



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

CHURCH AT HOME

Announcements:

Welcome to Trinity's worship resource for January 29, 2023, celebrating the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

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

Upcoming Services:

Date	Comment	Pastor / Lay Leader	Reader
February 5		Greg	
February 12	Communion	Pastor Jack	
February 19		Anne	
February 26	Communion	Father Brian	
March 5		Greg	
March 12			
March 19			
March 22	Ash Wednesday – 10am	Pastor Jack	
March 26	Communion	Pastor Jack	

We need your help to assist in the above services – readers and lay leaders.

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

Who are the blessed ones of God? For Micah, they are those who do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. For Paul, they are the ones who find wisdom in the weakness of the cross. For Jesus, they are the poor, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who mourn, and those who hunger for righteousness. In

baptism we find our blessed identity and calling in this countercultural way of living and serving.

Confession and Forgiveness

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who makes all things new, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin. Holy One, source of our renewal, **we confess that we are wrapped up in sin, and cannot free ourselves.**

We have not practiced your righteousness. Our hearts have turned away from you.

For the sake of the world you so love, forgive us,

that we may be reconciled to one another for the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Thus says our God: "The former things have come to pass and new things I now declare." God's mercy makes us new. We are forgiven in the name of ☩ Christ our Savior. **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

Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. *Alleluia.*

First Reading: Micah 6:1-8

With the mountains and the foundations of the earth as the jury, God brings a lawsuit against Israel. God has "weariied" Israel with a long history of saving acts. God does not want or expect lavish sacrifices to attempt to earn divine favor. Rather God empowers the people to do justice, to love loyalty to God, and to walk shrewdly in God's service.

¹Hear what the LORD says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice.

²Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the LORD,
and you enduring foundations of the earth;
for the LORD has a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel.

³“O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

⁴For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
and redeemed you from the house of slavery;
and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

⁵O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.”

⁶“With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

⁷Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

⁸He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Psalm: 15

LORD, who may abide upon your holy hill?

¹LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle? Who may abide upon your holy hill?

²**Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right,
who speak the truth from their heart;**

³they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends;
they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.

⁴**In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who fear the LORD.
They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their word.**

⁵They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes against the innocent. Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

According to the world's standards of power and might, the message of the cross seems stupid and offensive. Yet this word reveals the paradoxical way God has chosen to work power and salvation through weakness, rejection, and suffering. Hence the message of the cross becomes true wisdom and power for believers.

¹⁸The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

²⁶Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

Jesus opens the Sermon on the Mount by naming those who are blessed in the reign of God.

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

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

The Sermon: The Blessings On God’s Kingdom (preached by Father Brian Wearne at Trinity on January 29, 2023)

In the name of the true and living God: ✠ Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

As Jesus preaches His epic Sermon on The Mount, He introduces the kind of life those who seek to enter God’s Kingdom must lead. His Holy Church recognizes this offer of entrance into His Kingdom as a gift we can’t earn, while affirming our response to this gift must be to live by His teachings and example, for in being our Creator, Jesus is the one true Teacher of the world! Perhaps this is why the mountain Jesus preached upon isn’t named. For in Jesus, God takes the initiative, and this is a moment of Revelation – a symbolic Mount Sinai where God revealed Himself to His People through Moses, and gave them His Law (Exodus 19). We have an Epiphany on this mountain where Jesus reveals Himself as God to the world. Jesus began preaching with The Beatitudes – The Blessings of God’s Kingdom – which describes the joys of true discipleship, and the blessed way of life. In form, a Beatitude is an exclamation of congratulations that recognizes an existing state of happiness. A duty toward God is declared as a blessed state, and a reward is promised.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is The Kingdom of Heaven”. The reward verb Jesus uses here is “for theirs is”. God will reward those who perform this duty in this present life, with entrance into His Kingdom. In Hebrew, the word for “poor” can refer to the financially poor as well as the faithful among God’s People. God has a special concern for the poor, but the fact remains that anyone who desires to enter Heaven must have a faithful relationship with God. Economic destitution is recounted in The Bible as an evil to be overcome (Deuteronomy 15:11), and wealth isn’t an evil in itself; in fact, wealth is a necessity for the well-being of God’s Kingdom (The Church) on earth.

So “the poor in spirit” are Christians who prefer God’s ways over worldly riches. They practice detachment from worldly wealth, in order to help the financially poor. Jesus promises God will reward the poor in spirit in this life with a place in His Kingdom.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”. With this Beatitudes and many which follow, Jesus uses the reward verb “they shall be”, meaning God will reward us for having fulfilled these duties after Jesus Returns. Christians mourn to see evil reign over the earth, but by means of holy sorrow we can keep watch over our hearts and learn self-control over many of our sins. Those who mourn over their past sins and grieve for the suffering of humanity are genuinely repentant.

Jesus promises that Christians who mourn in holy sorrow over past sins and to see evil reign on earth will be rewarded with comfort by God. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth”. The meek are slow to anger and gentle with others. When we mourn, we find that sorrow for our sins can replace our anger and make us meek. Meekness is an attitude of being content with both honour and dishonour. It’s an imitation of Jesus who said “Learn from Me, for I am (meek) and lowly in heart” (Matthew 11:29). We must take care not to confuse meekness with timidity. Jesus wasn’t timid when He calmed the raging sea; performed exorcisms; drove the money-changers from His Temple; or endured crucifixion! The Greek word for “meek” is *praus*, which can mean “tamed” or “trained”. So Jesus isn’t saying “Blessed are the timid”, but “Blessed are those who are trained by God”. And if God trains us, then He also empowers us. The meek are Christians empowered by God, and through our prayers, God gives us mastery over our passions. Meekness isn’t a passive gentleness but strength under control. Jesus promises Christians who are meek in this sense will inherit the new earth Jesus will create when He Returns (Revelation 21:1).

