



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

February 18, 2024
1st Sunday in Lent

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. We'd be happy to share it.

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, Frank

Introduction to the day

On Ash Wednesday the church began its journey toward baptismal immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ. This year, the Sundays in Lent lead us to focus on five covenants God makes in the Hebrew Scriptures and to use them as lenses through which to view baptism. First Peter connects the way God saved Noah's family in the flood with the way God saves us through the water of baptism. The baptismal covenant is made with us individually, but the new life we are given in baptism is for the sake of the whole world.

ACS # 1018 Deep Peace
ELW # 319 O Lord, throughout these
forty
ELW #320 the glory of these 40 days
ELW #605, forgive our sins as we
forgive

Prayer of the day

Holy God, heavenly Father, in the waters of the flood you saved the chosen, and in the wilderness of temptation you protected your Son from sin. Renew us in the gift of baptism. May your holy angels be with us, that the wicked foe may have no power over us, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

AMEN

First Reading: Genesis 9: 8-17

⁸God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹“As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” ¹²God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the

clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” ¹⁷God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

Psalm 25: 1-10

¹To ^l you, O Lord,
I lift ^l up my soul.
²**My God, I put my trust in you; let
me not be ^l put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph ^l over
me.**
³Let none who look to you be ^l put to
shame;
rather let those be put to
shame ^l who are treacherous.
⁴**Show me your ^l ways, O Lord,
and teach ^l me your paths.**
⁵Lead me in your ^l truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all ^l the day long.
⁶**Remember, O Lord, your
compas- ^l sion and love,
for they are from ^l everlasting.**
⁷Remember not the sins of my youth
and ^l my transgressions;
remember me according to your
steadfast love and for the sake of your
good- ^l ness, O Lord.

⁸You are gracious and up-^l right,
O Lord;
therefore you teach sinners^l in
your way.

⁹You lead the low-^l ly in justice
and teach the low-^l ly your way.

¹⁰All your paths, O Lord, are
steadfast^l love and faithfulness
to those who keep your covenant
and your^l testimonies.

Second reading:

1 Peter 3: 18-22

¹⁸Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. ²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Gospel: Mark 1: 9-15



⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

¹²And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus

came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."



Sermon

Disruptive Spirit

A man was visiting a distant city during the Christmas season.

Despite the cold and the snow ... the tourist had spent the morning out seeing a few of the local sights before having to duck into a bus station to warm up.

He got a cup of coffee from a vendor and sat down on one of the benches that lined the small area where travelers could sit and eat. He figured to again brave the cold after he finished his coffee and warmed up a bit.

As he took small pulls from the cup, the man watched people coming and going from the station and watched others eating at the tables. After some time, he noticed a man sitting on one of the nearby benches.

From the way the man looked ... the tourist assumed that he was likely homeless and by the way he watched

the others eat their lunches, the tourist figured that the man hadn't eaten in a while.

The tourist was sure the man would come over and ask for help. If the man panhandled, the tourist decided that he would be happy to help out.

Only the man never came over to him ... he just sat by himself on the bench ... his hands folded in the lap of his stained parka.

For a few moments, the tourist argued with himself ... should I go over and help ... If I did, would he tell me to mind my own business ... would he scream something at me ... or worse ... attack. The tourist was really hoping the man would come over and just ask for help.

But before the tourist could make the decision, he saw a young couple go over to the man.

They offered the homeless man a Styrofoam container with a sandwich and a cup of soup.

"Excuse us," the husband said to the man as he offered the containers. "We just finished eating and ... I guess ... our appetites weren't as large as we thought.

"We hate to waste food, so we're hoping that ... maybe ... you can help us out."

The man took the container and the cup of soup from them...

"God bless you and Merry Christmas," the man said before the couple smiled, turned and left.

If this is where the story ended ... you'd have to agree that it's a good story. But something else happened...

The man held the container under his nose ... savouring the aroma of the soup and then carefully ... almost reverently ... unwrapped the plastic spoon. He dipped it into the soup and was about to take the first taste when something caught his eye.

The tourist ... who had been witnessing this scene ... followed the man's line of sight and saw an elderly man ... wearing a threadbare jacket and open shoes ... but no hat or gloves ... enter the dining area ... peeking into a couple of waste containers before sitting down on a bench.

A moment later ... the homeless man went over to the newcomer ... put the containers down ... and worked to warm him up ... rubbing his icy hands and then draping his jacket over the elderly man. Then, the man offered the food he had just been given ...

"Some people gave me this food," the man told the older visitor. "I've already eaten ... so why don't you take it?"

The elderly man looked at the containers of food ... "thanks, but only if you split the sandwich with me. This is more food than someone my age can handle."

