

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

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March 17, 2024  
5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

### **Announcements**

**Brown Bag Bible Study** continues on Wednesday, March 20. 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 scheduled for later this week. 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.

**Bring clean socks** to the Palm Sunday service, March 24. You are invited to wave new socks along with palms as we make Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. We will collect the socks after the service and donate them to a local shelter.

**Maundy Thursday** is planned for Thursday, March 28. The communion service, which marks Jesus' final time with the disciples before he is taken away, 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, silence, and reflection to mark Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. In place of a homily, a passion narrative will be offered. Communion is not offered during this service.

### **We Remember in our Prayers**

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

**Members:** Bunny, Donna, Ed, Joan, Susan, Evelyn, Connie, Judith.

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

### **Introduction to the day**

*God promises Jeremiah that a "new covenant" will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God's heart through Christ and draws God's love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God's love with all the world.*

ACS # 1018 Deep Peace

ELW # 803 When I Survey the

Wondrous Cross

ELW # 329 As the Sun with Longer

Journey

ELW # 339 Christ, the Life of all the

Living

### **Prayer of the day**

O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**AMEN**

### **First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34**

<sup>31</sup>The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup>No longer shall they teach one

another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

### **Psalm 51:1-12**

<sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your <sup>1</sup> steadfast love;

in your great compassion blot out <sup>1</sup> my offenses.

<sup>2</sup>**Wash me through and through <sup>1</sup> from my wickedness, and cleanse me <sup>1</sup> from my sin.**

<sup>3</sup>For I know <sup>1</sup> my offenses, and my sin is ev- <sup>1</sup> er before me.

<sup>4</sup>**Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil <sup>1</sup> in your sight; so you are justified when you speak and right <sup>1</sup> in your judgment.**

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born <sup>1</sup> steeped in wickedness,

a sinner from my <sup>1</sup> mother’s womb.

<sup>6</sup>**Indeed, you delight in truth <sup>1</sup> deep within me, and would have me know wisdom <sup>1</sup> deep within.**

<sup>7</sup>Remove my sins with hyssop, and I <sup>1</sup> shall be clean;

wash me, and I shall be pur- <sup>1</sup> er than snow.

<sup>8</sup>**Let me hear <sup>1</sup> joy and gladness; that the body you have broken <sup>1</sup> may rejoice.**

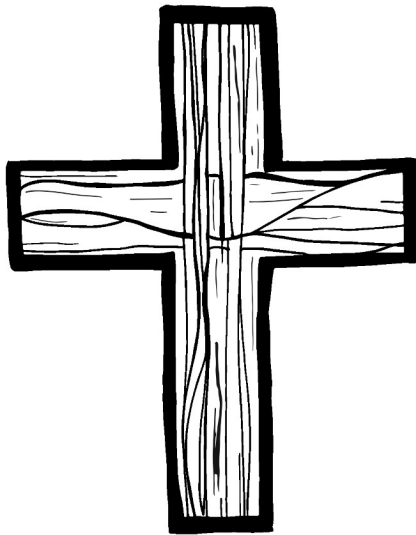
<sup>9</sup>Hide your face <sup>1</sup> from my sins, and blot out <sup>1</sup> all my wickedness.

<sup>10</sup>**Create in me a clean <sup>1</sup> heart, O**

**God,  
and renew a right spir-<sup>l</sup> it within  
me.**

<sup>11</sup>Cast me not away <sup>l</sup> from your  
presence,  
and take not your Holy Spir-<sup>l</sup> it from  
me.

<sup>12</sup>**Restore to me the joy of <sup>l</sup> your  
salvation  
and sustain me with your  
boun-<sup>l</sup> tiful Spirit.**



### **Second reading: Hebrews 5:5-10**

<sup>5</sup>Christ did not glorify himself in  
becoming a high priest, but was  
appointed by the one who said to him,

“You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you”;

<sup>6</sup>as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,  
according to the order of  
Melchizedek.”

<sup>7</sup>In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered  
up prayers and supplications, with loud

cries and tears, to the one who was able  
to save him from death, and he was  
heard because of his reverent  
submission. <sup>8</sup>Although he was a Son, he  
learned obedience through what he  
suffered; <sup>9</sup>and having been made  
perfect, he became the source of eternal  
salvation for all who obey him, <sup>10</sup>having  
been designated by God a high priest  
according to the order of Melchizedek.

