

Announcements

-Worship in July & August: Outdoor worship continues, alternating with fully-online worship. Currently, outdoor worship is scheduled for August 9 and August 23. Safety guidelines include social distancing, wearing masks, and modified worship. Full details are in the July Newsletter or online at trinitytipton.org/outdoor-worship/.

-The Women's Circle is collecting supplies for Lutheran World Relief's annual school kits drive. You can contribute any or all of the supplies needed for each kit: 4 70-sheet notebooks (wide- or college-ruled), 1 30-centimeter ruler, 1 pencil sharpener, 1 pair safety scissors, 5 unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers, 5 black or blue ballpoint pens, 1 box of crayons (16- or 24-count), 1 2.5" eraser; you can drop off these items at outdoor worship or by appointment

-Online connection opportunities: Zoom Fellowship today at 11am (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/601353237?pwd=YjhXSE5rZ2hPaUg1SIIzMUNMNVI2dz09>) or Sip & Scripture on Wednesdays at 7:30pm (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86015279481?pwd=b0o4SEwrZUxUZIYweWVyNU5WMY91QT09>)

-The Southeastern Iowa Synod, of which our congregation is a part, is meeting virtually on August 5 & 7 to elect a new bishop and conduct other business. Please keep the Synod Assembly in your prayers this week.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Gracious God,

have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may

**live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

Christ, Be Our Light



1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for
 2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for
 3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for
 4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for
 5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
 hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
 wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
 warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
 hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
 has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
 bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
 shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
 to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the
 dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your
 church gath - ered to - day.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957
 Music: CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT, Bernadette Farrell
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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

God, you have always delivered your church from oppression and strengthened it to face adversity. Strengthen us now to endure whatever troubles we face, that your word might continue to grow and increase. We pray this through Jesus Christ, our savior and lord.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

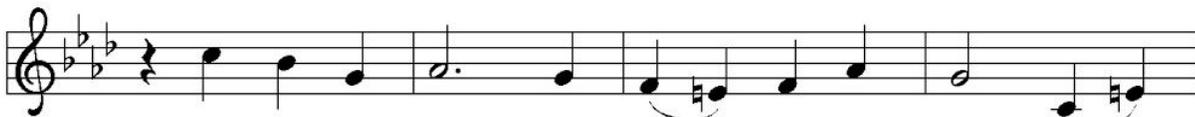
Amen.



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose
 2 Sing . . with all the peo - ple of God, and



blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.
 join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion:



Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and strength, and
 Bless - ing and hon - or, glo - ry and might be to



hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.
 God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Refrain



3 For the Lamb who was slain has be -



gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

Refrain

WORD

Acts 12:1-24

It's Passover again- the Festival of Unleavened Bread. In this passage, it's been between ten and fifteen years since the Passover when Jesus was crucified and resurrected. The Holy Spirit has been making good on the words of Jesus that the Good News would spread "to Judea, to Samaria, and to all the ends of the Earth." The kind of social change brought about by the church's growth is unpopular with the authorities. After all, Christians put loyalty to God above loyalty to the state, even when obeying God meant disobeying humans. Despite this opposition, God protected Peter and the believers.

About that time King Herod began to harass some who belonged to the church. He had James, John's brother, killed with a sword. When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he arrested Peter as well. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. He put Peter in prison, handing him over to four squads of soldiers, sixteen in all, who guarded him. He planned to charge him publicly after the Passover. While Peter was held in prison, the church offered earnest prayer to God for him.

The night before Herod was going to bring Peter's case forward, Peter was asleep between two soldiers and bound with two chains, with soldiers guarding the prison entrance. Suddenly an angel from the Lord appeared and a light shone in the prison cell. After nudging Peter on his side to awaken him, the angel raised him up and said, "Quick! Get up!" The chains fell from his wrists. The angel continued, "Get dressed. Put on your sandals." Peter did as he was told. The angel said, "Put on your coat and follow me." Following the angel, Peter left the prison. However, he didn't realize the angel had actually done all this. He thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself. After leaving the prison, they proceeded the length of one street, when abruptly the angel was gone.

