

June 23, 2024

An Explanation of Our Communion Practice

Today we are celebrating the Lord's Supper, which is a wonderful gift from our gracious God. In his Word, God teaches that Christians need a proper understanding of the Lord's Supper before receiving it (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). He also tells us that Christians should be completely united before communing together (1 Corinthians 10:17). Therefore, we ask that only members of our fellowship (The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and, worldwide, The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference) commune at Trinity.

We do want everyone to commune with us. So that everything may be done decently and in good order (1 Corinthians 14:40), we ask for the opportunity to verify that we are united in our beliefs based on God's Word, and then to celebrate that unity publicly in the Sacrament. If you would like to learn more, please speak to Pastor. Thank you for your understanding of our belief and practice.

trinity



LUTHERAN
CHURCH



Fifth
Sunday after Pentecost

June 23, 2024

Welcome! Thank you for joining us for worship! In our service, we receive God's grace through his Word and sacraments. As he works to strengthen our faith in Jesus, we respond to his goodness with our prayers, praise, and offerings. We are glad to be here and glad that you have joined us today!

- Restrooms are located in the main hallway, narthex, and back classrooms.
- If you wish to step out of the service to calm your child, please feel welcome to use the Fellowship Hall or the Toddler Sunday School Room (located in the back-corner classroom of the building, connected to the Fellowship Hall). Both of these rooms have televisions showing the worship service. Also, please do not hesitate to ask an usher or any member if you need help locating anything. We want to make you feel welcome.

Serving the Lord and Serving Us:

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Nick Proksch

Today's Focus: The loving Lord rules all creation; his people place their trust in him. Our worship follows *The Common Service*. Trinity's thanks goes Rev. Dr. Nick Proksch for leading us in worship today.

We Come into the Presence of God

MUSICAL INTRODUCTION

This is an opportunity to quiet your mind and heart and prepare for the joy of worshipping your God.

OPENING HYMN: 260, Let All Things Now Living

1 Let all things now liv - ing A song of thanks-giv - ing
2 His law he en - forc - es; The stars in their cours - es

To God the Cre - a - tor tri - um - phant - ly raise,
And sun in its or - bit o - be - dient - ly shine.

Who fash - ioned and made us, Pro - tect - ed and stayed us,
The hills and the moun - tains, The riv - ers and foun - tains,

Who still guides us on to the end of our days.
The deeps of the o - cean pro - claim him di - vine.

God's ban - ners are o'er us; His light goes be - fore us,
We, too, should be voic - ing Our love and re - joic - ing.

A pil - lar of fire shin - ing forth in the night,
With glad ad - o - ra - tion a song let us raise

Till shad - ows have van - ished And dark - ness is ban - ished,
Till all things now liv - ing U - nite in thanks-giv - ing:

As for - ward we trav - el from light in - to light.
"To God in the high - est, ho - san - na and praise!"

Text: Katherine K. Davis, 1892–1980, alt. © 1939. Renewed 1966 by E. C. Schirmer Music Co. (admin. ECS Publishing). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Tune: THE ASH GROVE (66 11 66 11 D) Welsh folk tune.

Stand

INVOCATION

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

M: Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this, I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me a sinner.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.



C: **Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.**



We praise you, we bless you, we wor-ship you, we glorify you,



we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,



God the Fa-ther al - mighty. O Lord, the only begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the

(Continued on Next Page)

sin of the world; have mercy on us. You take away the
 sin of the world; re - ceive our prayer. You sit at the right hand of
 God the Father; have mercy on us. For you on - ly are holy;
 you on - ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the Ho - ly Spirit,
 are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

M: O Lord, our God, govern the nations of the earth and direct the affairs of this world so that your Church may worship you in peace and joy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Be Seated

THE WORD

FIRST LESSON

Job 38:1-11

The Lord created all things with infinite power and wisdom, and still governs and guides all creation for the good of those who trust in him.

Then the LORD responded to Job out of a violent storm. He said:

²Who is this who spreads darkness over my plans
 with his ignorant words?

