

January 28, 2024

4th Sunday after Epiphany
Rev. Jonathan D. Meyer, Pastor
Pastor Meyer-(979) 540-7973
Our website – www.trinity-stjames.org

Color-GREEN [Life and regeneration]
Our email address – lexington.fedor.lcms@gmail.com
Church-(979) 773-2634

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH - FEDOR

The Elder-in-Charge – Charles Winkler
The Head Usher – Allan Urban
The Altar Guild – Debbie Winkler

The Organist – Kevin Patschke

ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH - LEXINGTON

The Elder-in-Charge – Dwayne Cass
The Acolyte – Michael Norment
The Head Usher – Wesley Boriack

The Organist – Dorothy Wachsmann

The Finance Board – Rodney Exner, Ferman Iselt, Patrick Jatzlau, Zachary Lay
The Altar Guild – Teresa Exner, Kelsi Otte, Peggy Raines
The Flowers – To the glory of God in honor of Clyde Lay’s birthday today by his grandchildren, Alli, Pistol, Rebel, and Rookie.

TO OUR VISITORS - In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we bid you welcome. May the Holy Spirit bless your, and our, hearing of the Word of God. *** Would you please sign the GUEST REGISTER [please also include your address] in the NARTHEX before leaving the church?

OUR WORSHIP THIS MORNING

THE ORDER OF MORNING SERVICE - PAGE 5 IN THE FRONT OF THE HYMNAL.

SILENT PRAYER upon entering the nave: Loving heavenly Father! I have come to hear Your Holy Word that makes the soul righteous. So then, put Your Holy Spirit in my heart that I may accept Your Gospel with awe and truly believe it. Amen.

**SUMMARY OF TODAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS –
THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY**

Jesus Came for Gentiles, Too The Gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. (*Romans 1:8-17*) Even in the Old Testament, the Gentiles were beneficiaries of God’s saving power. Though unimpressed at first with the Word of God, the Syrian military commander Naaman is persuaded to receive that Word, and in the water he is cleansed and brought to faith in the God of Israel. (*2 Kings 5:1-15a*) So also in the New Testament, a Roman centurion demonstrates great and humble faith in the Lord. (*Matthew 8:5-13*) All he needs is the Word of Christ, for he trusts that Jesus’ Word of healing has authority to accomplish what it says. And indeed it does. The centurion’s faith is praised by our Lord above that of any Israelite. For the last shall be first, and the first last. Apart from faith in Christ, there is no salvation – not even for a Jew – but only weeping and gnashing of teeth. (*lcms.org/lectionary-summaries*)

READING FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

Summary: Our Lord Jesus Christ serves His Church through His called and ordained priests or ministers of His Holy Word and Sacrament. Through them, He preaches His Word and administers His body and blood to His saints per His one-time sacrifice for us upon the cross. Christ does not need to be re-sacrificed for us on Church altars, nor can He be.

The adversaries [Romanist opponents of Lutheran Doctrine] understand priesthood not as the Ministry of the Word, and administering the Sacraments to others, but they understand it as referring to sacrifice; as though in the New Testament there ought to be a priesthood like the Levitical [Old Testament priesthood] to sacrifice for the people and merit the remission of sins for others [by that sacrifice.] We teach that the sacrifice of Christ dying on the cross has been sufficient for the sins of the whole world, and that there is no need, besides, of other sacrifices, as though [Christ's sacrifice was] not sufficient for our sins. Men, accordingly, are justified not because of any other sacrifices, but because of this one sacrifice of Christ, if they believe that they have been redeemed by this sacrifice. [Our ministers are] accordingly called priests, not in order to make any sacrifices for the people as in the Law, so that by these they may merit remission of sins for the people; but they are called to teach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments to the people. Nor do we have another priesthood like the Levitical [one], as the Epistle to the Hebrews sufficiently teaches. For the Ministry of the Word has God's command and glorious promises, Romans 1:16: "*The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.*" Likewise, Isaiah 55:11: "*So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I desire.*" For the Church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry and is present in the ministry by which He preaches and works through men and those who have been chosen by men.] (*The Apology of Defense of the Augsburg Confession, Article 23, The Number and Use of the Sacraments, paragraphs 7-12*)

† IN THE NAME OF JESUS †

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING HYMN: ♪ 16

SERVICE OF THE WORD [PAGES 5 TO 14, FRONT OF HYMNAL]

INTROIT (ENTRANCE INTO THE SERVICE OF THE WORD)

PASTOR: The heavens proclaim [God's] righteousness, and all the peoples see His glory. For You, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad! O you who love the Lord, hate evil! He preserves the lives of His saints; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to His Holy Name! (*Psalms 97:6, 9, 10-12*)

CONGREGATION: ♪ Glory be to the Father....

