



TRINITY MERRILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

107 N. State St. Merrill, WI 54452
715-536-5482 | trinitymerrill.com

Reverend Scott Gustafson
Reverend Jonathan Chapa

July 12, 2026 8:00 AM & 6:00 PM (DS 3)

The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

“Hey, God! What about CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION?”

Sharing the message with us today is Pastor Scott Gustafson with Mark Knorr as the Lector.

AS WE GATHER: for worship today, we continue our sermon series, “**Hey, God! What About _____?**” Today we ask a question that Christians have wrestled with since the days of the apostles: “**Hey, God! What about Christian Persecution?**” Jesus never promised His followers an easy path. In fact, He warned that the world would oppose those who bear His name. Yet God also assures us that suffering for Christ is never meaningless. Through persecution, trials, and opposition, the Lord strengthens His people, bears witness through their testimony, and reminds us that our true citizenship is in heaven. As we gather around God's Word and Christ's Holy Supper, we receive the courage, comfort, and confidence that come only from our crucified and risen Savior.

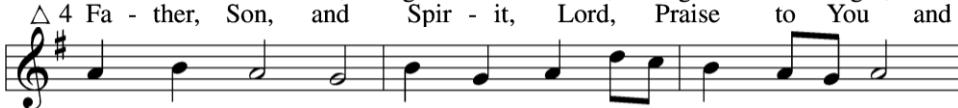
OPENING HYMN

“Blessed Jesus, at Your Word”

LSB 904



1 Bless - ed Je - sus, at Your Word We are gath - ered
2 All our knowl - edge, sense, and sight Lie in deep - est
3 Gra - cious Sav - ior, good and kind, Light of Light, from
4 Fa - ther, Son, and Spir - it, Lord, Praise to You and



all to hear You. Let our hearts and souls be stirred
dark - ness shroud - ed Till Your Spir - it breaks our night
God pro - ceed - ing, O - pen now our heart and mind;
ad - o - ra - tion! Grant that we may trust Your Word,



Now to seek and love and fear You, By Your teach - ings,
With the beams of truth un - cloud - ed. You a - lone to
Help us by Your Spir - it's plead - ing. Hear the cry Your
Con - fi - dent of our sal - va - tion, While we here be -



sweet and ho - ly, Drawn from earth to love You sole - ly.
God can win us; You must work all good with - in us.
Church now rais - es; Hear and bless our prayers and prais - es.
low must wan - der, Till we sing Your prais - es yon - der.

Text and tune: Public domain

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

RESPONSIVE LITANY

P Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
C **For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

P Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on account of Christ.
C **Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.**

P The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
C **The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?**

P Though the nations rage and the powers of this world oppose Christ,
C **God's kingdom shall stand forever.**

P Though we suffer loss, rejection, or hardship for the sake of Jesus,
C **Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

P Let us worship the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God!**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father.
C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed. We have often feared people more than we have feared You. We have remained silent when we should have confessed Christ. We have sought comfort more than faithfulness and safety more than obedience. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us, forgive us, renew us, and strengthen us, that we may faithfully bear His name before the world. Amen.**

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

COLLECT OF THE DAY

P Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, whose Son Jesus Christ suffered rejection, mockery, and death for our salvation, grant courage to Your Church throughout the world. Strengthen all who suffer for confessing Your name. Give boldness to our witness, patience in affliction, and confidence in Your promises, that we may stand firm in the faith until the day we receive the crown of life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON *(God delivers three men from a fiery furnace)*

Daniel 3:1-6, 8-14, 16-30

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.² Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.³ Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.⁴ And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,⁵ that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.⁶ And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace."

⁸ Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews.⁹ They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!¹⁰ You, O king, have made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image.¹¹ And whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace.¹² There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, pay no attention to you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king.¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?"

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.¹⁷ If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated.²⁰ And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.²¹ Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace.²² Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."²⁵ He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking

in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.”

²⁶Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. ²⁷And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. ²⁸Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. ²⁹Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.” ³⁰Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE (*Life bears witness to our salvation*)

Philippians 1:27-28

²⁷Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL (*Persecution will come*)

Matthew 10:16-22

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the tenth chapter.

