

September 4, 2022

12th Sunday after Trinity
Rev. Jonathan D. Meyer, Pastor
Pastor Meyer-(979) 540-7973
Our email address – lexington.fedor.lcms@ gmail.com

Color-GREEN [Life and regeneration]
Church-(979) 773-2634
Our website – www.trinity-stjames.org

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH - FEDOR

The Elder-in-Charge – Charles Winkler
The Head Usher – Allan Urban
The Altar Guild – Diane Walch, Ida Mae Mosley

The Organist – Daniel Krause

ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH - LEXINGTON

The Elder-in-Charge – Paul Rudd
The Acolyte – Michael Norment
The Head Usher – Wesley Boriack
The Finance Board – Rodney Exner, Ferman Iselt, Patrick Jatzlau, Zachary Lay
The Altar Guild – Ginger Clifford, Juanita Clifford, Paulette Schulze
The Flowers – To the glory of God in loving memory of Herman & Lorine Jatzlau's wedding anniversary on the 2nd by The Jatzlau Family.

The Organist – Daniel Krause

TO OUR VISITORS - In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we bid you welcome. May the Holy Spirit bless you, together with us, as we give our attention to the Word of God this morning. *** Please sign the GUEST REGISTER [please also include your address] in the NARTHEX as you leave the church.

HOLY COMMUNION STATEMENT AND POLICY: It is our expressed belief, confidence and joy that the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, present under the bread and wine, are distributed in the Lord's Supper. All who commune at His altar are to be in complete confessional agreement with the other communicants. This practice of Closed Communion is an evangelical expression of our love for the communicant and for Christ's Holy Supper. In accordance with the Word of God in 1 Corinthians 1:10; 11:27-29, we only permit members of this congregation, as well as members of fellow Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod congregations, to commune today. If your membership is with a different faith group, so that you have a belief which differs from our belief and confession on Holy Communion, then we kindly ask you in love to refrain from communing today and first speak with Pastor or an Elder. Members of our congregation who wish to commune are asked to sign the communion registration sheet in the Narthex.

OUR WORSHIP THIS MORNING

THE ORDER OF HOLY COMMUNION - PAGE 15 IN THE FRONT OF THE HYMNAL.

(Our visitors are asked to please read and honor our communion statement above.)

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.

† IN THE NAME OF JESUS †

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

RINGING OF THE BELL (CALL TO WORSHIP)

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING HYMN: ♪ 353

**PREPATORY SERVICE OF CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION AND SERVICE OF THE WORD
[PAGE 15 TO 23/FRONT OF HYMNAL]**

INTROIT (ENTRANCE INTO THE SERVICE OF THE WORD)

PASTOR: Make haste, O God, to deliver me! Make haste to help me, O Lord! Let them be put to shame and confusion who seek my life. Let them be turned back and brought to dishonor who desire my hurt. May all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You! May those who love Your salvation say continually, “Great is the Lord!” You are my Help and my Deliverer; O Lord, do not delay. (*Psalm 70*)

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

COLLECT (PRAYER) OF THE DAY

P: O Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by Your almighty Word You make the deaf to hear and the mute to speak. We therefore draw near to You in all our bodily and spiritual needs, for there is no one to help us but You alone. We humbly implore You to touch with Your divine power our diseased members and our corrupt hearts, to open our ears to hear Your Word, to loose our tongues to speak Your righteousness and to fill our hearts with the power of Your Holy Spirit, that, beholding the wonders of Your grace, we may confess Your Name before men and praise and glorify You, Who does all things well, and Who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: ♪ Amen.

SERVICE OF THE WORD/SCRIPTURE LESSONS: OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – ISAIAH 29:17-24

¹⁷ Is it not yet a very little while until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest? ¹⁸ In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. ¹⁹ The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel. ²⁰ For the ruthless shall come to nothing and the scoffer cease, and all who watch to do evil shall be cut off, ²¹ who by a word make a man out to be an offender, and lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate, and with an empty plea turn aside him who is in the right.

²² Therefore thus says the Lord, Who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: “Jacob shall no more be ashamed, no more shall his face grow pale. ²³ For when he sees his children, the work of my hands, in his midst, they will sanctify My Name; they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.

²⁴ And those who go astray in spirit will come to understanding, and those who murmur will accept instruction.”

