



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

## CHURCH AT HOME

### **Announcements:**

Welcome to Trinity's worship resource for February 5, 2023, celebrating the Fifth 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 12	Communion	Pastor Jack	
February 19		Anne	
February 22	Ash Wednesday – 10am @ Trinity	Pastor Jack	
February 22	Ash Wednesday – 7pm @ St. Mark's By The Lake in Tecumseh	Pastor Jack	
February 26	Communion	Father Brian	
March 5		Greg	
March 12			
March 19			
March 26	Communion	Pastor Jack	

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

**\*\* HOW EXCITING \*\***

A JOINT service on Ash Wednesday, with Trinity members and St. Mark's By-The-Lake members and choir invited to each other's service

### **Introduction**

Light shines in the darkness for the upright, the psalmist sings. Isaiah declares that when we loose the bonds of injustice and share our bread with the hungry, the light breaks forth like the dawn. In another passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, the light

of the world, calls his followers to let the light of their good works shine before others. Through baptism we are sent into the world to shine with the light of Christ.

### **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**

Lord God, with endless mercy you receive the prayers of all who call upon you. By your Spirit show us the things we ought to do, and give us the grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

### **Gospel Acclamation**

*Alleluia.* Jesus says, I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will have the light of life. *Alleluia*

### **First Reading: Isaiah 58:1-9a [9b-12]**

*Shortly after the return of Israel from exile in Babylon, the people were troubled by the ineffectiveness of their fasts. God reminds them that outward observance is no substitute for genuine fasting that results in acts of justice, such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and clothing the naked.*

<sup>1</sup>Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins.

<sup>2</sup>Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways,  
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness  
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;  
they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

<sup>3</sup>“Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers.

<sup>4</sup>Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist.  
Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.

<sup>5</sup>Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?  
Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

<sup>6</sup>Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup>Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover them,  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

<sup>8</sup>Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up quickly;  
your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

<sup>9a</sup>Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;  
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

[<sup>9b</sup>If you remove the yoke from among you,  
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

<sup>10</sup>if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places,  
and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

<sup>12</sup>Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.]

**Psalm: 112:1-9 [10]**

*Light shines in the darkness for the upright.*

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Happy are they who fear the LORD  
and have great delight in God's commandments!

<sup>2</sup>**Their descendants will be mighty in the land;  
the generation of the upright will be blessed.**

<sup>3</sup>Wealth and riches will be in their house, and their righteousness will last forever.

<sup>4</sup>**Light shines in the darkness for the upright;  
the righteous are merciful and full of compassion.**

<sup>5</sup>It is good for them to be generous in lending and to manage their affairs with justice.

<sup>6</sup>**For they will never be shaken;  
the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance.**

<sup>7</sup>They will not be afraid of any evil rumors;  
their heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

<sup>8</sup>**Their heart is established and will not shrink,  
until they see their desire upon their enemies.**

<sup>9</sup>They have given freely to the poor, and their righteousness stands fast forever;  
they will hold up their head with honor.

<sup>10</sup>**The wicked will see it and be angry; they will gnash their teeth and pine away;  
the desires of the wicked will perish.**

**Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 [13-16]**

*Though people such as the Corinthians are enamored with human philosophy and wisdom, Paul continuously presents God's hidden wisdom which is Jesus Christ crucified. True spiritual maturity involves judging ourselves and others in light of God's revelation in the cross.*

<sup>1</sup>When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. <sup>2</sup>For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. <sup>3</sup>And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. <sup>4</sup>My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup>so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

<sup>6</sup>Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. <sup>7</sup>But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. <sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this

age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

<sup>9</sup>But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,  
nor the human heart conceived,  
what God has prepared for those who love him” —

<sup>10</sup>these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup>For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God’s except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup>Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. [<sup>13</sup>And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

<sup>14</sup>Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God’s Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup>Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else’s scrutiny.

<sup>16</sup>“For who has known the mind of the Lord  
so as to instruct him?”

But we have the mind of Christ.]

### **Gospel: Matthew 5:13-20**

*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus encourages his followers to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, doing good works and keeping God’s commandments.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>13</sup>“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

<sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup>No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

<sup>17</sup>“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup>For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup>Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does

them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup>For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

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

***The Sermon: See The Need; Touch the Hurt (read by Greg Peifer, written by Max Lucado, from his book “Out Live Your Life”)***

A gate called Beautiful. The man was anything but.

He couldn’t walk but had to drag himself about on his knees. He passed his days among the contingent or real and pretend beggars who coveted the coins of the worshippers entering Solomon’s court.

Peter and John were among them.

