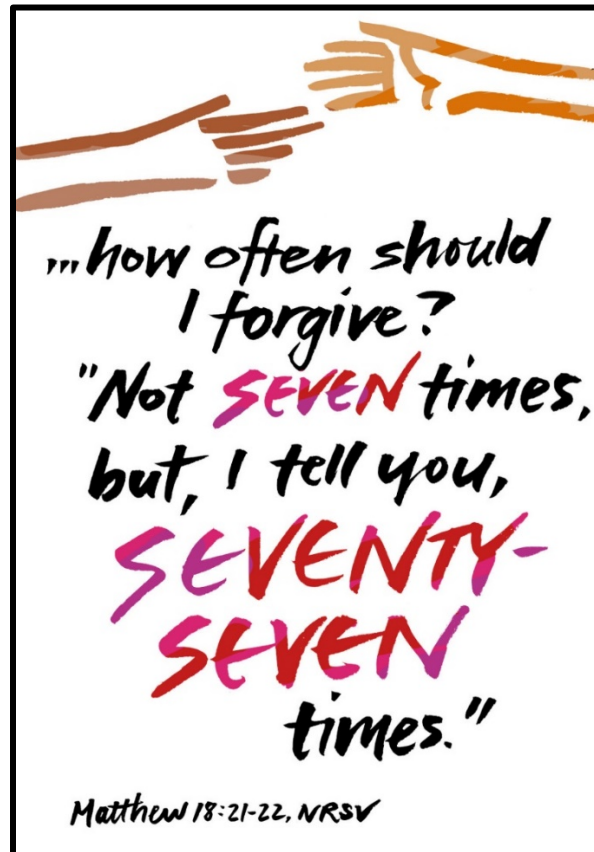


A Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358



Matthew 18:15-35
February 26, 2023



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



GATHERING

- **Prelude** **Pam Sherman**
- **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**
- **Welcome** **Pastor Mel Musser**

* **THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

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

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation.

C: Amen.

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

P: Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.

P: We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all. We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The service continues with gathering song. As a reminder of the gift of baptism, the assembly may be sprinkled with water during the singing.

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 - Please be seated

* **GATHERING SONG** **“Blest Be the Tie that Binds”** **LBW 370**



1 Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Chris - tian love;
2 Be - fore our Fa - ther's throne we pour our ar - dent prayers;
3 We share our mu - tual woes, our mu - tual bur - dens bear,
4 From sor - row, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free;



the u - ni - ty of heart and mind is like to that a - bove.
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our com - forts and our cares.
and of - ten for each oth - er flows the sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.
and per - fect love and friend - ship reign through all e - ter - ni - ty.

* **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.**

* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray... God of grace and mercy, you have forgiven us far more and more often than we deserve. Make us equally forgiving to all those in our lives, that we may live together in harmony, in Jesus name.

C: **Amen.**

WORD

• **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**



Theme: Passing On the Forgiveness of God

Materials: A Soccer ball

Scripture: Matthew 18:15-35

Place a soccer ball on the floor, and ask the children if any of them play the game. Have them describe how the game is played, and what it takes to kick the ball down the field and score a goal. Ask if any one player can win a game all by

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himself or herself. Of course not. Teamwork is needed, including passing the ball from person to person. Tell them that Jesus told a story about a boss and his employees or workers. Explain that one worker owed his boss a lot of money -- like, thousands of dollars -- and the boss "forgave him the debt" (v. 27). Roll the ball toward one of the children and say that the boss passed him the forgiveness ball. Continue by saying that the worker left his boss's house and ran into a friend who owed him a small amount of money, say \$5. Ask the children if they think the first worker passed the forgiveness ball to his friend. Tell them, "No, the first worker grabbed his friend and said, 'Pay what you owe!'" (v. 28). Ask what the children think about this. Ask if the worker should have passed the forgiveness ball to his friend, just as the boss passed the forgiveness ball to him. Ask the child to roll the ball to another person...

Let's pray... Dear Jesus, We owe you so much for your saving act on the cross. You took all the punishment we deserved into yourself. In this self-giving love you forgave us all our sins and gave us a new start. Help us to forgive others as you have forgiven us. Amen.

• **SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 18:15-35**

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

C: Glory to you O Lord.

¹⁵"If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

²¹Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²²Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. ²³"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents

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was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

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
embodiment of God’s Love, Jesus Christ our Savior, amen.

