

Day 1 - Focus: Drawing in the Unchurched

Opening collects:

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Almighty God, who has promised to hear the petitions of those who ask in your Son's Name: We beseech you mercifully to incline your ear to us who have now made our prayers and supplications unto you; and grant that those things which we have faithfully asked according to your will, may effectually be obtained, to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

As an aid to shape your thoughts and prayers, one or more of these scripture passages may be used:

Matthew 5:13-16 and 28:16-20

I Corinthians 3:1-9

II Corinthians 4:1-6

I Peter 3:13-17

Use any of the following questions that prove helpful in focusing your thoughts and prayers. Ask God to give you insight as you search your own heart, to reveal what makes your heart leap for joy and what fills you with grief.

In what ways do you succeed/fail to accept others? Are there particular sins/habits/styles that you find particularly difficult to accept? What occasions or events most tempt you to gossip? Even if you keep silent, do you sometime find yourself harboring a critical spirit? How can you help make Trinity a safer and more welcoming place for visitors?

In what ways do you succeed/fail to be a faithful witness for Jesus? What situations make you most uncomfortable speaking about Him or your faith? Are you ever too embarrassed to mention your beliefs? Do you feel inadequate or unworthy to represent Him? Do your neighbors and acquaintances know you are a Christian? How do you think your present life reflects on Christianity? In which situations do you feel you were most effective as a witness? Why?

In what ways do you succeed/fail to encourage others in the church? How do your conversations with others help them grow spiritually and when do you think they hinder? What do you do for the church that gives you most joy? Do you feel any inclinations or desires to try doing something you've never done before? In what ways have you failed in your attempts to help others and which failures cause you the most grief? What is lacking at Trinity that is most painful or discouraging to you personally, and how can you provide what is lacking? What is present at Trinity that gives you the most pleasure and how can you nurture it?

Prayer service

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

A meditation from Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis:

“...the real problem of the Christian life comes where people do not usually look for it. It comes the very moment you wake up each morning. All your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists simply in shoving them all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in. And so on, all day. Standing back from your natural fussings and frettings; coming in out of the wind. We can only do it for moments at first. But from those moments the new sort of life will be spreading through our system: because now we are letting Him work at the right part of us....This is the whole of Christianity. There is nothing else. It is so easy to get muddled about that. It is easy to think that the Church has a lot of different objects – education, building, missions, holding services....the Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became Man for no other purpose. It is even doubtful, you know, whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose.”

A reading from I Corinthians 3:1-9 and Ephesians 4:11-16

Thinking of the Kingdom of God as a garden we will focus in turn on three steps of gardening.

Opening the gate: pray that Trinity would become safe and welcoming to all who seek God's mercy.

Planting the seed: pray that Trinity would be faithful in speaking the truth of the gospel to everyone with whom we make contact.

Watering the seed: pray that Trinity would become a body of people speaking the truth to each other in love and growing up in every way into Him who is the head.

Almighty God, who has promised to hear the petitions of those who ask in your Son's Name: We beseech you mercifully to incline your ear to us who have now made our prayers and supplications unto you; and grant that those things which we have faithfully asked according to your will, may effectually be obtained, to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day 2 - Focus: Personal Spiritual Growth

Opening collects:

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Almighty God, who keeps our faith in your Son constantly in view, give us we pray a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, that we, having the eyes of our hearts enlightened, may know the hope to which He has called us, the riches of His inheritance in us, and His immeasurable power toward us who believe, according to the power that raised Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead. Amen.

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

As an aid to shape your thoughts and prayers, one or more of these scripture passages may be used:

Matthew 22:34-40

Luke 17:5-10

John 14:15-21

Colossians 3:1-17

Psalm 1: 1-3

I Corinthians 4:1-5

Use any of the following questions that prove helpful in focusing your thoughts and prayers. Ask God to give you insight as your search your own heart, to reveal what makes your heart leap for joy and what fills you with grief.

What does it mean to love God with all your heart? In what ways do you succeed/fail in expressing your love for God? How would you like your emotions toward God to be changed or strengthened? How constant are your prayers and how can you make a prayerful attitude a steadier part of your life? How can you learn to be more deliberately thankful for all His gifts? In what situations are you least able to let the peace of God rule in your heart?

What does it mean to love God with all your strength? In what ways do you succeed/fail to live up to what you understand He expects of you? What failures in your own life most grieve you? Do you feel that He cares how you do your daily routine? How can you learn to better offer your daily work to Him as a gift?

What does it mean to love God with all your mind? In what ways do you succeed/fail to study the Bible? Are you growing in the depth of your understanding of the truth? In what ways could you study the Bible in a more disciplined manner? If you do not find pleasure in studying and meditating on the word, what would help you learn to take some pleasure in it? Does memorization of scripture play any role in your spiritual life and should it?