### **Gospel: John 12: 20-33**

<sup>20</sup>Now among those who went up to  
worship at the festival were some  
Greeks. <sup>21</sup>They came to Philip, who was  
from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to  
him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup>Philip  
went and told Andrew; then Andrew and  
Philip went and told Jesus. <sup>23</sup>Jesus  
answered them, “The hour has come for  
the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Very  
truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat  
falls into the earth and dies, it remains  
just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears  
much fruit. <sup>25</sup>Those who love their life  
lose it, and those who hate their life in  
this world will keep it for eternal  
life. <sup>26</sup>Whoever serves me must follow  
me, and where I am, there will my  
servant be also. Whoever serves me,  
the Father will honour.

<sup>27</sup>“Now my soul is troubled. And what  
should I say—‘Father, save me from this  
hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have  
come to this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify your  
name.” Then a voice came from heaven,  
“I have glorified it, and I will glorify it

again.” <sup>29</sup>The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” <sup>30</sup>Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup>And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” <sup>33</sup>He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

## **Sermon**

### **Kernel of Grace**

God’s peace be with you this day and throughout your journeys

There are things I love about our new backyard here in Windsor ... for instance, I’m not sure how other pastors manage without a pool.

And there are things I am struggling with ... like there’s no room for a decent-sized vegetable garden and the flower gardens are a little ... well let’s say lacking.

It’s a big change from our previous home where we had some really robust flowergardens and two good-sized raised vegetable gardens.

These were three feet off the ground to keep the rabbits out ... the black squirrels and one of our hounds, Lady, were another matter.

Our last home had a pergola stretching out from the back of the garage toward the pool. One of the first things I did after we moved in was to

construct a garden box that sat upon the cement pads of the patio.

The box was more than three-feet tall and I planted kiwi vines in the hopes that they would stretch up into the pergola and provide natural shade and fruit in the years to come ... just as similar vines do at my cousin’s house in Finland.

I even painted the box in a colour that is in common use in Finland’s lake district where my mother’s family comes from.

To bring even more colour to the box, Donna planted snapdragons and marigolds, while I planted a couple of pepper plants. At the end of the first season, I dutifully pulled the plants and laid them on the soil in the box to provide some nourishment for next season’s planting.

Well, the unexpected happened the following spring, marigolds, snapdragons and even pepper seedlings cropped up from the soil.

The seeds from the earlier plants had been pushed into the soil by winter’s snow and took hold. The colours of the plants were a mixture of the previous year’s plants.

In fact, we didn’t have to buy bedding plants for that box during the rest of our time at the house. Each spring, plants with different mixtures of colours arrived ... something new to anticipate and witness.

Life from death ...

Just before today’s passage in John’s gospel, Jesus raises Lazarus

from the dead and people ... especially the religious leaders ... really take notice.

By the time Jesus reaches Jerusalem for the Passover festival ... there is a large crowd waiting to greet him ... The crowd cheers and throws palms in front of him and proclaims Jesus as the King of Israel

The temple authorities are watching all this unfold and they are worried that their world is beginning to crumble ... to fall away and die.

This upstart rabbi might cost them their power, status and control.

So, they begin plotting ... but that's for another service.

Today, we hear that some Greeks are at the festival.

They spot Philip in the crowd around Jesus and ... knowing that he is from the bilingual town of Bethsaida and that he has a Greek-sounding name ... approach him with a request ... "we wish to see Jesus."

Philip takes the request to Andrew ... and the two of them take it to Jesus.

Jesus never does answer the request ... at least not directly. This week's gospel passage continues last week's lesson about God's all-encompassing love for the world. Remember the verse ... "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

The gathered crowd ... and us here this morning ... now hear where that

love will take Jesus ... and about the act of self-sacrifice that is come.

In his sort-of-answer to the Greeks' request, Jesus tells the gathering that the time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified ... to be lifted from the earth.

It will be a moment of sacrifice that all followers would be expected to follow.

He tells the gathering:

"Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

Jesus compares his death to a grain of wheat that must die before there is new life in the field. Jesus' death is necessary for new life to come into the world.

Grace comes to us through Jesus' death and through death we share this grace.

This doesn't mean that we have to physically die, but rather the parts within us that hinder that love need to go.

This should raise the question for us: what must die for us to bring new life?

Barbara Brown Taylor is a former Anglican priest and the author of a number of books.

