



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

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September 8, 2024  
16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

### **Announcements**

**Juice boxes** are still needed at Street Help Shelter. The Welcome Centre Shelter for Women needs granola bars, fruit rollup-type items and another snack item for snack packs for children at the centre. Please leave donated items on the table in the Narthex.

**Brown Bag Bible Study** recommences on October 9. The noontime study sessions will look at the coming Sunday's readings. Bring your lunch and we'll supply the coffee, tea or water. Join us for a deep and lively discussion.

### **Coming Up**

**October 6** – As followers of Christ, we are called to be wise stewards of creation. Pets are important parts of our families and, in honour of St. Francis, our regular Sunday service will include a blessing of animals and our pets. You are welcome to bring your well-mannered, socialized pet to the service, but owners are responsible for their behaviour and are expected to prevent and/or clean up any messes.

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

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

**Members:** Bunny, Donna, Ed, Joan, Susan, Connie, Lorraine.

**Friends & Family:** Anna, Asdis, Audrey, Dot, Jean, Mary, Randy, Roger, Rose, Frank, Tanya, Jeremy, Rachel, Nash

### **Introduction to the day**

*James tells us to stop showing favoritism in the assembly, treating the rich visitor with more honour than the poor one. Jesus himself seems to show partiality in his first response to the Syrophenician woman in today's gospel. Was he testing her faith in saying Gentiles don't deserve the goods meant for God's children? Or was he speaking out of his human worldview, but transcended those limits when she took him by surprise with her reply? Either way, the story tells us that God shows no partiality. Everyone who brings a need to Jesus is received with equal honor as a child and heir.*

ELW # 819 Come, all you people  
ELW #677 this little light of mine  
ACS #1062 Build a longer table

### Prayer of the day

Gracious God, throughout the ages you transform sickness into health and death into life. Open us to the power of your presence, and make us a people ready to proclaim your promises to the whole world, through Jesus Christ, our healer and Lord.

**AMEN**

### First reading: Isaiah 35:4-7a

<sup>4</sup>Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

“Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God.  
He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.  
He will come and save you.”

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,

and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

<sup>6</sup>then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless  
sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,

and streams in the desert;

<sup>7a</sup>the burning sand shall become a

pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water.

### Psalm 146

<sup>1</sup>Hal- | lelujah!

Praise the Lord, | O my soul!

<sup>2</sup>**I will praise the Lord as long | as I live;**

**I will sing praises to my God while I | have my being.**

<sup>3</sup>Put not your | trust in rulers,  
in mortals in whom there | is no help.

<sup>4</sup>**When they breathe their last, they re- | turn to earth,**

**and in that day | their thoughts perish. R**

<sup>5</sup>Happy are they who have the God of Jacob | for their help,

whose hope is in the | Lord their God;

<sup>6</sup>**who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that | is in them;**

**who keeps promis- | es forever;**

<sup>7</sup>who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to | those who hunger.

The Lord sets the | captive free.

<sup>8</sup>**The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who | are bowed down;**

**the Lord | loves the righteous. R**

<sup>9</sup>The Lord cares | for the stranger;  
the Lord sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way | of the wicked.

<sup>10</sup>**The Lord shall | reign forever,**

**your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. † Hallelujah!**

**Second reading:** James 2:1-10, 14-17

<sup>1</sup>My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? <sup>2</sup>For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, <sup>3</sup>and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, “Have a seat here, please,” while to the one who is poor you say, “Stand there,” or, “Sit at my feet,” <sup>4</sup>have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? <sup>5</sup>Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? <sup>6</sup>But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? <sup>7</sup>Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

<sup>8</sup>You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>9</sup>But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup>For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

<sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? <sup>15</sup>If

a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? <sup>17</sup>So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

**Gospel:** Mark 7: 24-37

<sup>24</sup>[Jesus] set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice,<sup>25</sup>but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. <sup>26</sup>Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup>He said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” <sup>28</sup>But she answered him, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” <sup>29</sup>Then he said to her, “For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.” <sup>30</sup>So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

<sup>31</sup>Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup>They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. <sup>33</sup>He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and

touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup>Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” <sup>35</sup>And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. <sup>36</sup>Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. <sup>37</sup>They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

## Sermon

### Weighty words

Last week, we heard about a conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees and some scribes over the eating habits of his followers. It was a lesson that what comes from a person's heart is what defiles a person.