Prayer service

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

A meditation from Thomas Merton:

“Even the best of men, and perhaps especially they, when they return to a frank and undisguised self-awareness, confront themselves as naked, insufficient, disgruntled and malicious beings. They see their stubborn attachment to the lie in themselves, their disposition to infidelity, their fear of truth and of the risks it demands. This is all the more true when sincerity and a good life have removed those actual habits of sin which can be identified and rejected as sources of guilt and remorse. Even without acts of sin, we have in ourselves an inclination to sin and rebellion, an inclination to falsity and to evasion. It is in some ways a comfort to be able to assign one’s discontent to definite causes. Remorse is easier to bear than dread, for it is at least centered on something definite. But the worst emptiness is the emptiness of the faithful Christian who, when he has done what he had to do and has seriously sought God, responding conscientiously to the graces and tasks of life, still realizes even more acutely than before that he is an unprofitable servant. More than the sinner, more than the insincere one who can escape into the delusion of his own rightness, this man faces radical dread in his own being: the naked dread that is indefinite because it seems to be coextensive with his whole being and his whole life. Such a one sees that no virtue of his own, no good intention, no ideals, no philosophy, no mystical elevation can rescue him from the futility, the apparent despair of his emptiness without God.”

A reading from I Corinthians 3:1-9 and Ephesians 4:11-16

Thinking of the loving of God as a matter of the heart, the strength, and the mind, let us focus on each aspect in turn:

1. Loving God with our whole heart: pray that Trinity would become a congregation of people who are in love with God.
Loving God with all our strength: pray that Trinity would become a congregation of people who live in His presence and do all their work to His glory.
Loving God with all our mind: pray that Trinity would become a congregation of people who are devoted to the scriptures and love the truth.

Almighty God, who has promised to hear the petitions of those who ask in your Son’s Name: We beseech you mercifully to incline your ear to us who have now made our prayers and supplications unto you; and grant that those things which we have faithfully asked according to your will, may effectually be obtained, to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day 3 - Focus: Service to the Community and Nation

Opening collects:

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Almighty God, whose power is revealed in raising Christ from the dead and seating him at your right hand in the heavenly places, make your power also known throughout the world by establishing his name far above all rule and authority and power and dominion in this present age and in this our land and in our town. Amen.

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve: Bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister in his Name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the love of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

As an aid to shape your thoughts and prayers, one or more of these scripture passages may be used:

Isaiah 58:6-12

Matthew 5:9-16

Luke 10:25-37

Use any of the following questions that prove helpful in focusing your thoughts and prayers. Ask God to give you insight as you search your own heart, to reveal what makes your heart leap for joy and what fills you with grief.

In what ways do you personally impact the town of Potsdam for better or worse? How does Trinity impact this town? Are there new ways that you individually could work for the good of the community? What about our community makes your heart rejoice and how can you work to nurture and strengthen those things? What about our community is a source of grief to you? What can you do, even in a small way, to bring relief and healing to those problems?

How have you been a success/failure as a citizen of the country? In what ways can you be an influence on a local level to increase respect and kindness between people? In what specific ways can you work against injustice? How can you help our society become a more peaceful and stable one? In what ways can you change your lifestyle, your shopping habits, your giving habits, that would do less damage to the environment and help make our economy a more merciful one?

What does it mean that you are an ambassador of Christ? In what ways can you be a peacemaker in our community? What divisions between your neighbors cause you the most distress and in how might you help bring about reconciliation?

Prayer service

Almighty God, who created us in your own image: Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice in our communities and among the nations, to the glory of your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

A meditation from the Epistle to Diognetus:

“For Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind either in locality or in speech or in customs....But while they dwell in cities of Greeks and barbarians as the lot of each is cast, and follow the native customs in dress and food and the other arrangements of life, yet the nature of their citizenship, which they set forth, is remarkable, and admittedly contradicts expectation....Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign. They marry like all other men and they beget children; but they do not cast away their offspring Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws, and they surpass the laws in their own lives. They love all men, and they are persecuted by all....They are reviled, and they bless....Doing good they are punished as evil-doers; being punished they rejoice, as if they were thereby quickened by life. War is waged against them....and yet those that hate them cannot tell the reason of their hostility.

In a word, what the soul is in a body, this the Christians are in the world. The soul is spread through all the members of the body, and Christians through the various cities of the world. The soul has its abode in the body, and yet it is not of the body. So Christians have their abode in the world, and yet they are not of the world....The flesh hates the soul and wages war with it, though it receives no wrong, because it is forbidden to indulge in pleasures; so the world hates Christians, though it receives no wrong from them, because they set themselves against its pleasures. The soul loves the flesh which hates it, and the members: so Christians love those that hate them. The soul is enclosed in the body, and yet itself holds the body together; so Christians are kept in the world as in a prison-house, and yet they themselves hold the world together. The soul though it is itself immortal dwells in a mortal tabernacle; so Christians sojourn among perishable things, while they look for the imperishability which is in the heavens....This is the greatness of the office to which God has appointed them, and which it is not lawful for them to decline.”