(Continued on Next Page)

³ Get ready for action like a man!
Then I will ask you questions,
and you will inform me.
⁴ Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you understand anything about it.
⁵ Who determined its dimensions?
I am sure you know.
Who stretched out the surveying line over it?
⁶ What supports its foundation?
Who set its cornerstone in place,
⁷ when the morning stars sang loud songs together,
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?
⁸ Who locked up the sea behind doors
when it burst out of the womb?
⁹ When I clothed the sea with clouds,
when I wrapped it with thick darkness as its swaddling cloths,
¹⁰ when I broke its power with my decree,
when I locked it up behind barred, double doors,
¹¹ I said, "You may come this far, but no farther.
Here is the barrier for your proud waves."

PSALM OF THE DAY: 46

Read Responsively

M: God is our refuge and strength,

C: an ever-present help in trouble.

M: Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way

C: and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

M: though its waters roar and foam

C: and the mountains quake with their surging.

M: There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,

C: the holy place where the Most High dwells.

M: God is within her, she will not fall;

C: God will help her at break of day.

M: "Be still, and know that I am God;

C: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

SECOND LESSON

Acts 27:1-26

God protects his missionaries (and many others) and rescues them from the storm.

When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, of the Imperial Regiment. ² After boarding a ship from Adramyttium, which was going to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.

³ The next day, we put in at Sidon, and Julius treated Paul kindly and allowed him to go to his friends to receive their care. ⁴ From there we put out to sea and sailed on the sheltered side of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. ⁵ We crossed the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia and landed at Myra in Lycia. ⁶ There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us on board. ⁷ We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus. Since the wind did not permit us to go further, we sailed on the sheltered side of Crete, off Salmone. ⁸ With difficulty we sailed along its coast and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.

⁹ Since so much time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, ¹⁰ “Men, it looks to me as if the voyage is going to end with disaster and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship but also of our lives.” ¹¹ But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and the owner of the ship than to what Paul was saying. ¹² Since that harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there, hoping somehow to reach Phoenix and winter there. (Phoenix is a harbor on Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.) ¹³ When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they could carry out their plan. They raised the anchor and sailed close to the shore of Crete.

¹⁴ But before long, a hurricane-like wind, called the “northeaster,” rushed down from the island. ¹⁵ Since the ship was caught in it and could not head into the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. ¹⁶ As we sailed on the sheltered side of a small island called Cauda, we were barely able to secure the skiff. ¹⁷ After hoisting it on board, the men tied ropes around the ship to reinforce it. Then, fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and in this way were driven along. ¹⁸ Because we were tossed around so violently by the storm, the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. ¹⁹ On the third day, they threw the ship’s gear overboard with their own hands. ²⁰ When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the violent storm kept pressing down on us, finally all hope that we would be saved was disappearing.

²¹ After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up among them and said, “Men, you should have followed my advice and not set sail from Crete and avoided this damage and loss. ²² But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because there will be no loss of life among you. Only the ship will be lost. ²³ In fact, last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me ²⁴ and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand before Caesar. And surely God has graciously given you all those who are sailing with you.’ ²⁵ So keep up your courage, men, because I believe God that it will be exactly the way I have been told. ²⁶ However, we must run aground on some island.”

VERSE OF THE DAY

M: Alleluia! Because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” Alleluia! (*Galatians 4:6*)

Stand

GOSPEL

Mark 4:35-41

Jesus intentionally leads his disciples into a storm so that they will learn to believe the love and power of God's Son.

M: The Gospel of St. Mark, chapter 4.

C: Glory be to you, O Lord!

On that day, when evening came, Jesus said to them, "Let's go over to the other side." ³⁶After leaving the crowd behind, the disciples took him along in the boat, just as he was. Other small boats also followed him. ³⁷A great windstorm arose, and the waves were splashing into the boat, so that the boat was quickly filling up. ³⁸Jesus himself was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. They woke him and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we are about to drown?"

³⁹Then he got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" The wind stopped, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still lack faith?"

