

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
Epiphany 7 - February 20, 2022

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

Hymn #492 - "Son of God, Eternal Savior"

**Son of God, eternal Savior,
Source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us,
Honors all our human race,
You our head, who, throned in glory,
For your own will ever plead:
Fill us with your love and pity;
Heal our wrongs and help our need.**

**Come, O Christ, and reign among us,
King of love and Prince of Peace;
Hush the storm of strife and passion;
Bid its cruel discords cease.
By your patient years of toiling,
By your silent hours of pain,
Quench our fevered thirst for pleasure;
Stem our selfish greed for gain.**

**Bind us all as one together
In your Church's sacred fold,
Weak and healthy, poor and wealthy,
Sad and joyful, young and old.
Is there want or pain or sorrow?
Make us all the burden share.
Are there spirits crushed and broken?
Teach us, Lord, to soothe their care.**

**As you, Lord, have lived for others,
So may we for others live.**

**Freely have your gifts been granted;
Freely may your servants give.
Yours the gold and yours the silver,
Yours the wealth of land and sea;
We but stewards of your bounty
Held in solemn trust will be.**

Confession of Sins:

P: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!**

P: Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

First Lesson: Genesis 45:3-8a, 15

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" His brothers could not answer him, because they were terrified by his presence. Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me, please." They came closer. He said, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Now do not be upset or angry with yourselves for selling me to this place, since God sent me ahead of you to preserve life. For two years now the famine has been in the land, and there are still five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. God sent me ahead of you to preserve you as survivors on the earth, and to keep you alive by a great act of deliverance. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He kissed all his brothers and wept over them. After that his brothers talked with him. (EHV)

Psalm 103

Refrain: I will hear what the Lord proclaims: peace to his people.

**Praise the LORD, 'O my soul;
All my inmost being, praise his 'holy name.**

**He forgives 'all your sins
And heals all your dis'eases;**

**He redeems your life 'from the grave
And crowns you with love and com'passion.**

Refrain: I will hear what the Lord proclaims: peace to his people.

**The LORD is compassionate and 'gracious,
Slow to anger, abound'ing in love.**

**He does not treat us as our 'sins deserve
Or repay us according to our in'iquities.**

**For as high as the heavens are a'bove the earth,
So great is his love for those who 'fear him;**

**As far as the east is 'from the west,
So far has he removed our transgressions 'from us.**

Refrain: I will hear what the Lord proclaims: peace to his people.

**As a father has compassion on his 'children,
So the LORD has compassion on those who 'fear him;**

**For he knows how 'we are formed,
He remembers that 'we are dust.**

**Our days are like grass, like a flower 'of the field;
The wind blows over it and 'it is gone.**

**But the LORD's love is with those who 'fear him
From everlasting to ever'lasting.**

**Glory be to the Father and 'to the Son
And to the Holy 'Spirit,**

**As it was in the be'ginning,
Is now, and will be forever. 'Amen.**

Refrain: I will hear what the Lord proclaims: peace to his people.

Second Lesson: Romans 12:14-21

Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse. Rejoice with those who are rejoicing; weep with those who are weeping. Have the same respect for one another. Do not be arrogant, but associate with the humble. Do not think too highly of yourselves. Do not pay anyone back evil for evil. Focus on those things that everyone considers noble. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, maintain peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath. For it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay," says the Lord. But: If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink. For by doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (EHV)

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. Alleluia.

The Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

"But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, offer the other too. If someone takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes away your things, do not demand them back. Treat others just as you would want them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? To be sure, even the sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even the sinners do the same thing. If you lend to those from whom you expect to be repaid, what credit is that to you? Even the sinners lend to sinners in order to be paid back in full. Instead, love your enemies, do good and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the unthankful and the evil. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be poured into your lap. In fact, the measure with which you measure will be measured back to you." (EHV)

The Apostles' Creed:

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn #428 - *"Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me"*

**Why should cross and trial grieve me?
Christ is near with his cheer; never will he leave me.
Who can rob me of the heaven
That God's Son for me won when his life was given?**