A reading from Matthew 5:9-16

We will consider our connection to this town on three levels – as neighbors, as citizens, and as holy people separated for God. Pray:

1. that we will each individually grow into that neighborliness that Jesus taught in the parable of the Good Samaritan.
that we will each individually be taught how to use our influence as citizens to be a conscience to our nation.
that in seeking true holiness, we would show in our lifestyles, the impact of the gospel on our lives and its importance to the world.

Almighty God, who has promised to hear the petitions of those who ask in your Son's Name: We beseech you mercifully to incline your ear to us who have now made our prayers and supplications unto

you; and grant that those things which we have faithfully asked according to your will, may effectually be obtained, to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

4. Focus: Ministry to the Poor

Opening collects:

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light rises up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have us do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in your light we may see light, and in your straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As an aid to shape your thoughts and prayers, one or more of these scripture passages may be used:

Luke 1:46-55

II Corinthians 8:1-15

James 1:27 – 2:17

Proverbs 14:21, 14:31, 15:25, 17:5, 19:17, 21:13, and 22:9

Use any of the following questions that prove helpful in focusing your thoughts and prayers. Ask God to give you insight as you search your own heart, to reveal what makes your heart leap for joy and what fills you with grief.

What are the primary ways you now share with the poor? How much of your wealth have you committed to sharing with the poor? How can you take steps to increase the amount you share? How can you help ensure that everyone in this area has adequate food? How can you help ensure that the homeless have shelter? How can you help ensure that no one suffers needlessly because of having no health insurance? How can you encourage businesses to risk hiring the needy or handicapped or others of the poor, and then treat them fairly?

Do you have acquaintances who have serious financial problems? Do you feel comfortable socializing with the poor? If not, what is the difficulty that prevents you from treating the poor equitably, and what do you think the Spirit would have you do? How can you develop new ways of being hospitable to the poor? How can you make your house more welcoming to the poor?

In what ways is Trinity welcoming to the poor? What are some barriers that might discourage the poor from joining our parish? How would you feel about people who are desperately poor joining us? What responsibility should the parish assume toward the poor who joined us that we don't already have? How do you feel about the community dinners and how could they be made even more helpful? Are there other ways the parish can reach out to those who are desperate?

Prayer service

Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A meditation from Dorothy Day:

The mystery of the poor is this: That they are Jesus, and what you do for them you do for Him. It is the only way we have of knowing and believing in our love. The mystery of poverty is that by sharing in it, making ourselves poor in giving to others, we increase our knowledge of and belief in love.

A meditation from Peter Maurin:

The world would be better off, if people tried to become better.
And people would become better if they stopped trying to be better off.
For when everybody tries to become better off, nobody is better off.
But when everybody tries to become better, everybody is better off.
Everybody would be rich if nobody tried to be richer.
And nobody would be poor if everybody tried to be the poorest.
And everybody would be what he ought to be if everybody tried to be what he wants the other fellow to be.

A reading from James 1:27 – 2:17

We will consider our connection to the poor on three levels – as neighbors, as citizens, and as holy people separated for God. Pray:

1. that we will each individually grow in generosity to the desperate both in our own land and in the world.
that we will each individually grow in hospitality to the desperate.
3. that Trinity will be made into the kind of church that can bring comfort, support, and love to the poor

Almighty God, who has promised to hear the petitions of those who ask in your Son's Name: We beseech you mercifully to incline your ear to us who have now made our prayers and supplications unto you; and grant that those things which we have faithfully asked according to your will, may effectually be obtained, to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day 5 - Focus: Stewardship of Our Property

Opening collects:

O God, your never failing providence sets in order all things both in heaven and earth: Put away from us, we entreat you, all hurtful things, and give us those things which are profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever . Amen.

Gracious Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named: Grant us to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in our inner being, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith, and that, being rooted in grounded in love, we may comprehend with all the saints the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. Amen.

Almighty God, whose loving hand has given us all that we possess: Grant us grace that we may honor you with our substance, and, remembering the account which we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As an aid to shape your thoughts and prayers, one or more of these scripture passages may be used:

Matthew 6:19-34

Luke 12:13-34, 16:10-15, and 16:19-31

Use any of the following questions that prove helpful in focusing your thoughts and prayers. Ask God to give you insight as your search your own heart, to reveal what makes your heart leap for joy and what fills you with grief.

