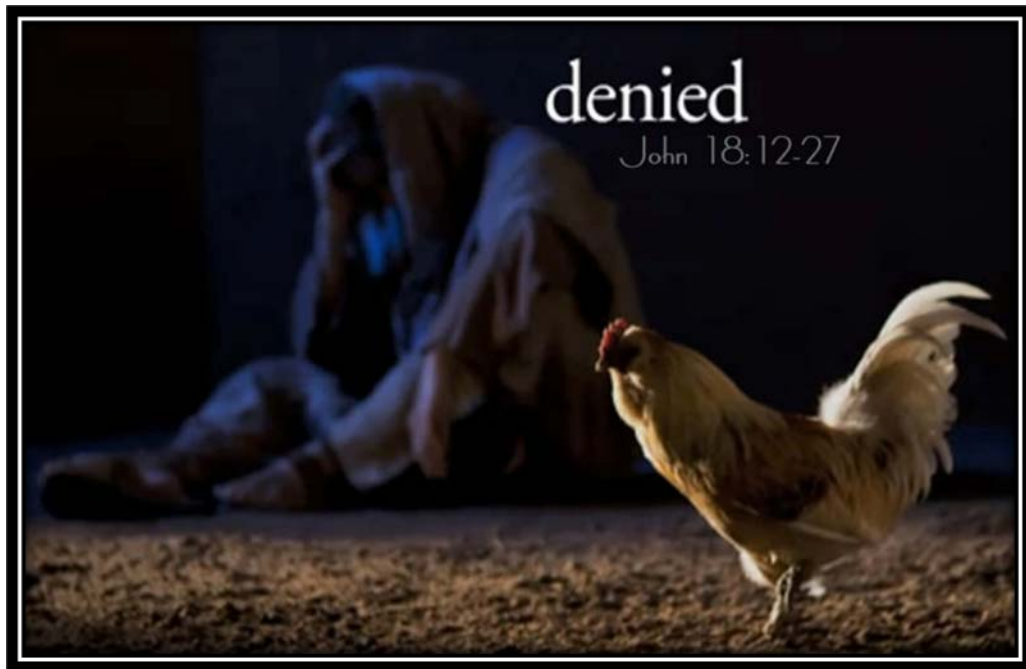


A Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358



John 18:12-27
March 20, 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**

Pastor Mel Musser

*** 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: Merciful God,

C: These 40 days we reflect on how our sin bleeds into the world, leaving a mark that we cannot remove. Forgive all we have done and failed to do, and cleanse us from the stain of sin.

L: Our God is gracious and forgiving. God does not desire that we wallow in the brokenness, but instead cleanses us and makes us new. Receive the entire forgiveness of all your sin, and walk in newness of life. For the sake of Jesus Christ we pray.

C: Amen.

* **HYMN OF PRAISE** **“Go to Dark Gethsemane”**

LBW 109



1 Go to dark Geth-sem - a - ne, all who feel the tempt - er's pow'r;
 2 Fol - low to the judg-ment hall, view the Lord of life ar - raigned;
 3 Cal - v'ry's mourn-ful moun-tain climb; there, a - dor - ing at his feet,
 4 Ear - ly has - ten to the tomb where they laid his breath - less clay;



your Re-deem - er's con - flict see. Watch with him one bit - ter hour;
 oh, the worm-wood and the gall! Oh, the pangs his soul sus-tained!
 mark that mir - a - cle of time, God's own sac - ri - fice com-plete.
 all is sol - i - tude and gloom. Who has tak - en him a - way?



turn not from his griefs a - way; learn from Je - sus Christ to pray.
 Shun not suf - f'ring, shame, or loss; learn from him to bear the cross.
 “It is fin - ished!” hear him cry; learn from Je - sus Christ to die.
 Christ is ris'n! He meets our eyes. Sav - ior, teach us so to rise.

* **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 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.

*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray... Faithful Lord, Peter denied knowing you when you needed the love and support of your disciples the most. Help us to show up when we are needed.

C: Amen.

• CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Theme: Peter Denied Jesus, but God still loves him

Materials: Video

Scripture: John 18:12-27

Hi boys and girls. This morning I have a short video for us that tells part of the story of one of Jesus' closest disciples, a man named Peter. Let's watch...

