



TRINITY MERRILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Reverend Scott Gustafson
Reverend Jonathan Chapa

August 31, 2025 - 8:00 AM & 6:00 PM (CW)

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Preaching today is Pastor Jonathan Chapa

AS WE GATHER Entering the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the traditional site of the birth of Jesus, is one of the most memorable experiences for any Christian pilgrim visiting the Holy Land. First constructed at the commission of Roman Emperor Constantine the Great in AD 326, the church is on the oldest site continually used for worship by Christians anywhere in the world. Although the basilica initially had a grand arched entrance in its first thousand years, it came into a period of disuse and neglect after the conquest of the Holy Land by the Islamic rulers of the Ottoman Empire in AD 1516. In an effort to prevent people from entering the church with horses and cattle, the Christians caring for the building at that time walled up the main entrance, leaving only a very small door. This opening has ever since been known as the “Door of Humility.” It makes a most fitting way for those who come to worship at the site of the manger of the Christ Child to enter that sacred space. Where we worship here and now is also a sacred space. Although we may not have needed to bow down to enter the front door today, bringing an attitude of humility to our worship of our gracious Lord is truly fitting for us.

OPENING HYMN *The congregation may select hymns from the Lutheran Service Book*

INVOCATION

A In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES

Psalms 149:1-4

A Praise the LORD! Sing to the Lord a new song,

C **His praise in the assembly of the godly!**

A Let Israel be glad in his Maker;

C **let the children of Zion rejoice in their King!**

A Let them praise His name with dancing, making melody to Him with tambourine and lyre!

C **For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He adorns the humble with salvation.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

A It is good and right that we should make confession of our sins. The section on confession in Luther’s catechism instructs us with these words: “Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.” Humble yourselves, then, before God, confess your sins to Him, and implore His forgiveness.

C **O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a troubled and penitent sinner, confess to You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your present and eternal punishment. By nature, I am a sinful creature. By thought, word, and deed I have continually transgressed Your law. For the sake of the sufferings and death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, a penitent and contrite being. Forgive me all of my sins and grant me the power of Your Holy Spirit that I may amend my sinful life.**

A God be gracious to you and strengthen your faith.

C **Amen.**

P As you believe, so let it be. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

INTROIT

Psalm 75:1-2; antiphon: v. 7

P It is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.

C **We give thanks to You, O God; we give thanks, for Your name is near. We recount Your wondrous deeds.**

P At the set time that I appoint I will judge with equity.

C **For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up.**

P But I will declare it forever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P It is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.

KYRIE

A In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

A For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

A For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C **Amen.**

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A Let us pray. O Lord of grace and mercy, teach us by Your Holy Spirit to follow the example of Your Son in true humility, that we may withstand the temptations of the devil and with pure hearts and minds avoid ungodly pride; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Proverbs 25:2-10

² It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out. ³ As the heavens for height, and the earth for depth, so the heart of kings is unsearchable. ⁴ Take away the dross from the silver, and the smith has material for a vessel; ⁵ take away the wicked from the presence of the king, and his throne will be established in righteousness. ⁶ Do not put yourself forward in the king's presence or stand in the place of the great, ⁷ for it is better to be told, "Come up here," than to be put lower in the presence of a noble. What your eyes have seen ⁸ do not hastily bring into court, or what will you do in the end, when your neighbor puts you to shame? ⁹ Argue your case with your neighbor himself, and do not reveal another's secret, ¹⁰ lest he who hears you bring shame upon you, and your ill repute have no end.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

EPISTLE

Hebrews 13:1-17

¹³ Let brotherly love continue. ² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. ³ Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. ⁴ Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. ⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." ⁶ So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" ⁷ Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. ⁹ Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. ¹⁰ We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. ¹¹ For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. ¹² So

Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. ¹³ Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. ¹⁴ For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. ¹⁵ Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. ¹⁶ Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. ¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE

Luke 14:11

C **Alleluia. Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. Alleluia.**

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 14:1-14

A The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the Fourteenth chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹ 14 One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. ² And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. ³ And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" ⁴ But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. ⁵ And he said to them, "Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?" ⁶ And they could not reply to these things.

