



## Sunday, June 7, 2020

# The Holy Trinity

### Introduction

Though the word *trinity* is not found in the scriptures, today's second reading includes the apostolic greeting that begins the liturgy: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. In the gospel Jesus sends his disciples forth to baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. More than a doctrine, the Trinity expresses the heart of our faith: we have experienced the God of creation made known in Jesus Christ and with us always through the Holy Spirit. We celebrate the mystery of the Holy Trinity in word and sacrament, as we profess the creed, and as we are sent into the world to bear witness to our faith.

### Confession and Forgiveness

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin. Reconciling God,

**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,  
and we deny your presence in our lives.**

**We place our hope in ourselves  
and rely on our own efforts.**

**We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.**

**We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.**

**We fear difference and do not welcome others  
as you have welcomed us.**

**We sin in thought, word, and deed.**

**By your grace, forgive us;**

**through your love, renew us;**

**and in your Spirit, lead us;**

**so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.**

Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of divine mercy  
we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus,  
through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.

Our sins are forgiven.

Let us live now in hope.

For hope does not disappoint,

because God's love has been poured into our hearts  
through the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

### Gathering Song:

#### Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!



1 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, Lord God Al - might - y!  
2 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! All the saints a - dore thee,  
3 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Though the dark - ness hide thee,  
4 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!



Ear - ly in the morn - ing our song shall rise to thee.  
cast - ing down their gold - en crowns a - round the glass - y sea;  
though the eye of sin - ful - ness thy glo - ry may not see,  
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, mer - ci - ful and might - y!  
cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim fall - ing down be - fore thee,  
on - ly thou art ho - ly; there is none be - side thee,  
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, mer - ci - ful and might - y!



God in three per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty!  
which wert and art, and ev - er - more shalt be.  
per - fect in pow'r, in love and pu - ri - ty,  
God in three per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty!

Text: Reginald Heber, 1783–1826, alt.  
Music: NICAEA, John B. Dykes, 1823–1876

### 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.**

Readings and Psalm

**First Reading: Genesis 1:1--2:4a**

*At the beginning of time, God the Creator, God the powerful Word, and God the life-giving Spirit form the earth and all its inhabitants. God sees that all this created work is good and then rests on the seventh day.*

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup>the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup>Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

<sup>6</sup>And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." <sup>7</sup>So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. <sup>8</sup>God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

<sup>9</sup>And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup>Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. <sup>12</sup>The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

<sup>14</sup>And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, <sup>15</sup>and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup>God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. <sup>17</sup>God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, <sup>18</sup>to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup>And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky."  
<sup>21</sup>So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup>God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." <sup>23</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup>And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. <sup>25</sup>God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

<sup>27</sup>So God created humankind in his image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup>God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." <sup>29</sup>God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup>And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. <sup>31</sup>God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

<sup>2:1</sup>Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. <sup>2</sup>And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. <sup>3</sup>So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

<sup>4a</sup>These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

## Psalm: Psalm 8

How majestic is your name in all the earth! (*Ps. 8:1*)

<sup>1</sup>O | LORD our Lord,

how majestic is your name in | all the earth!—

<sup>2</sup>**you whose glory is chanted above the heavens out of the mouths of in-fants and children;**

**you have set up a fortress against your enemies, to silence the foe | and avenger.**

<sup>3</sup>When I consider your heavens, the work | of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars you have set | in their courses,

<sup>4</sup>**what are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them,  
human beings that you should | care for them? R**

<sup>5</sup>Yet you have made them little less | than divine;  
with glory and honor you crown them.

<sup>6</sup>**You have made them rule over the works | of your hands;  
you have put all things under their feet:**

<sup>7</sup>all | flocks and cattle,  
even the wild beasts | of the field,

<sup>8</sup>**the birds of the air, the fish | of the sea,  
and whatever passes along the paths | of the sea.**

<sup>9</sup>O | LORD our Lord,

how majestic is your name in | all the earth! R

## Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

*Paul closes a challenging letter to the Corinthians with an appeal to Christian fellowship grounded in the triune harmony of Christ's grace, God's love, and the Spirit's partnership.*

[Paul writes:] <sup>11</sup>Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. <sup>12</sup>Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

<sup>13</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

## **Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20**

*After his resurrection, Jesus summons his remaining disciples and commissions them to baptize and teach all nations in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

<sup>16</sup>Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup>When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

## **SERMON ON MATTHEW 28:16-20**

### **THE GREAT COMMISSION – What can we do in the time of Covid-19?**

Today the Sermon is on Matthew 28. When I looked at it appeared so very, very short. However, there is a lot to this. I pondered on what I would concentrate on in terms of who we are as individual Christians and also in terms of whom we are in this community that we belong to especially in this time of Covid-19.

