



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

October 6, 2024
20^h 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, Brenda

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

Introduction to the day

Today's gospel combines a saying that makes many of us uncomfortable with a story we find comforting. Jesus' saying on divorce is another of his rejections of human legislation in favor of the original intent of God's law. Jesus' rebuke of the disciples who are fending off the children should challenge us as well. What does it mean to receive the kingdom of God as a child does?

INSHALLAH # 40 God welcomes all
ELW # 526 God is here
ELW # 641 All are welcome
ELW # 556 Morning has broken

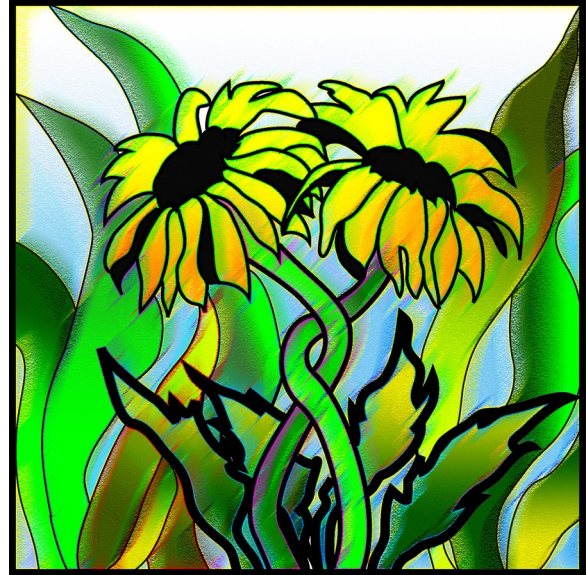
Prayer of the day

Sovereign God, you have created us to live in loving community with one another. Form us for life that is faithful and steadfast, and teach us to trust like little children, that we may reflect the image of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

AMEN

First reading: Genesis 2:18-24

¹⁸The Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." ¹⁹So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. ²¹So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the



man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." ²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Psalm 8

¹O Lord our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!—
²**you whose glory is chanted above the heavens out of the mouths of infants and children;**
you have set up a fortress against your enemies, to silence the foe and avenger.
³When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,

⁴what are mere mortals that you should be mind-ful of them, human beings that you should care for them? R

⁵Yet you have made them little less than divine; with glory and honor or you crown them.

⁶You have made them rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet:

⁷all flocks and cattle, even the wild beasts of the field, **⁸the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatever passes along the paths of the sea.**

⁹O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Second reading: Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

¹Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

^{2:5}Now God did not subject the coming

world, about which we are speaking, to angels. ⁶But someone has testified somewhere,

“What are human beings that you are mindful of them,

or mortals, that you care for them?

⁷You have made them for a little while lower than the angels;

you have crowned them with glory and honor,

⁸subjecting all things under their feet.”

Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them,⁹but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters,

in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

Gospel: Mark 10:2-16

²Some Pharisees came, and to test [Jesus] they asked, “Is it lawful for a



man to divorce his wife?" ³He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" ⁴They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." ⁵But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. ⁶But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' ⁷For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

¹⁰Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. ¹¹He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; ¹²and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

¹³People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Sermon

Unshattered relationships

I was a crime reporter during the early days of my first career.

You need to have a special disposition to do that kind of reporting for any great length of time. You see and hear things that you cannot unsee or unhear. There are dead bodies ... the victims of crime or accident.

It didn't take long for me to realize that I was not cut out for this type of reporting.

You see and speak to victims of crime on the worst days of their lives.

There was the time when I was at the scene of a house fire when police officers told the husband and father that his family had perished inside. It took a long time before I stopped hearing his cries.

Then, there was the morning when I was at a small-town police station

checking the police blotter to see what happened the night before.

A woman walked up to the front desk and stood next to me as she asked to talk to the officer in charge.

The woman looked to be in her thirties. She wore a faded blue jacket, her hair was tied back into a messy ponytail. Behind her sunglasses, I could see that her left eye was black and almost shut. There were cuts and scuffs on her cheek.

The woman's voice quivered as she spoke to the sergeant before he led her to an office at the back of the station.

It seems that this wasn't the woman's first visit to the station.

The woman's husband was in a particularly foul mood when he came home late the previous night. The kids were asleep. Words were exchanged ... and his response was to hit her.

That morning, after her husband had left for work, the woman dropped her kids off at a friend's house and came to the station ... as she had at least once before.

I don't know whatever came of the case ... I shifted over to sports a short time later ... but I hope that she pressed charges and got out of that dangerous situation, but back then ... forty years ago ... the odds were against it.

