



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

November 10, 2024
22th 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 continues on November 13. 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

December 21 - Trinity's NEW tradition Christmas musical event will be the first offering in our new "Trinity Musical Arts Series." The premiere event begins at 2 p.m. and will feature a performance of the Academy Brass Quintet. This concert marks the beginning of our new ministry that builds upon Trinity's great musical tradition and aims to establish affordable music outreach to the community. Tickets will go on sale by mid-November.

We Remember in our Prayers

In Residence: Cordelle

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

Widows are visible everywhere in today's readings. Jesus denounces those scribes who pray impressive prayers but devour widows' houses. He commends the poor widow who in his view gave far more than the major donors. Jesus doesn't see her simply as an object of compassion or charity. She, like the widow of Zarephath who shares her last bit of food with Elijah, does something of great importance.

Hymns

INSHALLAH # 40 God welcomes all

ELW 793 Be thou my vision

ELW 685 Take my life that I may be

ELW 638 Blessed Assurance

Prayer of the day

O God, you show forth your almighty power chiefly by reaching out to us in mercy. Grant us the fullness of your grace, strengthen our trust in your promises, and bring all the world to share in the treasures that come through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

AMEN

First reading: 1 Kings 17:8-16

⁸The word of the Lord came to [Elijah,] saying, ⁹“Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you.” ¹⁰So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.” ¹¹As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” ¹²But she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and

die.” ¹³Elijah said to her, “Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son.” ¹⁴For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth.” ¹⁵She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

Psalm 146

¹ Hal- | lelujah!

Praise the Lord, | O my soul!

² **I will praise the Lord as long | as I live;**

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

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

⁴ **When they breathe their last, they re- | turn to earth, and in that day | their thoughts perish.**

⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob | for their help, whose hope is in the | Lord their God;

⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that | is in them; who keeps promis- | es forever;**

⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to | those who

hunger.

The Lord sets the ^l captive free.

⁸ The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who ^l are bowed down;

the Lord ^l loves the righteous.

⁹ The Lord cares ^l for the stranger; the Lord sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way ^l of the wicked.

¹⁰ The Lord shall ^l reign forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. ^l Hallelujah!

Second reading: Hebrews 9:24-28

²⁴ Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; ²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Gospel: Mark 12:38-44

³⁸ As [Jesus] taught, he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in

long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! ⁴⁰ They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

⁴¹ He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴² A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. ⁴³ Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. ⁴⁴ For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

Sermon

Making the sacrifice

May God's grace be known to your hearts and lives this morning and each day...

A pastor once shared this parable with his congregation:

"Once upon a time, a pig and a chicken were walking down a village street. They came upon a church sign that was advertising a bazaar and breakfast that was going to be held in a few days.

At the bottom of the sign the menu was given, it read 'Ham and eggs will be

served from 6:30 to 8 a.m.’ The chicken turned to the pig and said, "See!!' Even we can help the work of the church!!!!"

"Yes," said the pig, "but yours is only a contribution, mine is a **SACRIFICE**."

This morning, Jesus once again criticizes those who put their piety on display.

He already warned the disciples about such conspicuous piety. He criticizes those who pray long and loud in public so that they can be seen and respected by the people ... and with that respect comes special perks.

Now, he warns the disciples about the scribes and the elites who place these perks ahead of God. They are more concerned about appearances than they are about serving God and others. As well, he criticizes those who make an offering without fully embracing the faith it represents.

Jesus is in the Court of Women in the temple in Jerusalem.

The court was the farthest point in the temple where women were allowed.

There were thirteen receptacles in the courtyard to receive offerings.

The trumpet-shaped urns were designated to receive: "New Shekel dues," "Old Shekel dues," four were to support the sacrifices, one for the mercy seat, and six for freewill offerings.

Every adult Jew was obligated to tithe the half-shekel a year. Delegations from communities all over the region came to

Jerusalem with their offerings to pour them into the urns.

Jesus and the disciples were gathered at a spot opposite the temple treasury.

From where they sat, Jesus and the disciples could watch as the temple offerings were being made. Jesus directs their attention toward the urns designated for free-will offerings.

