

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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(A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

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For today's "Hymn of the Day" we will sing "God Moves in a Mysterious Way" (CW 420). John Newton (author of "Amazing Grace") first published this hymn of William Cowper in 1774, originally entitled, "Light out of Darkness." The title evidently referenced Cowper's mental afflictions, but highlights Bible-based meditative thoughts to strengthen Christians, when God's ways are mysterious.

Truly, our God works in (humanly speaking) "mysterious" ways. According to human logic, one "doesn't get something for nothing." But with our gracious God, He saves us entirely by His grace through Jesus.

Christians well know how Paul stressed this truth, when he wrote, "*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast*" (Ephesians 2:8-9) [EHVTM]. Perhaps a better "mystery" would be: "Why did God save anyone, when all sinners deserved His everlasting punishment?"

How wonderful to hear the assurance of the gospel, "*that God was reconciling the world to himself through Christ, not counting people's sins against them*" (2 Corinthians 5:19) [EHVTM]. As God's people, we rejoice in that comforting and powerful message of salvation.

Order of Worship: ELH Page 60, **Divine Service "Rite Two,"** communion.
Hymns: 207 (1-3), 434, 325, 207 (4)

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Old Testament: Isaiah 55:6-9. The LORD's plan to save sinners is so lofty that natural man cannot comprehend it. It is a plan of pure mercy and free pardon. The only hope for sinners is to abandon their proud, self-righteous thoughts. Faith is God's free gift of mercy worked by the Holy Spirit.

Psalms of the Day: Psalm 27. We can be confident that the LORD will deliver us from our enemies today as He has in the past (*Supplement*).

Epistle: Philippians 1:18b-27. From prison, St. Paul speaks of the joyful tension in which a Christian lives. On the one hand, we long to be with Christ in heaven. On the other hand, we are happy to serve Christ on earth. May God give us courage and willingness to exalt our Savior in life and death!

Verses of the Day: Alleluia. My grace is sufficient for you, because my power is made perfect in weakness. Alleluia. (2 Corinthians 12:9a, EHV)

Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16. God's kingdom comes to different people at different times. Salvation is God's gift of grace, not a reward of personal accomplishment. Work in God's kingdom for the Christian, be it short or long, is the privilege of grace and the product of His love.

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Sermon: Philippians 1:18b-27

Theme - "The Christian's Bigger Than Life Boast"

Points to ponder from the day's Scripture readings:

- Old Testament: What does the LORD call all people to do, as He directs Isaiah to write in verses 6-7? How do we do that?
- Old Testament: The law shows us our sins; the gospel shows us our Savior from sin. In verses 8-11, how do we best understand the "mysterious" ways of the LORD...as "law" or "gospel?"
- Epistle: We often use the term "fellowship." What are some of the blessings of fellowship Christians enjoy according to Paul?
- Epistle: Agree/Disagree: According to verses 21 ff, it's better for a Christian to die and go to heaven than to continue living on this sinful earth.
- Gospel: What is the God-pleasing attitude, when the Holy Spirit brings a person to faith—no matter if even "later" in life?
- Gospel: How do Paul's words in Philippians 2:13 support the point of Jesus' parable of the workers in the vineyard?

Announcements:

+ **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.

+ **timeofgrace.org** – information on a variety of timely topics as presented by Wisconsin Synod pastors.

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.

+ Please join us for Bible class at 8:00 a.m. and Sunday School at 8:00 a.m.

+ **timeofgrace.org** – a resource for timely, topical subjects answered by pastors from the Wisconsin Synod.

Isaiah 55:6-9 - Seek the LORD while he may be found! Call on him while he is near! Let the wicked man abandon his way. Let an evil man abandon his

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thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will show him mercy. Let him turn to our God, because he will abundantly pardon. Certainly, my plans are not your plans, and your ways are not my ways, declares the LORD. Just as

the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my plans are higher than your plans. (EHV™)

Philippians 1:18b-27 - What does it matter? Only this, that in every way, whether for outward appearance or for the truth, Christ is being proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, because I know that this will turn out for my deliverance, through your prayer and the support of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This matches my earnest expectation and hope that I will in no way be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, so even now, Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. Yes, for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I am to go on living in the flesh, that will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet which should I prefer? I do not know. I am pulled in two directions, because I have the desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. But, it is more necessary for your sake that I remain in the flesh. And since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and will continue with all of you, for your progress and joy in the faith. And so by my coming to you again, my goal is to give you even more reason to boast in Christ Jesus. Just conduct yourselves in a way that is worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come to see you or am absent, I may hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, contending together with one soul for the faith of the gospel. (EHV™)

Matthew 20:1-16 - “Indeed the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. After agreeing to pay the workers a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. He also went out about the third hour and saw others standing unemployed in the marketplace. To these he said, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will give you whatever is right.’ So they went. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour and did the same thing. When he went out about the eleventh hour, he found others standing unemployed. He said to them, ‘Why have you stood here all day unemployed?’ “They said to him, ‘Because no one hired us.’ “He told them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When it was evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last group and ending with the first.’ “When those who were hired around the eleventh hour came, they each received a denarius. When those who were hired first came, they thought they would receive more. But they each received a denarius too. After they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner: ‘Those who were last worked one hour, and you made them equal to us who have endured the burden of the day and the scorching heat!’ “But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not make an agreement with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go. I want to give to the last one hired the same as I also gave to you. Can’t I do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ In the same way, the last will be first, and the first, last.” (EHV™)