

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



**John 7:37-52**  
**February 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: Jesus shows us all the ways that we fall short. He also provides a way out of the holes we dig ourselves into. Forgive us our sins, and show us how to make better choices, be better friends, parents, kids, partners, and co-workers. Let Christ's light shine through us, for the sake of Jesus we pray. Amen.**

L: Jesus does, indeed, forgive. Jesus cleanses us of our sin and recreates us in God's image. Receive the entire forgiveness of all your sins. Go, and walk free of guilt, shame, and sin. You are made new! In Jesus' name we pray.

**C: Amen.**

**\* HYMN OF PRAISE "Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty"**

**LBW 250**

*(Verses 1-3, & 5 only)*



1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty, Zi - on, let me en - ter there,  
2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore thee; come thou al - so un - to me;  
3 Here thy praise is glad - ly chant-ed, here thy seed is du - ly sown;  
4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick-en, let me keep thy gift di - vine;  
5 Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done in - deed;



where my soul in joy - ful du - ty waits for God who an - swers prayer.  
where we find thee and a - dore thee, there a heav'n on earth must be.  
let my soul, where it is plant-ed, bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone,  
how - so - e'er temp - ta - tions thick-en, may thy word still o'er me shine  
may I un - dis - turbed draw near thee while thou dost thy peo - ple feed.



Oh, how bless-ed is this place, filled with so - lace, light, and grace!  
To my heart, oh, en - ter thou, let it be thy tem - ple now!  
so that all I hear may be fruit - ful un - to life in me.  
as my guid-ing star through life, as my com-fort in all strife.  
Here of life the foun - tain flows; here is balm for all our woes.

\* Please stand if able

February 20, 2022

• Please be seated

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**\* 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... God of all who thirst, You sent your son, Jesus, to bring the living water of eternal life to all the earth. Quench the thirst of all who long for your word, your truth, and your presence, for the sake of him who gave everything to save all, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

- **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

**Theme:** Rivers of Life

**Scripture:** John 7:37-52

**Object:**

Today let's think about rivers and how important they are to all kinds of life.

Here's a picture of the Ohio River... Fishing may be the first thing that comes to mind when we think about rivers. We couldn't come close to counting or naming the many types of fish that are found in rivers all over the world. Have any of you ever gone fishing in a river? If so, you know you know how beautiful a river can be and you know the fish caught from those rivers are a good source of food for humans. Did you know many other animals also depend on the clean, fresh water and the food they get from those rivers? Eagles and other types of birds go to the river to catch fish, which they eat and feed to their young.

Many, many types of animals go to a river to drink. Can you name a few?

Elephants, cheetahs, zebras, lions, and deer.

Some animals actually live in rivers. Think of the crocodiles, otters, and crayfish. Beavers build their dams across a river or stream and raccoons use the river's water to wash their food before they eat it.

A river also allows crops to grow. Farmers can run water from the river through irrigation ditches and into the fields where they sprinkle their crops. We all benefit from that.

Jesus said, **whoever believes in Him will be like a river**. Isn't that a beautiful idea? Jesus suggests that we could be like a river and gives others what they need to have a good life.

When we believe in God we receive his Spirit. His Spirit lives in us and provides us with love that flows from us to others. God's love flows from our hearts like a "river of living water." We all benefit from that.

Let's pray... Dear God, thank you for filling us with your love. Help us to share the love you give to us so that we can be part of your river of living water. Amen.

- **SCRIPTURE READING: John 7:37-52**

P: Our scripture reading for this day is from the Gospel according to John, the 7<sup>th</sup> Chapter.

**C: Glory to you O Lord.**

<sup>37</sup>On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, <sup>38</sup>and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” <sup>39</sup>Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified. <sup>40</sup>When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, “This is really the prophet.” <sup>41</sup>Others said, “This is the Messiah.” But some asked, “Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he? <sup>42</sup>Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?” <sup>43</sup>So there was a division in the crowd because of him. <sup>44</sup>Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

<sup>45</sup>Then the temple police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, “Why did you not arrest him?” <sup>46</sup>The police answered, “Never has anyone spoken like this!” <sup>47</sup>Then the Pharisees replied, “Surely you have not been deceived too, have you? <sup>48</sup>Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? <sup>49</sup>But this crowd, which does not know the law—they are accursed.” <sup>50</sup>Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked, <sup>51</sup>“Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?” <sup>52</sup>They replied, “Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee.”