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 146

P: Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

C: I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

P: Do not put your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

C: When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish.

P: Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God,

C: Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, Who keeps faith forever;

P: Who executes justice for the oppressed, Who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free.

C: The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.

P: The Lord watches over the sojourners; He upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked He brings to ruin.

C: The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

EPISTLE LESSON – ROMANS 10:9-17

⁹ If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing His riches on all who call on Him. For “everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved.”

¹⁴ How then will they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of Whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

TRIPLE HALLELUJAH AND READING OF THE GOSPEL LESSON

C: ♪ Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 7th chapter.

C: ♪ Glory be to Thee, O Lord!

MARK 7:31-37

³¹ Then Jesus returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. ³² And they brought to Him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged Him to lay His hand on him. ³³ And taking him aside from the crowd privately, He put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. ³⁴ And looking up to heaven, He sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” ³⁵ And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶ And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more He charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷ And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: ♪ Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

NICENE CREED (CONFESSION OF FAITH) [PAGE 22]

HYMN OF THE DAY: ♪ 296

SERMON: GOD DOES ALL THINGS WELL FOR YOU IN BODY AND IN SPIRIT – MARK 7:31-37

“[Our Lord] has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” (Mk. 7:37) Amen.

Dear baptized saints of God in Christ Jesus: A major indictment of Christianity is that it is said to deal with the spiritual and not our flesh-and-blood lives. Faith in the one true God is alleged to be unattached to or unconcerned with the material reality around us. So the one true faith is routinely rebuffed as “otherly, out there” – not applicable to our physical, earthly lives.

Let’s dig into Holy Scripture to determine the truth of the matter, seeing just how “down to earth,” relevant and necessary our faith in the Triune God really is to us all. How God deals with us not only in a spiritual manner, but also in a very physical, earthly, personal way.

In our Gospel lesson for today – as well as other, similar Biblical texts – we see to what extent God deals with us, His creatures, in of-His-creation ways. He formed the heavens and the earth, after all. He created us from the soil of ground as well. Let’s take a look also at what the Lord does for us, His saints – in terms of caring for us in our bodies and our physical needs. And let’s tie this all together with the holy incarnation of our Savior since it proves that He cares for us in body and in soul, and that He will raise our sleeping bodies from the grave and reunite them with our souls to live with Him, the Father and the Holy Spirit forevermore. For He isn’t a God Who’s only far away; He’s our God Who’s nearby us as well (*see Jer. 23:23*) – God with us, in fact – our Immanuel!

The Lord Jesus miraculously heals people of various maladies in the Gospel accounts in two ways: By the Word of His mouth or by using a physical part of His creation. And sometimes both, as in today's Gospel. Why on earth does our Lord do this? Can't He just heal a person verbally? So that he or she is fully restored by God's Word alone? Sure He can! And sometimes Jesus does just that. And yet, for every time He simply speaks healing upon a person – as with His instant healing of a centurion's badly-injured servant – from a distance, even!, and His speaking a Canaanite woman's daughter free of demon-possession, there are also the times where He touches a sick or dead person, restoring him or her to life and health. Or when He uses saliva or soil – parts of His created order – to heal people. What gives?

God has chosen to use physical, material parts of His creation to heal and deliver, to bless and save us poor, hurting sinners. We see it all over the Bible. Recall that when the Prophet Elijah raises the widow of Zarephath's son from death, alongside praying to God for this to happen, the prophet stretches himself upon the child three times. (*See 1 Kings 17:20-22*) We ought not miss the importance of this physical contact, since God also uses it to wake the boy from death's grip.

The account of the healing of the Syrian military commander Naaman in 2 Kings also reveals that God oftentimes desires to deliver people by means of created things. When Naaman learns that God's prophet in Israel – this time Elisha – can heal him of the deadly skin disease, leprosy, he sets out to be healed by the man. Now Naaman – a pagan Syrian – certainly doesn't believe in the one true God of Israel. Yet he wants to be healed! His false, non-existent Syrian gods are no help to him; maybe the God of Elisha will be. The account of his healing, though, goes nothing like Naaman thinks it will. He thinks Elisha will heal him with a word and the flip of his hand. Instead, Elisha commands him to wash seven times in the Jordan River to be cured of his leprosy. Naaman angrily disagrees with God's way of doing things, saying, *"I thought that [the prophet] would...call upon the Name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper."* (2 Kings 5:11) Yet Naaman's servants persuade him to do what God says since divine healing has been promised to him, and what does he have to lose? So Naaman bathes in the Jordan and is healed! What's more, he believes in the God of Israel! We like to compare Naaman's cleansing to our own saving bath in the waters of Holy Baptism, and why not!

