



TRINITY MERRILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Reverend Scott Gustafson
Reverend Jonathan Chapa

September 6, 2026 - 10:30 AM
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sharing the message with us today is Pastor Jonathan Chapa. Pastor Scott Gustafson will be our Liturgist.

AS WE GATHER: In every congregation, there are those who once sat together with us in the pews but have since been lost to error or sin. Those who used to be Christian may constitute a number larger than those who are currently Christian. It is one thing to lament this and criticize from the sidelines. It is quite another to warn the wicked. Though some might assume that the chief purpose of church discipline is to condemn the sins and errors of others, our Lord reminds us that discipline is an act of love that seeks to restore the fallen. While this idea may seem out of step with the emphasis in our times on tolerance without judgment, if our Lord loves the lost enough to save us, then we are called to do no less. Key to this is warning the wicked (as Ezekiel puts it) with the voice of God's Word. This certainly includes condemning sin and error, but it also includes restoring the fallen through forgiveness. It is not the will of our Father in heaven that any should perish, and it is the joy of heaven to welcome them back. Is it also our passion to seek them out, to warn them with the voice of God's Word, and to welcome them home through forgiveness?

PRE-SERVICE SONGS

"Yes and Amen" (Praise Team) #61 Key of D

"I've Got A Fire" (Praise Team) #87 Key of D

WELCOME & GREETING

OPENING SONG

"I've Got A Fire"

#87 Key of D

Vs.1 *I've got a fire that will never burn out
I've got a song that you can't turn down
I've got a joy deep down in my soul
I've got joy and it overflows*

Bridge *How could I forget
Just how good you've been
All your promises
I'll sing it again and sing it again
(REPEAT)*

Vs.2 *Break off the chains let the horses run
Unleash the praise at the top of your
lungs
Right now we're living in the glory days
Right now heaven is in this place*

Ending *I've got a fire that will never burn out
(I've got a fire that will never burn out)
(Repeat 2x)*

Chorus *I could sing forever
How you freed my soul
Freed my soul
Freed my soul
I could sing forever
How you made me whole
Made me whole
Made me whole
(Repeat)*

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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

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

People: Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. 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. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: He who began this good work within you will bring it to completion on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
People: Amen.

MONTHLY VERSE (John 13:34-35)

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

SONG

“At the Cross (Love Ran Red)” #73 Key of G

Vs.1 *There's a place*

Where mercy reigns and never dies

There's a place¹

Where streams of grace flow deep and wide

Where all the love I've ever found

Comes like a flood comes flowing down

(Chorus)

Bridge *Here my hope is found*

Here on holy ground

Here I bow down here I bow down

Here arms open wide

Here You saved my life

Here I bow down here I bow (down)

(Chorus 2X)

Chorus *At the cross at the cross*

I surrender my life

I'm in awe of You I'm in awe of You

*Where Your love ran red and my sin
washed white*

*I owe all to You I owe all to You
(Jesus)*

Ending *I owe all to You I owe all to You Jesus*

Vs.2 *There's a place*

Where sin and shame are powerless

Where my heart

Has peace with God and forgiveness

Where all the love I've ever found

Comes like a flood comes flowing down

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APOSTLES' CREED

People: 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.

FIRST READING Ezekiel 33:7-9

⁷ “So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸ If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. ⁹ But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

SECOND READING Romans 13:1-10

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

GOSPEL READING Matthew 18:1-20

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” ² And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them ³ and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵ “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, ⁶ but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

⁷ “Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! ⁸ And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹ And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.

¹⁰ “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹² What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? ¹³ And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. ¹⁴ So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen

even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

SONG OF THE DAY

“Reckless Love”

#23 Key of C

Vs.1 *Before I spoke a word You were singing over me
You have been so so good to me
Before I took a breath You breathed Your life in me
You have been so so kind to me*

Chorus *(And) O the overwhelming never-ending reckless
Love of God
O it chases me down fights 'til I'm found
Leaves the ninety-nine
I couldn't earn it I don't deserve it
Still You give Yourself away
O the overwhelming never-ending reckless
Love of God yeah*

Vs. 2 *When I was Your foe still Your love fought for me
You have been so so good to me
When I felt no worth You paid it all for me
You have been so so kind to me*

(Chorus)

Bridge *There's no shadow You won't light up
Mountain You won't climb up
Coming after me
There's no wall You won't kick down
Lie You won't tear down
Coming after me
(Repeat)*

(Chorus)

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MESSAGE

ATTENDANCE / CONNECT TIME & OFFERING / (Instrumental) “Reckless Love” #23 Key of C

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 names and list the names of everyone in attendance in your family.)

PRAYERS OF GOD’S PEOPLE & 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

CLOSING SONG

"Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)" #14 Key of D

Vs.1 *Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now I'm found
Was blind but now I see*

Vs.2 *'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed*

Chorus ***My chains are gone I've been set free
My God my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy rains
Unending love amazing grace***

Vs.3 *The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures*

(Chorus)

Vs.4 *The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine
But God who called me here below
Will be forever mine
Will be forever mine
You are forever mine*

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Today's radio broadcast - is sponsored in celebration of the 49th Wedding Anniversary of Richard and Ann Stoeckmann.