COLLECT (PRAYER) OF THE DAY

P: Lord God, heavenly Father, Who of great love and mercy gave us Your Son to be made man and to die on the cross for us: put Your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may confide wholly in Your Son alone, and by Him believe as firmly in the forgiveness of sins and eternal life as the centurion believed that Christ would save his paralyzed servant with a word. We have His Word that whoever believes in Him will never perish. Therefore, beloved Father, grant that we may believe it with a resolute heart and thereby remain steadfast in the faith until the end; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: ♪ Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS: OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – 2 KINGS 5:1-15

P: ^{5:1} Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. ² Now the

Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. ³She said to her mistress, "Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." ⁴So Naaman went in and told his lord, "Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel." ⁵And the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. ⁶And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy." ⁷And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me."

⁸But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel."

⁹So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house. ¹⁰And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." ¹¹But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the Name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. ¹²Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. ¹³But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'" ¹⁴So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

¹⁵Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him. And he said, "See, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel."

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSIVE READING OF THE SMALL CATECHISM (SEE INSERT)

EPISTLE LESSON – ROMANS 1:8-17

P: ¹⁸First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. ⁹For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I mention you ¹⁰always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. ¹¹For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you – ¹²that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. ¹³I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. ¹⁴I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. ¹⁵So I am eager to preach the Gospel to you also who are in Rome.

¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

TRIPLE HALLELUJAH AND READING OF THE GOSPEL LESSON – MATTHEW 8:5-13

C: ♪ Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!


P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 8th chapter.

C: ♪ Glory be to Thee, O Lord!

P: ^{8:5}When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a [Roman] centurion came to Him, asking for help. ⁶"Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly." ⁷Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?" ⁸The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have You come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." ¹⁰When Jesus heard this,

He was amazed and said to those following Him, “Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. ¹¹ I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. ¹² But the subjects of the Kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” ¹³ And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C:  **Praise be to Thee, O Christ!**

APOSTLES' CREED (CONFESSION OF FAITH) [PAGE 12]

HYMN OF THE DAY:  132

SERMON: CHRIST CLEANSSES US OF OUR SPIRITUAL LEPROSY – 2 KINGS 5:1-14

“Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean.” (2 Kings 5:10) Amen.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen. Nothing is as it should be in our Old Testament lesson from 2 Kings 5. The military leader of a foreign, pagan nation which has no regard for the only true God of heaven and earth – General Naaman and his forces are victorious in battle over their enemies: God’s people Israel. Naaman the Syrian and his army hold the field and have won the day. To Naaman and Syria go the spoils of war. As unlikely as this may seem, God has brought this to pass. The Lord God of all power and might oversees all!

Speaking of spoils of war, a young Israelite girl has been seized from her family and forced to live in a foreign land away from her people, culture and religious tradition. The Gentile Naaman himself – the very man God has favored and given the victory to – is the one who’s taken her.

As for King Jehoram, son of Ahab, ruler of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, we read in 2 Kings 3:2 that he was one of a number of Israelite kings who tragically *“did evil in the eyes of the Lord,”* making him a wicked rather than a godly ruler of the nation. He wasn’t as gung-ho on Baal and Ashera worship as his father had been, but he did little to stop it in his kingdom, making Israel a very religiously-pluralistic place where various false gods were worshiped and prayed to alongside the one true God of Israel. All-in-all, Jehoram permitted open idolatry in his kingdom, leading his people in the way of evil. No wonder God gives Naaman and Syria victory over Israel and Jehoram, such that the Israelites must suffer greatly.

