

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



Christ the King Sunday
November 22, 2020

- **Prelude** “I Love to Tell the Story; It Is No Secret; Fairest Lord Jesus; Haven of Rest; Trust and Obey” **Roxanne Groff**
- **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**
- **Welcome** **Pr Mel**
- * **GATHERING SONG** “The King of Love My Shepherd Is” **LBW 456**
(Verse 1 only)

I The King of love my shep - herd is, whose good - ness
fail - eth nev - er; I noth - ing lack if
I am his and he is mine for - ev - er.

* **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 the covenant,

C: You have never failed in your promises to us, but we often fail to be your faithful people. We waste our time and resources on things which do not give life. We doubt our abilities and hide our light away from the world. We flee from your call when it doesn't appeal to us. Forgive us and call us back to your sustaining love.

P: God hears us when we repent and is quick to pardon our failures. Hear the words of your forgiveness and believe that you have been restored by your creator's great mercy and compassion. Rejoice!

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.

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*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray... God of wisdom, Your word lives within us, within our very souls. Make us living scriptures by which the world can see your love clearly demonstrated and shared. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

• SCRIPTURE READING Jeremiah 36:1-8, 21-23, 27-28 and 31:31-34

P: Our scripture reading for this morning is from Jeremiah, Chapters 31 & 36.

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

36 In the fourth year of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ²Take a scroll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah and all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah until today. ³It may be that when the house of Judah hears of all the disasters that I intend to do to them, all of them may turn from their evil ways, so that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. ⁴Then Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and Baruch wrote on a scroll at Jeremiah's dictation all the words of the Lord that he had spoken to him. ⁵And Jeremiah ordered Baruch, saying, "I am prevented from entering the house of the Lord; ⁶so you go yourself, and on a fast day in the hearing of the people in the Lord's house you shall read the words of the Lord from the scroll that you have written at my dictation. You shall read them also in the hearing of all the people of Judah who come up from their towns. ⁷It may be that their plea will come before the Lord, and that all of them will turn from their evil ways, for great is the anger and wrath that the Lord has pronounced against this people." ⁸And Baruch son of Neriah did all that the prophet Jeremiah ordered him about reading from the scroll the words of the Lord in the Lord's house. ²¹Then the king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and he took it from the chamber of Elishama the secretary; and Jehudi read it to the king and all the officials who stood beside the king. ²²Now the king was sitting in his winter apartment (it was the ninth month), and there was a fire burning in the brazier before him. ²³As Jehudi read three or four columns, the king would cut them off with a penknife and throw them into the fire in the brazier, until the entire scroll was consumed in the fire that was in the brazier. ²⁷Now, after the king had burned the scroll with the words that Baruch wrote at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ²⁸Take another scroll and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll, which King Jehoiakim of Judah has burned.

31 The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand

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to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.”

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 came to bring us God’s new covenant, Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

I love this story about re-writing this scroll... Back when I was a new Second Lieutenant in the Air Force, my first boss was a Major who was extremely picky over every written document that went out of our offices. In the Personnel business we have a ton of form letters. It seemed we had a pre-written letter for every situation. When your next assignment came, or when it was time for promotion testing, then when you got promoted, we sent you a form letter. When you were getting close to retirement, you guessed it, we sent you a letter. The trouble with form letters is that when the regulation changes sometimes the form letter needs to change too. So, one of my first projects was to review over 100 form letters, compare them to the current regulations, with all the most current changes posted, and rewrite the letters as necessary. Most of the letters only needed minor corrections such as dates or names of the commanding officers who

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signed the letters. Nevertheless, every letter I sent up the chain to my boss, Major Cecil E. Palmer III, would come back to me bleeding in red ink, even those letters with such minor changes. I would meticulously make all the changes Major Palmer required and get the package back usually within one day, only to have the letter returned with additional changes. This would go on, sometimes for weeks. Most of the time the letters would end up exactly the way I had originally drafted them. It was frustrating to say the least, especially since that wasn't my main job, it was what we called an "Additional Duty."

