

Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church

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

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

Time. What is it? Why do we keep it? What is its point? Some say it passes slowly, and for others that it is flying by so fast they can't keep up. No matter the perceived speed in our minds, time does indeed continue to tick on. It passes minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, and year by year. Kids are growing up way too fast; those gray hairs are showing up more every day; joints ache and wrinkles begin to show more and more. I'm sure more than a few of you would agree, just as I wished in the Caribbean last week, that time would...just...slow...down.

Time is one of those things that we talk about a lot, even in theological terms. God exists out of time, and that is something our frail human minds can't comprehend. Everything in our lives exists in terms of time. Even our explanations of the eternal nature of God have the concept of time embedded in them and therefore cannot fully encompass the entirety of the truth about it. But God chooses to work in time. He works in time for the benefit of His people.

Time is a gift that was created at the beginning. In His creation of the world, Genesis 1 says at the conclusion of each day, "And there was evening and there was morning, the _____ day." Time was given to us in order to teach us about the love of God. This world is a schoolhouse in which we learn about who God is and what it means that He loves us. We see the evidence of Him everywhere, just as Paul teaches in His letter to the Romans.

The greatest evidence of God and His love for His people came to us in the fullness of time. "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son,

born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Galatians 4:4-5). God created time so that He could work the redemption of His people in time. He sent His only Son into the world at the fullness of time in order that we would receive the adoption which He would win for us in His death and resurrection.

That also means that He will work the full consummation of our faith in time when Christ returns again to judge the earth. Judgment day is an event that we look forward to in time. There are many theologians who teach that when we die, we are immediately transported out of time to the judgment day. Jesus teaches in Matthew 24:36, "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." God knows the day and the hour. He knows the time when His judgment will come.

Time is a gift, one in which we live for the benefit of our salvation. We live in time to learn more about our loving God as He continually reveals Himself to us in the person of His Son, revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in His Word. Time is fleeting. It will come to an end, and we look forward to the day of that end. The Lord will come on clouds of heaven to raise the dead, and unite all believers in the bliss of eternal glory, and time will be no more.

Yours in Christ,



A Quick Note About Our Hymns and Hymnal

As you all know, Trinity has always used The Lutheran Hymnal (otherwise known as TLH, or, for some, simply the red hymnal). As I affirmed when I went through the call process, TLH is and will continue to be our hymnal from which we participate in the Divine Service, and I just want to reaffirm that for all of you. I have always loved the liturgy and hymns of the TLH, and I have no desire to move us away from its rich tradition in our church!

For many years, Trinity has periodically used hymns from other Lutheran hymnals such as Lutheran Worship (LW, or the blue hymnal), Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary (ELH), Lutheran Service Book (LSB, or the burgundy hymnal), and others. There is a vast amount of good and faithful worship resources that are available to us, and it is such a joy that we get to utilize them where they are appropriate. These hymns and parts of the liturgy are also good, right, and proper for use in the Divine Service when they fit.

I would love to give you a little insight into my hymn selection process. When we use a hymn (regardless of which hymnal) I first read through the texts for that given day. The Word is always the foundation of what we do in our services, and it serves as the foundation for our wonderful hymns! Based upon those texts, I evaluate hymns based on their theology and relevance to our texts for the day. I also try to make sure they match with the theme and subject matter of the sermon, all of which help to enrich our worship together as we gather around the Means of Grace in Word and Sacraments. I give a tremendous amount of time and thought when selecting our hymns, as they are part of our gifts of thanks and praise for the gifts our Lord comes to bring, and they are themselves His gifts as they bring the Word to us in song. I always have the mindset that they must be theologically sound and speak to the Scriptures in our purview for that day.

If you find yourself troubled by our use of a hymn, please come to me and discuss it. I value opportunities to have those conversations! May the Lord continue to bless our congregation as we sing His praises and receive His promised gift of forgiveness and salvation in His Divine Service!

