

Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church

1207 West 45th Street Austin, Texas 78756

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Sunday School and Bible Study 9:15 AM – Divine Service 10:30 AM

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April – May 2025

A Letter to the Congregation

On the off chance that someone did not receive a letter from me, this is what was sent out to the congregation in March.

Greetings in the name of our risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ, who has ransomed our souls from sin and the power of the devil, and has made us to be righteous in the sight of our loving God! What a blessing it is for me to write this letter as your Pastor. I am truly grinning ear to ear as I write. We have come to know each other pretty well over this last year and a few months, and I want to express how utterly thankful I am to be here in Austin with you. As my family gets settled into our new home and figures out what our “new normal” is, I ask for your patience with us as they settle back into a routine, and I too adjust to the demands of this blessed office which God has called me into for His service.

In the coming weeks, I will be reaching out to you to schedule a time to visit with you in your home, so that I can get to know you better and learn how I can best serve you as Christ’s under-shepherd. If for any reason you are not comfortable with me coming to your home, please do not worry. We can schedule a time to meet at the church and that will be just fine. My goal in this is to see where you live and meet you in your element. No pressure to entertain or put on a show. Just be yourself, and let’s spend a couple hours talking and enjoying each other’s company as brothers and sisters in Christ.

You will have needs for visits, whether they be medical related, or just need the care of your Pastor to help you through a difficult time. Rest assured that if you need anything, all you need to do is call, text, or email me, whichever is most comfortable for you. I am available ANYTIME you need me. Please never feel as though you are inconveniencing me or causing me distress with your needs. This is why the Lord has called me here as your Pastor, to care for the needs of His sheep whenever they arise. Also, should you find yourself hospitalized for any reason (including visits to the ER), I want to be there with you to provide you with the comforting words of our Lord, to pray for the intercession of the Great Physician, and to bring you the Supper should it be an extended stay. Please call me or have someone call me immediately, and I will be there. Don’t let me find out that you were there and didn’t tell me, or else....(somewhat tongue in cheek, but I am serious 😊). I want to be there for you.

You may also come to the church at any time when I am in the office. Fridays will be home office days for me, but I will be keeping regular church office hours Monday through Thursday, from 7am-2pm. My door is always open should you need private confession, a comforting word, or just feel like having a chat. There is no reason you should ever feel like you are inconveniencing me by coming to the office. When I say the door is always open, I mean exactly that.

Trinity is such a blessing to Jenn, Lily, Charlee, and me, and I cannot wait to see what the Lord will do through His church as we walk with Christ together in this place. I look forward to talking with you soon. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord look upon you with favor, and give you peace. Amen.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Killion

Elder Expectations

I want you all to know and understand my expectations of your elders, the men who have been chosen from among you as the leaders of our congregation. The office of elder, or deacon, as it is described by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 3, is one of great responsibility and honor, and my expectations of these men are entirely in keeping with the Scriptural understanding of what it means to hold this office. According to Acts 6, and 1 Timothy 3, these men are to be caretakers of the congregation, assisting the Pastor in the care of souls and in the proclamation of the Gospel. Certainly, they have other duties on Sundays and such, but all of these duties will be based in the purpose of aiding me in the proclamation of the Gospel and the care of souls.

Aiding in these things is the sole purpose of the office, and is the sole purpose of our board of elders. As such, they may call on you from time to time should they notice that you have not been in church recently, or seem to be troubled by something. Please note that any contact from them is intended solely as a brother in Christ who is concerned for his brother and not a replacement for Pastoral care. Should you need pastoral care for any reason, do not hesitate to reach out to me directly. The purpose in this is to make sure you

understand that your elders are here to support you. Each of you will have a specific elder who is “assigned to you” in order to give you a direct and clear point of contact should you have any questions or needs that may not need full pastoral care involvement.

Again, the duties of the office of elder are always going to be viewed from the lens of making sure that it frees up my time to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments. Nothing can hinder that great work which the Lord has called me to do! Your board of elders is prepared and able to do this, and these fine men have served you well, and will continue to serve you well as we move forward in our relationship as Christ’s under-shepherd and flock.

