

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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(A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

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The way to heaven is narrow, because there is only one way to enter. As Jesus Himself declared, "I am *THE* way and *THE* truth and *THE* life. No one comes to the Father except by Me" (**John 14:6**). Therefore, it is only through faith in Jesus as our Savior that we can enter heaven, not through outward attachment to a church or reliance on obeying God's law.

In today's epistle reading, the writer piles up reasons to avoid falling away from the faith. Returning to reliance on the law to save ourselves is useless. Why would we want to go back to the law, when we are under the gospel's grace? Those who rebel against God in work righteousness, in reality which is unbelief in His gospel promise, will receive unending punishment in hell. God's mercy is broad and deep, but is found in only one place, the promised Messiah.

Some from the chosen nation of Israel had rejected that narrow door of the LORD. Yet in Isaiah, the LORD, the covenant God of "free and faithful grace," gives a promise to the faithful remnant of believers gathered from the four corners of the earth: the name "Christian" will endure with blessings for those who keep their faith in Jesus.

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

Hymns: 207 (1-4), 252, 363, 207 (5)

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Old Testament: Isaiah 66:18-24. In the closing words of his prophecy, Isaiah foretold that people from every nation would be saved. Those who rebelled against the LORD (the "God of free and faithful grace") in unbelief would receive unending punishment.

Psalms of the Day: Psalm 72. This messianic psalm portrays Christ as the universal King to whom "all kings will bow down" (*Supplement*).

Epistle: Hebrews 12:18-24 God's inspired writer teaches that approaching God by way of Mount Sinai (the law) can only lead to a terrified conscience and an eternally dead end. Approaching Him by way of Mount Zion (the gospel), however, will lead to eternal life.

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. Our Savior Christ Jesus abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Alleluia. (2 Timothy 1:10b, cf. EHV)

Gospel: Luke 13:22-30 The door to heaven, open to people from all nations, is Jesus Christ, the ONE who makes us right with God. Those who try to enter though any other door remain locked out of heaven.

Sermon: Luke 13:22-30

Theme - "Enter Through The Narrow Door"

Points to ponder from the day's Scripture readings:

- Old Testament: In verse 20, what does Isaiah prophecy all believers in God's New Testament Church will do?
- Old Testament: On the Last Day (Judgment Day) what two groups does Isaiah describe in verses 22–24?
- Epistle: What event is described in verses 18–21? (See Exodus 19:10–25)
- Epistle: The Old Covenant with God left the Israelites quaking in fear. But the New Covenant gives us joy. Who brings that New Covenant to us?
- Gospel: Why is the entrance to heaven described as narrow, when it is open to all people of the world?
- Gospel: What does it mean to "strive to enter" through the narrow door?

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.

Isaiah 66:18-24 - As for me, because of their works and their thoughts, the time is coming for me to gather people from all nations and all languages. They will come, and they will see my glory. Then I will set up a sign among them, and I will send out survivors from among them to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, to those who are archers, to Tubal and Javan, to the distant coastlands, who have not heard my message and have not seen my glory. Then they will declare my glory among the nations. Then they will bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD. They will bring them on horses and chariots and wagons and mules and dromedaries to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, in the same way that the people of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel to the LORD's house. Even from among these people I will take priests and Levites, says the LORD. For just as the new heavens and the new earth that I am making will remain standing before me, declares the LORD, in the same way your offspring and your name will stand. As often as one new moon follows another and one Sabbath follows another, all flesh will come to worship before me, says the LORD. They will go out, and they will see the corpses of the ones who were rebelling against me, for their worm will not die, and their fire will not be quenched, and all flesh will be horrified by them. (EHV™)

Hebrews 12:18–24 - You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to burning fire, to darkness, to gloom, to a raging storm, to the sound of a

trumpet, and to a voice that spoke. Those who heard the voice asked that not one more word be added, because they could not endure what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned.” The sight was so terrifying that even Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.” Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God; to the heavenly Jerusalem; to tens of thousands of angels in joyful assembly; to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; to God, who is the judge of all; to the spirits of righteous people, who have been made perfect; to Jesus, the mediator of a new testament; and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better message than the blood of Abel. (EHV™)

Luke 13:22–30 - He went on his way from one town and village to another, teaching, and making his way to Jerusalem. Someone said to him, “Lord, are only a few going to be saved?” He said to them, “Strive to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able. Once the master of the house gets up and shuts the door, you will begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, ‘Lord, open for us!’ He will tell you in reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’ Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ And he will say, ‘I don’t know where you come from. Depart from me, all you evildoers.’ There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown outside. People will come from east and west, from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. And note this: Some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.” (EHV™)