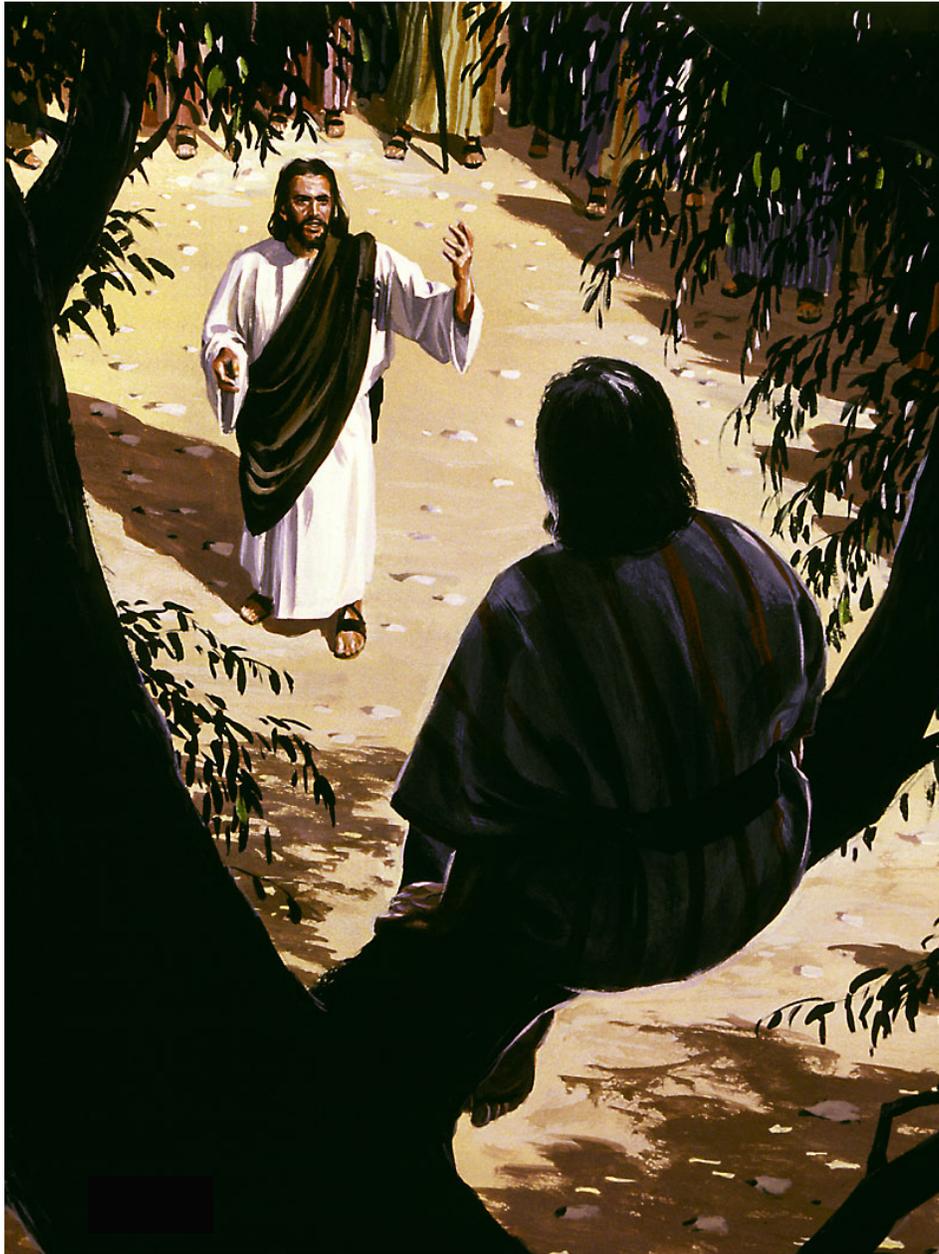


A Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358



Zacchaeus
March 21, 2021

- **Prelude** “Reach Out to Jesus; Great Is Thy Faithfulness;
Sweet Hour of Prayer; Now I Belong to Jesus” **Roxanne Groff**

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

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

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: God of mercy,

C: Jesus was faithful even in the face of death, yet we so often fail you in day to day living. Our commitment is shaky, our promises are unreliable, and our actions are questionable. We quit when discipleship becomes difficult and complain that we don't get enough credit. Forgive us our neglect of your mission and our lukewarm devotion and wake us up to the urgency of your gospel.