⁷ Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, ⁸ "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, ⁹ and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. ¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

¹² He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

A This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Son of God, Eternal Savior”

LSB 842



1 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, Source of life and
 2 As You, Lord, have lived for oth - ers, So may we for
 3 Come, O Christ, and reign a - mong us, King of love and
 4 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, Source of life and



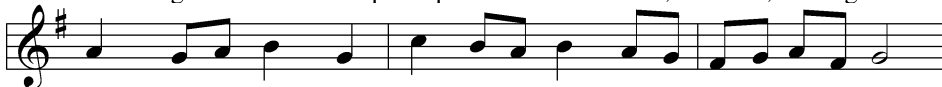
truth and grace, Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us
 oth - ers live, Free - ly have Your gifts been grant - ed;
 Prince of Peace; Hush the storm of strife and pas - sion,
 truth and grace, Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us



Hal - lows all our hu - man race, You our Head, who, throned in
 Free-ly may Your ser - vants give. Yours the gold and Yours the
 Bid its cru - el dis - cords cease. By Your pa - tient years of
 Hal - lows all our hu - man race: By Your pray - ing, by You



glo - ry, For Your own will ev - er plead: Fill us with Your
 sil - ver, Yours the wealth of land and sea; We but stew - ards
 toil - ing, By Your si - lent hours of pain, Quench our fe - vered
 will - ing That Your peo - ple should be one, Grant, O grant our



love and pit - y, Heal our wrongs, and help our need.
 of Your boun - ty Held in sol - emn trust will be.
 thirst of plea - sure, Stem our self - ish greed of gain.
 hope's fru - i - tion: Here on earth Your will be done.

Text: Somerset T. C. Lowry, 1855–1932, alt. Tune: Oude en Nieuwe Hollandse . . . Contredansen, c. 1710, Amsterdam Text and tune: Public domain

SERMON

APOSTLES CREED

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

ATTENDANCE / CONNECT TIME / OFFERING

During this time, please sign the attendance book found in the pew or use your mobile device to fill out the Connect Card or submit prayer requests on our app or online at www.trinitymerrill.com/live. You can also visit our app or www.trinitymerrill.com/give to learn more about other ways to support the ministries at Trinity.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

- P God, our Savior, wants all people to come to know the truth. Let us pray for ourselves and for the church everywhere, that we may persevere in grace, and for all people, that we may share with them the joy we have in the unity of Christ.

For the church, the gathering of God's people; for the clergy of the church that the Holy Spirit confirm then in their apostolic mission; for all Christians, that persevering in grace, we may proclaim the kingdom of heaven in our lives, let us pray:

- C **Lord, have mercy.**

- P For all public servants, that they zealously promote justice and the common good; for industrial workers, that their productivity provide blessing for all; for favorable weather, that we may give thanks for a good harvest, let us pray:

- C **Lord, have mercy.**

- P For the homeless and the hungry; for the physically and mentally ill and the aged and infirm, that we cherish Christ in them and surround them with our care, [*especially...*], and that each of us would be graced with holy humility that we may find our joy in humble service in Jesus' name in every situation, let us pray:

- C **Lord, have mercy.**

- P For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of our missionaries, missionary teachers, medical personnel, and all Christian aid workers, that their work be unhindered and be a continuing source of blessings in Jesus' name, let us pray:

- C **Lord, have mercy.**

- P With thanks for the faithful examples set by those whose earthly journeys are complete and whose witness to Christ still inspires us, and also for this holy assembly here and now, that sealed with the promised Spirit, we may witness to the fullness of God's love, let us pray:

- C **Be merciful, Lord God, and hear our prayers; grant Your Holy Spirit to plead for us and guide Your church into all truth and holiness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

- C **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

BENEDICTION

- P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and T give you peace.
- C **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN *The congregation may select hymns from the Lutheran Service Book*

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Today's Radio Broadcast and the Altar Flowers are sponsored by Dorothy Klade and family in loving memory of Doyle A. Klade.

Trinity ELC Garage Sale Fundraiser Sept 4–6, 8:00 AM–6:00 PM daily

Join us for our fundraiser in the Fellowship Hall downstairs at church

Donation Drop-Off: Sept 2 & 3, 8:00 AM–6:00 PM at Trinity Church

We're accepting clean, usable items (clothing, kitchenware, toys, books, tools, etc.).

No TVs, cribs, car seats, or broken/dirty items, please.

Please sign up in the Narthex to volunteer to help.