In a sermon some years back, she talked about this grain of wheat. That if it's not planted, it remains unfulfilled. Sitting in a bag or on the barn floor, its potential for life remains unrealized ... new life remains unknown.

The grain ... the seed ... has to be buried, remain in the soil before it cracks open ... throws out a green shoot ...

grows into a plant ... and the cycle continues.

She points out something any farmer or gardener knows ... that if you dig around the roots looking for that seed ... you won't find it.

The seed is given up so that something new could arise.

This is what happened with those snapdragons, marigolds and pepper plants in the garden box.

The plants died ... as expected each fall ... and through their death ... seeds became something new ... unexpected and beautiful.

The husks of the previous life remained, but the kernel of life was nowhere to be seen ... only the product could be witnessed.

That's way God's love ... through Jesus ... works.

The old, decaying stuff is discarded while the grain of grace remains active.

In her book, "God in Pain," Brown Taylor compares the grain of wheat to a person's heart.

That it is just like when God breaks open hard hearts ... so that they are open to something new ... something transformative ... and through this transformation ... lives are changed ... and the world becomes something different.

Once planted, grace breaks open hearts to love the world.

Jesus ... through his death ... resurrection ... and ascension ... offers a new life that comes through grace. It is a new life through the cross that calls us to operate outside of the world's

expectations ... to shed the values of the human world ... allowing them to die ... and letting the seeds of the divine sprout and blossom into the world.

It is a life that is inclusive and unconditional ... it is one that brings people into community rather than pushes them to the margins ... it is one that places a premium on respect ... integrity ... and it values the person rather than productivity and accumulation.

In short, we are called to let the world's values die away and to allow God's unconditional love ... through our faith ... take root in our lives and ... through us ... bring new life into the life of the world.

We are nearly at the end of our Lenten sojourn ... a time of reflection and contrition. Next Sunday, we join the crowds in Jerusalem and cheer Jesus' triumphant entry into the city.

The difference is that ... unlike that crowd ... we know that betrayal ... the cross and the tomb follow those cheers.

We are not told if the Greeks in this morning's passage ever see Jesus ... Jesus never says "sure, come on down!" ... my apologies to the folks at the Price is Right.

Rather, Jesus tells the crowd how God's love can be seen and experienced through them and their actions in the world.

So, as we move closer to the foot of the cross, we are invited to consider what we need to sluff off if we are to act in a life-affirming way to those around us



... or ... put another way ... do we act in a way that helps others to see ... to experience ... Christ in the world?

Jeremiah describes God's new covenant with the people ... that the law will be written on their hearts.

So, is there something keeping those words from being realized ... what hinders our relationship with God and one another?

Jesus died for us ... to give us the gift of grace and show just how deeply God so loved the world ... and if we are to be true followers of Jesus, then it stands to reason that part of us must die for grace to be extended ever outward.

The part of us anchored in the earthly, needs to be relinquished in order for the grain of the divine to fully take root and bring new life.

Just ask any gardener or farmer ... death is not the end.

Just think of the fruit that God's love will bear through our actions ... our ministry to the world ... Self-giving love ... Jesus tells the crowd this morning ... is the currency of the life to come.

God so loves the world ... and we are called to unconditionally love it as well ... and through our loving acts ... Jesus is lifted up for all to see...

... love is made known ... grace blossoms ... and new life is borne.

**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**

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. The God of all grace + bless you now and forever.

**AMEN**

**TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE PROGRAM**

**AUTHORIZATION**

I hereby authorize **Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church**, 1215 Parent Avenue, Windsor, ON N8X 4J1, to cause a cheque to be drawn on my account, each month as a contribution by me to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, as follows:

Total **monthly** contributions to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of:

\_\_\_\_\_ (\$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00) per month  
Distributed as follows:

Current Giving/Benevolence \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month

Global Hunger and Development Agency (GHDA) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month

Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month

ELCIC World Missions/Volunteers in Mission \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month

Specify \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month

Specify \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month

Specify \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month

Total Monthly Giving: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month

Contributor's name \_\_\_\_\_ Envelope # \_\_\_\_\_

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***This authority may be changed or cancelled by the contributor at any time.***

To ensure accuracy, a sample cheque marked "VOID" must accompany this form.

The transfer of contributions to the ministry of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church will begin in the month *following* receipt of this authorization.