My Form Letter project took place in the 1st year of King, er, um, Major Palmer, or about 1985. We had the first mass produced computers with 5 ¼ inch floppy disks. So, I quickly became an expert on word processing. As frustrating as it was to reproduce all those letters, it must have been maddening for the Prophet Jeremiah to have his scribe Baruch write down all his prophesies only to have the King cut it up and burn it in the fire. At least I had the benefit of computer word processing. Jeremiah and Baruch had to start from scratch. My boss didn't like the word choices or maybe the tone of the letters, but the King to whom Jeremiah addressed this summary of his oracles didn't like the content of his preaching contained in the written document Jeremiah produced.

Up to this point Jeremiah had been a leading prophet in both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah, where the city of Jerusalem

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is located. He was called by God when he was only a boy. We don't know his exact age when God called Jeremiah, but back in Chapter, one God speaks, and tells Jeremiah He knew him even before he was conceived in his mother's womb. Before he was born, God consecrated Jeremiah to this task of speaking truth to power. Of course, Jeremiah protested, but God silenced those objections by assuring him God would be with him and deliver him. So, for the next 20 years Jeremiah pleaded with Israel and Judah to repent and return to the Lord their God. For all those 20 years they ignored Jeremiah's preaching. At one point, back in chapter 5, God tells Jeremiah to run through the streets of Jerusalem and try to find even one person who acts justly and who seeks truth. If Jeremiah could find just one righteous person God declares He would pardon the whole city. Sadly, all Jeremiah was able to find were people who felt no anguish, who failed to take correction, those who had made their faces harder than rocks, and an entire city who refused to turn back and repent. So, after 20 years, God instructs Jeremiah to summarize all his preaching into one document. This is where we pick up the story in today's text.

By this time the king was a man named Jehoiakim. He objected to being told he was a sinful king who was leading his nation astray. Jeremiah had warned the King that his actions were heading headlong toward destruction. I think it's safe to say King Jehoiakim didn't take the reading of the scroll that summarized all

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the coming destruction very well. First, Baruch read the scroll in the presence of a great number of the people from all over Judah who had come to Jerusalem for a religious fast. Now these national fasts were held during times of national distress. Judah was being threatened by the vastly superior armies of Babylon from the north. All those prophecies from the past 20 years were about to unfold. Yet, despite seeing the writing on the wall, the people continued in their own pursuits. When the court officials heard what had been read, they took the scroll to King Jehoiakim who was warming himself next to the fire pit in his winter home. They were shocked to hear of the coming desolation. The description of the reading of this scroll to the king is like something out of an ancient Hebrew Sitcom. The King was so irate he cut the scroll into pieces as it was being read to him and threw the pieces into the fire.

Nobody likes to have their actions called out, but when we stray from God, we need to be held accountable from time to time. That was the main function of the Prophets. God sent lots of them to each and every king who ruled over God's people and almost all of them either ignored their warnings, mistreated them or even murdered them. Sometimes we all act as if God will never hold us accountable for our actions. Yet, as we see over and over again in scripture, God does indeed hold both kings and paupers accountable. I know we Lutherans like to

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talk a lot about Grace, especially when we get to throw in words like free grace and unmerited mercy, but the Bible also says judgment day is coming as well.

I had the honor of visiting our oldest member this week, Lowell Schenck. He was my Jeremiah. He reminded me that there were two criminals on crosses next to Jesus. He said the one on the left derided Jesus, but the one on the right asked to be remembered when Jesus came into his kingdom. Lowell pointed out both criminals deserved what they were getting and both of them had a choice to make. Only the one who asked Jesus to remember him got to be with Jesus in paradise, that very day. The other made his choice too. Unfortunately, he remained separated from Jesus and from God. Lowell went on to tell me that he attended a church for over 16 years and never once heard the word hell mentioned, not even once. Folks, that's what Lutheran Theologian and martyr, Detrick Bonhoeffer called "Cheap Grace".

