

Trinity Sunday
June 7, 2020

(Read the prayers and scripture readings and recite the Creed aloud, even if you are by yourself, in order to hear with the ears each one. Sing or read the final hymn aloud.)

Prepare for worship Sit in silence or with soft music for a few moments

Call to Worship: *Spirit of the Living God (UMH-393)*
Spirit of the living God, fall a-fresh on me.
Spirit of the living God, fall a-fresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God, fall a-fresh on me.

Opening Prayer:

Everlasting God: You have revealed yourself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and ever live and reign in the perfect unity of love. Grant that we may always hold firmly and joyfully to this faith, and, living in praise of your divine majesty, may finally be one in you; who are three persons in one God, forever and ever. Amen. (UM Book of Worship, 412)

Affirmation of Faith: Apostle's Creed

Prayer of the Day:

Father, Son, Spirit. In your divine unity, we see the possibility of unity among all people. But we are not united.

As we live with an unknown illness, we remain separated by fear.

As we see injustices in our society, we remain separated by anger.

As we hear differences of opinion on so many issues, we remain separated by confusion.

We remain separated by fear, by anger, by confusion.

We focus more on what makes us different.

But you, who are three in one, Father and Son and Spirit, help us to see and know that we all are one: White and Black, Police and Protester, Republican and Democrat, Straight and Gay, Old and Young, Male and Female. We are one as you are one; created by the same Father, redeemed by the same Son and connected by the same Spirit as we together pray the prayer you taught:

The Lord's Prayer

Prayer of Illumination:

Open our ears that we may hear and our hearts and minds that we may receive your word
O Lord our rock and redeemer.

(After each reading take two to three minutes to reflect upon the meaning of the passage to you today.)

Old Testament Reading Genesis 1:1-2: 4a

Psalm 8

Epistle Reading 2 Corinthians 13: 11-13

Special Music

Gospel Reading Matthew 28: 16-20

Sermon In the Name of the “And” God

Hymn *Come, Thou Almighty King (UMH 61)*

1. Come, thou almighty King,
help us thy name to sing,
help us to praise!
Father all glorious,
o'er all victorious,
come and reign over us, Ancient of Days!

2. Come, thou incarnate Word,
gird on thy mighty sword,
our prayer attend!
Come, and thy people bless,
and give thy word success,
Spirit of holiness, on us descend!

3. Come, holy Comforter,
thy sacred witness bear
in this glad hour.
Thou who almighty art,
now rule in every heart,
and ne'er from us depart, Spirit of power!

4. To thee, great One in Three,
eternal praises be,
hence, evermore.
Thy sovereign majesty
may we in glory see,
and to eternity love and adore!

Benediction:

Let us go forth, knowing that we are united with all creation as God is united as Father,
Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

Response *God Be With You till We Meet Again (UMH 673)*

God be with you till we meet again;
by his counsels guide, uphold you,
with his sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

In the Name of the “And” God

6/7/2020

Matthew 28: 16-20

Trinity Sunday

This is Trinity Sunday. The one distinctive that separates Christianity from all other religions is the belief in a triune God. This is not polytheistic in that we believe in three separate Gods: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Nor is it three separate modes or manifestations of the same God. There is God the Father who creates, God the Son who was God incarnate and walked on the earth, and God the Holy Spirit who is the continuing presence of God. Nor is it God in three different activities: God the Father creates, God the Son redeems, God the Holy Spirit sanctifies. But if the Trinity is not three separate Gods or three separate manifestations of the same God or three different activities of God, then what is it? What is this thing that we say we believe that separates Christians from all other religions?

To begin with I have to quote Dr. Yeago, my theology professor at Lutheran. “If you can wrap your head around it, it ain’t God.” So even as I attempt to give a better understanding of the Trinity, remember this is God and I can’t wrap my head around it.

If we say that God is Father, that God is the one who creates, we are absolutely correct. We read the story of creation from Genesis and there seems to be no question that God creates. Though the timeline presented in Genesis may be more mythical than actual, it is still God that creates. Whether it was 7 days or 7 billion years it was still God creating.

But if we limit it to just God as Father/creator, then we are really espousing a concept of God that was along the lines of the Deist of the enlightenment who believed that God created and set the world in motion then left it to the humans. We limit God to just being the creator.

If we say that God saw the brokenness of humanity and then personally intervened by becoming human in order to deliver humanity from the state of sin, we have God the Son. God became human in the person of Jesus to become the means through which humanity may be brought out of the state of sin. God became human at one point in human history then returned to the heavens and will come back in the end.

But if we view God as becoming human in order to save humanity from sin, do we once again limit God? Do we view God the Son as simply a divine lifeguard pulling drowning people from the pool of sin and placing them safely on the deck? That limits God to just acting to save us.

What about God the Spirit? Is God some mystical spirit that is simply connecting us all together in some metaphysical manner so we can all sit around the global campfire singing *Kum Ba Ya*? Is God the Spirit a comforter, one who knows and feels our pain along with us? Is God the Spirit a counsellor, one that we can go to when we have a problem or question that will give us the perfect answer?

