

A Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358



Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7
August 13, 2023



Scan with your Smartphone and link to our web page, our Facebook page, and our YouTube Channel.

GATHERING

• **Prelude** **Roxanne Groff**

• **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**

• **Welcome** **Pr Mel Musser**

* **THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation.

C: Amen.

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

P: Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.

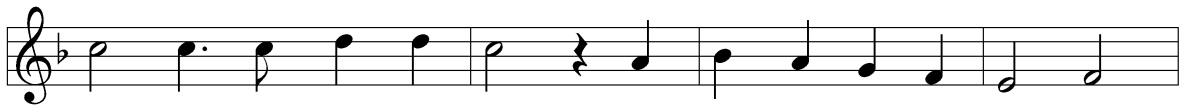
P: We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all. We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C: Amen.

* **HYMN OF PRAISE** **“Now Thank We All Our God”** **LBW 533**



1 Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voic - es,
 2 Oh, may this boun-teous God through all our life be near us,
 3 All praise and thanks to God the Fa - ther now be giv - en,



who won-drous things has done, in whom his world re - joic - es;
 with ev - er joy - ful hearts and bless - ed peace to cheer us,
 the Son, and him who reigns with them in high - est heav - en,



who, from our moth - ers' arms, has blest us on our way
 and keep us in his grace, and guide us when per - plexed,
 the one e - ter - nal God, whom earth and heav'n a - dore;



with count-less gifts of love, and still is ours to - day.
 and free us from all harm in this world and the next.
 for thus it was, is now, and shall be ev - er - more.

* **APOSTOLIC GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray... God of passionate love, you love your people fiercely and with enduring zeal. Show us how to love as eagerly, celebrating love as a precious gift, in Jesus' name.

C: **Amen.**

WORD

- **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**



Theme: God's Love

Materials: Video of Kimber and Pipper

Scripture: Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7

Good morning girls and boys! I hope you had a fantastic week! Today I want to talk about love! Can you describe what love is? ... me neither, but I know it when I see it. I know my momma loved me because she took care of me. She wanted to be near me all the time. And she hugged me. I used to love my momma's hugs!

I can also tell my puppies love me. Here's a short video of what Kimber and Pipper look like when they see me coming down the hallway of our house...

(SHOW VIDEO)

See how Kimber's whole body shakes when she sees me coming? That's how someone who misses you acts when they see you coming. When I get to the point where I open the gate both dogs jump into my lap and either give me great big puppy kisses or they try to bite my face off... They're so excited to see me.

Did you know God loves you that much? When you turn your heart and your mind toward God in prayer or in reading the Bible which contains God's Word or when you come to Church to hear God's Word God gets that excited. God loves you more than my puppies love me! That's for sure!

Let's pray... Dear God, thank you for loving us so much. We know we can never love you that much, so please forgive us when we turn our hearts and minds to other things. Thank you for sending Jesus to remind us just how much you do love us. Amen.

- **SCRIPTURE READING: Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7**

P: Our scripture reading for this day is from Song of Solomon, Chapters 2 and 8.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

¹⁰My beloved speaks and says to me: “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; ¹¹for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. ¹²The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. ¹³The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

⁶Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame.

⁷Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If one offered for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly scorned.

R: This is the Word of the Lord!

C: Praise to You, O Christ (*Spoken*)

- **SERMON**

Pr Mel Musser

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from our Savior and our Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

I’ve been dreading this sermon for some time now. Ever since I saw that Song of Solomon or the Song of Songs was on the Lectionary, I’ve wanted to avoid this particular sermon and this particular Book of the Bible. Then when I read the actual verses that have been appointed for today I was a little relieved, but still apprehensive about how to approach this book of Scripture. In case you’ve never closely read Song of Solomon it’s a bit steamy and quite erotic. There are verses in this short book of 6 love poems that can make even this old man blush. I,

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

along with many others have wondered why in the world the early Church Fathers decided this materiel belongs in the canon of Holy Scripture... Then I really started to study the book and what some of the commentators had to say.

