

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

Sermon Series on the Book of 2 Corinthians
Week 1
July 12, 2020



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• **Prelude** **Roxanne Groff**

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

• **Welcome** **Pr Mel**

* **HYMN OF PRAISE**



1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.
2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:
Son of God and gra - cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;
Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.
Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.
Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.
For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

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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: Loving God,

C: When our path becomes difficult, we do not always turn to you. We look for an easy way out. We escape in avoidance and addiction. We forget your promises and seek what does not satisfy. Forgive us and bring us back into the strength of your Spirit.

P: God is generous and loving and forgiving. Hear and believe that your sins are washed away and that new life is yours through Christ our Lord.

All: 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: Compassionate God, You long for your people to find consolation within your community. Bind us together as your people that we might seek to bear one another's burdens, for the sake of Christ,

C: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

P: Our scripture reading for this morning is from 2 Corinthians.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
To the church of God that is in Corinth, including all the saints throughout
Achaia: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and
the God of all consolation, ⁴who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be
able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we
ourselves are consoled by God. ⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant
for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. ⁶If we are being

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afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering.

⁷Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation. ⁸We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself. ⁹Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death so that we would rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. ¹⁰He who rescued us from so deadly a peril will continue to rescue us; on him we have set our hope that he will rescue us again, ¹¹as you also join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

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 the Our Consolation, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, amen.

Today we begin the second great series of our summer sermon series as we open Saint Paul's Second Letter to the Church he founded in the ancient Roman city of Corinth. Before we dig into God's Good News about consolation and consoling one another, there are a few background items you should know so our further exploration of this wonderful, but often overlooked book of the Bible, will make more sense.

So, first, why Second Corinthians? Why not First Corinthians? As I said, Second Corinthians is a wonderful book. It's a letter or perhaps a combination of several letters to the Church in Corinth that Paul founded in about the year 50 AD.

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He was on his second missionary journey and ended up staying in Corinth for about 18 months while the church began to grow. Paul spent a lot of time and missionary effort getting the Corinthian Church up and running. So, naturally he had a vested interest in making sure they continued proclaiming the Gospel he had taught them over that time. Remember, there is no formal scriptures, especially any New Testament yet. They had the Jewish scriptures, but Paul's letters are the earliest Christian writings from the time after Jesus death and resurrection. In Paul's other letters he wrote about the problems his congregations were experiencing and imparted his advice to them. The letter we call Second Corinthians is somewhat different from the other letters in that Paul talks much more about himself and his sufferings for the sake of spreading the Gospel message about Jesus Christ. In this letter we get to see his struggles and his insights much more than his other writings.

We should also keep in mind the Book of Second Corinthians is probably not a single letter, but rather a composite of letter fragments that have been edited together, most likely by one of the members of the Corinthian Church. Also, it's most certainly not the second letter Paul wrote to the church at Corinth. In fact, the book we call First Corinthians is most certainly not Paul's first letter either. In

both First and Second Corinthians, there are references to other letters which have been lost in time.

Finally, by way of background, the city of Corinth is a very ancient city. Historical evidence shows the site was inhabited as far back as 3000 years BC. The city was destroyed in 146 BC when the Romans burned it to the ground. Julius Caesar rebuilt it about 100 years later in 44 BC, largely on the backs of Jewish slaves. During Jesus' and Paul's day, Corinth was a large Roman city and the capital city of the Roman Province of Achaia. Corinth was a gateway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Aegean Sea. Because of its strategic location it was an important site for trade. Ships would dock on one side of the city, unload their merchandise and carry it overland to the opposite side and reload it onto another ship for transport to the final destination. Because of this, there was a lot of travel through Corinth and a lot of jobs. Many people from all over the world ended up staying and making a life in Corinth. There's a lot of commentary about the immorality, especially the sexual immorality of the Corinthians. That was one of the problems Paul addressed in First Corinthians. Immorality isn't so important an issue in the second book. In Second Corinthians, Paul is much more concerned with the internal relations within the church.