He tells the gathering that what you eat and how you eat doesn't exclude you from being in a faith community ... sinful words and actions ... the products of a sinful heart are what is truly damaging. Jesus tells them that these are the evil things that defile a person and a community.

The Pharisees and scribes would consider where Jesus finds himself this morning as unpure territory filled with unpure people.

Jesus heads north to Tyre ... to recharge his batteries after a long stretch of ministry ... healing and teaching ... as well as almost continually

having to correct religious authorities on misguided practices and perspectives.

Tyre is outside the land of Israel and outside the law of Moses ... the people are the descendants of ancient enemies of Israel.

Jesus is an outsider in a land of outsiders.

Tyre is in present day Lebanon. The city's population was a mix of romans, Greeks and displaced Jews. It was an important centre of commerce in the area. At the time, its harbour was a hub of activity for the city's merchants.

Jesus wants to be alone after the 80-kilometre journey from Galilee.

Jesus hopes to slip into town unnoticed and stay in someone's home. Jesus wants to hide from the demands of the world and of his ministry to it. But things don't go as he had hoped.

Even outside Israel ... people have heard about his healing ministry.

A woman ... a Syrophenician woman no less... has noticed Jesus was in town. He might be the only hope for her daughter. The mother is desperate. The girl ... Mark tells us ... is possessed by an unclean spirit.

The woman enters the house ... bows before Jesus ... and begs Jesus to cast out the demon and heal the girl.

Jesus' answer to the woman comes across as pretty harsh.

It is certainly different from the Jesus we know ... he usually reserves such an attitude ... such a tone ... for Pharisees and scribes that keep testing him by questioning his and his disciples' actions or authority.

He tells the woman:

“Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”

Jesus’ answer doesn’t sound like grace or like good news for the woman or for other Syrophenicians.

The children Jesus speaks about ... are the people of Israel ... he makes it clear that they are the priority of his ministry.

He wasn’t polite about it either ... calling the woman and her people “dogs.” Dogs during Jesus’ time were scavengers and not the cherished household members they are today. They lived on whatever scraps and crumbs they could find in the streets.

We are not told why Jesus reacts in such an unJesus-like way.

Was he tired?

Was he grumpy because his attempt to be alone and rest was interrupted?

The woman hears his words and does the unthinkable ... she argues with Jesus.

... and what’s more ... she wins!

The woman listens to his words ... she understands that the people of Israel are his stated priority ... but she refuses to accept his answer.

She tells Jesus,

“Sir,<sup>[9]</sup> even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.”

In other words, even those who others might consider unworthy deserve to be fed as well.

Her response ... her persistent advocacy ... leads Jesus to change his mind and remove the demon from her

daughter. Jesus doesn’t comment on her faith ... he said her words were persuasive enough.

Jesus tells her,

“For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.”

The woman has been heard. Her words carried weight.

This is not an easy story to hear ... there are hints of favoritism, racism and sexism ... especially when the deaf man in the second half of the story is healed without any argument. It can seem like he got preferential treatment compared to the woman.

Jesus sounds angry at the woman ... he seems racist when he compares the woman and others to “dogs”

Rather than consider Jesus’ snippiness ... let us look at the effect of a mother trying to save her child and her strong advocacy on her behalf.

She’s a woman which means she has little or no power in the community... even if her family has a measure of wealth.

The woman lives in a gentile region, far from the centre of the Jewish faith.

Mark never gives her a name. But being Syrophenician and unaccompanied, it’s doubtful she would have been welcomed in a Jewish household. She might have even crawled into the home to go unnoticed before she bowed before Jesus.

