

Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358



Esther 4:1-17
December 4, 2022



Scan with your Smartphone and link to our web page, our
Facebook page, and our YouTube Channel.

• **Prelude**

Roxanne Groff

• **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**

• **Welcome**

Pr Mel Musser

• **Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

R: With Esther we see plainly the injustice at work in our world, O God.

C: And with Esther we know it is our call to stand up to injustice whatever the cost.

R: *(light candle 1)* We light this first candle as a beacon of hope for those who wait.

C: *(light candle 2)* We light this second candle as the fire of courage that we might bear witness to your justice.

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Radiant God,

C: You have come to live among us, yet we fail time and again to see you in the faces of our neighbors. We look to ourselves instead of those in need.

We seek the shallow comforts of things we can buy instead of the deep and lasting comfort of your presence. Forgive our stubborn refusal to see, and open our eyes to the joy and wonder of your incarnation.

P: Do not be afraid, for I bring you good news of great joy. The God of boundless grace forgives you all your sins, renewing your spirit for the sake of Immanuel, God with us.

C: Amen.

* HYMN OF PRAISE

“Good Saint Nicholas of Myra”

(Verses 1, 2, and 3 Only)

1. Good Saint Ni - cho - las of My - ra, deeds and leg - ends tell his fame.
2. Mir - a - cles and signs and won - ders, he per - formed to praise the Lord.
3. Sail - ors, na - tions, peo - ple thank him for the mess - age that he brought.

Saint - ly bi - shop, friend of child - ren man - y pli - grims chant the name:
For a poor and wear - y peo - ple source of care and joy out - poured:
Young and old now hail the mem - 'ry Of the less - ons that he taught:

Refrain
Bless - ed Nich - las, bless - ed Nich - las He loved all in Je - sus' name!

* APOSTOLIC GREETING

P: 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.

*** KYRIE**

A In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.

A For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mer - cy.

A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mer - cy.

A For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.

A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **C** A - men

*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray... God of grace and mercy, with Esther we fear for the future of our people and all the earth. As we wait for your promised savior, give us hope that all will be made right in you.

C: Amen.

- * Please stand if able
- Please be seated

• **DRAMATIC READING OF SCRIPTURE: Esther 4:1-17**

P: Our scripture reading for this day is from the book of Esther, Chapter 4.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

Narrator 1: When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went through the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry; he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. In every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

Narrator 2: When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he would not accept them.

Narrator 1: Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening and why. Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people.

Narrator 2: Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying,

Esther: "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden scepter to someone, may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days."

Narrator 1: When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, Mordecai told them to reply to Esther,

Mordecai: "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this."

Narrator 2: Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai,

Esther: "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish."

Narrator 1: Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

R: This is the Word of the Lord!

C: Praise to You, O Christ (*Spoken*)

- **SAINT NICHOLAS VISITS TRINITY**

(Santa Clause Is Coming To Town is played/projected on the front wall.)

*You better watch out! You better not cry!
You better not pout, I'm telling you why:
Santa Claus is coming to town.
He knows when you are sleeping,
He knows when you're awake,
He knows when you've been bad or good,
So be good for goodness sake!
He's making a list, checking it twice,
Gonna find out who's naughty or nice,
Santa Claus is coming to town.*

(SLIDE) Ho! Ho! Ho! I just love Christmas time, don't you? I just wish you all wouldn't mix me up with that other guy... You know who I'm talking about, right? I mean all this is wonderful... And I'm flattered, but it's really not me. I'm not omniscient. I don't know if you're bad or good. I have no way of knowing if you're sleeping. And I'm not omnipresent. I can't be everywhere at once on the

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

same night. Only God can be these things. I also don't live at the North Pole nor do I drive a sleigh with eight tiny reindeer? No, all of that's that other guy... You know the one who lives at the North Pole and has lots of elves making toys all year. That's Santa Claus. I definitely do not live at the North Pole nor do I drive a sleigh with eight tiny reindeer.

Who am I then? I saw a cartoon the other day. A man reading the newspaper was saying to his wife, "Honey, it says here scientists have discovered the true meaning of Christmas!" I guess you could say I did that 1,700 years ago!