Again, our Lord Jesus also uses parts of His creation – including His own body, to heal and restore – to save! When a woman suffering from years of bleeding believes that her touching Jesus' garment will heal her, her faith in Him saves and heals her fully. Jesus touching the corpse of a man in the town of Nain and His words, *"Young man, I say to you, get up!"* (Lk. 7:14) are what's needed to raise him to life again. And Christ's taking the hand of a synagogue ruler's dead daughter and saying to her, *"Little girl, I say to you, arise,"* (Mk. 5:41) wakes her from the sleep of death unto the life of God forever!

You also know the Gospel account of Jesus healing a blind man by spitting in the dirt to make mud, then smearing his eyes with it so that he can see again. (*See Jn. 9:1-7*) And how He heals another blind man by applying His own saliva to the man's eyes so that he goes from pitch blackness to blurred vision to perfect sight. (*See Mk. 8:22-26*) God loves us and revels in using His created order for our good! He doesn't just deal in the spiritual realm, but in the physical realm too.

We see that the Son of God cares deeply for folks around Him – especially those in need of His healing and salvation. It's remarkable just how often our incarnate Lord – like the Prophets Elijah and Elisha – uses His hand or a part of His creation to grant life and healing to people. There's a definite reason for this. God works through the means of His own created order to help, save and deliver us as His people. Sure, He could just say to the deaf-mute man's ears and mouth *"Ephphatha!"* *"be opened!"* (Mk. 7:34) and no doubt they'd comply. But He chooses to also apply His saliva to the man's ears and tongue, for this too is how He looses his tongue to speak and opens his ears to hear. It's the only way – the way of God – that he, that anyone can be healed, made whole, delivered by the Son unto the Father.

We ought not think that God is more for us in our spirit or soul than He is for us in our body. We wrong the Lord when we say that spiritual or soul-care comes from Him while the care of our body - our physical needs - comes from nature or from we ourselves. We must repent before heaven whenever we seek to separate the two halves of who we are and think that God cares more about our spiritual being than our bodily frame, that He's all about one and not so much about the other. Didn't He create you in body and in soul and combine these two aspects of who you are into one person? No way would He love, save, care for and minister to your body any less than your spirit!

Look at just how much God the Son cares for the deaf-mute man and for you! The man has some very physical defects. He can't hear or speak a thing. Jesus knows this man's physical needs; He cares about this fellow intensely

and so heals Him completely. Not only this, He heals him in a very earthly, physical way – with His spit – and with His almighty Word. He helps this man in one other easy-to-miss but crucial way. He, the Lord, is present with the deaf-mute man in His body and His spirit just like the man is there in his body and spirit. Jesus is present then and now as God and man to minister to the deaf man and to us in our bodily as well as our spiritual needs.

Just how much does God care for and provide for you in your body, meeting all your earthly, physical needs? More than you'll ever fully know! When I visit Church members who are sick – hospitalized or recovering at home – one of the key ways I minister to them is by praying over them, asking for the Lord to forgive and comfort them, to help and heal them. One portion of a prayer I pray over the ill or injured is: *“Defend Your dear servant, O Lord, from every danger to body and soul, and keep him or her in peace and safety, confidently trusting that You are very near at hand, and that underneath him or her are Your everlasting arms.”* Another part of a prayer that I pray with the sick is: *“Refresh the soul of Your beloved saint with the forgiveness of sins and Your benevolent presence,”* and *“grant him or her Your consolation, strength and healing. Preserve the life of Your dear child and restore him or her to good health and soundness of body.”* And what does the Lord do but *“forgive all your iniquities and heal all your diseases!”* (Psalm 103:3)

We especially delight in how the Lord our God combines His Word of salvation with special means of His created order: water; bread and wine. Water's just plain water until it's combined with the Holy, Precious Word of God in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Then it's a saving bath that washes away all our sins and grants us saving faith, eternal life in God the Holy Trinity – in Whose Name we're baptized – every bit as much as the waters of the Jordan healed Naaman. You were baptized for about 10-12 seconds of your life in order to be *“washed, sanctified, justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God”* (1 Cor. 6:11) all your earthly days and forever! You were baptized; you are baptized – now and forever unto God your heavenly Father, in Christ Jesus your Savior, through the Holy Spirit, your Sanctifier!