The captured Israelite girl’s faithful witness to Naaman is remarkable! She trusts in the Lord her God even in the midst of terrible circumstances for her and her family, what with her being forcibly taken from them. Rather than hide God’s power to heal diseases from her captor, she informs Naaman that the prophet in Israel will surely heal him. How kind she is to Naaman, who has essentially enslaved her in his household. See how she holds to God’s Word: *“Love your enemies” (Mt. 5:44)* and *“overcome evil with good.” (Rom. 12:21)* She refuses to be silent and let Naaman’s skin continue to rot away and his suffering worsen.

As faithful as this girl is, the rotten, good-for-nothing king of Israel is the exact opposite: faithless as can be. When Jehoram learns of Naaman’s desire for him – through God’s prophet Elisha – to heal the general of his leprosy, he quakes with fear! The king doesn’t trust in or call upon the Name of the Lord Who’s given him his kingship. He thinks as little of God’s prophet Elisha as he does of the Lord. For him, the situation’s hopeless. In his mind, Naaman can’t be helped. Elisha’s rebuke of Jehoram is that he should know better! As king of Israel he should trust in God’s power to heal. He should also understand that God has given Israel into Syria’s hand as punishment for their unbelief.

Naaman’s expectation to be healed in the way he thinks he should be healed proves that God’s ways are not man’s ways. God, after all, teaches us: *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Is. 55:8-9)* The Syrian is deeply offended that God, through Elisha, would have him bathe seven times in the Jordan River – a silty, dirty river which we might compare to washing downstream a sewage pipe today. Also, it’s a foreign river that he doesn’t care for. Naaman gives his own idea of a “proper healing:” *“Look, I thought that [the prophet] would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the Name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.” (2 Kings 5:11)* Could God have healed Naaman in this way? Certainly! Yet the Lord desires to heal Naaman in the way of His own choosing – and His way is always best!

Naaman would benefit from having the faith of the Roman centurion in today's Gospel reading. Not only does this soldier appeal to the Lord Jesus to heal his paralyzed, suffering servant, he even trusts in the Son of God to heal the man from a great distance! But you know what? God in His great mercy equips Naaman with true, devout faith in Him all-the-same – by healing him in Jordan's waters! He ends up in the same place as the Roman centurion – reveling and rejoicing in God's healing power! Trusting in the Lord as his only God – even as a Gentile!

Naaman's exchange with his servants is as wonderful as it is fascinating! It proves the mighty, saving power of God's Word! Displeased that God's prophet has sent a servant to speak God's Word to him... Incensed that he's being made to wash in some cesspool-of-a-river in a foreign land that he's crushed militarily, Naaman has about had it and is ready to go home! To heck with being healed by a foreign God in a foreign place! Yet his servants point out that the assurance of healing is actually on the table for him! Nowhere, no way else is this a possibility. He's got nothing to lose by trusting Elisha. They're actually urging him to have faith in the God of Israel because He has made a definitive promise: *"Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean."* (2 Kings 5:10)

Then and now, leprosy is a terrible disease in which bacteria eat away at skin and flesh. In Naaman's day, there was no cure for this disease, nor would there be until the mid-20th century with the introduction of antibiotics. Nowadays, very treatable, leprosy is rarer than it's ever been before in history.

Yet there is another type of "leprosy" that'll never have a medical or human cure. This leprosy infects all people the world over; it's far more pervasive, powerful and deadly than even the worst strain of physical leprosy! It's spiritual leprosy, and it has the power to kill and condemn eternally to hell; and it does so. It's sin. Not only is this sin the *"actual transgression of God's commandments, but [it is] also the horrible, dreadful hereditary, [spiritual] disease by which our entire nature is corrupted."* (FC SD: Article 1, 5) So, along with the inbred, inherited sin of which we're all sorely guilty, there's the hard fact that we've all been disobedient and unfaithful to God and selfish and uncaring to others.

Our true spiritual state as a result of our original sin and all the wrong we've done is as unflattering as can be. In fact it's downright awful! Truth is, we're *"thoroughly and utterly infected and corrupted before God by original sin, as by a spiritual leprosy; and on account of this corruption and because of the fall of [Adam and all of us since then] our nature is accused or condemned by God's Law, so that we are by nature the children of wrath, death and damnation."* (FC SD: Article 1, 5) Apart from God and His Word, we've got it just as bad as Naaman did. We're just as spiritually dead and physically dying as Naaman was, absent God and His Son. But for the faithfulness of God, and through Him an Israelite girl and God's prophet – Naaman would be doomed.

