

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

Sermon Series on the Book of Genesis
Week 1
September 13, 2020



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- **Prelude** “Peace Like A River; When the Lord Saved Me;
It Took A Miracle; The Savior is Waiting;
Thank You, Lord” **Roxanne Groff**

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

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

* **HYMN OF PRAISE** “For the Beauty of the Earth” **LBW 561**



- 1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the beau - ty of the skies,
- 2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,
- 3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,
- 4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
- 5 For your - self, best gift di - vine to the world so free - ly giv'n;



for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:
hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:
for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:
friends on earth and friends a - bove; for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:
a - gent of God's grand de - sign, peace on earth and joy in heav'n:



Refrain
Christ, our Lord, to you we raise this our sac - ri - fice of praise.

* **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 all ages,

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

C: You have chosen us as your own, yet we so often live as if it were not so. We succumb to things which are not good for us. We believe we know better than you. We refuse to put our trust in your promises. Sweep away our foolishness and bring us back into a trusting relationship with the one who has lovingly created us and longs to be our strength and life.

P: Dear people, hear the joyful words that God has forgiven us! Our misdeeds and folly are forgotten; grace and mercy abound. Let us give thanks that we have a compassionate creator!

C: Amen.

*** 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: Merciful God, You created people not as subjects to rule, but as partners in tending and enjoying this bountiful earth. Help us release our shame and guilt over what we have done wrong, accepting instead your mercy and forgiveness offered through Jesus Christ our Lord,

C: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 2:4b-7, 15-17; 3:1-8

P: Our scripture reading for this morning is from Genesis, Chapter 2.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

⁴These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; ⁶but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— ⁷then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.

* Please stand if able

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¹⁵The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶And the Lord God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. ⁸They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

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

• **SERMON**

Pr Mel Musser

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the one through whom everything was created, Our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

We embark today on a journey through some of the most epic stories of the Old Testament. We begin our journey, where else, at the beginning, well almost... The story of creation in the first chapter of Genesis is probably one of the most familiar stories of the Bible. It's also one of the most misunderstood... We're not

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starting with that familiar creation story, but rather with the other creation story, the one many people either gloss over or don't even remember exists. In this version of creation, the Lord God artistically, beautifully, and divinely forms the man from the dust of the earth. In the verses we skipped over this morning, God created all living things from the dust of the ground after creating Man. As God was creating all the wonderful animals and birds, God enlisted the man to help in the creative process by naming all the creatures. After that was finished, God realized the man still did not have a suitable partner, so God created the woman. We continue with the story after the work of creating and naming all the animals had been completed. That's when the serpent entered the picture and deceived our first couple. They disobeyed God's one and only command, which was to leave that one tree in the middle of the garden alone.

Just on the face of it, this story appears to be a myth or fantasy. You don't have to be a Bible scholar to figure that out. I mean, when was the last time you encountered a talking snake? So, call it a fantasy, a myth, or a fable, it's obviously not to be taken literally. However, just because a story in the Bible isn't meant to be literal, that doesn't mean there isn't great truth in the story. Many myths and fables contain great wisdom. In fables, the animals and even the people in the story are character types that represent traits we can easily recognize in ourselves

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and other people. In this case, the serpent represents temptation personified and the man and the woman both together represent sin personified. It's easy to see why the writer of this story picked a serpent to represent temptation. Snakes are unusually thought to be cunning, but they are also slimy and treacherous to boot. So, in this scene of our story the tempter simply serves to externalize what is already going on in the hearts of humankind.

The fall of humankind into sin has plagued humans almost since the beginning. In our confession we admit before God and one another that we've done many things God has commanded us not to do, and we've also *not done* what we know God *has* commanded us to do. To make matters even worse, we're born with this sin built right into our DNA. We have the natural tendencies toward sin and there's nothing we can do about it. In this masterpiece of a story, sin is portrayed for what it truly is. Sin is, first and foremost, disobedience of God. It's doing what we know he wants us not to do, and it is not doing what we know he wants us to do. I believe disobedience to God's commands is actually the outward manifestation of a deeper trouble. When we do wrong or fail to do what's right, we're showing symptoms of a much deeper and more sinister disease.

Underneath it all we have at least 3, probably many more, ailments that come to the surface and show themselves as what we call sin. First off, we're

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people who are discontent. We're dissatisfied with what God has given us and we want more. Many times, what's behind the outward sin is that we're not satisfied with what we have. We're a greedy people and no matter how much we have we seem to always want more. Another underlying ailment that shows itself as sin is our self-deceit. We're looking for freedom from being restrained. We don't like restrictions that keep us tied down. We believe freedom means we can do what we want, when we want it. The problem is that's only an illusion of real freedom. Real freedom only comes from God, through Jesus Christ. Remember the verse, "If the Son set you free, you will be free indeed"? Our outward sin has a third underlying ailment. It's pride. It's thinking we can run our affairs better than God can. All these underlying ailments erupt into outright rebellion against God. We continuously try to usurp God's role and thereby chase God out of our lives. In the span of these few verses, our fable goes from the cute idea of a talking snake to the horror of our real human predicament. The truth is, on our own, not only should each and every one of us be banished from the Garden, none of us should be allowed within a thousand miles of it!