As often as the words of our Lord – which He spoke at His *Last Supper* – are spoken over mere bread and wine in His Church, they become also His very true body and blood which goes into our bodies, forgives us our sin as well, saves us also unto the Father and strengthens our faith in Him and His Son. What a precious, very physical and eternal life-giving Food our beloved Lord Jesus gives to us – amazingly from the holy flesh and sacred blood of His own body!

Behold the Lamb of God Who suffered bitter anguish and death upon the cross, gave up His spirit to His Father and died a holy, substitutionary death for you: for your body and your soul. Since you in your soul and body are sick and dying of sin and all evil; since you've corrupted and corroded yourself... You were doomed to receive the fruit of your sin and rebellion: eternal death; damnation. But now, in Christ Jesus Who gave His life for you, *“you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”* (1 Peter 1:9) And of your bodies too, of course!

Christianity is far from a spiritual-only religion. It's the world's one true faith, and by it, God became man for us body-and-soul people – for our life-long good and for the Life to come, after this one's all done and gone. Because Jesus lives forever, you also shall live eternally with Him! (See Jn. 14:19) Our bodies will be raised imperishable as Christ's body was raised imperishable for us. And our souls and bodies shall then be rejoined by Him. Till then, trust that God your heavenly Father holds your entire being – body and spirit – in the palm of His hand! He keeps the whole of you as the apple of His eye! (See Ps. 17:8) Amen. *The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

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

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

In peace, let us pray to the Lord: **C: Lord, have mercy.**

For this congregation, that our ears would be opened by the Spirit to the Gospel of peace and salvation, and that our lips would show forth our thanks and praise, let us pray to the Lord: **C: Lord, have mercy.**

For the conversion of the unbeliever to the one, true Christian faith, that the Lord would remove all false beliefs from the hearts of those who do not confess Him as Lord, and graciously grant them the only, true confession of Jesus Christ, let us pray to the Lord: **C: Lord, have mercy.**

For our deliverance from the assaults of the devil, and our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger and need, let us pray to the Lord: **C: Lord, have mercy.**

For the restoration of those who have left the Church, that they would be renewed in the true confession of the faith and delivered from abandoning it; and that they would be gathered back into God's holy flock and around our Good Shepherd, Jesus, let us pray to the Lord: **C: Lord, have mercy.**

For the unborn, the widowed, the infirm and the aged, that the Lord of life and of love would preserve and sustain them always in His loving care, let us pray to the Lord: **C: Lord have mercy.**

For husbands and wives, parents and children, employees and employers, and all people whom God places into relationships, that people may view their dealings with others with responsibility and be given the zeal to love and serve their neighbor through their unique God-given vocations, let us pray to the Lord: **C: Lord have mercy.**

For all in authority by whose service God provides for us the gift of order, including parents and family, our government, our police and firemen, our military, and our schools, that God would give them strength and endurance to carry out their duties for the good of those entrusted to their care, let us pray to the Lord: **C: Lord, have mercy.**

For the sick, the frail and the dying, *including our brothers and sisters in Christ: _____*, that God would restore them to health. We pray also for doctors, nurses, therapists and all who tend our brothers and sisters in need, that God would bless them as they put the talents He has given them to good use, let us pray to the Lord: **C: Lord, have mercy.**

For all who will partake this day of Christ's most precious body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar, that they may discern His body and come to His table in humility and faith to receive the forgiveness of sins and salvation, let us pray to the Lord: **C: Lord, have mercy.**

For the faith to confess and believe in Christ, that having been redeemed by Christ, we may gaze on God's glory in heaven, let us pray to the Lord: **C: Lord, have mercy.**

O Lord, our loving Father, we entrust all these petitions to Your care for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who is worshiped together with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: Amen.**

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR [PAGES 24-31]

PROPER PREFACE (LORD'S SUPPER OPENING PRAYER)

