

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



Esther 4:1-17
June 28, 2026



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

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.



1 Lord, speak to us, that we may speak in
 2 Oh, lead us, Lord, that we may lead the
 3 Oh, teach us, Lord, that we may teach the
 4 Oh, fill us with your full - ness, Lord, un -



liv - ing ech - oes of your tone; as you have sought, so
 wan-d'ring and the wa - v'ring feet; oh, feed us, Lord, that
 pre - cious truths which you im - part; and wing our words, that
 til our ver - y hearts o'er - flow in kin - dling thought and



let us seek your stray - ing chil - dren, lost and lone.
 we may feed your hun - g'ring ones with man - na sweet.
 they may reach the hid - den depths of man - y_a heart.
 glow - ing word, your love to tell, your praise to show.

* 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 power, stir up in us a resolve to carry your message of love into all we do and say, especially when it is challenging to do so. Give courage to act even when we might injure our reputations or incur the disapproval of others. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

WORD

• CHILDREN'S MESSAGE



Theme: God's Gift of Prayer
Materials: School Backpack and a Prayer Quilt or Square
Scripture: Esther 4:1-17

Good morning, everybody! I brought this really cool Backpack with me today. (Show backpack) You might take your backpack to school, or on a trip, or maybe to Grandma's house. Now let me ask you something: have you ever had to go somewhere and you felt a little nervous? Maybe the first day of school? Maybe a doctor's appointment? Maybe walking into a room where you didn't know many people? Maybe seeing someone being picked on and wondering, "Should I say something? Should I get help?" Sometimes we need courage. Now, courage does not mean we are never afraid. Courage means we can do the right thing even when we feel afraid.

Today our Bible story is about Queen Esther, who lived a long time ago in Old Testament times. She was a young Jewish woman, but the King didn't know it. Esther found out that her people, other Jewish people who lived under that King, were in danger. Mordecai told her she might be the person God could use to help, but Esther was scared. She knew going to the King without being called by the King first, could have been very dangerous, even deadly.

So, do you know what Esther did? She did not just say, "I'm brave, I can do this all by myself." No! Esther asked people to pray and fast with her. Before Esther went to talk to the king, she asked God's people to pray. That is a very important thing to remember. God does not usually ask us to be brave all by ourselves. When you are scared, you can pray. When someone at school is being unkind, you can pray and then ask a grown-up for help. When you don't know what to do, you can pray and then talk to someone who loves you. When someone else is having a hard time, you can pray for them and with them too. That is one of the reasons God gives us the church. God gives us parents, grandparents, teachers, pastors, Sunday School teachers, friends, and people here at church who can pray with us.

At Trinity, we even have prayer quilts. When people tie knots in those quilts, they're saying, "You are not alone. We are praying for you and God loves you." (Hold up quilt/square or gesture toward congregation.) So here is what I want you to remember today: You do not have to be brave all by yourself. Can you say that with me? **"I do not have to be brave all by myself."** Good. Jesus is with you. And Jesus gives you people who can pray with you, help you, and remind you that you are loved. So, the next time you feel scared, or the next time you see someone who needs help, you can remember Esther. You can pray. You can ask for help. And you can trust that God is with you.

Let's pray... Dear God, thank you for loving us. Thank you for listening when we pray. When we are scared, give us courage. When others need help, show us what to do. Thank you for Jesus, and thank you for people who pray with us. Amen.

• **A READING OF SCRIPTURE: Esther 4:1-17**

R: Our scripture reading is from Esther, Chapter 4.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

4 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went through the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry; ²he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. ³In every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes. ⁴When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he would not accept them.

⁵Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening and why. ⁶Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, ⁷and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people. ⁹Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. ¹⁰Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying, ¹¹"All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden scepter to someone, may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days." ¹²When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, ¹³Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. ¹⁴For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this." ¹⁵Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai, ¹⁶"Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish." ¹⁷Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

R: This is the Word of the Lord!

