face of the Blessed One who "comes in the name of the Lord."

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.

In the name of God, who makes a way in the wilderness, walks with us, and guides us in our pilgrimage. **Amen.**

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy One,

we confess that we have wandered far from you, we have not trusted your promises, we have ignored your prophets in our own day, we have squandered our inheritance of grace, we have failed to recognize you in our midst.

Have mercy on us! Forgive us and turn us again to you. Teach us to follow in your ways, assure us again of your love, and help us to love our neighbor. Amen.

Beloved in Christ, the Word draws near to you, and all who call out to God shall be saved. In Jesus, God comes to you again and again and gathers you under wings of love.

In **✝** Jesus' name, your sins are forgiven. God journeys with you and teaches you how to live in love.

Amen.

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

God of the covenant, in the mystery of the cross you promise everlasting life to the world. Gather all peoples into your arms, and shelter us with your mercy, that we may

rejoice in the life we share in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Gospel Acclamation

The Son of Man must be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

First Reading: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

God promises a childless and doubting Abram that he will have a child, that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars, and that the land of Canaan will be their inheritance. Abram's trust in God is sealed with a covenant-making ceremony, a sign of God's promise.

¹After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ²But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." ⁴But the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." ⁵He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness.

⁷Then he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess." ⁸But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" ⁹He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. ¹¹And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹²As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him.

¹⁷When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates."

Psalm: Psalm 27

¹The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

²**When evildoers close in against me to devour my flesh,
they, my foes and my enemies, will stumble and fall.**

³Though an army encamp against me, my heart will not fear.
Though war rise up against me, my trust will not be shaken.

⁴**One thing I ask of the LORD; one thing I seek;
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life; to gaze upon the
beauty of the LORD and to seek God in the temple.**

⁵For in the day of trouble God will give me shelter,
hide me in the hidden places of the sanctuary, and raise me high upon a rock.

⁶**Even now my head is lifted up above my enemies who surround me.
Therefore I will offer sacrifice in the sanctuary, sacrifices of rejoicing; I will sing
and make music to the LORD.**

⁷Hear my voice, O LORD, when I call;
have mercy on me and answer me.

⁸**My heart speaks your message— “Seek my face.”
Your face, O LORD, I will seek.**

⁹Hide not your face from me, turn not away from your servant in anger.
Cast me not away—you have been my helper; forsake me not, O God of my
salvation.

¹⁰**Though my father and my mother forsake me,
the LORD will take me in.**

¹¹Teach me your way, O LORD;
lead me on a level path, because of my oppressors.

¹²**Subject me not to the will of my foes,
for they rise up against me, false witnesses breathing violence.**

¹³This I believe—that I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living!

¹⁴**Wait for the LORD and be strong.
Take heart and wait for the LORD!**

Second Reading: Philippians 3:17--4:1

Although Paul's devotion to Christ has caused him to be persecuted, he does not regret the course he has taken. Writing from prison, he expresses confidence in a glorious future and encourages other Christians to follow in his footsteps.

¹⁷Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. ¹⁹Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. ^{4:1}Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

Gospel Reading: Luke 13:31-35

Neither Herod's plotting nor Jerusalem's resistance to maternal love will deter Jesus from his sacrificial mission.

³¹At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to [Jesus,] "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." ³²He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. ³³Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' ³⁴Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.' "

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

The Sermon: The Promise of Belief (Pastor Jack Dressler)

There are times in our lives when we are confronted with a challenge so overwhelming that we struggle to believe that even God can bring about a positive outcome. We recite scripture verses, think positive thoughts, ask our friends to pray for us, and look for the signs of God's positive intervention. We want to believe, but we still have lingering thoughts of failure. What is there about human nature that allows doubt to creep in and the fear of failure to ruin our faith? This state of unbelief has been called by some a doubt storm or as Leonard Sweet calls them, "Faith quakes."

What separates our belief in the promises of God's word from the application of those promises in our daily lives? We confess faith and confidence in the word of God. We say that we have faith but sometimes we will take matters into our own hands. In

the midst of our wavering confidence, God many times reminds us of his covenant with us.

Our Genesis text begins with God ratifying his promise to Abram. "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." "I am your shield," your divine protector. What a powerful statement of assurance. Instead of Abram responding in faith, he like many of us missed God's promised initiative and responded with doubt. "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless?" Abram's preoccupation with his own selfish desire to have an heir prevented him from believing God although God had already shown Abram that he would keep his promises.

This is the same God who said to Abram back in Genesis 12:2-3: "I will make you a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and him who curses you I will curse and by you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." This blessing from God that accompanied God's call of Abram included inheriting land, becoming a great nation, and becoming a blessing to other people. God's promised covenant with Abram contained the assurance of an heir, but because it had not yet come to pass, Abram doubted.

God's covenant with Abram continued when God rescued Sarai from becoming part of Pharaoh's harem in Egypt (12:10-20). God's promise was again seen in the victory over the four eastern kings that were defeated by Abram's small but victorious army (14:1-16). After all of that we would think that Abram would have total confidence in God's promise. NO, Abram's response: "But God, I am still childless."

Sometimes because God doesn't act when and how we think God should, we respond in doubt. I know a young couple whose lives were tragically interrupted when their young son drowned in the swimming pool of a friend. Grief turned to anger, anger to blame and eventually the couple separated.

