



TRINITY MERRILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Reverend Scott Gustafson
Reverend Jonathan Chapa

March 15, 2026 - 10:30 AM
THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Sharing the message with us today is Pastor Jonathan Chapa with Pastor Scott Gustafson as our Liturgist. Eileen Hass is our pianist today.

AS WE Gather: The Lord is grieved by the spiritual blindness of His people, but He does not forsake them. Instead, He promises to turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground (Isaiah 42:16). The Lord does not give up on His servant, Israel, but sends another Servant who is the light of the world (John 9:5). Jesus' light comes to us in His Word, His water, and His Supper. These are His means for opening our eyes to see and to live as children of light (Ephesians 5:8). Baptized into Christ, we look forward to the day when these words will come pass: "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" (Ephesians 5:14).

WELCOME & GREETING

OPENING HYMN

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

LSB 411

1. *I want to walk as a child of the light.
I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world.
The star of my life is Jesus. (Refrain)*

2. *I want to see the brightness of God.
I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path,
And show me the way to the Father. (Refrain)*

Refrain *In Him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.*

3. *I'm looking for the coming of Christ.
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race,
We shall know the joy of Jesus. (Refrain)*

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INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Psalm 142:1

Pastor: With my voice I cry out to the LORD;

People: with my voice I plead for mercy to the LORD.

Silent reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

Pastor: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

People: Most merciful God, we confess that we were born in utter sin. To this day and by nature, we have eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear. We have trusted in the things we have made rather than You. Our thoughts, words, and actions have been unfruitful and dark. We have been blind to our sin, but You have seen it. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, open our eyes. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. Jesus is the light of the world and your salvation. He has enlightened you with His gifts and given you ears to hear Jesus' words. It is He who is speaking to you. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

INTROIT

Psalm 27:4-6; antiphon: Psalm 25:15

Pastor: My eyes are ever toward the LORD,

People: for He will pluck my feet out of the net.

Pastor: One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:

People: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple.

Pastor: For He will hide me in His shelter in the day of trouble;

People: He will conceal me under the cover of His tent; He will lift me high upon a rock.

Pastor: And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy;

People: I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

**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.**

Pastor: My eyes are ever toward the LORD,

People: for He will pluck my feet out of the net.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

MONTHLY VERSE (Romans 5:3-5)

“More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

SONG “Rejoice In The Lord Always”

Rejoice in the Lord always

Again I say rejoice

Rejoice in the Lord always

Again I say rejoice

Rejoice rejoice

Again I say rejoice

Rejoice rejoice

Again I say rejoice (Repeat)

APOSTLES' CREED

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

And 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence 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.

THE FIRST READING**Isaiah 42:14-21**

¹⁴For a long time I have held my peace; I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant. ¹⁵I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn the rivers into islands, and dry up the pools. ¹⁶And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them. ¹⁷They are turned back and utterly put to Shame, who trust in carved idols, who say to metal images, "You are our gods." ¹⁸Hear, you deaf, and look, you blind, that you may see! ¹⁹Who is blind but my servant, or deaf as my messenger whom I send? Who is blind as my dedicated one, or blind as the servant of the Lord? ²⁰He sees many things, but does not observe them; his ears are open, but he does not hear. ²¹The Lord was pleased, for his righteousness' sake, to magnify his law and make it glorious.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**SECOND READING****Ephesians 5:8-14**

⁸For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but Instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. ¹³But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

GOSPEL READING**John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39**

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. ²And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud ⁷and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

³⁴ They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out. ³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” ³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.”