Trinity Lutheran School Needs You! Become a Substitute Teacher! Do you have an Associate's or Bachelor's Degree from an accredited school? Do you care about kids, love your school, and want to make a difference? **Trinity Lutheran School is looking for substitute teachers—maybe someone just like YOU!** Whether you're a parent, grandparent, or church member, if you've got a heart to serve and a willingness to learn, we'll walk with you through the process. You'll need to complete a **WI DPI - approved substitute teacher training through CESA** <https://dpi.wi.gov/licensing/apply-educator-license/sub-permit#Programs>, either **online or in person**, and then apply for your **Wisconsin Substitute Teaching License**. Principal Johnson would love to talk with you and help you get started! Reach out to the school office today and take the first step toward joining our mission to teach children about Jesus and help them grow in faith and knowledge.

New Fall Bible Study: You're invited to join the Sunday 9:15am Bible Class starting September 21 as we explore the book of Ecclesiastes! Is everything really "vanity"? Are we living "under the sun," or "under the Son"? Bring your Bible to the Fellowship Hall at church and let's discover what King Solomon says to us today! Please call the church office to sign up so that we have enough materials for everyone.

LWML Fall Rally -The Trinity Ladies Aid and Dorcas Society would like to invite the women of Trinity to the Zone 6 LWML (Lutheran Women's Missionary League) Fall Rally that we are hosting on Saturday, October 11, 2025. Registration will begin at 8:15 a.m. with the rally beginning at 9:00 a.m. The registration fee of \$5.00 will provide you with rally materials and includes a luncheon which concludes the rally. The rally will feature devotions, a Bible Study on "Prayer", and a guest

speaker. We hope many ladies will join us for a day of learning and Christian fellowship! Questions or to pre-register: Please call Diane Schult at 715-722-3401.

Trinity Lutheran School Launches Operation Christmas Child Project

Bringing Joy—and Jesus—to Children Around the World

At Trinity Lutheran School in Merrill, we believe that even the smallest hands can make a big impact. This fall, we are excited to begin a school-wide mission project that will reach far beyond our classrooms and community. Through Operation Christmas Child, a ministry of Samaritan's Purse, our students and families have the opportunity to shine the light of Jesus into the lives of children across the globe—one shoebox at a time.

Our goal is simple but powerful: pack 100 shoeboxes filled with love, joy, and the hope of Christ. Each box is a chance to tell a child they are seen, valued, and deeply loved—not just by us, but by their Savior.

To make this vision a reality, we need your help. Over the course of September and October, we'll be collecting different types of items each week to fill the shoeboxes. Congregation members can drop off donations in the box at church. Here's how you can get involved:

September

Week 1 – School Supplies: pencils, crayons, notebooks, calculator, drawstring bag

Week 2 – Personal Care Items: toothbrushes, comb, washcloth, nail clipper, water bottle

Week 3 – Clothing & Accessories: socks, flip-flops, mittens, hats, hair ties,

undergarment Week 4 – Games & Activities: jump ropes, cards, small puzzles, stickers, coloring books

October

Week 1 – Toys: small stuffed animals, dolls, balls, building blocks, yo-yo, fidgets

Week 2 – WOW! Items: a special gift that will truly delight a child, stuffy, toy car, jewelry Week 3 & 4 – Help us fill the gaps! We'll share updates on what we still need.

Each shoebox also requires a \$10 donation to cover overseas shipping and delivery. Your gift not only helps a child receive a box, but ensures they also hear the Good News of Jesus in their own language through outreach and discipleship programs offered by Samaritan's Purse.

As our students sort, pack, and pray over these boxes, they'll also be learning powerful lessons—about generosity, compassion, and the mission Christ calls us to: "Go and make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19)

We invite you to be part of this meaningful mission. Let's come together as a school and church family to bless 100 children— and perhaps even more—with the love of Jesus. Let's pack these shoeboxes full of hope... and send them off with hearts full of love. Contact the school office or Principal Scott Johnson with any questions. **Together, we can show the world that God's love fits perfectly in a shoebox.**

Youth Lake Day -September 14th - 2-6pm - Alexander Lake - 6-12th Grade



- Come join us for a fun day out on the lake with pontoon rides, swimming, beach games, food, and lots of fun!
- Sign-up to participate is necessary so we can plan ahead for drop off, pickup, and boat rides.
- Contact DCE Steph Chapa with any questions at dce@trinitymerrill.com or 320-510-4862.