With the prayers, counsel and encouragement of believing Christian friends they reconciled and began to re-build their lives. Their reconciliation was well under way, when they were faced with another challenge, a troubled pregnancy. They questioned God, "What have we done to deserve this unending tragedy in our lives?"

Their search for meaning led them to study and fellowship with mature Christian believers who helped them discover God's promise and covenant relationship with them. As they grew in their belief and spiritual maturity they found the strength to accept challenges that tragedy sometimes brings. They are now the parents of two beautiful children. As heirs of the covenants of God we grow to understand that difficult circum-

stances in our lives can either become obstacles or opportunities, depending on how we believe.

The promise of belief does not come only with words: it comes with action. After God took Abram outside and assured him that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars, our O.T. reading says, “And Abram believed” (trusted in, relied on, remained steadfast to) “the Lord; and he counted it to him as righteousness” (right standing with God, 15:6).

Promise, belief, covenant, while used interchangeably, have slightly different meanings. Promise means to make a declaration or assurance with regard to an upcoming specified act. Belief is trusting in, resting in, or taking refuge in something or someone. Covenant is an agreement, obligation, or binding contract.

This Lenten season provides for us an opportunity to examine God’s promise, our belief, and the covenantal relationship that exists between God and us. When Abram finally confessed his trust in God’s promise even though no heir had yet been born, God counted that as righteousness and a covenant ceremony took place (7-12 and 17-18).

While we are no longer required to offer animals as a sacrifice, the season of Lent offers us many opportunities to affirm and demonstrate our covenants with God. The spiritual disciplines of the 40-day period of penitence, prayer, fasting, reflection and witness can be for us a reminder of the sacrificial nature of Christ. How, might you ask?

The story of Abraham and Sarah begins a continuous biblical journey of God working through ordinary people like you and me to bring about God’s will. Sometimes like Abraham and Sarah God challenges us to believe in spite of what our eyes see because God’s ability and desire to demonstrate the covenant relationship is best expressed when we can’t see with our eyes, but must learn to trust God for the outcome. Much of our doubt comes from the fear of failure. Some of us fail to try because we are afraid of failing. That’s why funerals are so hard for me, I want to do the most perfect job for the family and friends present and capture the person’s life of whom I’m speaking about, allowing those present the ability to grieve, celebrate and have hope in the present and future and I’m always afraid I will fail them and God. I have to constantly remind myself of God’s covenant and promise to me and not doubt.

The season of Lent gives us opportunities to look beyond our abilities and remember God’s promises and the covenantal nature that exists between God and humankind. The promise of belief is not just found in the historical acts of God. The promise of belief is also found in the covenantal nature of God in our lives today.

The promise of belief turns our faith into power: the power that comes with believing. Jesus comforted his disciples by saying, “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12). This covenantal nature of God through faith that begins with Abraham continues today with the covenantal nature of God through Christ, you and me.

We’re invited during the Lenten season to remember the promises of God, the covenantal nature of God, and our response as we act on what we believe. The promise of belief begins with trusting God. Trust becomes belief, belief becomes assurance, assurance is then expressed as promise, and promise is lived and acted on through our acts of faith in God.

She stood before the congregation and asked for prayer: The doctors had discovered cancer. She boldly proclaimed, “I’m believing God for my healing.” One year later she stood and shared the good news. She reminded us that not only had God answered her prayer a year ago, but God kept his promise – she was still cancer-free. Yes, it does make a difference what we believe. **Amen.**

Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

The Prayers of Intercession

Drawn close to the heart of God, we offer these prayers for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

You gather the church into a community of mercy and grace. Unify Christians around the globe in efforts to proclaim good news even in the face of opposition and to protect those whose lives are imperiled by the gospel. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You create the entire universe and call it good. Hinder those who would cause further destruction to our planet’s fragile ecosystems, and augment the calls of those who advocate for thoughtful stewardship of the earth’s resources. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You raise up leaders committed to love and justice. Nurture in those who govern patience to receive criticism, openness to new ideas, and courage to change course when needed for the sake of the common good. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You hear us when we cry to you. Attend to those expecting a child, and console those

who have experienced miscarriage. Comfort veterans enduring post-traumatic stress. Shield those endangered by domestic violence. Uphold those who are ill or grieving. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You kindle faith that moves us into action. Guide children and adults preparing for baptism or confirmation. Empower Sunday school teachers, confirmation leaders, and parents who share their faith with younger generations. Give us all a renewed sense of vocation. 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; Dorothy

Needing our prayers: Ed; Pastor Mike & Patti, Donna; Sharon B

Friends of our Members Needing our prayers: Audrey; Greg; Paul; Hilda; Mary

...and all members who may have needs unknown to us

And all those we name in our hearts...

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You welcome us into your heavenly realm. We give thanks for those whose labors on earth are ended and who now rest with you. On the final day, gather all of us, with them, in your loving arms. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Accept the prayers we bring, O God, on behalf of a world in need, for the sake of Jesus Christ. **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

You are children of God, anointed with the oil of gladness and strengthened for the journey. Almighty God, motherly, majestic, and mighty, bless you this day and always.
Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Jesus meets you on the way. **Thanks be to God.**