The needy man saw the apostles, lifted his voice, and begged for money. They had none to give, yet still they stopped. “Peter and John looked straight at him and said, “Look at us!” (Acts 3:4). They looked their eyes on his with such compassion that “he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them”. Peter and John issued no embarrassed glance, irritated shrug, or cynical dismissal but an honest look.

It is hard to look suffering in the face. Wouldn’t we rather turn away? Stare in a different direction? Fix our gaze on fairer objects? Human hurt is not easy on the eyes. The dusty cheeks of the Pakistani refugee. The wide-eyed stare of the Peruvian orphan. Or the salt-and-pepper tangle of a beard worn by the drifter Stanley and I met in Pennsylvania.

Stanley Shipp served as a father to my young faith. He was thirty years my senior and blessed with a hawkish nose, thin lips, a rim of white hair, and a heart as big as the Midwest. His business cards, which he gave to those who requested and those who didn’t, read simply, “Stanley Shipp – Your Servant.”

I spent my first post-college year under his tutelage. One of our trips took us to a small church in rural Pennsylvania for a conference. He and I happened to be the only two people at the building when a drifter, wearing alcohol like a cheap perfume, knocked on the door. He recited his victim spiel. Overqualified for work. Unqualified for pension. Lost bus ticket. Bad back. His kids in Kansas didn’t care. If bad breaks were rock and roll, this guy was Elvis. I crossed my arms, smirked, and gave Stanley a get-a-load-of-this-guy glance.

Stanley didn't return it. He devoted every optic nerve to the drifter. Stanley saw no one else but him. How long, I remember wondering, since anyone looked this fellow square in the face?

The meandering saga finally stopped, and Stanley led the man into the church kitchen and prepared him a plate of food and a sack of groceries. As we watched him leave, Stanley blinked back a tear and responded to my unsaid thoughts. "Max, I know he's probably lying. But what if just one part of his story was true?"

We both saw the man. I saw right through him. Stanley saw deep into him. There is something good about taking time to see a person.

Simon the Pharisee once disclaimed Jesus' kindness toward a woman of questionable character. So Jesus tested him: "Do you see this woman?" (Luke 7:44).

Simon didn't. He saw a hussy, a streetwalker, a scamp. He didn't see the woman.

What do we see when we see:

- The figures beneath the overpass, encircling the fire in a fifty-five-gallon drum?
- The news clips of children in refugee camps?
- Reports of 1.75 billion people who live on less than \$1.25 a day?

What do we see? "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36).

This word compassion is one of the oldest in Scripture. The New Testament Greek lexicon says this word means "to be moved as to one's bowels ... (for the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity)." It shares a root system with *splanchnology*, the study of the visceral parts. Compassion, then, is a movement deep within – a kick in the gut.

Perhaps that is why we turn away. Who can bear such an emotion? Especially when we can do nothing about it. Why look suffering in the face if we can't make a difference?

Yet what if we could? What if our attention could reduce some one's pain? This is the promise of the encounter.

Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them – walking, leaping, and praising God. (Acts 3:6-8)

What if Peter had said, “Since I don’t have any silver or gold, I’ll keep my mouth shut”? But he didn’t. He placed his mustard-seed-sized deed (a look and a touch) in the soil of God’s love. And look what happened.

The thick, meaty hand of the fisherman reached for the frail, thin one of the beggar. Think Sistine Chapel and the high hand of God. One from above, the other from below. A holy helping hand. Peter lifted the man toward himself. The cripple swayed like a newborn calf finding its balance. It appeared as if the man would fall, but he didn’t. He stood. And as he stood, he began to shout, and passersby began to stop. They stopped and watched the cripple skip.

Don’t you think he did? Not at first, mind you. But after a careful step, then another few, don’t you think he skipped a jig? Parading and waving the mat on which he had lived?

The crowd thickened around the trio. The apostles laughed as the beggar danced. Other beggars pressed towards the scene in their ragged coverings and tattered robes and cried out for the portion of a miracle.

“I want my healing! Touch me! Touch me!”

So Peter complied. He escorted them to the clinic of the Great Physician and invited them to take a seat. “His name, ... faith in His name, has made this made strong ... Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord”.

Blotted out is a translation of a Greek term that means “to obliterate” or “erase completely.” Faith in Christ, Peter explained, leads to a clean slate with God. What Jesus did for the legs of this cripple, he does for our souls. Brand-new!

An honest look led to a helping hand that led to a conversation about eternity. Works done in God’s name long outlive our earthly lives.