My name is Nicholas. I was born in the year of our Lord 270 A.D., in the sea coast town of Patara in Asia Minor. (SLIDE) That's in the present-day country you call Turkey today. My mother and father were wealthy, and they raised me in a Christian home. Sadly, they died in the plague when I was a little boy. As I grew older I traveled often and got into the habit of using my money to help people. When I was nearly 50 years of age, I took a trip to the Holy Land. I wanted to see Galilee, Jerusalem, Bethlehem — the places where Jesus walked! During that journey God spoke to my heart and I was called by God to become a pastor in the church. This seemed the best way for me to really help people, so that's just what I did. I returned to a village near my birthplace, a town called Myra. The year was around 320 A.D. My job was to be the Bishop or Pastor of all the Christians in the area.

-
- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

So, who am I really? I am Nicholas of Myra, Turkey. I lived 1,700 years ago. I was pastor of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, in those days we Pastors and Bishops all dressed like this. We dressed this way to remind people who Jesus Christ is. My red bishop's coat is a reminder of the blood of Christ that cleanses from all sin. (*Cross yourself beatifically.*) The Lord be praised! My hat is called a miter. It is a symbol of Christ as the helmet of salvation. It has this funny shape to remind us of the tongues of fire that came to the apostles on Pentecost. This stole is a symbol of the yoke of Jesus, a simple reminder we are all his servants. And this staff is a symbol of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and how I care for his flock. And these shoes? Why, they are to keep my feet warm!

In my day it was dangerous to be a Christian. A man named Diocletian was the emperor or king. Aye! And he was such a bad person. He made himself to be a god and ordered everyone to worship him and to chant "Diocletian is lord!" I refused and I taught my people that only Jesus is Lord. So, the emperor rough-handled me. He persecuted my people and exiled me, forced me to live far away from my people. Then, God be praised! (*Cross yourself.*) Mean old Diocletian died and was replaced by Constantine as emperor! Thanks to Constantine's mother who was a Christian, Constantine became a Christian too. When he did Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. After that, he allowed me to return to Myra and my church. What joy! What a feast! What

* Please stand if able
• Please be seated

worship there was in the church when we met together in God's house! Freedom!

I was able to spend the rest of my life with my... er... God's people!

For 22 years I watched over Christ's church and during this time I grew especially fond of children. You see, I was single. My parents were both in heaven with Jesus. So, my family became the church and other people's children became like my own, in the faith. How I loved to sit the little children on my lap and tell the stories of Jesus! One of my other joys was gift giving gifts to people. Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (*Cross yourself.*) The Lord be praised!

Once a man in my church went bankrupt, and, in order to pay his bills was going to have to sell his three beautiful daughters into slavery, a practice quite common in those days. When I heard about it, I prayed to God almighty, our provider and in the dark of night I snuck to the man's house and threw a bag of gold into an open window! Well, it seems the little girls had left their freshly washed stockings by the chimney to dry and don't you know that bag of gold landed in a stocking! Imagine everyone's surprise the next morning when they were dressing and they found enough money to pay off their debts and keep the family together.

Another time a young lady wanted to marry, but she had no dowry. That's a large sum of money and possessions that a woman's family gives to the man's family when they get married. Without a dowry, no man would want to marry the poor girl. Hearing of her troubles, I gathered some money, climbed on her roof in the black of night, and dropped some coins down her chimney. Wouldn't you know it! They also fell into her stockings hung to dry by the chimney with care! The next day she found the money, and a wedding was announced right away! Imagine their joy and mine as I got to perform their marriage and as the years past I also got to baptize their children!!

And here's the really important part...because these gifts were given in secret, there was no one to thank but God alone! And you know what else? I hear tell that on Christmas night people still hang their stockings by the fireplace in hopes that something good will fall into them by morning! Have you ever hung up stockings on Christmas eve and then woke up to find lots of goodies in them?

