

Trinity Lutheran Church

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March 24, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Faith,

Under normal circumstances, we would be putting together our April Trends Newsletter this week and you would soon have it in your hands. It would be filled with all the details of the activities that surround the observances of Palm Sunday and Holy Week, and of course the highest festival of the entire Church Year: Easter Sunday! Given our current health crisis, we most likely will not be holding these observances and festival celebrations as Trinity has for the past 75 years. We will, for certain, find creative ways to be church together in observance of these dear and important faith moments. But, the determination of exactly how that will occur, is best made closer to the time. One of our very faithful and longstanding faith community members has often proclaimed that we are a “flexible” congregation – and she is being proved even more accurate than ever in these days!

So, along with “no public worship,” we will have “no April Trends.” Instead, we will update weekly, by email and on our website – unless you have no email contact or ability to access our website. In that case, you must call the church office (941) 747-3081 and request a physical mailed communication. Please help us stay in contact with you by calling the church office right now – so you don’t forget! To those who have already updated their personal information with the church office, thank you!!!

A huge thank you to Nathan Krafve for filming our worship and our musicians on staff for accompanying our televised and recorded worship experiences. We will continue to do a weekly “Facebook Live” service that you can watch in real time on Facebook, or later on the Facebook feed of our Website (Ministries page) OR the video posting done by Nathan, linked on the front page of our website. Our sermons will be included in the weekly posting or mailing (available on request by calling the church office).

Our scheduled **Facebook live worship times are:** **Sunday, March 29th, 9am**
Saturday, April 4th, 5:30pm (Palm Saturday)
Sunday, April 12th, 9am (Easter)

As we continue to discover in this time of uncertainty and health crisis, our Spiritual Ancestor Martin Luther’s insights can direct our path. Luther’s most known hymn, “A Mighty Fortress” was written between 1527 and 1529 – following two major tragic periods of Luther’s life: his unsuccessful efforts, beginning in 1517 to reform the Roman Catholic church (which chose instead to disassociate from him) and the Black Plague’s rampage through Wittenberg, Luther’s city, from August to November of 1527. Luther and Katie did not flee the city in the wake of the plague, but opened their home to plague victims and provided care, risking their own health in the process. While neither succumbed to the illness, and their little daughter with whom Katie was pregnant at the time, was born healthy at Christmas. She then died at 8 months of age.

Luther was no stranger to struggle and hardship and the uncertainties of life. Which makes all the more powerful and comforting the words of his hymn, which is based on Psalm 46. “A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing...” Take the time to read prayerfully both Psalm 46 and this hymn. Be upheld and comforted, strengthened and inspired.

Our offerings can be received either online at the website through E-Giving OR by physically mailing your offering to Trinity. Normally, this would be “*Noisy Offering Weekend*” so be sure to include a gift for Our Daily bread in your giving!

Sending prayers and God’s love to you, *Pastor Bobbie (941) 243-9473 and Vicar Fred (941) 301-0691*

Lenten Meditation Series: “Open Our Eyes, Lord... We Want to See Jesus!”

March 25, 2020

Pastor Jim Dugan

“I was sick and you took care of me.” -Matthew 25

The Coronavirus has changed all our lives! Sadly, in an imperfect/human world, a virus can go crazy, cancer cells explode, famine, droughts and wars occur. YES, Bad things happen to good people! And this will be true until the 2nd Coming when Christ will make all things new.

So, we pray unceasingly for: Grieving families, those infected, all medical, research, care-giving professionals and volunteers, those losing income + millions more and us. And yes, let's make sure we keep up with our personal and corporate hygiene.

With that said, we turn to our text: “I was sick and you took care of me.” Matthew 25

No one likes to be sick. A guy goes to his doctor very sick and doctor says he'll have him on his feet in two weeks. And he was right because guy had to sell his car to pay for the doctor's bill.

When we are sick, what do we want?

-Good doctor – No I Vs ☺ - Great medications – No pain – Positive diagnosis - YUP, We WANT ALL of these plus more.

Also, we want “Tender Loving Care” when we're sick because we all know how special the following are:

-Cool wash cloth – Ice chips - Caressing hand – Friendly conversation – Fluffing pillow – Reading scripture – Praying together. YUP, When we're sick we want the best medical care AND we also want and need the “Personal Touch”.

And the HUMAN REALITY is we are all Spiritually Sick.

The old Red Hymnal [SBH] had the confession: “We are by nature sinful and unclean”. And all of you know this hymn which I would sing if this were a live sermon ☺!

“Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my life's in vain, and then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again. There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole, There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.”

YES – We all need “Eternal Healing” and WHY? Simple, physical healing eventually stops. The surgeries, medications, therapies only work for so long on our bodies that do wear out. As I shared last year in a sermon: “Death is our only ultimate healing!”

So, When all else fails, Jesus the Son of God is our:

Ultimate doctor – Caring nurse – Welcomed visitor and caregiver – Compassionate comforter for all eternity because of His brutal cross, death and eventual eternal Resurrection. And because He did, we will also!

