

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



Sermon at Nazareth
January 17, 2021

- **Prelude** **“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus; Brightest and Best;
I Cannot Tell; Lord, We Praise You”** **Roxanne Groff**

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

- **Welcome** **Pr Mel**

*** 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: God of light,

C: You light a fire within us and ask us to shine, but we are quick to hide and make excuses. We shrink from challenges, avoid responsibility, and deny the goodness of your creation. We seek hollow praise and then don't believe it. Forgive us for hiding our God-given light and remaining self-absorbed.

P: Children of God, never fear, for you have always lived in the mercy of your creator. Hear the words of absolution and believe them: you are forgiven, you are made whole, you are restored to God. Hallelujah!

C: Amen.

*** HYMN OF PRAISE “Hark, the Glad Sound!” LBW 35**



1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior



prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -



pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song.

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January 17, 2021

Page 2 of 15

*** 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.**

*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Powerful God, You stir up your people with challenging words. Open our ears to hear truly the truth which you bring, and may it shake up our lives so that we can be your faithful witnesses in the world.

C: **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 4:14-30

P: Our scripture reading for this morning is from Luke, Chapter 4.

C: **Glory to you O Lord.**

¹⁴Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. ¹⁶When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: ¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” ²⁰And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” ²²All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” ²³He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” ²⁴And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. ²⁵But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷There were

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also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”²⁸When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage.²⁹They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff.³⁰But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

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

• **SERMON**

Dean Thompson

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the one who brings us the good news, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, amen.

2021 is already shaping up to try to outdo 2020. Talk about upside down and backwards, I mean the Browns beat the Steelers in Pittsburgh and are now playing in the second round of the playoffs. I’ve heard some parts of Hades had frost this morning... Since when do Republicans protest, riot, and break stuff? On the other hand, the big tech companies are taking it upon themselves to censor free speech. I haven’t seen such a divided nation since the days of the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War protests. What we need is a leader with a clear and positive vision for the future and a ready to go plan on how to get there. I’m not too optimistic we have such a person currently on the scene in Washington. It would sure be nice if we had something positive we could set our hearts and minds to. What we need right now is a hero we can rally around, someone who can lead

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us from these dark days of division, disease, and dis-ease into the paradise of peace and harmony. Jesus' life and ministry point us in that direction to a better way.

Today we pick up the story of Jesus as his fame has already spread throughout the region of Galilee. The people of Nazareth heard about all the things Jesus was accomplishing and were ready for Jesus to do in Nazareth what he had been doing in the surrounding countryside. I imagine the headlines in the Nazareth Times going something like this, "Hometown Hero Returns: Jesus, Son of Joseph, to Appear in Synagogue." Expectations were high to say the least. What were the people of Nazareth expecting Jesus to do? I, along with most scholars, always thought the Jewish people were waiting and longing for the Messiah described in the books of the prophets. You know the anointed one of God who would come in power to reclaim the former glory days of Israel. The Warrior King who would finally, once and for all rid their nation of the foreign kings and emperors and restore the throne to King David's heirs. None of that is unbiblical. As the Gospels clearly show us, when Jesus came preaching forgiveness and peacemaking, and talking about loving your enemies instead of going to war against the Romans, the people turned on him. This might be true, but I'm not convinced Jesus' failure to take a stand against the Romans tells the complete story. First of all, Nazareth was a small town in the shadow of much larger cities.

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Just 10 miles away was the city of Sepphoris, a new and growing city. Since Joseph was a carpenter, he likely travelled to Sepphoris for work. The people who lived in Nazareth were local-yokels and certainly not sophisticated cosmopolitan intellectuals following all the latest political maneuvering. Even Phillip, when told about Jesus of Nazareth, the one spoken about by the prophets, his reply was, “can anything good come from Nazareth...” Successful people were the ones who made it out of Nazareth. The people left in Nazareth didn’t have the time nor the inclination to study the politics of the day, nor be all that emotionally invested in some Warrior King predicted over 500 years previously. They were much more concerned about making ends meet for today and tomorrow. They were the poor relatives of the Jews who lived in Jerusalem or Sepphoris the city ancient historian Josephus called the jewel of Galilee. What they expected of this Jesus was the miracle worker they had heard about. They wanted their sick to be healed and their bellies to be fed. They wanted a hero like Superman or the Flash to storm into town and make their troubles go away.