By the time Paul wrote this letter, he had been concerned for a number of years about the church he spent so much effort starting. There is evidence Paul made a visit to Corinth that didn't turn out well. By his visit he actually made the situation worse. After that visit he sent a letter that unfortunately no longer exists, but Paul refers to it in Second Corinthians and is known as the Letter of Tears. We don't know the final outcome of Paul's relationship with the congregation at Corinth, nor do we have a complete understanding of all the details of the various problems his letters address. Much of that has been lost in history. Fortunately, our understanding of what Paul was saying to the Corinthians doesn't depend on a full and final solution to all the questions regarding the number of letters, the exact timing of the visits by Paul and his associates, or the specific details of the issues facing the Church addressed in the letters. We do get enough of the details to understand some very basic truths about how churches function from studying and learning from this congregation of believers who caused Paul so much worry and grief and that's what makes a sermon series on Second Corinthians worthwhile for us or any modern day congregation.

For one thing the Corinthians were divided over basic tenants of their faith. When Paul called them out on beliefs and practices that were not in line with the Gospel, some in the congregation questioned his authority. While Paul was with

them in the beginning for those 18 months, he was their source of information about Jesus Christ, the resurrection, and their salvation. After he left to start the church at Ephesus, other people, calling themselves “apostles,” came and preached and taught a gospel that differed from what Paul had taught. This is why Paul begins this letter by reinforcing his calling as an Apostle by the will of God. He wasn’t hired by a church committee or decided on his own he had the truth of the Gospel. He was called and appointed by the will of God.

When Paul left Corinth to continue spreading the Gospel in other cities there was a leadership and pastoral vacuum. Into that vacancy the people began to listen to other voices. In addition to these faux apostles, others tried to bring their previous religious experiences and beliefs into the Church’s mainline teaching. In today’s church we try to overcome many of these issues through a rigorous call process and extensive seminary training. Before one can assume the role of Pastor in the Lutheran tradition, the call and will of God must be recognized in the life of the person desiring to fill the role of Pastor. A congregation council who knows the person’s background, character, and lifestyle must recommend that person for candidacy into the Ministry. After at least four long years of learning and constant evaluation, if God’s call on the individual is still recognized by this committee of other Christ followers, only then is the person eligible for a call by a congregation.

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Once again, our Church relies on the call and will of God. If a potential congregation also recognizes the will of God and God's call on the person's life, only then can he or she be ordained as a Pastor.

The function of a pastor in our ELCA tradition helps ensure our preaching and teaching are consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and about Jesus Christ. I may not be a perfect leader, nor am I the best scholar when it comes to always having the right answer to deep mysteries of our faith, but I do know God has called me and I'm only here by God's grace. I also know God has stepped in and has led me through some very sticky times. I know how Paul felt when the Church didn't recognize his authority. I left my first call feeling that way.

The time between leaving my first call and being called here at Trinity was pretty rough. For a while, I didn't have the consolation of a supportive congregation. Then one of my colleagues, Pastor Peter Kruse reached out and invited me to come to his Church. There, I found the kind of consolation Paul describes in these verses from the opening chapter of Second Corinthians. We joined the Church that became Arise in Christ Lutheran Church, in Donnelsville. The consolation we're capable of as a Church is something you can't get from any other organization. I owe a debt of gratitude to Pastor Peter Kruse and the good people of Arise in Christ. Without Pastor Peter reaching out to me when I was at

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my lowest and that congregation reaffirming my confidence in the Gospel, I most certainly would not be your pastor today. That kind of love is what sets the Church apart from all other manmade groups, societies or associations. We offer one thing you can't get anywhere else and that's judgment free acceptance and forgiveness. It's the kind of love God has for you and me. We call it agape love or love without condition. It's a love that says God has first loved me and so I am free to love my neighbor. When we're the Church at its best we are God's house of love.