Divorce is on the minds of some people this morning. Many scholars believe that the Pharisees are making their latest attempt to trap Jesus.

They decide to publicly test Jesus by asking if it is lawful for a man to

divorce his wife. They remember what happened to John the Baptist when he spoke out against Herodias' divorce and marriage to Herod, her first husband's brother.

Perhaps, the religious authorities hoped that if Jesus spoke against divorce, that he would be imprisoned or discredited and their control would remain firm.

But Jesus points out that they already know the answer to their own question ... a man is allowed to divorce a woman. Besides ... Jesus says ... Moses put the rules in place because the people were being hard-hearted ... just like those asking the question this morning.

... and divorce was for the hard-hearted.

During earlier times, a man could be issued a divorce certificate, which would end all the man's obligations to the woman. There were no alimony or child support payments.

The certificate allowed the woman to remarry ... but until she did, the woman was vulnerable and dependant on family or the charity of others to survive.

During Jesus' time, the Romans allowed the woman to seek a divorce, but that only applied to gentiles. Under Jewish law, women could not seek a divorce. If a man wanted a divorce, rabbis woman gather and debate the request.

A divorce wasn't for the benefit of the wife. The system was rigged in favour of the husband.

Maybe, we can hear Jesus' words as a call to make the system fair ... as a call to equality and justice.

When he speaks to the disciples about divorce, Jesus tells them "when she divorces her husband..."

So, Jesus advocates for woman to have a say in the process and not be treated as property to be discarded at the whim of the husband. This means she should be able to protect herself and her children from the effects of a divorce.

So, she is not vulnerable.

But instead of divorce and loopholes in the rules, Jesus wants the religious authorities and the disciples to better consider God's intention for the relationship between the married couple.

God's plan for creation didn't include divorce guidelines ... those were man's creation to meet their desires.

Jesus turns the issue of divorce into an issue of relationship.

There are a many relationships involved in a marriage and a divorce.

There's the relationship between the two parties in the marriage;

Their relationship with any children;

Their relationship with the greater community;

In some cases, there are relationships with and within a faith community.

and, as Jesus points out, their relationship with God and creation.

Jesus wants the religious authorities and the disciples to consider the divine rather than the earthly.

Divorce could leave women and children isolated from the community ... alone to fend for themselves. This can still be the case in today's world.

This morning's passage is an uncomfortable one to hear and to process ... especially if you have been through a divorce.

To be sure, passages like this one from Mark have been used by the church to keep people in bad or even dangerous marriages ... such as the one the woman in that small police station found herself in.

So, it's best that we place the talk about divorce rules on the backburner.

The people who posed the question lived in a vastly different world than we do. I know ... duh, right.

Couples and families aren't the same as when Mark was composing his gospel. There are blended families and same-sex families that were not imagined when Mark composed his gospel. Now, divorce and separations represent a sizeable percentage of marriages.

Maybe, it would be best to follow course that Jesus' sets out this morning.

Jesus turns the divorce discussion to the issue of love ... which should lie at the heart of all relationships.

Even today, some denominations restrict membership from divorced people ... meaning you're not welcome if you are divorced ... or divorced and remarried. There is the reality that members congregations sometimes pick sides when members divorce ... or even

make it clear that the couple or their new partners are not welcome.

Where we are called to be loving and compassionate toward one another ... divorce leads some to being judgmental and make the situation even more painful.

Jesus is concerned about the aftermath of a divorce ... about the effect on relationships.

Jesus is more concerned about the vulnerable members who can be victimized by the system and those who divorce threatens to push to the margins of a community and out on the streets than on the legalese and procedures followed in the temple and synagogues.

That is where our concern should be as well.

Our reading from Genesis this morning tells us that God didn't want us to be alone and filled creation with animals and then a partner for the man, so that their lives can intertwine and two becomes one.

Sometimes that relationship comes unravelled ... sometimes amicably ... sometimes somewhat less so.

In either case, that is when we ... as disciples ... are called to embrace our relationship with them ... to keep them anchored in community.

Jesus ... in his words to the disciples ... offers guidance calling us to act with love and compassion ... to be present for them as God is present for us.

Jesus calls us to act with love and ensure that those most vulnerable are protected and cared for and kept in

community ... placing those the world places last ... first in our hearts.

When we do this, then we provide a glimpse of the kingdom ... we allow the divine to enter and flow through our lives ... and we uphold those affected with loving hearts.

And that ... in short ... is grace.

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

**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 # _____

Bank/Trust/Credit Union Name _____

Branch Address: _____

Account Number _____ Type of Account _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

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.