C: Praise to You, O Christ

- **SERMON**

Pr Mel Musser

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the one who placed you in such a time as this, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

After several weeks with Ruth, we now turn the page to Esther. Ruth took us to Bethlehem, into the fields, among ordinary people trying to survive grief and uncertainty. Esther takes us to Persia, into the palace, among kings and queens and dangerous political plots. Still, the stories have something important in common. Both begin with God's people in a vulnerable place. Both center around a woman whose courage matters. Both remind us God often works through ordinary decisions, relationships, and courage. (SLIDE)

By chapter four in Esther, that courage is desperately needed. Haman, one of the king's officials, has convinced the king to sign an edict calling for the destruction of the Jewish people. Esther herself is Jewish, although the king does not know that. This is not just bad news. This is quite literally a death sentence. (SLIDE) When Mordecai hears what's happened, he does what people did back then when grief got too heavy to carry quietly. He tears his clothes, puts on sackcloth and ashes, and goes through the city crying out with a loud and bitter cry. There are some sorrows that cannot be dressed up. I was reminded of that again this past year, as we went from Melanie's illness to my pneumonia without much of a break. I know many of you are carrying far more than I can even see. Some realities cannot be softened with nicer clothes, polite conversation, or a quick, "Well, I'm sure everything will work out."

(SLIDE) When Esther hears Mordecai is in sackcloth, her first response is to send him clean clothes. That's such a human response. When someone we love is hurting, we want to fix it, cover it up, and make it look better. We might not send clean clothes, but we'll bring a casserole or a homemade pie. Mordecai will not accept the clothes offered by Queen Esther. The problem is not his outfit. The problem is that his people are in grave danger. That's the first hard word for us today. Sometimes faithfulness begins when we stop trying to make pain look presentable and finally ask, "What's really happening here? Who is hurting? What is God calling us to see?" (SLIDE) Esther does ask, and Mordecai tells her about Haman, gives her a copy of the decree, and tells her she must go to the king, plead for mercy, and speak on behalf of her people. Now Esther knows the truth, but knowing the truth and knowing what to do with the truth are not always the same thing.

(SLIDE) We shouldn't be too hard on Esther. Her answer is honest. Anyone who goes to the king without being called can be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden scepter may that person live. And Esther has not been called to the king for thirty days. In other words, Esther says, "This could cost me my life." She's not exaggerating. This is life and death. As our son Trevor used to say, "This is serious business!" ... Mordecai doesn't deny the danger. He doesn't say, "Don't worry, Esther. I'm sure it'll be fine." Instead, he sends back one of the most famous lines in Scripture (SLIDE), "Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this." ... Who knows? ... That little phrase matters. Mordecai doesn't pretend to have the whole plan figured out. He doesn't claim to know exactly

what God is doing. He says, “Who knows?” That sounds a lot like faith to me. Not certainty about every detail. Not control over every outcome, or a promise that courage will be easy or safe. Faith is often this, “Who knows? ... Perhaps God has placed me here, with these people, in this moment, for some good purpose I cannot fully see.”

Most of us would like God’s will to arrive with a printed itinerary, guaranteed results, and preferably a low-risk option. The real world is a lot more like what we see in Esther who gets a crisis, a calling, and a choice. That’s where this story hits home. We know what it’s like to see something wrong and hope someone else will deal with it. We know what it’s like to notice someone hurting and tell ourselves, “I probably shouldn’t get involved.” We know what it’s like to keep quiet because speaking may cost us approval, comfort, or peace in the family, the church, the workplace, or the community. Even for your pastor, sometimes keeping quiet feels safer...

That’s why Mordecai’s word to Esther is a word to every person of faith. Do not imagine that your position, comfort, safety, or silence separates you from the suffering of your people. Esther lives in the palace, but she is still part of her people. In Christ, we belong to one another. That is part of what we remembered at the beginning of worship in the Thanksgiving for Baptism. (SLIDE) In baptism, God joins us to Christ, clothes us with mercy and forgiveness, claims us as His children, and makes us servants of all. We are saved by grace and covered by the righteousness of our Savior, Jesus Christ, but the grace that saves us also sends us. The

mercy that covers us, frees us to cover our neighbors with mercy. The love that holds us, gives us courage to stand with those who are afraid, forgotten, threatened, grieving, or pushed aside.

Right here in this little chapter in a book that doesn't even mention the name of God once, we find the Gospel. (SLIDE) The good news for Esther is, she is not alone. Before she goes to the king, she tells Mordecai, "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf." Esther doesn't simply say, "Fine, I'll be brave." She asks her community to enter this moment with her. Before Esther stands before the king, the people stand together before God and before we talk to anyone about God, we can follow her example and talk to God and our siblings in Christ, first. God's call may be personal, but it is rarely solitary. God does not usually ask us to be heroes all by ourselves. God gives us the body of Christ. God gives us siblings who pray for us, encourage us, tell us the truth, and remind us who we are when fear, grief, loneliness, or shame makes us forget. That is one of the gifts of being the church. At our best, we pray. We tie knots in quilts. We bring food. We sit in hospital rooms. We teach children. We speak words of hope. We remind one another God's grace is enough and God's mercy is still at work. Sometimes, like Mordecai, we help one another recognize the moment. Who knows? Perhaps God has placed you where you are for such a time as this. Not because you are perfect, fearless, or have everything figured out, but because God works through real people in real places at real moments. God works through queens and cousins, quilters and teachers, grandparents and children, and even through inept pastors and awesome parish nurses.

