



Reverend Scott Gustafson
Reverend Jonathan Chapa

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

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.

INVOCATION

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES **Psalm 149:1-4**

Leader: Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song,

People: His praise in the assembly of the godly!

Leader: Let Israel be glad in his Maker;

People: let the children of Zion rejoice in their King!

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

People: For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He adorns the humble with salvation.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Leader: 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.

People: 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.

Pastor: God be gracious to you and strengthen your faith.

People: Amen.

Pastor: 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.

People: Amen.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. Remember us, O Lord, not for what we deserve, but because You have begun Your good work in us. As You have called us to follow Your example of humble service, make us worthy of our calling; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

MONTHLY VERSE (Hebrews 12:1-2a)

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith."

SONG

"Yes and Amen" #61 Key of D

Vs.1 Father of kindness You have poured
out grace
You brought me out of darkness
You have filled me with peace
Giver of mercy You're my help in time
of need
Lord I can't help but sing

Chorus 1 Faithful You are
Faithful forever You will be
Faithful You are
All Your promises are Yes and Amen
All Your promises are Yes and Amen

Vs.2 Beautiful Savior You have brought me near
You pulled me from the ashes
You have broken ev'ry curse
Blessed Redeemer You have set this
captive free
Lord I can't help but sing

Chorus 2 Faithful You are
Faithful forever You will be
Faithful You are yes You are
All Your promises are Yes and Amen

Bridge I will rest in Your promises
My confidence is Your faithfulness
(REPEAT)

(Chorus 2 – 2X)

Ending All Your promises are Yes and Amen
All Your promises are Yes and Amen

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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.

FIRST 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.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SECOND READING 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.

GOSPEL READING Luke 14:1-14

¹ 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."

MESSAGE

SONG OF THE DAY

"A Thousand Hallelujahs" #86 Key of E

Vs.1 Who else would rocks cry out to worship
Whose glory taught the stars to shine
Perhaps creation longs to have the
words to sing
But this joy is mine

Chorus With a thousand hallelujahs
We magnify Your name
You alone deserve the glory
The honor and the praise
Lord Jesus this song is forever Yours
A thousand hallelujahs
And a thousand more

Vs.2 Who else would die for our redemption
Whose resurrection means I'll rise
There isn't time enough to sing of all
You've done
But I have eternity to try

(Chorus)

Bridge Praise to the Lord
To the Lamb
To the King of heaven
Praise for He rose
Now He reigns
We will sing forever
(Repeat)

(Chorus)

(Bridge - Sing Once)

(Chorus)

ATTENDANCE /CONNECT TIME / OFFERING (Instrumental) **“A Thousand Hallelujahs”**

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.

PRAYERS OF GOD’S PEOPLE & THE LORD’S PRAYER

BENEDICTION

CLOSING SONG

“We Believe”

#58 Key of D

Vs.1 In this time of desperation
When all we know is doubt and fear
There is only one foundation
We believe we believe
In this broken generation
When all is dark You help us see
There is only one salvation
We believe we believe

Chorus We believe in God the Father
We believe in Jesus Christ
We believe in the Holy Spirit
And He's given us new life
We believe in the crucifixion
We believe that He conquered death
We believe in the resurrection
And He's coming back again
(We believe)

Vs.2 So let our faith be more than anthems
Greater than the songs we sing
In our weakness and temptations
We believe we believe

(Chorus)

Bridge Let the lost be found and the dead be raised
In the here and now let love invade
Let the church live loud our God will save
We believe we believe
And the gates of hell will not prevail
For the pow'r of God has torn the veil
Now we know Your love will never fail
We believe we believe

(Chorus)

Ending He's coming back again
He's coming back again
We believe we believe

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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.

Dear Trinity Families, As we launch a new school year, I want to thank you for your faithful support and prayers. Our staff has worked hard to prepare classrooms, curriculum, and hearts to welcome students back with Christ-centered learning. This year's theme is "Let's Make a Joyful Noise!" (Psalm 98:4), and we are excited to explore what that means in every aspect of school life. We ask for your continued prayers for our teachers, students, and families. Please feel free to stop by, say hello, or get involved—you are always welcome in our school ministry. May God bless this new beginning! ~ Principal Scott Johnson

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. Stay tuned for weekly reminders, supply lists, and updates. 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.**

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.

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.