Black Cassock during Lent/Advent

It has been the practice of the church, dating back to the late 1800s (likely earlier, but this is specifically related to the Lutheran church in America), to wear only black for non-communion services during the seasons of Lent and Advent. This is done as a reminder and sign of the repentance which these seasons call us to proclaim. As those who are utterly depraved, lost in our original sin, we bear the black and dark reality that without Christ we would be eternally lost in the outer darkness, where “there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt 8:12).” This contrasts with the joy of Sunday mornings, and especially Easter and Christmas, when we cover the black of our sin with the white of Christ, to celebrate the blessed Sacrament which brings us the body and blood of our Lord and Savior for the forgiveness of all of our sins. There we are washed clean of the stain of sin, and are made pure in the sight of God by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, by the blood of the “Lamb who was slain

(Rev 13:8).” So, in accordance with the seasons, we wear only the black cassock for midweek Lent and Advent services, and then don the white surplice on Sundays as we celebrate the Sacrament of the Altar.

Rehabilitating Happiness

To be happy is to be the object of God’s love in Christ and to love God and others with the love of Christ.

I was surprised to see a translation of Proverbs 17:22 that read: “A *happy* heart is good medicine.” Earlier generations would know this verse as “A *joyful* heart” set in juxtaposition to “a broken spirit” that “dries up the bones.” Singing this verse in our youth had a conditioning effect: pursue the Lord for joy in life. This, of course, was in line with a myriad of biblical exhortations such as Psalm 16:11: “You [Lord] will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of Your presence and the pleasures of living with You forever.” In that schema, the Lord abides as the source of joy and delight and blessedness. Hence, the prophet Jeremiah: “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is in the Lord” (17:7). But the recent alteration in terminology reflects a change in value and human pursuits. *Happiness*, it seems, is prized more than joy or a blessed estate. The source of happiness, too, has defrayed from the Lord to any number of factors that give (as Google now defines happiness) feelings of fulfillment, purpose, and well-being.

Something has changed. Happiness is divorced from virtue. And virtues, such as they are determined by contemporary values, are divorced from God — the source of all true virtue and, therefore, happiness (where happiness is understood as divine joy and blessedness). The

divorce of happiness from divine virtue and God has had a conditioning effect on people, too. Happiness has suffered a qualitative downgrade.

Happiness used to be thicker and richer, which is why words like “joy” and “delight” and “blessedness” were better designators when describing it. Happiness bespoke of a divine source and virtuous enrichment of a person’s soul. It wasn’t so much a feeling as it was a disposition in life due to some greater, overriding reality — like Christ’s redeeming love. Love, not for the self, but being loved and altered by that love constituted abiding joy or a disposition of happiness, such that persevered through troubles and trials. Love, argues St. Paul, is the greatest of virtues (1 Corinthians 13), and it’s always striving toward and for others. This is what makes it the greatest virtue. And no wonder, for God is love (1 John 4:8). To be happy, then, is to be the object of God’s love in Christ and to love God and others with the love of Christ, come what may.

However, people today want a sense of “well-being” disconnected from virtue. Well-being, popularly understood, is virtueless happiness. And so, in order to attain moments of “well-being,” the contemporary pursuit is that of the sentiment of happiness. Again, it’s not the kind of happiness resultant from the pursuit of virtue, which again would lead one directly to God or, at least in the case of the ancient Greeks, the gods or philosophical concept of “God” as the supreme good. No. In order to understand today’s idea of happiness we have to think in terms of consumption of things that engender the momentary sentiment of happiness. Happiness can be marketed. Happiness is marketed as a consumed commodity, be that commodity a product, ideology, or status. Just look at the personalities of those who use Gain Scent-Beads or drive a Lexus or vacation at Sandals or practice yoga or Stoic mindfulness— *they* project “happiness.” Once we collapse the pursuit of happiness around the individual and the

circumstances of a person's life, we'll find that contemporary happiness is largely a circumstantial byproduct, depending on whether the circumstances elicit favorable sentiments or at least project such favorability. Bleakly, happiness has been reduced to an image. "You *look* happy?" *Being* happy, on the other hand, transcends the moment and has an enduring quality about it, even when circumstances are awful. Justification by grace posits a deep-seated happiness on account of God's great love set to action in Christ Jesus (Rom. 5:8). And at the same time, regeneration allows for the virtues of the Spirit, virtues like love and joy, to form as a disposition within the baptized. This is why St. Paul, for one, believed that joy and thankfulness were basic to life as a Christian (Phil. 4:4-8).