The good people of Nazareth along with most everyone in the region misread the signs of the Messiah. Jesus came to be neither the Warrior King nor the Superman, miracle worker, the people wanted. If that’s not the kind of Savior Jesus was, then what was Jesus up to and why should we care? At first the people

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thought they were getting exactly what they wanted. When Jesus read that passage from the prophet Isaiah it was so familiar to them you can almost hear them cheering him on 2000 years later. Yes, the blind will see the sick were healed and the dead brought back to life. So, what happened in Nazareth? Well, for starters, Jesus abruptly stopped reading and put the scroll down and announced that today these scriptures have been fulfilled... Wait! What? Fulfilled, we're still sick and hungry. We're still mourning our dead. We still can't make ends meet let alone get ahead in this life. Why wasn't Jesus doing here, what he did in Capernaum? He healed others, come on Jesus heal our sick as well...

How many of us today have those same expectations of our Messiah? We regularly pray for our sick and dying relatives and life seems to go on as if those prayers were spoken to the empty sky. We've all prayed for healing of our world from this Rona Virus and yet over 25 million have been infected and over 350,000 have died in the United States alone. We've prayed for a healing of the divisions tearing our country apart and yet it seems to be sinking further and further into the morass of political hate. What good is a savior if He can't do something about our troubles here and now. Where's our Superman?

The traditional Church hasn't helped us much. For most of my life I learned that Jesus came so we could have forgiveness from God and go to heaven

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when we die. That's not much help when I'm hungry and grieving. If this Jesus didn't come to bring good blessings right here and now, what good is this religion? We "Church" people spend so much time thinking and talking about getting to heaven we forget Jesus came to be our King of Kings. We've misread our scriptures as badly as the Nazarenes of old. We tend to move directly from the Manger in Bethlehem to the cross on Calvary. If you need any proof of what I say, just look at the importance we place on the creeds. We say either the Apostle's or the Nicene creed every week in worship. Obviously, these creeds are important, but look at what they actually say about Jesus, or what they don't say. I believe Jesus who was born of a virgin, suffered under Pontius Pilate and was crucified, died and was buried. All three of the creeds completely leave out everything Jesus did and taught during his earthly ministry. Most Christians are hard pressed to tell anyone what Jesus actually said, did and taught. If you want to know the heart of God, look at what Jesus did and how he lived.

I can't explain everything Jesus did and taught in this short sermon, but I can hopefully pique your curiosity. Jesus did perform miracles, but that wasn't his primary purpose. He came to be our King. He came to show this broken and sinful world a different kind of kingdom. Jesus rarely spoke about heaven, but he constantly spoke about the Kingdom of God. His stories and parables regularly

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started out something like this, “The Kingdom of God is like...” Jesus came to inaugurate this Kingdom of God right here and right now. His Kingdom is not *of* this world Jesus famously said to Pilate during his sham of a trial. We’ve been conditioned to believe if it’s not *of* this world, then Jesus’ Kingdom must be in heaven, where we good Christians will all go someday... A better translation is that his Kingdom is not *from* this world. A Kingdom that’s not *from* this world means something else altogether. It means the Kingdom comes *from* Heaven *to* earth. It’s not so much about what happens after you die, as how you live each and every day right here and right now. Jesus had a lot to say about that.

For starters, Jesus wouldn’t buy into this myth of redeeming violence with more violence. He taught things like, “you have heard it said and eye for an eye,” but Jesus said we must turn the other cheek. He taught when someone asks for your coat, give them your shirt as well. Jesus even healed the ear of the centurion soldier after Peter had cut it off. That was one of the soldiers who was there to arrest him... He showed us what it looks like to love our enemies, not just our family and friends... The Kingdom Jesus began was nothing like anything His friends and neighbors in Nazareth ever imagined and it’s pretty foreign to us as well. The Kingdom we live in is one where when you don’t get your way you storm the capital and make violence to get what you want by force. I don’t care if

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you're a member of Black Lives Matter or the Republican Party, Jesus would never condone taking what you want through violence.

I believe we're coming into a time when we'll have to decide what Kingdom we're going to live in. Will it be a Kingdom where might makes right or one where the oppressed have a voice? Jesus offers a Kingdom where all the hungry are fed, and where hatred and violence are repaid with love and kindness. The choice is yours. Will you accept and learn from our King Jesus as he really is, or try to make him into the Warrior King or the Superman he is not?

May you find peace and joy living under the Kingdom of God with Jesus as our one and only King. May the Kingdom of God come ever closer on earth as in heaven through the way you live your life as a follower of King Jesus. Amen.

Silence for reflection may follow

*** APOSTLES' CREED**

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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.**

➤ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need...

A brief silence.