Just so you don't think I've never done anything but good works all my life, let me tell you about the time when I got into a fist fight. Back in the early days of the Church there were many Priests and Bishops teaching false things about Jesus. Our new emperor, Constantine became worried that all these religious arguments would destroy his new and fragile empire. So, Constantine ordered all of us Bishops to come together in the city of Nicaea for a special council meeting. Back

-
- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

in those days when the Church had a council meeting every Bishop came. At the Council of Nicaea in the year 325 over 300 Bishops attended. Our job was to fashion a single statement of what the Christian faith means. What do we believe about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Oh, the arguments! I became so angry with a fellow named Arius that I walked right up to him and slapped him across his face. I'm still ashamed of my actions and that I lost control in front of everyone, including Emperor Constantine. I was stripped of my Bishops garments, chained, and thrown in jail. During that night in jail, Jesus and his blessed mother Mary came to me in my cell. Jesus asked me why I was in jail and when I told him it was because I loved him so much, he forgave me my sin. He gave me a copy of the Gospels and Mary dressed me in these very Bishop's vestments that I wear to this day. When the jailer came to give me breakfast in the morning he found my chains had been removed and my Bishop's clothing restored. When Constantine was told what had happened during the night, he himself released me from jail and restored me to my post as Bishop of Myra. By the way, the Council of Bishops decided with me and against that old heretic Arius. The result of our meeting in Nicaea in the year 325 was what you all will be reading in just a few moments, called the Nicæan Creed. It's our statement of confession of our common beliefs about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

-
- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

Jesus called me home to be with Him in Heaven in the year 342 A.D., on December 6. By then I was well known in the area and many Christians had begun to follow my example in Christ by giving gifts in secret. After I died, my reputation grew and the Church declared me to be a Saint. Now I'm the patron saint of unwed girls, sailors and several cities, as well as the entire country of Poland.

I am one of the great cloud of witnesses that stands to encourage you in your own faith. I want to point you to Jesus Christ who saved me, who gave me children to love, who gave me a generous heart and a place to serve God. I want to point you to the God who became one of us that we might become one of his. And I want to point you to your own town, right here in Pitsburg, or Arcanum, or Greenville, where ever you live as a place to serve God and God's people.

There are children right here who need to be told stories, gifts that are waiting to be given in secret. And just as I did, so can you. (*Cross your self.*) Praise be to God! May all of you use the gifts God has given to you to secretly help your friends and neighbors in need and may you be one of the ones who lets the light of Jesus Christ shine through you all the days of your life. Amen!

Now you may go and collect you shoes from the back of the Sanctuary. Please look inside before you put them on your feet! I'll be back after your

-
- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

Worship Service for a few minutes if anyone has any questions for me or if you would like your picture taken with old Saint Nicholas! Ho...Ho...Ho!!!

Silence may be kept for meditation...

* **NICENE CREED**

Mark says: We respond to God's Word by confessing our faith. We use the words Saint Nicholas and the other 300 Bishops worked so hard and fought so courageously to hand down to us...

C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

**Or He descended to the dead.*

* **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

L: Confident that your promises are sure, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

L: Through the prayers and fasting of Esther, Mordecai, and the faithful Jews, you worked behind the scenes to carry out your miracles. Show up in our lives in big and small ways, and give us eyes to see where and when you are at work. We call on our God,

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

December 4, 2022

Page 13 of 21

C: O come, o come Immanuel.

L: All creation hangs in delicate balance to nurture and sustain all things, including us. Help us to be faithful stewards of all that you have made. We call on our God,

C: O come, o come Immanuel.

L: Give your world's leaders wisdom to listen to the voices of those with less power, as those voices may speak with greater wisdom and truth. We call on our God,

C: O come, o come Immanuel.

L: Healing comes in many forms. You graciously offer healing of bodies, souls, and minds, and also healing of relationships, communities, finances, and vocations. Grant healing to all who are in need, (*especially*). We call on our God,

C: O come, o come Immanuel.

L: Lift up the lowly and bring down the haughty, so that this world might function according to your will; a beautiful kingdom of heaven on earth. We call on our God,

C: O come, o come Immanuel.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

L: With gratitude we remember all your saints who have spoken courageously on behalf of others like Esther. We remember generous saints who fought for our true beliefs like Nicholas of Myra. May we speak as they spoke, until we join the eternal conversation with you. We call on our God,

C: O come, o come Immanuel.

P: In faith, hope, and love, we lift our prayers to you, in the name of your promised savior, Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

PEACE

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

The ministers and congregation may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Peace be with you.

Peace be with you.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

• OFFERING

The Offering is received as the Lord's table is prepared.

* CONGREGATIONAL OFFERTORY

“Let the Vineyards”

Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our
cup of bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the
seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u - nite them with the
prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

* OFFERING PRAYER

P: God, you call us to bold action on behalf of the world. Accept now these gifts for the good of all your beloved creation.