I thank God for calling me to this congregation. In this place I know we reach out to our neighbor in love. I've witnessed and been privileged to be a part of offering the kind of consolation Paul describes in these verses. May God continue to console us and may we continue to be a conduit of that love and consolation. May Trinity always be that loving place where people are encouraged and uplifted. May we continue to seek new opportunities to minister to and for people who need God's consolation. May agape, self-giving love always guide us in the way we treat each other and those around us. Amen.

Silence for reflection may follow

*** 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.**

➤ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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

L: We share the joys and griefs of our community, O God. Give us compassionate hearts when others are suffering and cheerful souls when our neighbors are doing well, for we are all joined together in one family. Gracious God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: In places where discrimination and hatred still hold fast, send your cleansing and chastening Spirit, O Lord. Reform minds that have been misled and heal hearts that have suffered abuse. Gracious God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: When we look around at the harm and pollution which we have caused in this world, it is easy to despair. Instead, inspire us to devote ourselves to the renewal and restoration of your creation, for the sake of those who will come after us. Gracious God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: To all those whose suffering is so great that they desire their lives to be over, grant your comfort and never-failing presence. Use us to bring comfort and consolation so your love can grow. Send your healing Spirit to the ones whom we know need it most... Especially we pray for... Gracious God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We celebrate the life of all those who work for unity, cooperation and justice. Use your Church to bring healing to cities where divisions of race have led to violence. Give us hearts like theirs, and open us to new pathways of understanding those who are different from us and help us work to make all

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people know your love. Gracious God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Your hands are strong enough to hold all our concerns, and your heart compassionate enough for all our griefs. Hold us together in your love, and in the presence of Jesus Christ our Lord, 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

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

P: Bless these gifts which we now bring to your altar, O Lord, and may they be blessings for the community of your people worldwide, wherever there is need. In Jesus' holy name we pray,

C: Amen.

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Jesus is the "tie that Binds us together", 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.

• ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** SENDING BLESSING**

P: Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love.

C: Amen.

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* **SENDING HYMN**

God of Grace and God of Glory



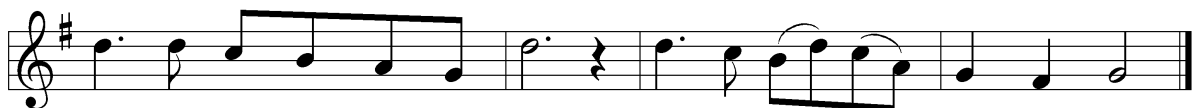
1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple
2 Lo! The hosts of e - vil round us scorn the Christ, as -
3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
4 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils



pour your pow'r; crown your an - cient chur - ch's sto - ry;
sail his ways! From the fears that long have bound us
your con - trol; shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness,
we de - plore; let the gift of your sal - va - tion



bring its bud to glo - rious flow'r. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age
free our hearts to faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age
rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,



for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
lest we miss your king - dom's goal, lest we miss your king - dom's goal.
serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore.

* **DISMISSAL**

P: Depart in Christ's Love.

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

Postlude

Roxanne Groff

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Lector	N/A
Acolyte	N/A
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Greeters	Dean Thompson
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
FaceBook Live Recorder	PJ Musser

Health Tips for the Week

BODY: Get your hearing checked
MIND: Study about a famous inventor
SPIRIT: Be Still-Listen to Nature



This Week @ Trinity – July 12 thru July 19, 2020

Sun, June 12

10:30 am Worship Service

Wed, July 15

6:30 pm Finance Team Meeting
 7:30 pm Trinity Council Meeting

Fri, July 17

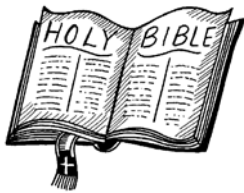
3:30 pm FISH Pantry @ 400 Markwith, Greenville OH

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Sun, July 19

10:30 am Worship Service

Newsletter Deadline is Tuesday, July 21st. Please send all news items to secretary@pitsburgtlc.org to be included in the August issue!



Scripture readings for next Sunday, July 19th
2 Corinthians 2:1-10

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