

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



**Fish for People**  
**January 24, 2021**

- **Prelude**      **“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus; Brightest and Best;  
I Cannot Tell; Lord, We Praise You”**    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 light,

**C: You light a fire within us and ask us to shine, but we are quick to hide and make excuses. We shrink from challenges, avoid responsibility, and deny the goodness of your creation. We seek hollow praise and then don't believe it. Forgive us for hiding our God-given light and remaining self-absorbed.**

P: Children of God, never fear, for you have always lived in the mercy of your creator. Hear the words of absolution and believe them: you are forgiven, you are made whole, you are restored to God. Hallelujah!

**C: Amen.**

\* **HYMN OF PRAISE**

**“I Love to Tell the Story”**

**LBW 390**



1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,



of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.



I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know it's true;



it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else would do.

*Refrain*



I love to tell the sto - ry; I'll sing this theme in glo - ry



and tell the old, old sto - ry of Je - sus and his love.

\* **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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\* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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**\* PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Wondrous God, You turned fishermen into disciples, teachers, and healers.  
Transform us in the ways which serve you best, and lead us fearlessly forward  
in faith.

**C: Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 5:1-11**

P: Our scripture reading for this morning is from Luke, Chapter 5.

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

**5** Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, <sup>2</sup>he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup>He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. <sup>4</sup>When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” <sup>5</sup>Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” <sup>6</sup>When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. <sup>7</sup>So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup>But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” <sup>9</sup>For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; <sup>10</sup>and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” <sup>11</sup>When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ (*Spoken*)**

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\* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

- **SERMON**

**Pr Mel Musser**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the great fisherman, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

I wish I had this great fishing story to lead with this morning. It just seems right to talk about that time when I had the big one on the hook, how I'd plied the rod and reel for what seemed like an eternity giving out line and reeling it back in to tire out the huge fish. Then, how I finally got him up to the side of the boat and lifted him out of the water and into my net. How all my friends on the fishing trip congratulated me for nabbing the biggest fish of the day as we posed for pictorial proof of the size of that leviathan I'd pulled up. How I singlehandedly caught, filleted, and cooked the huge monster. I wish I had such a story to tell... The last time I was on a boat fishing, my son, brother-in-law, son-in-law, and nephews took a header boat out on the great sea to the north, Lake Erie. We fished all day, battling the waves and running away from pop-up storms on the lake. In the end I didn't even catch a fish worthy to be brought in.

I don't make a very good fisherman, but Simon, James, and John were professionals. They caught fish for a living. They understood the lake, the weather, and the patterns of the schools of fish in that lake. When Jesus asked Simon to go out to the deep water and try one more time, he objected, but did as

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\* Please stand if able

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Jesus asked. He was already finished for the night and was cleaning the seaweed out of the nets and sewing up any holes that might let fish escape the next time they put out to sea. These highly trained Fishing experts had done everything they knew how to do, all night long and had caught Bupkis. You can almost hear the thoughts running through Simon's brain... "Who is this guy? What makes him think he can tell me how and where to find fish." He even informs Jesus they had already been out there all night. Then he thinks to himself, like guys do, "what have I got to lose... I'm already the laughingstock of the pier, coming up empty after being out all night... Ok Jesus let's put out to the deep water." We all know the rest of the story. From John's Gospel we know that about 153 fish would stretch the limits for one of the boats, but on this day, the catch was so big it filled 2 boats to the point of sinking. It was a miracle!

Yes, it was a miracle, but that's not the point of Luke's story. Simon, later called Peter, was already familiar with this man called Jesus. He had heard rumors of people being healed and something about a bunch of water being turned into wine at a wedding not too far away in Cana. Wherever Jesus went he amazed the people by his words and the authority by which he spoke them. Now this Jewish Rabbi had demonstrated his authority over not just the words of scripture, but also over nature itself. This is a miracle story, but so much more. Some scholars refer

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to it as a call story. The call of Jesus first disciples, where the miracle only serves to advance the plot of the story and make Simon Peter aware of who this Jesus really is. From the miraculous catch, Peter figures out he's in the presence of the divine and realizes his own sinfulness. He falls to his knees and begs Jesus to leave him. After being reassured by Jesus, Simon and his partners James and John leave everything behind and they all follow Jesus.

