

Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church

1207 West 45th Street Austin, Texas 78756

Pastor Joshua A. Killion – (512) 453-3835

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

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June – July 2025

Greetings and Blessings in the Name of Our Lord, Jesus Christ!

As the summer months begin to come upon us, there are many wonderful things of God's creation that will be a part of our lives (despite the miserable heat). Many will be outside enjoying the grill, the pool, the garden, and, of course, the always enticing summer vacations. But in the middle of all of those joyous things that begin to pervade your lives, it's easy to lose sight of the things that strengthen your faith.

Especially when you go on vacation, you must take care that you don't expose yourself to false ideologies and poor doctrine. If you must be gone on a Sunday, do your research and try to find a confessional Lutheran church to attend the divine service. If you can't find one (a seemingly more common occurrence in the days of modern worship) then take the time to do your own devotion. Read the Word, sing a hymn, listen to the sermon on our website, and pray as the Lord has taught you to pray. The edification of faith that these 15-20 minutes bring is something far greater than getting out to the beach a little quicker, or being the first to hit the water and snag a fish.

We all struggle with our personal devotional lives. We live in a busy world that is constantly moving, and the evil one is very adept at causing chaos in our lives to try and get us to throw out the Word in favor of convenience. Don't forget that your faith needs no vacation. It doesn't need rest

and relaxation. It needs to be fed with the Word of God. So, as you indulge in all the wonderful food off the grill (I'll be spending a lot of time with mine), remember the words of Paul found in Romans 10:17, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ."

If you avoid devotional time with your family because you just don't know what to do, come and talk with me. I would always be happy to share resources and options for how you can worship outside of the church setting by yourself, or with your family. Nothing truly replaces the divine service when you miss it, but hearing the Word of forgiveness from the Scripture, and proclaimed in the preaching of the Gospel gets pretty darn close. Have fun this summer, and grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who has died a terrible death in your place to redeem you and grant you everlasting salvation.

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

Updates/Reminders

Just a few quick updates that I need to share with everyone.

First, my office hours are being updated slightly. My office hours will now be Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 7am-2pm, and Wednesdays from 10:30am-6:30pm. Please feel free to stop by anytime during those hours if you need anything. Also, let me reiterate, I am available for anything you need at any time, not just during those hours. If you require counseling, confession, or any pastoral care, you all have my number. Call or text any time.

Second, I will be out of the office with our Youth Group, attending the Higher Things Youth Conference in Grand Rapids, MI, from 7/28 - 8/1. If you need anything during that time, you may reach out to your Elder, or you always have my number.

Third, I am continuing to schedule home visits over the coming months. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time getting to know you better in your own environment, and I look forward to getting to everyone soon. If I have not contacted you yet, I have not forgotten you! I'll be in touch, but don't hesitate to reach out to me and ask if we can get you scheduled.

“Pride” Month? More Like “Sin” Month

The unfortunate thing about the summer beginning is that the month of June brings with it “National Pride Month.” The stolen symbol of the promise of God flies everywhere, promoting that which is entirely contrary to His promises. And what is worse is that the so-called “church” joins in with them. Male and female “clergy” alike, running around in rainbow stoles and preaching the gospel

of the devil as they coalesce and comfort the sinners in their midst with the damning promise that “God accepts them for who they are.”

And the idea that we should celebrate sin with the compounding of yet another sin is a grotesque sign of the evil one's influence on society. Pride is the window to destruction. It turns one in on themselves and away from the truth of God. Psalm 40:4, Psalm 94:2, Isaiah 2:12, Luke 1:51, ...and the list goes on. Paul wraps it all up nicely in II Timothy 3:1-5 (I won't write out that passage, but I invite you to read it, along with the others I have mentioned). He speaks of the end times and the reality that pride, among all the other sins he mentions, are all about becoming “lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God.” He exhorts us also to “avoid such people.” I don't know what debaucherous slogan they have for this month, but I'm sure it is blasphemous and lewd at best. If they are in dire need of a new one, I have a suggestion: Psalm 10:3-4, “For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord. In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek Him; all his thoughts are, ‘There is no God.’”

All those participating in this vile show of debauchery and sin have abandoned the truth of the one true God (if they ever had it at all). Especially those who claim to be in the faith. If you claim to be one who worships the one triune God, then you cannot support this insanity. The sexual sins which are so clearly condemned in the pure and inerrant Holy Word are not negotiable items that we can pick and choose from as we see fit. They are a violation of God's holy Law, and those who engage in them are willfully placing themselves above the God who created them. Paul makes this clear in Romans 1:26-27, “For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.”