P: It is truly good, right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we would not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious Name, evermore praising You and saying:

COMMUNION HYMNS: ♪ 305 & 487

CLOSING HYMN: ♪ 39

† TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY †

OUR ATTENDANCE FROM LAST SUNDAY

	Worship	Comm.	S.S. & B.C.	Offerings
Trinity	28	--	10	\$1,505.00
St. James	54	--	6 12	\$3,754.81

Sunday Offerings—Trinity, Fedor

	Operating	Building	Missions	Cemetery	Week
Goal	52,115.00				
Actual	50,716.31		4,142.00		35
Last Week	1,485.00		20.00		

Sunday Offerings—St. James, Lexington

	Operating	Mission	Future Development	Total	Week
Goal	85,400.00			85,400.00	

Actual	72,045.62	440.00	72,485.62	35
Last Week	3,754.81		3,754.81	

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THIS WEEK

TODAY

+Brief **Voters meeting** (at Holy Trinity) following the service
 *A **DOOR COLLECTION** (at St. James) following the service for
 to help a Lincoln resident obtain a new AC unit

WEDNESDAY

9:00AM: LWML & Quilting (St. James)
 3:30PM: **Week Day School** begins the 2022-2023 school year!

FRIDAY

+Pastor's Day Off

NEXT SUNDAY

*Elders (St. James)...following the service

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

+++**We remember in our prayers:...** at Holy Trinity...*Alleen Winkler, Al Cain, Dorothy Schimank, Monroe Brade, Donna Moerbe, Margaret Richter, Carolyn Nitsche, Andrew Richter, Michelle Holmes* [sister-in-law of Paul & Meloney Tucker (Holy Trinity)];...at St. James...*W. O. Exner* (residing at Bec's Blessing in Giddings), *Genell Boettcher* (residing at Lost Pines Rehab in Bastrop), *Joey Johnson, Tom Kleinschmidt, David Roensch, Lucas Raines, Paulette Schulze, Ernest Biehle, Charles Kaiser, Ginger Clifford, Doug Wheeler, Charles Patschke, Walter Dube Jr., Lorine Lerche, Carole Heller* [mother of Juanita Clifford (St. James)]; *Scott Husband* [son of Sherwood & Janet Frosch (St. James)], *Amber Brockenbush* [friend and relative of St. James members], *Elton "Sonkey" Walther* [father of Felicia Poston (St. James)], *Bethany Behrens Lara* [friend of St. James members], *Tim Kleinschmidt* [brother of Tom Kleinschmidt (St. James) and friend of members] and *all of our sick and shut-ins*.

*****WEEK DAY SCHOOL**...our 2022-2023 school year begins this Wednesday, September 7!
 ...**PARENTS**...the information was sent out this past week so please be looking for it and don't forget bus permission forms for elementary students with 1 part needing to be turned into the school and 1 part needing to be turned into the church office!!!

+++**TODAY**...at Holy Trinity...a brief voters meeting after the service to consider financially supporting Lincoln resident, Mary Taylor, as she needs a new AC unit!

*****TODAY**...at St. James...a free-will *door collection* will be taken following the service with funds being used to help purchase an AC unit for Lincoln resident, Mary Taylor!

+++**HOLY TRINITY** ...we would like to express our sincere **THANKS** to Nolan Huston for the recent donation of a load of gravel...thanks Nolan!!!

*****SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY**...on the Book of Philippians...We are currently studying St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians. No matter what we're going through of will endure in life, Philippians aids us greatly in being joyful in Jesus Christ throughout. A copy of the Bible study is also available for anyone who would desire it.

+++**Family/Personal Daily Devotional Settings:** It is good for us as to be able to utilize devotional settings throughout the week for family or personal use. You're therefore encouraged to make use of several Lutheran devotional settings/devotions in printed form, available now at the entrance to Church, and online at: trinity-stjames.org/devotions_updated_. The use of daily devotionals settings/devotions is a great way to receive and grow in God's Word in-between the weekly Sunday Divine Service. So by all means, do make faithful use of them!

***Community wide prayer initiative for 2022!!! If you are interested in praying for 5 to 10 of your

neighbors on a regular basis this year, please contact Cindy Terrell at 979-540-7026 for more information. Let's cover our community in prayer and draw nearer to God while we do!

