



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

September 29, 2024
19th 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

The All Saints Service is scheduled for Nov. 3. This is the service in which we remember the saints in our lives who have gone on to the kingdom. The service will include a guest musician and is intended to assist attendees with processing their sense of grief. You are invited to bring a candle (a votive is preferred) to light and place before the altar. If you don't have a candle or forgot to bring one, don't worry. We'll have some available.

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

Someone who isn't part of Jesus' own circle is casting out demons in Jesus' name, and the disciples want him stopped. They appeal to Jesus, as Joshua did to Moses about the elders who prophesied without official authorization. Like Moses, Jesus refuses to see this as a threat. Jesus welcomes good being done in his name, even when it is not under his control. The circle we form around Jesus' word must be able to value good being done in ways we wouldn't do it, by people we can't keep tabs on.

INSHALLAH # 40 God welcomes all
ELW # 808 Lord Jesus you shall be my
song
ELW # 804 Come down love divine
WOV #722 Hallelujah! We sing your
praises

Prayer of the day

Generous God,
your Son gave his life that we might
come to peace with you. Give us a
share of your Spirit, and in all we do
empower us to bear the name of Jesus
Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

AMEN

First reading: Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16,
24-29

⁴The rabble among them had a strong
craving; and the Israelites also wept
again, and said, “If only we had meat to
eat! ⁵We remember the fish we used to
eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers,
the melons, the leeks, the onions, and
the garlic; ⁶but now our strength is dried
up, and there is nothing at all but this
manna to look at.”

¹⁰Moses heard the people weeping
throughout their families, all at the
entrances of their tents. Then
the Lord became very angry, and Moses
was displeased. ¹¹So Moses said to
the Lord, “Why have you treated your
servant so badly? Why have I not found
favor in your sight, that you lay the

burden of all this people on me? ¹²Did I
conceive all this people? Did I give birth
to them, that you should say to me,
‘Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse
carries a sucking child, to the land that
you promised on oath to their
ancestors’? ¹³Where am I to get meat to
give to all this people? For they come
weeping to me and say, ‘Give us meat
to eat!’ ¹⁴I am not able to carry all this
people alone, for they are too heavy for
me. ¹⁵If this is the way you are going to
treat me, put me to death at once—if I
have found favor in your sight—and do
not let me see my misery.”

¹⁶So the Lord said to Moses, “Gather
for me seventy of the elders of Israel,
whom you know to be the elders of the
people and officers over them; bring
them to the tent of meeting, and have
them take their place there with you.”

²⁴So Moses went out and told the
people the words of the Lord; and he
gathered seventy elders of the people,
and placed them all around the
tent. ²⁵Then the Lord came down in the
cloud and spoke to him, and took some
of the spirit that was on him and put it on
the seventy elders; and when the spirit
rested upon them, they prophesied. But
they did not do so again.

²⁶Two men remained in the camp, one
named Eldad, and the other named
Medad, and the spirit rested on them;
they were among those registered, but
they had not gone out to the tent, and so
they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷And a
young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad
and Medad are prophesying in the
camp.” ²⁸And Joshua son of Nun, the

assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, "My lord Moses, stop them!" ²⁹But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit on them!"

Psalm 19:7-14

⁷The teaching of the Lord is perfect and re-¹ lives the soul;

the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom¹ to the simple.

⁸**The statutes of the Lord are just and re-¹ joyce the heart;**

the commandment of the Lord is clear and gives light¹ to the eyes.

⁹The fear of the Lord is clean and en-¹ dures forever;

the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous¹ altogether.

¹⁰**More to be desired are they than gold, more than¹ much fine gold, sweeter far than honey, than honey¹ in the comb.**

¹¹By them also is your ser-¹ vant enlightened, and in keeping them there is¹ great reward.

¹²**Who can detect one's¹ own offenses?**

Cleanse me from my¹ secret faults.

¹³Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion¹ over me;

then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a¹ great offense.

¹⁴**Let the words of my mouth and**

the meditation of my heart be acceptable¹ in your sight,

O Lord, my strength and¹ my redeemer.

Second reading: James 5:13-20

¹³Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. ¹⁷Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

¹⁹My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, ²⁰you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.