P: God is gracious and pardons all our shortcomings. May the giver of life forgive us our sins and restore us to the joy of discipleship and service, for the sake of Jesus our faithful Lord.

C: Amen.

* HYMN OF PRAISE

“Be Thou My Vision”

ELW 793

(Verses 1 & 3)



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,
4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.
thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:
may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,
Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,
thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,
Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

* 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.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray... Compassionate God, You welcomed all people and did not hold their misfortunes against them. Encourage us also to set aside our prejudice and show the same unbiased mercy you demonstrated, through Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 18:31-19:10

P: Our scripture reading for this morning is from Luke, Chapters 18 and 19.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

³¹Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. ³²For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. ³³After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again.” ³⁴But they understood nothing about all these things; in fact, what he said was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said. ³⁵As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. ³⁷They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” ³⁸Then he shouted, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ³⁹Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁰Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, ⁴¹“What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, let me see again.” ⁴²Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has saved you.” ⁴³Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

19 He entered Jericho and was passing through it. ²A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. ⁵When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” ⁶So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. ⁷All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.” ⁸Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the

* Please stand if able

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poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.”⁹ Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.”¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”

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 our Lord and Savior, The Messiah, Jesus Christ, amen.

Before we changed to the Narrative Lectionary, this story about the wee little man, Zacchaeus, always fell on the same Sunday as Reformation Sunday. As a result, we never read it in Church because we always used the Gospel appointed for Reformation instead. So, this is the first time I’ve really looked at Zacchaeus with a critical eye, including all the commentaries and in the original Greek language. I discovered it’s much more than a cute little tale we all learned in Sunday School. It is that, I mean, who remembers singing:

(SLIDE)

Zacchaeus was a wee, little man,
And a wee, little man was he.
He climbed up in a sycamore tree,
For the Lord he wanted to see.
And as the Savior came that way,
He looked up in the tree,

Spoken: And he said, "Zacchaeus, you come down from there, "
For I'm going to your house today.
For I'm going to your house today.

(SLIDE)

* Please stand if able

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On one level this story is so familiar from our Sunday School Days I was tempted to just overlook it and find another part of today's readings to focus on. Then I began reading the commentaries and discovered scholars are by no means united in their interpretations on this childhood tale. The setting for our encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus is what is known as "The Travel Journal of Jesus" as he heads toward Jerusalem and the fate that awaits him there. He set his face toward Jerusalem way back in Chapter 9 after he was transfigured on the mountain top. He has already plainly told the disciples what will happen when they arrive in Jerusalem, that he will be betrayed, handed over to the authorities, beaten, humiliated, spat upon, and killed, but on the third day he will rise from the dead. No one understood. They couldn't fathom God's Messiah dying, much less dying on a cross.

So, Luke milks all he can out of the events that happened along the way from the mountain of Transfiguration to the mountain of Calvary. That brings us to Zacchaeus. Everyone agrees he was a tax collector. He was the chief tax collector to be precise... As such, he would be required to pay the Roman authorities the required tribute and then try to earn his money back by charging his fellow Jews a tax on goods that they either bought or sold. He was also in charge of the toll booths that were set up on the roads. People had to pay, just like today,

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as they travelled from place to place. Because of the mostly secret tribute he paid to the Romans, his business was considered shady at best. He could charge whatever he wanted and chalk it up to the price he had to pay the Romans. As the go between he was doubly hated by his own people, the Jews. There was even more bias and hatred of tax collectors in the First Century than there is of the IRS today. At least the IRS agents collect taxes for our own country. Imagine if we had American citizens collecting taxes for Russia or China...

