

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

18th Sunday after Pentecost

September 27th, 2026

Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.

PRELUDE

WELCOME

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
who pours love into our hearts
and healing upon the earth.

Amen.

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God,
**we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness
in the world and in our own hearts.**

Creation groans from overuse.

Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships.

Indifference keeps us from seeking justice.

**Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love
to others.**

Turn our hearts back to you.

Restore our world and reconcile us to one another.

**Renew us to live as your holy people,
following the way of Jesus Christ.**

Amen.

Hear this good news:

We have peace with God through ✝ Jesus Christ,
in whom there is no condemnation,
but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.
Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

Amen.

God Is Here!

1 God is here! As we your peo - ple meet to of - fer
 2 Here are sym - bols to re - mind us of our life - long
 3 Here our chil - dren find a wel - come in the Shep - herd's
 4 Lord of all, of church and king - dom, in an age of

praise and prayer, may we find in full - er mea - sure
 need of grace; here are ta - ble, font, and pul - pit;
 flock and fold; here as bread and wine are tak - en;
 change and doubt, keep us faith - ful to the gos - pel;

what it is in Christ we share. Here, as in the
 here the cross has cen - tral place. Here in hon - es -
 Christ the sus - tains us as of old. Here the ser - vants
 help us work your pur - pose out. Here, in this day's

world a - round us, all our var - ied skills and arts
 ty of preach - ing, here in si - lence, as in speech,
 of the Ser - vant seek in wor - ship to ex - plore
 ded - i - ca - tion, all we have to give, re - ceive;

wait the com - ing of the Spir - it in - to o - pen minds and hearts.
 here, in new - ness and re - new - al, God the Spir - it comes to each.
 what it means in dai - ly liv - ing to be - lieve and to a - dore.
 we, who can - not live with - out you, we a - dore you! We be - lieve!

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000

Music: ABBOT'S LEIGH, Cyril V. Taylor, 1907–1991

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***GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

A reading from Ezekiel:

The word of the Lord came to me: ² What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? ³ As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die.

²⁵ Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶ When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

A Word for God’s people.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 25:1-9

Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love. (Ps. 25:6)

- ¹To | you, O Lord,
I lift | up my soul.
- ²**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be | put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph | over me.**
- ³Let none who look to you be | put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame | who are treacherous.
- ⁴**Show me your | ways, O Lord,
and teach | me your paths. R**
- ⁵Lead me in your | truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all | the day long.
- ⁶**Remember, O Lord, your compas- | sion and love,
for they are from | everlasting.**
- ⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and | my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your good- | ness,
O Lord.
- ⁸**You are gracious and up- | right, O Lord;
therefore you teach sinners | in your way.**
- ⁹You lead the low- | ly in justice
and teach the low- | ly your way. R

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:1-13

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

A reading from Philippians:

If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though he existed in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,

⁷but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,

⁸ he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly
and gave him the name
that is above every other name,
¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but
much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is
God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

A Word for God's people.
Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Gospel Acclamation *Celtic Alleluia*



Verses may be sung by a leader. Then the alleluia is repeated.

Music: Fintan O'Carroll and Christopher Walker
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***GOSPEL – Matthew 21:23-32**

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’ ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.”

