

Announcements

-Worship: Outdoor worship continues, alternating with fully-online worship. Outdoor worship at Trinity is scheduled for Oct. 18. Safety guidelines include social distancing and wearing masks. Full details at trinitytipton.org/outdoor-worship/.

-Worship: We need your input for worship going into the colder months. If we required masks and distancing, would you attend worship indoors, or does that seem too risky for you? Council needs to hear your thoughts before Oct 13 to help us decide.

-World Communion Sunday: Our three-year tradition of worshipping with the Methodists on the first Sunday in October has undergone a transformation this year. We will worship in the Tipton City Park on October 4 at 10am, with congregations from Tipton & Bennett.

-Zoom Fellowship today at 11am

(<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/601353237?pwd=YjhXSE5rZ2hPaUg1SIIzMUNMNVI2dz09>)

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.

O God, Our Help in Ages Past



- 1 O God, our help in a - ges past, our hope for years to come,
 2 Un - der the shad - ow of your throne your saints have dwelt se - cure;
 3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood or earth re - ceived its frame,
 4 A thou - sand a - ges in your sight are like an eve - ning gone,



our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home:
 suf - fi - cient is your arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.
 from ev - er - last - ing you are God, to end - less years the same.
 short as the watch that ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
 bears all our years away;
 they fly forgotten, as a dream
 dies at the op'ning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,
 our hope for years to come,
 still be our guard while troubles last
 and our eternal home.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.

Music: ST. ANNE, William Croft, 1678–1727

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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, in the book of Acts we have seen how you work. You worked through a mighty wind on the day of Pentecost. You worked through changed hearts and minds when the church was divided. You worked through water and the word to include the Ethiopian eunuch. You worked through Peter, Paul, Lydia, Tabitha, and so many more for the purpose of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, healing the sick, and proclaiming the good news about Jesus Christ, whose death and resurrection bring us life. **Amen.**

Hymn of Praise

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.



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 27:1-2, 13-26, 44b-28:10, 16-31**

When it was determined that we were to sail to Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were placed in the custody of a centurion named Julius of the Imperial Company. We boarded a ship from Adramyttium that was about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia. So we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, came with us.

When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they could carry out their plan. They pulled up anchor and sailed closely along the coast of Crete. Before long, a hurricane-strength wind known as a northeaster swept down from Crete. The ship was caught in the storm and couldn't be turned into the wind. So we gave in to it, and it carried us along. After sailing under the shelter of an island called Cauda, we were able to control the lifeboat only with difficulty. They brought the lifeboat aboard, then began to wrap the ship with cables to hold it together. Fearing they might run aground on the sandbars of the Gulf of Syrtis, they lowered the anchor and let the ship be carried along. We were so battered by the violent storm that the next day the men began throwing cargo overboard. On the third day, they picked up the ship's gear and hurled it into the sea. When neither the sun nor the moon appeared for many days and the raging storm continued to pound us, all hope of our being saved from this peril faded.

For a long time no one had eaten. Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have complied with my instructions not to sail from Crete. Then we would have avoided this damage and loss. Now I urge you to be encouraged. Not one of your lives will be lost, though we will lose the ship. Last night an angel from the God to whom I belong and whom I worship stood beside me. The angel said, 'Don't be afraid, Paul! You must stand before Caesar! Indeed, God has also graciously given you everyone sailing with you.' Be encouraged, men! I have faith in God that it will be exactly as he told me. However, we must run aground on some island."

The ship struck a sandbar and was broken into pieces by the waves. The soldiers and prisoners swam to shore of a nearby island.

After reaching land safely, we learned that the island was called Malta. The islanders showed us extraordinary kindness. Because it was rainy and cold, they built a fire and welcomed all of us. Paul gathered a bunch of dry sticks and put them on the fire. As he did, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, latched on to his hand. When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer! He was rescued from the sea, but the goddess Justice hasn't let him live!" Paul shook the snake into the fire and suffered no harm. They expected him to swell up with fever or suddenly drop dead. After waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to claim that he was a god.

They stayed three months on Malta before sailing on to Rome.

When we entered Rome, Paul was permitted to live by himself, with a soldier guarding him.

Three days later, Paul called the Jewish leaders together. When they gathered, he said, "Brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors, I'm a prisoner from Jerusalem. They handed me over to the Romans, who intended to release me after they examined me, because they couldn't find any reason for putting me to death. When the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar. Don't think I appealed to Caesar because I had any reason to bring charges against my nation. This is why I asked to see you and speak with you: it's because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."

They responded, "We haven't received any letters about you from Judea, nor have any of our brothers come and reported or said anything bad about you. But we think it's important to hear what you think, for we know that people everywhere are speaking against this faction."

On the day scheduled for this purpose, many people came to the place where he was staying. From morning until evening, he explained and testified concerning God's kingdom and tried to convince them about Jesus through appealing to the Law from Moses and the Prophets. Some were persuaded by what he said, but others refused to believe. They disagreed with each other and were starting to leave when Paul made one more statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke correctly when he said to your ancestors through Isaiah the prophet,

Go to this people and say:

You will hear, to be sure, but never understand;

and you will certainly see but never recognize what you are seeing.

