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



Council at Jerusalem May 2, 2021

"All Because of God's Amazing Grace; All My Praise; This Moment"

Roxanne Groff

- Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell
- Welcome and Children's Message

Prelude

Pr Mel

Items Needed: Ask Council Members to Stand Up

Scripture: Acts 15:8 And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us;

Do you know who makes the decisions about how to operate this Church? Well the secretary has the most power... But after the secretary? Some of you might think the Pastor makes all the decisions... Well I may have some influence, but in this Church the Pastor doesn't even get to vote on the issues. We have elected people from the congregation who get together almost every month to debate and discuss all the issues facing our congregation. If you are a member of our Church Council, please stand up so our young people can see who you are... These people give of their time and talents to make this Church run as smoothly as possible. During our monthly Council meetings, they can make what we call motions that state a problem or issue and call for a solution for how to fix that problem. Sometimes in the course of the debate or discussion different ideas come up and maybe even a better idea is found. After everyone has their chance to talk and give their opinion the president of our Council calls for a vote.

Most of the time this process works out very well. Do you know why? We are all held together by bonds that are much stronger than friendship or even stronger than our family ties. We are bound together by our faith and trust in Jesus and because of that trust we are able to follow his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guides us and leads us even when we're in meetings and debating things we don't all agree on. Since we are all followers of Jesus, we try to see what Jesus would want us to do and we all try to do just that.

Some day when you are old enough, I think the age is 18 years old, you can even be on Church Council and help us make the decisions that keep our Church on the right track. Then you can help us decide on important operational things like when to fix the parking lot and other big issues like how to best manage the great gifts of volunteers and money made available to our Church to use to help the poor and disadvantaged people of our Community. I hope you will ask your Parents or

* Please stand if able March 7, 2021

• Please be seated Page 2 of 18

Grandparents to bring you to a Council meeting sometime so you can see how God works through people go get the jobs in the Church done.

Lets Pray... Dear God, we thank you for all the people who serve on our Church Council and for all those who have served in the past. We ask you to give them a special blessing for their willingness to put aside their own opinions and desires to follow where your Holy Spirit leads. Amen.

You may now go with Mrs. Warner to Children's Sunday School... Thank you for coming. I hope to see you all next week!

* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

P: Our Worship Service continues as we confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Risen Lord,

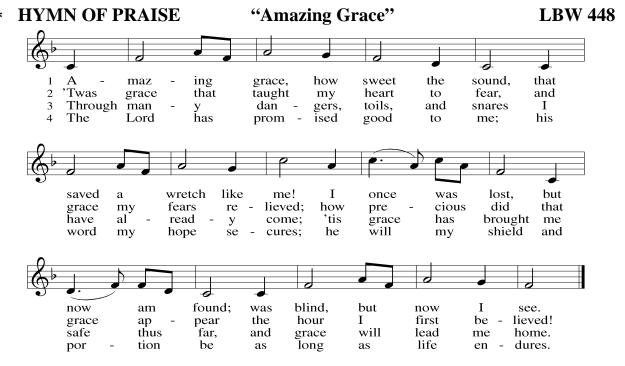
C: We admit that we are slow to believe, and even slower to follow where you lead us. We doubt your promise, divide your people, and fail to proclaim the power of your resurrection. We choose to live small lives when you have given us the biggest gift of all: your eternal life. Forgive us. Raise us up to a place where we can serve you faithfully.

P: Christ is arisen, bringing gifts of life, mercy and pardon for sin! Believe that you are forgiven, and go out and live in the joy of your Lord's resurrection in the power of God's Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

* Please stand if able March 7, 2021

• Please be seated Page 3 of 18



* 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 mercy.

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

C: Lord have mercy.

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 mercy.

A: For this Holy House, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord have mercy.

A: Help, save, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: Amen.

* Please stand if able March 7, 2021

• Please be seated

* PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Loving God, You showed your followers that their salvation didn't depend upon culture or traditions, but on the grace freely offered by your Spirit. Show us the same open vision of mercy offered to all, regardless of background or practice, for the sake of the whole world.

C: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Acts 15:1-18

P: Our scripture reading for this morning is from Acts, Chapter 15. C: Glory to you O Lord.

