



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

February 16, 2025
6th Sunday in Epiphany

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

You can order your own copy of the hymnal All Creation Sings (ACS). We have a request from a couple of members to purchase this supplement to the red hymnal. If you would like your own copy, let the church office know by Feb. 28 and we'll order one for you. The cost is \$23 and be made as an offering to the church (which gives you a tax benefit).

Midweek Holden Services will be part of our Lenten Season. The informal services will take place in the Fellowship Hall beginning March 12. There will be a simple meal at 5 p.m. and the service will begin at 6 p.m.

We Remember in our Prayers

In Residence: Cordelle

Members: Bunny, Donna, Ed, Joan, Susan, Connie, Brenda

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

Thames Area Clergy: Rev. Wallace Bornhuse, Redeemer Lutheran Church, London

Introduction to the day

Blessings and curses abound on the sixth Sunday after Epiphany. We would do well to listen closely to whom the "blessed are" and the "woe to" are directed and to find our place in the crowd among those who desire to touch Jesus. The risen Christ stands among us in the mystery of the holy supper with an invitation to live in him and offers power to heal us all.

Hymns

WOV #788 Glory to God

ELW #705 God of grace, God of glory

ELW #728 Blest are they

ELW #710 Let streams of living justice

Prayer of the day

Living God, in Christ you make all things new. Transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your glory, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

AMEN

First reading Jeremiah 17:5-10

⁵ Thus says the Lord:

Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals
and make mere flesh their strength,
whose hearts turn away from
the Lord.

⁶ They shall be like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see when relief comes.

They shall live in the parched places
of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.

⁷ Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord.

⁸ They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.

It shall not fear when heat comes,
and its leaves shall stay green;
in the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

⁹ The heart is devious above all else;
it is perverse—
who can understand it?

¹⁰ I the Lord test the mind
and search the heart,
to give to all according to their ways,
according to the fruit of their doings.

Psalm: 1

¹ Happy are they who have not walked
in the counsel ^l of the wicked,
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the seats ^l of the scornful!

² **Their delight is in the law ^l of
the Lord,
and they meditate on God's
teaching ^l day and night.**

³ They are like trees planted by
streams of water, bearing fruit in due
season, with leaves that ^l do not wither;
everything they ^l do shall prosper.

⁴ **It is not so ^l with the wicked;
they are like chaff which the
wind ^l blows away.**

⁵ Therefore the wicked shall not stand
upright when ^l judgment comes,
nor the sinner in the council ^l of the
righteous.

⁶ **For the Lord knows the way ^l of
the righteous,
but the way of the wicked
shall ^l be destroyed.**

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 15: 12-20

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; ¹⁴ and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. ¹⁵ We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. ¹⁷ If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

Gospel: Luke 6:17-26

¹⁷ [Jesus] came down with [the twelve] and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸ They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. ¹⁹ And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out

from him and healed all of them.

²⁰ Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹ “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.

“Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

²² “Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. ²³ Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

²⁴ “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

²⁵ “Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry.

“Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep.

²⁶ “Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.”

Sermon

‘Plainly’ spoken

Jesus and his followers are still travelling around the region of the Galilee. Last Sunday, they were near Capernaum on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee ... calling fishers from their nets and their boats so that they can become fishers of people.

This morning, Luke shares a story from the northwestern corner of the Sea of Galilee.

Just before this morning's passage, Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. Then, he went up a mountain to pray. When he came down, Jesus called the disciples ... selected 12 of them ... and began to call them apostles.

Word of Jesus' healing abilities have spread across the region and beyond.

A great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, Tyre and Sidon have gathered on the plain at the foot of the mountain hoping to be healed or have unclean spirits removed. The people are looking to be made whole.

Jesus heals them all ... sending God's power to flow through him and into the multitude.

Once he was done, Jesus stood before them ... at level with them ... and offered a sermon that ... if fully embraced ... would heal the world.

The multitude is filled with people who were broken ... who had been beaten down by the powers of the world ... who seemed to feel a sense of loss each day.

Jesus spoke to them ... of them ... for them.

Blessed are the poor ... Jesus tells them.

Blessed are the hungry ... Jesus continues.

Blessed are those filled with sorrow ... blessed are the hated ... those pushed to the margins ... the reviled ...

those defamed because they follow Jesus and live life differently.