This people's senses have become calloused,

and they've become hard of hearing,

and they've shut their eyes

so that they won't see with their eyes

or hear with their ears

or understand with their minds,

and change their hearts and lives that I may heal them.

"Therefore, be certain of this: God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles. They will listen!"

Paul lived in his own rented quarters for two full years and welcomed everyone who came to see him. Unhindered and with complete confidence, he continued to preach God's kingdom and to teach about the Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON

And so the story ends. The church has made it through external persecution, internal division, and the ever-present call of the Holy Spirit. Paul has endured blindness, imprisonment, beatings, a shipwreck, and the ever-present compulsion to preach about Jesus Christ. He ends up under house arrest in Rome, where he awaited Caesar's judgment. There, he preaches God's kingdom and teaches about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Is that really the end?

I have always like epilogues, the "seventeen years later" type summary that show how a group of characters finished out their lives. I like to have my stories neatly tied up in a bow. You know, the kind where all the loose ends are gathered together and nothing is left unfinished. Movies and books with cliffhangers, well, I just don't like that kind of ending.

But the book of Acts leaves us with a lot of questions! What happened to all the other believers who only showed up once or twice in the story? Did the church in Lydia's house continue to grow? Did Eutychus become a leader in the church or never go back after the window incident? Where's Peter? What ever happened to Cornelius and his family after they became Christians?

There are so many people whose stories don't get epilogues in Acts, Paul included. The story, which has led toward his trial before Caesar for six chapters now, just stops with Paul's house arrest in Rome. The story ends with what the author finds most necessary to tell about Paul: Unhindered and with complete confidence, he continued to preach God's kingdom and to teach about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Wow. Being under house arrest was no hindrance or confidence-shaker for Paul. He just kept right on telling the good news. The author doesn't say a word about the trial (it wasn't good for Paul) or the outcome (death by beheading).

Maybe that's the point, actually. There is no neatly organized storybook ending for our lives. The author of Acts wasn't caught up in obsessing about the end. The early Christians knew better than most that resurrection requires death first. There would be an end for Paul, and, as for many leaders of the early church, it would be a violent one.

But the end is never the end for Christians, just as it wasn't the end for our Lord Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ, the end is only the beginning.

HYMN OF THE DAY - When We Are Living

1 When we are living, it is in Christ Jesus,
and when we're dying, it is in the Lord.
Both in our living and in our dying,
we belong to God, we belong to God.

2 'Mid times of sorrow and in times of pain,
when sensing beauty or in love's embrace,
whether we suffer, or sing rejoicing,
we belong to God, we belong to God.

3 Across this wide world, we shall always find
those who are crying with no peace of mind;
and when we help them, or when we feed them.
we belong to God, we belong to God.

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. May we learn from the faithful believers in the book of Acts,
following their example of listening, dedication, inclusion, and steadfast trust in you. Guide
bishops, pastors, deacons, teachers, council members, musicians, administrators, and
custodians, that their work may serve you. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the well-being of creation. Bless animals preparing for winter by migrating or
stockpiling. As fields and orchards ripen, grant an abundant harvest. Deliver creation from
the harm of natural disaster. 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 relief from this pandemic. Where we are frustrated, grant us peace. Where we
are frightened, grant us courage. Where we are divided, grant us understanding. Where we
seek for vaccines and treatments, grant us success. Where we are in danger, protect us.
Where we are ill, grant healing. 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.**

OFFERING

God has given to each of us- our selves, our time, and our possessions. God gives the cool breeze of autumn, the joy of a friendly text, the guidance of Scripture. 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.

HOLY COMMUNION

Gathered in a home, the disciples received Jesus' promise that the bread and cup was his presence with them. In our homes, we gather around smaller tables, trusting that Jesus Christ is with us and the grace of this meal reaches us here.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when he was betrayed, took the bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples and said: Take; eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.
In the same way he also took the cup after the supper, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, Take and drink. This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me.

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

Eternal Father, Strong to Save



1 E - ter - nal Fa - ther, strong to save, whose arm has bound the
 2 O Sav - ior, whose al - might - y word the winds and waves sub -
 3 O Ho - ly Spir - it, who didst brood up - on the cha - os
 4 O Trin - i - ty of love and pow'r, all trav - 'lers guard in



rest - less wave, who bade the might - y o - cean deep its
 mis - sive heard, who walked up - on the foam - ing deep, and
 dark and rude, and bid its an - gry tu - mult cease, and
 dan - ger's hour from rock and tem - pest, fire and foe, pro -



own ap - point - ed lim - its keep: oh, hear us when we
 calm a - mid the storm didst sleep: oh, hear us when we
 give, for wild con - fu - sion, peace: oh, hear us when we
 tect them where - so - e'er they go; thus ev - er - more shall



cry to thee for those in per - il on the sea.
 cry to thee for those in per - il on the sea.
 cry to thee for those in per - il on the sea.
 rise to thee glad hymns and praise from land and sea.

In our prayers this week:

Millie Mracek (Sally Kruse's great-niece, cancer treatment)

Our members in nursing homes or assisted living: Ron & Carolyn Belitz, Marge Seebeck, Delores Werling

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