1 5 Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." ²And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders. ³So they were sent on their way by the church, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they reported the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the believers. ⁴When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. ⁵But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, "It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses." ⁶The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. ⁷After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. ⁸And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; ⁹ and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. ¹⁰Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? ¹¹On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." ¹²The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles. ¹³After they finished speaking, James replied, "My brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. ¹⁵This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written,

* Please stand if able March 7, 2021

• Please be seated Page 5 of 18

¹⁶ After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up, ¹⁷so that all other peoples may seek the Lord—even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called. Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things ¹⁸known from long ago."

- 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 Lord of all people, Jesus who is called the Christ, amen.

Most of our Church Council meetings are pretty bland and some are even flat out boring. I mean we can discuss the fine points of wearing facemasks for hours! We've been discussing changes to our Church Constitution for almost 3 years now... Nothing in the modern Church happens very quickly. In fact one of the tricks I've picked up over the years is when there's a controversial issue, I usually suggest we form a committee and study the problem for a while and then ask the committee to provide an update and a recommendation. That forces a review and when or if the issue comes up again it will come with a single recommendation. Often times I've discovered this leads to the issue being killed by committee or at least put off until everyone's had time to consider the issue...

That's not what the Apostles and elders of the early Church did with respect to the mission to the Gentiles. They addressed the issue with much debate and

* Please stand if able March 7, 2021

• Please be seated Page 6 of 18

discussion and in the end made some historic decisions. For those of you who have been recording secretaries for our Church Council, did you ever think while you were documenting the monthly Church meetings that your words might be recorded for all of future history to read? For those who have been council members, did you ever think the decisions you make and the votes you cast might change and define the Church forever? My guess is the disciples, Apostles and elders of the Church in Jerusalem never imagined their decisions would forever define the trajectory Church would take for the next 2000 years and counting....

A few weeks ago, we read about how the new Church solved the unequal distribution of food to the widows and poor. Now the issue is how do we include all these new folks into our community. The mission outreach of the Church had been one fine tuned machine when all they were doing was reaching out to the Jews in Jerusalem and the Jews in other cities and regions. All these converts shared the same background religion and faith including their faith practices and the Laws of Moses. Since they were all Jews already they were already circumcised and they already knew and mostly practiced the Mosaic laws regarding food and ritual cleanliness. This is not so with all the new Gentile converts. They knew nothing about the Jewish ways or practices. Last week we heard about the first Gentile conversion with the story of the Ethiopian Eunuch.

^{*} Please stand if able

March 7, 2021

His conversion didn't cause much if any stir because he was on his way back to Ethiopia. If you know your Book of Acts you might remember that back in Chapter 10 Peter had a dream where all kinds of animals were lowered from heaven on a sheet and Peter was instructed not once or twice, but three times by God to eat. From that dream Peter knew God wanted him and God's new Church to accept the Gentiles because God did not create anything unclean. Sin may spoil God's creation, but the creation wasn't created defiled... So, after his dream, Peter baptized Cornelius and his entire household. This opened up the mission to the Gentiles for Peter and the other Apostles. I'm not sure they ever thought the Gentiles would respond in such a huge way to the Gospel. They were unprepared for the onslaught of new converts and this created a crisis for the Church.

When the Pandemic first hit over a year ago our Council met in emergency session. Several of us had studied the WHO and CDC recommendations and had put together a list of precautions and restrictions that we must do in order to have Worship Services. We couldn't push this issue off to some committee for further sturdy. We needed to take action and we did. As a result, we began with outdoor worship and then added speakers and a radio transmitter for folks to listen from their vehicles. Only after careful consideration and many discussions and debates

^{*} Please stand if able

did we decide it was safe enough to return to indoor services. That was the kind of crisis the early Church faced with all these new Gentile converts.

Some 2000 years later we look at their issues and snicker or smile. I mean who worries about whether someone is circumcised or not today... Maybe parents of a newborn have to make a decision, but they don't make that decision thinking about their son's future religious identity. Yet, that was what was at stake, the very identity of the Church. Circumcision was the sign given by God so that the Chosen People would have their own unique identity. They would be separated out from the rest of humanity and blessed by God in order to be a blessing to the rest of the world. By the way, circumcision wasn't the only Law of Moses we're talking about here. There were over 613 laws recorded in the book of Leviticus alone. Jesus had personally thrown out the laws regarding eating of ritually unclean foods. He told the Pharisees it wasn't what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of your mouth because that comes from your heart.