So, let's stick to our Lenten Journey to the cross even though it's at home and on-line, and await with hope and anticipation the Eternal Healing of Easter! Amen

The Healing of the Man Born Blind...John 9

March 21, 2020

Pastor Bobbie Blackburn

Today we have a marvelous story from John's Gospel – found only in John's Gospel and told with the detail and precision that marks each of the seven “signs” that John's Gospel communicates...from the turning of water into wine to the raising up of Lazarus from the dead, when Jesus moves into divine action, people take notice.

In this story, the man does not come to Jesus and ask for help. Matter of fact, it is Jesus who sees him, and then his disciples take note of the man as well. Wandering into a teaching moment, the disciples ask a curious question: Who sinned? This man or his parents that he would be born blind?

The question breaks open the deeply held notion of the time that tragedy had a source, a sinful source that could be pinned as accountable for what was happening. Two thousand years later, we continue to seek to identify fault so that we can know where to locate blame and then accountability and apply retribution. It takes shape in so many ways in our lives...

Like when we were seeking housing for Vicar Fred and Mycah last summer, Meredith and I toured a number of apartment homes in our community. We were looking for a place that would accommodate pets, and one such place that we checked out was extremely intent upon making sure that dog owners cleaned up after their animals...so much so that they required that you have the dog's excrement DNA tested so that they could match up uncompliant pet owners with accuracy! Talk about wanting to locate blame and responsibility! We humans are indeed both inclined and capable of pinning blame and finding fault, aren't we?

While the doggie story is a somewhat comical and over the edge example, I have been in a setting and maybe you have as well, when you hear of an event and those around you immediately wonder or speculate about whose fault it is.

There is no shortage of fault finding and blame flinging in our climate of coronavirus. Whose fault is it that the beaches are now closed? That funerals cannot be held or graduations celebrated? That there are not enough masks for health care workers or toilet paper for anybody? I don't need to belabor this reality because we are in the very middle of it, each of us.

Which is why I find our Gospel message, chosen for us hundreds of years ago by those who created the lectionary reading schedule, so dead-on appropriate for us today. The disciples wanted to know who to blame, where the fault was to be found for the man's being blind, but Jesus outright denies that it is anyone's fault. He will not even debate the question. Instead, he confidently proclaims that this man's being blind from birth is not a cause-and-effect event but an OPPORTUNITY – an opportunity for God to work to reveal God's own self through him! Not that God made him blind so he could then heal him, but that every experience of struggle, every challenge of life can become a moment of revealing the love and grace and tender mercy of God.

No blame. No fault. Just an opportunity for God to be seen and known. What amazes me is how Jesus changes the subject. Who sinned, this man or his parents? No one sinned. No one is the cause of this. No one is the subject, here—except God, and what God might do in this situation.

For me, this changes everything. Whose fault is it that the beaches are closed and our lives as we knew them are socially changed? No one's fault. No one is the subject, here—except God, and what God might do in this situation. So look around, folks. What do you think God is doing, here? How can we help?

Whose fault is it, that masks are not available for healthcare workers in our community? No one's fault. No one is the subject, here—except God, and what God might do now. So look around. What do you think God is doing, here? How can we be a part of it? I will tell you one small way a few from our faith community are being a part of showing God's grace and care – they are coming together to sew 150 cotton masks for health care workers.

Who's fault is it that we are spatially distanced from one another in these days of health crisis? NO one's fault – just an opportunity to shine the light of God's love in tiny ways...through a few phone calls a day to someone who is alone or a note written. Or maybe you have a globe in your house that you can spin and then stop with your finger and where ever it lands, lift up prayers for the people of that place.

Jesus said to his disciples before he healed the man born blind: “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Because of you, in these dark days, Jesus' light is still in the world! Amen.

Easter Flowers – Order Today

Honor or remember your loved ones with lovely, colorful spring flowers. This year's colorful flowers are \$7 each. To order flower(s), please call the church office or email the following information for each flower you wish to dedicate: 1) Number of plants you wish to order; 2) Name(s) in Honor Of or in Memory Of; 3) "Given by" Name(s). You may mail payment to the church office or send by eGiving and note "Easter flowers." Deadline to order is April 5th.

April Birthdays

4/1 Zachary Genewick, Susan Hullett
4/3 Diane Reining, Ann Terhardt, Rachel Kronmann
4/4 Benjamin Reiss
4/5 Andrew Kalaman
4/11 Sawyer Daughtry, Linda Haack, Laura Reiss, Yvonne Houston
4/13 Carol Berge
4/14 Peter Procyk
4/15 Deborah Federsel
4/17 David Cozzette, Brett Flannigan, Terry Terhardt
4/18 Carol Hauch
4/19 Bette Stang
4/20 Jay Whetsel
4/21 Nathaniel Hall, Pam Melville-Davis, Amber Monroe
4/22 Brett Peterson, Marlyn Thornton, Sandra Dugan
4/23 Janet Berger, Barbara Wolf, Shaun Spangler
4/25 Lorraine Heidelberg
4/28 Gwin Wilburn
4/30 Doug Quick

April Anniversaries

4/1 Mark Dellis and Pam Melville-Dellis
4/4 Leroy and Linda Barth
4/16 Leroy and Sherrie Everett
4/27 Julian and Claudine Knisley
4/28 Cyril Matherne and Harriet Walters

Here is Chef Darrell's April recipe. Enjoy trying something new!

