

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



**"She out of
her poverty has
put in everything
she had."**

MARK 12:44

**Mark 12:28-44
March 10, 2024**



Scan with your Smartphone and link to our web page.

GATHERING

- **Prelude** **Pam Sherman**

- **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.

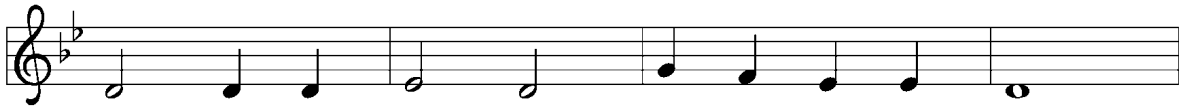
P: Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

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.**

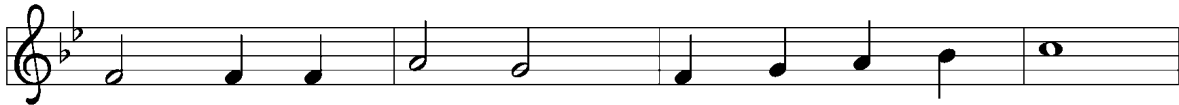
* **GATHERING HYMN “Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart” LBW 486**



1 Spir - it of God, de - scend up - on my heart;
 2 I ask no dream, no proph - et ec - sta - sies,
 3 Have you not bid me love you, God and King;
 4 Teach me to love you as your an - gels love,



wean it from earth, through all its puls - es move;
 no sud - den rend - ing of the veil of clay,
 all, all your own, soul, heart, and strength, and mind?
 one ho - ly pas - sion fill - ing all my frame:



stoop to my weak - ness, strength to me im - part,
 no an - gel vis - i - tant, no op - 'ning skies;
 I see your cross; there teach my heart to cling.
 the bap - tism of the heav'n - de - scend - ed dove,



and make me love you as I ought to love.
 but take the dim - ness of my soul a - way.
 Oh, let me seek you and, oh, let me find!
 my heart an al - tar, and your love the flame.

* **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... Holy God, you have taught us what it is to live in community with one another in sacrificial love. Give us hearts for service so that all might have their needs met, and be freed to give back for the good of others and of all creation. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: **Amen.**

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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• **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**



Theme: Trusting In God and Sharing What We Have
Materials: Widow's Mites
Scripture: Mark 12:28-44

Good morning boys and girls! I hope you all had a great week. Do any of you get an allowance? What do you have to do to earn your money. Do you have to pick up your toys or make your bed? Do you get paid in dollars or in coins? What about the tooth fairy? Do you get coins or dollars?

This morning I want to show you two coins that are very old. Back when Jesus was still alive, before the crucifixion, Jesus took his disciples to the Temple. That was the only Church where people could go to Worship our Father in Heaven. Anyway, Jesus and the disciples were watching the people come and go and as they came to the Temple they would put their offering into a large tuba shaped offering box. The rich people put in large sums of money. They made a big show of how much they gave to the temple treasury.

Then along came a very poor widow. Do you know what a widow is? A widow is a woman whose husband had died. Unless her husband had been a rich man, most widows were poor. Anyway, this widow came and put in two very small coins called mites. A couple of months ago, a friend of mine gave me these two ancient coins. These are just like the coins the poor widow put into the offering that day. These tiny coins aren't worth very much back then, but Jesus told the disciples the poor widow had put in more than all the other rich people because she had given everything she had.

Do you think Jesus said that because he wanted everyone to give everything they own to the Church? I don't think that was the point Jesus was making. I do think Jesus wants us to trust in God for what we need to live each and every day. The poor widow trusted in God to provide for her food and shelter, for her clothing, and for everything she needed each and every day. That's why she could put her last two coins into the Church offering. She knew God would provide for her daily Bread as we pray in the Lord's Prayer. Do you want to trust God like that poor Widow. I sure do.