**When life's troubles rise to meet me,
Though their weight may be great, they will not defeat me.
God, my loving Savior, sees them;
He who knows all my woes knows how best to end them.**

**God gives me my days of gladness,
And I will trust him still when he sends me sadness.
God is good; his love attends me
Day by day, come what may, guides me and defends me.**

**Since I know God never fails me,
In his voice I'll rejoice when grim death assails me.
Trusting in my Savior's merit,
Safe at last, troubles past, I shall heav'n inherit.**

**The Sermon: Romans 12:14-21
 "Overcome Evil With Good"**

Romans 12:14-21

In this part of his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul shows us a couple of very **important** things. First of all, we need to remember that the way we live our lives as **Christians**, is a **response** to the **mercy** which God has shown to us. And **second**, in order to live as Christians, we need to have our thoughts and actions completely **transformed** by the Word of God. The concept of loving our **enemies** runs completely **opposite** from the way we normally think. That was true for the people in Paul's day too. They lived under the rule of the Roman Empire - an empire which was well known for its **aggression** and **violence**. So, when Paul wrote "*If your enemy is hungry, **feed** him; if he is thirsty, give him a **drink**,*" that seemed to be completely **backward** - and it seems that way to **us** as well. And that's because it **is** backward. The life of a **Christian** needs to be **completely opposite** from the ways of this world. While fighting back with **violence** might slow our enemies down, the only way the enemies of Christianity can be **permanently** changed is through **grace - undeserved love**. So, God encourages us to **Overcome Evil With Good**.

As always, Jesus gives us the **perfect** example. Jesus was **always** in character in **every** circumstance - fighting against **sin** and its **consequences**, and against **Satan** and his **followers**. Jesus treated Jews and Gentiles **alike - destroying** the powers of evil, and showing to **all** people the glory of God's **grace** and **mercy**. But He didn't destroy them with outward **force** or armies of **angels**. He did it as He willingly sacrificed His life on the **cross**, to **save** all people **regardless** of their **race, health, or social status**.

So, as His **followers** - brothers and sisters who have been **baptized** into Christ and His family - we will strive to **imitate** the character of Jesus in all of **our** circumstances as well. How can we **do** that? Certainly **not** by physically dying on a **cross**. But rather, we can **imitate Jesus** by showing love and kindness not only to those who are our **friends** and who **like** us - and not just on Sunday mornings. We need to be living as Christians and following the example of Jesus **everywhere** and at **all times** - even if we find ourselves in a **hostile** crowd, among those who **hate** us. In this way, we'll be offering our lives as **living sacrifices** - giving **thanks** to the LORD for His **mercy**.

Our text begins, “**Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse. Rejoice with those who are rejoicing; weep with those who are weeping. Have the same respect for one another. Do not be arrogant, but associate with the humble. Do not think too highly of yourselves. Do not pay anyone back evil for evil. Focus on those things that everyone considers noble.**” It’s pretty **easy** for us to be **friendly** toward people who are **friendly** - to be **nice** to people who are **nice** - to repay **good** with **good**. But, it’s a little bit **different** when we have to deal with someone who is **arrogant**, or **hateful**, or who is downright **evil**, isn’t it? How do we **react** when someone has **gossiped** about us, or when someone has **cheated** us - or when a driver has **cut us off** in traffic? How do we **feel** when someone falsely accuses us - or calls us **cold-hearted** or **homophobic**, or **racist**? The natural **temptation** is to pay them **back** with **evil**. That’s how our sinful flesh operates. When you get **hit**, you need to hit **back**. But that’s **not** the choice **God** would have us make. Instead, He encourages us to do just the **opposite** - to **Overcome Evil With Good**.

We want the people of this world to see and hear **good things** from us, because as **Christians** we’re representing our **Savior**. We are to be **lights** in the **darkness** of this world - lights which allow the love of **Jesus** to shine forth into the world. How we **handle** ourselves when **evil** comes against us really does **matter**. That’s why we need to take to **heart** Paul’s words, “*Do not pay anyone back evil for evil ... If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, maintain peace with everyone.*” Again, look at the actions of **Jesus**. He **always** showed **mercy** and **love**, even for His **enemies**. When He was **arrested**, and Peter took out a sword and cut off the **ear** of the High Priest’s servant, Jesus mercifully **healed** his ear. And even while He was hanging on the **cross**, Jesus **prayed** for **forgiveness** for those who were **crucifying** Him. In the face of the most **severe** hostility, Jesus did what was **right**. He **fulfilled** the heavenly Father’s **plan**, and gave up His **life** to **rescue** all people - even His **enemies**.