Here's where the different interpretations begin. Most of us have probably heard or been taught that Zacchaeus was one of the sinners that Jesus associated with. He was a scoundrel and a cheat. He cheated his own countrymen, making him the worst of the worst. Then, after encountering Jesus, Zacchaeus repents and has a conversion. He declares he will give half his vast fortune to the poor and repay anyone he might have over charged four times the over-payment. (I wish the IRS would do that with my tax returns...) Interpreted in this way, Zacchaeus makes a wonderful story of repentance and transformation. The morale of the story is something like, after encountering Jesus, we also should repent and give to the poor and repay anyone we have hurt in the past. That's how to live a good Christian life...

The problem with that interpretation is that it isn't faithful to the original Greek text. It assumes some conversation between Zacchaeus and Jesus that just isn't there. It also changed the present tense verbs into future tense. The Greek text and some of our English translations that try to remain faithful to the original writings, have Zacchaeus declaring he already gives half of his income to the poor and he already repays anyone who he overcharges fourfold. This is in response to the grumbling of the bystanders who ask why Jesus wants to eat with this sinner and tax collector, not in response to any call to repent by Jesus. In fact, Zacchaeus apparently already has placed his trust and had great faith in Jesus because he climbs up in that Sycamore tree long before Jesus says a single word to him.

You are free to understand this story any way you want, but I will tell you the evidence points toward a story about how a man's faith in the Messiah enabled him to overcome the hatred of his neighbors to climb up a tree and quite literally go out on a limb, just to be able to catch a passing glimpse of the Son of God. Then, when Jesus sees this demonstration of faith he says, Come down here, I must stay at your house today. In other stories Jesus tells certain people your faith has made you well, or your faith has saved you. In this story Jesus tells Zacchaeus salvation has come to your house today. It's the same thing. The faith of Zacchaeus has saved him. He was outcast, ridiculed, a socially irredeemable

deplorable, yet he was found by Jesus to be a Son of Abraham. We know from last week's Gospel story that sons and daughters of Abraham are carried straight to heaven by the angels. In today's Gospel, Zacchaeus is the foil to the Rich Man from last week's sermon. Zacchaeus exceeds Levitical Law cheerfully, despite receiving nothing, but hatred and exclusion from his own neighbors and fellow Jews. In response, Jesus assures him, in front of all the gathered crowd, that salvation has come, today to him and to his entire household, not will come some day in the great by and by, but right now today.

How do we make this more than a historical event or a nice story of Zacchaeus the wee little man? There are a couple of things we can take away from this story. First, Zacchaeus went out on a limb to see Jesus. How far are we willing to go to catch a glimpse of our Lord and Savior? Most aren't even willing to get up an hour or so early and make the trip to Church or even tune in on their smart phones. I know I'm preaching to the choir, because you are up and tuned in, but I pray for all those who aren't. If that's all we get from this story, that's good, but there's something more important we might have missed.

Secondly, who are we excluding from our fellowship because of our perceived bias and prejudice? Maybe it's their race, their gender, or their political affiliation that we discount. We learn from Jesus that even the most hated of our

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neighbors might be a fellow Child of Abraham and by ignoring or discounting them we're missing the opportunity to see the face of Jesus in them. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, said he had a dream where all people would be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin. I pray for that dream to come true in our lives. Loving our neighbors and even our enemies might be another important take away from the Zacchaeus story, but I don't think that's the most important lesson we learn here either.

Here's my biggest take away from this story. Jesus told Zacchaeus salvation had come to his house that very day. We don't have to wait for our death or for Jesus to come again to reap the rewards of the Kingdom of God. We can live them right here and right now. I'm not talking about how Zacchaeus gave half his money to the poor. It's not about how rich or poor you are, but about your faith. Zacchaeus was free to give because he trusted in God for his daily bread. Zacchaeus was free to go out on that limb because he didn't care what other people thought about him, he only thought about how much he loved God and that allowed him to ignore all the grumbles and complaints and to show his faith in the way he lived his life. In the same way our faith is what frees us to live out our lives in ways that serve God by serving other. We are free to declare our faith

without fear of what anyone else says about us because it's Jesus we care about and there's nothing more important than showing our love for Him.