We Lutheran Christians like to draw a line connecting Naaman's washing with our own in Holy Baptism. And why not! But for God's faithfulness to you in washing your head, body and soul clean of all sin, death and hell in your Baptism, you're toast. We also love to talk about how God's Word slays us sinners in the sense that it puts our unbelieving, sinful and rotten self to death and causes a faithful, believing Christian in us to come alive unto God! But for Christ's Word making you a believing, clean, saved child of God, you're done for. So today, tomorrow and every day, be turned by the Word of God from yourself and your sins to your Savior Jesus and His righteousness! Put away all filthiness in you – cast it upon Christ; ask Him to take it from you! In faith cling hard-and-fast to your Baptismal grace and faith; hold fast as well to the Word of the Lord. Believe, live, be saved according to it alone!

How good of God to join His glorious Word to His physical creation so that water and Word combined deliver Naaman from disease, death and hell. Naaman properly responds by praising God and confessing Him alone as his Lord. Naaman begins to live by faith. God has kept His Word and has done great things for him – holy is His Name! Naaman has done nothing to deserve or get this. God alone is the Doer and Giver of faith, life and salvation! To you too – no less than to Naaman! How good of God to join His Name, His Word – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – to water in order to save the whole of you from death and hell! How good of Him to declare Naaman, you and all believers in Jesus of every age absolved and free of all sin, death and endless judgment!

People of God, though you're afflicted with troubles, griefs, heartaches because of your foul trespasses which spring up from the poisoned well of your sinful heart... Though accidents, illnesses, setbacks, unease, pain, even times of despair distress us as fallen people living in a badly fallen world, do not fear! Christ Jesus is your Savior for this very reason, so that you don't lose heart and despair, but trust in Him to forgive you your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness! To give you comfort, peace, hope in the midst of the harshness of life.

Christ your Redeemer took all your sins upon Himself. Even your inherited sin-guilt is expiated, removed from you! All of it is put to death in Jesus, Who was put to death for you. You have new life in His Holy Word, and in that Word joined with water in your Baptism.

Naaman's story is our story as well. We're all Gentile sinners who've received the forgiving, saving grace of God in full measure. We keep on receiving it with joy and thanksgiving, trusting always that, like Naaman, we have a gracious God!

Take a few, final points to heart: 1) Naaman's washing in the Jordan River differs from our Baptismal washing as Christians. Our Baptism saves us unto God as we're united to Him in the Christian faith, seeing as how we're baptized in the Holy Triune Name of God. Naaman's washing in the Jordan cleanses him of his leprosy. It's only after his miraculous healing that Naaman realizes that the God of Israel, Who's restored his body, is the only God there is. For Naaman and us the end result is the same: a living, saving faith in the one true God.

2) After the Hebrew girl's abduction drastically changes her life, she doesn't lose all hope but trusts in and relies upon God all-the-more! In this way she serves as a good example for us whenever we face adversity. She doesn't hate or curse Naaman who's taken her away from her homeland. Nor are we to do so to those who mistreat us. Instead, this young girl shows love and kindness to her captor, informing Naaman that the God of Israel can and will heal him. Show love and kindness as well to all who cross your path – not just to those close to you but also to other types of people, even those who dislike you or don't treat you well. Like this faithful girl, be like Jesus to others!

This girl is also proof that even children can make a difference in the world and share God's Word faithfully and lovingly. And so God, Who has saved all His children and loves them so, works through even them for the good of others. As it's written: *"From the mouths of children You have established strength and ordained praise [O Lord.]" (Ps. 8:2)*

3) Be of good cheer that Christ Jesus died not only for you and for all people from Good Friday onward, but also for everyone prior to it. Therefore, Naaman, the Israelite girl and all the faithful saints of God in the Old Testament were made so by the Holy Lamb of God Who died to take away the sin of the whole world. Amen. *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

OFFERTORY (ANTHEM PRECEDING THE OFFERING OF TITHES) [PAGES 22-23]

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P: Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

The heavens proclaim Your righteousness, O Most High, and in Your beloved Son all peoples see Your glory. Let the many coastlands be glad, let false gods be abandoned and let Jesus Christ alone be worshipped and sought. Lord, in Your mercy, **C: hear our prayer.**