L: Sometimes we think we know you and your scriptures so well that there is nothing new to be learned. Keep us humble, open and receptive to the continual renewal of your Spirit among us. God of truth,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As we honor the memory of your servant Martin Luther King, Jr. and the prophetic life he lived, inspire us to continue his work for justice and champion his dream that all persons would be regarded as equals. God of truth,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: You created all that we can see and experience, O God, and those things which we can neither see nor understand. Make us seekers and discoverers in your amazing world, and guide us to use our own creative powers for good and noble causes. God of truth,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Be with those who feel estranged from familiar people and places in their lives. Reunite estranged people and mend broken relationships, and be especially with those whose names we bring before you for healing... God of truth,

C: Hear our prayer.

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January 17, 2021

Page 11 of 15

L: We commemorate St. Antony of Egypt and St. Pachomius, contemplatives and rejuvenators of your Church. Bring us faithfully with them to your promised eternal rest, where we will live with all your children, embraced by unending love. God of truth,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Receive our prayers and shed light on our path as we seek to walk in your ways and bring glory to you through your son Jesus, our Lord.

C: Amen.

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

While the congregation is still standing say:

P: Instead of passing the offering plate, we ask you to please place your offering in the Offering Plates conveniently located on your way out of worship. For those worshipping with us from their vehicles, there is a ceramic flower pot located near the back door of the church.

P: As Jesus offered his whole life to you, so move our hearts to dedicate all we have to your service. Bless these tokens of our gratitude for all that we have been given in this life, and of our desire that all may be fed, clothed, and freed from the things which bind them, by the power of your Holy Spirit,

C: Amen.

*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

(The Sharing of the Peace that began when the congregation arrived is now shared with the Pastor at this time...)

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

C: And also with you.

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Jesus is the "tie that Binds us together", 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.

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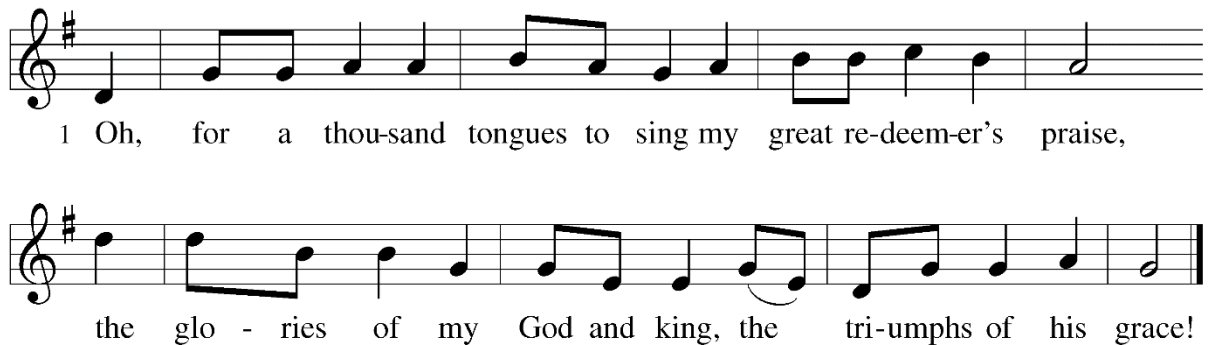
• **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

* **SENDING BLESSING**

P: God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the comforter ✚ keep you in peace.

C: Amen.

* **SENDING HYMN** “Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing” LBW 559



1 Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing my great re-deem-er's praise,
the glo - ries of my God and king, the tri-umphs of his grace!

* **DISMISSAL**

P: Depart in Christ's Love.

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

Postlude

“Happiness”

Roxanne Groff

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January 17, 2021

Page 13 of 15

Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	Caleena Hesler
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser

Health Tips for the Week

BODY: Try a new vegetable

MIND: Work on a crossword puzzle

SPIRIT: Try a 15-minute meditation at least 3 times this week



Scripture readings for next Sunday, January 24th
Luke 5:1-11

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.

This Week @ Trinity – January 17 thru January 24, 2021

- Sun, January 17 -** 10:30 am Worship Service
- Mon, January 18 –** **Happy Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday**
- Tues, January 19 -** ***FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE***
- Wed, January 20 -** 6:00 pm Finance Team Meeting
7:00 pm Trinity Council Meeting
- Thurs, January 21 -** 7:00 pm ~~Trinity Bible/Book Club~~
- Fri, January 22 -** 3:30 pm FISH Choice Food Pantry
- Sun, January 24 -** 10:30 am Worship Service

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE is Tuesday, January 19.

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