That was a cool story wasn't it? I'm sure glad that Jesus forgives us and loves us even though He knows we're going to mess up and sin. That doesn't mean we shouldn't try to be better followers of Jesus, it just means that when we make mistakes, it's not the end of the world. Jesus will always forgive us when we're sorry for what we've done.

Let's pray and thank Jesus for his love... Dear Jesus we know we're going to make mistakes and sin. Thank you for loving us any way and for being such an awesome God. We are sorry for the things we've done that hurt you. We want to do better. Please help us when we fall. Amen.

• **SCRIPTURE READING: John 18:12-27**

P: Our scripture reading for this day is from the Gospel according to John, the 18th chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

¹²So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him.

¹³First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. ¹⁴Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people. ¹⁵Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷The woman said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.” ¹⁸Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself. ¹⁹Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰Jesus answered, “I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.” ²²When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?” ²³Jesus answered, “If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?” ²⁴Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. ²⁵Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, “You are not also one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” ²⁶One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” ²⁷Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

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

- **SERMON**

Pastor Mel Musser

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Son of the Living God, Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

I don't hold much stock in the judicial system. In my lifetime I've seen too many cases where the guilty go free and innocent people have been wrongly accused and sentenced to serve out long prison terms and even sent to death row only to later, sometimes decades later, be exonerated by DNA evidence or other witnesses who come forward and in some cases actually confess to the crime. I remember the case of the Central Park Five from around 1989. Five poor black teens and young adults were falsely accused of raping a white upper-class woman as she jogged through Central Park in New York City. All five of these men spent more than 30 years in prison until they were found innocent because of DNA evidence. Then there was the famous case of the Duke Men's Lacrosse team. In about 2006 several of the members of men's Lacrosse team were similarly accused of rape. Like the Central Park 5, the Duke students were all teens or young men. The media coverage of the case was massive, and the public early on turned against the Duke athletes. The Duke students were all from well connected families and hired the best legal minds money could buy. Because of the lack of

evidence that a crime had even been committed, the charges were eventually dropped against all of the Duke students, but not before they lost their reputations.

It's clear to me that the judicial system in every era of history has had trouble ensuring innocent people aren't unjustly punished. Let's examine the case against Jesus of Nazareth... For three years Jesus had been teaching and preaching in the synagogues and even in the Temple in Jerusalem. While no video evidence exists to prove exactly what Jesus taught and preached, the Jewish Law stated that in a trial the accused had the right to not be directly questioned. We still have a similar provision today. You cannot be forced to testify against yourself. Yet in this sham of a trial Annas directly questions Jesus who smartly replies that everything he has taught and preached was out in the open. He then asks where are your witnesses against me... That's how a trial is supposed to go. The prosecution presents the facts, including witnesses who testify they heard Jesus saying this or that in order to prove he had spoken inappropriately about God or His relationship with God. John tells us of no such witnesses. Only that the bound Jesus was grilled and when he had the audacity to question the process, the Temple Police struck Him.

There are a couple of notable things in this first part of the trial of Jesus that jump out. First, let us remember that the body of the Son of God was bound in order that we might be set free from the bonds of sin and Satan. Second, do not

think that because Jesus was arrested and bound that he had lost control of the situation. Right before our text for today, when the soldiers, the police, and Judas approached Jesus in the Garden, Jesus asked who they were looking for. When they answered they were looking for Jesus his reply was the great I AM. At this all the soldiers and the police fell backwards to the ground. This happened not once but twice to emphasize the power in simply uttering the Name of God. Once this display of power had been accomplished Jesus allowed himself to be arrested and bound. Never forget that in John's Gospel, Jesus is always in control. Even at the moment of his death, in John's Gospel Jesus doesn't just die or breath his last. No, John says Jesus "gave up his spirit." Jesus decides when His time has come and never relinquishes that power. His crucifixion is the moment of his glorification, not his demise. For Jesus, kingship, obedience, and suffering are inseparable in the establishment of the salvation of God for you.

In my pondering and meditation, I've concluded that Annas and then later Caiaphas, had no interest in making this a legally sufficient trial. They had no intention of trying Jesus under their Jewish system. On the contrary, their entire intent was to turn Jesus over to Pilate and to make this a political trial overseen by the Romans in order to keep their own hands clean and to ensure Jesus received the worst capital punishment the Romans could deal out. So, they ignored their own

Jewish laws and regulations requiring witnesses to prove their case, that the accused would not be directly questioned, that there would be at least two days from arrest to trial, that no trial would occur at night, and finally that the accused would not be harmed or injured. All of these laws were violated, making this trial nothing more than a sham or a show for the people. The intent all along was to move Jesus from the Jewish court into the Roman “civil” or secular justice system. The charge would ultimately become treason as Jesus would be accused of making himself the King of the Jews...