At that, Peter came to his senses and remarked, "Now I'm certain that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod and from everything the Jewish people expected." Realizing this, he made his way to Mary's house. (Mary was John's mother; he was also known as Mark.) Many believers had gathered there and were praying. When Peter knocked at the outer gate, a female servant named Rhoda went to answer. She was so overcome with joy when she recognized Peter's voice that she didn't open the gate. Instead, she ran back in and announced that Peter was standing at the gate.

"You've lost your mind!" they responded. She stuck by her story with such determination that they began to say, "It must be his guardian angel." Meanwhile, Peter remained outside, knocking at the gate. They finally opened the gate and saw him there, and they were astounded.

He gestured with his hand to quiet them down, then recounted how the Lord led him out of prison. He said, "Tell this to James and the brothers and sisters." Then he left for another place.

The next morning the soldiers were flustered about what had happened to Peter. Herod called for a thorough search. When Peter didn't turn up, Herod interrogated the guards and had them executed. Afterward, Herod left Judea in order to spend some time in Caesarea.

Herod had been furious with the people of Tyre and Sidon for some time. They made a pact to approach him together, since their region depended on the king's realm for its food supply. They persuaded Blastus, the king's personal attendant, to join their cause, then appealed for an

end to hostilities. On the scheduled day Herod dressed himself in royal attire, seated himself on the throne, and gave a speech to the people. Those assembled kept shouting, over and over, "This is a god's voice, not the voice of a mere human!" Immediately an angel from the Lord struck Herod down, because he didn't give the honor to God. He was eaten by worms and died.

God's word continued to grow and increase.

SERMON

The disciples just can't catch a break, can they? Any time things seem to be getting better, the resistance picks up. And that resistance, predictably, comes from the same place: from authority figures who feel threatened by the rapid growth of the believers in Jesus Christ. It's been religious leaders, like the chief priests. Now it's a civic leader: Herod. As Acts goes on, it will also be economic and social leaders who object to the presence of Christians. For the last two thousand years, human authorities—whoever and wherever they might be— have felt threatened by Christians. With good reason, I might add. Christians hold a competing allegiance over their loyalty to any nation, economy, or society, summed up in the declaration: Jesus Christ is Lord.

Herod has realized that if Jesus Christ is Lord, then he is not. If Jesus Christ is Lord, then Caesar is not. And the last thing Herod's pride and political career can afford is a growing group of people who don't revere his authority. So he does what any tyrant would do. He kills James. He arrests Peter. He's not the only ruler to do this, just the first. The Roman Emperors, the Caesars, would arrest, abuse, and execute Christians beginning about 80 years from this story. Christians who lived as a minority in most any place or time could expect periods of persecution.

But some rulers have found a more devious way to sway Christian allegiance back to human powers: by trying to fit Christian belief and practice to suit them. King Henry VIII of England resented the power of the Pope, so he rejected the Catholic Church in order to form the Church of England, with himself as its head. He imprisoned, beheaded, or burned at the stake any Christians who objected to his reforms. Christians like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., and many more have been harassed, imprisoned, and even killed by their governments in the past century, all because their Christian faith was at odds with ruling authorities who falsely claimed to be acting in Christian ways.

In a sense, Christian faith has been political from the beginning—because it gets Christians killed. It forces Christians to pledge their allegiance first and foremost to Jesus Christ, and only secondarily to any nation or group. We Americans need to remember that especially because it is usually pretty easy to be Christian in the United States. We're not prevented from worshiping as we choose. Most of our leaders claim a Christian identity. And yet, since Jesus Christ is Lord, then no human leader or party line is Lord. Since Jesus Christ is Lord, then no powers in heaven or on the earth are Lord. Since Jesus Christ is Lord, no trouble at all is Lord- not division, not pandemic, not injustice, not even death. Could somebody tell by looking at your life—the way you spend your time, the way you talk, the way you worry— that Jesus Christ is Lord, and everything else is not?

