



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

January 26, 2025
3rd Sunday in Epiphany
Reconciling in Christ Sunday

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.

Coming Up

Annual Congregational Meeting - Trinity's Annual Congregational Meeting will be February 9. The meeting will follow the worship service and will include a potluck meal. The Annual Report will be available at the end of January. While all are welcome to attend the meeting, only active members can vote on any matters.

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, Nash, Jeff

Thames Area Clergy: Bishop Susan Johnson and ELCIC support staff

Introduction to the day

God's glory is revealed in the reading of scripture. People stand at attention. People weep. People prostrate themselves in prayer. The unity of the church is another reflection of God's glory. Most gloriously, the promises of God are fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Gather round. Listen up. Glimpse the glory of God.

Hymns

ACS #1038 Nada Te Turbe

ELW #532 Gather us in

WOV #690 Wade in the water

ELW # 715 Christ Be Our Light

WOV #649 I want to walk as a child of
the light

Prayer of the day

Holy God, your Word teaches us, calls us and shapes us, that we will become the wisdom of God and the body of Christ for others. On this Reconciling in Christ Sunday, may your word turn us toward what is good and holy and just, that all your beloveds of all sexual and romantic orientations, identities, and expressions will know we are seen, known, and loved by you. May the example of Jesus continue to create words and actions of courage in the work and ministry of anti-racism.

AMEN

First reading: Nehemiah 8: 1-3, 5-6, 8-10

¹All the people [of Israel] gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. ²Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. ³He read from it

facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. ⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. ⁸So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

⁹And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Psalm: 19

5 ¹The heavens declare the
glo-¹ry of God,
and the sky proclaims its ¹maker's
handiwork.

²**One day tells its tale ¹to another,**

**and one night imparts
knowledge | to another.**

³ Although they have no | words or
language,

and their voices | are not heard,

**⁴ their sound has gone out into all
lands, and their message to the
ends | of the world,**

**where God has pitched a tent | for
the sun.**

⁵ It comes forth like a bridegroom
out | of his chamber;

it rejoices like a champion to | run its
course.

**⁶ It goes forth from the uttermost
edge of the heavens and runs about
to the end of | it again;**

**nothing is hidden from
its | burning heat. R**

⁷ The teaching of the Lord is perfect
and re- | vives the soul;

the testimony of the Lord is sure
and gives wisdom | to the simple.

**⁸ The statutes of the Lord are just
and re- | joice the heart;**

**the commandment of the Lord is
clear and gives light | to the eyes.**

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

the judgments of the Lord are true
and righteous | altogether.

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

¹¹ By them also is your ser- | vant
enlightened,

and in keeping them there is | great
reward.

¹² Who can detect one's | own

offenses?

**Cleanse me from my | secret
faults.**

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

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

**¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and
the meditation of my heart be
acceptable | in your sight,**

**O Lord, my strength and | my
redeemer.**

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 12: 12-
31a

¹² For just as the body is one and has
many members, and all the members of
the body, though many, are one body,
so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in the one Spirit
we were all baptized into one body—
Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we
were all made to drink of one Spirit.

¹⁴ Indeed, the body does not consist
of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot
would say, "Because I am not a hand, I
do not belong to the body," that would
not make it any less a part of the
body. ¹⁶ And if the ear would say,
"Because I am not an eye, I do not
belong to the body," that would not
make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If
the whole body were an eye, where
would the hearing be? If the whole body
were hearing, where would the sense of
smell be? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged
the members in the body, each one of
them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single
member, where would the body be? ²⁰

As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; ²⁴ whereas our more respectable members do not need this.

But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, ²⁵ that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues.

²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ^{31a} But strive for the greater gifts.



Gospel: Luke 4: 14-21

¹⁴ Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵ He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

¹⁶ When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to
the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Sermon

Love says today

There was council meeting at another congregation in another part of the synod some years back.

The congregation's pastor sat at the end of the council table occasionally checking her phone while the council ... most of whom had been in the congregation for decades ... discussed the ongoing work of the congregation.

When the council reached the new business portion of the meeting, the pastor put her phone down and spoke to the first item.

"I believe it is time that we include a land acknowledgement in our bulletin and at the beginning of services," she told the members. "The Anglican church has been offering one for years ... so has the United Church on the corner ... and a couple of others in town.

The chair looked at the five members sitting around the table. There was a moment or two of silence before one member spoke.

"I'm not sure that's a good idea," she said. "It might upset our members and some might stay away from the church."

The council members recalled road blockades from three or four decades earlier ... another brought up a story they heard from a friend of a friend of a friend's second cousin who heard that someone had to vacate a cottage was built on treaty land.

After the council members had their say, the council chair added his opposition and said the potential loss of money from offerings and the possibility of members not attending services was too great to make any land acknowledgement worthwhile.

He ended the discussion with the possible promise of "Maybe we can revisit it somewhere down the road."

Here at Trinity, there have been plans to begin the Reconciling in Christ process in earnest. This education process aims to make the congregation more understanding ... more welcoming ... more inclusive ... and even more affirming.