Well, God’s Word certainly doesn’t hesitate at the starting line nor
avoid those elephants in the room that can sometimes appear like land mines.
Jesus doesn’t mince any words when explaining how to handle broken
relationships and conflict in the Church. In our scripture for today Jesus describes
what we’re supposed to do when someone sins or transgresses against us. In this
example Jesus says the one who was hurt in the relationship, the victim, if you
will, should be the one to take the first step toward forgiveness. Lest you think that

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lets you off the hook for making your apologies when you're the one who caused the transgression, I'll take a short minute to remind you what Jesus said all the way back in the 5th chapter of Matthew... He said if you're at Church and about to give your offering when you realize a brother or sister has something against you, then leave your offering and go to that person... In this case Jesus is talking about the offender going to the offended. In the Kingdom of God, it doesn't seem to matter who offended whom, both are responsible to make the first move to go to the other person. You see when Humankind had fallen so far into sin and decay there was no humanly way out, God made the first move to reconcile humans to Himself. God so loved you and me that He became one of us so that all of us might gain eternal life. That's one huge first move...

God's first move was so selfless and sacrificial it was the greatest gift in all of history. So, now that we're all recipients of God's lavish mercy and grace, now what are we going to do? Do we just soak up all that forgiveness and keep it to ourselves? Unfortunately, more times than I'd like to admit that's exactly how I act and I strongly suspect I'm not alone in this... The unconditional love I bask in every day of my life hasn't completely softened this old heart of stone. I'm still pretty stingy with my forgiveness. I tend to treat forgiveness as if it's a limited supply item like the blueberry yogurt I have such a hard time trying to find in the

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stores. The reality is when we forgive it's not our supply of forgiveness we're using. We forgive because we were first forgiven. We love because we were first loved. It's God's divine nature to forgive because that's what divine love looks like. Since making the first move to forgive is God's nature, God wants and indeed expects his Children to do likewise.

The beginning of this scripture text is what scholars refer to as Church Discipline. We're told this is what we're supposed to do when there's a conflict between two members. It's quite a process... Then after describing the process, Jesus goes on to say that when the process doesn't work, treat your opponent like a tax collector or a Gentile... Before we move on, I remind you Jesus included tax collectors and even ate with them. Jesus healed the daughter of a woman only identified as a Gentile. So, the end result is not to excommunicate the unrepentant sinner, but to redouble our efforts at including them, praying for them, and blessing them. Since Jesus doesn't stop there, we can assume even this radical inclusion, prayer, and blessing them still fails, then and only then is it permissible to bring out the big gun. What's the "Big Gun" you ask? Jesus went on to say, "Whatever you lose on earth will be loosed in heaven and what you bind on earth will be bound in heaven..." Pow! The power to loosen or bind up the sins of others. That's a huge responsibility never to be undertaken lightly. After the conflict resolution process,

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after the time of radical inclusion, prayer, and blessing then you can consider binding this person to their sin. That's called the Office Of The Keys if you remember your catechism days. The power to bind or loosen the demands of the Law doesn't reside with one or two people or even with any individual Church Council. Jesus gives the Office of the Keys to the entire Church.

Here's the funny thing about the Office of the Keys. I don't think God ever intends for them to be used. Here's what I mean. Immediately after telling the disciples they have this power to bind and loosen the sins of others, Peter blurts out this silly question about how many times we have to forgive our brother or sister. I'm sure he thought he was being exceedingly generous when he said up to 7 times... Jesus was quick rebuke Peter, saying no, my friend, you're a little short on the forgiveness scale. In our Bible's translation it says 77 times. In the Greek it's hard to determine if Jesus meant 77 times or 7 times 70 times. That would be 490 times to forgive for the same offence. In either case, 77 times or 490 times, Jesus is telling Peter, the disciples, and you and me that we must forgive as many times as it takes. Today, Jesus might have said an infinite number of times. If we're to offer forgiveness infinitely, no matter if you're the perpetrator or the victim, then there would be no need for the disciplinary process, nor the need for the Office of the Keys. All of this elaborate process for kissing and making up

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within the Church comes under the heading Fallen world. Under the Reign of God all this is just so unnecessary.

Are you holding on to any grudges from the past? Are you withholding your forgiveness from someone? If you are, you are hindering your entrance into the Kingdom of God here on earth right here and right now... Forgiveness is the key and you've held it in your hand all along. I'm not going to stand up here and tell you how easy this whole forgiveness thing is. Forgiving someone who caused you great harm is hard to do. I mean, it's really hard to do! In fact, from my own experience with forgiving others, it's down right humanly impossible. If it were humanly possible we would have no need for a savior. When the hurts are so bad and the wrong cuts so deep it becomes impossible for us to forgive of our own power or strength. From the cross, Jesus prayed to His Father and our Father when he said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing." When the world comes crashing in because of the actions or inaction of someone else and it's impossible for you to forgive, may I suggest you do what Jesus did? When I can't forgive out of my own supply of forgiveness or even out of the love I have in my heart, I can still ask God to do for me what I can't do on my own. God, in the Name of Jesus, please forgive this person for

they don't even know what they did..." Those are the most powerful words in the English language. Not, I forgive you, but rather Father, forgive them...

