

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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(A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

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Pentecost 12

August 28, 2022

Sometimes there are things that we really long for deep in our hearts and everything else pales in comparison. Abraham longed deeply for the son promised to him by the LORD, and all his earthly wealth hardly mattered to him in comparison. In the Old Testament reading, the LORD came to Abraham and reminded him that He was not only Abraham's shield, but his greatest treasure. That LORD, who keeps His promises as the all-powerful God of "free and faithful grace," assured Abraham he would have a son...and through that son's descendants, most importantly, a Savior.

Some say, "You just gotta have faith" striving to keep a positive attitude in life. But that sentence is only half complete. What makes faith great remains the object of faith, the LORD and His promises in Jesus. In fact, the birth of God's Son, Jesus, is the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise given and repeated hundreds of times in the Old Testament. By the LORD's grace, we have possession of that promise and now with certainty equal to Abraham's for the fulfillment of the LORD's other promise—a heavenly inheritance, everlasting life in heaven.

Order of Worship: ELH Page 60, The Divine Service, "Rite Two."

Hymns: 364, 184, 494, 474

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Old Testament: **Genesis 15:1-6.** Hoping beyond human hope, Abraham believed the LORD's promise to bless him with a son and a Savior. The LORD "*credited it [his faith] to him as righteousness.*"

Psalm of the Day: **Psalm 33.** God's faithfulness in all things causes His people to "wait in hope for the LORD." (*Supplement*)

Epistle: **Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16.** Faith grasps that which we do not see. True faith will raise our sights to life everlasting in heaven as our true home.

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. Faith is being sure about what we hope for, being convinced about things we do not see. Alleluia. (Hebrews 11:1, EHV)

Gospel: **Luke 12:32-40.** Our Savior urges us: "*Do not be afraid,*" for the kingdom of heaven is ours. We set our hearts on this promise as we live our faith...all the while preparing and patiently awaiting our Lord's return.

Sermon: **Genesis 15:1-6**

Theme - "Give Credit Where Credit Is Due"

Points to ponder from the day's Scripture readings:

- Old Testament: What is meant by "He [God] credited it to him as righteousness?" (See St. Paul's discussion in Romans 4)

- Old Testament: The LORD promised Abraham that his offspring would be more numerous than the stars of the sky. Who are Abraham's offspring? (See Romans 4:11 and Galatians 3:29)
- Epistle: What is true faith? (See Question 151 in the [blue] WELS Catechism). How does James 2:19 prove that true, saving faith is more than an intellectual awareness or knowledge of God?
- Epistle/Gospel: What promises has God already fulfilled for us?
- Epistle: For what promise do we still await?
- Gospel: Agree/Disagree – God wants us to sell all and give the money to the poor, which would prove that we really have faith in Him.
- Gospel: How does Luke 19:8ff offer faith guidance for Christians, when it comes to showing the sincerity of our faith?

Announcements:

+ Please join us for Bible class, Sunday morning at 8:00 a.m.

+ Confirmation Class: which day/time?

+ timeofgrace.org – a resource for timely, topical subjects and what the Bible says.

+ **Guests and Visitors** – We are pleased to have you worship with us today. Please sign our guest book before you leave. Our church provides a free daily devotional booklet (*Meditations*). The *Lutheran Sentinel*, a news and informational publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, is also available. Please ask for a free copy.

Genesis 15:1-6 - After these events the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision. He said, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." Abram said, "LORD God what can you give me, since I remain childless, and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" Abram also said, "Look, you have given me no offspring, so a servant born in my house will be my heir." Just then, the word of the LORD came to him. God said, "This man will not be your heir, but instead one who will come out of your own body will be your heir." The LORD then brought him outside and said, "Now look toward the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them." He said to Abram, "This is what your descendants will be like." Abram believed in the LORD, and the LORD credited it to him as righteousness. (EHVTM)

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16 - Faith is being sure about what we hope for, being convinced about things we do not see. For by this faith the ancients were commended in Scripture. By faith we know that the universe was created by God's word, so that what is seen did not come from visible things. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go to a place that he was going to receive as an inheritance, and he left without knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as a stranger in the Promised Land, as if it did not belong to him, dwelling in tents along with Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith Abraham also received the ability to conceive children, even though Sarah herself was

barren and he was past the normal age, because he considered him faithful who made the promise. And so from one man, and he as good as dead, descendants were born as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand along the seashore. One by one, all of these died in faith, without having received the things that were promised, but they saw and welcomed them from a distance. They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Indeed, people who say things like that make it clear that they are looking for a land of their own. And if they were remembering the land they had come from, they would have had an opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better land—a heavenly one. For that reason, God is not ashamed to be called their God, because he prepared a city for them. (EHV™)

Luke 12:32–40 - Do not be afraid, little flock, because your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Provide money bags for yourselves that do not become old, a treasure in the heavens that will not fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. “Be dressed, ready for service, and keep your lamps burning. Be like people waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. Blessed are those servants, whom the master will find watching when he comes. Amen I tell you: He will dress himself and have them recline at the table, and he will come and serve them. Even if he comes in the second or third watch, they will be blessed if he finds them alert. But know this: If the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. You also be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you are not expecting him.” (EHV™)