The woman is taking a huge risk.

But she is taking a risk any good parent would take.

The parents among us know that feeling of powerlessness when their child is sick or injured. We also know that a parent would fight and advocate for their child's care ... even when the situation seems overwhelming or hopeless.

But the Syrophenician woman's efforts ... her words ... had an effect far beyond her household.

This unnamed woman seems quite aware of what God is capable of doing in her life and in the life of the world.

The woman insists that Jesus live into the promise of new life that she obviously has heard about so far from the Galilee and the places where Jesus had ministered.

The woman's words change things though. Jesus' heart isn't hardened. He is convinced to be more inclusive in his ministry.

The Syrophenician woman insists that Jesus be a presence in her life as he is for others ... that God be God ... for everyone.

If we look at Jesus' ministry as a model to follow do we ... as Jesus apparently did ... place limits on how and to whom we share grace?

Do we minister out of a sense of scarcity or abundance?

Is our ministry and our love fully and completely inclusive?

The Syrophenician woman was convinced that God's grace and mercy extended to her and to her daughter.

When she challenges Jesus on behalf of her daughter, she also

advocates for her people ... that grace ... God's love ... should extend to them, just as it does for the people of Israel.

The table should be built longer so that people don't need to live on the scraps and crumbs on the floor ... that they have a place at the table. All are welcome ... all are fed and sustained.

This could be why there was no argument or hesitancy when the deaf man was brought to him in Sidon.

The woman's words changed things ... they changed the reality of the world ... they transformed Jesus' ministry ... leading him to remove the limits he had tried to place upon it.

We are continually called to a larger vision of the world and our mission within it.

In this troubling story, Jesus teaches us the value of listening, the value of hearing, and the value of being able to grow and change your mind.

These skills are essential if we are to truly heal the community and the world ... and the stories this morning are about healing.

The passage from Mark begins and ends with a request for a healing and with a discovered healing.

The desire to be healed ... and the knowing that Jesus can do that ... is the connecting tissue between the woman's and the deaf man's experience. It is one of the connecting tissues of our faith ... our faith community and the world.

At a time when congregations are feeling the pinch ... when numbers aren't trending the way we'd like ... this

connecting tissue needs to extend even farther outward.

We need to give voice to those who feel silenced or that their wounds are being ignored.

We need to know that ... like the Syrophenician woman ... what we say carries weight ... that our advocacy for change ... for others ... carries weight.

Those words ... based in love ... are what connects us ... and where grace can be heard and felt.

Such words break down walls that the world erects ... and extends the table ... where all are welcome ... all are included ... and all are loved.

**AMEN**

### **Lord's Prayer (Dr. Seuss Style)**

We hold you dear as children should.  
Your name is holy, true and good.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done  
In heaven like on earth, as one.  
Give us today our daily bread,  
Forgive the things we've done and said,  
As we forgive things done to us.  
And, save us from the tempt-u-ous.  
Keep evil things from us and ours,  
For the kingdom and the powers,  
And the glory, just for you.  
From now until all time is through.

AMEN

**AMEN**

### **Blessing**

May the Holy Parent ignite the fires of advocacy in your heart

May the Spirit place the scroll of knowledge on your tongue in tough conversations

May the Son + walk with you as you march with your queer siblings.

**AMEN**

### **EVEN MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS...**

**We are in the process** of reviewing and updating our membership records. If you would like a visit from Pastor Chris, please call the church office and leave a message. Pastor Chris would be happy to visit and bring you communion, if you have difficulty attending church services.



**Trinity's Confirmation classes** are planned to restart in the Fall. The Confirmation program is two-years long. The classes are an hour in length once a week. Each year runs from the end of September to early December and from mid-January to Easter. If your child has been baptized Lutheran, please consider enrolling them in the program. Email the church office or DM through the congregation's Facebook page for more information.

**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

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

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