C: Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Communion is at the rail. All the Baptized are welcome at this Holy Meal.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated


December 4, 2022

Page 15 of 21


* **DIALOGUE**



☐ The Lord be with you. ☑ And al - so with you.



☐ Lift up your hearts. ☑ We lift them to the Lord.



☐ Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



☑ It is right to give him thanks and praise.

* **PREFACE**

P: It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everliving God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

* **THE SANCTUS**



☑ Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:



Heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.



Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who



comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

December 4, 2022

Page 16 of 21

*** EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

P: Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope, we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty. When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy. At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love and to heal all the suffering world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace. Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son. Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

C: Amen.

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Jesus is the tie that binds us together. So, let us pray as Jesus taught...

C: 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.

*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: God sets a feast before us in the presence of our enemies, and strengthens us for the work ahead. Let us prepare our hearts and minds that we might answer God's call. Come and be satisfied.

• COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

Communion is at the railing. As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

The communicant may say: Amen.

*** POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

P: May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path. Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen

*** POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

P: Let us pray... God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

• ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** SENDING BLESSING**

P: God the eternal Word, who dwells with us in Jesus, and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

*** SENDING HYMN**

“Good Saint Nicholas of Myra”

(Verses 4 and 5 Only)

4. May his ways of true de-votion guide us on our earth-ly way.
5. Fath-er, Son, and Ho-ly Spir-it bind us in comm-un-i-ty,
Challeng-e us to be more like him as Christ's Gos-ple we o-bey:
So that we with ho-ly Nich-las might e-ter-nal glo-ry see:
Refrain
Bless-ed Nich-las, bless-ed Nich-las He loved all in Je-sus' name!

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

December 4, 2022

Page 18 of 21

*** DISMISSAL**

P: Thank you all for joining us to worship our great and gracious God! Thanks also to our Facebook and other social media viewers for joining us as well. We're glad you're with us today. In a world where you can be anything, be kind! Until the next time we gather together as God's people to offer our worship and praise, depart in Christ's Love.

C: Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!

*** POSTLUDE**

Roxanne Groff



Copyright © 2022 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS023830. New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Revised Common Lectionary, Copyright © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts, admin Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission.

* Please stand if able

December 4, 2022

• Please be seated

Page 19 of 21

Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	Teresa Neitzelt, Kathy Kathman, Linda Baker, and Chris Cassle
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser
Altar Flowers	



Scripture readings for next Sunday, December 11th
Children's Christmas Program...

Health Tips for the Week

BODY: use good body posture

MIND: read a Christmas story

SPIRIT: Write about what Christmas means to you

This Week @ Trinity – December 4 thru December 11, 2022

Sun, Dec 4	10:30 am	Worship Service (With Communion at the railing and a visit from Saint Nicholas)
	After Worship	Children's Christmas Program Practice
	2:00 pm	Santa Claus Visits Trinity (Parents, Please provide a wrapped gift with your child's name on the wrapping. \$15 max...)
Mon, Dec 5	7:00 pm	Dartball at Trinity
Wed, Dec 7	11:00 am	WELCA Christmas Party
Thurs, Dec 8	10:00 am	Prayers & Squares Quilting Ministry
Fri, Dec 9	3:30 pm	FISH Choice Food Pantry
Sun, Dec 11	10:30 am	Children's Christmas Program
	After Worship	Confirmation Students and Mentors Shopping Trip for our Gateway Children

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

December 4, 2022

Page 20 of 21

Trinity is on the Air at FM 88.3

If you are near the Church on Sunday morning, you can tune in to FM 88.3 at 10:30 AM and hear the sermon from your car.

Holy Communion Delivery Available to ALL:

If you or anyone you know would like to have Holy Communion delivered to a home or place of business, please call Pastor Mel at 937-626-7100. He will bring a prefilled communion chalice including both sanctified wine and a morsel of bread all prepackaged from the Concordia True Vine company. This is a safe way to stay connected to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Trinity Contact Info

Pastor:	Mel Musser
Email:	pastor@pitsburgtlc.org
Cell Phone:	937-626-7100
Secretary:	Sharon Fourman
Email:	secretary@pitsburgtlc.org
Office Hours:	By Appointment
Office Phone:	937-692-5670
Website:	www.pitsburgtlc.org

-
- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

December 4, 2022

Page 21 of 21