⁴¹They were filled with awe and said to one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

M: The Gospel of our Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and became fully human.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

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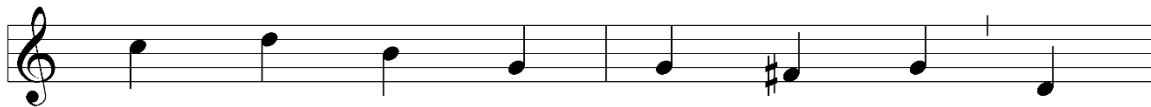
**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Be Seated

HYMN OF THE DAY: 517, Almighty Father, Strong to Save



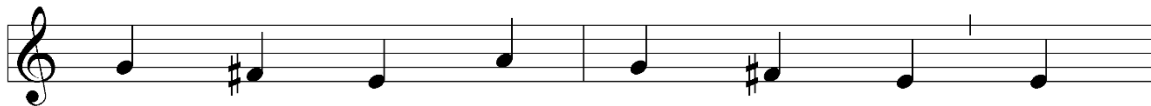
1 Al - might - y Fa - ther, strong to save, Whose
2 O Christ, the Lord of hill and plain O'er
3 O Spir - it, whom the Fa - ther sent To
4 O Trin - i - ty of love and pow'r, Your



arm has bound the rest - less wave, Who
which our traf - fic runs a - main By
spread a - broad the fir - ma - ment; O
peo - ple shield in dan - ger's hour; From



bids the might - y o - cean deep Its
moun - tain pass or val - ley low; Wher -
Wind of heav - en, by your might Save
rock and tem - pest, fire and foe, Pro -



own ap - point - ed lim - its keep: Oh,
ev - er, Lord, your peo - ple go, Pro -
all who dare the ea - gle's flight, And
tect them all wher - e'er they go; Thus

(Continued on Next Page)

hear our earn - est, hum - ble plea For
 tect them by your guard - ing hand From
 keep them by your watch - ful care From
 ev - er - more to you shall be Glad

those in per - il on the sea.
 ev - 'ry per - il on the land.
 ev - 'ry per - il in the air.
 praise from air and land and sea.

Text: William Whiting, 1825–78, st. 1, 4, alt.; Robert N. Spencer, 1877–1961, st. 2-3, alt. From *The Hymnal 1982*
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 New York, NY.
 Tune: MELITA (88 88 88) John B. Dykes, 1823–76.

SERMON

TEXT: Isaiah 49:14-16

THEME: "Make the past your power-up"

14 But Zion said, "The Lord has abandoned me.
 The Lord has forgotten me."

15 Can a woman forget her nursing child
 and not show mercy to the son from her womb?
 Even if these women could forget,
 I will never forget you.

16 Look, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands.
 Your walls are never out of my sight

Stand

CREATE IN ME

C: Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -
way from your pres-ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it
from me. Re-store un - to me the joy of your sal - va -
tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir-it. A - men.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'CREATE IN ME'. It consists of five staves of music in a single system. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The melody is written on a treble clef. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The final note of the piece is a double bar line.

Be Seated

OFFERING

Please take a moment to sign the friendship register found in your pew.

The members of Trinity make joyful offerings to support this church's ministry. A portion of our offerings is also used for the training of future pastors and teachers, and the worldwide mission work carried out by our fellowship, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Our guests are under no obligation to give, but any gifts freely given are welcome and will be put to work in service to God's kingdom.

Stand

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Lord Jesus Christ, we lift up our hearts with thanksgiving and praise. Through the blood of your covenant, you have made us worthy to receive your Holy Supper. You join us with believers throughout the world and throughout the ages by your body given for us. In this sacrament time and eternity meet as we celebrate a foretaste of the feast now enjoyed by all who are in heavenly glory. As we receive your true body and blood, we rejoice in our salvation through you, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit are one God, now and forever.

Special prayers

LORD'S PRAYER

C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

M: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: It is good and right so to do.

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock till he comes again in glory. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

C: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en - ly hosts:
heav'n and earth are full of your 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 who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san -
na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

The musical score is written on six staves in a single system. It features a treble clef, a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and a common time signature. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics printed below each staff. The lyrics are: "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en - ly hosts: heav'n and earth are full of your 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 who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est." The score ends with a double bar line.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this (+) is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this (+) is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD

C: O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
grant us your peace. A - - men.

The musical score is written on five staves in a single system. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature is common time (C). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some phrases spanning across bar lines. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes or bar lines. The final phrase 'A - - men.' has a long horizontal line under the 'A' and a dash, indicating a long note or a pause.

