

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



Lament Over Jerusalem
February 28, 2021



1 “I was there to hear your born-ing cry, I’ll be there when you are old.
2 “When you heard the won - der of the Word I was there to cheer you on;



I re - joiced the day you were bap - tized to see your life un - fold.
you were raised to praise the liv - ing Lord, to whom you now be - long.



I was there when you were but a child, with a faith to suit you well;
If you find some-one to share your time and you join your hearts as one,



in a blaze of light you wan - dered off to find where de - mons dwell.”
I’ll be there to make your vers - es rhyme from dusk till ris - ing sun.”

• Presentation

P: In Holy Baptism our gracious heavenly Father liberates us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are born children of a fallen humanity; in the waters of Baptism we are reborn children of God and inheritors of eternal life. By water and the Holy Spirit, we are made members of the Church which is the body of Christ. As we live with him and with his people, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God.

The sponsors and parents present Scarlett for Baptism.

We present Scarlett Danielle Kemper to receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

The minister addresses the sponsors and parents.

P: In Christian love you have presented *Scarlett* for Holy Baptism. You should, therefore, faithfully bring *her* to the services of God’s house, and teach *her* the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. As *she* grows in years, you should place in *her* hands the Holy Scriptures and provide for *her* instruction in the Christian faith, that, living in the covenant of *her* Baptism

and in communion with the Church, *she* may lead a *godly life* until the day of Jesus Christ. Do you promise to fulfill these obligations?

Sponsors and Parents: We do.

P: Congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church, do you promise to assist these sponsors and parents to fulfill these obligations?

C: We do and we ask God to help and guide us.

*** THANKSGIVING**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

P: Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: We give you thanks, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and you created heaven and earth. By the gift of water you nourish and sustain us and all living things. By the waters of the flood you condemned the wicked and saved those whom you had chosen, Noah and his family. You led Israel by the pillar of cloud and fire through the sea, out of slavery into the freedom of the promised land. In the waters of the Jordan your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Spirit. By the baptism of his own death and resurrection your beloved Son has set us free from the bondage to sin and death, and has opened the way to the joy and freedom of everlasting life. He made water a sign of the kingdom and of cleansing and rebirth. In obedience to his command, we make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Pour out your Holy Spirit, so that *Scarlett Danielle Kemper* who is about to be here baptized may be given new life. Wash away *her* sin, cleanse *her* by this water, and bring *her* forth as *an heir* of your glorious kingdom.

To you be given praise and honor and worship through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C: Amen

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The minister addresses the baptismal group and the congregation.

P: I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church, the faith in which we baptize. Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil, and all his empty promises?

C: I do.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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P: Do you believe in God the Father?

C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

P: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

C: 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.

P: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

C: 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.

BAPTISM

The minister baptizes the candidate.

Scarlett Danielle Kemper, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we give you thanks for freeing your sons and daughters from the power of sin and for raising them up to a new life through this holy sacrament. Pour your Holy Spirit upon *Scarlett*: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence.

C: Amen

P: *Scarlett Danielle Kemper*, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

C: Amen

A lighted candle may be given to the sponsor of a young child by a representative of the congregation who says:

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

R: Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

P: O God, the giver of all life, look with kindness upon *Jesse and Tracy*. Let them ever rejoice in the gift you have given them. Make them teachers and examples of righteousness for this child you have given to them. Strengthen them in their own Baptism so they may share eternally with *Scarlett*, the salvation you have given them, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

• WELCOME

The ministers and the baptismal group turn toward the congregation; a representative of the congregation says:

P: Through Baptism God has made *Scarlett* our new *sister* in Christ and a fellow member of the priesthood we all share in Christ Jesus, that together we may proclaim the praise of God and bear his creative and redeeming Word to all the world.

C: **We welcome you into the Lord's family. We receive you as a fellow member of the body of Christ, child of the same heavenly Father, and a worker with us in the kingdom of God.**

All return to their places and the Service continues with verses 3&4 of Baptismal Song.

* BAPTISMAL SONG "Borning Cry" (Verses 3 & 4)

ELW 732



3 "In the mid-dle a - ges of your life, not too old, no lon - ger young,



I'll be there to guide you through the night, com-plete what I've be - gun.



When the eve - ning gent - ly clos - es in and you shut your wea - ry eyes,



I'll be there as I have al - ways been, with just one more sur - prise."



4 "I was there to hear your born-ing cry, I'll be there when you are old.



I re - joiced the day you were bap - tized to see your life un - fold."

* PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Merciful God, You long for your people to bear the fruits of mercy and repentance. Tend and guide our growth into a faithful nation who serves you and the people you love, for the sake of Jesus.