C **Glory be to Thee, O Lord.**

¹⁶[Jesus said:] “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. ¹⁷Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, ¹⁸and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. ¹⁹When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. ²⁰For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ²¹Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, ²²and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

NICENE CREED

C I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

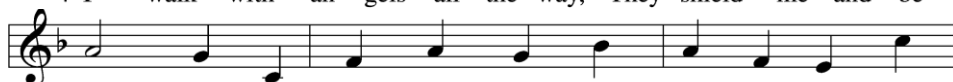
And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

SERMON HYMN "I Walk in Danger All the Way"

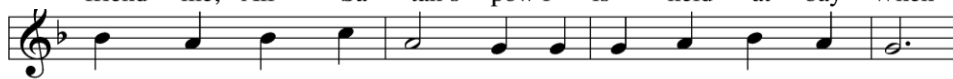
LSB 716



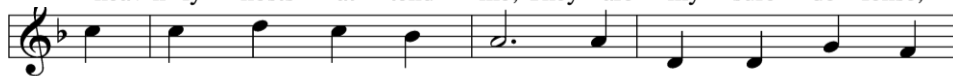
1 I walk in dan - ger all the way. The thought shall nev - er
2 I pass through tri - als all the way, With sin and ills con -
3 And death pur - sues me all the way, No - where I rest se -
4 I walk with an - gels all the way, They shield me and be -



leave me That Sa - tan, who has marked his prey, Is
tend - ing; In pa - tience I must bear each day The
cure - ly; He comes by night, he comes by day, He
friend me; All Sa - tan's pow'r is held at bay When



plot - ting to de - ceive me. This foe with hid - den snares
cross of God's own send - ing. When in ad - ver - si - ty
takes his prey most sure - ly. A fail - ing breath, and I
heav'n - ly hosts at - tend me; They are my sure de - fense,



May seize me un - a - wares If I should fail to
I know not where to flee, When storms of woe my
In death's strong grasp may lie To face e - ter - ni -
All fear and sor - row, hence! Un - harmed by foes, do



watch and pray, I walk in dan - ger all the way.
soul dis - may, I pass through tri - als all the way.
ty to - day As death pur - sues me all the way.
what they may, I walk with an - gels all the way.

5. *I walk with Jesus all the way,
His guidance never fails me;
Within His wounds I find a stay
When Satan's pow'r assails me;
And by His footsteps led,
My path I safely tread.
No evil leads my soul astray;
I walk with Jesus all the way.*

6. *My walk is heav'nward all the way;
Await, my soul, the morrow,
When God's good healing shall allay
All suff'ring, sin, and sorrow.
Then, worldly pomp, begone!
To heav'n I now press on.
For all the world I would not stay;
My walk is heav'nward all the way.*

Text and tune: Public domain

SERMON VIDEO (The story of the early Christian martyr Perpetua, who died for her faith with such profound joy and confidence in Christ)

SERMON “Hey, God! What about CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION?”

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 list the names of all in attendance in your family.) If you are a visitor interested in membership please include your email and phone number.***

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

✠ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT ✠

PREFACE & PROPER PREFACE

P The Lord be with you

C **And with thy spirit.**

P Lift up your hearts

C **We lift them up unto the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God.

C **It is meet and right so to do.**

P It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who on this day overcame death and the grave and by His glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:

SANCTUS

C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth;
 heav'n and earth are full of Thy glo - ry. Ho - san - na,
 ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is He,
 bless - ed is He, bless - ed is He that com - eth in the name of the Lord.

Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

C 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.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI

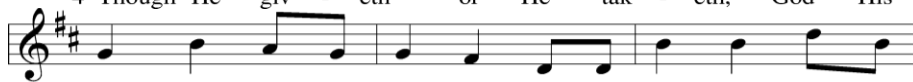
P The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C Amen.

AGNUS DEI

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak - est a - way the sin of the
 world, have mer - cy up - on us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that
 tak - est a - way the sin of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.
 O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak - est a - way the sin of the
 world, grant us Thy peace. A - men.