Matthew's version of this sermon is known as the Sermon on the Mount, while Luke's version is called the "Sermon on the Plain."

The different locations reflect the gospel writers' different perspectives and intentions.

For Matthew, Jesus brings his lesson from a higher place ... teaching after travelling down to the crowd. For Luke, Jesus stands with the multitude ... a sign of joining in their pain and suffering ... and of Jesus' accessibility to the people.

The blessings and the woes are bound up in the challenges of life on earth. Jesus sees the hunger ... suffering ... and grief that is present in the world and offers hope that those realities are temporary, that people's circumstances will reverse.

The blessings the people will receive are not the result of their actions or of their good behaviour. The blessings are not some award of merit and neither are they the results of the actions of others. They are a gift from God.

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul tells listeners that our connection with Jesus is so strong and intimate that the resurrection guarantees our future hope. Through the resurrection the people are called to a purposeful life ... a life of blessings.

The blessings speak to the very nature of God and how God wants

creation to experience a relationship with God.

... you will know the kingdom

... you will be filled.

... you will laugh and know joy.

Jesus tells those who the world has cut off from a full and loving life that they are in good company. The prophets ... those who voiced God's intentions and warnings to the world ... especially to those in power and control ... were rejected and even despised, as well.

The world may have forgotten you ... Jesus tells the multitude ... but God has not.

The good news for the poor is bad news for others.

Luke includes a list of woes ... warnings for people who believe success in the world means that they are also spiritually rich. Matthew's version doesn't include such a list.

Jesus' sermon tells the people that there is something more trustworthy than the things of the world ... wealth, status and power. God's provision offers more hope to the world than those things that will fade and be forgotten in time.

If the coming kingdom is ever to be good news for the well-fed and the rich and those joyous at their good fortune, then they need to change ... their focus needs to be moved to a path that is true to God's call.

The falsehoods of the world need to be dumped or else they will miss the mark.

In the original Greek, the word we see as "woe" is actually just a sound ... a sound effect like a sigh.

So, you can picture just letting loose a deep, heart-felt sigh and then saying: <sigh> "to you who are full now, you will be hungry."

It is as if a sad and frustrated Jesus is telling these people that the wealthy and powerful of the world have been fed false promises by.

The story invites to consider what false promises we have been told and ... worse ... if we have been embracing and sharing those false promises with others. If we place our wallets and self-interest before all else.

In a recent podcast on Jesus' sermon, Lutheran pastor and scholar Rolf Jacobson said:

"In North America, we want faith to be only about the blessings; we want our beliefs to be just about what we believe and not about the renunciations."

During our times ... when messages like the Prosperity Gospel tell us to pray and act because God will reward us ... the Sermon on the Plains shares a radical gospel.

It is a bold new way of viewing faith and life. It changes the way we are to view and relate with the world. To Jesus, the "other" must hold our attention.

Discipleship means being the mechanism for transformation.

Luke's story also seems to call the members of gathered multitude "disciples."

Remember, that I pointed out that just before Jesus heals and removes the unclean spirits, he begins to call the 12 “apostles.”

This means that the multitude is being called into discipleship and the sermon tells them what will mark such a life.

Jesus’ sermon is about what needs to mark a community of faith ... it is a listing of those aspects that mark that community.

Jesus calls us into the “now” ... to see and act upon the needs and suffering we see in the world as we see them.

In that way, the woes of the poor, the hungry and the grieving become blessings of belonging ... inclusion ... and love.

Just as the apostles slowly recognized more than two centuries ago ... our discipleship ... our acts of welcoming and ministry ... stand in opposition to the trends and values of the world. Now, we are seeing the rise of hatred ... suspicion ... exclusion ... and self-interest both south of the border and here.

In our belief, we are called to stand on level with others as we advocate ... comfort ... minister and love.

Jesus never tells the multitude that they won’t experience loss, emptiness, pain, hurt, or loneliness ... the Sermon on the Plain tells us that all this is temporary ... we are not alone and forgotten.

God is ever-present in our journey and calls the community of believers to make blessings known ... to be the means for God’s grace to be experienced ... transforming lives ... and bringing the fullness of love to the world.

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