The flowers on the altar - are sponsored in loving memory of Roger & Lenore English and Gerald and Carol Duwe and for blessings received by Brent & Crystal Duwe.

Bible Legacy Night – September 10 at 6:00 PM at Trinity Church

This invitation is for all Trinity third graders and their families, including students enrolled at Trinity School and public-school students who are Trinity members. This special evening celebrates an important milestone in each child's faith journey as our third graders receive their own Bible from Trinity. Families are encouraged to attend as we gather to give thanks for God's Word and pray that these Bibles will guide, encourage and strengthen our students for years to come.

Join us for Trinity's next COMMUNITY MEAL- Wednesday, September 16th from 4:30-6:30.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY – Diane Kreager's bible study on The book of Ruth "More than a Love Story" will begin on Wednesday, September 9th from 1:00-2:00. No need to sign up.... Just show up.

Sunday Morning Bible Class resumes on September 13th! Join us at 9:15am each Sunday in the Fellowship Hall here at Trinity! This year, we'll be going through the Augsburg Confession. This historic document, written in 1530, is the foundation statement for what we Lutherans believe, teach, and confess--and why! Registration is necessary to make sure we have enough materials for you. Please contact the church to sign up"

NEED A RIDE TO CHURCH? WE'RE HERE TO HELP! 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, and how many people need transportation to Trinity.

The Fall Congregational Meeting is October 25 after the 10:30 service. At that meeting, we will be electing three members to serve the next three years on the Church Council. If anyone's interested or if anyone has recommendations, please speak to Pastor G.

Trinity Kids (Sunday School) will begin on September 20th from 9:15-10:15 at Trinity School. Children will enjoy learning about Jesus and his love for them.

Share Your Garden Harvest with Trinity Hot Lunch! Has God blessed your garden with an abundant harvest this year? Beginning **September 1**, Trinity Lutheran School is excited to accept donations of **fresh, unprocessed garden produce** to be used in our hot lunch program. Your generous donations will help provide healthy, nutritious meals for our students while allowing them to enjoy the fruits and vegetables grown right here in our community. If your garden is overflowing, please consider sharing your bounty with the children at Trinity. Your gift is a wonderful way to support our hot lunch program and demonstrate God's love through service to others. **Produce donations may be dropped off at the school.**



OPEN HEARTS FOOD SHELF — VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! Our Open Hearts Food Shelf is open every Wednesday and Friday from 2:00–4:00 PM, providing food to individuals and families in our community. We are looking for a few volunteers who can help pick up food on Thursday or Friday mornings and bring it to Trinity. The food will already be packaged and ready to go—no shopping required! Some muscle is helpful, as there will be boxes and food packages to load and unload. If you can help on a regular or occasional basis, please contact the church office or speak with Pastor G. Your helping hands can be an Open Heart to someone in need!



SOCKTOBER
OCTOBER 1st - OCTOBER 31st

Trinity Dorcas will be collecting new and gently used socks for people in need during the Month of October. There will be a clothes hamper in the narthex for any size sock donations. "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." – Hebrews 13:16

North Wisconsin District Adult Gathering - Make plans now to attend the NWD Adult Gathering on Tuesday, October 13 at Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Weston. Registration & morning refreshments begin at 9:30 a.m. with the program from 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. A catered lunch will be served at noon. Devotions will be led by District President, Rev. Timothy Shoup. Keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Brian Gauthier, who serves as managing director – global mission operations of the LCMS Office of International Mission. Rev. Gauthier will share a message on "Unpacking Lutheran Mission" providing insight and understanding of LCMS missions, the impact around the world, and how your congregation can make an impact. The \$35 registration fee includes morning refreshments, program, and a catered lunch. Registration deadline is September 25. Registration forms are available in the office and on the NWD homepage at nwdlcms.org under 'Events and Info'.

Lincoln County Health Department will be offering some seniors (65+) flu shot clinics in September.

Sept 9th we will be at TB Scott Library from 11-12 to give flu shots.

Sept 16th from 8:30-11:30 we will be at the Merrill EXPO center- in the Steckling building to offer "drive thru" flu shots for seniors. No need to get in or out of the car at this clinic.

We will also be offering "walk in" flu shots (including high dose flu shots) every Wednesday from 8:30-4pm from mid Sep-Nov. No appointment needed.

GRIEF SHARE- September 14th through December 7th (Monday's) from 6:00-8:00 PM at Trinity Church.

Trinity will once again be offering Grief Support to our church and community. This support group will offer help and encouragement after the death of a loved one. At a GriefShare meeting, you will find understanding, guidance, relief, and a safe place to navigate the challenges of grief. Come join us and bring a friend. Contact us Today so we have enough materials. 715-536-5482.