O Lord our God, You have actually spoken Your great Word by Your holy prophets and apostles. Do not let us despise it but, in spite of all appearances, gladly receive its wisdom and promises, doing as Christ commands. Help us never to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but to boldly believe and confess it and always cling to it as Your power for salvation to everyone who believes. Lord, in Your mercy, **C: hear our prayer.**

Father above, bless the congregations of our Synod, that they would be faithful to Your Word and motivated by Your love and compassion in all they do. Lord, in Your mercy, **C: hear our prayer.**

Holy Father, You saw fit to cleanse the Syrian Naaman from his leprosy in the waters of the Jordan River. We thank You as well for healing the corruption of our sinful nature and saving us from judgment by Christ's power in the sacred bath of Holy Baptism. With Your great Word and Name, plain water becomes a life-giving stream. Do not let us forget our Baptism, nor withhold it from our children, but treasure it as Christ's trustworthy promise and arise daily to newborn life, cleansed by Your grace. Lord, in Your mercy, **C: hear our prayer.**

Lord of all truth, richly bless all who study Your Word in our congregation and who are edified by It [St. James: especially our Sunday school and weekday school students, as well as our catechumens preparing for Confirmation], that all who are taught would grow in Your wisdom and knowledge, so that they are strengthened and fortified in the faith and have fervent love for others. Lord, in Your mercy, **C: hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, Your Son did not turn away the centurion nor forbid the work of civil servants and soldiers, but He respected the service of loyalty and honorable authority with uprightness. Uphold both our leaders and our military in such honorable service, and grant that they, too, may share with us the faith of the centurion and so be gathered to the eternal feast in Your Kingdom. Lord, in Your mercy, **C: hear our prayer.**

God of all comfort, look with compassion on the sick and suffering, especially _____, that they would know Your peace and receive healing and relief according to Your gracious will. Lord, in Your mercy, **C: hear our prayer.**

Lord God, heavenly Father, do not throw us into the outer darkness of weeping and gnashing of teeth. Strengthen and preserve our faith in Christ Jesus, our only Mediator, by Whom we also are welcomed to recline at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as true Israelites. When our last hour comes, welcome us as brothers and sisters of Christ, baptized in His Name, and therefore as sons and daughters of Your Kingdom by grace; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN: ♪ 391

CONCLUDING COLLECTS

P: Almighty God and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities and stretch forth the hand of Your majesty to heal and defend us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: ♪ Amen.

P: Dear Lord Jesus, Who, as the truly patient Lamb of God, did suffer for us the most shameful death upon the cross and with Your precious blood did redeem us from all our sins, from death and from the power of the devil, give us the assurance of this redemption through Your Holy Word, govern our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, preserve us with Your divine love, and hide us this day, both in soul and body, in Your holy wounds. Cleanse us of all our iniquities, teach us to live a life of good works, and finally lead us from this world of sorrows to Your eternal joy and glory, O most faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, our only Comfort, Hope and Life.

C: ♪ Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: ♪ 334

† **TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY** †

OUR ATTENDANCE FROM LAST SUNDAY

	Worship	Comm.	S.S. & B.C.	Offerings
Trinity	34	25	14	\$1,220.00
St. James	43	33	5 7	\$2,231.00

Sunday Offerings—Trinity, Fedor

	Operating	Building	Missions	Cemetery	Week
Goal	4,467.00				
Actual	4,260.00		625.00		3
Last Week	1,050.00		170.00		

Sunday Offerings—St. James, Lexington

	Operating	Mission	Future Development	Total	Week
Goal	7,905.00			7,905.00	
Actual	6,685.00	5.00	50.00	6,740.00	3
Last Week	2,231.00			2,231.00	

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THIS WEEK

WEDNESDAY 3:30PM: Week Day School
THURSDAY 10:00AM: Joint Bible Study (at St. James)
FRIDAY +Pastor's Day Off

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

*****We remember in our prayers:...**at Holy Trinity...*Eldor Brade, Dorothy Schimank, Monroe Brade, Carolyn Nitsche, Connie DeHart* [wife of Mickey DeHart (Holy Trinity)];...at St. James...*Lillie Mae Boettcher, Tom Kleinschmidt, Ronnie Iselt, Egor Raines, Genell Boettcher, David Roensch, Ernest Biehle, Charles Kaiser, Ginger Clifford, Charles Patschke, Walter Dube Jr., Lorine Lerche, Levi Dube* [grandson of Walter Jr. & Sherry Dube (St. James)], *Carole Heller* [mother of Juanita Clifford (St. James)], *Amber Brockenbush* [friend and relative of St. James members], and *all of our sick and shut-ins*.