Black Cassock during Lent/Advent

I thought it would be a good reminder for everyone if I brought this back around from last year. Anytime there is a question of why something is a certain way in the service, never hesitate to ask!

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.

Why Christian Tradition? Why the Word

- An article written by Donovan Riley

This is the third installment in a series meant to let the Christian tradition speak for itself, the way it has carried Christians through long winters, confusion, and joy for centuries.

Every hearing of the Word in the liturgy is doing (at minimum) three things at once:
it places God’s voice at the center,
reveals Christ as the heart of Scripture,
and creates faith where none could be manufactured.

This isn't information transfer.
It isn't religious instruction.
It isn't spiritual commentary.

The Word is what happens when God speaks, and his people are addressed rather than consulted.

The Word begins where Scripture itself begins. Not with human searching, but with divine speech. "Let there be light," God says, and light comes into being (Gen. 1:3). At Sinai, Israel doesn't gather to discuss God. The Lord speaks, and a people are formed (Exodus 20). Through the prophets, God doesn't offer insights for reflection, but sends a Word that accomplishes what he declares (Isa. 55:10–11).

The pattern is always the same: God speaks first and life follows.

The early Church recognized this immediately. Writing in the second century, St. Justin Martyr describes Christians gathering on the Lord's Day while the memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read. He doesn't explain why this matters. He simply reports what happens. God speaks and the Church listens.

This is why Scripture is read aloud in the Divine Service. Not summarized. Not paraphrased. Not silently absorbed. It's spoken publicly, because it's public speech. God addresses his gathered people now, with the same authority by which he has always spoken.

The pattern is older than the New Testament. Moses commanded Israel to read the law aloud when the people assembled, so that faith would be carried by hearing rather than memory alone (Deut. 31:11). Ezra opens the Book, the people stand, the Word is read, and hearts are cut open and healed (Nehemiah 8). St. Paul instructs Timothy not to neglect the public reading of Scripture, because the Church lives by what she hears, not by what she assumes (1 Tim. 4:13).

Faith, Paul insists, comes by hearing — not by effort, sincerity, or analysis — but by hearing the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17).

A monk in Northumbria once observed that Scripture read aloud forms the heart before it informs the mind. St. Bede the Venerable believed that the repetition of

the readings trained the Church to dwell inside God's story rather than skim across it. The Word, he taught, does its work by return and rhythm.

This is why the Word isn't optional. It isn't decoration between prayers. It isn't background for reflection. It's the living voice of God, active and working, exposing and healing at the same time (Heb. 4:12).

And the Word that is read isn't scattered or random. It's ordered.

The Church receives the Scriptures in sequence because God has chosen to reveal himself through a story. St. Augustine warned his hearers against treating Scripture as a collection of useful sayings. The Scriptures, he taught, have a center. And that center is Christ. To read them rightly is to be led, again and again, to him.

Jesus himself teaches the Church how to hear Scripture. On the road to Emmaus, he opens the Scriptures and shows how Moses and the Prophets were always speaking about him (Luke 24:27). The Bible isn't a set of moral examples or religious insights. It's the record of God's saving work, fulfilled in Christ, delivered now through words spoken and heard.

This is why the Psalms hold such a central place. The Church doesn't only listen to Scripture; she sings it back to God. St. Athanasius once wrote that the Psalms gather the whole range of human speech — fear, joy, sorrow, hope — and place it before God. In the Psalms, Christ gives his own prayer to his people, and teaches them how to speak to the Father.

Then comes the sermon.

The sermon doesn't stand above the readings, nor does it compete with them. It exists for one reason: to place Christ where he has already promised to be. The sermon doesn't add authority to Scripture. It serves it.

St. John Chrysostom warned preachers that when Christ isn't given, the sermon becomes noise, however polished it may be. The task of preaching, he said, is to open the treasure and distribute what's inside.

The Wittenberg Reformers took this with utmost seriousness. Martin Luther insisted that preaching belongs inside the liturgy because the Word must be delivered, not discussed. The sermon doesn't explain Scripture away from the people. It presses Scripture into their ears with a promise attached — for you.

