



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

February 23, 2025
7th 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.

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, Jerry, Connie, Rose, Frank, Tanya, Nash, Jeff

Thames Area Clergy: Rev. David Wirt, St. Ansgar Lutheran Church, London

Introduction to the day

Mercy. Mercy. Mercy. Joseph lives it in Egypt. Jesus preaches it in the gospel. The Spirit guides us into merciful lives with the power of forgiveness to reconcile what is fractured and divided. Such merciful living is the baptismal blessing of having put on Christ. It is the gift of the life-giving Spirit. It is a reflection of God's glory revealed in Christ.

Hymns

WOV #788 Glory to God

WOV #648 Jesus come, for we invite
you

ELW 605 Forgive our sins as we forgive

ELW #835 All creatures worship God
most high



Prayer of the day

O Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

AMEN

First reading Genesis 45:3-11, 15

³ Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come closer to me.” And they came closer. He said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.” ⁵ And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there

will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷ God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹ Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰ You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹ I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.’” ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Psalm: 37:1-11, 39-40

¹ Do not be provoked by ¹ evildoers;
do not be jealous of those ¹ who do

wrong.

**² For they shall soon wither | like the grass,
and like the green grass | fade away.**

³ Put your trust in the Lord | and do good;
dwell in the land and | find safe pasture.

**⁴ Take delight | in the Lord,
who shall give you your | heart's desire.**

⁵ Commit your way to the Lord; put your trust | in the Lord,
and see what | God will do.

**⁶ The Lord will make your vindication as clear | as the light
and the justice of your case like the | noonday sun.**

⁷ Be still before the Lord and wait | patiently.

Do not be provoked by the one who prospers, the one who succeeds in | evil schemes.

**⁸ Refrain from anger, leave | rage alone;
do not be provoked; it leads on- | ly to evil.**

⁹ For evildoers shall | be cut off,
but those who hope in the Lord shall pos- | sess the land.

**¹⁰ In a little while the wicked shall | be no more;
even if you search out their place, they will | not be there.**

¹¹ But the lowly shall pos- | sess the land;
they will delight in abun- | dance of peace.

³⁹ But the deliverance of the

**righteous comes from | you, O Lord;
you are their stronghold in | time of trouble.**

⁴⁰ You, O Lord, will help them and | rescue them;
you will rescue them from the wicked and deliver them, because in you | they seek refuge.

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 15: 35-38, 42-50

³⁵ But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶ Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

⁴² So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just

as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

⁵⁰ What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

[Jesus said:] ²⁷ “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

³⁷ “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will

not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

Sermon

The Hard ask

Last night, a handful of us walked a few kilometres around the downtown to raise money for the Downtown Mission.

After we had trekked the 5 kilometres, the council chair and I took part in a chili dinner at the mission and enjoyed a conversation with members of a United Church congregation. We also got to hear of the services being provided by the Mission and the challenges they face as homelessness and the threat of homelessness rises in the city.

As we were leaving the elevator on our way out, we met a family being brought into the Mission.

They were a young couple, with a child and dog.

The Mission staff were making sure they had a place to stay the night, but you could still see the fear and sorrow in their eyes.

I'm sure that there are some who ... if they saw this couple on the street ... or even knew their circumstances ... would judge them or avoid them.

But it is clear that their relationship with the world is broken ... that while there is love between them ... love is missing from their lives.

I wonder if they would forgive those who judge ... insult ... or despise them. I wonder if we can forgive ourselves for allowing such circumstances to exist.

Forgiveness ... reconciled relationships ... these are the crux of this morning's lesson in Jesus' Sermon on the Plain.

If you went online last week, you heard that Jesus had come down from the mountainside where he had been praying. He selected twelve and named them apostles. Then, he addressed the multitude of people who had traveled great distances to be healed or to have unclean spirits removed.

The power of God flowed through Jesus into the people and all of them were healed. Then, Jesus offered a sermon to the multitude ... he offered words of hope for their future.

Jesus told the gathering who would be blessed and who needs to change their lives in order for them to experience the blessings of the coming kingdom.

This morning, Jesus tells the gathering ... or at least the portion of the multitude that was actually paying attention ... what those blessings and woes means for them and for the world.

Jesus tells them to love their enemies ... to be generous with them ... to practise peace and nonviolence and don't judge ... above all, to forgive.

You can imagine the people on the plain before Jesus ... hearing the instruction to love their enemies ... to love and forgive the roman oppressors

... the soldiers and politicians who victimize the people on a daily basis.

