

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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(A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

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Lent 4

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The Bible's central theme remains "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). During Lent we trace our Savior's steps to Calvary's cross where we witness HOW God proved that love, specifically by giving His Son to suffer and die on the cross.

Also central to the Bible and our teaching is rightfully always keeping before us Easter's empty tomb. Jesus' rising from death assures that "Christ has indeed been raised from the dead...so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:20 & 22). Today, we hear of two attitudes toward the cross' meaning and naturally Christ's rising from death.

Order of Worship: ELH Page 109, *Matins*.

Hymns: 227 (1-6), 194, 227 (7-10), 593

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 12:1-6. Surely it is God who saves us. God's well of salvation overflows with His forgiveness and love. With joy and thanksgiving, we sing to the LORD.

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 32. When a sinner turns to the Lord in repentance, mercy and grace and shower the penitent with salvation (*Supplement*).

Epistle Lesson: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. Complete salvation for unworthy sinners didn't seem logical to the Greeks, and the Jews didn't want a Savior who lived and died humbly. Yet, God saved sinners by grace through the power of the cross.

Verse of the Day: For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16, EHV)

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32. Jesus teaches this account of the prodigal, or wayward, son. Because of his sins, this prodigal couldn't expect any kindness from his father. Yet, his father restored him as a full son and rejoiced over him, since he repented. Such compassion and mercy seemed wrong to the jealous brother, the "real" prodigal, who didn't appreciate or understand the Father's joy over one sinner who repents and is saved.

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Theme - "THE Cross Demonstrates God's Power And Wisdom"

Points to ponder from the day's Scripture readings:

- Old Testament: What is the basis for the Christian's joy as we read these verses in Isaiah?

- Epistle: What two differing attitudes do we witness as Paul writes these words to the church in Corinth?
- Epistle: Why would a Jew demand a miraculous sign to authenticate Christianity?
- Epistle: Why would a Greek (Gentile) demand wisdom to authenticate Christianity?
- Epistle: Paul uses the word "*stumbling block*" to describe the attitude of unbelieving Jews toward the message of the cross. What does that term mean? (See 1 Corinthians 8:9; Romans 14:13)
- Epistle: Why, specifically to some Jews, was the message of the cross a "*stumbling block*?"
- Gospel: In the Parable of the Lost Son, what does Jesus reveal about His/our heavenly Father's zeal to save? (Give examples of where we witness evidence of this attitude here.)
- Gospel: What does it mean that this prodigal son "came to his senses?" (See v. 21 as well)
- Gospel: Who ended up being the "real" prodigal son in this parable and why?
- Gospel: "...we had to celebrate and be glad" (v.32). Where is there also a celebration occurring when a sinner repents as confirmed by Jesus? (See Luke 15:7)

Announcements:

+ Please join us for Bible class on Sunday mornings at 8:00 a.m.

+ Confirmation class: 3:15-5:00 p.m. at the church on Monday.

+ Sunday school on Sunday mornings from 8-8:30 a.m.

+ Midweek Lenten service on April 2 at 6:00 p.m.

Isaiah 12:1-6 – In that day you will say: I will give thanks to you, LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger has turned away, and you comfort me. Surely God is my salvation. I will trust him and will not be afraid, because Yah, the LORD, is my strength and song, and he has become my salvation. Therefore, with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. In that day you will say: Give thanks to the LORD! Proclaim his name. Declare among the peoples what he has done. Proclaim that his name is exalted! Sing to the LORD, for he has done amazing things! Let this be known in all the earth! Shout aloud and sing for joy, daughter of Zion, for the Holy One of Israel is great among you! (EHV™)

1 Corinthians 1:18-25 – For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. In fact, it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will bring to nothing. Where is the wise man? Where is the expert in the Jewish law? Where is the probing thinker of the present age? Has God not shown that the wisdom of this world is foolish? Indeed, since the world through its wisdom did not know God, God in his wisdom decided to save those who believe, through the foolishness of the preached message. Yes, Jews ask for signs, Greeks desire wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified—which is offensive to Jews and foolishness to Greeks, but to those who

are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. We preach Christ crucified, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (EHV™)

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 – All the tax collectors and sinners were coming to Jesus to hear him. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law were complaining, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” He told them this parable: “A certain man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So, he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered together all that he had and traveled to a distant country. There he wasted his wealth with reckless living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that country, and he began to be in need. He went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. He would have liked to fill his stomach with the carob pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, and I am dying from hunger! I will get up, go to my father, and tell him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.”’” “He got up and went to his father. While he was still far away, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran, hugged his son, and kissed him. The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick, bring out the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let us eat and celebrate, because this son of mine was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found.’ Then they began to celebrate. “His older son was in the field. As he approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what was going on. The servant told him, ‘Your brother is here! Your father killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ The older brother was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. He answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I’ve been serving you, and I never disobeyed your command, but you never gave me even a young goat so that I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours arrived after wasting your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ “The father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. But it was fitting to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found.’” (EHV™)

*Our Christian brothers and sisters in Ukraine are in need of our support. First and foremost, they need our prayers to God for peace, protection and security. There is also a very great need for humanitarian assistance as the war continues to destroy lives and property. The ELS Board for Christian Service has established the Ukraine Crisis fund to aid our brothers and sisters in the Ukrainian Lutheran Church and the Gift of Life program as well as other Ukrainians in need. To contribute to this fund, go to els.org/donate. Please use one of the “Other” options and enter “Ukraine Crisis Fund.” Or, checks may be sent to ELS Ukraine Crisis Fund, 6 Browns Ct., Mankato, MN 56001. Jesus bless us all with His saving grace!