



**“Living with Gratitude – Trusting God”**

**Reformation Sunday**

Saturday & Sunday, October 26-27, 2019

All Services

The Reverend Dr. Jack M. Horner, Jr.

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 46;

Romans 3:19-28; John 8:31-36

Grace and peace be to you from our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

It's a Tuesday morning at Trinity Lutheran Church in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. Two people are talking outside, one is comforting the other being a friend and a mentor. He knows what his friend is going through, he's been sober for twenty-five years and has been coming to AA meetings at Trinity for most of those years.

It's a Tuesday morning at Trinity Lutheran Church. A group of Trinity members are waiting around a car before they carpool to a school in Harrisburg. They are tutors giving their time, knowledge and love to kids who live on the margins that have an opportunity at a future if someone like those tutors invests a little time with them.

It's Tuesday morning at Trinity Lutheran Church. A mother, her hair askew, her keys in her hand rushes to her car, she is late for work. But she knows that she has left her child at a Christian preschool where her child will be safe and loved.

It's a Tuesday morning at Trinity Lutheran Church. The staff gathers for prayer for our weekly meeting. Following devotions, we review the calendar and all the activities at Trinity for the month: 14 self-help groups, 11 music rehearsals, 25 small group and classes, a dozen committee and ministry team meetings and countless ministries of outreach, teaching, property, and administration.

It's a Tuesday morning at Trinity Lutheran Church. Your church. In a room not far away from the staff meeting, women sew pieces of fabric for quilts that will travel very far away, most likely half a world away, enfolding to the recipient of congregation's compassion and love for an unknown neighbor.

I thank God for this ministry, our staff, our ministry leaders, and volunteers.

It takes a lot of faith to make this all work.

It takes a lot of trust, in God and in each other, for this community of Christ followers to thrive in mission and ministry.

You know trust is an important part of any relationship. You might say that without **trust** you can't even have a relationship.

Take marriage for instance. If a person doesn't totally trust his or her spouse, that marriage is probably in for some rough waters. Faithfulness and trust are what holds

marriages together through the joys and the sorrows, the plenty and the want, the sickness and the health. Trust is a gift to be shared, respected, and cherished.

God made us to connect with each other and without the human connection we wouldn't be able to live. You and I were made to trust others. A trusting spirit is essential to our survival as a community and people. Together we accomplish so much more than we would by ourselves. And when we trust, we thrive off one another, we push each other to grow and to learn. We can be overcome with challenges, but we can overcome them together. And what seems daunting becomes something that is achievable.

Doing life and ministry together in trusting relationship will be less lonely. We don't have to go through life by ourselves, and with trust, opening ourselves up to others, we make ourselves vulnerable and able to share our hearts.

And connected with others we experience those sources of happiness, positivity and connection. When you try to do life alone, it can easily lead to feelings of bitterness, sadness, and loneliness. We fear the worst in people and institutions, and the world can look dismal and bleak. We try to erect walls to protect ourselves, but we just end up isolating ourselves.

And when we trust someone, we are trusting them with our deepest, darkest secrets and letting them see the unedited versions of ourselves. People get to see you FOR YOU. They see you at your worst, and yet they still accept you. They see you at your best, and they celebrate with you. No masks, no pretending, no lying. We are free to be. Free to live, free to enjoy companionship and peace and harmony.

Trusting others can even change our view of the world. When we begin to trust others, people will see us as those people who can effect change, as those who can make an impact in the world, as people who are there to support us in good times and in bad.

And when we trust others, our fears can be placed in their proper places. As the Psalmist sang so many years ago "In God I trust; I am not afraid" and you and I have no greater friend than we can trust in than God.

Martin Luther says of our Reformation faith and trust in God, "Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace, so certain of God's favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God's grace makes you happy, joyful, bold in your relationship to God and all creatures. The Holy Spirit makes this happen through faith. Because of it, you freely, willingly and joyfully do good to everyone, serve everyone, suffer all kinds of things, love and praise the God who has shown you such grace."

Trusting in God and each other brings out the best in us as individuals.

God provides for you and for me everything that we need, food, clothing, spiritual gifts for use in ministry.

God makes a covenant with us, a covenant of love and writes it on our hearts.

He gives us grace, forgiveness of our sins.

He loves us unconditionally; we are justified before him by faith.

He knows us better than we know ourselves. The Bible says that he knows us like the hairs on our head.

He puts us in a community of faith to be his holy people, and he inspires us to offer generosity, to serve others and to lead people in ministry.

God will never fail you or me.

And so, we are grateful to God, we live in trust. He is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble. God is with us and you can put your trust in him! Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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