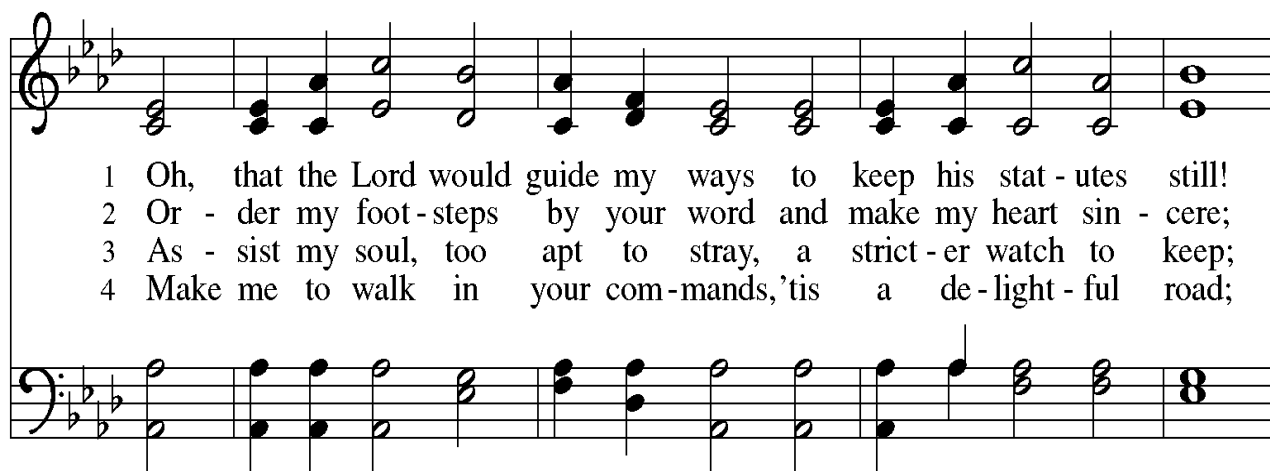
The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

SERMON

Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways



1 Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways to keep his stat - utes still!
2 Or - der my foot - steps by your word and make my heart sin - cere;
3 As - sist my soul, too apt to stray, a strict - er watch to keep;
4 Make me to walk in your com - mands, 'tis a de - light - ful road;



Oh, that my God would grant me grace to know and do his will!
let sin have no do - min - ion, Lord, but keep my con - science clear.
and should I e'er for - get your way, re - store your wan - d'ring sheep.
nor let my head or heart or hands of - fend a - gainst my God.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.

Music: EVAN, William H. Havergal, 1793–1870

***APOSTLES CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father
almighty, creator of heaven and
earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third
day he rose again; he ascended into
heaven, he is seated at the right hand of
the Father, and he will come to judge
the living and the dead.**

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

PRAYER REQUESTS

Calm to the Waves



Calm to the waves. Calm to the wind. Je - sus whis - pers, "Peace, be still."

Balm to our hearts. Fears at an end. In still - ness, hear his voice.

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

Music: CALM SEAS, Thomas Pavlechko, b. 1962

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

Center your church in humility as we strive to follow in your way. Help us listen to the cries of those who have been unfairly hurt by the church and dare to name difficult truths. Show all your love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You call us to care for your creation. Lead us into your promise of a better world through sustainable practices and respect for your handiwork. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Inspire all in positions of authority to act honorably. Remind them of their call to use their authority for the sake of the common good. Give them the gift of humility. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Comfort those who come before you in fear and trembling. Calm troubled hearts with your forgiveness. Help all those in need. Grant us your salvation. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Change our congregation's heart along with those at our sister congregations Immanuel Lutheran in Allegan with the pastor the Rev. Christopher Laughlin and First Congregational when we say no to your call. Open us to courageous learning and service in our community, especially in new or challenging places. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Your steadfast love holds all the saints who have finished their work and are at rest. As we grieve, remind us of your mercy so we may also give thanks. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PEACE The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

You are invited to share your offering as you enter the sanctuary. An offering plate is located in the center aisle near the back the sanctuary.

OFFERING PERFORMANCE: "Songs of Praises" by Sibelius/Lovelace performed by Trinity Choir

God Bless to Us Our Bread

Ben - di - ce, Se-ñor, nues-tro pan, y da pan a los que tien - en
 God bless to . . us our . . bread, and give bread . . to all those who are

ham - bre y ham-bre de jus - ti - cia a los que tien - en
 hun - gry, and hun - ger for jus - tice to those who are

pan. Ben - di - ce, Se - ñor, nues - tro pan.
 fed. God bless to . . . us our . . . bread.