1 Chil - dren of the heav'n - ly Fa - ther Safe - ly
 2 God His own doth tend and nour - ish; In His
 3 Nei - ther life nor death shall ev - er From the
 4 Though He giv - eth or He tak - eth, God His



in His bos - om gath - er; Nest - ling bird nor star in
 ho - ly courts they flour - ish. From all e - vil things He
 Lord His chil - dren sev - er; Un - to them His grace He
 chil - dren ne'er for - sak - eth; His the lov - ing pur - pose

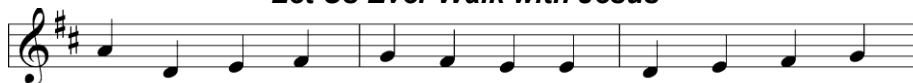


heav - en Such a ref - uge e'er was giv - en.
 spares them; In His might - y arms He bears them.
 show - eth, And their sor - rows all He know - eth.
 sole - ly To pre - serve them pure and ho - ly.

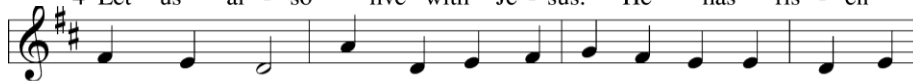
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"Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus"

LSB 685



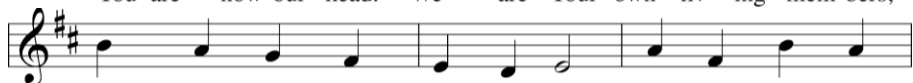
1 Let us ev - er walk with Je - sus, Fol - low His ex -
 2 Let us suf - fer here with Je - sus And with pa - tience
 3 Let us glad - ly die with Je - sus. Since by death He
 4 Let us al - so live with Je - sus. He has ris - en



am - ple pure, Through a world that would de - ceive us And to
 bear our cross. Joy will fol - low all our sad - ness; Where He
 con - quered death, He will free us from de - struc - tion, Give to
 from the dead That to life we may a - wak - en. Je - sus,



sin our spir - its lure. On - ward in His foot - steps tread - ing,
 is, there is no loss. Though to - day we sow no laugh - ter,
 us im - mor - tal breath. Let us mor - ti - fy all pas - sion
 You are now our head. We are Your own liv - ing mem - bers;



Pil - grims here, our home a - bove, Full of faith and
 We shall reap ce - les - tial joy; All dis - com - forts
 That would lead us in - to sin; And the grave that
 Where You live, there we shall be In Your pres - ence

hope and love, Let us do the Fa-ther's bid-ding. Faith-ful
that an- noy Shall give way to mirth here - af - ter. Je - sus,
shuts us in Shall but prove the gate to heav-en. Je - sus,
con - stant - ly, Liv - ing there with You for - ev - er. Je - sus,

Lord, with me a - bide; I shall fol - low where You guide.
here I share Your woe; Help me there Your joy to know.
here with You I die, There to live with You on high.
let me faith - ful be, Life e - ter - nal grant to me.

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DISMISSAL BLESSING

NUNC DIMITTIS

LSB 199

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant de - part in peace ac-
cord - ing to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,
which Thou hast pre - pared be - fore the face of all people,
a light to light - en the Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of Thy
peo-ple Is - ra-el. Glo - ry be to the Father and
to the Son and to the Ho-ly Ghost; as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ev - er shall be, world with - out end. A - men.

POST COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

P O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,
C and His mercy endureth forever.

P Let us pray. We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

BENEDICAMUS

LSB 202

P Bless we the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

BENEDICTION

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and T give you peace.
C **Amen.**
P Go in peace. Stand firm in one spirit, striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel
C **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN "On What Has Now Been Sown "

LSB 921



1 On what has now been sown Thy bless - ing, Lord, be - stow;
2 To Thee our wants are known, From Thee are all our pow'rs;
3 O grant that each of us, Now met be - fore Thee here,



The pow'r is Thine a - lone To make it sprout and grow. Do Thou
Ac - cept what is Thine own And par - don what is ours. Our prais -
May meet to - geth - er thus When Thou and Thine ap - pear And fol -



in grace the har - vest raise, And Thou a - lone shalt have the praise!
es, Lord, and prayers re - ceive, And to Thy Word a bless - ing give.
low Thee to heav'n, our home. E'en so, a - men, Lord Je - sus, come!

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Today's radio broadcast is sponsored in celebration of the 47th wedding anniversary of Jim and Jackie Jackson on July 14th.
Today's altar flowers are sponsored by Shawn & Laurie Schultz in loving memory of Grace Lau.

If you are a visitor who is interested in membership at Trinity, please contact the church office or add your phone number, email and/or address to the fellowship pad. Otherwise, we have no way to reach you to talk about membership. Thank you.