(SLIDE) Of course, as Christians, we cannot hear Esther say, “If I perish, I perish,” without hearing an echo of the One who went even farther. Jesus did not enter a throne room hoping a king would spare his life. Jesus entered Jerusalem knowing the powers of this world would not welcome him. He stood before Pilate. He faced the cross. He gave himself for the life of the world. On the cross, it looked as if death had won, but God raised Jesus from the dead. That is our hope. Not that God always protects us from suffering. Our hope is that even death does not separate us from God’s love in Christ Jesus and because Christ is risen, we’re free to live with courage, speak truth in love, and serve our neighbor even when it costs us something.

(SLIDE) So maybe the question for us this week is not, “Am I important enough for God to use?” That question has already been answered at the baptismal font. You are God’s beloved child. You are joined to Christ. You are clothed in mercy. You are sent in love. The real question for us each and every day is this, “What moment has God placed before me?” Who needs my prayer? Who needs my kindness? Who needs my courage? Who needs me to stop sending clean clothes and start asking what is really wrong? It may not look dramatic. It may simply be the next faithful thing: a phone call, an apology, a hard conversation, a visit, a word of encouragement, a stand for someone who cannot stand alone. Who knows? Perhaps God has brought you to this place, this congregation, this family, this community, this moment, for such a time as this.

So, my dear congregation, when your time comes, may God grant you holy wisdom.

May God grant you courage. And may the grace of Jesus Christ hold you, send you, and go with you, now and always. Amen.

Silence may be kept for meditation...

* HYMN OF THE DAY

“God of Grace and God of Glory”

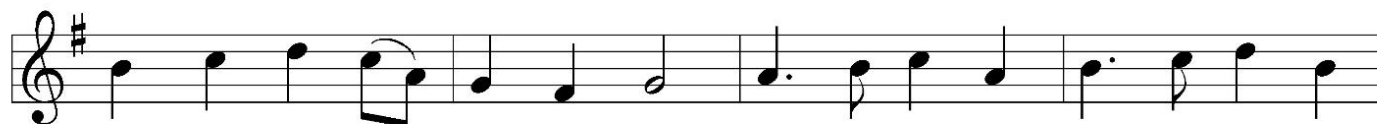
LBW 415



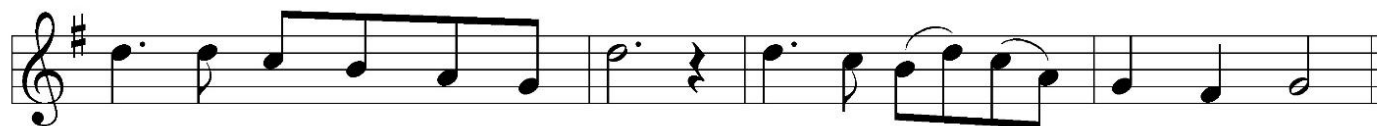
1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple
2 Lo! The hosts of e - vil round us scorn the Christ, as -
3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
4 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils



pour your pow'r; crown your an - cient chur - ch's sto - ry;
sail his ways! From the fears that long have bound us
your con - trol; shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness,
we de - plore; let the gift of your sal - va - tion



bring its bud to glo - rious flow'r. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age
free our hearts to faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age
rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,



for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
lest we miss your king - dom's goal, lest we miss your king - dom's goal.
serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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* 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.

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

L: Confident that God acts on our behalf, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: God of love, when we look around we see time and again the way our neighbors are harmed by the powers that be. Give us courage for 'just such a moment as this,' in the same way you gave Esther courage to risk for the sake of her people. God in your mercy,

C: You hear our prayer.

L: Give us courage to speak up on behalf of your beautiful creation as so many seek its destruction for their own benefit, and to change our own ways in order to have less of a negative impact on our environment. God in your mercy,

C: You hear our prayer.

L: Give us courage to hold our leaders accountable to the people they serve, and give courage to our leaders to stand up for what is right even if it might tarnish their reputations. God in your mercy,

C: You hear our prayer.

L: Give us courage to walk with our siblings who are struggling with illness, injury, mental health issues, addiction, or grief, (*especially...*). Give courage to those who are struggling, and to their caregivers. God in your mercy,

C: You hear our prayer.