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 source of our living water, Jesus Christ who is Savior and Lord of all, amen.

Unless you’re living under a rock, you know what I mean when I use the term “Fake News.” It’s gotten so bad I can’t tell what to believe when it comes to news anymore. For over a year we saw video of buildings and police cars being burned while the talking heads told us these were peaceful protests. Now we see truck drivers who merely parked their semis on the streets of Ottawa Canada and

played hockey in the streets and those same talking heads repeat the words of Canadian political officials who claim the protestors were violently trying to overthrow the legitimate government of Canada. I'm not even going to get into what happened on the grounds of our own Capital a little over a year ago... The thing is, humans have been trying to deal with "Fake News" almost from the beginning of time. Remember the story from the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Genesis where a serpent intentionally misinterpreted God's words and misled Adam and Eve? The purpose of the serpent was to sew the seeds of discord between the humans and God on the one hand and between the humans themselves on the other. The manipulation of information has always been a part of the struggle for power and wealth. In warfare, it was called propaganda. In trade, it is called advertising. There were times when the information at our disposal was quite limited and manageable. In recent years, particularly with the rapid spread of internet, social media, and the 24 hour news cycle we need to deal with virtually unlimited flows of information that come to us in ever more dazzling speed. It's especially frightening now because we don't necessarily know any more, where the information is coming from or what it's intended to achieve.

It may surprise you to know that the situation was no different in the time of Jesus. The Gospel text puts us in the middle of a huge dispute over who Jesus

really is and what should be done with him. Jesus made his own claims concerning his identity and his mission. He called upon the people to recognize him for who he claimed to be, and to follow in his footsteps. Not everybody was convinced. His way of life and his teaching—however impressive and extraordinary—also raised a lot of eyebrows. There were two sides to the debate. Many people saw in Jesus a man of God. He exercised unusual and unnatural healing powers. They liked him. Some of them said he could be the Prophet that God had promised all the way back to the time of Moses. Others thought he was the Messiah, the descendant of king David, who would establish a kingdom that would last forever.

The leaders of the Jewish people were sure Jesus was a con. They had two substantial arguments against Jesus. The first was that he was from Galilee. Galilee was not where men of God would come from—no prophets, and certainly not “the Prophet.” They also knew for sure, the Messiah, the Son of David, would come from Bethlehem, not from Nazareth. There was even more crucial evidence against Jesus. Certainly, He did some very good things, like healing people and driving out demons, but He did them on a Sabbath, when God’s Law forbade the Jewish people to work. So, they concluded, a man from Galilee who constantly

breaks the Sabbath Command cannot be a man of God. They couldn't see beyond what they thought they knew about God and God's Law...

So, to bring back law and order, the Jewish leaders sent armed temple guards to arrest Jesus and bring him in for cross-examination and a quick trial. They wanted to prevent the Romans, who occupied the land, from becoming alarmed and intervening in the internal affairs of their Jewish nation. After all, Jesus was teaching in the Temple, where they called the shots. Can you imagine the surprise and indignation of the leaders when the temple guards returned empty-handed!? When the leaders demanded an explanation, they simply said, "No one ever spoke the way this man does."

What Jesus said, and the way he said it, were so unique and overwhelming, the temple guards simply could not bring themselves to arrest Him. Jesus didn't resort to clever rhetorical devices to capture his audience. He wasn't being overly theatrical. He didn't capitalize on the latest findings in media and advertising. He simply was being himself, genuinely himself. He connected to his audience in a way that nobody really understood. He spoke from His heart directly to their heart. Jesus disarmed the temple guards not by violence or force, but by his words. The question forces itself upon us, how, exactly, did his words change their hearts—and, no doubt, so many others who heard Jesus speak.



First, Jesus' teaching was full of authority and truth. The evangelist Matthew writes, after Jesus finished his famous Sermon on the Mount, "the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law." I always smile when I read that about Jesus. He is the very Word of God incarnate, after all... He wasn't a philosopher, who contemplated questions of life on a deep and profound level and left his thoughts for others to meditate upon. He wasn't a teacher, who developed new models, new curricula, or new theories about life, religion, and God. Jesus himself was God—and Jesus still is God. His words were indeed God's own words, and they never fail to touch each person who comes to Jesus with an open mind and an open heart.

Still today, when we read or hear the teaching of Jesus from the Gospels, we immediately sense how true his words are on a very deep and existential level. You simply can't escape its message. Even after 2,000 years, it never ceases to address us and our lives, here and now. It hits the target every time again—exactly when and where we need it the most. The Jewish leader Nicodemus noticed it when he came in the middle of the night to Jesus to discuss with him—and he was overwhelmed. The Samaritan woman at the well noticed it when Jesus asked her for a drink and then offered her the water of life. She, too, was overwhelmed. No doubt, the temple guards noticed it and they were overwhelmed too.

A second way Jesus overwhelmed the crowds and even the temple guards who were sent to arrest Him, was through His divine love and compassion. Some people may disagree with that. It is true, his teachings can feel at times to be extremely tough, demanding, and uncompromising. I mean it's hard enough to love your friends and family sometimes, but come on Jesus, love even our enemies. How are we supposed to do that in a world that describes those who disagree with us as terrorists and Nazis on one side, and communists and dictators on the other? There is something gentle and compassionate about even the toughest challenges that Jesus sets before us. Jesus was so different from the teachers of the law in his time, who set the demands of the law of Moses before the people as huge obstacles on the way to salvation. Following Jesus does come with a price tag—a huge price tag. Jesus asks us to give Him our lives just as he gave his life for us. Jesus spoke to women and men whom society had rejected, with words that communicated acceptance, forgiveness, reconciliation and hope. He healed those whose sickness no one else bothered to treat. He helped those who were too weak to help themselves. In his compassion, he gave new value and meaning to those whose lives were empty and meaningless. That message of love and mercy still resounds because it fills the void in our hearts meant to be filled by God and then offers us a purpose for living. We take the message of Jesus to our

own heart when we raise funds for a sister in Christ to receive the dental care she needs to live a healthy life. Or when we come together to serve grieving families after they release their loved one to eternity. Those are just two ways we're overwhelmed by the words of Jesus in our lives. There are so many more...

When Jesus speaks, he creates a direct hotline between the loving heart of God and our hearts. We get to experience that connection on a very deep and existential level, even though we can't explain it. When Jesus speaks, you can sense God's loving presence—you can almost touch him with your hands. He wants to strengthen you and build you up in your faith. He wants you to recognize Jesus as your God, and Lord, and Savior—not just on an intellectual and theological level, but also on an existential, a deep spiritual soul level. Today I want to encourage you and challenge you to continue to let God speak to you through the words of Jesus in the Gospels—or in any other way that he chooses to speak to you right now. Allow him to reveal his truth, his love and his heart to you so that still small voice of God can come through all the Fake News that permeates our lives. As the Gospel fills you up, feel it fill the well of your soul with God's love. When your soul is overwhelmed, you too will have an unending supply of God's grace to bring to our neighbors who are still in need of that life-giving water. Trinity Lutheran Church, drink up! Amen.

*Silence may be kept for meditation...*

**\* APOSTLES' CREED**

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

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➤ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

**\* PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

**L:** Confident in your abundant grace, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

**L:** God, giver of life, your son, Jesus, risked everything to bring your word of life to people who were slow to receive him. Open our hearts so that we may receive your word and your truth with humility and grace. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

**L:** Let rivers, lakes, streams, oceans, ponds, and wells deliver clean water to all who are in need. Help us to make your earth sustainable for all who depend on it for life. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

**L:** Grant wisdom and mercy to all who lead. Grant trust and peace to all who follow. Grant faith to all who place their lives in your hands. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

**L:** Pour your healing waters upon all who suffer in all areas of life. For those who mourn, are hungry, homeless, neglected, alone, abused, addicted, imprisoned, or ill, especially... Lord, in your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

**L:** Show us the brilliant colors of the diversity in this world. Help us appreciate our differences and celebrate all that makes us unique. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

L: With all your saints we marvel at your unending persistence as you continue to pursue us and call us by name. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

P: Grateful for your everlasting faithfulness, we lift our hearts and our prayers to you, merciful God, in the name of your son, Jesus Christ.

**C: Amen.**

**\* OFFERING PRAYER**

*While the congregation is still standing say:*

P: Instead of passing the offering plate, we ask you to please place your offering in the Offering Plates conveniently located on your way out of worship. For those worshipping with us from their vehicles, there is an offering basket located near the back door of the church and for those worshipping online if you go to [www.pitsburgtlc.org](http://www.pitsburgtlc.org) you can make your offering online.

P: So, let's pray for the offerings we receive this day.... Living water, receive these gifts that we offer to you as a sign of our devotion to the one who gives life. Multiply these gifts so that your water may flow abundantly throughout the world.

**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.**

**\* 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. Sharing our life, he lived among us to reveal your glory and love, that our darkness should give way to his own brilliant light. 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:** Almighty Lord, we praise your shining light, your glowing grace. From before the earth's foundation, you loved us and promised us life forever. Within the earth's deep sadness, we laud your great and glorious might. Despite our tears and sinning, we sing of the gladness of your mercy. We praise your Son, our Morning Star. Christ is our diamond bright, our treasure dear. He is our living Savior who has ransomed us in love. He keeps us yours and fails us never—today, tomorrow, and every day.

On the night before his great salvation, he took bread and gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. With joy we tell our story: Alleluia!

**C: Alleluia!**

**P:** We call for your Spirit on us and this meal. Refresh our souls with this heavenly food, the body and blood of your Son. Nourish us as branches of your tree, and enlighten us with your undying flame. We sing out to the Father, we ring out to the Son, we exult in the Spirit. Transport us in our yearning, and be for us the end and the beginning, our purest pleasure, our victorious crown, our never-ending love.

And so we pray and praise: Amen, amen, amen, amen.

**C: Amen, amen, amen, 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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\* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

**\* INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: All who hunger or thirst are invited to the table. Jesus is the living water that gives life to all. Come, the feast is prepared 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, now and forever.

**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: God, who leads you in pathways of righteousness, who rejoices over you, and who calls you by name, ✝ bless your going out and your coming in, today and forever.

**C: Amen.**

\* **SENDING HYMN**

**“Shall We Gather at the River”**

**ELW 423**



- 1 Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,
- 2 On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,
- 3 Ere we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - 'ry bur - den down;
- 4 Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er, soon our pil - grim - age will cease;



with its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow - ing by the throne of God?  
 we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.  
 grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro - vide a robe and crown.  
 soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.



Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful riv - er;



gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.

\* **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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\* Please stand if able

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• Please be seated

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### Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

|                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ministers              | All the People of Trinity |
| Organist               | Roxanne Groff             |
| Lector                 | Linda Baker               |
| Acolyte                |                           |
| Parrish Nurse          | PJ Musser                 |
| Custodian              | Mark Groff                |
| Secretary              | Sharon Fourman            |
| Facebook Live Recorder | PJ Musser                 |
| Altar Flowers          |                           |

#### Health Tips for the Week

**BODY:** Go for a relaxing massage

**MIND:** Organize your clothes closet

**SPIRIT:** Bring a friend to church



Scripture readings for next Sunday, February 27<sup>th</sup>  
John 9:1-41



### ***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

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**This Week @ Trinity – February 6 thru February 13, 2022**

**Sun, February 20**      10:30 am    Worship Service

**Mon, February 21**      **President's Day**

**Tues, February 22**    9:00 am    Prayers & Squares Quilting

**Wed, February 23**    6:30 pm    Confirmation

**Fri, February 25**      3:30 pm    FISH Choice Food Pantry

**Sun, February 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**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Pastor:       | Mel Musser   |
| Email:        | <a href="mailto:pastor@pitsburgtlc.org">pastor@pitsburgtlc.org</a>       |
| Cell Phone:   | 937-626-7100   |
| Secretary:    | Sharon Fourman   |
| Email:        | <a href="mailto:secretary@pitsburgtlc.org">secretary@pitsburgtlc.org</a> |
| Office Hours: | By Appointment   |
| Office Phone: | 937-692-5670   |
| Website:      | <a href="http://www.pitsburgtlc.org">www.pitsburgtlc.org</a>             |

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- \* Please stand if able
  - Please be seated