Let's pray... Dear Jesus, thank you for helping us to understand your desire for us to trust in you. We know you will provide us our daily bread, but help us to also share what we have so that nobody goes hungry. Amen.

• **A READING OF SCRIPTURE: Mark 12:28-44**

R: Our scripture reading is from the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 12.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁸ One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” ²⁹ Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰ you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” ³² Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; ³³ and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” ³⁴ When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

³⁵ While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, “How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David? ³⁶ David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.”’”

³⁷ David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?” And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.

³⁸ As he taught, he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! ⁴⁰ They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

⁴¹ He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴² A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. ⁴³ Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. ⁴⁴ For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord!

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

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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- **SERMON**

Pr. Mel Musser

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the one who gave everything he had for you, Jesus Christ our Savior and our Lord, amen.

Every time I read this story about the Widow and her sacrificial gift I'm confused, perplexed, and maybe even dumbfounded. Here's why... When I find out that a charitable organization I support doesn't follow the principles of good stewardship, I drop that organization from my list of charities that I give to. I mean why would I continue to give my hard earned dollars to an organization that fails the financial accountability test. (SLIDE) In 2016 the Wounded Warrior Project, one of the largest veteran charities in the country was rocked by a scandal where their two top executives were fired for allegedly throwing lavish parties at expensive all-inclusive hotels.. The accusations grew until these two executives had been found to have spent over \$800 million between 2012 and 2016. The "administrative" costs at that time were revealed to be north of 40% of their total donations received for the Wounded Warrior Project. When news of the scandal hit the news media, donations to Wounded Warrior Project rightfully plummeted. I believe Wounded Warrior Project has fixed their dismal record since 2016 when the allegations hit the news media.

In our scripture reading for today, Jesus and the disciples are sitting across the room from the offering collection receptacle of the temple treasury. (SLIDE)

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- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

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They're watching the people who came to the temple that day give their tithe to the Lord. As they watch, they see rich people coming by and making a loud show of how much money they put into the treasury. The receptacle for collecting the people's offering was designed to make loud clanking noises as the coins were dropped into the collection tube. (SLIDE) It was made of copper and shaped sort of like the opening of a tuba. There was no hiding how much or how little you gave. Everyone who was there could see you as you dropped in your coins. Even if they were in the back of the room and couldn't see how much you were giving they could hear the coins drop. Imagine one of those spiral Wishing Wells they have at places like the Mall where you put your coin in a slot and when you release it in goes around and around, faster and faster until it finally drops into the coin box below like it's being drawn into a black hole never to be seen again. They were made for show. They were made so people could show off how much they were giving to the temple. The society and culture back then was built on what scholars call the Honor-Shame system. (SLIDE) Among other things, the more you contributed to the temple, the higher your social standing was in the community. Oh how the rich loved to show off...

Now imagine you're at the bottom of the social system. You couldn't get much lower than being a poor widow. (SLIDE) After all, the rich people had given out of the abundance of their blessings, it's now your turn to approach the

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- * Please stand if able
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offering vessel. Your pockets are empty, except for your last two mites. What would you do with your last two coins? In our scripture reading the widowed woman approached the temple treasury. Carefully, she reached into her satchel and she pulled out two copper coins. They are so small and so insignificant nobody even notices the noise they made as they are dropped into the tuba. Nobody notices, that is, except Jesus.

Here's the part that confuses, perplexes, and dumbfounds me. Jesus, who just explained to his disciples how evil and corrupt the entire temple system was. This was the exact same temple system where the Scribes "devour widow's houses." Now Jesus praises this widow for giving, not out of her abundance as all the others had done, but she gave all she had to this very same evil, corrupt system. Jesus goes on to say she has contributed more than all the rest. Now, I never took a math class from Andy, but I did get all the way through a full year of Calculus in college many years ago. I'm certain even my brilliant Calculus professor could not have made that math add up. My experience has been that when I'm really studying and pondering a Bible story and it just doesn't add up, usually there's more going on than meets the eye.

