

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



Third Sunday of Advent
December 13, 2020

- **Prelude**

Roxanne Groff

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

- **Welcome and Children’s Message**

Pr Mel

- **Third Week of Advent**

Use this blessing when lighting three candles.

L: Blessed are you, God of might and majesty, for you promise to make the desert rejoice and blossom, to watch over the strangers, and to set the prisoners free.

L: As we light these candles, satisfy our hunger with your good gifts, open our eyes to the great things you have done for us, and fill us with patience until the coming of the Lord Jesus.

L: O ransomed people of the Lord, come,

C: let us travel on God’s holy way and enter into Zion with singing. Amen.

* **GATHERING SONG** **“Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel”** **LBW 34**

1 Oh, come, oh, come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here

un - til the Son of God ap - pear. *Refrain* Re - joice! Re - joice!

Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

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*** 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: Renewing God,

C: You have come into our world to live among us, yet we often lose sight of this and seek to manufacture our own truth. We are afraid to share your word lest others judge or mock us. We ignore your wisdom because it isn't convenient. We allow ourselves to be defeated by despair. Forgive our negligence and breathe new life into our heavy hearts.

P: God knows our every weakness and still loves us and upholds our life. May your sins be forgiven, your past forgotten, and your hope restored in the name of our incarnate savior, Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

*** GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray... Faithful God, You restore to your people all that has been lost. Renew our hopes for the future and our zeal for serving you as chosen and beloved children, through Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

• SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 61:1-11

P: Our scripture reading this morning is from Isaiah, Chapter 61.

C: Glory to you, O Lord. (*Spoken*)

61 The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to

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comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁵Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines; ⁶but you shall be called priests of the Lord, you shall be named ministers of our God; you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory. ⁷Because their shame was double, and dishonor was proclaimed as their lot, therefore they shall possess a double portion; everlasting joy shall be theirs. ⁸For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

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 one who actually was the Good News of our Salvation, Jesus Christ our Savior and our Lord, amen.

The Spirit descended upon the prophet Isaiah sometime during the time after the Israelites had returned to Jerusalem in order to rebuild their once beautiful temple. Over 500 years before the birth of Jesus, God's Holy Spirit empowered him to bring good news to the captives, proclaim liberty and announce God's everlasting covenant. You see the people of the time when Isaiah wrote this were

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in great distress. Yes, Emperor Cyrus released them to return some 1500 miles back to Jerusalem. Yes, that same Cyrus had issued orders for lumber and other building requirements to be shipped to Jerusalem. So, why were the Hebrew people in such great distress that they needed this word of encouragement from the prophet? What had gone wrong with God's plan?

After consulting with several leading commentaries, my assessment is the people who returned followed after their own desires before pursuing God's will. I say that because the reason they were allowed to return to Jerusalem in the first place was to rebuild the Temple. During this time of what scholars call Third Isaiah, not much had been done along those lines. The people began by trying to grow crops, rebuild their own homes, and fortify the wall around Jerusalem. Does any of that sound like the Temple was anywhere near their top priority? So, that's the situation in which these returned exiles found themselves. Between the draught, crop failures, hunger, and inflation, the people were in dire straits. Their civil and religious leaders looked only after their own personal gain and the court system was riddled with utter corruption. Hmmm, sound familiar? On top of all that, there was great enmity between the masses of the people. The ones who returned from exile looked down upon the ones who had been left behind. That bias and discrimination between the Jews who had returned from exile and the Samaritans who were the ones left behind lasted for many hundreds of years. Most

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of what we call Third Isaiah arose against this background of severe hardship and division. The early attempt at rebuilding the Temple lay in ruins, as did the lives of most of the people who lived in these Holy Lands. The people needed some encouragement. They needed some glimpse of Good News amid their bleak world. As we prepare for the future--for the birth of the Christ Child and the arrival of the King of kings--we once again glance to the past, but looking back helps us see God's plan for our future....