This is why the Word comes before the Church's confession and prayer. God always speaks first. The Church, then, responds to this address rather than out of uncertainty. She doesn't confess faith she has generated, but faith that has been given. She doesn't pray to awaken God, but because God has already awakened her.

The Word does all this quietly, persistently, and without spectacle.

It doesn't require the hearer to feel its power. It works whether the heart thrills or resists. St. Gregory the Great once said that Scripture grows with the reader; not because its meaning changes, but because the Word continues to address new depths of need.

This is why the Word endures at the center of the Divine Service. It doesn't flatter the listener. It doesn't entertain the restless. It doesn't bend to the age. It does what God has always promised it would do.

It speaks.
It creates.
It gives Christ.

And having been spoken and heard, it leaves the Church changed; not because she has mastered it, but because it has done its work on her.

The Word doesn't wait for readiness.
It makes it.

And where the Word of Christ is heard,
faith is born.

Article taken from <https://www.1517.org/articles/why-christian-tradition-why-the-word>

Here follows a wonderful story of a young woman who found the comfort of God's grace in Word and Sacraments as she came to Lutheranism. Article from the Issues, Etc. Journal from Winter 2025.

Wittenberg Trail: From Seed to Sacrament

by Megan Bloedel

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)

The Seed Is Planted

I grew up in a Christian home that, while attending churches in the Baptist and Evangelical Free traditions, was decidedly evangelical in ethos. My parents had been Pentecostal in college, but a theological awakening after graduation drew them into more Calvinist and Reformed circles.

When I finished high school, I enrolled at Moody Bible Institute, a non-denominational school with strong Reformed/Dispensational leanings. History and theology had always fascinated me, so I thrived in Bible school, where classes on Church History, Sacramentology and Systematic Theology were part of my daily rhythm.

It was during those courses, as we explored the ecumenical councils, church doctrines and denominational developments, that I first felt my long-held understandings of the Sacraments begin to shift.

I had always held extremely symbolic views of both Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism was an “outward symbol of an inward reality,” reserved for those who had personally “decided to follow Jesus.” Communion was a time to remember Christ's sacrifice and confess sins, but little more. Yet as I studied how Christians throughout history

understood the Sacraments, I realized how differently they spoke of them.

During a semester abroad in Greece, I encountered Greek Orthodoxy. While I disagreed with significant aspects of their theology, I was struck by the beauty and richness of their sacramental practice. A seed was planted—a quiet, slow-growing curiosity—that remained in the background as I finished my studies.

My husband, John, whom I met and married during college, had a parallel journey. He also grew up evangelical but was increasingly drawn to the Lutheran understanding of the Lord’s Supper. I was more hesitant at first, but I eventually found myself compelled by the simple clarity of Christ’s words: “This is my body... This is my blood.”

It became harder to dismiss the deep spiritual refreshment I experienced every time I received the elements, even in a non-denominational setting. I would leave feeling strengthened and restored. Surely something more was happening than mere symbolism.

The Seed Is Watered

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God. ... Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 3:18–22)

Baptism, especially the idea of baptismal regeneration, proved a more difficult shift. I found it hard to break free from the Reformed frameworks I’d grown up with, and I couldn’t understand how Lutherans could say “Baptism saves” while still affirming salvation by faith alone. It was easier to shelve my growing discomfort with memorial-only

Sacraments and stay within the evangelical church context that felt familiar.

Years later, John and I had both served in ministry, and he was working toward his Master of Divinity with a pastoral emphasis. While finishing a pastoral internship at a non-denominational church, we attended a service where several Baptisms were performed. Mid service, the pastor impulsively decided to baptize “in Jesus’ name” only—omitting the Trinitarian invocation.

My stomach twisted. I had long ignored my discomfort with how Baptism often felt more like a public testimony time, or how frequently people were re-baptized due to feeling insincere the first time. But this—changing the very words Christ gave us—felt like a bridge too far.