By nature, you and I were **included** among God’s **enemies** - unable to do what is **right**, and only doing what is **evil** in His sight. The end result of our **sinfulness** would have been eternal **damnation in hell**. But, Jesus wouldn’t let that happen. God did **not** send His Son to **even the score** or to **pay us back** with **punishment**, but rather God sent His

Son to be the **payment** which would **restore** us to God as His **forgiven** and **reconciled** children. A little bit earlier in this letter Paul had told the Romans, *“God shows his own **love** for us in **this**: While we were still **sinners**, Christ **died** for us.”*

The result is that because Jesus has shown **grace** to **us**, **we** can respond to evil with **grace** as well. We respond not by demanding our **rights**, but by doing what **is** right. Our **goal** is to live in **peace** with everyone. Of course, it takes **two** to have peace; and even though **we** are striving to live in peace, the **other** side doesn't always **want** that to happen. In fact, they may even make things **worse** by continuing to **irritate** us, and **adding** to the conflict. Even our **Lord** had enemies who kept piling on the **hostility** all the way to His **death**. But Jesus stayed in character, and reached out to them in **love**. When He was **struck**, He didn't strike **back**.

So, as we strive to follow the example of our **Savior**, we'll make every effort to live in **peace** with **all** people. We'll try to sit down and peacefully **discuss** disagreements which arise - we'll even be willing to give up our **rights** for the sake of **peace**, as we let God's mercy **shine** in our lives. In His sermon on the mount Jesus said, *“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But **I** tell you, do not **resist** an evildoer. If someone strikes you on your **right** cheek, turn to him the **other** also. If anyone wants to sue you to take away your **shirt**, give him your **coat** too. Whoever compels you to go **one** mile, go with him **two**.”*

Our text continues: *“Do not take **revenge**, dear friends, but leave room for **God's** wrath. For it is written, ‘Vengeance is **mine**; **I** will repay,’ says the Lord.”* Getting **even** is the way of our sinful **flesh**; and it's the **cause** of all kinds of problems. But revenge **isn't** the way God wants us to **deal** with our problems. Two **wrongs** don't make a **right**. When **thieves** break in and **steal**, or when **injustice** runs rampant, it's not up to us as **individuals** to take matters into our own hands, in order to try to solve the problem. That's one of the reasons God has established the **government**. As **Christians**, we need to reflect the **love** and **grace** of our Lord. We have a God who loves us **dearly**. He watches **over** us, and **protects** us from all the **harm** which others would like to **cause** us. He holds all men **accountable** to **Him** for their hostility toward us. And, He has reserved a day of **wrath** when He will justly

deal with those who have **not** repented of their sins. **Vengeance** belongs to the LORD, so leave **room** for Him to **take** His vengeance. Even **Jesus** didn't take matters into His own hands when He was wronged, but instead the Bible tells us, "*When he was **insulted**, he did **not** insult in **return**. When he **suffered**, he made no **threats**. Instead, he entrusted himself to **him** who judges **justly**.*"

And finally, Jesus tells us, "*If your enemy is hungry, **feed** him; if he is thirsty, give him a **drink**. For by doing this, you will heap **burning coals** on his head.*" When we pour out **kindness** on our enemies - when we **befriend** them, and **help** them when they are in need - when we offer them **food** and **drink**, or **shelter** and **care** - our **kindness** serves **two** purposes. **First** of all, it reflects the **love** which Jesus has for **us**. And **second**, it causes our enemies to realize that there's really **no reason** for them to be **angry** with us. As that realization **burns** into their hearts and minds, they may be moved to learn more about the **Savior** whom we represent.

