



# Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

[www.trinitylutheran.ca](http://www.trinitylutheran.ca)

---

February 4, 2024  
Fifth Sunday in Epiphany

## Announcements

**Brown Bag Bible Study** begins on February 28. The five-week study will discuss the week's Lenten lessons and aims to deepen our understanding and appreciation of the season's lessons. Bring your lunch to the noon- 1 p.m. gathering in the Fellowship Hall. Drinks will be provided.

**Next Trinitarian** the next issue of Trinity's newsletter is due out later this month. If you have news, recipes, pictures or even a bad pun, please send it to the church office [trinitywlutheran@gmail.com](mailto:trinitywlutheran@gmail.com). We'd be happy to share it.

**Shrove Pancake Supper** is scheduled for 5 - 7 p.m. Tuesday, February 13. Invite your friends and family to this meal before we begin our Lenten journey toward the cross.

**Lenten Messy Church** is planned for Wednesday, February 21. This is a mid-week alternative worship for families of all types and sizes. Messy Church involves a meal, activities, crafts, a quiet area and a brief worship. Please let Pastor Chris or Donna know if you would like to attend or help with the event.

## We Remember in our Prayers

**In Residence:** Cordelle, Dorothy, Katie, Margaret, Sharon, Vern.

**Members:** Bunny, Donna, Ed, Joan, Susan, Evelyn

**Friends & Family:** Anna, Asdis, Audrey, Dot, Jean, Mary, Michelle, Randy, Roger, Rose

## Introduction to the day

*In Isaiah the one God who sits above the earth and numbers the stars also strengthens the powerless. So in Jesus' healing work we see the hand of the creator God, lifting up the sick woman to health and service (diakonia). Like Simon's mother-in-law, we are lifted up and healed to serve. Following Jesus, we strengthen the powerless; like Jesus, we seek to renew our own strength in quiet times of prayer.*

---

## Suggested Hymns

WOV # 788 Glory to God

ELW #314 Arise your light has come

ELW #787 On eagle's wings

ELW #665 Rise shine you people

## Prayer of the day

Everlasting God,  
you give strength to the weak and power  
to the faint. Make us agents of your  
healing and wholeness, that your good  
news may be made known to the ends  
of your creation, through Jesus Christ,  
our Saviour and Lord.

AMEN

## First Reading: Isaiah 40:21-31

<sup>21</sup>Have you not known? Have you not  
heard?

Has it not been told you from the  
beginning?

Have you not understood from the  
foundations of the earth?

<sup>22</sup>It is he who sits above the circle of the  
earth,

and its inhabitants are like  
grasshoppers;

who stretches out the heavens like a  
curtain,  
and spreads them like a tent to live in;

<sup>23</sup>who brings princes to naught,  
and makes the rulers of the earth as  
nothing.

<sup>24</sup>Scarcely are they planted, scarcely  
sown,  
scarcely has their stem taken root in  
the earth,

when he blows upon them, and they  
wither,  
and the tempest carries them off like  
stubble.

<sup>25</sup>To whom then will you compare me,  
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

<sup>26</sup>Lift up your eyes on high and see:

Who created these?  
He who brings out their host and numbers  
them,

calling them all by name;  
because he is great in strength,  
mighty in power,  
not one is missing.

<sup>27</sup>Why do you say, O Jacob,  
and speak, O Israel,  
“My way is hidden from the Lord,  
and my right is disregarded by my  
God”?

<sup>28</sup>Have you not known? Have you not  
heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.

<sup>29</sup>He gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.

<sup>30</sup>Even youths will faint and be weary,  
and the young will fall exhausted;

<sup>31</sup>but those who wait for the Lord shall  
renew their strength,  
they shall mount up with wings like  
eagles,

they shall run and not be weary,  
they shall walk and not faint.

## Psalm 147: 1-11, 20c

<sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! How good it is to sing  
praises | to our God!

How pleasant it is to honor | God with  
praise!

<sup>2</sup>**The Lord re- | builds Jerusalem,  
and gathers the ex- | iles of Israel.**

<sup>3</sup>The Lord heals the | brokenhearted  
and binds | up their wounds.

<sup>4</sup>**The Lord counts the number | of  
the stars**

**and calls them all | by their names.**

<sup>5</sup>Great is our Lord and might- | y in power;  
there is no limit | to God's wisdom.