L: Give us courage to look honestly at ourselves, our choices, and the harms we have done knowingly or unknowingly, that we might seek to put right any wrongs we have done. God in your mercy,

C: You hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

L: Give us the courage that so many of our forebears showed throughout history, enduring all manner of challenges and yet keeping their faith in you. God in your mercy,

C: You hear our prayer.

P: With gratitude for your faithfulness, we pray these things in the name of 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 ...Gracious God, your generosity is without measure, and your help sure. With joy and thanksgiving we respond to your generosity with our own. Accept now our gifts of money, time, or skill, that you might use them for the benefit of all that you have made.

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

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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• ANNOUNCEMENTS

* SENDING BLESSING

P: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, one God, bless, heal, and hold you today and always.

C: Amen.

* SENDING HYMN

“O Zion, Haste”

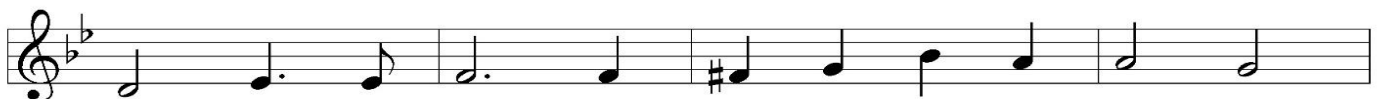
LBW 397



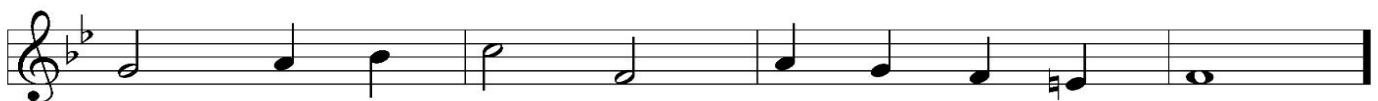
1 O Zi - on, haste, your mis - sion high ful - fill - ing,
2 Pub - lish to ev - 'ry peo - ple, tongue, and na - tion
3 Give of your own to bear the mes - sage glo - rious,
4 He comes a - gain! O Zi - on, ere you meet him,



to tell to all the world that God is light;
that God, in whom they live and move, is love;
give of your wealth to speed them on their way,
make known to ev - 'ry heart his sav - ing grace;



that he who made all na - tions is not will - ing
tell how he stooped to save his lost cre - a - tion
pour out your soul for them in prayer vic - to - rious,
let none whom he has ran - somed fail to greet him,



one soul should per - ish, lost in shades of night.
and died on earth that we might live a - bove.
and haste the com - ing of the glo - rious day.
through your ne - glect, un - fit to see his face.



Pub - lish glad tid - ings, tid - ings of peace,



tid - ings of Je - sus, re - demp - tion, and re - lease.

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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* **DISMISSAL**

P: Thank you all for joining us to worship our great and gracious God! Thanks also to our Facebook 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!

* **POSTLUDE**

Roxanne Groff

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

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

Health Tips for the Week

MIND: Discover the meaning of your name.

BODY: Enjoy foot care or a pedicure.

SPIRIT: Learn a new bedtime prayer.



Scripture readings for next Sunday, July 5th
Esther 7:1-10, 9:1-2, 20-22, 29-32

* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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Please pick up your July Trinity Trumpet!

This Week @ Trinity – June 14 thru June 21, 2026:

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Sun, June 28	9:30 am	Christian Conversations (Coffee/Juice and Donuts)
	10:30 am	Worship Service
	6:00 pm	Video/Book Club “The Chosen”
Tues, June 30	10:00 am	Prayers & Squares Quilting
Thurs, July 2	10:00 am	Youth & Family Ministry Meeting
Fri, July 3	3:30 pm	FISH Choice Food Pantry
Sat, July 4	<i>Independence day</i>	
Sun, July 5	9:30 am	Christian Conversations (Coffee/Juice and Donuts)
	10:30 am	Worship Service w/Communion

Save the Date:

Sun, July 12	12:00 pm	Annual Picnic & VBS Celebration
Fri, July 16	11:30 am	Ladies & Gents Luncheon @ Olive Garden, 6722 Miller Ln., Dayton

Vacation Bible School at Trinity!!

Tuesday, July 7

and Wednesday July 9

@ 6:00 pm



* Please stand if able

• Please be seated

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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

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Secretary:	Sharon Fourman
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Office Hours:	By Appointment
Office Phone:	937-692-5670
Website:	www.pitsburgtlc.org



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- * Please stand if able
 - Please be seated