+++**Sunday Sermons to Be Made Available Separately**...During the pandemic and the resulting change in how Divine Worship was conducted, the sermon was included in the bulletin and has been ever since. Beginning in February, it will no longer be included in the bulletin. However, a separate copy of the sermon will be made available to anyone who desires it before worship. You may request a copy of the sermon from the ushers before entering the sanctuary. The sermon will still be in the online bulletin which is available every Sunday at our website: http://trinity-stjames.org/sunday_bulletin.

*****HOLY TRINITY**...we've moved the Elders' meetings to the second Sunday after church each month.

+++**POINSETTIAS**...we **THANK** everyone that placed poinsettias to grace our chancel area for the Christmas and New Year's services! Please be sure to pick yours up following the service today!!!

*****St. James Finance Board**...is divided into 2 groups serving every other month...(January, March, etc.) are: Rodney Exner, Ferman Iselt, Patrick Jatzlau, Zachary Lay...(February, April, etc.) are: Ryan Brockenbush, Jeremy Brown, Tom Kleinschmidt, Clyde Lay. Thanks!

+++**Sock and Underwear Drive is under way!**: St. James LWML is collecting new socks and underwear [all sizes infant through teen] to donate to Orphan Grain Train. See the box in the narthex for your donations. We are also collecting used clothing, but Orphan Grain Train will not accept clothes with holes or stains, so please be sure anything you donate is in good condition. Please also label clothes donations with size and gender on the bag for ease of sorting. Thank you for your donations!

+++**Texas Lutheran Writers Round Up**: Save the date! Faith Lutheran High School will be hosting the annual TX Lutheran Writers Round Up on Friday, February 9, from 8-2. Featured authors this year include Sarah Baughman, Christina Hergenrader, Rev. Brian Kachelmeier, Rev. Chris Kennedy, Ruth Meyer, Donna Snow, and Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller. Be on the lookout for more details about the schedule in future bulletins, but be sure to mark your calendar now!

*****SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS & THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY**...As God's Christians, we live by every Word that comes from the mouth of God. (*See Deut. 8:3; Mt. 4:4*) Since His Holy Word gives us saving faith in Christ; (*see Rom. 10:17*) since it strengthens our faith and

serves as a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path and a great comfort to us, (*see Ps. 119:105; Rom. 15:4*), how good it is to hear, read and study it. So by all means do so. On Sunday mornings we're studying: **St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians**. On Thursday mornings we are studying: **St. Luke's gospel account**.

+++Devotional book available: Copies are available in the office of Ruth Meyer's book, "**Truth Notes**", as well as her other books [*Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Hope Alone, and Stand Alone* (\$12.00)]. This devotional is based on her past blog post and point to God's timeless truths in a changing world. Books are \$15 each. See either Sandra Lay or Ruth Meyer to purchase yours!

*****ST. JAMES**...how about **YOU!** We are looking for **Sunday School teachers** to teach either every other Sunday or just once a month. **YOU** can do it..just contact the church office!!!

+++Knitting & Crocheting Group...a group of ladies from Immanuel, Giddings, have been making warm hats and scarves for the needy. They're all created from donated yarn, however, now they are very low on yarn skeins and colors. If anyone would have left over yarn that they may put it in a bag and mark it "Knitting & Crocheting Group" and drop it off at the church office.

*****QUILTING UPDATE**...St. James LWML will be quilting every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 9-12!!!

+++**THE FLOWER CHARTS**...are posted in the Narthex at both Holy Trinity and St. James...sign up for birthdays, anniversaries, or "just because".

*****BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK**...Holy Trinity-Kaden Schimank, 31; Jason Handrick, 1; Frances Kalmbach, 3;...St. James-Elizabeth Boettcher, today; Clyde Lay, today; Vanessa Clifford, 29; Wesley Boriack, 30; Paul Kleinschmidt, 30; Jacob Phillips, 31; Curtis Roensch, 1; Lillie Clifford, 2; John Hester, 2.