Love them? Forgive them? Some of the multitude might have laughed at the thought ... others probably muttered something unrepeatable under their breath.

But these are the practices that mark life in a community that lives with God at its centre. It is a life where relationships are whole.

It is a life where love is not treated as a transaction ... a life that is markedly different from the life the world calls us into.

The world is a place where love ... service ... and even forgiveness ... are treated as a transaction rather than as the means to strengthen or to mend a relationship. It is a place where relationships are based on the concept of tit-for-tat.

It is a world that values retribution. What another person does, dictates what we do ... we love only those who love us ... which, as Jesus points out, is easy. We expect repayment when we act on behalf of others ... we lend rather than give ... we forgive others or offer contrition when there is a benefit to us.

Jesus doesn't ask people to give up things ... he calls on the multitude to love others ... to be merciful ... and to lessen the hold possessions have on their lives. The people are to treat others as they themselves want to be treated.

Jesus calls on listeners to be like those who are blessed in the kingdom ... to live in community and to concern themselves more with the welfare of

others more than the world would expect.

Such actions shines a light of hope for all to see and shows that where love is present, hate cannot exist.

Jesus' sermon gives all who listen a recipe for a merciful and blessed life. It is a sermon that reveals a loving and merciful God to the people and ... as it does ... it reveals the self-giving love we are to mirror.

Jesus calls on those listening to break the cycle of violence ... hate ... revenge and self-interest and live in joy and love ... regardless of whatever others direct toward them.

This is the call of discipleship ... a call that ... in the current climate ... increases in importance each day.

In his reflection on this morning's passage from Luke, Professor Robert Darden says:

"Stern though the call may be, greater still is the promise. We are blessed and we become children of God.

"By implication, the call holds an even more startling hope: by lending, by loving, by giving, by forgiving, by showing mercy: by doing all these things we enter into the very life of God."

This not an easy ask.

The world doesn't wire people that way. As one theologian puts it: No one starts the day thinking ... "I would really like a challenge today; perhaps, I will be asked to love my enemy."

The instructions within the Sermon on the Plain are challenging ... they represent a radical view of love and

forgiveness. It is a view that runs counter to our thinking and desires.

Jesus calls us to widen our circle of concern, even when the world promotes individualism and placing our own needs and those of people close to us first and foremost. The needs of others ... of strangers and of those we consider enemies are far down the list of priorities ... if they appear on the list at all.

Jesus calls people to practise actions in the face of hatred and self-interest are the very opposite of what the world says is the appropriate response. But these are actions ... this approach to life ... bear the marks of love and compassion ... the true marks of discipleship.

Love lies at the centre of discipleship. It is a call to bless rather than curse.

When we operate in love ... in grace ... we join what German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer called "a fellowship with the crucified."

Bonhoeffer wrote that loving our enemies takes us along the way of the cross. God's love is directed toward enemies just as it is directed toward us.

"... a fellowship of the crucified."

It is a fellowship anchored in love and one that through loving forgiveness ... seeks to reconcile broken relationships ... even if that relationship is with ourselves.

We are nearing the beginning of our Lenten journey toward cross and tomb.

It is a period when we are called into a deeper reflection ... of our actions and relationship with neighbour ... community ... and with God. It is a time when we are invited to consider ... as

we walk along the way ... when we stand at the foot of the cross ... if the grace we have received flows outward as intended.

This morning, we hear Jesus speak to an entire community ... the multitude on the plain ... members from different regions and different social positions ... a diversity of believers.

Jesus speaks to a congregation ... to a church ... and invites us to consider what it would mean if we loved those whom we consider our enemies.

To wonder if we have been true to our call to be a reconciling people ... welcoming, embracing, loving, lending, forgiving ... and showing the world the place love, hope and honesty holds in our lives.

Fully and earnestly loving ... even loving those we consider enemies ... is what Bonhoeffer called a "divine gift."

It is the gift of grace ... a gift freely given through Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. It is a gift that knows its full expression only when it is unconditionally shared with all we meet in our travels.

So, let us be serious and committed to be among the listeners on the Plain in Galilee ... hearing the words Jesus spoke ... heeding the call of discipleship he offered ... let us show compassion and mercy ... let us not judge ... let us forgive ... and most of all ... let us love.

Because that is the currency of the kingdom ... that is the currency of reconciliation of hope ... it is the currency that people ... like that couple last night ... desperately need.

It is the currency we carry in our hearts.

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

**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.