C: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 13:1-9, 31-35

P: Our scripture reading for this morning is from Luke, Chapter 13.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

13 At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²He asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? ³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. ⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”

⁶Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ ⁸He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

³¹At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” ³²He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. ³³Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’

³⁴Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

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 one who never gives up on you, Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

I have to admit, this was a hard week for me wrestling with this Gospel text. I mean this text could have been divided up into at least 3, maybe 4 different texts. We go from Jesus learning about two different tragedies. One where the Governor, Pontius Pilate murdered some folks from Galilee while they were worshipping at the Temple. Some of their blood mingled with the blood of their sacrifice. This was a sacrilege. The other involved a tower collapsing and killing some 18 people. In response to this news, Jesus gives a teaching about repentance. He moves directly into a parable about the unfruitful fig tree. From there we skip over several verses and take up the story with Jesus being warned by the Pharisees that Herod was out to get him, and He should run away. Jesus then prophesies about the remaining work He still has to accomplish before going into Jerusalem. Jesus then takes a rare moment to reflect and lament over the city of Jerusalem. See what I mean? There's a lot of seemingly unconnected stories jammed into this Gospel text. It would take an entire sermon for each one... It might make a good sermon series, but we don't have the time or scope for that.

So, I tried to pick one part of this massive text to relate the Gospel of Jesus. First the story about the disasters. Yes, life is too short and fragile. Nobody knows how long we have on earth. The best way to live in that uncertainty is to live a life of repentance where you recognize your sin and confess it to God. Then walk

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- * Please stand if able
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blamelessly, serving God by serving our neighbor. OK, I get that message, but I don't find a lot of Gospel, Good News in that message...

Then I looked at the end to the text to the stories about Herod the fox and Jesus lamenting over the city of Jerusalem. Hard to find any Good News there... That left me with the fig tree... I admit, I don't know much about fig trees, but here's what I do know. A typical fig tree will take about 3 years before it can be expected to produce figs. So, in our parable Jesus says the landowner had come three times expecting to gather fruit. That means the tree was already at least 6 years old. We also know the gardener doesn't want to give up because he's the one who started the tree from a sapling and had nurtured it this far. If they cut the tree down now, he'll have to start over from scratch with another sapling. The gardener has a vested interest in keeping the tree a while longer so that all his work hasn't been in vain. He doesn't want to give up on the tree just yet...

I read a story about Winston Churchill this week. He was giving the commencement address at Harrow School in England in 1941. Do you remember what was happening in England in 1941? Britain was being bombed almost daily by the German Luftwaffe. The British people were well on the way to despair. Out of that context there arose an urban legend about this speech that Mr. Churchill gave. He was given a very long and glorious introduction and he came to the

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podium cleared his throat and said, “Never give up.” Then he returned to his seat and sat down. After several awkward moments, he came back to the podium and said it again, “Never give up.” He then went back and sat down. It’s said he returned to that podium 5 times and each time he repeated the words, “Never give up.” Unfortunately, I couldn’t find any corroboration for that urban myth, but he did give a speech at the Harrow School in 1941 where he said, “Never give in...” He added some qualifying weasel words that would allow you to get out of taking a position on any topic if you weren’t convinced in your conscience... Even though it was probably never said, it’s still good advice for us. Never give up is good advice when you’re facing the negative side of life. It’s good advice when you’re working hard to fulfill your life’s dream or your goals. It’s good advice in our prayer life when we pray for someone or for something. Never give up! Even when you can’t see any progress whatsoever, you never know what the future holds and when your efforts might be ready to pay big dividends.

To never give up is a nice slogan or way to encourage a friend having a bad day, but what about when you’re facing the daily bombardment of life’s liquid do-do? Where does the hope for a better tomorrow come from when all you know is defeat and failure? When temples and churches are no longer safe sanctuaries and when towers fall, killing many people, what keeps you strong in your faith?

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When a community loses an 11-year-old boy to suicide, how can we still believe in a loving, and almighty God...

When you start asking these kinds of questions, maybe the committee that put all these stories together for this Sunday was smarter than I gave them credit. Jesus doesn't give any answer to why these bad things happened. My belief is that although God most certainly is almighty, God doesn't normally intervene in human history because when the world was created, God gave humans freedom of will, to act and do what we want. From that moment on, God has never stopped wooing humanity into this never-ending love affair. God loves us and desperately wants us to love God too.

That brings us to the fig tree... We've all heard the allegorical way this has been interpreted. The Landowner is God. The vineyard is the Church, the fig tree is you and or me. The gardener is Jesus... So, Jesus buys us more time in the hope we will bare fruit. In the meanwhile, Jesus tills around our roots, covers us in manure, and gives us plenty of water and sunshine to produce the fruit we were made to produce. That allegory works for the most part, but what if we turned it on its heels. Suppose we're the landowners, Jesus is still the gardener and God is the fig tree. When bad things happen do you turn away from God or till the soil of your faith and talk to the pastor so he or she can add a little manure, and give God

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more time to make God's plan known. In other words, do you become jaded and cynical when the world doesn't go your way, or do you turn back even more to God, increasing your prayers and trusting all the more? By the way, when Jesus called for the people to repent when they learn about the bad news our world serves up on a daily basis, the Greek word he used is μετανοέω (*Metanao*), which literally means to change directions, in this case to return to God...