What I discovered is that in the early years of Christianity there were more books written and sermons preached on these texts from the Song of Solomon than any other book of the Bible including all of the Gospels! Why all the interest? Why were all those early theologians obsessed with this book? Well, the answer is quite simple. Sex sells, even 2000 years ago... To be fair, the Church Fathers, all those years ago, recognized the vivid descriptions of the love between the two people in these love poems and they turned the entire book into an allegory where God was one of the lovers and the Hebrew people and then later the Christian Church was the other. They set up elaborate relationships describing how God was the man and the people of God were the woman in this relationship. I will admit when you think through all the attempts to describe the relationship between God and humankind in the Bible, the image of marriage, of a bride and groom, is used quite often. The origin of these 6 love poems that comprise the Song of Solomon is shrouded in mystery. Most scholars believe they may have been sung at wedding feasts since nearly 1000 years before Jesus, generation to generation, as oral folk songs before they were ever written down. Perhaps the erotic nature of

-
- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

the poems helped the wedding couple understand that within the bonds of marriage, intimacy is not only a pleasurable event, but also a beautiful and miraculous gift from our creator God.

When we fast forward to the modern era we can see little or no correlation between the love expressed in this book of poetry to what passes for love today. Our modern society has put sex on every street corner and in every living room in America. From toothpaste to automobiles, almost every television commercial uses sex to sell their products, not to even mention the prime time ads for ED and PD. If you don't know what those are, ask your mom... My personal assessment is that today's modern culture has pornified sex and turned this wonderful gift from God into a sin that has broken up more relationships than anyone can count. Seeing human sexuality from this perspective leads us to see the other person as not much more than an object. There's not much room for give and take in the relationship, only take and take... That's why I call it the pornification of human sexuality...

Now, you'd think the Church would be a safe place where God's people could learn to understand God's point of view regarding our sexuality. Unfortunately, the Church, has been much more concerned about setting itself up as the arbitrator of what is considered normal verses abnormal when it comes to human sexuality. The Church is in the business of legalism and telling us what we

-
- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

can and can't do. Mostly what we can't do... All the while so many Church leaders violate every taboo and norm known to exist. The Church has turned human sexuality into a dirty thing that we don't talk about in civilized company... I call the way the Church has treated human sexuality over the many centuries as the Prud-ification of sex.

So, if society pornifies sex and the Church prudifies it, what does God actually say about human sexuality? I highly encourage you all to read the entire book of the Song of Solomon to find out for yourself. Our short text for today gives us a hint of what the entire book is like. It's full of images of longing for the absent lover to return. Packed with vivid descriptions of the total giving of every ounce of yourself to the one you love. Just a couple of verses beyond what we read this morning it says, "My beloved is mine and I am his..." There's no holding back. Love is intended by God to be a 100 percent commitment. Love isn't some 50/50 proposition. It's a full-time commitment. When the lovers are together they hold each other and never want to let go. When they're apart, they urgently long for that closeness.

We can see why so many of the Church Fathers early on found the connection between God and God's people in the way the relationship between these two lovers is described. The vast majority of the verses of all 6 of these love

-
- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

poems is from the voice of the woman in the relationship who seeks after her lover who is not around. The Bible tells us plainly the Church is the bride of Christ. Given the description of how these two lovers long for one another, shouldn't we be at least as vigilant in seeking Jesus and longing for His return as this woman who desires her lover to hurry home as a gazelle gallops across the plain. Given the vivid descriptions and the urgent longings and the absolute beauty ascribed to this intimate relationship between these lovers, my assessment of the viewpoint God has of human sexuality is one of purification. It is pure and Holy when God is in the center of any human endeavor, but especially including our intimate relationships. I mean, just listen once again to God's ideal of what human love can and should be... "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave." Human love without Christ at its center is like a flash in the pan, but grounded in the love of Jesus Christ it lasts and lasts all the way to the grave... Here, we can also begin to understand how the Church Fathers found the comparison to the love God in Jesus Christ has for humankind. It's a love so strong it can even outlast the grave. The love God has for you is the same love that held Jesus to the cross on Good Friday. The love God has for you was the power that raised Jesus on that first Easter morning. The love God has for you is the same love that brought forth every living and non-living

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

thing in all of creation. The love God has for you is the driving force that still raises up leaders and preachers and prophets to continue to reveal, to you, God's desire for you to love him as much as God loves you!

