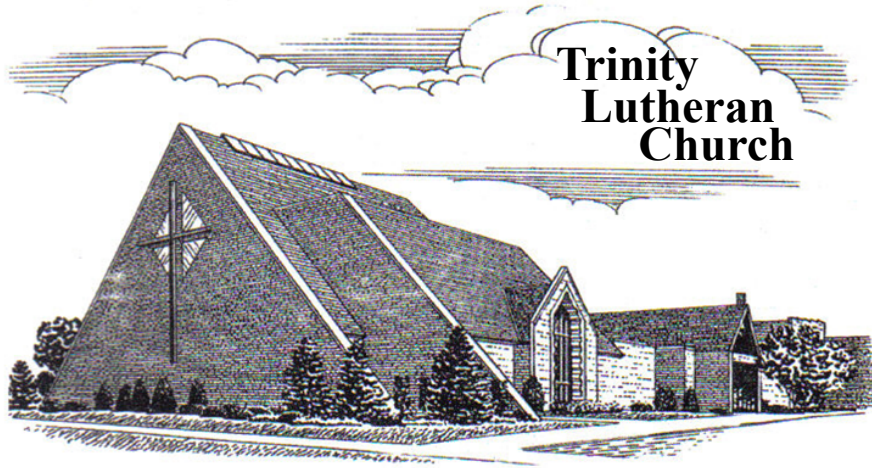


Proper 8



June 22-28, 2026

Weekly Outline

Invocation

L: In the way of your testimonies I delight.

C: I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.

L: O Lord, take away from me all coldness, all wanderings of the thoughts, and fix my soul upon thee and thy love, O merciful Lord and Saviour, in this hour of prayer.

C: Amen.

Scripture

June 22: Jeremiah 28:5-9

June 24: Romans 7:1-13

June 26: Matthew 10:34-42

Devotion

Closing Prayer

L: Ever blessed Trinity, to thy mercy I commit this day, my body and soul, together with all my ways and undertakings. I beseech thee to be gracious unto me; enlarge my heart and open my lips, that I may praise and magnify thy name which alone is holy. And as thou hast made me for the praise of thy holy name, grant that I may yield my life a sacrifice to thy honor in humble love and fear.

C: Amen.

Monday

Everyone loves a message of peace, a reassuring word that says, “Everything is going to be okay.” That’s the word that the false prophet Hananiah proclaimed to the people of Israel, that despite their sins and the continued threat of punishment spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, God was going to give them peace. Not only did the prophecy of Hananiah fail to come true, but God announced through Jeremiah that Hananiah would soon die as punishment for breaking the second commandment (lying in God’s name). Two months later, Hananiah was dead.

There are two words that God speaks to us, the first is the threat of punishment for our sins. We call this Word “Law.” The second is the promise of peace for the sake of Jesus. We call this Word, “Gospel.” Because the Gospel is always easier than the Law, there is a great temptation to proclaim the Gospel falsely, to say with Hananiah, “Everything is going to be okay,” even when God is about to send disaster. In that case, all a prophet does is confirm people in sin and lead them to their death. As a fourth century pastor once said, “The road to hell is paved with priests’ skulls.”

The Law preached by Jeremiah wasn’t popular, but it was necessary. Death to sin always precedes new life; Law comes before Gospel, because we cannot be saved without repentance. What would salvation even mean if not salvation from sin? Therefore, let us love the Gospel of Christ and the grace we are given through it, but let us also listen gladly to the Law that we might die to our sins and be saved. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Wednesday

A pastor in Iowa once told me this story. A town decided to put up a speed camera on the highway through town because people were going too fast. There was a two-month grace period where speeds were recorded but fines were not issued. The speeding violations were published in the local paper. During that two-month period, kids in town started a competition to see who could get the top recorded speed in the paper. And suddenly, they had a much bigger problem on their hands than before!

To be a sinner is to live in rebellion against God's authority, which means that the Law of God serves to awaken sin in us, just like that speed camera awakened some unwanted behavior in those kids. Paul reflects on this in Romans 7. He sees that the Law has the opposite effect that God desires. God gives the Law to teach us righteousness, and yet, it serves to awaken sin. As Paul writes, "I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness." The Law exposed Paul's sinful nature, because as soon as the commandment was given, Paul rebelled against it.

All of us live with that struggle. We know that the Law of God is good. We even know that it is simple enough that we should be able to keep it. But our sinful nature is exposed because even though we agree that the Law is good and that we should keep it, we rebel against it. So we all have reason to agonize with Paul and practice daily repentance. But sin is put off in death. As Paul says in another place, "Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Amen.

Friday

Peace is an elusive thing. For example, families can put on their Sunday best, and everyone who sees them would expect to find peace in their homes. But they would find conflict instead. Or a pastor can appear serene when interacting with a parishioner, but the staff knows him to be a tyrant. Peace even eludes us in our Gospel reading, where Jesus says, “I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

The sword of Christ is the division that he brings into the world through his appearance in it. Before Christ, there was no reason for a family to divide itself over him. He hadn't yet appeared! But now that Christ is come, every person is forced to make a choice between faith and unbelief. As Jesus says, “I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother... And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.” He sets the household against itself because one person accepts Christ, while the other rejects Christ. But lest we think that it would be better to avoid Christ altogether for the sake of familial peace, Jesus adds, “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.” There is no choice but to let the sword divide.

Ultimately of course, Christ didn't come to bring division. He came to bring peace between God and man. Division comes first because not all believe. Our responsibility is to stand with Christ, even should that cause a divide. But if a division must come, let it come because of Christ, not because of our sinful behavior. Peace should be found in us, even if it can't be found around us. As Paul writes in Romans 12:18, “So far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” In Jesus' name, Amen.

Evening Prayer

You may pray one or more of the following after dinner or before bed:

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day; and I pray you that you would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.



Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep; if I should die before I wake, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take; and this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.



Visit, O Lord, our home, and drive from it all the snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell in it to preserve us in peace, and may your blessing be upon us evermore; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

A Parent's Blessing

You may place your hand on the head of your child before kissing them goodnight and say:

My loved one, rest securely,
for God this night will surely
from peril guard your head.
Sweet slumbers may he send you
and bid his hosts attend you
and through the night watch o'er your bed. Amen.

Memory Verse

MEMORY VERSE

AT ONE TIME YOU
WERE DARKNESS, BUT
NOW YOU ARE LIGHT
IN THE LORD. WALK AS
CHILDREN OF LIGHT.

EPHESIANS 5:8