Be Seated

DISTRIBUTION

HYMN: 315, Here, O My Lord, I See You Face to Face



1 Here, O my Lord, I see you face to face;
2 This is the hour of banquet and of song;
3 I have no help but yours nor do I need
4 Mine is the sin but yours the right - eous - ness;
5 Too soon we rise; the ves - sels dis - ap - pear.



Here would I touch and han - dle things un - seen,
Here is the heav'n - ly ta - ble spread a - new.
An - oth - er arm but yours to lean up - on.
Mine is the guilt but yours the cleans - ing blood.
The feast, though not the love, is past and gone.



Here grasp with firm - er hand e - ter - nal grace,
Here let me feast and, feast - ing, still pro - long
It is e - nough, O Lord, e - nough in - deed;
Here is my robe, my ref - uge, and my peace:
The bread and wine re - move, but you are here,



And all my wea - ri - ness up - on you lean.
The brief bright hour of fel - low - ship with you.
My strength is in your might, your might a - lone.
Your blood, your right - eous - ness, O Lord, my God.
Near - er than ev - er, still my shield and sun.

6 Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
Yet, passing, points to that glad feast above,
Giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
The Lamb's great marriage feast of bliss and love.

Text: Horatius Bonar, 1808-89, abr., alt.
Tune: FARLEY CASTLE (10 10 10 10) Henry Lawes, 1595-1662.

Stand

SONG OF SIMEON



C: Lord, now you let your servant de - part in peace ac-cord-ing
to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have pre-
pared be - fore the face of all people, a light to light - en the
Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of your peo-ple Is - ra - el.

M: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

C: And his mercy endures forever.

M: O God the Father, source of all goodness, in your loving kindness you sent your Son to share our humanity. We thank you that through him you have given us pardon and peace in this sacrament. We also pray that you will not forsake us but will rule our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit so that we willingly serve you day after day, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace.

C: Amen.

Be Seated

CLOSING HYMN: 256, How Great Thou Art, verses 1 and 3

1 O Lord my God, when I in awe-some won-der
 3 And when I think that God, his Son not spar-ing,
 Con-sid-er all the works thy hand hath made,
 Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
 I see the stars, I hear the might-y thun-der,
 That on the cross my bur-den glad-ly bear-ing
 Thy pow'r through-out the u-ni-verse dis-played.
 He bled and died to take a-way my sin.
Refrain
 Then sings my soul, my Sav-ior-God, to thee, "How great thou
 art! How great thou art!" Then sings my soul, my
 Sav-ior-God to thee, "How great thou art! How great thou art!"

Text: Stuart K. Hine, 1899–1989. © 1949, 1953 The Stuart Hine Trust. U.S. print rights admin. by Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
 Tune: HOW GREAT THOU ART (11 10 11 10 with Refrain) Swedish folk tune. © 1949, 1953 The Stuart Hine Trust. U.S. print rights admin. by Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Trinity Lutheran Church

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/trinityofwoodbridge

Summer Bible Class

Bible class (on Luther's Large Catechism) meets from 9:15-9:45 each Sunday morning, with Sunday School adjourned. Please note there will be no class next Sunday, June 30.

Wine and Word Bible Study – July 18

The Wine and Word Bible Study meets at the home of Bruce and Dawn Knox. Their home is located just 5 minutes from the church in Old Bridge Estates. We meet the 1st and 3rd Thursdays from 7-8:30 pm. We are studying The Apocrypha with Larry Kovaciny as our guide. The study of follows the study guide for *The Apocrypha: The Lutheran Edition with Notes* (available from Northwestern or Concordia Publishing Houses and other booksellers). You can also follow the readings at apocrypha.org. Those who wish can bring a bottle of wine and a small bite appetizer. Come and join us whether you drink wine or not! Contact Dawn at 703-615-9320 or dawn.f.knox@gmail.com to RSVP.

Trinity's Little Free Library is one of our church's most effective tools for reaching out to our neighborhood. Many families in the area around Trinity regularly visit our LFL for books and shelf-stable food items, especially those who are experiencing food scarcity. Particularly useful are canned or boxed foods that do not require additional ingredients besides water to prepare. Books are always welcome, too, of course! If the shelves happen to be full, there is a donation bin for overflow items in the fellowship room beside the door to the hallway.

