



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

March 23, 2025
3rd Sunday in Lent

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

Mark your calendars for April 12. The second in the Trinity Arts concert series begins at 4 p.m. The concert will feature the Woodward String Quartet from the Detroit Symphony. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. Spread the word, invite family and friends. A reception follows the concert. Proceeds support our Music Outreach Program.

Midweek Holden Services will be part of our Lenten Season. The informal services will take place in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesdays. There will be a simple meal of soup and bread 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, Ken, Mary, Randy, Roger, Rose, Frank, Tanya, Nash, Jeff

Thames Area Clergy: Pastor Nadine Schroeder-Kranz, St. Peter's, Zurich

Introduction to the day

The warnings are plentiful and blunt on the third Sunday in Lent. Cut it out or get cut down! The warnings are accompanied by God's invitation to attentiveness: "Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live." The landowner's ultimatum is forestalled by the gardener's readiness to till the ground one more year. That is good news for all of us. Thanks be to God!

Hymns

ACS #1018 Deep Peace

ELW #323 God loved the world

ELW #338 Beneath the cross of Jesus

ELW #319 O Lord, throughout these 40 days

Prayer of the day

Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

AMEN

First reading Isaiah 55:1-9

¹ Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.

² Why do you spend your money for
that which is not bread,
and your labour for that which does
not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is
good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.



³ Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.

I will make with you an everlasting
covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.

⁴ See, I made him a witness to the
peoples,

a leader and commander for the
peoples.

⁵ See, you shall call nations that you
do not know,

and nations that do not know you
shall run to you,

because of the Lord your God, the
Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

⁶ Seek the Lord while he may be
found,

call upon him while he is near;

⁷ let the wicked forsake their way,
and the unrighteous their thoughts;
let them return to the Lord, that he
may have mercy on them,

and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts,

nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth,

so are my ways higher than your ways

and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Psalm: 63:1-8

¹ O God, you are my God; eager-¹ly I seek you;

my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there¹ is no water.

² Therefore I have gazed upon you in your¹ holy place, that I might behold your power¹ and your glory.

³ For your steadfast love is better than¹ life itself;

my lips shall¹ give you praise.

⁴ So will I bless you as long¹ as I live and lift up my hands¹ in your name.

⁵ My spirit is content, as with the rich-¹est of foods,

and my mouth praises you with¹ joyful lips,

⁶ when I remember you up-¹on my bed, and meditate on you in¹ the night watches.

⁷ For you have¹ been my helper,

and under the shadow of your wings I¹ will rejoice.

⁸ My whole being¹ clings to you; your right hand¹ holds me fast.

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

¹ I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. ⁷ Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." ⁸ We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. ⁹ We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. ¹⁰ And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. ¹³ No testing has overtaken you that

is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.



Gospel: Luke 13: 1-9

¹ At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.² [Jesus] asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?”³ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.⁴ Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem?”⁵ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you

will all perish just as they did.”

⁶ Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none.⁷ So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’⁸ He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it.⁹ If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

Sermon

Changing minds

One of my colleagues when I was teaching journalism had been a documentary filmmaker before she began working at the college.

Over coffee one morning, she told me about her experiences filming and interviewing the victims of Hurricane Katrina in and around New Orleans.

She spoke about the families who lived in the same homes for generations only to be left homeless because they couldn’t rebuild after the waters receded. She talked about the devastation and how the poorer areas were largely ignored during the cleanup effort.

At the time, there were “Christians” who proclaimed that the city had experienced divine retribution. Mardi Gras and jazz music were not God’s liking and the city had to be punished.

Similar comments could be heard when wildfires recently destroyed homes and property in Southern California ... because ... well, you know ... that's where Hollywood and its liberals can be found.

There are some who believe a person's or a people's misfortune is the result of their sins ... even to the point that other's misfortune is a reflection of the seriousness of their sin.

Such comments echo the Prosperity Gospel ... that God rewards the devout and the pious and punishes those who fall short.

Jesus' answer to a gathering this morning puts lie to such thoughts.

Jesus is told about Pilate executing Galileans as they were worshipping at the temple. The roman leader had the victims' blood mixed with the blood from the animals that the Galileans had offered as part of a ritual. The move was Pilate's way of demonstrating who has the power by desecrating the victims.

The people wondered if the Galileans' sins merited such treatment ... because they were Galilean jews and not Jerusalem jews. Had they offended God?

Jesus asks the gathering to compare those deaths with the deaths of 18 people killed when a tower collapsed in Siloam.