May you find time this Lenten Season to reflect on those you need to forgive and those to whom you might owe an apology. May you be the first to make the move toward forgiveness and if possible, reconciliation. When the hurt is too fresh or too deep, may you follow the example of Jesus our Lord and give those hurts over to God our Father who art in heaven. May His love fill all the places in your heart where resentment or grudges used to reside so you can reflect God's grace in a world God loved enough to die for. 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.**

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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: Trusting in the promise of Jesus Christ's unending love, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

L: Loving God, you have taught us to walk in your way of mercy and peace. Teach us to forgive, that we might better serve our siblings in Christ. Merciful God,

C: You hear our prayer.

L: Make us intentional stewards of your awesome creation. Heal this planet, so that it might bring forth abundant life for generations to come. Merciful God,

C: You hear our prayer.

L: As we walk together on this journey of Lent, give us the humility to see where we have harmed others. Free us from shame, that we might put right our wrongs and know that, no matter what, your love for us is sure. Merciful God,

C: You hear our prayer.

L: Pour your healing upon all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, (*especially*). Heal the hurts of our sin, and restore us all to wholeness. Merciful God,

C: You hear our prayer.

L: Give us a heart for grace toward peoples the world over. Help us to forgive hostile actions, real or perceived, and reach out in reconciliation to the whole human family. Merciful God,

C: You hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

L: With gratitude we remember all the saints who have taught us to forgive as we have been forgiven. Merciful God,

C: You hear our prayer.

* Please stand if able

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P: We lift these prayers to you, Gracious God, in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, our savior.

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.

MEAL

• OFFERING

P: As we collect our offering here in person, those worshipping with us through the internet, may you go to our website located at www.pitsburgtlc.org where you'll find a button labeled "Give to Trinity." You can make your offering to God through our secure website.

*** OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: Let us pray for the offerings we receive this day.... Gracious God, we cannot possibly repay the debt we owe to you for all that you have given us. We return now what we can for the life of your church, that all might be richly blessed through these gifts. Accept them for the sake of your son, Jesus Christ.

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.

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SENDING

- **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- * **SENDING BLESSING**

P: God, the giver of love, Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey.

C: **Amen.**

- * **SENDING HYMN**

“O Zion, Haste”

LBW 397



1 O Zi - on, haste, your mis - sion high ful - fill - ing,
2 Pub - lish to ev - 'ry peo - ple, tongue, and na - tion
3 Give of your own to bear the mes - sage glo - rious,
4 He comes a - gain! O Zi - on, ere you meet him,



to tell to all the world that God is light;
that God, in whom they live and move, is love;
give of your wealth to speed them on their way,
make known to ev - 'ry heart his sav - ing grace;



that he who made all na - tions is not will - ing
tell how he stooped to save his lost cre - a - tion
pour out your soul for them in prayer vic - to - rious,
let none whom he has ran - somed fail to greet him,



one soul should per - ish, lost in shades of night.
and died on earth that we might live a - bove.
and haste the com - ing of the glo - rious day.
through your ne - glect, un - fit to see his face.



Refrain
Pub - lish glad tid - ings, tid - ings of peace,



tid - ings of Je - sus, re - demp - tion, and re - lease.

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*** 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**

Pam Sherman

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	
Acolyte	
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser
Altar Flowers	No flowers during Lent

Health Tips for the Week

Mind: Start a family journal-Document important dates and facts

Body: Complete your Living Will

Spirit: Memorize Bible verses



Scripture readings for next Sunday, March 5th
Matthew 20:1-16

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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 – February 26 thru March 5, 2023

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Sun, February 26	9:15 am	Christian Conversations (Coffee/Juice and Donuts)
	10:30 am	Worship Service
Tues, February 28	10:00 am	Prayers & Squares Quilting
Wed, March 1	11:30 am	WELCA Meeting
Fri, March 3	3:30 pm	FISH Choice Food Pantry
Sun, March 5	9:15 am	Christian Conversations (Coffee/Juice and Donuts)
	10:30 am	Worship Service w/Communion

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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