SONG OF THE DAY

“Chief of Sinners Though I Be”

LSB 611

1. *Chief of sinners though I be,
Jesus shed His blood for me,
Died that I might live on high,
Lives that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine,
I am His, and He is mine.*
2. *Oh, the height of Jesus' love,
Higher than the heav'ns above,
Deeper than the depths of sea,
Lasting as eternity!
Love that found me—wondrous thought!
Found me when I sought Him not.*
3. *Only Jesus can impart
Balm to heal the wounded heart,
Peace that flows from sin forgiv'n,
Joy that lifts the soul to heav'n,
Faith and hope to walk with God
In the way that Enoch trod.*
4. *Chief of sinners though I be,
Christ is all in all to me;
All my wants to Him are known,
All my sorrows are His own.
He sustains the hidden life
Safe with Him from earthly strife.*
5. *O my Savior, help afford
By Your Spirit and Your Word!
When my wayward heart would stray,
Keep me in the narrow way;
Grace in time of need supply
While I live and when I die.*

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SERMON

ATTENDANCE /CONNECT TIME / OFFERING

*During this time, please sign the attendance book found in the pew or use your mobile device to fill out the Connect Card or submit prayer requests on our app or online at www.trinitymerrill.com/live. You can also visit our app or www.trinitymerrill.com/give to learn more about other ways to support the ministries at Trinity. **(When filling out the attendance book – please include your last name and list the names of everyone in attendance in your family)***

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

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.

BENEDICTION

1. *Amazing grace—how sweet the sound—
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see!*
2. *The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.*
3. *Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
His grace has brought me safe thus far,
His grace will lead me home.*
4. *Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail
And mortal life shall cease,
Amazing grace shall then prevail
In heaven's joy and peace.*
5. *When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.*

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Today's radio broadcast is sponsored in celebration of the 58th wedding anniversary of Allan & Chris Schult on March 23.

The flowers on the altar today are sponsored by Amy Hanneman & Mary Jo Rajek

Lenten Lunches are being served each Wednesday throughout Lent. Lunch will be served at 11:30 AM. This is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a simple meal and meaningful conversation with fellow members.

Lenten Dinners are being served on Wednesday's during Lent. Dinner will be served from 5:00 PM until just before the 6:30 PM worship service, providing a convenient and welcoming time to gather before evening worship. Please let us plan your dinner before service. Come join us.

SPREAD THE WORD.... Tell your friends and your family to

Mark Your Calendars- BOW THE KNEE, a dramatic musical for Easter will be presented here at Trinity Merrill on Saturday, March 21st at 7 pm and Sunday, March 22nd at 2:30pm. Plan to come see and hear what it must have been like to be in Jerusalem with Jesus during his life, death, and resurrection. Everyone is welcome!

EASTER BREAKFAST - Continue with your Easter tradition or start a new one with your family! Enjoy Easter Breakfast at Trinity Church on Easter morning. Breakfast will be served from 7:00-10:30 and will include pancakes (regular, banana, chocolate chip, & blueberry) pure maple syrup, scrambled eggs, sausage, bacon and some delicious sweets. Join us on Easter morning and bring the family. A Free Will Offering will be accepted.



SECRET PRAYER SUPPORT. Keep that name a SECRET until Easter time when you mail a signed card to him/her, revealing your identity. Galatians 6:2 asks us "to share each other's burdens." Let's practice that!

NO 6:00 PM Church Service on March 15 or March 22. *Our Church is hosting the Bow the Knee Musical and will need March 15 for rehearsal and to set up the stage and props. The Musical itself will be held on March 21st at 7:00 PM and March 22nd at 2:30. This is an event you need to attend. It is a beautiful reenactment of Jesus' journey to the cross and resurrection. Bring your family and friends.*

Maundy Thursday (April 2)
"Bow Before the Servant King"
John 13:1-17

Services are 1:00 PM & 6:30 PM w/ Holy Communion

The 1:00 PM service can be heard on the 730 AM and 96.3 FM dial on your radio at 6:00 PM
8:00 PM Special Service of First Communion for our Confirmands

Good Friday (April 3)
"Every Knee at Calvary"
John 19

Services are 1:00 PM & 6:30 PM

The 1:00 PM service can be heard on the 730 AM and 96.3 FM dial on your radio at 6:00 PM

Easter Sunday (April 5)
"Every Knee Will Bow"
Services are 6:00, 7:30, 9:00 AM (Traditional)
10:30 AM (Contemporary)
All with Holy Communion

The 6:00 AM service can be heard live on the 730 AM and 96.3 FM dial on your radio and the 9:00 service will be broadcast at 10:30 AM