

May 30, 2021 Worship – Holy Trinity Sunday

Introduction to the Day

When we say God is the triune God, we are saying something about who God is beyond, before, and after the universe: that there is community within God. Our experience of this is reflected in Paul's words today. When we pray to God as Jesus prayed to his Abba (an everyday, intimate parental address), the Spirit prays within us, creating between us and God the same relationship Jesus has with the one who sent him.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the God of manna,
the God of miracles,
the God of mercy.

Amen.

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our provider,

help us.

It is hard to believe there is enough to share.

**We question your ways when they differ from
the ways**

of the world in which we live.

**We turn to our own understanding
rather than trusting in you.**

**We take offense at your teachings and your
ways.**

Turn us again to you.

Where else can we turn?

**Share with us the words of eternal life
and feed us for life in the world.**

Amen.

Beloved people of God:

in Jesus, the manna from heaven,
you are fed and nourished.

By Jesus, the worker of miracles,
there is always more than enough.

Through Jesus, † the bread of life,
you are shown God's mercy:

you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

Amen.

Gathering Song "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!"

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Prayer of the Day

Almighty Creator and ever-living God: we worship your glory, eternal Three-in-One, and we praise your power, majestic One-in-Three. Keep us steadfast in this faith, defend us in all adversity, and bring us at last into your presence, where you live in endless joy and love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lesson – Romans 8:12-17

¹²Brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Children's Message

Gospel – John 3:1-17

¹Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” ³Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” ⁹Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?”

¹¹“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

Message

Grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN

We are given one of our most comfortable and readily recitable Gospel texts on one of the more confusing and difficult to make sense of Holy Days in the Church.

Holy Trinity Sunday. A day we celebrate the Triune nature of God – Father, Son, Holy Spirit. A day that pastors continually trip over ourselves trying to make it make sense using every analogy in the book. But really, how do we actually make sense of a God who is simultaneously Father, Son, and Spirit, yet none of those things are each other?

And, why are we given this comfortable and readily recitable scripture for this day in the church year?

It is no accident that Nicodemus comes to Jesus by nightfall, and notice that it is Nicodemus – a leader of the Jews, one of the church elites – that comes to Jesus, and not the other way around. And he does it by night because he doesn’t want to be noticed.

And he brings questions. Many of them. And a desire to not back down until he’s heard what he wants to hear. This, in surprise to no one, creates some tension. You see, Jesus doesn’t just give answers. Jesus wants us to think. Jesus wants us to live in that tension and in doing so isn’t afraid to point out the role that we play in that very tension he pushes us into.

As he is speaking with Nicodemus he makes a subtle point, at least to us. “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony.” In the Greek, the word for you is plural. Jesus isn’t talking strictly to Nicodemus but the religious elites that he represents. Jesus is speaking directly to a demographic that believe that all of this goodness, all that he is about and speaks out against, is for them. He is speaking directly to a demographic that finds themselves better than the unlovable, unforgivable, and untouchable. But that is not what Jesus is about.

Do you sometimes find yourself wondering what this conversation would be like with Jesus if it were you that approached him? What would you ask him? What would he say to you?

We chuckled at Bible Study this past week because we know that Jesus would surely affirm that our position on all matters is the correct position, and our neighbors probably have those same certainties. So what do we do with that?

Pretty soon we start to think of those very neighbors and the things we may not like about them. We start to think of those that Jesus calls us to love and forgive, when what they've done is anything but loveable and forgivable. And we find ourselves living in that very tension in which Jesus and Nicodemus sit.

The verse that we know so well here is 16. "For God so loved the WORLD that God gave God's only Son, that whoever would believe in him would not perish but have everlasting life." In concluding this tense exchange, Jesus tells Nicodemus who ELSE this is for. The WORLD. That would be difficult for this religious elite man of power and privilege to here.

And Jesus doesn't stop there. "Indeed God did not send the Son into the world to condemn, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

Jesus wants us to live in this tension of realizing just who ELSE he is talking about when he speaks of the WORLD.

In saying this to Nicodemus he is saying this to us. For God so love YOU, and everyone else, that God gave God's only Son, that all who believe would not perish but have eternal life. We are given this promise as something to live into, not as something to live towards. We have received this gift. That is the life we have been given, that NEW life that we receive in the waters of our baptism.