When I read the Song of Solomon, I'm transported back to the days of my youth when springtime and the promise of the beauty of the flowers and the smell of newness in the air made me feel joyful and ready to take on anything the world might throw my way. There's good reason springtime brings spring fever. God created the seasons to reflect the ebb and flow of life. Human sexuality is a part of that cycle too. This summer series on Wisdom Literature in the Bible ends with the Song of Solomon. It's appropriate because it is here, finally, in the Song of Songs as it has been called for a thousand years before Christianity began, that we see what makes for the good life. I mean, we see the good life consists of right relationships—between man and woman, between humanity and the earth, and between humanity and God. In the love described in this Song, we see a reflection of the love that first called the world into being, that continues to sustain it season by season, and that will bring it to new life beyond death itself. Such love is worth preaching about and I'm so happy God brought me through my fear of talking about human sexuality and allowed me to bring you this good news today!

May the joy of the Lord be your strength today and every day. May you seek out the love of your Savior Jesus Christ as ardently and as persistently as a woman seeking after her distant lover. May your joy overflow because of the love God has for you. Amen!

Silence may be kept for meditation...

* **HYMN OF THE DAY** **“Lift High the Cross”** **LBW 377**



Lift high the cross, the love of Christ pro - claim till



all the world a - dore his sa - cred name.



1 Come, Chris - tians, fol - low where our cap - tain trod,
 2 All new - born ser - vants of the Cru - ci - fied
 3 O Lord, once lift - ed on the glo - rious tree,
 4 So shall our song of tri - umph ev - er be:

Refrain



our king vic - to - rious, Christ, the Son of God.
 bear on their brows the seal of him who died.
 as thou hast prom - ised, draw us all to thee.
 praise to the Cru - ci - fied for vic - to - ry!

* **APOSTLES' CREED**

The Nicene Creed is said on all festivals and on Sundays in the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. The Apostles' Creed is said at other times. The Creed is omitted here if the service of Holy Baptism or another rite with a creed is used.

- * Please stand if able
- Please be seated

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

➤ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: Let us pray together for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

L: O God, you love your children deeply with a love that endures all things. Help us to celebrate your gift by loving all our sisters and brothers in this world. God of wisdom,

C: In mercy, hear our prayer.

L: The flowers that appear on the earth, the turtledove that is heard in the land, the fig tree that puts forth its figs; all are signs of the enduring love that you have given us as a gift. Help us to nurture creation so that we may see in all its unfolding the love that you have for us. God of wisdom,

C: In mercy, hear our prayer.

L: In this season of rest, we ask your holy hand be upon all who travel, to lands both near and far. Give them eyes to see you in the faraway lands and return them home safely. God of wisdom,

C: In mercy, hear our prayer.

L: Shower your people with gracious healing, (*especially*). Restore all your creation and its people to wholeness and abundant life. God of wisdom,

C: In mercy, hear our prayer.

L: Where there is fear, bring courage, where there is isolation, bring companionship, where there is misery, bring relief, and where there is hatred, bring love. God of wisdom,

C: In mercy, hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

L: We remember the saints that have gone on before us and rejoice in the wisdom they shared with us, teaching us to love with enduring passion. God of wisdom,

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

C: In mercy, hear our prayer.

L: Into your hands, loving God, we lift all for whom we pray, confident in your grace and mercy, through our savior Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

(The Sharing of the Peace that began when the congregation arrived is now shared with the Pastor at this time...)

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

C: And also with you.

MEAL

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

While the congregation is still standing say:

P: As we collect our offering here in person, those worshipping with us through the internet, may you go to our website located at www.pitsburgtlc.org where you'll find a button labeled "Give to Trinity." You can make your offering to God through our secure website.

P: Let us pray for the offerings we receive this day.... Loving God, you have generously entrusted to us your whole creation. Receive this day the offerings we bring before you, gifts freely given in gratitude for your abundant blessings.

C: Amen.

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: We are united together by this heavenly food, which is the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. So, let us pray as Jesus taught...

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.

SENDING

• ANNOUNCEMENTS

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

August 13, 2023

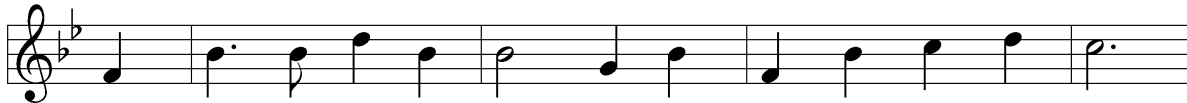
Page 13 of 17

* **SENDING BLESSING**

P: The God who calls across the cosmos and speaks in the smallest seed bless, keep, and sustain you now and to the end of the age.