The truth is, all of God's Prophets, including Jesus, present us with a choice. They came to hold us accountable for living every day, not just Sunday morning, as if judgment day were today. Yes, Jesus came to usher in a new Covenant, just as Jeremiah foretold some 2500 years ago, but even under this new covenant, we're given the same choice. Do we follow Jesus, or do we follow the kings and queens of this world? God's new covenant might be less, "if you love, honor and praise God then God will bless you," and more, "God has already blessed you and

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so out of love and gratitude I'll love, honor and praise God," but we're still called to make a choice to follow Jesus. When we take all of God's blessings and still bow down to worship money, job, family, or possessions instead of giving God our undivided praise and worship, we're not much different than King Jehoiakim or the people under his reign. God's free Grace doesn't mean we can ignore the great commands of Jesus to love the Lord God with all our heart, strength, mind, and soul, and to love our neighbor as our self. If we choose money, or career, or family, or possessions over following Jesus we will end up in the same place as the criminal who was crucified on the left side of Jesus, alone and separated from God. Isn't that the very definition of hell? Being separated from God... I like to think God will find a way to get every single soul to heaven and I have no idea who will end up in hell, but one thing I do know is that if anyone does wind up down there, it's by their own choice...

May you read the law and the prophets and realize just how much Jesus has really done to deliver you from the consequences of your sin. May you experience the joy of being so loved by Jesus. Being loved so much He was willing to die for you in order to bring you with him into paradise. May gratitude and thanksgiving flow from that joy so that you do turn toward God and find the paradise Jesus promised his followers, not after this life, but like the criminal on Jesus' right, may

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you be with Jesus today and every day of this life in the paradise of the Kingdom of God. Amen.

Silence for reflection may follow.

*** 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 AND QUILT TYING IF QUILT IS PRESENT**

*** 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.

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*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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

A: Your word stands fast in spite of those who have disregarded, disrespected or distorted it over the ages. Continue to inspire us through the holy scriptures and other revelations of your timeless truth. God of the covenant,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As we pause this week to ponder all that we are thankful for in our lives, may your grace and faithfulness be first on our list. Bless those who travel and be present in our gatherings with loved ones, amidst the joy and occasional friction which arises at such times. God of the covenant,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: God of all creation, you have made everything good, but we do not always treat it with the care and respect it deserves. Foster in our hearts a love for this planet which strives to protect and nurture all that you have made. God of the covenant,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Heal all who have had words used against them as weapons of dogma, hatred and abuse. May they know instead words of reconciliation and atonement. Send your healing spirit to those who need it, especially... God of the covenant,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We give thanks for all who have gone before us in faith, and those who bore witness to your gospel of love in our lives. May we follow in their footsteps as signposts of grace that help others find their way to you. God of the covenant,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: Receive these prayers as parents hear the cries of their own children, and answer us in your time, in your way, for the sake of Jesus.

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 flower pot located near the back door of the church.

P: We honor your word when we live according to your ways. Accept these offerings which we present to you for the sake of your work in the world, in the power of your Spirit,

C: Amen.

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* **THE LORD’S PRAYER**

P: Jesus is the “tie that Binds us together”, let us pray as Jesus taught... I’ll lead the prayer and invite you to pray silently, trusting God hears what is on your heart...

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: May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad! The blessing of God, Sovereign, † Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always.

C: Amen.

* **SENDING HYM “God of Grace and God of Glory” LBW 415**

(Verse 1 only)



1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple
pour your pow'r; crown your an - cient chur - ch's sto - ry;
bring its bud to glo - rious flow'r. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age
for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.

* **DISMISSAL**

P: Depart in Christ’s Love.

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

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Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodians	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Flowers	Given to the Glory of God by Pastor Mel & PJ Musser
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Health Tips for the Week
BODY: Try crock pot cooking
MIND: Learn some simple sign language
SPIRIT: Give thanks to God for your many blessings



Scripture readings for next Sunday, November 29th
Daniel 6:6-27

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This Week @ Trinity – November 22 thru November 29, 2020

Sun, November 22

10:30 am Worship Service

Wed, November 25

7:00 pm Thanksgiving Eve Pastoral Message (*Virtual only*)

Thurs, November 26 *HAPPY THANKSGIVING!*

Fri, November 27 (Secretary **IN** the office.)

Sun, November 29

10:30 am Worship Service



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.

Silent Auction continues today and through next Sunday, November 29. Check out the items on display in the lobby and basement and make your bid!

THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE will be virtual only. You may view the message on Facebook Live at 7 pm and later on YouTube and our website (pitsburgtlc.org).

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