Notwithstanding, an attractive feature of the modern pursuit of happiness is that when one option fails to deliver, then you simply discard it and try another that fits your style, that is, your image of happiness you'd like to project. And, so, the consumption never ends because the pursuit of well-being through vapid sentiments of happiness in a crowded marketplace of competitors (ever touting new and improved methods and experiences) never actually satisfies the soul. Never. Modern happiness remains an ever-elusive deceit.

St. Augustine wisely said that only finding our repose in God will yield true and lasting joy, delight, and blessedness. He stated it like this: "You, O Lord, have created us for Yourself. And our hearts are restless, until they find their repose in You." [1] According to Augustine, happiness is nothing other than the joy, delight, and blessedness one has in God and with God. Think in terms of Colossians 3:3: "Your life is hidden with Christ in God," and you'll better understand what the Lord means by "happiness." Yes, there's a sentiment involved, but the source of that sentiment is not a subjective feeling but rather the objective One himself — the Creator who made

us for himself. What is more, the source of sentiment flows from the "fruit of the Spirit" delineated in Galatians 5:22-23: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." Consequently, happiness does not only begin with God but also consists of him and terminates in him. "Happy are the people whose God is the Lord," exclaims the psalmist (144:15). In Galatians, St. Paul establishes Augustine's observation that it isn't circumstances, but rather God himself both with us and in us that serves as the wellspring of happiness, the kind of happiness that also assuages the niggling of having a purpose in life and satisfaction with life and even ourselves. "The Spirit is the indwelling wellspring of joy in God that we experience as we live by faith in the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20). Paul hereby makes explicit the connection between the Spirit-engendered virtue of joy and living in the gift of faith.

A Christian can have true happiness in Christ and only Christ yields true happiness. In other words, happiness is reciprocal love in Christ. "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). That's happiness rehabilitated, happiness as gift, and justification is the first point of contact for each of us.

It turns out that "A happy heart is good medicine" when God's love determines our happiness.

Written by Dr. John Bombaro

03/03/25

Taken from <https://www.1517.org/articles/rehabilitating-happiness#>

Augsburg Confession, Article XII. Of Repentance.

“Of Repentance they teach that for those who have fallen after Baptism there is remission of sins whenever they are converted and that the Church ought to impart absolution to those thus returning to repentance. Now, repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; the other is faith, which is born of the Gospel, or of absolution, and believes that for Christ’s sake, sins are forgiven, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terrors. Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruits of repentance.

They condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that those once justified can lose the Holy Ghost. Also, those who contend that some may attain to such 8 perfection in this life that they cannot sin.

The Novatians also are condemned, who would not absolve such as had fallen after Baptism, though they returned to repentance.

They also are rejected who do not teach that remission of sins comes through faith but command us to merit grace through satisfactions of our own.”

(Source: <https://bookofconcord.org/augsburg-confession/of-repentance/>)

A Very Good Friday

The death and resurrection did indeed really happen. They are accomplished historical facts, and by them, so too is the forgiveness of our sins and justification before God.

Jesus died nearly 2000 years ago. The historical source material for his life is not

entirely clear on the year, but the evidence strongly favors April 3rd (Nisan 14 in the Jewish lunisolar calendar) of AD 33. It all happened when Tiberius Caesar was emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate was prefect over Judea. Herod Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee. And Joseph Caiaphas was high priest in Jerusalem.

The events leading to His death are well-known. He was arrested late Thursday night or very early on Friday morning while praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. Almost immediately, He was brought before the high priest Annas and, more officially, Caiaphas, his son-in-law, for a brief trial. Finally, after several flimsy accusations in what seems like a kangaroo court, Jesus Himself gave the evidence needed to convict Him of a theological crime when He affirmed that He was the “Christ, the son of God” (Matt 26:63-64). With that, He was found guilty of blasphemy.

Judea, the region in which Jerusalem was located, was administered by the Romans, and the conviction of blasphemy by a Jewish court would have carried little weight for the charge of a capital crime. So, the Jews altered the charges, and Jesus was brought before Pilate, accused of political crimes. “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar,” claimed the Jewish officials, “and saying that He himself is Christ, a king” (Luke 23:2).