Gospel: Mark 9: 38-50

³⁸John said to [Jesus], “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” ³⁹But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰Whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

⁴²“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. ⁴³If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is

better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

⁴⁹“For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Sermon

tumbling blocks

I stood with a group of seminarians and pastors on a lookout just south of Jerusalem.

Nearby were two burned out UN cars ... another group was nearby hearing a different version of local history. The spot looked out over part of the Kidron Valley ... a valley that stretches out from the city ... through the desert and to the Jordan River.

To the west of us was the Valley of Hinnom or as it was known to the Greek translators of Mark’s gospel ... Gehenna.

The valley wraps around the southern border of the old city of Jerusalem and merges with the Kidron.

In Jesus’ time, Gehenna was known as “the burning place” ... and for good reason.

The valley was the site of child sacrifices to the god Baal centuries before Jesus. There were sacrificial fires burning at shrines in the valley for the children who had been sacrificed.

At these shrines, priests would walk children between the flames to sanctify them before their lives were ended in the name of their god.

Caves in certain areas of the valley were used and reused as burial places for local families. And when the Romans ruled the area, the valley was the location of a crematorium for their dead and a dump for the city's waste.

It's easy to see why the valley's name ... "Gehinnom" ... became known as the equivalent to hell for the people. It was a visible place of torment and pain and a warning for those who sin.

Last week, we heard Jesus offer the disciples a lesson on where their hearts ... and their attention ... should lie.

If you remember, the disciples looked at serving others as an opportunity to collect gold stars ... as a way to gain status and prestige in the community. They argued over who among them was the "greatest."

Their minds are on earthly concerns ... which makes bringing the divine into the world impossible.

Like any good teacher, Jesus offers a visual reminder to illustrate the point he was trying to make to the disciples.

He calls a child into the gathering.

The vulnerable ... those depending on others ... as children do in the world ... that is where the disciples' attention

needs to be focused. Not on their own self-interests.

The status the disciples seek is bestowed on the vulnerable ... they will be first ... those who serve them ... Jesus' followers ... will be toward the back of the line.

This morning's passage continues Jesus' teaching with the disciples on the floor of that house in Capernaum. Jesus still holds the child.

He has just told the twelve that followers should welcome those the world considers "the least" ... those who place the vulnerable and their needs first are the ones who truly offer a sight of the divine in the world.

Martin Luther once called Jesus' followers a "priesthood of believers." Jesus' lesson calls for "a priesthood of servants."

But this appears lost on John.

John complains that someone outside the twelve is casting out demons in Jesus' name. They've all seen the person do it and he is not one of us, John laments.

John still seems more worried about protecting the disciples' ministry turf than about serving others as he is called to do. John still wonders about their status and respect gained through service to others.

This stranger accomplishes what the disciples failed to do with another child earlier in Mark's gospel. The unnamed person healed with Jesus' authority.

But John ... maybe speaking for the other eleven ... wants such authority to be kept within the group.

John wants to be exclusionary in this service, while Jesus calls the gathering to be inclusionary.

Jesus tells that being among the group isn't what is important ... serving others ... ministering to their needs in Jesus' name makes them someone to be supported.

Jesus had just told the disciples: "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me ..."

They should also welcome the person doing the welcoming ... even if they are not among the twelve.

Jesus moves from John's complaint back to the lesson ... back to the children and the vulnerable. In fact, he broadens the idea of who is among the vulnerable people.

Now, Jesus talks about children of faith ... and about those who cause others to lose or stumble in their newfound faith.

Like children, those who are new to faith can be impressionable and easily discouraged. They recognize when words and actions don't match up ... and they can fall victim to poor teaching.

Jesus warns the disciples about causing the little ones ... the children in faith ... to stumble ... to sin.

There would be consequences for the little one ... for the disciple ... and for the greater community.

Ministry in Jesus' name cannot be properly done ... hunger and suffering cannot be eased ... healing in body and spirit cannot be offered with one's sins are carried like a millstone.

Jesus cautions about the effects of being concerned with self or being exclusionary in their ministry rather than following Jesus' model of being open-spirited and welcoming.

The disciples are told that it's better to cut off hands or feet or gouge out their eyes and enter hell ... to toss themselves into Gehenna ... than to cause others to lose faith and push them away to the margins.