Text: Argentine traditional, collected by Federico Pagura, 1923–2016; tr. John L. Bell, b. 1949

Music: BENDICE NUESTRO PAN, Argentine melody, collected by Federico Pagura; arr. John L. Bell

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***OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray:

God of creation,

you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly.

All blessings are from you;

make us generous with what we have.

Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts

in service to you and in love to our neighbors,

today and always.

Amen.

*** WORDS TO LOVE BY**

John 15: 5 – 16

I am the vine, you are the branches.

Whoever remains in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit;

For you can do nothing without me ...

If you remain in me, and my words remain in you,

then you will ask for anything you wish,

and you shall have it ...

This is my commandment: Love one another, just as I love you.

The greatest love a man can have for his friends

is to give his life for them.

And you are my friends, if you do what I command.

I do not call you servants any longer,

because a servant does not know what his master is doing.

Instead, I call you friends, because I have told you

everything I heard from my Father.

You did not choose me; I chose you,

and appointed you to go and bear much fruit,

the kind of fruit that endures.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray...

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

***BLESSING**

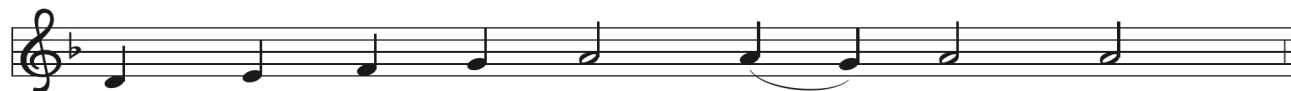
The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind,
in the body of Christ Jesus.

The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances
through the interceding of the Spirit.

The God of grace ✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

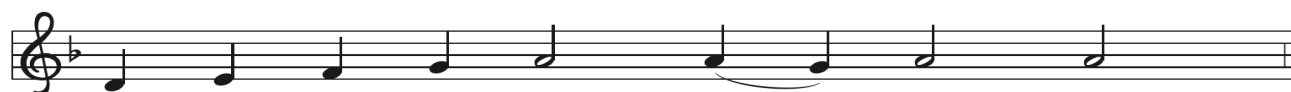
You, Lord, Are Both Lamb and Shepherd



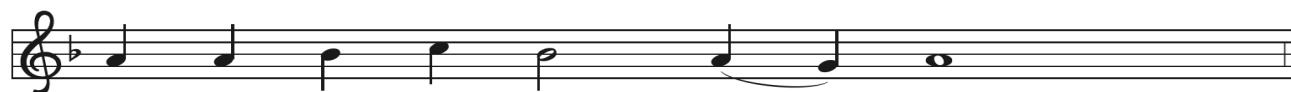
1 You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shep - herd.
 2 Clothed in light up - on the moun - tain,
 3 You, who walk each day be - side us,
 4 Wor - thy is our earth - ly Je - sus!



You, Lord, are both prince and slave.
 stripped of might up - on the cross,
 sit in pow - er at God's side.
 Wor - thy is our cos - mic Christ!



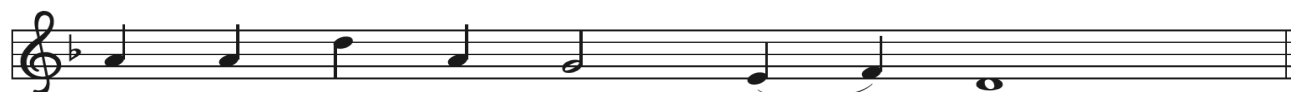
You, peace - mak - er and sword - bring - er
 shin - ing in e - ter - nal glo - ry,
 You, who preach a way that's nar - row,
 Wor - thy your de - feat and vic - t'ry;



of the way you took and gave.
 beg - gared by a sol - dier's toss,
 have a love that reach - es wide.
 wor - thy still your peace and strife.