The first man sat down next to him and the two spent the next little while sharing that meal...

The tourist finished his coffee and left ...

In today's gospel passage, Jesus arrives at the Jordan River and is baptized by John.

We have heard Jesus' baptism story a few times during the past couple of months.

This time, as Jesus comes out of the water, the heavens are torn apart ... the Spirit comes upon him and a voice ... that only he can hear ... affirms his identity as the Son ... the Beloved. This is the same voice that the disciples hear later in Mark – in the transfiguration story we heard last Sunday.

Then, the Spirit calls Jesus out into the wilderness for forty days.

After his time in the wilderness is over, Jesus travels through the region proclaiming the good news ... that the kingdom of God has come near.

In Mark's gospel, Jesus' time in the wilderness merits just two verses.

In those verses, we hear that Jesus spent forty days there ... was tempted by Satan and that he lived in harmony with the wild animals and that angels waited on him.

In Matthew's and Luke's hands, we hear about the specific trials and temptations that Jesus faced. We hear that Jesus fasted and prayed while he was in the wilderness.

In Mark ... the challenges and the details of Jesus' time in the wilderness are left to our imagination. Mark doesn't tell us of Jesus' actions during the forty days ... what feats of healing or what miracles he performed. Mark doesn't say if Jesus reflected on what his calling means to the world.

But the lack of detail makes listeners focus on the journey. That seems appropriate when you consider that we too are called to spend a lot of time in the wilderness.

In Jewish tradition, the wilderness was considered a place of uncertainty and danger ... a place that challenges a person ... a place where people are changed ... a place of reflection and repentance.

It was also a place where God acted.

Mark's gospel shows the transformative power of God's presence in the world ... of God in the wilderness.

By the end of the forty days, life in the wilderness was changed by his presence into something other than a place of desolation.

A place of danger ... of fear ... of brokenness ... of scarcity and of pain ... had been transformed through the presence of love.

For some, the pandemic had been a journey through the wilderness of anxiety and uncertainty.

Congregations were broken and disconnected ... people fell away or felt pushed away from their faith families ... by the effects of Covid restrictions. They have yet to return and congregations and their ministries are the poorer for it.

In a sense, these people and these congregations are still journeying in a wilderness. They are broken.

The story of the people in the bus station is a story of brokenness ... of scarcity and of pain. ... It's a story where

we can see the wilderness areas that remain in the life of the world.

But it is also one that allows us to see the possibilities held within loving acts.

During the coming weeks, we are invited to remember Jesus' journey after the wilderness ... after the Spirit moved him into a place of transformation. We are invited to remember the transformation that comes through the cross.

Those who attended last week's Ash Wednesday service spent a few moments creating remembrance bracelets for the Lenten Season.

They have been asked to wear the bracelets during Lent as a reminder of the call we have received ... to remember the journey Jesus makes toward the cross ... a journey, by the way, that we are to join, as well.

The Spirit calls us ... to journey out of comfort and into the wilderness ... unfamiliar places where hunger ... pain ... and brokenness flourish. Places where God can break in through our words and actions.

The Lenten season is a time when we can reflect and reset ... to adjust our attitudes, words, and actions so that we can better pursue justice and peace ... to more fully share God's gift we have received ... to being a community. Lent calls us to consider how we too can spark holy disruptions ... seeking those moments when we can be the catalyst for change.

It is a time when we can consider if we have lived into our baptismal vows ... the vows that link us to the promise ... a promise that ... if fulfilled through our actions ... is a disruptive influence.

In baptism, we too hear God's blessings ... and like Jesus we can feel the Spirit urging us forward into the wilderness ... called by a gentle whisper or by the shouts of a reality such as those from Gaza ... that unsettle us to our core.

We are called to participate in God's loving reign ... wherever that may lead us and to share that unconditional ... transformative ... loving power present through the gift of grace ... with whomever we meet in those moments ... in those places ... of wilderness.

These wilderness places can stretch for miles or they can stretch between two people ... even between benches of a bus station.

On the surface, the story in the bus station that I told a few minutes ago was about sharing.

But it is also a story about what happens when you journey into the wilderness between people ... of what can happen when you boldly seek to comfort others in their pain ... bringing them ... and yourself ... into community.

In thinking about this story, I've been wondering about the tourist ... the man who recognized another's pain ... yet was hesitant to act ... slow to cross the divide between him and the homeless man ... because he was more concerned about other things ... than he was about the man's needs.

I pray that as we move through these forty days ... that we recognize the wilderness regions in our lives and within the life of our community ... that we follow the call to transform them into places of hospitality ... of acceptance ... of inclusion and of love and be transformed ourselves in the bargain.

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