

## TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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(A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

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### Pentecost 4

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Forty days after Easter, Jesus ascended into heaven. What this biblical truth means is that Jesus removed His visible presence from us. There are some who incorrectly believe that since Jesus is “physically” in heaven, He’s “trapped” there and cannot be “present” on earth. But Scripture clearly teaches that our Savior, who is both God and man in one person, can be physically present in more than one place at a time (**Matthew 28:20**). For example, Jesus gives us His very body and blood, His “real presence,” when Christians—even at differing locations—celebrate the Lord’s Supper.

In a somewhat similar fashion, Jesus also spoke of the “kingdom of God.” Often, people think of such a kingdom in an earthly, physical manner, such as an empire on earth. Even Jesus’ disciples at times misunderstood, thinking that His kingdom would be a visible kingdom on earth (**Acts 1:6**).

But Jesus reminds all that His kingdom is “*not of this world*” (**John 18:36**). Rather, the “kingdom of God” is a spiritual kingdom; it’s Jesus’ ruling activity in the hearts and lives of His believers. That’s an important truth to remember as we carry out our Savior’s Great Commission—where He emphasized to His disciples right before ascending into heaven—“*Therefore go and gather disciples from all nations*” (**Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8**).

Our readings for Pentecost 4 stress faithfulness to using God’s word to grow His kingdom and to “*walk by faith and not by sight*,” especially when we may not always “see” the kingdom of God growing as we believe it should. What may be “invisible” to us, however, is clearly visible to God (**1 Samuel 16:7**).

Order of Worship: ELH Page 60 with communion.

Hymns: 474, 252, 313 (1, 3),

### THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

*Old Testament: Ezekiel 17:22-24.* The church of every age should, according to human reason, perish. And to be sure, if it were up to the merit of her members or the whim of the world, she would perish in an instant. But it is not up to men. God Himself renews her, sustains her, strengthens her, and gives her fruit. Her ultimate goal and glory is to glorify her Lord, who keeps His promise that all may know that He alone is the Savior.

*Psalm of the Day: Psalm 92.* We are the plantings of the Lord in His household, the Church. Since that is altogether His doing and not the result of our merit or decision, we give Him thanks, worship and adore His grace. (*Supplement*).

*Epistle: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10.* Were we to judge only by sight, our whole existence would be one of doom and despair. For mortality is our inheritance as the result of sin. Even now the house in which we live, the one seen, is decaying. Nevertheless, we are confident and courageous. God Himself has come with His Spirit to live in us by His Word. He is not mortal, nor is the life He gives in the gospel. Not for death and decay did He save us, but for immortality with Him.

*Verse of the Day:* Alleluia. May your priests be clothed with righteousness. May your favored ones shout for joy. Alleluia. (Psalm 132:9, EHV)

*Gospel: Mark 4:26-34.* The church father, St. Augustine, said that all things in the visible world mirror something in the spiritual world. How lowly is the sowing of seed in the dirt; how wondrous the result! How insignificant, almost invisible, the mustard seed; how magnificent its growth! The lowly Word is preached and life comes to the dead soil of the human heart. The lowly Word grows into the magnificent planting of the Lord and performs its functions to the glory of God in the world. We do not understand it; we do not always see it. But the Lord speaks, and it is done!

*Sermon: 2 Corinthians 5:1-10*

*Theme - “Walk By Faith, Not By Sight”*

Points to ponder from the day’s Scripture readings:

- Old Testament: How does the LORD explain that the “success” of the church is up to Him and not to man?
- Epistle: How does God through Paul explain that the “success” of the church remains in His hands and not ours?
- Gospel: St. Augustine once stated that all things in the visible world mirror something in the spiritual world. How does Jesus use the analogy of these two parables to teach this truth?
- Gospel: What tool does Jesus use to build His kingdom? (See also **Romans 1:16**)

### Announcements:

**Bible Class** – Please join us on Sundays at 8:00 a.m. for the study of the psalms.

**Holy Communion** - We celebrate the Lord’s Supper because Jesus instructed us to do so, and God offers us forgiveness of sins, life and salvation through it (Matthew 26:28). We believe the Bible’s teaching that receiving the Sacrament together is a way of expressing unity in our beliefs as one body (1 Corinthians 10:17). We therefore respectfully ask that guests who are not members of our Evangelical Lutheran Synod, or our sister synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, refrain from communing here until becoming familiar with our beliefs and express agreement. We in no way imply that you are not a Christian or are not “good enough” for us. God’s Word teaches us to regard communion as an outward expression of unity in all areas of faith. In communion we publicly confess that we agree in all that we teach and confess on the basis of the Bible (Matthew 28:20, 1

Corinthians 1:10, Romans 16:17, 1 Corinthians 10:17). We pray that you understand and will respect this practice of Close Communion. We encourage you to seek more

information about the confession that unites us and would love to meet with you if you have questions regarding Close Communion.

**Ezekiel 17:22-24** – This is what the LORD God says. I myself will take part of the tip of the cedar and plant it. From the topmost of its shoots I will pluck off a tender sprig, and I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the high mountain of Israel I will plant it. It will produce branches, bear fruit, and become a magnificent cedar. Flying birds of every kind will live under it. In the shelter of its branches they will nest. Then all the trees in the countryside will know that I, the LORD, bring down the high tree and raise up the low tree, that I make the green tree dry up, and I make the dried-up tree blossom. I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will carry it out. (EHV™)

**2 Corinthians 5:1-10** – Now we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal home in heaven, which is not made by human hands. In fact, the reason we groan is that we long to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven. If we do indeed put it on, we will certainly not be found naked. To be sure, while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as the down payment. Therefore, we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. But we are confident and would much prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. And for this reason, we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home or away. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he did while in the body, whether good or bad. (EHV™)

**Mark 4:26-34** – He said, “The kingdom of God is like this: A man scatters seed on the ground, and while he sleeps and rises, night and day the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. The ground produces fruit on its own: first the blade, then the head, then the full grain in the head. When the crop is ready, he swings the sickle without delay, because the harvest has come.” Then he said, “To what should we compare the kingdom of God? Or with what parable may we picture it? It is like a mustard seed, which when sown on the ground is one of the smallest of all the seeds planted in the ground. Yet when it is planted, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches so that the birds of the sky can nest under its shade.” With many similar parables he continued to speak the word to them, as much as they were able to hear. He did not speak to them without a parable. But when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything to them. (EHV™)