You, the ev - er - last - ing in - stant;
 you, the ev - er - last - ing in - stant;
 You, the ev - er - last - ing in - stant;
 You, the ev - er - last - ing in - stant;



you, whom we both scorn and crave.
 you, who are both gift and cost.
 you, who are our pil - grim and guide.
 you, who are our death and life.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993

Music: PICARDY, French folk tune, 17th cent.

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*DISMISSAL

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

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TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

2055 E. Columbia Avenue

Battle Creek, MI 49014

269-963-5356

tlcbattlecreek.org

Welcome! We believe God created all of humanity in God's image. Since every person is made in the image of God, every person is part of God's family. Whatever your gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, race, income, mental or physical ability, age, religious background, nationality, or political ideology, you are welcome here. Diversity of skills, gifts, talents, opinions, and experiences are strengthened in the body of Christ. "For all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28b).

As we worship, you're invited to light a candle at the cross on the left wall at any time music is playing or we are singing. This is a way of praying with our bodies and the elements – as we light a flame, we lift up our concerns, gratitude, or whatever else we carry in our hearts.

The **CROP WALK** is **today!!** Registration is at 2:30 at Leila Arboretum with the walk beginning at 3:00. See Mary Mahurin or Gloria Kolodizieizyck if you would like to walk or to contribute to a walker.



The Council has a goal of better advertising Trinity and all the things going on in our congregation. One way to reach this goal is to increase our presence on Facebook by having more folks see our posts. If you are on Facebook and you have not already followed Trinity, please do so and then "Like", "Comment" and "Share" our weekly service and any other happenings. THANKS!!

Contact Info: For emergency pastoral care contact:

Pr. Ed Ruble, St. Peter Lutheran Church

Cell: 269-569-4721

Email: pastor@saintpeterbc.org

Our thanks to all those who give of their time, talent, and prayers for our church and God's work in the world.

Assisting in worship today:

Preaching: Reverend Ricky Perry

Lay Assistant: Doug Martens

Sound Board: John Kolodizieizyck

Streaming: Doug Martens

Music Director: Ronnie Cung

THIS WEEK AT TRINITY

September 27 – October 4, 2026

TODAY: 11:00 am Worship, Coffee Hour, 2:30 Crop Walk

MONDAY: 10:30 Yoga

TUESDAY: 10:30 Yoga

WEDNESDAY: 12 AA, 6:30 Choir

THURSDAY:

FRIDAY: 10:30 Yoga

SATURDAY:

NEXT SUNDAY: 11:00 am, Worship, Coffee Hour, Crop Walk

**Readings for next Sunday: Isaiah 5: 1 - 7; Psalm 80: 7 - 15; Philippians 3: 4b - 14
Matthew 21: 33 - 46**

PRAYER REQUESTS Prayer requests are gathered from the spoken prayer requests during worship and can also be added by calling or emailing to office@tlcbattlecreek.org. Prayer requests will stay on the list for three weeks and can be renewed:

September 20: Gloria: Wayne; **Mary:** Tish, Charlene; **Connie:** Mary; **Eileen:** Family of Billy Blackburn; **Tresa:** Anyone with unspoken needs & concerns.

September 13: The Family of Ellis Cutler; **Janelle:** Anthony Case, Chelsea & Baby, Linda, John, Wayne; **Eric:** Brenon; **Eileen:** Melissa, Jennifer, Butch, Les; **Connie:** Todd; **Kathy:** Folks impacted by flooding.

September 6: Kathy: Hadley, Steven; **Tresa:** Angela; **Janelle:** Charles Rothwell & family; **Al:** Harold

August 30: Family of Ellis Cutler; **Janelle:** Linda Stacey, Ginesa; **Eric:** Brenon; **Connie:** Colin; **Tresa:** Angela, Jim

The Franklin Food Pantry desperately needs to have its shelves restocked. The items needed are: Canned goods, soups, fruits, vegetables; also, cereal, juice, boxed milk, toilet paper and soap. Cash donations are also appreciated. Please drop off any donations at church placing them in the wagon in the narthex. Thanks!!