In all these ways of viewing God the Spirit do we limit God? Do we limit God's Spirit to be there for us when we call, when we need divine help but no other time?

Father/ Creator, Son, Holy Spirit. Which of these is God and when is God each one of these? When is God Father/Creator? When is God Son? 2020 years ago? When is God Spirit? When we need it?

Some of you may remember the old *Schoolhouse Rock* on Saturday mornings. These were short educational clips interspersed in the Saturday morning cartoons. One of the clips was *Conjunction Junction* about the use of conjunctions, words that connect words and phrases together. It used a little railroad engineer to demonstrate the use of conjunctions to link words and phrases together. We know that in English there are two main conjunctions; **and**, which links words together, and **or**, which links words together in a choice.

I think too often that as we think of God and the Trinity, we use the wrong conjunction. We may tend to use **or**. God is Father **or** Son **or** Spirit, especially if we think in terms of the Trinity being three different modes of the same God. The proper conjunction to use as we think of God is **and**. God is creator **and** God is Son **and** God is Spirit. God is all three.

Remember from Exodus chapter 3 as Moses asks the name of God, God replies, "I am who I am." God is. God's being is not just one thing or having dominion over just one aspect of creation as thought by the Greco-Roman pantheon of gods. Nor was God a god of a particular place as was thought in the ancient Middle East. No,

God is in all things, in all acts of creation, in all places. This God is a limitless being. God is creator/ Father and God is Redeemer/Son and God is sanctifier/ Holy Spirit.

The Trinity is at work in all things. We see this in the creation story from Genesis. We see God creating, of course, but we also see that the wind from God swept over the face of the earth. The Hebrew word for wind also means breath and Spirit. And God created with the divine word, the divine word which according to the Gospel of John, “became flesh and lived among us...” (1:14). At the time of creation, Father, Son and Holy Spirit were working together in community to create.

Therefore, our Triune God is a God of community. It is the communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that creates, redeems and sanctifies. The Father, Son and Spirit work together in community to bring about the reign of the Triune God.

The picture for May on my wall calendar in my office depicts this community well. The picture shows three women dancing. Looking at the bottom of the picture the dresses of each almost blend together as one. As your eye goes up, they seem to separate into individuals but there remains a sense of connection and they move together in unity as they dance.

We call upon the name of the Triune God. Jesus in the great commission instructs the disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Paul closes his letter to the Corinthians with a blessing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We close many of our prayers by asking in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Most of us think that this is simply saying that we believe in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But it is more than just making a statement of belief. By being baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and calling upon the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we are saying that we will live under the reign of the Triune God. For when you call upon the name of the deity, or a king you declare that deity or king to be your ruler.

This means that we live in community as the Trinity exists in community. We exist in community with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as they exist in community. We exist in community with others just as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit exists in community with each other. When we call upon the name of the Father, Son and

Holy Spirit we join in community with the Trinity and with all people. We are in community with all regardless of religion. We are in community with all regardless of race. We are in community with all regardless of gender. We are in community of all, police and protester. We are in community with all regardless of any sort of human designation which separates.

Therefore, we cannot condone violence against others who are members of our world community which has been created by our Triune God that exists in and for community. To exist in community, we must listen to seek to understand the perceptions of those whose perceptions differ from ours. We must understand that the experience of people of color with police are markedly different from most of ours.

For it is only as we try to understand each other to bring about the community of all people that we can truly say that we call upon the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Triune God of community.

Living in community is not always easy. It is not easy to understand those whose values and perceptions may be radically different from ours. But we saw this triune community being played out as the Sheriff of Flint, Michigan took off his riot gear, talked to protesters and then walked with them.

We saw this in a black man who posted on his neighborhood page that he was scared to go out to walk his dog for fear that someone in his predominately white neighborhood would call the cops, and some 30 neighbors came out to walk with him.

As we listen to the voices of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit entering into the divine community of the Trinity, we become part of that divine community of the Three in One God and of all creation.

Let us all call upon the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit so the divine community may come upon the earth and all throughout creation may live in community as do the Three in One.



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John D. Jordan
Pastor

June 4, 2020

Dear Trinity Family,

As we look forward to coming together again to worship in person on Sunday mornings, the worship committee is working to develop a plan to ensure that we will restart as safely as possible. Some of the issues that we are addressing is the disinfecting of the building, which parts of the facility will be accessible, seating arrangement to ensure social distancing, what type of service will we have, and many others.

While we all may desire to rush back on June 14, we will not be ready by that time. Our goal is to insure that we return to in-person worship with an experience that will be meaningful, worshipful and as safe as possible. When the plan to restart in-person service is established, it will be sent to you well in advance so you will know what to expect when we do return to in-person worship. We will continue to post the service on Facebook and the web page and have begun the process to upgrade our infrastructure so we may begin streaming services live online.

As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:23, "All things may be permissible, but not all things are beneficial." While it may be permissible for us to return it is not beneficial until we have a plan in place to ensure the health and safety of all members of our Trinity family and our community.

Shalom,

Pastor John