It's not about you ... Jesus tells them ... it's about others. It's about widening the circle ... welcoming others who serve in Jesus' name ... as well as welcoming and nurturing newcomers in faith because they too will come to serve others.

Love will ripple out into the world.

Like John and the disciples, we can lose track of those who Jesus places at the centre of community ... those who should be at the centre of our ministry and our hearts.

John and the other disciples witnessed someone else accomplishing what they themselves could not ... and their envy grew ... it became a stumbling block to them hearing and living Jesus' lesson.

As we will hear next week ... the disciples still don't fully comprehend the lessons or live into the inclusive nature of God's love.

But Jesus keeps trying and keeps loving them no matter.

Mark's story calls us to consider a number of things as we move through the world as disciples.

It calls us to consider those millstones we carry around our necks or around our hearts ... those things that hold us back from embracing and helping the “little ones” in faith or reaching out to the community to help those in need.

The behaviours that cause us to stumble in faith ... and thereby cause others to stumble.

Jesus used a pretty shocking description for the disciples this morning ... for them, Gehenna was an actual place on earth ... it could be seen ... smelled ... and experienced. It was a place where God’s presence seemed absent.

People can find themselves in such a place ... and come seeking life ... a place to belong ... a place where they can be nourished physically and spiritually.

Jesus uses salty language to the disciples, but in his warning lies love ... Jesus’ love for those who are at risk of being exploited ... those who are powerless ... those who are like the child that Jesus continues to embrace in the room in Capernaum.

And his message carried love for his followers ... to approach the world with hearts open ... to allow love to guide their actions so that they bore witness to the words that they proclaimed

His message was to abandon the things that get in the way of being open ... to lose those things that keep us from welcoming ... loving ... to love those those things that keep us from nurturing those who were just coming into faith.

The vulnerable are to be protected and cared for ... both physically and spiritually. Those who are thirsty are to be given water.

By living in a way that bears witness to the righteousness ... the mercy and justice that Jesus proclaims ... faith and trust are nurtured ... love flourishes ... and grace flows freely.

And ... as Jesus ends this morning’s passage ... when all this occurs, we are “at peace with each other” ... and ... I would add ... within ourselves.

May God’s peace mark our lives.

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 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.

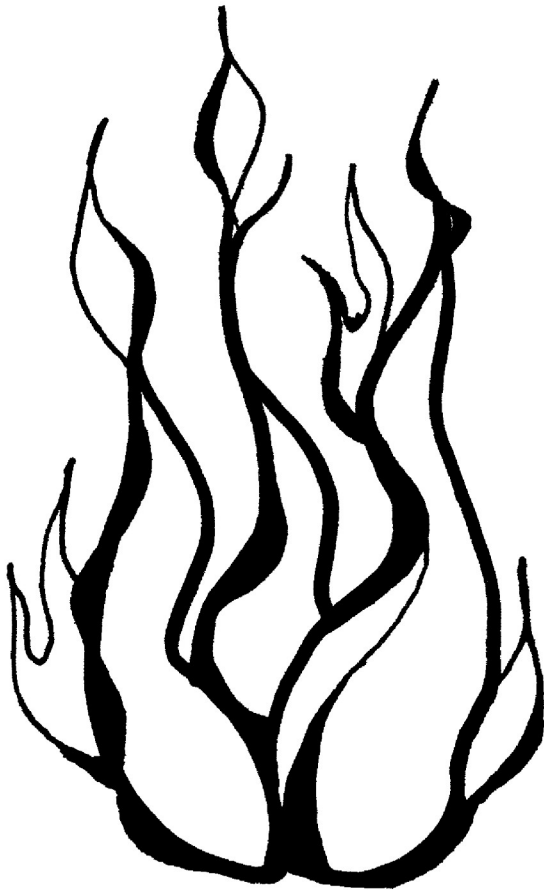
AMEN

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.

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. Please leave any horses, cows and donkeys on the front lawn. We'll bless them there.



We pray for the well-being and safety of those whose lives have been affected by Hurricane Helene in the southern United States. May differences be set aside and people come together to provide assistance and comfort.

AMEN