Most popular Bible scholars and commentators will tell you this story is about the origin of evil, death, sin or the fall of humankind from the grace of God. Again, I say, if you only look at this fable to see how sin entered the world, you're

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only looking at the surface problem and assuming that's all there is. I think this story goes much deeper. It's really about the call of God on each of our lives. It's about God's purpose for making creation in the first place. The categories this story is usually confined to are far too small. A story that provides information about the origin of sin, evil, death, or even the power of the fall is nice, but not very helpful or even relevant to our lives today. I mean, a talking snake who deceives Adam and Eve into disobedience might be a good story, but how does that relate to our present day reality? This story is, rather, about the calling God for you to be God's creature and to live in his world on God's terms. This story is much more concerned with the reality of God and that makes it so much more than a hopeless description of the human condition. The story of the creation and fall of humankind requires us to ask about the reality of God and God's resolve for life in a world on its way to death.

So, how do we find hope and grace and mercy in this story? Is there any gospel, Good News for us to get excited about? I think there is! First of all, the punishment for disobeying God was supposed to be death. Everyone knows the wages of sin is death... Even so, as far as I can tell, and I've read this story over several times looking, but no matter how many times I read and re-read it nobody dies in this story. Sure, their eyes are opened, and they discover they really need to

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put on some clothes, but nobody is dead at the end of this story. That's because of only one thing, God's mercy. Even at this point in the history of humankind God had a bigger plan. The truth is, if you read just a little bit further, you'll find out that God actually sews clothing from animal skins for both the man and his wife. Does that sound like the actions of an angry God bent on punishment? No, right from the beginning God has mercy and wants to woo humans into relationship. The Lord God is a God of forgiveness and mercy and that's what we're meant to get from this story. That's something that is relevant to you and your life today.

The Bible is chalk full of examples of how our greed, pride, and self-deceit continue to rear their ugly heads and God's forgiveness and mercy redeeming our ancestors in the faith. As awful as our record is when it comes to obeying God's commands, God's record is even better when it comes to showing God's love and mercy. For a long time, God simply put aside our sinful behavior, but the plan all along was for a final cure. Unlike our current search for a vaccine and therapeutic treatment for the corona virus, God had his secret weapon all along. I can't speak to the timing of God's gift of Jesus Christ to the world, what I can say is, God had Jesus in mind from the get-go. The Lord God has always been three in one, the Trinity. God knew Jesus would be the one to finally overcome our rebellion. Jesus lived that perfect sinless life we are not capable of living. Because Jesus was

that perfect unblemished human, only Jesus could be the perfect scapegoat and take our sins upon himself. Even though Jesus isn't mentioned by name in this story of the creation and fall, God's will for all creation to be forever just, forever pure, and forever Holy is revealed by God's mercy for our sin, which is personified in this first couple we call Adam and Eve.

As you re-read some of the greatest stories ever written over the upcoming weeks, may you find God's call on your life to live as a Child of the Lord God, a creature God formed from the dust of the earth and breathed God's own breath of life into. May the sin of Adam and Eve be wiped away from you along with all your greed, pride, and self-deceit, through the precious blood of our savior, Jesus Christ. May the promise of God's forgiveness and mercy give you hope and peace, knowing you are already surrounded by God's love and included in God's Kingdom now and forever. 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: The things which are forbidden are often the most tempting, and we seem to love pursuing them. Take away our greed, pride, and self-deceit, that we might choose instead a path of joy and freedom, and live in the grace which you have offered. God of compassion,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Bless all grandparents—those who care for and love their children's children, those who serve as mentors, and those who long for children and grandchildren but do not have any. Strengthen ties between generations that each might be blessed and enriched by the other. God of compassion,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Loving creator, you have given us this great garden of earth to till and keep. May we resist the temptation to exploit and misuse it out of greed, choosing instead to cultivate its beauty and share its fruits equitably and justly. God of compassion,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: So many people are burdened with shame over events long past. Help us all to release what no longer serves us and be open to your renewing love. Bring an end to violence in the streets of our cities and speed a cure for the Covid-19 virus. Send your healing to all who need it, especially... God of compassion,

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C: Hear our prayer.