Now let's move on and pivot to our dear hapless Peter... Remember that Peter had just moments before proudly proclaimed that even if all the others fall away, he alone would stand by Jesus during his time of trial and tribulation. To be fair, Peter did try to defend Jesus at his arrest by cutting off the ear of the slave of the High Priest. But now, when the chips are down, what does he do? Peter denies Jesus not once or twice, but three times, exactly as Jesus had predicted he would. I've said many times that John's Gospel is significantly different from the other three, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. There are only a handful of stories recorded by all four Evangelists. One is the feeding of the multitudes, and the other is this story of Peter's threefold denial. It must have been a genuine historical occurrence for all of them to recall the same event and secondly, it must have been an

important story for the early church and subsequently for all of us. Peter often in the Gospels is the foil or the representative who speaks for all the disciples. In this story of his denial of Jesus Peter represents all of us. At some time or other we've all denied knowing Jesus. Before you get all offended hear me out.



Have you ever seen the Heisman Trophy? Here's a picture... (SLIDE) Notice the football player's pose. He's holding his arm out in order to stiff arm the defensive player and keep him away from the football, but also so that he can advance the ball toward his own goal, maybe only another yard or two, sometimes much more. My point here is that at times I've been guilty of holding Jesus back so that I might advance my own agenda, my own will and desire. I've stiff armed Jesus even in noble things like trying to grow the Church or adding some new program that I just know will bring more people to know Jesus. Any time I put my plan ahead of Jesus' plan, I'm doing the exact same thing Peter did as he warmed his hands by the fire all those years ago. I don't believe I'm the only one guilty of giving God the stiff arm when called to some task we don't particularly want to do.

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- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

In John's Gospel account we get just the facts, like the old Dragnet TV detective show. In Luke we find out that Peter went out and wept bitterly after that third denial and then hearing the rooster crow. Although not expressly stated in John, I can imagine the shame and embarrassment Peter must have felt when he realized what he had done.



Have you ever wondered why Jesus chose the Rooster as the sign that would alert Peter to his sin? (SLIDE) He could have easily said, “before sunrise you will deny me three times,” but he used the image of the rooster. A rooster is one who is so sure of himself that he makes a grand show. His plumage is brilliantly colored and he struts around the hen house like he owns the place. Roosters are proud birds, and they announce their glorious presence with a loud Cock-a-doodle-doo! We don't like to think about it, but roosters are a sign of our own sin of pride and reliance on our own selves for our security. We often hold Jesus at a distance, so he doesn't interfere with our own priorities or our own agendas. Every time I see a Rooster in Christian art I think about those times when I denied what I knew to be God's will in favor of doing my own thing... At times I, like Peter have gone out and wept bitterly...

The Good News is that our denials, our sin doesn't define us. We are defined by God's love and God's forgiveness. John is also the only Gospel that

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- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

includes the line from the angel who greeted Mary at the empty tomb, Go and tell the disciples *and Peter*, that He is risen and has gone to Galilee just as he said he would... None of the other Gospels add those words, “*and Peter*” to the resurrection experience. John wants us to know that all of our denials, all of our sin, doesn’t permanently separate us from Jesus or from God’s love. We are still loved and can never be separated from God’s love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Now that’s what I call good news for those of us who know we’ve sinned!

May God’s love always override your guilt. May God’s forgiveness always follow our stiff-arms until we finally drop the Heisman illusion that we can hold off sin, death and the devil and finally learn to rely on our Savior Jesus alone. Thanks be to God for roosters, but even more thanks for our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen!

Silence may be kept for meditation...

*** 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: Your servant, Peter, is not alone in falling short of the mark, dear Lord. Forgive us when we deny our true identity as your children in order to please, placate or avoid giving offense to others. Faithful God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: In a world that still persecutes those who are different or dare to stand for a radical reordering of society, make us bold to confess the biggest rebel of all—our unwavering Savior and brother, Jesus Christ. Faithful God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We would love to believe that, were we put to the test, we would be found loyal to our faith and to our God. Give us strength when we are pushed to try to escape from trials and avoid having to be courageous. Faithful God,

* Please stand if able

March 20, 2022

• Please be seated

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C: Hear our prayer.