**<sup>6</sup>The Lord lifts | up the lowly,  
but casts the wicked | to the ground.**

<sup>7</sup>Sing to the Lord | with thanksgiving;  
make music upon the harp | to our God,

**<sup>8</sup>who covers the heav- | ens with clouds  
and prepares rain for the earth,  
making grass to grow up- | on the mountains.**

<sup>9</sup>God provides food | for the cattle  
and for the young ravens | when they cry.

**<sup>10</sup>God is not impressed by the  
might | of a horse,  
and has no pleasure in the  
speed | of a runner,**

<sup>11</sup>but finds pleasure in those who | fear the Lord,  
in those who await God's steadfast  
love. <sup>20cl</sup> Hallelujah!

## **Second reading:**

### **1 Corinthians 9: 16-23**

<sup>16</sup>If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! <sup>17</sup>For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. <sup>18</sup>What then is my reward?

Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.

<sup>19</sup>For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. <sup>20</sup>To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. <sup>21</sup>To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. <sup>22</sup>To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. <sup>23</sup>I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.



## Gospel: Mark 1: 29-39

<sup>29</sup>As soon as [Jesus and the disciples] left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. <sup>30</sup>Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. <sup>31</sup>He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

<sup>32</sup>That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. <sup>33</sup>And the whole city was gathered around the door. <sup>34</sup>And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

<sup>35</sup>In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. <sup>36</sup>And Simon and his companions hunted for him. <sup>37</sup>When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." <sup>38</sup>He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." <sup>39</sup>And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.



## Sermon

### Prayerful Service

Some years back, Robert Baldwin was an editor working for a Catholic newspaper in Boston.

Back in the 70s, one of his assignments was to cover a visit by Mother Teresa.

The nun had journeyed from India on a speaking tour of the United States and Baldwin ... hearing that she would be speaking nearby ... decided to cover the event himself rather than hand the assignment to someone else.

After arriving at the auditorium, he settled into his assigned place in the press section.

A short time later, a priest from the archdioceses came over and informed Baldwin and the rest of the journalists that “Mother Teresa will see you now.”

The small group headed off to the room where they would meet the famous nun and have the opportunity to ask her some questions about her ministry.

During her talk to the audience later that evening, she explained that the members of her order actually seek Christ as they minister to the poor and the outcasts in the streets of Calcutta.

She spoke of a member of the order spending a day tending to the wounds of a dying street beggar. Mother Teresa told the gathering that the nun felt she was tending to the wounds of Jesus.

Baldwin recounted how she insisted that Christ tests our love by hiding behind grotesque disguises.

So ... through their work in the streets ... the sisters of her order actually seek to recognize Christ among the poor.

They seek to see beyond the disguise.

Baldwin was leaving his office one night a few weeks later ...

He was still processing Mother Teresa’s words and said he wasn’t entirely certain that he believed that Jesus hid behind disguises that made people uncomfortable whenever they were encountered.

Stepping outside ... Baldwin was greeted by a drunk.

The man was ragged, dirty and smelled awful. His speech was slurred.

The man asked, “Did the bus leave yet?”

Baldwin knew that the only bus that ever stopped in the neighborhood at that time of night was a van that took homeless people to a nearby soup kitchen ... and the man had missed it.

Baldwin found himself thinking about Mother Teresa’s words ... that God tests our love by coming to us in disguises ... he later said that he didn’t really believe that God was standing there smelling of cheap wine, ... but he could see that the man needed a meal and the soup kitchen wasn’t too far out of his way.

So, he offered to drive the man there.

The man studied Baldwin through a pair of bleary eyes ... he looked stunned at the offer. The next words Baldwin heard made him rethink Mother Teresa’s lesson ...

“You must know me,” the man said.

How does this morning’s gospel lesson from Mark fit into this story about Mother Theresa ministry to those living in abject poverty?

Last week, we heard of Jesus teaching at the Capernaum synagogue and then healing a man by removing an unclean spirit from him.

The act restored the man to both the faith community and to full participation in life in Capernaum.

Jesus' teaching and his act of healing amazed and astounded the gathering. Word began to spread about this gifted rabbi who teaches with authority and who brings out demons and heals people with just a few words and perhaps a touch.

Now, it is the end of the sabbath ... Jesus has left the synagogue and is at the home of Simon and Andrew.