It sounds really good on paper. All we have to do when things go south is repent or turn back to our God. If only it were so easy... We don't do it, maybe we can't do it because we're broken and sinful from the inside out... In our text we skip from this parable of the fig tree directly to the warning about Herod, Jesus showing His bravado in continuing on his very long and circuitous journey to Jerusalem, and His pause to lament over the people's rejection of God's prophets, including himself. In this scenario, we're the ones who give up and want to cut the tree down. We're the ones who give up on God. We're the ones who need to hear those words probably not spoken by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in the midst of German bombing, "Never Give Up!" When towers fall, when sickness comes, when death pays its unwanted visit, listen to Jesus and return to God where you will find love, and peace. The message of the fig tree is for us. It reminds us that God is full of mercy and never gives up on you or on me, but it

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also calls us to never give up on God—to never stop praying and hoping and trusting in God’s love and mercy.

Today, we welcomed another sister into the Body of Christ. Another fig tree sapling was planted in God’s Kingdom. It’s now our job to nurture her and teach her the ways of this Kingdom she is now a part of. Scarlett was born a sinner. She was crucified with Christ and drown in the waters of Baptism. She has also risen with Christ now clothed in His righteousness and completely covered by God’s grace. The same grace that saved a sinner like me and you. Let’s pray she produces much fruit for the Kingdom of God!

I imagine a longer ending to this little parable of the fig tree. Suppose the gardener does fertilize, till and water the fig tree another year. Suppose the sun shined down and all the conditions were exactly perfect for fig production, but when the landowner returns the next year there’s still no figs. The way my parable goes the gardener begs for another year to till and water and fertilize. The owner grants the gardener another year and then another, and another...

May the tragedies of this life grab your attention and help you focus more on the God who loves you and never gives up on you. May you find the faith to trust Jesus even when temples and towers are falling. May you return to God’s love and care where peace is yours and each obstacle in life only brings you closer to God

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who grants us another year – another chance for repentance – another chance to receive God’s amazing grace. Amen.

Silence for reflection may follow

• **SPECIAL MUSIC**

Jake Angles

* **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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

A brief silence.

L: You give us endless chances to show your love in our lives, although we do not always take them. Open our hearts to see the world with the same compassion that you do, and treat others with the grace you have given us. God of mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We pray for peace in the Holy Land and for reconciliation between its peoples. Soften hearts that have hardened and forgive those who have succumbed to hatred. God of mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Even amidst the curses of pollution, endangerment and exploitation, this earth and its creatures continue to endure and thrive. Make us willing and dedicated partners committed to the renewal of our environment. God of mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Disease and disaster are not punishments for sin, but rather reflections of a broken and imperfect world. Strengthen all who suffer adversity of any kind and who need a special measure of your healing, especially... God of mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We remember Linus Pauling and all scientists who use their gifts for the benefit of people and the advancement of peace upon the planet. Inspire us through his witness to discern where our own gifts are most needed. God of mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

* Please stand if able

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Here other petitions may be offered.

P: You hear all your children's prayers and gather the lost into your loving arms.
Teach us to put our trust in you, and in our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

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.

*** 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 demand faithfulness and not perfection, O God. May these offerings be true reflections of our gratitude for your gifts, and may they be blessed to benefit those who need them, by the power of your Spirit.

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: You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.

C: Amen.

* Please stand if able

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* **SENDING HYMN** **“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”** **LBW 221**

1 Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,
2 With praise and thanksgiving to God ever-living,
the peo - ple of God from this dwell - ing take leave.
the tasks of our ev - 'ry - day life we will face—
The sup - er is end - ed, Oh, now be ex - tend - ed
our faith ev - er shar - ing, in love ev - er car - ing,
the fruits of this ser - vice in all who be - lieve.
em - brac - ing God's chil - dren, the whole hu - man race.
The seed of Christ's teach - ing, re - cep - tive souls
With your feast you feed us, with your light now
reach - ing, shall blos - som in ac - tion for God and for all.
lead us; u - nite us as one in this life that we share.
Your grace shall in - cite us, your love shall u - nite us
Then may all the liv - ing with praise and thanks - giv - ing
to work for your king - dom and an - swer your call.
give hon - or to Christ and his name that we bear.

* **DISMISSAL**

P: Until we gather to Worship our great God next time, depart in Christ’s Love,
C: **Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!**

* **POSTLUDE** **“When the Lord Saved Me”** **Roxanne Groff**

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	Teresa Neitzelt
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser
Altar Flowers	<i>There are no altar flowers during Lent.</i>

Health Tips for the Week
BODY: Get a pedicure
MIND: Call a friend
SPIRIT: Spend a quiet moment at church



Scripture readings for next Sunday, March 7th
 Luke 15:1-32

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 worship from your car.

This Week @ Trinity –February 28 thru March 7, 2021

Sun, February 28

10:30 am Worship Service

Wed, March 3

6:30 pm WELCA Meeting
 Lenten Drama Monolog–Testimony of the Basket Maker

Fri, March 5

3:30 pm FISH Choice Food Pantry

Sun, March 7

10:30 am Worship Service

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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

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