Pilate’s initial interrogation found Jesus blameless. He sensed, however, that the Jewish leaders wanted a conviction. They, after all, had been trying to find a way to kill him (Matt 6:4). So, upon learning that Jesus was from Galilee, he tried to pawn him off to Herod Antipas —the man who had Jesus’ cousin John the Baptist beheaded just a few years earlier. But Herod found him innocent of any crime as well. And back to Pilate, Jesus went.

Pilate made one last attempt to do the right thing. He called Caiaphas and the Jewish leadership together and announced: “You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining Him before you...I do not find this man guilty of any of your charges

against Him. Neither did Herod, for he sent Him back to us. Look, nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. I will therefore punish and release Him” (Luke 23: 14-16).

But the crowd would hear none of it. They pleaded for the release of Barabbas instead and demanded that Jesus be crucified. Pilate caved. Preparations for His crucifixion began in earnest, including flagellation and the placing of a crown of thorns upon Jesus’ head. As was customary, He was then made to carry a crossbeam to Golgotha, but He was too weak after a night without sleep and repeated abuse and torture. So, a man from North Africa named Simon the Cyrene was enlisted to help. As they walked, Luke tells us that a “great multitude” of Jews (probably those who greeted Him with shouts of hosanna earlier that week) followed along, “mourning and lamenting” what was about to happen (Luke 23:27).

By 9 a.m. on Friday morning, His arms and legs were nailed to the cross. He was hoisted up next to two other criminals where, over the course of about six hours, He spoke very little (just seven times, according to the Gospels), and by 3 p.m., He was dead. The sun would soon set. So, the Jewish leaders asked for His body to be taken down and buried. Pilate complied. Jesus’ body was placed in a tomb. The tomb was sealed shut, and guards were posted at its entrance to prevent anyone from stealing the body. And the next day—the sabbath—officially began.

What happened the day before—what we call Good Friday—was anything but good from a historical perspective. It was filled with obvious and outright injustices. Behind it all, however, was the work of God’s justice, for “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” (Heb. 9:22). It is natural and perhaps even reasonable to look at the events that took place so long ago with grief and even anger. It is important to remember, though, that it wasn’t really the feckless leadership of Pontius Pilate or the vindictive plotting of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem that ultimately led to Jesus’ crucifixion. They didn’t really know what they were doing,

Jesus said (Luke 23:34). It was “God,” Paul Maier poignantly puts it, “who was ultimately responsible.”

He had planned it from the beginning, ever since he first promised to undo the work of Satan (Gen. 3:15). That promise was reiterated “many times and in many ways...by the prophets.” In the days of Pontius Pilate, Herod Antipas, and Joseph Caiaphas, He spoke “by His son” (Heb. 1:1-2). The promise of God would finally manifest itself as a sacrifice, and because it was a promise, it was necessary. The “Son of Man,” as Jesus put it, “must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed” (Luke 9:22). “It was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead,” proclaimed Paul (Acts 17:3). Why? For our trespasses and sins (Rom. 4:25). This is why Jesus went to—and it is what he paid for on—the cross. That part of his promised redemptive work was finished there on Golgotha (John 19:30).

There is more, though. Jesus also said that the “Son of Man” must “on the third day be raised.” And though the liturgical calendar would have us wait (and it is good for us to wait), on the third day, He did. He was (and, even as we now wait, will be) “raised for our justification” (Rom. 4:25). From this perspective, we can call that Friday in AD 33 good, for without it we would all be lost, dead in our trespasses and sins. The death and resurrection did indeed really happen. They are accomplished historical facts, and by them, so too is the forgiveness of our sins and justification before God. Today, just as it was nearly 2000 years ago, is a good Friday. Indeed, it is a very good Friday, for you and I are forgiven and free on account of the work of Christ and Him alone.

Written by Adam Francisco, 03/29/24

Taken from <https://www.1517.org/articles/a-very-good-friday#>

Easter Triumph, Easter Joy

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!
Alleluia! April 20th begins the Easter Season, a time of joy and the assurance of our salvation as Christ has overcome the last enemy, death. Our somber, repentant mood that highlights the Lenten season, now turns to exultation and praise in our Risen Lord. Having left each other in silence and mournful reflection on Good Friday, we gather on Easter morning in full celebration of the truth that Jesus Christ is indeed Risen from the dead, and, as such, we too shall rise to live with Him in the resurrection of the last day, as Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 15.