Simon's widowed mother-in-law lives with his family.

Simon most likely brought her into the household, so she wouldn't end up living on the street.

Now, the woman is sick with a fever and the family fears she might die.

After all that they had witnessed at the synagogue, the men tell Jesus about her illness.

Jesus enters the room ... touches her ... lifts her up ... and she is made well.

The restored woman begins to serve the guests in the house ... possibly out of gratitude, but she ensures that the house guests were honoured and that no shame would be brought on the family through.

She becomes an example of prayer leading to service to others ... just as Jesus does later in the passage.

Of course, word spreads about this healing and about the earlier one at the synagogue.

People from across Capernaum ... those who are sick or possessed by unclean spirits ... begin to arrive at the Simon's and Andrew's doorstep ... no doubt crowding into the small street in

front of the house as they wait for a touch or a word of hope.

Scholar Dawn Wilhelm says these people are "hovering at the doorway, but haven't yet crossed the threshold of faith."

For some of them, faith comes with Jesus' healing words. Their restoration will bring others in search of Jesus and their own restoration to health or community.

Jesus heals them all ... it makes for a very long day.

So, in the morning, while everyone is probably still asleep ... Jesus heads to a deserted place so he can have a quiet place to pray.

Jesus hits the reset button.

In this quiet place, Jesus finds himself in the company of a God who offers a renewed and expanded vision of life and ministry. He takes the disciples and leaves Capernaum to carry on his ministry ... the sharing of the good news ... elsewhere in Galilee.

As it does with Simon's mother-in-law, Jesus' prayer leads to continued service.

Through prayer, Jesus strengthens the relationship tether with the Father.

For Jesus, there is no surer sign of faithful communion with God than emerging from prayer with a renewed sense of proclaiming the good news. This is function of prayer ... both of private prayer and communal prayer as we do each Sunday morning.

This morning's passage from Isaiah describes the restorative nature of our relationship with God:

He gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.  
Even youths will faint and be weary,  
and the young will fall exhausted;  
but those who wait for the Lord shall  
renew their strength,  
they shall mount up with wings like  
eagles,  
they shall run and not be weary,  
they shall walk and not faint.

This power ... this renewed strength ... comes through prayer. It is in the moments of prayer when the relationship with God is at its most intimate. It is when faith can be revitalized and its roots in God strengthened.

This morning's passage from Mark calls us to consider our prayer life.

Do we feel restored or renewed by our time in prayer? Do our prayers energize us to carry on our ministry to the world? For what do we pray ... for ourselves ... for others ... for both?

Prayer is a time when we can address our own spiritual health and well-being by seeking to heal the wounds and the pain that we ourselves feel.

Prayer is that moment when we reset our lives ... and perhaps ... rethink and reset our priorities. Prayer provides us with the opportunity to discern the needs

of the world and to give voice to those we see suffering and lift them up.

It is when we can look past those disguises that Mother Theresa and members of her order dealt with during their ministry ... and heal ... restore ... forgive and speak truth to power as we are called to do.

As we near the end of the season of epiphany ... a time when Jesus' nature is revealed to us ... we witness Jesus lifting up the faint ... as Isaiah puts it ... and the prayerful nature that tethers us ... individually and collectively ... to God ... and to others.

This morning, Jesus hoped to be hidden in Simon's home, but his nature was still revealed in the lifting up of Simon's mother-in-law.

That nature is revealed with we lift others up in prayer and service.

Coincidentally, Trinity's annual congregational meeting takes place following this service.

It is a time we can collectively discern ... reaffirm ... and reset our priorities ... to ensure we remain on the long-term path that has been decided upon ... while ensuring that more immediate needs that crop up do not overwhelm our long-term missional goals.

Through prayer, we can discern how best to minister and where we are needed ... on those doorsteps and streets ... where the gift of grace we have received can be shared in word and deed.

... those places where we can look past the disguises and heal.

**AMEN**

### **Lord's Prayer**

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**

May the outrageous welcome of our Creator  
+ accept and love us for who we are;  
may the incarnation of the Word  
touch and hold us close;  
may the dancing flicker of the rainbow Spirit  
help us risk ourselves for love;  
and the blessing of God  
now and forever.

**AMEN**

**Visit us on Facebook  
and Instagram**