Let’s be the people who stop at the gate. Let’s look at the hurting until we hurt with them. No hurrying past, turning away, or shifting of eyes. No pretending or glossing over. Let’s look at the face until we see the person.

A couple in our congregation lives with the heartbreaking reality that their son is homeless. He ran away when he was seventeen, and with the exception of a few calls from prison and one visit, his parents have had no contact with him for twenty years. His mom allowed me to interview her at a leadership gathering. As we prepared for the discussion, I asked her why she was willing to disclose her story.

“I want to change the way people see the homeless. I want them to stop seeing problems and begin seeing mothers’ sons.”



In certain Zulu areas of South Africa, people greet each other with a phrase that means “I see you”. Change begins with a genuine look.

And continues with a helping hand. I’m writing this chapter by a dim light in an Ethiopian hotel only a few miles and hours removed from modern-day version of this story.

Bzuneh Tulema lives in a two-room, dirt-floored, cinder-blockhouse at the end of a dirt road in the dry hills of Adama. Maybe three hundred square feet. He’s painted the walls a pastel blue and hung two pictures of Jesus, one of which bears the caption “Jesus the Goos Shepherd.” During our visit the air is hot, the smell of cow manure is pungent, and I don’t inhale too deeply for fear of swallowing a fly.

Across from me, Bzuneh beams. He wears a Nike cap with a crooked bill, a red jacket (in spite of furnace-level heat), a a gap-toothed smile. No king was ever prouder of a castle than he is of his four walls. As the thirty-five-year-old relates his story, I understand.

Just two years ago he was the town drunk. He drank away his first marriage and came within a prayer of doing the same with the second. He and his wife were so consumed with alcohol that they farmed out their kids to neighbours and resigned themselves to a drunken demise.

But then someone saw them. Like Peter and John saw the beggar, members of an area church took a good look at their situation. They began bringing the couple food and clothes. They invited them to attend worship services. Bzuneh was not interested. However, his wife, Billie, was. She began to sober up and consider the story of Christ. The promise of a new life. The offer of a second change. She believed.

Bzuneh was not so quick. He kept drinking until one night a year later he fell so hard he knocked a dent in his face that remains to this day. Friends found him in a gully and took him to the same church and shared the same Jesus with him. He hasn’t touched a drop since.

The problem of poverty continued. The couple owned nothing more than their clothing and mud hut. Enter Meskerem Trango, a World Vision worker. He continued the looking-and-touching ministry. How could he help Bzuneh, a recovering alcoholic, get back on his feet? Jobs in the area were scarce. Besides, who would want to hire the vil-lage sot? A gift of cash was not the solution; the couple might drink it away.

Meskerem sat with Bzuneh and explored the options. He finally hit upon a solution. Cow manure. He arranged a loan through the World Vision microfinance department. Bzuneh acquired a cow, built a shed, and began trapping the cow droppings and turning them into methane and fertilizer. Billie cooked with the gas, and he sold the fertilizer.

Within a year Bzuneh had repaid the loan, bought four more cows, built his house, and reclaimed his kids.

“Now I have ten livestock, thirty goats, a TV set, a tape recorder, and a mobile phone. Even my wife has a mobile phone.” He smiled. “And I dream of selling grain.”

It all began with an honest look and a helping hand. Could this be God’s strategy for human hurt? First, kind eyes meet desperate ones. Next, strong hands help weak ones. Then, the miracle of God. We do our small part, he does the big part, and life at the Beautiful Gate begins to be just that.

### **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.*

Call your people to seek your wisdom in difficult conversations and action. Give the church everywhere courage to repent for the ways we have tolerated and practiced injustice. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Inspire our wonder at creation, from the light of dawn to the beauty of the dark night. Sustain the unseen depths of the ocean to the plants and animals we know well. Bring healing to lands and communities experiencing natural disasters. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Instruct the powerful in your ways. Provide upright leadership in business and industry, that workers are not oppressed. Throughout the world, inspire voters and raise up politicians to heed your call for nations to practice righteousness. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Loosen the bonds of injustice in our midst. Grant peace to endless quarrels, put an end to hunger, and break every yoke of oppression. Shelter all who flee abuse in their homes or violence in their communities. Satisfy those afflicted in any way. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Shape our congregation to be salt for the earth. Give us delight in your commandments, that we are generous with those in need. Make us steadfast in our trust in you, ready with tangible mercy and compassion for our neighbors. 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.**

The cross and resurrection bring redemption from sin and death. We praise you for (*the Martyrs of Japan and*) all whose unshaken faith in Christ shines forth in their witness. Keep them in our remembrance and bring us with them into the kingdom of heaven. 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.**