Last Sunday Pastor Hergy led us to an understanding of the Holy Spirit. This Sunday we recognize the Feast of the Holy Trinity and also celebrate the start of a new part of the Church year. We have been through Advent and Christ's coming. Epiphany has been recognized and followed by Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and finally culminating in Easter Sunday. We have passed through the Ascension and last week, the Pentecost. Today is the Feast of the Holy Trinity.

On this particular Feast all three of our readings today call attention to one person of the Trinity. Genesis speaks of the work of the Father. Corinthians speaks of the planting and nurturing of faith and the birth of the Church and is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. And finally, Mathew's

Gospel shows Jesus teaching and instituting a sacrament. While each of the readings calls attention to one member of the Trinity, they also call attention to the fact that the 3 persons of God work together. Look at the birth and life of Jesus. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, was baptized in the name of the Father with the Holy Spirit with Him in the form of a dove. Then the Father declared that Jesus was, in fact, His Son and that He was well pleased with Him. The Trinity was with Jesus every step of the way. So too is the Trinity active in completing OUR salvation.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, began, continued, and ended His time on Earth in complete harmony with the other persons of the Trinity. Can we say the same? God gave us all the tools to live in harmony with the Trinity and with each other. But, the proof of human existence is that we haven't been true to God's plan. We broke our human relationship with God, **from the very beginning**. Each and every one of us has inherited that broken relationship. It is in the brokenness that we find life on this earth so difficult. In the past, I have spoken about us having 'Heart Trouble'. We deal with our daily frustrations, the dangers of living, disease, failed relationships, financial troubles and on and on. We also know that we will all die and that all of our loved ones will as well. **Only through our relationship with the Holy Trinity will we relieve this Heart Trouble.**

We all have been very troubled and affected this past while with the tragedies besetting the world and ourselves. The pandemic has affected the whole world. Many tragic events around the world seem never ending. We have racial, religious and sexual discrimination, political unrest, greed, the never-ending search for power, floods, fire, storms and on and on. It has made me ask over and over again the same question. Not, **why** do these things happen, but **where is our Father** in all of this? Why doesn't He intercede to prevent this from happening? Isn't the Father supposed to protect His children? Isn't it what we would do as parents? Wouldn't we do **ANYTHING TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN?** Well, if we are all God's children, why doesn't He protect us? If there isn't an intercession in times of difficulty, why do we then pray? These questions disturb me regularly and have for many, many years. Perhaps they do to you as well.

Well, what I do know is that GOD hasn't caused these things. In one way or another we have caused many of these things, and alone, we cannot fix these things. Even Paul the Apostle had to admit in Romans 7 that, "**I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing**". Following God's commands seems to be a nearly impossible thing for us humans to do. Since we can never heal our broken relationship with the Trinity, we need God to do this for us.

So **WHY** doesn't God intercede in all these worldly problems in a way that is easy for us to see? Just as we allow our children to go out into the world to find their own way, to make mistakes and to learn, so too does our Father in Heaven allow us the '**Free Will**' to make decisions, to search for truth, to make mistakes. We give our children the tools to succeed. We teach them about good and bad, about how to conduct themselves, how to solve problems and especially about God's place in their lives. We can't **MAKE** them do anything.

**God does the same things.** He allows us to make mistakes, make decisions, and for us to search for how to mend our broken relationship with the Trinity. How does God heal this broken relationship since we cannot do it? Well, He sends his Son, Jesus Christ to be amongst us. Jesus suffered on the cross for us to renew our relationship with the Trinity. **We cannot forgive our own sins, but He can and did.**

Now what do we do now that we have been renewed with the Trinity? Jesus told the disciples to go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything He had commanded. He then adds that He will be with them, and us, always to the very end.

Okay, that sounds wonderful but what does that mean in terms of what we are to do? And I am speaking of us in this church, at this time. When we are supposed to self-isolate, are we to leave our homes and go to other parts of the world to baptize, teach, to evangelize. Would seem most impracticable and unwise for us to do so. Do we head out every day and knock on the doors of our neighbours on the Coast? No, we can't do that. For the computer savvy, do you go online and post Blogs, or Twitter or Facebook?



I don't know how to do any of those things and perhaps you don't either. So, what do we do in practical terms to use the Trinity to accomplish Jesus' directives in the here and now?

In 1527, Martin Luther wrote a letter to a fellow pastor about what to do when the plague strikes one's city. Luther's advice is clear-headed and soundly missional. Do not flee from risk. Do your job. Use medicine. If you are sick, keep away from others. Most of all – remain steadfast. The work of Christians does not change in times of trial. It becomes more important. Luther was not writing hypothetically; he remained in Wittenberg when the plague struck, against the advice of his friends. He showed that Christians are called to continue to serve others in the role in which God has placed us.

Doing the work Christians are called to do during times of trial is not easy. Proportional giving to church ministries seems impossible during periods of income instability. Serving one another in person seems unwise in light of the potential transmission of disease. But what does trust in God's faithfulness mean if it does not translate into our willingness, as disciples, to continue to act on our missional mandate?