L: Ever-loving Creator, you put no condition on your blessings, and offer healing at our most vulnerable, least attractive moments. Surround us with mercy and visit the sick and troubled with your renewing spirit, especially... Faithful God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Blessed are those who were severely tested and prevailed, choosing your approval rather than that of the world. Make us worthy to stand at last in their company and share your blessed eternity with our brother and sister saints. Faithful God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

P: We call upon you, and you answer us, O Lord. Into your hands we place these, our prayers, and entrust all whom we love, including ourselves and our lives, to your eternal mercy, In Jesus' name we pray.

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 online if you go to www.pitsburgtlc.org you can make your offering online.

P: So, let's pray for the offerings we receive this day.... Lord, sometimes all we have to offer is our fear and our brokenness. But we still strive to offer the best of ourselves, even when we feel limited by our humanness. Accept these gifts, offered by a people who are sometimes driven by fear, and sometimes by courage, and always with a deep love for you. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

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.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

*** 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, through Christ our Lord. You bid your people cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast. Renew our zeal in faith and life, and bring us to the fullness of grace that belongs to the children of God. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, 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. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

*** EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

P: Holy God, our living Water and our merciful Guide, together with rivers and seas, wells and springs we bless and magnify you. You led your people Israel through the desert, and provided them water from the rock. We praise you for Christ, our Rock and our Water, who joined us in our desert, pouring out his life for the world.

P: 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.

P: 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.

P: Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await your salvation for all this thirsty world. Pour out your Spirit on this holy food and on all the baptized gathered for this feast: wash away our sin, that we may be revived for our journey by the love of Christ.

P: 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 together by this heavenly food, which is the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. 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: Our Lord stood strong when he was forced to stand alone. As he faced frightening hours ahead, he continued to give of himself. We are humble recipients of Christ's great gifts, and we receive them with gratitude as we share in the body and blood of Christ, offered here and now. Come, this meal is ready for you.

• 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... We give you thanks, gracious God, for we have feasted on the abundance of your house. Send us to bring good news and to proclaim your favor to all, strengthened with the richness of your grace in your Son, Jesus Christ.

C: Amen

• ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** SENDING BLESSING**

P: You are children of God, anointed with the oil of gladness and strengthened for the journey. Almighty God, motherly, majestic, and mighty, bless you this day and always.

C: Amen.

* **SENDING HYMN**

“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”

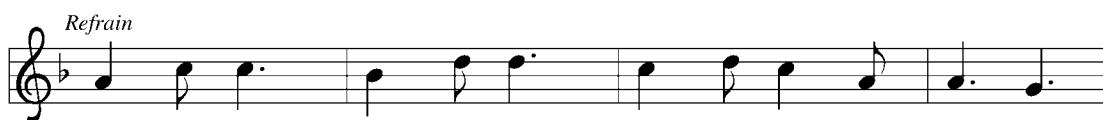
ELW 335



1 Je - sus, keep me near the cross, there's a pre - cious foun - tain;
 2 Near the cross, a trem - bling soul, love and mer - cy found me;
 3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes be - fore me;
 4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hop - ing, trust - ing ev - er,



free to all, a heal - ing stream flows from Cal - v'ry's moun - tain.
 there the bright and morn - ing star sheds its beams a - round me.
 help me walk from day to day with its shad - ow o'er me.
 till I reach the gold - en strand just be - yond the riv - er.



In the cross, in the cross be my glo - ry ev - er;



till my ran - somed soul shall find rest be - yond the riv - er.

* **DISMISSAL**

P: 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

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Scripture readings for next Sunday, March 27th
John 18:28-40

Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	Peggy Didier
Acolyte	Devyn Thobe
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser
Altar Flowers	<i>No flowers during Lent</i>

Health Tips for the Week

BODY: Give yourself a facial
MIND: Allow yourself quiet time
SPIRIT: View the sunrise



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.

- * Please stand if able
- Please be seated

This Week @ Trinity – March 20 thru March 27, 2022

Sun, March 20	10:30 am	Worship Service w/Communion
Wed, March 23	12:00 noon	Lenten Worship at St. Paul's, Greenville
	6:30 pm	Confirmation
Fri, March 25	3:30 pm	FISH Choice Food Pantry
Sun, March 27	10:30 am	Worship Service

AROUND THE PARISH

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

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Secretary:	Sharon Fourman
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