It's a good fish story, but what are we to learn from it and what importance is it for our lives today? With the possible exception of Mark Brumbaugh, none of us has ever made our living fishing. At most we only go out on the water as a hobby. For most of us, the context and underlying nuances are lost. So, here's how I understand this story... Let's imagine Simon, James, and John are stand-ins for people. Most people, like Simon, have heard stories about Jesus. Some have even read his books... Many might even admire Jesus as a good man, a great teacher, or a supernatural miracle worker. Almost everyone today knows a bit about Jesus, but they aren't his followers or disciples. Something happened that day for Simon and it fundamentally changed who he was, to the point where it even changed his name. What happened? He encountered the Son of God. He saw in Jesus something more than just a great man, teacher, Rabbi, or miracle worker. The scales fell from his eyes and he was able to see, in Jesus, the presence

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of God. His first reaction, like many others since, was to fall to his knees and confess his sinful nature.

Today, most of us would never think to do that. We're taught from the time we're toddlers that we're mostly good, well at least pretty good people. I mean in our congregation look how many of us are involved in so many ministries... We're basically good people, right? We're so conditioned to think about the good things we do, we forget our true nature and the old Adam and Eve that still live inside each of us. In true Godly style, Jesus calms Simon-Peter's fears and invites him to use his fishing skills to catch people for the Kingdom of God. In one sentence Jesus lets Simon know he is forgiven and despite his sinful nature, God has a use for him. I said in true Godly style because that's exactly the way God works, and the type of people God chooses to work through. Ordinary, sinful, and sometimes broken people are best suited for work in the Kingdom of God...

Being a fisherman is hard work and it was even harder during the time of Jesus. They spent a lot of time cleaning and mending their nets. Their boats and their nets were more than simple possessions. They represented their entire way of life. They spent the vast majority of their waking hours either out on the water, in their boats, casting their nets or on the beach cleaning and fixing both boat and net.

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Yet after this encounter with the divine presence of God, they left everything to follow Jesus.

If you would ever have such an encounter with Jesus what would you do? What holds you back from following him more closely? Simon, James and John had a fishing business with at least 2 boats that we know of and all their nets. Even more than boats and nets they up and left that great catch of fish right there on the dock. We all have something holding us back. I almost never made it through seminary because I was held back by the love of my family. For my third year of Seminary training I interviewed for lots of internship positions, but the ones that felt like a match between me and the potential Pastor Supervisor were all in far away places like Texas or Iowa. The closest one I thought was even remotely right for me was in Toledo. All of these potential internship sites would have required me to move and leave my family behind. I wasn't willing to make that sacrifice. It literally came down to the last day of the selections, when I was surprised by my Former Pastor and mentor Pastor Craig Fourman. His church, Abiding Christ, in Fairborn had agreed to help the Lutheran Church in Xenia with the cost of having me as their intern. I ended up having one of the best years of my life learning and studying with Pastor Glen Bengson. Without the assistance from Abiding Christ, I would have been stuck with my boats and nets because I couldn't leave them

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behind. From that experience, I learned that when God calls and you have a desire to answer the call, miraculous things suddenly begin to happen. That's only one of the many miracles that brought this sinful, broken person to fall to my knees, declare my unworthiness, but then get up and go where Jesus leads.