Afterward, I said to John, “I’ve always claimed to reject infant Baptism because believer’s Baptism seems biblical, ... but that didn’t reflect what we see in the Bible.” That moment pushed me to reconsider my assumptions. I began to dig deeper into why I thought infant Baptism was unbiblical—and found that position increasingly hard to defend.

I started with 1 Peter 3:18–22. Peter connects the flood, where God used water to destroy evil and deliver Noah and his family, with Baptism. If Baptism “corresponds to this,” then must it not also cleanse, save and establish a covenant? Peter even anticipates symbolic misunderstandings by clarifying: “not as a removal of dirt from the body.”

I initially struggled with how this didn’t lead to a works-based salvation. Baptism had always felt like something I did—a declaration of faith after God had already saved me. In that view, God wasn’t necessarily active in the act of Baptism itself.

The Lutheran articulation flipped this completely. Grace and faith are gifts from God. Baptism saves not because we do something, but because God does. It is not our work—it is His. He is the one acting in Baptism, not us. Baptism saves because faith alone saves, and Baptism is one of the means through which God gives faith.

The Seed Sprouts

“But Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.’” (Matthew 19:14)

If Baptism is God’s action, His gift, then how could I deny that gift to an infant? Scripture is clear that children can have faith and even worship God (Matthew 21:18; Psalm 8:2; Luke 1:41; Psalm 22:9). Jesus doesn’t diminish the faith of children, He commends it.

I began to see myself in the disciples whom Jesus rebuked in Matthew 19. Who was I to hinder a child from receiving what God offers? Who was I to determine whether someone’s faith was “good enough”?

As I watched my own daughters, it became even clearer. They trust me instinctively and completely. Could I really believe they were capable of faith in me as their mother, but not capable of faith in God as their Creator?

The Seed Blossoms

“Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’” (John 6:68)

Humbled and full of gratitude, I realized I needed to turn to Lutheranism to find the fullness

and richness of God’s promises in the Sacraments. In the Supper, Christ gives us His very body and blood, extending forgiveness, faith and renewal. In Baptism, He also gives forgiveness, faith and new life—not because of who we are, but because of who He is.

A fellow Lutheran once described Baptism as the planting of a seed of faith, which is watered by the Word and nourished by the Sacraments, growing into a tree that bears the fruit of regeneration.

In many ways, my own journey to Lutheranism mirrors that image. A seed was planted during college, quietly watered over the years, then finally sprouted and blossomed, culminating in the first time I received Christ’s body and blood in a Lutheran church.

Through it all, the Lord was patient with me, caring for my heart, challenging my assumptions, and gently leading me to Himself. He who began a good work in me is indeed bringing it to completion.

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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.

FEBRUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 YOUTH CONFIRMATION 4:00 PM	4 BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	5	6	7 KOOL GAME/ MOVIE DAY 1:00 – 4:30 PM
8	9	10 YOUTH CONFIRMATION 4:00 PM	11 BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM	12	13	14
15 BURYING ALLELUIAS DINNER 1:15 PM	16	17 YOUTH CONFIRMATION 4:00 PM	18 ASH WEDNESDAY COMMUNION SERVICE 7:30 PM	19	20	21
22	23	24 YOUTH CONFIRMATION 4:00 PM	25 LENTEN VESPERS 7:30 PM	26	27	28

MARCH 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4 LENTEN VESPERS 7:30 PM	5	6	7
8	9	10 YOUTH CONFIRMATION 4:00 PM VOTERS MEETING 7:00 PM	11 LENTEN VESPERS 7:30 PM	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 LENTEN VESPERS 7:30 PM	19	20	21
22	23	24 YOUTH CONFIRMATION 4:00 PM	25 LENTEN VESPERS 7:30 PM	26	27	28
29	30	31	1 APRIL	2 MAUNDY THURSDAY 7:30 PM	3 GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE OF DARKNESS 7:30 PM	4