This story about the widow's mite comes slightly after Jesus had been asked about paying taxes to Caesar. If you remember from last week, Jesus famously said we should give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, but give to God what

belongs to God. This story isn't so much about how much we give to God but how we view our entire lives. Those rich givers probably never missed the 1 or 2 percent of their income they lavished on the temple treasury. It's like this past couple of weeks when the news cycle has focused on the \$450 million fine Donald Trump must pay for overestimating the value of his property when he applied for a loan. Now \$450 million is a lot of money, (SLIDE) but for the Donald, maybe not so much. I mean he'll probably have to cash in a few CDs or sell one of his properties, but it's certainly not going to bankrupt a man who's worth about \$10 Billion. On the other hand, when you think about the sacrifice the widow made, it was all she had. The rich donors held back in order to ensure they had enough to live on. They placed their trust in their large piles of cash and in their ability to leverage that cash by making large, showy donations to the Church Treasury, into being held in high esteem in their culture's social circles. They were much more concerned about how they appeared to other people than with their relationship with their heavenly Father. On the other hand, the poor widow didn't care about where she stood in the honor, shame game or with any of the others in the temple that day. (SLIDE) She already knew she was at the bottom of the heap. She had nowhere to go, but up. Our widow wasn't trusting in her reserve cash, but in the abundance of blessings she receives each and every day from the Lord our God. I don't know where she got those two mites, maybe someone gave them to her.

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- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

Maybe she was a beggar and that was all she earned that day. Wherever she got them, she trusted God would provide for her needs that day and every other day for the rest of her life. She wanted to give all she had as a sign of how much she loved the Lord God. (SLIDE) Do you think she heard Jesus talking to the Scribe about the most important Command, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength? Do you think she thought to herself, “All means all...”

The Old Testament standard for giving to the temple was a tithe of 10% of your gross earnings or first fruits of your labors. Most Christians today give more than ten percent, but they tithe to the credit card company instead of the church. Credit card companies today charge upwards of 12% to 27% interest. In the US today, 80% of Americans give less than 3% of their income to all charities, including to the Church. Listen again to what Jesus says in the greatest commandment, (SLIDE) “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with *all* your heart, and with *all* your soul, and with *all* your mind, and with *all* your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Those words come from Jesus, not Mel Musser... I guess, if you’re looking for some wiggle room here you could say, “Well Jesus said all you heart, soul, mind and strength, but he never said all of your money...”

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- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated

I will tell you Jesus is concerned about *all* of your money. If you love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, you have to be concerned with how you spend every mite and every dollar. Not only how you spend every dollar, but how you earn every dollar as well. In these two commands, Jesus is saying it's more than just about money. When you love with all your heart, you love with all your emotions. When we love God with all our soul, you integrate your faith into everything you are and all you do. To love with all your mind means you're totally committed to Christ, searching for ways to bring God's reign into this lost world. Loving with all your strength means using every bit of your God given talent to make Christ known. God thought our physicality was important enough to become incarnate himself. Certainly this indicates our bodies should bear witness to God's love in every way possible. All means all...

May the love of God fill all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all of your body. May Christ's sacrificial gift of his Body and Blood demonstrate the level of commitment God has to you and may your gratitude overflow into dedicating your *all* of your life to serving this God who gave His all for you.

Amen.

Silence may be kept for meditation...

* **HYMN OF THE DAY “Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound” ELW 779**



1 A - maz - ing grace!— how sweet the sound— that
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
 4 The Lord has prom - ised good to me; his
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but
 grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
 have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
 word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
 shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to



now am found; was blind, but now I see.
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

* **NICENE 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.

C: 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; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. 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.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic 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.

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

L: As we walk together through this season of contemplation and preparation, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

L: O God, your commandment to us is love. Keep us ever mindful that love is not a feeling but an action, the kind of action that allows your reign of justice and mercy to break into the world each day. God of the journey,

C: In mercy, hear our prayer.