He does the same in I Timothy 1:8-10, and, in my opinion, most convincingly in I Corinthians 6:9-11, where the Apostle writes, “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” What Paul brings out in this passage is so much more than the condemnation of those who are in open sin against God. Though, that is most certainly the case.

He highlights the truth that those who have been called to repentance and received the washing of the blood of Jesus are no longer under that condemnation. Those who have thrown off the bondage of sin, repented, and changed their ways are justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. And so, we do not spend our time condemning individuals for their heinous sins, but we call them to repent. We call them to the forgiveness which is theirs for the sake of Jesus Christ. But open and unrepentant sin that is in violation of God’s Word and His will for us, keeps them in the devil’s grasp. And they are running the risk of being given up to their dishonorable passions, like those Paul mentions in Romans. From there, there is no coming back, because they have been given up to their idolatry and they will receive the due penalty for their willful error.

For us, the month of June is not “Sin Month,” but a celebration of the gifts of our gracious God. This month we celebrate the Ascension of our Lord, Jesus Christ, as He goes to the right hand of God to rule all things for the benefit of our salvation. We celebrate the Day of Pentecost, as the gift of the Holy Spirit is given to establish the New Testament Church and extol the proclamation of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. And we celebrate Holy Trinity Sunday, to acknowledge the might of the Triune God, who has bought us back from slavery to sin and the devil,

that we would live sanctified lives as those who are justified by faith in the only begotten Son of God.

As you navigate this societal mess, hold fast to your faith, which by the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, holds on to you. And as you endure the barrage of phonetic alphabet soup that we have to withstand, remember your own identification. Let them have their letters, because you have your own. You are a member of the JBGTFIJCA community. Justified By Grace Through Faith In Jesus Christ Alone. By the water of your baptism, He is your identity, and He is your salvation.

Bound to God, Free in the World: The Strange Freedom of the Christian Life

Written by Ryan Couch

As posted at: <https://www.1517.org/articles/bound-to-god-free-in-the-world-the-strange-freedom-of-the-christian-life>

Imagine being completely free from God. No commands. No guilt. No expectations. You answer to no one but yourself. That kind of freedom might sound attractive—until you realize it’s actually a description of hell. What seems like liberation from God is, in truth, slavery to something else. The irony is painful: the further we run from God, the deeper we fall into bondage.

People often ask, “Does the Bible teach free will?” The answer is both yes and no. No, it doesn’t teach that human beings are free moral agents who can decide on their own to get right with God. But yes, the Bible does speak of a kind of freedom, and tragically, it ends in self-destruction. If there is any freedom of the will, it will always choose bondage, and it looks a lot like Romans 1-3. Apart from Christ, our “free will” is simply the freedom to serve false gods and chase our own desires into the grave. “Free will is really a fiction,

a term without reality, because no one has the power to will anything good,” says Martin Luther in *The Bondage of the Will* (LW 33:64). Apart from Christ, we are free from God and in bondage in this world. In Christ, we are bound to God and free in a world given back to us.

Free From God

Paul writes in Romans 6:20, “When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.” It’s a haunting sentence. Before Christ, we were indeed free—but only free from righteousness. Free from God. And that kind of freedom is actually bondage. The truth is, we don’t start out neutral toward God. We start out as his enemies (Rom. 5:10), not his seekers. Left to ourselves, we are opposed to God, we fight him at every turn, seeking to be a god rather than to have God. We reject His rule, thinking we can live on our own terms. But when we rebel against God’s authority, we don’t find freedom, we simply find a different god, one we think we can control. Luther described the human will apart from Christ as “curved in on itself” (*incurvatus in se*). Instead of living outward in love toward God and neighbor, we spiral inward, obsessing over self-justification, self-expression, and self-preservation. In rejecting God, we don’t become independent. We become slaves to something else.

In Bondage to This World

Galatians 4:3 says, “We were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.” That bondage takes many forms, and it doesn’t always look like rebellion. Sometimes, it looks like religion. To be enslaved to the world means to live under its demands: success, image, control, hustle, and performance. It’s the relentless pressure to prove yourself, the nagging voice that says you’re never quite enough. This kind of bondage doesn’t just show up in the office or on social media—it shows up in church, too. Some of the most weary, guilt-ridden people you’ll meet are those striving the hardest to be “good Christians.” The world’s way

of measuring worth creeps into our spirituality, turning even faith into another performance metric. We chase perfection, approval, and identity through jobs, parenting, ministry, politics, and even spirituality. The world gives us endless tools for self-justification—and they all demand more.