There have been so many other such small miracles I can no longer count them all, but the point of any miracle is to help us see the presence of the Holy and Divine God working in our lives. I know you have had those same God moments, where you had such a clear encounter with the divine you were humbled, forgiven, joyful, and thankful all at the same time. It's like an overflowing cup. May Jesus come into each of our lives every day with the same authority and power he had in Simon Peter's life. May we, as individual disciples of Jesus or as a congregation, never refuse to put out to the deep water and try one more time to follow where Jesus bids us go. Even if it seems like we've been fishing the same pond for years without catching a single fish. May our perseverance in following our Master and our King fill our days with life and joy. May your fishing be an adventure and the catch miraculous! Amen.

*Silence for reflection may follow*

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**\* 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**

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

*A brief silence.*

L: You amaze us with how well you know us. You invite us to know ourselves more deeply through serving you. Give us the courage to follow where you are leading. Inviting God,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: As a new presidential term begins we pray your blessing upon this land and all of its people, that everyone would find a way to contribute and flourish within the fabric of society, and that we would truly accept the gifts of those who differ from us. Inviting God,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: As disciples gathered great multitudes of fish from the sea, so they in turn gathered the multitudes of people longing to hear the good news. May we capture hearts with your words of life, and demonstrate how your love embraces your whole creation. Inviting God,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: Sometimes the unfamiliar is where we need to go to find our true home. Shake us out of inertia and disrupt our lives with your healing Spirit. Bless those who need it most today... We especially lift up to your throne of Grace...  
Inviting God,

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\* Please stand if able

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**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: We may never know the kind of persecution which your saints and martyrs have suffered, yet their lives stand as beacons of faith to inspire and draw us forward. Join our songs of praise with theirs and bring us all together on the last day. Inviting God,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

*Here other petitions may be offered.*

L: Receive our prayers and shed light on our path as we seek to walk in your ways and bring glory to you through your son Jesus, our Lord.

**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: You have given us much, O Lord, and so we give back. Bless these offerings of our lives and our livelihood. Use them for your good purposes in the world, and use our lives to serve your children,

**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.**

**\* 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.**

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\* Please stand if able

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• **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

\* **SENDING BLESSING**

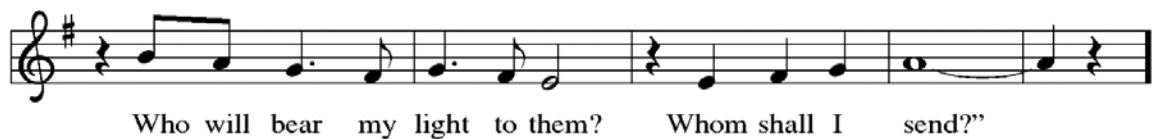
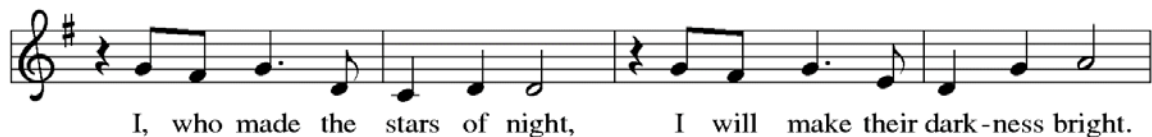
P: God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the comforter ✚ keep you in peace.

C: Amen.

\* **SENDING HYMN**

**“Here I Am, Lord”**

**ELW 574**



\* **DISMISSAL**

P: Depart in Christ’s Love.

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

\* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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**Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff**

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	Dean Thompson
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser

**Health Tips for the Week**  
**BODY:** Drink more water  
**MIND:** Read a poem  
**SPIRIT:** Give your loved ones a hug



Scripture readings for next Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>  
 Luke 6:1-16

***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



**This Week @ Trinity –January 24 thru January 31, 2021**

**Sun, January 24**

10:30 am      Worship Service

**Wed, January 27**

6:30 pm      Confirmation Class

**Thurs, January 28**

7:00 pm      ~~Trinity Bible/Book Club~~

**Fri, January 29**

3:30 pm      FISH Choice Food Pantry

**Sun, January 31 -**

10:30 am      Worship Service

**Trinity Contact Info**

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