Speaking of Pharisees, who let them in the Church? These were the same ones who opposed Jesus right from the start and now apparently some of them have converted to Christianity... The problem is they didn't leave their old ideas behind. They're still advocating that all Christians must first become fully Jewish,

^{*} Please stand if able

March 7, 2021

observing every law and ordinance in order to become disciples of Jesus Christ. Yes, that included circumcision, but also all the cleanliness laws regarding lepers and women and eating certain shellfish and many, many others. The laws and rules were so onerous they couldn't possibly be all kept perfectly.

One thing I love about the Book of the Acts of the Apostles is the vindication of Peter. I mean, in the Gospels, Peter is sort of a bumbling fool. He opens his mouth and blurts out the first thing that comes to his mind. It's usually wrong and he frequently gets reprimanded by Jesus. Peter denied Jesus on the night of his betrayal three separate times and even unsuccessfully tries to walk on water. In the Book of Acts Peter preaches and thousands are converted. He performs healing miracles and seems to be in the right place at just the right time. He's still learning, but by the time of Acts, Peter has indeed become what Jesus dubbed him, the Rock of the Church. Normally we associate salvation by Grace with the preaching of Paul, but today we see Peter finally gets it. I'm pretty sure that if Peter hadn't said his peace about salvation coming through God's Grace and not through keeping of the Law, we would have a very different Church than we have today. I mean, for one thing, bacon would be out of the question even for breakfast. Have any of you ever been to Israel? Breakfast is not the same when the eggs come with a side of chicken or fish...

March 7, 2021

^{*} Please stand if able

Here's what the early Church decided, and I believe they got it right... The Law, including circumcision, gave the Jewish people their identity, but their salvation was still by the grace of God. For us, and for all the Gentile converts to Christianity from the early Church to today, we are also saved by the Grace of God. The difference is that our identity comes from a different sign. Our identity doesn't come from whether we're circumcised or not, it comes from our Baptism. Jesus commanded a different sign for his Church to follow. Let me be clear on this point, a Baptized person is a person who has received God's gift of salvation. Does Baptism save, no. It is God who saves, and Baptism is a visible sigh of that invisible reality. Baptism removes any and all doubt regarding your ultimate salvation. You are Baptized therefore you are saved. That is our identity as disciples of Jesus Christ. He commanded his Church in Matthew Chapter 28 to Go into all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

May your Baptism give you the peace of mind to know you are a loved and cherished child of God. May the Church always have leaders who boldly follow God's Holy Spirit in leading the Church into the mission Jesus gave to her.

Thanks be to God that when we faced the crisis of Corona God raised us leaders right here in our tiny country Church that led with confidence because they heard

* Please stand if able

March 7, 2021

and followed our Lord and our Savior, Jesus Christ. May we continue to seek His voice and follow where He leads. Amen.

Silence for reflection may follow

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Ears to Hear"

Carlee & Carter Kemp

* NICENE CREED

The Nicene Creed is said on all festivals and on Sundays in the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. The Apostles' Creed is said at other times. The Creed is omitted here if the service of Holy Baptism or another rite with a creed is used.

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: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need... *A brief silence*.

L: You helped change the minds of the early disciples, guiding them towards grace and away from legalism. Likewise keep us focused on your wide mercy and

* Please stand if able March 7, 2021

• Please be seated Page 12 of 18

inclusion of all, instead of the trivial things that would serve to keep us divided. God of all,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As our Orthodox brothers and sisters celebrate the festival of Easter, revive our own joy at the news of your resurrection and fill us with the gladness of your promises. God of all,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: You have made every one of us unique, and we each have something to bring to the body of Christ. Help us recognize and value our particular contributions and the things which make us different and important. God of all,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Unlock fixed minds and entrenched beliefs which focus on separation and keeping those with whom we differ at a distance. Show us the healing that needs to take place so that we can embrace those who are different from us. Help us spread that healing to our neighbors and to the entire country. Send your Spirit's presence to those in need, especially... ... God of all,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We honor Peter, Paul, and James and all the Church Fathers who stood firm in their beliefs so that your gospel could be proclaimed. Give us the conviction of our forebears in faith. God of all,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

P: Incline your ear to our prayers and fill us with power to begin living out our faith, by the power of your Son our savior, Jesus Christ.

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 an offering basket located near the back door of the church and for those worshipping with us online, please visit our website at www.pitsburgtlc,org to make your offering..
- P: Let us pray for the offering we receive this day... When we give of ourselves, you prosper our hearts. Receive and bless these gifts and use them and us for the ongoing work of your merciful kingdom, for the sake of Jesus our Lord.