Jesus asks if the Galileans were worse sinners than those other victims because of the way they died. Did those in the gathering believe God was behind

the tower collapse to punish the 18 victims?

Whatever sins the people in the two groups committed are beside the point. Jesus makes it clear that what happened in the temple and at Siloam had nothing to do with divine punishment.

The people gathered around him were worried about the wrong things.

Instead of worrying about another person's sins or offences, Jesus calls on the people to look at their own life and consider their actions and beliefs.

Jesus tells the people that all will die in the same way ... unprepared ... their hearts and minds attuned to the wrong things ... UNLESS.

Unless they repent.

Jesus calls on the people to repent ... it is the way to be prepared for when the inevitable happens.

Repent! The same call made by John at the Jordan River. Repent and allow the Spirit to work through you.

For some of us, repentance has come to mean ritually confessing our sins ... the things done and the things not done ... and being forgiven.

But repentance ... as Jesus means it ... goes beyond simple confession. Repentance as he proclaims it is about transformation ... changing one's life in the most fundamental ways.

Repentance is about a complete and total change of heart, soul and mind. It's about being prepared by shedding the wrong ways we approach life ... the ways that allow injustice and

hate to flourish without voicing an objection or taking action.

Following Jesus requires true, soul-felt repentance that “shifts and frees” us to pursue a new way of living ... a way of life that through the Spirit produces good fruits.

Without such a change, the confession-forgiveness practice becomes a practice that enables continual broken relationships.

Changing one’s mind toward the right things ... toward right relationships with God and with one another ... prepares a person’s heart for the suddenness of life.

Jesus ... this morning ... makes it clear that bad things will happen and will happen with little or no notice, so attention is better spent on living in faith and trust in God.

Changing one’s mind takes effort and time. That’s where grace comes into the picture this morning.

Jesus presents the parable of the fig tree to illustrate this point.

After three unproductive years, the owner of a vineyard wants a tree cut down ... the tree is wasting good soil. The owner tells the gardener to chop down the tree so that something productive can be planted in its place.

The gardener understands the owner’s frustration, but advocates for one more year ... a year for the tree to change and bear fruit.

During that year, the gardener will work the soil around the tree ... nourishing the soil with some natural

fertilizer. If the tree still doesn’t produce good fruit, it can be removed then said the worker.

Have patience ... the gardener says ... so the tree can have a chance.

Those who preach the Prosperity Gospel argue that that barren fig tree is actually blessed with special attention and fertilizer it receives because the tree is special and faithful.

But to look at the parable that way ... I think misses the point. We aren’t to serve ourselves, but live to serve others.

The tree doesn’t exist for itself ... the tree exists in community ... to produce the fruits that nourish others’ lives.

The prophet Isaiah shares a story about a vineyard that also failed to produce.

In that case, the owner was so annoyed at the lack of production that he destroyed the barren vineyard and all the structures.

Patience ... as shown in Jesus’ parable ... is a radical concept for those who first heard it. The gardener’s request for another year ... for time to allow the fig tree to change and begin bearing good fruit ... is a grace-filled act. If nothing changes, then the tree’s removal won’t be an unexpected occurrence ...

Like the gardener, Jesus intercedes for us. Through the cross, the ground has been prepared ... feeding the roots of faith anchored in the soil ... providing the potential for good fruit.

In Jesus' parable, people are invited to see themselves as a fig tree ... living a life that fully realizes grace or living a life that offers nothing to the world and lets the grace lie fallow.

If we see ourselves as a barren fig tree, what do we need to begin bearing fruit? Do we need the patience and empathy of others as we struggle to offer true repentance?

Do we extend the same grace we have received to those struggling?

Jesus' words this morning call us into the spiritual transformation that repentance offers ... a transformation that results in a different approach to life ... and a different set of eyes to view the world ... which lead us to a new and deeper loving action toward those who are suffering and marginalized.

Repentance prepares the grace-filled ground of our hearts to fully nourish life and produce good fruits for the world.

During our Lenten journey we are called into a time of reflection ... to consider those things that prevent us from producing such fruit.

We are called into meaningful repentance ... and not simply confessing by rote ... to truly recognizing where and when we have fallen short of the life God calls us into ... and changing our minds and ways to attune them to right relationships with God and neighbour.

To hold fast to the word of God ... to open our hearts to the world ... and to know the joy as we both experience and

share the grace and beauty of a fruit-filled life.

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 God who has called us forth from the dust of the earth,
and claimed us as children of the light,
strengthen you on your journey into life renewed.

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord's face shine upon you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favour
and give you + peace.

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.