C: Amen.

* **SENDING HYMN** **“Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus”** **LBW 389**



1 Stand up, stand up for Je - sus, as sol - diers of the cross,
2 Stand up, stand up for Je - sus; the trum - pet call o - bey;
3 Stand up, stand up for Je - sus, stand in his strength a - lone;
4 Stand up, stand up for Je - sus, the strife will not be long;



lift high his roy - al ban - ner; it must not suf - fer loss.
stand forth in might - y con - flict in this his glo - rious day.
the arm of flesh will fail you, you dare not trust your own.
this day the din of bat - tle, the next the vic - tor's song.



From vic - t'ry un - to vic - t'ry his ar - my he shall lead,
Let all his faith - ful serve him a - gainst un - num - bered foes;
Put on the gos - pel ar - mor; each piece put on with prayer.
The sol - diers, o - ver - com - ing, their crown of life shall see,



till ev - 'ry foe is van - quished and Christ is Lord in - deed.
let cour - age rise with dan - ger, and strength to strength op - pose.
Where du - ty calls or dan - ger, be nev - er want - ing there.
and with the King of glo - ry shall reign e - ter - nal - ly.

* **DISMISSAL**

P: Until the next time we gather together as God's people to offer our worship and praise, depart in Christ's Love.

C: Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

August 13, 2023

Page 14 of 17

Copyright © 2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS023830. New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Revised Common Lectionary, Copyright © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts, admin Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission.



Scripture readings for next Sunday, August 20th
Genesis 1:1-5; Matthew 6:30-34

Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	Lexie Angles
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser
Altar Flowers	

Health Tips for the Week

MIND: Clean out your junk drawer.

BODY: Jump rope.

SPIRIT: Watch the sunset.

This Week @ Trinity – August 13 thru August 20, 2023

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Sun, Aug 13	9:30 am	Christian Conversations (Coffee/Juice and Donuts)
	10:30 am	Worship Service
Thurs, Aug 17	11:30 am	Ladies & Gents Luncheon at Scottish Thistle, 110 W. High St., Piqua
Fri, Aug 18	3:30 pm	FISH Choice Food Pantry
Sun, Aug 20	9:30 am	Christian Conversations (Coffee/Juice and Donuts)
	10:30 am	Worship Service w/Communion

SAVE THE DATE!

- **August 27 – Rally Day!**
 - Sundaes on Sunday!
 - Blessing of the School Year and the Backpacks
 - Bible Gifting
- **October 8 - Church Security and Safety**
 - Special Guest Speaker-eric Haynes
 - Adult Christian Conversations starts at 9:00am this day only...
- **October 22 - Trinity Fall Festival – 2:00 pm – 5:30 pm**
- **October 29 – Reformation/Confirmation Sunday**
 - Reception following Service
- **November 5 – All Saints Sunday – Annual Congregational Meeting**
- **November 5 – Trinity Annual Christmas Auction**
 - Starts at 3:00 pm @ Bev & Eldon Erdmann’s Home
- **November 12 – Women’s Thankoffering Sunday**
- **December 3 – First Sunday of Advent**



Trinity is on the Air at FM 88.3

If you are near the Church on Sunday morning, you can tune in to FM 88.3 at 10:30 AM and hear the sermon from your car.

-
- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

Trinity Contact Info

Pastor:	Mel Musser
Email:	pastor@pitsburgtlc.org
Cell Phone:	937-626-7100
Secretary:	Sharon Fourman
Email:	secretary@pitsburgtlc.org
Office Hours:	By Appointment
Office Phone:	937-692-5670
Website:	www.pitsburgtlc.org

Holy Communion Delivery Available to ALL:

If you or anyone you know would like to have Holy Communion delivered to a home or place of business, please call Pastor Mel at 937-626-7100. He will bring a prefilled communion chalice including both sanctified wine and a morsel of bread all prepackaged from the Concordia True Vine company. This is a safe way to stay connected to your brothers and sisters in Christ.



-
- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated