



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

---

February 25, 2024  
2<sup>nd</sup> 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 has been sent out. If you haven't received a copy by email or by in-person delivery, contact the church office. 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.

**Maundy Thursday** is planned for Thursday, March 28. The communion service, which marks Jesus' final time with the disciples before he is taken away by the authorities, begins at 6 p.m.

**Good Friday** service is set to begin at 10 a.m. on Friday, March 29. This is a service of prayer and reflection. In place of a homily, a passion narrative will be offered. There is no communion offered as part of this service.

### **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**

*The second covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them the ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal promise of resurrection life in faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ.*

ACS # 1018 Deep Peace  
ELW # 796 How firm a foundation  
ELW # 808 Lord Jesus, you shall be my  
song  
ELW # 325 I want Jesus to walk with me

### Prayer of the day

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son, you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**AMEN**

### Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

<sup>1</sup>When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. <sup>2</sup>And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous."

<sup>3</sup>Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, <sup>4</sup>"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>5</sup>No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations.

<sup>6</sup>I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. <sup>7</sup>I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their

generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you."

<sup>15</sup>God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. <sup>16</sup>I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her.

I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

### Psalm 25: 1-10

<sup>23</sup>You who fear the Lord, give praise! All you of Jacob's <sup>1</sup> line, give glory.

Stand in awe of the Lord, all you off- <sup>1</sup> spring of Israel.

<sup>24</sup>**For the Lord does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither is the Lord's face hid- <sup>1</sup> den from them;**

**but when they cry out, <sup>1</sup> the Lord hears them.**

<sup>25</sup>From you comes my praise in the <sup>1</sup> great assembly;

I will perform my vows in the sight of those who <sup>1</sup> fear the Lord.

<sup>26</sup>**The poor shall eat <sup>1</sup> and be satisfied,**

**Let those who seek the Lord give praise! May your hearts <sup>1</sup> live forever!**

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn <sup>1</sup> to the Lord;

all the families of nations shall bow <sup>1</sup> before God.

<sup>28</sup>**For dominion belongs <sup>1</sup> to the Lord,**

**who rules o- <sup>1</sup> ver the nations.**

<sup>29</sup>Indeed, all who sleep in the earth

shall bow <sup>l</sup> down in worship;  
all who go down to the dust, though  
they be dead, shall kneel be- <sup>l</sup> fore  
the Lord.

<sup>30</sup>**Their descendants shall <sup>l</sup> serve  
the Lord,  
whom they shall proclaim to  
genera- <sup>l</sup> tions to come.**

<sup>31</sup>They shall proclaim God's  
deliverance to a people <sup>l</sup> yet unborn,  
saying to them, "The <sup>l</sup> Lord has  
acted!"

### **Second reading: Romans 4:13-25**

<sup>13</sup>The promise that he would inherit the  
world did not come to Abraham or to his  
descendants through the law but  
through the righteousness of faith.

<sup>14</sup>If it is the adherents of the law who are  
to be the heirs, faith is null and the  
promise is void. <sup>15</sup>For the law brings  
wrath; but where there is no law, neither  
is there violation.

<sup>16</sup>For this reason it depends on faith,  
in order that the promise may rest on  
grace and be guaranteed to all his  
descendants, not only to the adherents  
of the law but also to those who share  
the faith of Abraham (for he is the father  
of all of us, <sup>17</sup>as it is written, "I have  
made you the father of many nations")  
— in the presence of the God in whom  
he believed, who gives life to the dead  
and calls into existence the things that  
do not exist. <sup>18</sup>Hoping against hope, he  
believed that he would become "the  
father of many nations," according to  
what was said, "So numerous shall your

descendants be." <sup>19</sup>He did not weaken in  
faith when he considered his own body,  
which was already as good as dead (for  
he was about a hundred years old), or  
when he considered the barrenness of  
Sarah's womb.

<sup>20</sup>No distrust made him waver  
concerning the promise of God, but he  
grew strong in his faith as he gave glory  
to God, <sup>21</sup>being fully convinced that God  
was able to do what he had  
promised. <sup>22</sup>Therefore his faith "was  
reckoned to him as  
righteousness." <sup>23</sup>Now the words, "it was  
reckoned to him," were written not for  
his sake alone, <sup>24</sup>but for ours also. It will  
be reckoned to us who believe in him  
who raised Jesus our Lord from the  
dead, <sup>25</sup>who was handed over to death  
for our trespasses and was raised for  
our justification.

### **Gospel: Mark 8: 31-38**

<sup>31</sup>[Jesus] began to teach them that the  
Son of Man must undergo great  
suffering, and be rejected by the elders,  
the chief priests, and the scribes, and be  
killed, and after three days rise  
again. <sup>32</sup>He said all this quite openly. And  
Peter took him aside and began to  
rebuke him. <sup>33</sup>But turning and looking at  
his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said,  
"Get behind me, Satan! For you are  
setting your mind not on divine things  
but on human things."

<sup>34</sup>He called the crowd with his



disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. <sup>36</sup>For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <sup>37</sup>Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? <sup>38</sup>Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

### **Sermon – The cross within us**

On one of my first days here at Trinity, I walked around the sanctuary and the Fellowship building ... poking my nose into the different rooms ... looking in closets ... getting a feel for the

place where I had been called to serve the gospel.

Part of the exercise was just to see where things are ... and the last three meal events have shown that I still have some learning to do ... although I now know what “hot pads” are and what drawer they are in.

Another part of the exercise was to see how many crosses were on display. BTW, I discovered last week that I had missed one ... it was behind the door of the sacristy.

A couple of months ago, when the congregational council was deciding what to procure from the Lutheran Church in Oakville that was closing ... a 15-20-foot sanctuary cross caught our eye. We didn’t get it ... of course ... but the image of an oversized cross strapped to the roof of Dagmar’s car as she speeds down the 401 still makes me chuckle.

Talk about taking up a cross...

Today in his passion prediction, Jesus tells the disciples what lies ahead for the Son of Man and ... just as importantly ... what is expected of his followers.

Jesus tells them that the Son of Man will suffer ... that he will be rejected by all the religious authorities ... that he will be killed and that ... after three days ... he will rise again.

The disciples ... Peter especially ... were stunned by this news.

They expect him to save them ... to deliver them from the oppressive life

that they know ... and he's just told them the stark reality that he faces.

Earlier in Mark's gospel, Peter seems to have recognized that Jesus is the Messiah – but then pooches things by framing his expectations of a Messiah through society's lens ... “earthly things” is how Jesus puts it.

Jesus rebukes Peter ... “get behind me,” we hear Jesus say ... that's the cleaned-up version. A better translation of the original Greek is “shut up.”

Jesus tells him and the disciples to think of the big picture ... the divine things that have the power to transform life and to save people ... and not on those small things ... those “earthly things.”

Jesus tells them that if they want to be followers ... they need to take up the cross ... that if they want to save their life ... they will lose it.

Disciples are to live for ... they are to serve others.

In biblical times ... taking up a cross was something to be avoided at all costs.

Under the Romans, the cross was a symbol of oppressive power ... it represented the most humiliating, torturous form of execution imaginable.

People who were crucified on the cross died slowly ... suffocating under their own weight ... and all in full public display.

Under the Romans, crucifixion was reserved for a special criminals ... ones guilty of violent or dangerous crimes ... for people who represented a danger to

the Roman way of life ... the ones to be made an example of.

Following a lengthy slave revolt about 70 years before Jesus arrived, Roman authorities had six thousand rebellious gladiators and slaves crucified along the main route into the city of Rome.

It's the kind of execution that sends a message to the people ... a message that there is no hope.

But Jesus ... through his suffering ... death ... and resurrection transforms the cross into something that embodies the exact opposite of what the world had come to know.

It becomes a symbol of the new covenant between God and the people ... a covenant that we join through baptism and faith. It is a symbol that calls us to look out from ourselves ... to make a commitment to God and to others ... to be active in our faith.

Through Jesus the cross becomes a sign of hope.

Author Sara Miles shares a story about such a cross in her book “Take this bread.”

Although her grandparents were active in their faith communities and performed missionary work abroad, she was raised as an atheist and spent a good portion of her time living her life as one.

One day, she inexplicably wandered into a church and took communion. At that point, her world ... and her approach to the world ... changed.

Of course, it wasn't as simple as that ... looking back in her book ... Miles is able to trace the events ... the incidents ... the people ... that led her to the moment at the table.

As a journalist and social activist, Miles traveled to communities in the midst of upheavals. In the '80s ... she traveled to Nicaragua and to the Philippines where she met and interviewed revolutionaries ... and others who were battling oppressive governments.

During her travels, she lived among the poor ... people who rarely had enough to eat ... but who always made sure their guest didn't go hungry.

She wrote about a time when she interviewed a Spanish Jesuit professor in El Salvador.

Miles remembers the deep, calming presence of Ignacio Martin-Baro when they met in his office. She wrote about his lack of fear during a dangerous time in that country's history.

At the time, Martin-Baro was a target for assassination ... something that the bullet holes in his office wall bore witness to.

In her remembrance, she talks about a crucifix among those bullet holes on the office wall ... and her thoughts about what it meant.

Miles writes: "I wouldn't have seen it as a sign of hope, back then, just as a rather gory art object. The power of the cross ... the idea that suffering for others could lead to a new life ... was for me then, as it was for the unbelievers

Saint Paul wrote about, and remains for rationalists today, a 'folly.' "

Miles came to recognize the power of the cross ... the transformational power carried within it ... through her experiences in El Salvador and on the streets of San Francisco.

The Lenten Season ... and its destination ... calls us to reflect not only on the journey, but on the cross ... the ones that are visible and the ones that are experienced.

It has been written that Christian faith is not a lifestyle choice, but it is a vocation to a never-ending struggle ... to bring the promise of the gospel to a world that desperately needs to experience it.

In that light, to take up the cross means that we serve as a symbol of God's love ... of God's gift of grace ... that we comfort ... feed ... heal ... those we meet when we travel to the margins.

Taking up the cross then is about our response to a world in pain. It is about our call to love ... to work for justice ... for peace ... for reconciliation ... and for inclusion.

Through the cross, we are joined to one another.

Taking up the cross represents a dramatic transformation in a person's identity ... a willingness to place others needs before your own ... a willingness to lose yourself in service.

We are called to take the cross into places and to people that the world tells us must be avoided ... places that can

be both dangerous and but also life-affirming.

The Lenten season is an opportunity to contemplate whether the crosses we take up are indeed life-giving.

It's an opportunity to contemplate how we live into the life of discipleship.

It is a life we enter through our baptism and continually reaffirm through our communion.

So, how many crosses did I find when I walked around the building months ago?

To tell the truth ... I'm not sure anymore, because many of the crosses present here ... those being borne ... aren't visible ... they are embossed on hearts and are only made known through compassion ... empathy ... through service to others ... through love.

... through the grace we receive and through the grace share.

In such moments ... those crosses serve as a light that illumines the way ahead of us ... a light that beckons others to join in a journey that ends in hope and in new life at a tomb near Jerusalem.

**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**