One of my favorite Easter hymns is “At the Lamb’s High Feast We Sing,” which is Hymn 633 in the Lutheran Service Book (LSB). My favorite verse of that hymn, though so hard to narrow it down to just one, is verse 6:

6) Now no more can death appall,
Now no more the grave enthrall;
You have opened paradise,
And Your saints in You shall rise.
Alleluia!

This brings to mind the words of Paul from 1 Corinthians 15:55, “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” It is lost! Death’s dominion is ended, and the grave is no longer the end. Our Lord Jesus, on account of His steadfast love and undeserved kindness, has opened paradise to His sheep, to His saints. And that is the true joy of Easter. That is the joy of the empty tomb. We will rise to live with our Lord and Savior, united in body and soul to be one together in Christ for all eternity.

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

This is the Feast

In our Divine Service Liturgy, we sing the *Hymn of Praise* following the Kyrie. On any given Sunday, this is typically the Gloria in Excelsis (Glory to God in the Highest), and it will continue to be on the typical Sunday. On the festivals of Easter, Ascension, and All-Saints Day, this *Hymn of Praise* will be *This is the Feast*, a hymn which the congregation is familiar with, in part. This hymn is based upon the songs of the multitude of heavenly saints in Revelation 5:12-13, and 19:5-9.

Phillip Pfatteicher, in his Lutheran liturgy commentary, writes the following in regard to the origin and properness of using this hymn during the feast seasons:

The antiphon-refrain, “This is the feast of victory for our God,” is, like many traditional antiphons in the church’s liturgy, not an exact Biblical quotation but rather a gathering and a restatement of the many Biblical references and allusions to banquets and feasting as signs of the gladness and intimacy of God’s kingdom. It draws upon the picture of the Messianic banquet in Isaiah 25:6, which celebrates the destruction of death and which proclaims therefore God’s victory and triumph (see also Rev 5:5; 22:6; Is. 55:1). The New Testament image for the gladness of the kingdom is often the wedding feast (as in Matt. 22:1; Rev 19:9) but is sometimes simply a “feast” as in Matthew 8:11. Nonetheless, the image looks back to the Passover meal which celebrates Israel’s deliverance from slavery, to the Easter victory both in its past and present dimensions, and to the Messianic banquet of the future, when the kingdom comes in all its fullness.*

The beautiful words of this *Hymn of Praise* are worthy of use during these 3 festival periods. Many churches use it throughout the Easter season until Pentecost, but I would prefer it be reserved for only the 3 festival days mentioned

above. All thanks and praise to God that the Lamb who was slain has come to be our deliverance, to bring us home to His eternal banquet in His kingdom!

This is the Feast

(LSB p.155, LW p.161-163)

This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,
whose blood set us free to be people of
God.

This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and
honor, blessing, and glory are His.

This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Sing with all the people of God, and join
in the hymn of all creation: Blessing,
honor, glory, and might be to God and the
Lamb forever. Amen.

This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

For the Lamb who was slain has begun His
reign. Alleluia!

This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**Pfatteicher, Philip H. Commentary on the
Lutheran Book of Worship: Lutheran Liturgy in
Its Ecumenical Context. Augsburg Fortress,
1990.*


Trinity Lutheran Church

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All articles must be approved by Pastor Josh Killion
Articles with no author are written by him.

APRIL 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2 LENTEN VESPERS V 7:30 PM	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 LENTEN VESPERS VI 7:30 PM	10	11	12
13 PALM SUNDAY CRAWFISH BOIL: NOON	14	15	16	17 MAUNDY THURSDAY 7:30 PM	18 GOOD FRIDAY 7:30 PM	19 TRINITY RANGE DAY 1:00 PM
20 THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD	21	22 ELDERS MEETING 7:00 PM	23	24	25	26
 PASTOR ON VACATION PASTOR ON VACATION						
27	28	29	30 BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM			

MAY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 CONFIRMATION SUNDAY	5	6	7 BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	22	23	24
25	26	27	28 BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	29	30	31

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