There's a second verse to that old Sunday School song. It goes like this:

(SLIDE)

Zacchaeus was a wee little man,
But a happy little man was he,
Zacchaeus saw the Lord that day
And a happy man was he;
And a very happy man was he.

(SLIDE)

May we all have the faith of Zacchaeus to go our on a limb for Jesus. May our faith free us from our bondage to money and the desire for the praise of other people. May the love we have for Jesus become the most important thing in our lives and may salvation come to this house today! Amen.

Silence for reflection may follow

- **SPECIAL MUSIC**

The Sister Act

*** 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: Restorer of sight to the blind, sharpen our own eyes to see the places where we are needed, and to see ourselves as you see us: gifted servants and beloved children. God of love,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Forgiver of sin, you didn't judge a man for his past offenses, but rather saw the true heart within, enabling him to become the person he was truly created to be. May we, like Zacchaeus, be open to the transforming power of your forgiveness. God of love,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Show us how to be better stewards and care takers of the earth, O Lord. We ask

* Please stand if able

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for wisdom find way to preserve the beauty of nature while making good use of the resources you provide from the bounty of your goodness. God of love,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Heal us of all sin and bodily ailments so we can be free to serve you and our neighbor. End this Covid virus pandemic and grant healing and mercy to all those who need it... We especially ask for you mercy for God of love,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We remember Thomas Cranmer, martyr and reformer of your Church, and pray for the strength to stand by our witness to your gospel, even in the face of opposition. God of love,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: You hear all your children's prayers and gather the lost into your loving arms. Teach us to put our trust in you, and in our Lord and savior 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 PRAYER**

While the congregation is still standing say:

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

P: You have given freely to us, and so we freely offer these gifts to your people. Bless them and use all of our resources: time, money and talents, to serve your kingdom's mission in the world, for the sake of Jesus.

C: Amen.

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Jesus is the "tie that Binds us together", let us pray as Jesus taught...

* Please stand if able

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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**

* **SENDING BLESSING**

P: You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

C: Amen.

* **SENDING HYMN “What A Friend We Have in Jesus” LBW 439**



1 What a friend we have in Je - sus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
 2 Have we tri - als and temp - ta - tions? Is there trou - ble an - y - where?
 3 Are we weak and heav - y - lad - en, cum - bered with a load of care?



What a priv - i - lege to car - ry ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
 We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged—take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Pre - cious Sav - ior, still our ref - uge—take it to the Lord in prayer.



Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit; oh, what need - less pain we bear—
 Can we find a friend so faith - ful who will all our sor - rowsshare?
 Do your friends de - spise, for - sake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.



all be - cause we do not car - ry ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
 Je - sus knows our ev - 'ry weak - ness—take it to the Lord in prayer.
 In his arms he'll take and shield you; you will find a so - lace there.

* **DISMISSAL**

P: Until the next time we gather together as God's people to offer our worship

* Please stand if able

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and praise, depart in Christ's Love.

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

* **POSTLUDE**

“Trust and Obey”

Roxanne Groff

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	Linda Baker
Greeter	Tony Baker
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser
Altar Flowers	<i>There are no altar flowers during Lent.</i>

Health Tips for the Week

BODY: Know your cholesterol numbers

MIND: Clean out your junk drawer

SPIRIT: Hold hands with someone



Scripture readings for next Sunday, March 28th
Luke 19:29-44

* Please stand if able

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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 –March 21

thru March 28, 2021

Sun, March 21 Daylight Savings Time Begins
10:30 am Worship Service

Tues, March 23 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Wed, March 24
6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Fri, March 26
3:30 pm FISH Choice Food Pantry

Sun, March 28 Palm - Passion Sunday
10:30 am Worship Service

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.

I will be **OUT** of the office on Tuesday, March 23 but **IN** on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Secretary, Sharon Fourman

Trinity Contact Info

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 - Please be seated

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