We are reminded that we are loved by a God who created us and knew who and what we would be long before we were a twinkle in our Old Man's eye.

We are loved by a God who sent a Son to live and breathe with and for us, to suffer and die on the cross that we would be redeemed again and again to have eternal life in Him.

We are loved by a God who sends us the Spirit to sustain us in the moments that seem impossible to do what we've been called to do.

A colleague of mine in her sermon for Pentecost spoke of a flame, and what it takes for a flame to spread. Just a little bit of oxygen and some fuel and a flame will spread. That is all it takes.

And this is the difficult tension we live in. We have been entrusted with the responsibility to know Christ and to make Christ known. We have been entrusted with the responsibility to make EACH Child of God know that they are known, seen, and loved by us, but more importantly by God.

People of God, I pray that we would take the flame of the Creating, Redeeming, and Sustaining love of the Triune God and give it the oxygen and fuel it needs to spread, taking down every single barrier this world might throw at it.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

Baptism of Ellie Belle Swanbeck

(Daughter of Elizabeth and Kenny Swanbeck – granddaughter of Mark and Sue Kramer

Her sponsors are Jessa Kramer, Stephanie and Joe Hall, Katie and Nate Irwin)

Apostle's Creed

Prayers

Let us come before the triune God in prayer.

A brief silence.

We pray, O God, for your holy church around the world. Revitalize and renew us, that we may be reborn once again through the waters of baptism and the blowing wind of your Spirit. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We give you thanks for your power revealed to us in creation; for cedar and oak trees, for rushing waters, for the echoes of thunder. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for the nations and our leaders, that led by your Spirit, they work towards a world where all of your children enjoy peace. We pray especially for peace in the Middle East. Creator God, you are our strength and our shield. We give you thanks for the men and women of our armed forces, past and present, and especially for those who have died while serving. May their sacrifices serve the cause of peace, and may our nation be ever grateful for their service. With your wisdom and strength guide our military's leaders, and give to all people a desire for justice and peace. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for healing for all those who suffer, especially victims and survivors of trauma or violence. Give respite to those living with PTSD or any other mental health concerns. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for this worshiping community, that the splendor of your majesty and the holiness of your mystery may be glorified through our worship and our relationships with one another. We pray for all who are in any need this *day* (*especially Jim Holte, Jim and Sandy Nelson, Joe Christensen, Steve and Marilee Julson, Bill Kuehn, Shirley Stark, Kathy Smith, Bob Kries, Bill and Betty Davey*) Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We give you thanks, O God, for those who have died in the faith. We remember also those whose lives have been lost due to the horrors of war. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Jesus, Bread of life,
you have set this table with your very self,
and called us to the feast of plenty.

Gather what has been sown among us,
and strengthen us in this meal.

Make us to be what we receive here,
your body for the life of the world.

Amen.

Words of Institution – We invite you to find bread and wine or juice and partake in this Holy Meal.

(Holding the bread) In the night in which we was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and broke it, gave thanks and gave it for all to eat saying, "This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

(Holding the cup) Again after supper he took the cup, and after giving thanks he gave it for all to drink saying, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. So often as you do this, remember me."

Once you've taken the elements say, "Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**"

Lord's Prayer

Blessing

The blessing of God,
who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us,
✠ be upon you now and forever.
Amen.

Sending Song "Hallalujah! We Sing Your Praises"

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Go in peace, you are the body of Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Please sign up to attend in-person worship!

For the remainder of May and throughout the Summer months, there will be worship Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. in the Sanctuary. Other worship opportunities will be added starting in June, but worship at 9 a.m. in the Sanctuary will remain. Please call DeAnne in the office to get signed up!

Re-Connect Opportunities

We hope you will join us for any, or all, of these Re-Connect Opportunities throughout the week!

Stop in for coffee and conversation at 9 am on Mondays

TUESDAYS be sure to stop by for Bible Study starting at 11, followed by Lunch and Laughter at noon.

Wednesdays will continue to be our Faith Formation Days

Thursdays we will have the sanctuary open for prayer for 8 am to 3 pm.