How does our ownership of our building affect you personally? What benefits do you enjoy from the building and how important are they spiritually? How do you contribute to the maintenance of the building? As a member of the parish, what responsibilities do you have for the cost of owning such a building? In what way is the ownership of the building a burden to you? How can the building be made more of a blessing to you and the rest of the parish? In what ways do we fail to utilize the possibilities of the building? How does all our property enhance our ministry to the community? How does it hinder us?

What is the true mission of our parish, the fundamental job God has for us in Potsdam? How have we failed/succeeded to carry out the responsibilities God has given us to the third world? What are the biggest hindrances we face that prevent us from doing what God would have us do? How can we overcome them? How does fear of financial insecurity hinder us from hearing God? How does fear of the future hinder us, and what can we do about it?

It what ways can we be better conserve the environment? Do you understand how the impulse to greed works in your own life? Do you understand how the impulse to self-indulgence and the love of comfort works in your own life? How can you grow in your determination and strength to curb these impulses in yourself?

Prayer service

O God, who loves us abundantly and provides for our every need: Grant us the wisdom and ability to use our resources in the service of others, so that we can be living examples of your commandment to love one another, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who gave his life for us. Amen.

A meditation from three witnesses:

“Some people want to see God with their eyes as they see a cow, and to love Him as they love their cow - for the milk and cheese and profit it brings them. This is how it is with people who love God for the sake of outward wealth or inward comfort. They do not rightly love God, when they love Him for their own advantage. Indeed, I tell you the truth, any object you have in your mind, however good, will be a barrier between you and the inmost Truth.” - Meister Eckhart

“I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. In other words, if our expenditure on comforts, luxuries, amusements, etc., is up to the standard common among those with the same income as our own, we are probably giving away too little. If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, I should say they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditures excludes them.” — C.S. Lewis

Our destruction of nature is not just bad stewardship, or stupid economics, or a betrayal of family responsibility; it is the most horrid blasphemy. It is flinging God's gifts into His face, as if they were of no worth beyond that assigned to them by our destruction of them....The cockroach and the rat live by competition and the law of supply and demand; it is the privilege of being human that we may live by the law of grace and mercy. -Wendell Berry,

A reading from Luke 16:10-15

We will consider our stewardship from three angles. Pray:

1. that we will learn to use our property wisely, in a way that is pleasing to God and respectful to the creation.
that each of us individually will see properly our connection to the parish life and how God would have us support it from our own resources.
3. that God would teach us how to escape our anxieties about the future, so that we could live fully in His present and exceeding good will toward us.

Almighty God, who has promised to hear the petitions of those who ask in your Son's Name: We beseech you mercifully to incline your ear to us who have now made our prayers and supplications unto you; and grant that those things which we have faithfully asked according to your will, may effectually be obtained, to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day 6 - Focus: Worldwide Economic Crisis

Opening collects:

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Almighty God, whose son Jesus Christ in his earthly life shared our toil and hallowed our labor: Be present with your people where they work; make those who carry on the industries and commerce of this land responsive to your will; and give to us all a pride in what we do, and a just return for our labor; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

As an aid to shape your thoughts and prayers, one or more of these scripture passages may be used:

Ezekiel 28:1-10

James 4:13-17

Use any of the following questions that prove helpful in focusing your thoughts and prayers. Ask God to give you insight as you search your own heart, to reveal what makes your heart leap for joy and what fills you with grief.

How has the present economic crisis affected your neighbors so far? Do you know of any that are likely to be affected in the near future through loss of job or income? What ways can you be of help or encouragement to them? What ways can you prepare now for conditions if they get worse?

In what ways should Trinity act to preserve our resources and ability to care for the community and maintain our ministries in this economic climate? How can we best give hope to those around us if things get worse? In what specific ways does the gospel speak to this crisis and how can we communicate it to our neighbors? In what ways could Trinity act to preserve our ability to maintain our property in an economic downturn?

Prayer service

O God, your never failing providence sets in order all things both in heaven and earth: Put away from us, we entreat you, all hurtful things, and give us those things which are profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever . Amen.

Almighty God, you are the One who establishes thrones and authorities and powers and dominions, who raise up our leaders for your own purposes, to execute justice and bring peace in this world; so work in our leaders in this crisis that the poor may be strengthened, the honest may be given good and proper work, the desperate may be given hope, and all men may be drawn into your gracious kingdom, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever . Amen.

We will consider our the world economy from three angles. Pray:

1. that the causes that led to the present crisis may be truly understood and that hurtful practices be corrected.
that the efforts of our leaders, even if misdirected, will not be for nothing, but will be used by His Spirit to accomplish His mercy among us.
3. that the violence and instability which is the natural result of poverty and desperation will be curtailed.

Almighty God, who has promised to hear the petitions of those who ask in your Son's Name: We beseech you mercifully to incline your ear to us who have now made our prayers and supplications unto you; and grant that those things which we have faithfully asked according to your will, may effectually be obtained, to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.