The apostle Paul learned that Jesus Christ was Lord, and that Rome was not, and it eventually cost him his life. Yet, he could write these words of trust in his Lord:

"I'm convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers or height or depth, or any other thing that is created." Since Jesus Christ is Lord, everything else is not.

HYMN OF THE DAY -

The Church's One Foundation



1 The church's one foun - da - tion is Je - sus Christ, her Lord;
 2 E - lect from ev - 'ry na - tion, yet one o'er all the earth,
 3 Though with a scorn - ful won - der this world sees her op - pressed,
 4 Through toil and trib - u - la - tion and tu - mult of her war,
 5 Yet she on earth has u - nion with God, the Three in One,



she is his new cre - a - tion by wa - ter and the word.
 her char - ter of sal - va - tion one Lord, one faith, one birth:
 by schisms . . rent a - sund - er, by her - e - sies dis - tressed,
 she waits the con - sum - ma - tion of peace for - ev - er - more;
 and mys - tic sweet com - mu - nion with those whose rest is won.



From heav'n he came and sought her to be his ho - ly bride;
 one ho - ly name she bless - es, par - takes one ho - ly food,
 yet saints their watch are keep - ing; their cry goes up: "How long?"
 till with the vi - sion glo - rious her long - ing eyes are blest,
 Oh, bless - ed heav'n-ly cho - rus! Lord, save us by your grace,



with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.
 and to one hope she press - es with ev - 'ry grace en - dued.
 and soon the night of weep - ing shall be the morn of song.
 and the great church vic - to - rious shall be the church at rest.
 that we, like saints be - fore us, may see you face to face.

Text: Samuel J. Stone, 1839–1900

Music: AURELIA, Samuel S. Wesley, 1810–1876

PRAYERS

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

We pray for the church. Let your word grow and spread among and through us. May we trust and live each day in the certainty that you are Lord. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the well-being of creation. Protect the air, water, and land from misuse and neglect. Bless the crops that grow in the fields, that they might produce abundantly. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for schools in our community planning and preparing for a return to learning this month. Give wisdom to decision-makers. Protect all who gather to learn. Be present with those who stay apart to learn. Grant health and safety to all. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for all in need. For those who lack employment, clothing, shelter, or food. For those who long for healing of body and spirit. For all who are tired, feeling despair, sick, or oppressed, especially those we name aloud or in our hearts. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for this congregation. May we continue to be your church in the midst of change. Give us eyes to see your hand at work in our congregation, and give us faith to follow where you lead. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for those who have died in faith. Welcome them into your eternal rest and comfort us in our grief until we are joined with them in new life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us join together in the prayer Jesus taught us:

**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.**

PEACE

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

This week, share the peace of Christ by taking two minutes each day to sit quietly, breathe deeply, and remember that Christ is your Lord, not any other power or authority.

OFFERING

God has given to each of us- our selves, our time, and our possessions. God gives the warmth of summer sun, the comfort of a phone call from a loved one, the reassurance of prayer. What God has given to us, God expects us to share. If you are in a position to make a contribution to support our congregation's ministry, you can mail your check to the church; the mail is being checked regularly. Thank you for your support.

OFFERING PRAYER

Merciful God, our ordinary gifts seem small, but you make of them an abundance, just as you do with our lives. Let all that we offer be in service to you to the glory of the risen Christ.
Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SENDING HYMN - God Be With You Till We Meet Again

1 God be with you till we meet a - gain; by good coun-sels guide, up - hold you,
2 God be with you till we meet a - gain; ho - ly wings se - cure - ly hide you,
3 God be with you till we meet a - gain; when life's per - ils thick con-found you,