The Exodus out of slavery in Egypt through the wilderness to the Promised Land and the Exile to Babylon consume a significant portion of the Old Testament. There are several reasons for this. First, they are major events in the history of Israel. They are also very reflective of our individual and corporate lives. What I mean is that back then as now life is neither pretty nor easy. It can get to be awfully messy. That was the situation of the people of Third Isaiah's time. In this passage of scripture, they are addressed as the oppressed, the brokenhearted, captives, prisoners and people who mourn. Into that situation of bleakness, the Prophet Isaiah writes; The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners...

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Perhaps we can identify with the returned exiles. There are times we feel oppressed by the expectation of others; brokenhearted because of loved ones who can no longer celebrate this Christmas season with us; captive to credit card debit and prisoner to over scheduled calendars. There are times when our lives are cluttered. At other times our lives are a mess, and occasionally our lives are disasters. The Lord did not abandon God's people during their exile, nor does God abandon us in the messiness of our lives. Quite the contrary, into those situations God speaks a word of hope. Hear the Word of the Lord!

God speaks good news to the oppressed. I have someone very close to me who has been suffering from severe, debilitating headaches for many years. Modern medicine has only been able to provide mild, temporary relief. As she struggles to face days filled with pain, God's Good News comes to her and that good news is God loves her deeply and God will not abandon her. I also know some of you have lost loved ones during the time around the holidays. Now the days before Christmas are filled with sadness rather than the joy and excitement of our newborn Savior. Still, this Word of God is for all of us who have suffered the loss of our loved ones. We can rejoice in the hope of the resurrection and the promise of being reunited one day. In the meanwhile, family and especially our Church Family surround us with love and the strength and comfort that only a faith community can provide. That's why we make the effort to do extra cleaning, have

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prepackaged communion, and wear our facemasks diligently, so we can gather together as God's people to hear the Good News that God is still our God and God has not abandoned us, even in this messy time of political, economic, and civil uncertainty. Somehow I feel the weight of expectation, of anticipation more this year than ever before. Maybe it's because in addition to the coming of Jesus on Christmas I'm hoping for the coming of the vaccine that is promised to relieve over 95 percent of the suffering, death, and anxiety caused by the Covid Pandemic. I pray for the quick supply, especially to the most vulnerable among us...

I know many people this year who are held captive by anxiety and oppressed by fear. There are times when God's love, acceptance, forgiveness and grace break into those lives and set them free. I pray our world can experience more of those times... This is an ongoing struggle against so many powerful forces that want to keep the people held down and as far away from the Good News of God's Salvation as possible. These powers and principalities rely on anxiety and fear to keep the masses from uniting under the Word of God. Yet, even to those who are consumed with fear, God's Word of love and peace enters our World.

Thousands of people have faced tragedies during 2020. Besides the Covid Pandemic, recently there have been disastrous wildfires. Earlier in the year there were hurricanes, floods and tornadoes, so many in fact that the weather guessers had to use the Greek Alphabet to name them because they had used all the English

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letters for named storms. Now, we're on the verge of receiving a vaccine for the Covid virus, but people are still dying. The latest figures I saw last week were 300,000 deaths in the United States alone. In the midst of devastation, upheaval and loss, God is still present in words and in actions. God's presence is experienced, and God's love is demonstrated.

Why are you here today? And for those watching on Social Media, what has brought you here at this moment in time? I believe we're all here right now because our lives have been touched by God. We have heard the Good News. We have received the strength and ability to endure because of the hope and encouragement we have heard in God's Word and experienced among God's people when we have been oppressed. Our broken hearts have been comforted and we have been set free from fear, sin and death precisely because of the Good News of God's Word.

Now, it is our privilege to share the good news of what God has done for us by seeking out the lost and broken, by welcoming them into our world—a world where sin, death, and the devil do not win the day. In this way others will hear the good news and they too will experience God's love and power in their lives. Perhaps God wants to use your brokenness to heal the brokenness of another of His children who need to hear how God brought you through your own personal devastation.