Before the process can really begin, three members of the congregation need to attend a 90-minute online workshop. From there, these members would hold workshops for other members in the church.

After a few months or a year, Trinity would be designated an RIC Congregation and known as a safe and welcoming place for members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

We just need for three people to register for the workshops.

Time ... money ... limited congregational resources ... demands of family life ... or the possibility that

someone might be upset ... these all get in the way it seems.

Love is willing ... but ... we need to wait a bit.

Just before this morning's passage, Luke tells us that Jesus has begun his public ministry.

Jesus has returned from the Jordan River and the wilderness where he was tested. Now, in Galilee, he teaches in the synagogues and people love what they heard.

He returns home to Nazareth and follows the same practice ... he goes to the synagogue to teach on the Sabbath. Jesus walks into the room and one of the attendants hands him the lesson for the day ... the 61st chapter of Isaiah.

Jesus reads the opening of the passage:

The spirit of the Lord God is upon
me
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to
the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives
and release to the prisoners,
²to proclaim the year of the Lord's
favour.
- Isaiah 61: 1-2

All eyes and ears are upon him ... waiting to hear how the passage applies to their lives. You can imagine the air of anticipation as the gathering waits for this teacher ... the one whom they have

heard so much about ... offer words of wisdom.

Jesus rolls up the scroll ... hands it back to the attendant ... and sits back down on one of the benches. You can imagine the grumbling ... the surprise ... among those seated around the synagogue. Then, Jesus ... with no embellishment ... no real sense of grand gestures says:

"Today, this scripture has been fulfilled..."

Love says today.

Today ... the good news has been brought.

Today ... captives are released

Today ... the blind gain sight

Today ... the oppressed are freed

And ... today ... we can proclaim the reign of the Lord has come near.

Today ...

Jesus ... God's love incarnate ... says "Today" this is all accomplished.

We will later hear that the message was welcomed by the gathering ... until they began questioning the credentials of the messenger and drove him from the town.

Let's face it ... sharing the message of love that is carried within the gospel ... working and living into that promise carries with it the risk of rejection ... of anger ... even of physical threats.

Early last week, the Episcopal bishop in Washington D.C. caused a furor by sharing a message that is anchored in the gospel.

At a prayer service in the National Cathedral, Rev. Mariann Budde

preached the message of the very heart of the gospel and asked the U.S. president to show mercy and compassion for the families of migrants and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Rev. Budde now faces criticism ... death threats ... and even a Congressional Resolution against her making a message of love.

Imagine ... the gentle call for empathy, compassion, mercy causes political leaders to become apoplectic!

But for her, love said "today."

If bearing witness to the gospel promise carries the risk of anger and abuse, would we call others to live a life of compassion ... mercy and justice ... just as we are called to do?

Would love say "today" through us or would we hem and haw ... and come up with reasons why we can't proclaim God's love and grace being present for all ... why we cannot advocate for others whose identity and well-being are in danger?

Would we hold love to ourselves and wait for a better time ... a financially better time ... to offer it?

Today is Reconciling in Christ Sunday.

This is a day when we have the opportunity to recommit ourselves to being an affirming, inclusive congregation and take another step toward our goal of being designated as an RIC congregation.

It is a process that allows us to understand the challenges and dangers

faced by the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. It's a process that will make Trinity more welcoming ... and a true place of belonging for all.

Trinity's place as a safe space ... seems essential as members of the community living on the other side of the border have their very existence denied by the country's leaders. It is a denial that has been echoed by someone seeking to serve as prime minister on this side of the creek.

Today, love needs to flow outward from each of us. That love ... through our actions ... fulfills the scripture.

As we journey into the Season of Epiphany ... as we reflect upon the revealed nature of Jesus ... we have heard how that nature calls us to live into a different reality.

Jesus' nature calls us to show up for others ... to notice the problems and the miracles around us ... today, it calls us to speak and act ... to advocate and minister without hesitation ... today.

This nature calls us to free those held captive ... physically and spiritually ... to free others from the burden of oppression ... to share the radical grace that is good news for all ... to act out of love for one another ... to give hope to those at risk.

We can offer many reasons to delay the work of love ... to wait until things change ... until conditions improve ... until finances strengthen ... or when there is a better opportunity to minister or to love our neighbour ... somewhere down the road.

But those reasons pale when compared to the needs of others ... the insecurity ... the injustice ... the fear ... and the isolation. Those are the realities that exist regardless of the reasons not to act. But those are also the places Love calls us.

So, let me ask you, what does Love say?

Love says ... "Today!"

May it ever be so...

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 steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus. 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

EVEN MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS...

The Annual Report for 2024 will be emailed to members on Sunday, January 26. Please keep an eye out for it. In preparation for the annual meeting on Feb. 9, the report reviews Trinity's activities during the year. As well, proxy forms will be part of the email package. Instructions for use of the proxy are included on the form. Note that only active members can vote at the annual meeting.

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.

Communication is the key to a healthy congregation and a strong ministry. If you have a suggestion, a concern or a comment, share it with a council member or with Pastor Chris.