Bourbon Street Dirty Rice

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil	8 oz lean ground beef or ground turkey
8 oz ground pork	8 oz ground sausage
1 medium onion, diced	1 green pepper, diced
1 cup diced celery	3 cloves garlic, minced
1 1/2 teaspoons Cajun Seasoning	1 1/2 cups white rice
3 1/2 cups chicken broth	2 bay leaves
salt & pepper to taste	green onion for garnish

Instructions

1. Heat olive oil over medium high heat in a Dutch oven or heavy bottomed pan.
2. Add beef, turkey and sausage. Cook until no pink remains.
3. Add onion, garlic, green pepper, celery, and Cajun seasoning. Stir until softened, about 5 minutes.
4. Add rice, broth and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer covered about 20-23 minutes or until rice is cooked.

Garnish with green onions and serve.

This week, several of our quilters sewed face masks for Westminster Suncoast – St. Pete, where one of Trinity's members is Director. Thanks to the folks who took part in this project – God's Work. Our Hands.

Order for Worship—March 29th 9am—Facebook Live

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude: *"How Beautiful"*

-Joel Raney

Piano, Shaun Spangler; Flute, Rebecca Kasang

* Confession and Forgiveness

L: In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. C: **Amen.**

L: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. C: **Amen.**

L: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

L: Most merciful God, C: **We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

L: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. C: **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn: #838 *Beautiful Savior*

- 1 Beautiful Savior, King of creation, Son of God and Son of Man! Truly I'd love thee, truly I'd serve thee, light of my soul, my joy, my crown.
- 2 Fair are the meadows, fair are the woodlands, robed in flow'rs of blooming spring; Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer, he makes our sorrowing spirit sing.
- 3 Fair is the sunshine, fair is the moonlight, bright the sparkling stars on high; Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer than all the angels in the sky.
- 4 Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations, Son of God and Son of Man! Glory and honor, praise, adoration, now and forevermore be thine!

Text: Gesangbuch, Münster, 1677; tr. Joseph A. Seiss, 1823-1904

* **Apostolic Greeting:** L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. C: **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day: L: Let us pray. C: **Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

First Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm: Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;

O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

If you were to keep watch over sins, O Lord, who could stand?

Yet with you is forgiveness, in order that you may be feared.

I wait for you, O Lord; my soul waits; in your word | is my hope.

My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch for the morning, more than those who keep watch for the morning.

O Israel, wait for the Lord, for with the Lord there is steadfast love; with the Lord there is plenteous redemption.

For the Lord shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

Second Reading: Romans 8:6-11

Lenten Verse: *Open Our Eyes, Lord*

Open our eyes, Lord; we want to see Jesus, to reach out and touch him, and say that we love him. Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen. Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus.

Gospel: John 11:1-45

L: The Holy Gospel according to John, the eleventh chapter. C: **Glory to you, O Lord!**

The Reading of the Gospel

L: This is the Gospel of the Lord! C: **Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon Hymn: *I Will Rise*

Verse 1 There's a peace I've come to know, Though my heart and flesh may fail, There's an anchor for my soul
I can say it is well.

Pre-Chorus: Jesus has overcome, And the grave is overwhelmed, The victory is won, He is risen from the dead

Chorus: (And) I will rise when He calls my name, No more sorrow no more pain, I will rise on eagle's wings
Before my God fall on my knees, And rise I will rise (I will rise)

Verse 2: There's a day that's drawing near, When this darkness breaks to light, And the shadows disappear
And my faith shall be my eyes

Bridge: And I hear the voice of many angels sing, Worthy is the Lamb, And I hear the cry of ev'ry longing heart
Worthy is the Lamb (REPEAT) Worthy is the Lamb

CCLI Song # 5183450

Sermon:

Vicar Fred Klinker

*Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the Church *After each petition:* L: Lord, in your mercy. C: Hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Exchange of Peace:

L: The peace of the Lord be with you always. C: **And also with you!**

Blessing

L: Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. C: **Amen.**

Sending Song: *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*

1 My hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
no merit of my own I claim, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Refrain: On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand.

2 When darkness veils his lovely face, I rest on his unchanging grace;
in ev'ry high and stormy gale, my anchor holds within the veil. *Refrain*

3 His oath, his covenant, his blood, sustain me in the raging flood;
when all supports are washed away, he then is all my hope and stay. *Refrain*

4 When he shall come with trumpet sound, oh, may I then in him be found,
clothed in his righteousness alone, redeemed to stand before the throne! *Refrain*

Text: Edward Mote, 1797-1874, all.

Dismissal:

L: God has filled us with peace and hope in this time of worship!

C: **We arise at the sound of our name, prepared to be light and love for others.**

L: Go in peace. Share the gift of faith.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

Postlude