C: Amen.

* Please stand if able March 7, 2021

• Please be seated Page 13 of 18

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

- * DIALOGUE
- P: The Lord be with you.
- C: And also with you.
- P: Lift up your hearts.
- C: We lift them to the Lord.
- P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

* THE 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 ever living God. But chiefly we are bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of our Lord; for he is the true Passover Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin, who by his death has destroyed death, and by his rising has brought us to eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

* THE SANCTUS

C: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might: Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

* EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P: Holy, living, and loving God, we praise you for creating the heavens and the earth. We bless you for bringing Noah and his family through the waters of the flood, for freeing your people Israel from the bonds of slavery, and for sending your Son to be our Redeemer. We give you thanks for Jesus who, living among us, healed the sick, fed the hungry, and with a love stronger than death, gave his life for others.

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-giving death and glorious resurrection, we await your promised life for all this dying world. Breathe your Spirit on us and on this bread and cup: carry us in your arms from death to life, that we may live

* Please stand if able March 7, 2021

• Please be seated Page 14 of 18

as your chosen ones, clothed in the righteousness of Christ. 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: We are united into one Body of Christ by this heavenly food, 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: You gather all to your table, even when we keep some out. You welcome all to your supper even when we limit the guest list. Your grace and mercy are enough for all; now let us come at our savior's invitation.

• COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

During the distribution the minister says these words to each communicant:

P: At this time you may open the communion bread and partake of the body of Christ, given for you.

Now please open the wine and you may now partake of the Blood of Christ, shed for you.

The communicant may say: Amen.

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

- P: May this Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, strengthen, keep, and unite us.
- C: Amen.

* POST COMMUNION PRAYER

P: Let us pray... Gracious and abundant God, you have done great things for us, and we rejoice. In this bread and cup you give us life forever. In your boundless mercy, strengthen us and open our hearts to the world's needs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen

* Please stand if able March 7, 2021

• Please be seated Page 15 of 18

ANNOUNCEMENTS

* SENDING BLESSING

P: May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus. The God of life, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

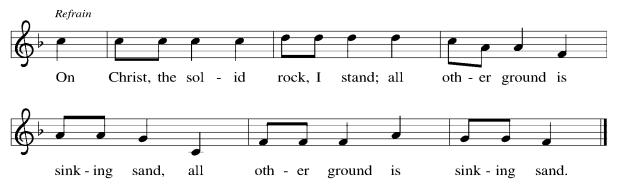
C: Amen.



- 1 My hope is built on noth-ing less than Je-sus' blood and righ-teous-ness;
- 2 Whendark-ness veils his love-ly face, I rest on his un chang-ing grace;
- 3 His oath, his cov e nant, his blood sus tain me in the rag ing flood;
- 4 When he shall come with trum-pet sound, oh, may I then in him be found



no mer-it of my own I claim, but whol - ly lean on Je - sus' name. in ev-'ry high and storm - y gale my an - chor holds with-in the veil. when all sup-ports are washed a-way, he then is all my hope and stay. clothed in his righ-teous-ness a-lone, re - deemed to stand be - fore the throne!



* DISMISSAL

P: Thank you for worshipping with us either in person or through the internet. Until we gather to Worship our great God next week, depart in Christ's Love,

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

Postlude "I Keep Falling in Love with Him" Roxanne Groff

Copyright © 2021 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 March 7, 2021

• Please be seated Page 16 of 18

Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

| Ministers | All the People of Trinity |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Organist | Roxanne Groff |
| Greeter | |
| Lector | Teresa Neitzelt |
| Acolyte | |
| Parrish Nurse | PJ Musser |
| Custodian | Mark Groff |
| Secretary | Sharon Fourman |
| Facebook Live Recorder | PJ Musser |

Health Tips for the Week

BODY: Update your Health Records

MIND: Look in the mirror and remind yourself- You are worthy

SPIRIT: Volunteer



Scripture readings for next Sunday, May 9th Galatians 1:13-17; 2:11-21

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.

Please stand if able March 7, 2021

• Please be seated Page 17 of 18

This Week @ Trinity -May 2 through May 9, 2021

Sun, May 2

10:30 am Worship Service

Wed, May 5

6:30 pm WELCA Meeting

Fri, May 7

3:30 pm FISH Choice Food Pantry

Sun, May 9

10:30 am Worship Service



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 March 7, 2021