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Not only do we share, we also rejoice. As the voice of Isaiah speaks from days far gone, “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness...” We rejoice because in this Season of Advent we hear the good news and see God's love and promise for our future. May your anxiety be lowered and your fear be gone as you place your trust on the Word of God. May your hope be contagious and your love overflowing as you prepare to once again welcome our Lord Jesus Christ into your heart this Christmas. Amen.

Silence for reflection may follow

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* **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.

* **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.

* **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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

A brief silence.

A: More valuable than expensive clothes or symbols of status is the robe of righteousness with which you cover us. Teach us to treasure the gifts of your kingdom blessings more than the material things which we are tempted to pursue. Generous God,

C: Hear our prayer.

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L: Build up and restore ruined relationships and shattered connections with those from whom we feel distanced. Forgive harmful words and actions and teach us to value love and compassion above the need to be right and to justify ourselves. Generous God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Just as the earth brings forth shoots and a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, you will keep your promise to renew all of creation. Make us co-creators in your reconciling work, defenders of living things and the environment which supports them. Generous God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Those who mourn will one day celebrate again. Heal all those struggling with grief, regret, sadness, or any sort of illness, speed the delivery of the Covid Vaccine to those most in need and ease the anxiety of all those who are afraid to take it. We especially lift up those who we now name before you... ...
Generous God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We honor St. Lucia for her generosity and devotion to her faith, and we pray to be as bold in our own proclamation of your gospel. Generous God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

P: Our eyes await the fulfillment of all your promises, the answer to all our prayers: your Son, our Lord, 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 a ceramic flowerpot located near the back door of the church, and for all of you worshipping with us on FaceBook or other Social Media you can make your offering directly on our Website at www.pitsburgtlc.org.

P: Let us pray for the offerings we receive this day... You love justice, O Lord, and long to see all your people live life abundant. Bless these gifts and make them work towards your vision of plenty for all, in the power of your Spirit,

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C: Amen.

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: United into one by this heavenly food, we pray as Jesus taught...

C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

• ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** SENDING BLESSING**

P: The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, now and forever.

C: Amen.

*** SENDING HYMN**

“Joy to the World”

LBW 39



I Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.

*** DISMISSAL**

P: Depart in Christ's Love.

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

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Lector	Teresa Neitzelt
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Flowers	Given to the Glory of God by Pastor Mel & PJ Musser
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser

Health Tips for the Week
BODY: Wear hats and gloves
MIND: Sing Christmas songs
SPIRIT: Take a drive to see Christmas lights



Scripture readings for next Sunday, December 20th
 Luke 1:26-45 [46-56]

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.

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This Week @ Trinity –December 13 thru December 20, 2020

Sun, December 13

10:30 am Worship Service

Wed, December 16

9:30 am GRCC Soup Kitchen

Fri, December 18

3:30 pm FISH Pantry @ 400 Markwith, Greenville

Sun, December 20

10:30 am Worship Service with Children's Christmas Program Montage

SUBMIT YOUR PICTURES BY THIS TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15!

Due to the Covid Pandemic we will not be doing a live Children's Program this Christmas. Instead we are asking everyone who has pictures and or videos from years past to share them. We will edit them together and create a video collage of past Children's Christmas Programs. If you have hard copies of pictures, please drop them off at the Church. Make sure your name is on them and if they are more than a couple of years old, please let us know who is in the picture.

If you have digital pictures and or videos you can bring them to Church on a USB drive or click on the link below and when the window opens simply "Drag and Drop" them to the Trinity Lutheran Church Google Drive.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zTKD3I7R2UHy4F1v9HSkaS6oNb3Rywd?usp=sharing>

We hope to get a large number of pictures and videos that will allow all of us to take a nostalgic walk down Memory Lane. We plan to premier the video on Sunday, December 20, 2020 during the Worship Service, **so please get your pictures and videos turned in as soon as possible, but not later than December 15, 2020.**

If you have any questions or need assistance getting your pictures and videos turned in, please call Pastor Mel at 937 626-7100. I look forward to seeing all the "Ghosts of Christmases Past" pictures and videos. Let's make this a fun project and make lemonade out of the lemons of this pandemic!

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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



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