Looking forward to hearing from you!!!

+++Knitting & Crocheting Group...a group of ladies from Immanuel, Giddings, have been making warm hats and scarves for the needy in the Midwest and Alaska for 6 years now. 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 would not need or would like to donate to this project, put it in a bag and mark it "Knitting & Crocheting Group" and drop it off at the church office whenever they are in Giddings. Each September these are shipped to the Lutheran Social Services in the Midwest and Alaska.

***Holy Trinity...A Note of Thanks from Head Usher Allan Urban...on behalf of the our congregation, I would like to express my appreciation to the faithful and dedicated gentlemen willing to step up and help with ushering (many serving each month)! It is a wonderful thing to know that we have such dependable and willing help and support by their continued service ...many ~~THANKS!!!~~

+++**QUILTING**...St. James LWML invites you [we need participation] to come **HELP** quilt on Wednesday mornings from 9-11am.

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

+++Get your published novels *Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Hope Alone, and Stand Alone* by Ruth Meyer ...if you are interested in purchasing a copy (\$12.00), you can either contact the church office or see Ruth!

***St. James & Trinity...the LWML and Ladies Aid are collecting used postage stamps (regular and commemorative). At least a ¼ inch margin should be left around the stamp (or just drop in the whole envelope). A box has been placed in the Narthex that you may place your stamps in.

+++**BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK**...Holy Trinity-Madison Iselt, today; Judy Brade, 6; Wallace "Mickey" DeHart, 8; Jaeger Lovell, 9; Karen Patschke, 10;...St. James-Bryson Hicks, today; Ryan Brockenbush, 6; Brayden Drosche, 6; Trish Ammon, 7; Delbert Faske, 8; Amber Dockery, 9; Tyler Spitzenberger, 9.

*****ANNIVERSARIES THIS WEEK**...Holy Trinity-Edwin & Tiffany Albrecht, 8;...St. James-Craig & Elizabeth Boettcher, today.

SUMMARY OF TODAY'S DIVINE SERVICE READINGS – TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Faith Comes from Hearing A man who was deaf and therefore also had an impediment in his speech was brought to Jesus. (*Mark 7:31-37*) In the same way, all are by nature deaf toward God and therefore also unable to confess the faith rightly. For "*faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*" (*Romans 10:9-17*) Jesus put His fingers into the man's ears, and He spat and touched His tongue. Even so in Holy Baptism, water sanctified by the words of Jesus' mouth is applied to us; and the finger of God, that is, the life-giving Holy Spirit, is put into our ears in the hearing of the Baptismal Gospel. Jesus' sighing "*Ephphatha*" opened the man's ears, and his tongue was loosed to speak plainly as Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah, "*In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book.*" (*Isaiah 29:18-24*) So also, He Who sighed and breathed His last on the cross for us has given us to hear and believe in Him and has opened our lips so that our mouths may declare His praise. (*lcms.org/lectionary-summaries*)

A READING FROM THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

Summary: A sinner cannot come to know or believe in God by his own free will any more than a deaf man can will himself to hear. Jesus used His fingers and saliva to open up a deaf man's ears and loose his tongue. He also uses the preached Word and Sacraments to open up dead hearts and loose tongues to confess sins and faith in Christ.

We believe, teach, and confess that the unregenerate will of mankind is not only turned away from God, but also has become God's enemy. So it only has an inclination and desire for that which is evil and contrary to God. Romans 8:7 says, *"The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's Law; indeed, it cannot."* Just as a dead body cannot raise itself to bodily, earthly life, so a person who by sin is spiritually dead cannot raise himself to spiritual life. So it was that *"when we were dead in our trespasses, God made us alive together with Christ."* (Ephesians 2:5)

It is God's will that His Word should be heard and that a person's ears should not be closed. With this Word the Holy Spirit is present and opens hearts, so that people pay attention to it and are converted only through the Holy Spirit's grace and power, Who alone does the work of converting a person. For without His grace, and if He does not grant the increase, our willing and running, our planting, sowing, and watering are all nothing. As Christ says in John 15:5, *"apart from Me you can do nothing."* The Spirit denies free will its powers and ascribes everything to God's grace, in order that no one may boast before God. (lcmssermons.com; Formula of Concord: Epitome, Article 2: Free Will)