L: We remember our Bishops present and past, along with all courageous preachers of your gospel. Make each one of us a bold proclaimer of your grace and mercy. God of compassion,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Receive these prayers and all those which we offer in the silence of our hearts, for the sake of our savior and your Son, Jesus Christ,

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.

• OFFERING

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

P: You have freely given everything to us, O Lord. Teach us to be good stewards of all your gifts, and accept these offerings we now present as tokens of our gratitude and reflections of your generosity to all people, for the sake of Christ,

C: Amen.

*** 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.

• ANNOUNCEMENTS

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* **SENDING BLESSING**

P: Mothering God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.

C: Amen.

* **SENDING HYMN “Earth and All Stars” – Verses 1,2,5, & 6**



1 Earth and all stars! Loud rush - ing plan - ets!
 2 Hail, wind, and rain! Loud blow - ing snow - storm!
 3 Trum - pet and pipes! Loud clash - ing cym - bals!
 4 En - gines and steel! Loud pound - ing ham - mers!



Sing to the Lord a new song!



Oh, vic - to - ry! Loud shout - ing ar - my!
 Flow - ers and trees! Loud rus - tling dry leaves!
 Harp, lute, and lyre! Loud hum - ming cel - los!
 Lime-stone and beams! Loud build - ing work - ers!



Sing to the Lord a new song!



Refrain
 He has done mar - vel - ous things.



I too will praise him with a new song!

5 Classrooms and labs!
 Loud boiling test tubes!
 Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Athlete and band!
 Loud cheering people!
 Sing to the Lord a new song! *Refrain*

6 Knowledge and truth!
 Loud sounding wisdom!
 Sing to the Lord a new song!
 Daughter and son!
 Loud praying members!
 Sing to the Lord a new song! *Refrain*

* Please stand if able

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*** DISMISSAL**

P: Depart in Christ's Love.

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

Postlude

“The Family of God”

Roxanne Groff

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Lector	N/A
Acolyte	N/A
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Greeters	Dean Thompson
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
FaceBook Live Recorder	PJ Musser

Health Tips for the Week

BODY: Put a first aid box together

MIND: Take a first aid class

SPIRIT: Pray for first responders



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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 – September 13 thru September 20, 2020

Sun, September 13

10:30 am Worship Service
7:30 pm Confirmation Class on ZOOM

Wed, September 16

9:30 am GRCC Soup Kitchen
6:00 pm Finance Team Meeting
7:00 pm Trinity Council Meeting

Fri, September 18

3:30 pm FISH Pantry @ 400 Markwith, Greenville OH

Sun, September 20

10:30 am Worship Service



Scripture readings for next Sunday, September 20th
Genesis 15:1-6

NEEDED FOR LWR PERSONAL CARE KITS:

Bath size bars of soap (8-9 oz.) in original wrapping and dark color bath towels between 20" X 40" and 27" X 52".

LWR KIT ASSEMBLY DATE will be Monday, September 28 between 9 am and 12 noon.

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DEADLINE FOR ITEMS FOR THE OCTOBER TRINITY TRUMPET is Tuesday, September 22.

COMMUNITY PRAYER WALK – A Community Prayer Gathering and Walk will take place September 26 from noon to 2:00 pm in Arcanum. The event will begin at Veterans Park on George Street. People of all faiths are invited to come together to pray for our families, our schools and our nation. Small groups will form to walk separately in different areas of the Village. Those choosing not to walk may stay to pray and listen to Christian music in Veterans Park. Those using licensed golf carts, motorized scooters and 3-wheel bikes are encouraged to join in this community prayer. Contact Marge Warner if you would like to participate.

“THE RETURN”, a National and Global Day of Prayer, will be held Saturday, September 26 starting at noon in downtown Greenville. The event was organized in Washington DC but is for national repentance and revival and will include worship, prayer, gospel music and special singing. For more information on this national event, go to <https://thereturn.org>.

We’re making School Kits for Lutheran World Relief!

If you don’t feel like doing the shopping, Linda Baker says she loves to shop (and Tony affirms how much she loves it 😊). Linda has offered and will be happy to accept any donations. She will purchase what is most needed to make the maximum number of school kits with what donations she receives. If you’re like Linda and love to shop, here’s the list that goes into a kit:

- 1 - Sturdy drawstring backpack style cloth bag— approximately 14” X 17”, w/shoulder straps (handmade)
- 1 - Ruler—30 cm on one side (May have inches on the other side.)
- 1 - Box of Crayons (16 or 24)
- 5 - Unsharpened Pencils w/Eraser
- 1 - Pencil Sharpener
- 1 - 2 1/2” Eraser
- 1 - Pair Blunt Scissors
- 5 - Blue or Black Ball point Pens (No GEL pens)
- 4 - 70 Sheet College or Wide ruled Notebooks



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