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.” These are Christians who see the presence of God and His Kingdom as the most important things in their lives. The poor in spirit, the mourners, and the hungry are the people Jesus came to save, because they walk in His ways. Jesus promised He will reward us by filling our hunger and thirst for Him and His Kingdom by granting us both when He Returns. In the meantime, Jesus feeds our hunger and the thirst for righteousness through His Holy Eucharist.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy”. Jesus refers to the forgiveness of our neighbour (Matthew 6:12,14-15;18:35). Jesus also refers to love (Matthew 9:13; 12:7; 23:27), especially of the needy (Matthew 25:31-46), and even to our enemies (Matthew 5:44-47). God loves us and He took our suffering upon Himself on

The Cross to grant us His Kingdom. In view of God's love, we are to be merciful to all others. Jesus promises Christians that upon His Return to Judge the living and the dead, He will reward us for being merciful with others by merciful with us.

"Blessed are the pure at heart, for they shall see God". To be pure is to be unmixed with anything else. Thus the pure in heart are sincerely devoted to the worship of God. With the Holy Spirit's help, we practice all virtue and we aren't conscious of any evil in ourselves. For when a soul isn't dominated by evil passions or dissipated by worldly things its only desire is God. So Jesus promises that the reward of the pure in heart who are unmixed with evil or worldly things will be to see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God". Peacemaking is closely related to love of our neighbour – to the Blessing of the merciful. Being the source of peace, Jesus found only the shedding of His Blood on The Cross a sufficient price for our peace with God. In so doing, Jesus revealed Himself as the Reconciler and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6; Ephesians 2:14,16). Thus, we are peacemakers when we share God's peace with those around us by living according to the teachings and example of God's Son. We become God's Children by His grace through our belief and Holy Baptism, but when we respond to God's grace by behaving like His children, Jesus promises to reward us by recognizing us as such when He Returns.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven". Many Christians have been persecuted and martyred "for the sake of righteousness", for God's Children uphold His truth and refuse to compromise with the ways of this world. We give our loyalty to none other than Jesus. It's not surprising then that we, like Jesus, should be persecuted for righteousness sake. For the first time since His Blessing on the "poor in spirit", Jesus uses the verb "for theirs is", meaning God will reward our loyalty in this life with entrance into His Kingdom.

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecuted you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you". This last Blessing of Jesus is closely related to the previous one. Jesus does not tell us to rejoice and be exceedingly glad because we are morally better than others, but because of God's special care for us when we are mistreated by worldly people for our loyalty to Him. Jesus promises us that when He Returns, He will so greatly reward us in Heaven for walking the road taken by prophets, saints and martyrs that we will rejoice and be glad. Notice that Jesus does not precisely say here what this reward will be. But the Greek word for "exceedingly glad" more literally translates "to leap exceedingly with

joy". Thus when Christ Returns, He will reward our unwavering loyalty to Him with inexpressible joy!

Christ's epic Sermon on The Mount spans three chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel. **In The Blessings of God's Kingdom**, Jesus gives us an action plan for life; a list of desirable qualities or virtues He expects to find in us today, as well as the day that He Returns.

And now to ☩ God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be all might, majesty, dominion and honour, this day and forevermore. Amen.

Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

The Prayers of Intercession

Called together to follow Jesus, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

Cultivate humility in your church. In gatherings of every size, teach us to boast only in the cross. Shape your church to be people of kindness, generosity, and justice. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

The foundations of the earth bear witness to your faithfulness; the mountains and hills echo with your holiness. When we mistreat your creation, show us the error of our ways. Inspire us with reverent awe to honor all you have made. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You make foolish the wisdom of the world. Raise up honorable leaders who seek justice, love mercy, and pursue peace. Frustrate plans that are corrupt, wicked, and self-seeking. Prosper the work of peacemakers. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Bless all whom the world rejects. Accompany those who are regarded as foolish, weak, low, and despised; reveal your power and presence at work where it is least expected. Give your life, strength, and wisdom to all in need. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

As with your people Israel, remind this congregation of your saving acts. Remind us how your faithfulness brought us through difficulties and sustained us despite our weaknesses. Establish the cross as the center of our life together. 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; Donna; Sharon B; Jeffrey; Art; Joan; Olga; Jack Stark
Friends and Family of our Members Needing our prayers: Audrey; Mary; Anna; Jean;
Randy

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

And all those we name in our hearts...
Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Praise to you for your blessed saints in every time and place. Trusting you accompanied them in poverty, persecution, and in every trial, we trust you abide with your people always. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We bring to you our needs and hopes, O God, trusting your wisdom and power revealed in Christ crucified. **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.

Blessing

The God who faithfully brings forth justice and breaks the oppressor's rod
✠ bless, strengthen, and uphold you, today and always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Follow the way of Jesus. **Thanks be to God.**