Jesus has achieved a great victory for **all** people by removing the curse of **sin**. But it wasn't with a **cost**. Jesus overcame evil by taking **our** sin on **Himself** - giving up His own **perfect life** to **pay** for the world's sin, Three days later, He **rose** from the dead to claim His **victory** - a victory which He has given to **all** those who **believe** in Him. Jesus has overcome all the evil which **torments** us, and He has brought us from **death** to **life**. He has overcome our **sinful flesh** with all its evil desires, and has created a new heart in us - a heart filled with **holy** desires. That's why we can honor God's request, "*Do not be **overcome** by evil, but **Overcome Evil With Good**.*" That's our **goal** - to overcome **evil** with **good**, and to let the **mercy** and **kindness** of our **Savior** shine through our life to **all people** - even to our enemies - so they may be won over to Jesus, and share in the saving **victory** of our Lord. The glory of Jesus **shines** - in His merciful **healing** of the people of His day - in His **sacrifice** for sinners on the **cross** - and even through **us**, His redeemed people, as we strive in the face of **evil**, to live in love, peace, and kindness, displaying the victory of **salvation** which Jesus has **won** for us. Amen.

Prayers:

Dear Savior, Jesus Christ, we are thankful for the great gift of **love**, which You poured out for us in sacrificing Yourself for our sins. We also thank You for the gift of **faith**, by which we receive Your redemptive work, and make it our own. Help us always to **Overcome Evil With Good** in the world. Lord, it's Your will that **no one** should perish. Therefore, give us a **love** for souls that will cause us to

let down our **nets**, that we may bring in the bountiful catch of souls which **You** have prepared. Help us to tell them of the **sacrifice** You made for their sins. Make us devout and able **messengers** of the Gospel, by filling us with Your Holy Spirit.

Through that same Spirit, cause the words of salvation, which we offer to others, to be **received** in their hearts by **faith**, that they **too** may know the joy and gladness that fills **our** souls. May we never become **disheartened** in our efforts to speak the Gospel to others, nor be **ashamed** to declare and defend Your name. Help us recognize and seize **every** opportunity to testify of the **only** way to salvation - **Your cross**.

Destroy the power of every **evil** force which works **against** the Gospel, and **remove** every **hindrance** to the swift movement of salvation's message in the world. Help us see our personal responsibility to **support** the Gospel work done by our **missionaries**, wherever they may labor. Give us **generous** hearts to share **abundantly** from our earthly means for their support, and also remind us to continually **pray** for Your blessings on their labors. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory
Forever and ever. Amen.**

Hymn #479 - "Jesus, Your Boundless Love to Me"

**Jesus, your boundless love to me
No thought can reach, no tongue declare.
Dwell in my heart eternally,
And reign without a rival there.
To you alone, dear Lord, I live;
Myself to you, dear Lord, I give.**

**Oh, grant that nothing in my soul
May dwell but your pure love alone;
Oh, may your love possess me whole,
My joy, my treasure, and my crown!
All coldness from my heart remove;
My ev'ry act, word, thought be love.**

**This love unwearied I pursue
And dauntlessly to you aspire.
Oh, may your love my hope renew,
Burn in my soul like heav'nly fire!
And day and night be all my care
To guard this sacred treasure there.**

**In suff'ring be your love my peace;
In weakness be your love my pow'r;
And when the storms of life shall cease,
O Jesus, in that final hour
Be then my rod and staff and guide
And draw me safely to your side.**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

The Blessing:

P: The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

Hymn #238 - "Oh, Bless the Lord, My Soul"

**Oh, bless the Lord, my soul!
Let all within me join
And aid my tongue to bless his name
Whose favors are divine.**

**Oh, bless the Lord, my soul,
Nor let his mercies lie
Forgotten in unthankfulness
And without praises die.**

**'Tis he forgives my sins;
'Tis he relieves my pain;
'Tis he that heals my sicknesses
And makes me young again.**

**He fills the poor with good;
He gives the suff'ers rest;
The Lord has judgments for the proud
And justice for th' oppressed.**

**His wondrous works and ways
He made by Moses known,
But sent the world his truth and grace
By his beloved Son.**