Mark tells us that "Many rich people put in large sums." (verse 41).

The temple treasury was bursting at the seams. The gathering could hear the rich persons' coins spill into the urns.

Then, comes a widow.

She tosses in two copper coins ... worth all of a penny ... less than seven-tenths of one per cent of a denarii ... but it's all she had in the world. The coins were all she had to live on.

But for Jesus, it's not how much money is tossed into the urns, but why the offering is being made.

Earlier in Mark's gospel, Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all our hearts, all our minds, all our souls and all our strength. That is what this woman is doing.

And she did it without putting on a show for everyone to witness. The well-dressed rich were noticed for their abundant offering ... and likely recognized for the shekels and denarii they handed over to the scribes for the treasury ... thanked profusely and recognized publicly for what they had given.

The woman simply walked up ... gave her coins ... and left.

It was a sacrifice, not a contribution.

Like the widow in Elijah's story, she gave her meagre amount to help others ... faithful that God would take care of things from there ... and in Elijah's story ... God did.

Jesus recognizes the widow for giving all she had out of her poverty and for the sacrificial nature of her heart ... something this is more precious to God than all the gold and silver the rich men pour into the urns.

Her heart was attuned toward community.

Mark's story is a favourite of stewardship committees ... especially during Fall campaigns when congregations try to boost their coffers before the end of the year.

For some, the widow is used as an example of discipleship ... her faith in God leads her to give all she has. Jesus' praise for her sacrifice becomes a selling point for Stewardship Committees to get people to follow her example when they give.

And do you remember the passage where Jesus calls on the poor to make themselves poorer by giving all their money to the temple so they could follow him?

I don't either.

The wealthy also give this morning, but they give from a place of abundance and privilege. For them, the offerings are an obligation ... a contribution made from their abundance, they won't miss what they give ... there's plenty more at home.

As much as this morning's story from Mark praises the widow for her faithful sacrifice, it is also a criticism of the system that remains wealthy and comfortable while its poorest members give all they have ... a system that neglects the poor rather than give them the help and comfort they need.

The story is not only about faithful giving, but also about a failed and corrupt system that should be challenged.

Jesus criticizes temple leaders ... especially the scribes ... for a system that keeps the treasury overflowing ... while people suffer in poverty. Worse the temple system ... in the form of the scribes ... devour widows' homes ... making the women even more vulnerable and dependant on the charity of others.

During Jesus' time, scribes were given control over a widow's estate if she had no male family members.

Widows ... because they are women ... were considered incapable of handling their own finances, so the temple would manage things for them ... for a fee, of course.

The system was full of abuse as scribes took advantage of the widows and drained their accounts dry ... devouring their homes and filling the treasury ... taking their last coin.

At the same time, the scribes and other temple leaders enjoyed preferential seating in the synagogues and the seats of honour at banquets. They enjoyed the status that came with such invitations.

The scribes' public face masks their less-than-loving actions. For all the wealth in the treasury, people still suffer in poverty and are still expected to support a system that exploits and victimizes them when it should be comforting and raising them up.

They are expected to make the sacrifice.

It's interesting that the word "sacrifice" has its origins in Latin and means "to make sacred."

Jesus offers himself and makes our hearts and lives sacred through the grace we receive through the cross.

Like the widow, we are called to love God with all of our heart, all of our mind, all of our soul, and all of our strength. Do we do this?

Do we love, give and serve with the right intentions or do we minister and share our gifts because there is a net gain for us? Do we share our financial gifts and talents because they will gain us notice, status and maybe some power?

Jesus' economy is one based on faith ... a faith that is marked by our love and sacrifice for others.

Our offerings of talent and funds are not contributions that can be adjusted by our whims and preferences ... Our offerings are sacrifices that serve as signs of our faith ... of our commitment to relationships with God and to one another ... a commitment to love and to raise people from places of poverty and scarcity so they too can experience God's abundant love.

A commitment that becomes more important in the times that lay ahead ... for this congregation ... our community ... and the world.

May we offer ourselves ...

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 Ancient One, enthroned,
the Crucified One, now risen,
the Indwelling One, poured out,
✠ bless you now and forever..

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.