In this kind of bondage, our sense of worth is always on the auction block—sold to the highest bidder, one who will give us just a little bit of recognition and approval. Our very existence and certainly any hope we have of contentment and happiness becomes contingent on our success. One misstep, one disappointment, and the whole house of cards collapses. That’s not freedom; that’s slavery disguised as self-expression. Left to ourselves, we cannot enjoy the good things of this world—instead, we demand that they give us meaning. We look to work, relationships, reputation, or even our own virtue to fill the void only God can satisfy. As Paul says in Romans 1:25, we exchange the truth of God for a lie and worship the creation rather than the Creator. But created things make cruel gods. They can’t bear the weight of our hopes, and they will always leave us restless, disappointed, and hungry for more.

Bound to God

But then comes the Gospel. Then comes Christ. In Galatians 4:7, Paul says, “So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.” God doesn’t just forgive us; He adopts us. He doesn’t just let us off the hook; He brings us into His family. This is what Luther called passive righteousness. It means we don’t climb to God; He descends to us. We don’t earn His favor; we receive it. Our righteousness before God does not originate with us—it’s Christ’s, credited to our account as if it’s our own.

Paul says it like this: “For our sake, He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21). That’s not a metaphor. That’s a real exchange. Christ takes our sin. We get His

perfection. To be bound to God, then, is not to be crushed under His law but to be united with Him through faith. It is to be set free from yourself and Bound to God placed under the rule and reign of Christ. It's to find rest in His grace. It's the end of striving and the beginning of peace. It's to be put to death as an enemy of God and raised to new life as His redeemed child, His forgiven friend, and His sanctified servant.

Free in the World

Here's the surprise: once we are bound to God, we are finally free—not from the world, but in the world. Luther called this active righteousness: our call to love and serve our neighbors. But notice the order. We do not love others to get God's approval or get anything at all. We are free to love those around us without needing anything in return. This is the freedom of vocation. God places us in specific roles—child, parent, spouse, employee, citizen, friend—and tells us that these ordinary places are holy ground. We don't need to escape the world to serve God. We serve Him precisely by serving others. These good works that we are called to walk in were created by God beforehand, and they flow forth from our lives in very natural ways (Eph. 2:10).

No more spiritual rat race. No more ladder-climbing. In Christ, we are free to fail, free to rest, and free to do for others what we wish they Free in the World would do for us (Matt. 7:12). Our value is fixed in Jesus. Our work is no longer a means of proving ourselves but of loving our neighbor. This flips everything upside down. Freedom doesn't mean detaching from responsibility. It means being so secure in God's love that we can finally show up for others.

Living the Paradox

The Christian life is a paradox. We are bound to God and free in the world. We are justified apart from our works and given the freedom to do good works. We rest in Christ and rise each day to serve. You are not what you do or what you accomplish. Your worth is not measured by your ministry success, your reputation, or your performance. Your life is hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). That's who you are. From that safe and unshakable identity, you're sent into the world—not to prove anything, but to love freely. God isn't asking you to change the world. He's calling you to live faithfully in the life you already have. You don't need to invent ways to serve your neighbor; opportunities are already woven into your daily routine. The office, the dinner table, the grocery store, the awkward family gathering: these are the sacred places where love takes shape.

As a member of Christ's body, you don't need a new life crafted for you. Instead, you need eyes to see the freedom you already possess. This freedom allows you to be a vessel of God's grace in small, unnoticed, and profoundly ordinary ways. So yes, in Christ, you are bound. Bound to mercy. Bound to grace. Bound to a God who won't let you go. And because of that, you are Living the Paradox free—gloriously, joyfully free.

Free to live. Free to love. Free to fail. Free to be insignificant. Free to be His in a world given back to you.

Trinity Lutheran Church

1207 West 45th Street, Austin, TX 78756

~ 512.453.3835 ~ www.trinityaustin.com ~

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Deadline for all articles is the 15th of the odd months.

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

JUNE 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 ASCENSION OF OUR LORD	2	3	4 BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	5	6	7
8 DAY OF PENTECOST	9	10	11 BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	12	13	14
15 HOLY TRINITY	16	17 ELDERS MEETING 7:00 PM	18 BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	19	20	21 AUGUSTANA 4:00 PM
22	23	24 VOTERS MEETING 7:00 PM	25 BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	26	27	28
29	30					

JULY 2025

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

PASTOR AT
HIGHER THINGS
7/28 – 8/01