L: Your charge to love our neighbors as ourselves includes every living thing in all your vast creation. Fill us with such love for animals and plants that we cannot help but strive for the preservation of the ecosystems in which they thrive. God of the journey,

C: In mercy, hear our prayer.

L: Guide leaders around the world to act in love for all people, rather than serving the interests of a few. Give them a spirit of cooperation, that all nations might work together for the flourishing of the whole world. God of the journey,

C: In mercy, hear our prayer.

L: Walk with all those whose lives are diminished by pain, that they might know your loving and healing presence, and find comfort, strength, and hope to endure, (*especially...*) God of the journey,

C: In mercy, hear our prayer.

L: Call to account those who keep up the appearance of piety while visiting injustice on others, especially when it is us. God of the journey,

C: In mercy, hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

L: We thank you for all the saints, from the first disciples to the present day, who modeled your great commandment for us. Inspire us to the same love of God and others each and every day. God of the journey,

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

C: In mercy, hear our prayer.

P: Confident that you walk alongside us in our need, we lift to you all our prayers, spoken and unspoken, through Jesus Christ our savior.

C: Amen.

MEAL

- **OFFERING**

P: As we collect our offering here in person, those worshipping with us through the internet may 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.

- * **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: Let us pray for the offerings we receive this day ... With the poor widow, we bring to you our gifts and our tithes, trusting that you will provide us with all we need to flourish. Use these gifts in service to all that you have made, that all might be satisfied.

C: Amen.

- * **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: United into one through Jesus Christ Our Lord, we 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**

- * **SENDING BLESSING**

P: Beloved, we are God's own people, holy, washed, renewed. God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill you with courage, and ☩ give you peace.

C: Amen.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,
 2 I love to tell the sto - ry: how pleas - ant to re - peat
 3 I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best



of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.
 what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet!
 seem hun - ger - ing and thirst - ing to hear it like the rest.



I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know it's true;
 I love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard
 And when, in scenes of glo - ry, I sing the new, new song,



it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else would do.
 the mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly word.
 I'll sing the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long.

Refrain

I love to tell the sto - ry; 'twill be my theme in glo - ry



to tell the old, old sto - ry of Je - sus and his love.

* DISMISSAL

P: Thank you all for joining us to worship our great and gracious God! Thanks also to our Facebook and other social media viewers for joining us as well. We're glad you're with us today. 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

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• Please be seated

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Lector	Kathy Kathman
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser



Scripture readings for next Sunday, March 17th
Mark 13:1-8, 24-37

Health Tips for the Week

MIND: Call a friend that you have not spoken with recently.

BODY: Try some balancing exercises.

SPIRIT: Get up early and watch the sunrise.

This Week @ Trinity – February 25 thru March 3:

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Sun, Mar. 10	9:30 am	Christian Conversations (Coffee/Juice and Donuts)
	10:30 am	Worship Service
Wed, Mar. 13	6:30 pm	Lenton Soup Supper/Devotion
Thurs, Mar. 14	10:00 am	Prayers & Squares Quilting
Fri, Mar. 15	3:30 pm	FISH Choice Food Pantry
Sun, Mar. 17	9:30 am	Christian Conversations (Coffee/Juice and Donuts)
	10:30 am	Worship Service w/Communion

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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Save The Date!

Lent Midweek Soup Supper/Devotion	Mar 12, 19 @ 6:30 pm
Palm/Passion Sunday	Mar 24 @ 10:30 am
Maundy Thursday Seder Meal	Mar 28 @ 6:00 pm
Good Friday	Mar 29 @ 7:00 pm
Easter Sunday Worship, Breakfast, Easter Egg Hunt	Mar 31 @ 8:00 am & 10:30 am



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.

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.

Trinity Contact Info

Pastor:	Mel Musser
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