Vacation Bible School Registration OPEN!

Registration is now open for this year's VBS, which will be held July 15-19 from 9:00-11:30 am. Come join us for Scuba VBS where we will dive into an amazing undersea adventure and experience the ever-flowing, never-ending love of God. We look forward to sharing God's Word, singing songs, making crafts, playing games, and of course, having some awesome snacks together! VBS is for kids ages 3 (and potty trained) to those entering 6th grade in the fall. Kids entering 7th grade and older may volunteer as helpers. Please register here: <https://vbspro.events/p/events/trinity24> or scan this QR Code!

Small Choir

Trinity's small choir sings about once a month during worship. Anyone is welcome to join! We'll sing hymns from our hymnal, Christian Worship. If you are interested in joining, please let John or Erika Ohlendorf know.

Ushers and Usher Assistants Needed

A sign-up sheet is sent via email through Sign-up Genius. You are welcome to fill in as many Sundays as you are available. If you would like to become part of the regular rotation of ushers, or even just fill in once in a while when needed, please speak to Worship Elder Matt Popelier. If you are not getting the emails for Sign-Up Genius, please email admin@trinityofwoodbridge.org

Lord's Supper Available to All Members

If you are a confirmed member of Trinity, Pastor would be happy to commune you at home, or anywhere else you would like to meet. Just contact him at (309) 433-5807 or revpauljenkins@yahoo.com with a date, time, and place, and he will make it work



The Holy Spirit Makes Us Alive by Faith

<https://wels.net/family-devotion/fd20210526/>

This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.... Then you will know that I am the Lord.”

Ezekiel 37:5-6

Ellie was a fourth grader who worried about her friend, Izzy. Ellie noticed that Izzy hadn't been her usual self for the past few days. Izzy wasn't eating much food. She wasn't moving around as much as she usually did. In fact, Izzy hardly swam at all. Izzy was Ellie's goldfish. Ellie didn't know how to help or what to do. Izzy asked her mom for help, but her mom wasn't quite sure what to do either. What they worried about most was that Izzy the goldfish would stop eating and swimming all together. If Izzy went "belly up," there would be nothing that either of them could do to help.

Ezekiel was a prophet who was very concerned about his friends, the people of Israel. He was worried that these people had stopped listening to and learning from God's Word. It's like they had stopped eating the spiritual food that God was giving them. They were not worshiping or serving God anymore in their lives. It's like they had almost stopped believing all together.

Had the people of Israel gone "belly up?" God answered Ezekiel's concern for his people in a dream. In it, God showed Ezekiel a valley filled with dry bones. That's what the people of Israel looked like without God—a bunch of dead, dry bones! But God knew just what to do. He would send his Holy Spirit to bring the people back to life. God says, "Hear the Word of the Lord! Listen to the voice of the Living God! I will bring you back to life, and you will know that I am the Lord!"

Ellie and her mom finally figured out the problem with Izzy the fish: the aquarium's air pump stopped working. Izzy wasn't getting enough oxygen. Once mom fixed the problem, Izzy was right back to swimming again.

God fixes the problems of our faith. He does it through the wonderful work of his Holy Spirit. The amazing stories that we find in the Bible prove it—like a valley of dead bones coming back to life. When our faith is weak, our God breathes and brings us back to life. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for feeding our faith, forgiving our sins, and making us strong until we are with you forever in heaven!

Questions to Consider

- Izzy the goldfish was sick, but Ellie and her mom found the problem. What was it?
- How does God fix our faith when it gets sick?
- Why was Ezekiel so worried about his people, Israel? What was wrong?
- Ezekiel did not have the power to bring dry bones back to life. Only God does. What truth does this teach us about where our faith in God comes from?
- Agree or disagree. Sometimes we do a better job of feeding and caring for our pets than we do feeding and caring for our faith.
- Discuss as a family why it's important not to take the summer off from feeding your faith.

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CHURCH

to glorify God

by growing in His Word and by going with His Word

to Woodbridge and to the world.



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