NEED A RIDE TO CHURCH? WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

Getting to church shouldn't be a barrier to worship. Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, Trinity is pleased to offer **free taxi rides to and from worship services** through Blue Jay Taxi. If you or someone you know could benefit from transportation assistance, simply call **715-921-4110** by **Wednesday** before the weekend service you plan to attend.

When leaving your message, please include:

- Which worship service you will attend
- Your pick-up address
- How many people will need transportation to Trinity Church.

We are grateful for this opportunity to help connect people with God's Word, worship, and the fellowship of our church family. If transportation has been keeping you from attending worship, we encourage you to take advantage of this wonderful ministry. We look forward to welcoming you to Trinity!

Trinity Lutheran Church – “Living River” Concert in the Park

Trinity Lutheran Church will be hosting the "Living River Quartet" on **Saturday, August 8th at 6:00 PM at Normal Park, 500 N. Center Ave in Merrill.** Bring your lawn chairs and refreshments. Last year, two Trinity members sponsored the entire cost of this group. This year we would like to open this up to all members to help sponsor this city-wide event. Envelopes are available on the "Adopt a Bill" board if you would like to help sponsor this fun community event. Living River's mission is to share the love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, with their music, and to proclaim His gift of salvation and eternal life. Volunteers from Aspirus Merrill Hospital will be selling hamburgers, brats, chips and soda from the concession stand. Bring your family, friends, and neighbors and enjoy this wonderful concert in the park with us.

Trinity Community Meal – Faith, Fellowship, and Food

Trinity will host a Community Meal on Wednesday, July 15, from 4:30–6:30 p.m. Our goal is simple: to share Faith, Fellowship, and Food with our community. A dedicated group of Trinity volunteers has already begun planning this event, but we will need your help to make it a success. While serving a delicious meal is important, our greatest goal is to provide something even more meaningful—friendship. We invite members of our Trinity family to come, sit, visit, and build relationships with those who attend. A warm smile, a friendly conversation, and a welcoming spirit can make a lasting impact. Through these interactions, we hope to show our community the love of Christ and the welcoming nature of our congregation. The menu will feature pulled pork with a variety of sides, and desserts graciously provided by the Dorcas Society. Whether you can help prepare, serve, clean up, or simply spend time getting to know our guests, your presence can help make this event a blessing to many. Join us as we share not only a meal, but also the love and hospitality of Christ with our community

Trinity Community Meal

**WEDNESDAY
JULY 15TH**

4:30-6:30 PM

*Faith
FELLOWSHIP
Food*

Free Meal
All are Welcome!

Pulled Pork with sides

Desserts provided by
Trinity Dorcas

As schedules shift and vacations begin, we invite you to stay connected through worship, fellowship, service opportunities, and the many ministries continuing throughout the summer months. We are grateful for your continued support of Trinity's mission and ministry. Even during the summer season, the work of the church continues each and every week through worship services, outreach, youth programs, education, and care ministries. We encourage you to prayerfully consider maintaining your regular giving throughout the summer, even if you are traveling or away from church.

For your convenience, electronic giving is available through Subsplash at:

<https://trinitymerrill.com/give>

You may also continue to mail your offerings directly to Trinity. Please note that electronic giving options do include processing fees charged to the church. Subsplash giving does provide an option to help cover those fees if you choose. No matter the method, we are sincerely thankful for your faithful generosity and partnership in ministry.

Trinity Block Party – August 16 at Normal Park

**Mark your calendars and join us for the Trinity Block Party on
Saturday, August 16, from 12:00–3:00 p.m. at Normal Park!**

Bring your lawn chairs, yard games, family, friends, and neighbors for an afternoon of fun, food, fellowship, and community. This free event is open to everyone, and we would love to see you there. The day begins with a special 10:00 a.m. worship service, including a blessing of backpacks as students prepare to return to school.

Come and enjoy:

- Free meal
- Culver's ice cream
- Popcorn
- Live music
- Bounce houses
- Face painting
- Petting zoo
- Special vehicle viewings
- Sawmill beer sampling
- And much more!

Whether you're a longtime Trinity member or simply looking for a fun way to spend a summer afternoon, there's something for everyone. Come celebrate the blessings of community and enjoy a day of laughter, connection, and family-friendly fun.

For more information, visit TrinityMerrill.com/BlockParty.