A crisis offers those in every vocation an opportunity to reaffirm their calling and to find new ways of living into it. Luther's words are particularly instructive. "Whoever will not help or support another person unless they can do it without affecting their safety or property will never help their neighbour." Love for neighbour is most evident not when expressions of love are easy, but when they are difficult.

To heal our brokenness with the Holy Trinity we need to act, to pray, to give. I certainly don't know how to solve all the world's problems or even many of my own for that matter. We can't stop the violence that we see human beings commit against each other that we witness with regularity on TV. Alone we can't stop this pandemic. **But, we can make a difference in the here and now if we work together.**

I think what we can do is to be the kind of Christians that Jesus wants us to be. We can:

- give of our time and talents to help others
- give of our financial resources to help each other, those less fortunate in our community and the larger community in the world (many people give to Charities in foreign countries and even give their time and resources in those places)
- show those around us in our daily lives the example of Christ in how we speak and conduct ourselves
- teach our children and grandchildren the way in which Jesus wants us to live and take care of each other
- find ways to show our community that Living Faith Lutheran is here in our community to serve our community

The Author Marina McCoy (Professor Of Philosophy at Boston College) has suggested these Seven Spiritual Strategies for a time of Pandemic:

**1. Pray.** God is listening. I firmly believe that God is with us, as close as we are to ourselves, and even closer. When I pray, I wait for God to reply, not always knowing how God will reply, but trusting that God will. When I pray for others, such as my mother who lives in another state, I know that they are with me in the time of prayer, as much as if they were in the same room. In God's presence, we are all united.

**2. Stay connected.** I was recently in a self-quarantine for 14 days after my husband fell ill with flu-like symptoms after we returned from Europe. (We are all healthy now.) I found that staying connected through video programs like Zoom, Skype, or Google Meet, or texting or phone calls, were all great ways to stay in relationship with others beyond my quarantine. Human beings are social and need connection.

**3. Reach out.** Not ill or self-quarantined? See what the neighbours need. We can still practice social distancing by starting a group chat with the people on our block. When I could not go out, a friend of mine dropped some flowers and a bottle of wine at our house. Social distancing does not mean the end of service.

**4. Be grateful.** There is always something for which to be grateful. Always. As I write this, both of my adult children are home with us, and healthy. I am grateful for the shared conversation, the shared meals, and for everyone's health. Gratitude gives us perspective.

**5. Slow down.** I have often wished I had more time for contemplation. Be careful what I wish for! In all seriousness, however, more time to contemplate and watch the sun rise or look at a beautiful tree through my backyard window brings me a sense of peace. Baking bread takes more time than buying it but helps me to stay in the moment while also nurturing others. Perhaps slowing down is a hidden gift.

**6. Engage in meaningful work.** Monks have always known this: we need a [balance](#) of work, prayer, and leisure in life. I am a teacher so have been putting energy into teaching my university students through remote platforms, holding office hours, and finding creative new ways to help my students to grow and learn. Even for those who are retired or otherwise not employed, tasks like baking, minor household projects that have been put off, or organizing photos into albums can be meaningful work.

**7. Love.** Love is contagious. Love, St. Ignatius says, is shown in deeds, not only in words. But it also helps to tell the people whom we love, that we love them. How do you want to share love today?

As a community of Christians we can do this together. Through our Stewardship, our Outreach, our being there for each other, and the Trinity behind us, we can have the effect that Jesus commanded of the disciples. Amen

## Hymn of the Day:

### Come, Join the Dance of Trinity



1 Come, join the dance of Trin - i - ty, be - fore all worlds be - gun—  
 2 Come, see the face of Trin - i - ty, new - born in Beth - le - hem;  
 3 Come, speak a - loud of Trin - i - ty, as wind and tongues of flame  
 4 With - in the dance of Trin - i - ty, be - fore all worlds be - gun,



the in - ter - weav - ing of the Three, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son.  
 then blood - ied by a crown of thorns out - side Je - ru - sa - lem.  
 set peo - ple free at Pen - te - cost to tell the Sav - ior's name.  
 we sing the prais - es of the Three, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son.



The u - ni - verse of space and time did not a - rise by chance,  
 The dance of Trin - i - ty is meant for hu - man flesh and bone;  
 We know the yoke of sin and death, our necks have worn it smooth;  
 Let voic - es rise and in - ter - weave, by love and hope set free,



but as the Three, in love and hope, made room with - in their dance.  
 when fear con - fines the dance in death, God rolls a - way the stone.  
 go tell the world of weight and woe that we are free to move!  
 to shape in song this joy, this life: the dance of Trin - i - ty.

Text: Richard Leach, b. 1953  
 Music: KINGSFOLD, English folk tune  
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## Prayers of Intercession

Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

God of community, you form us as your church. Guide our bishops, pastors, deacons, and all the baptized in sharing your life-giving good news with all the world. Strengthen us to be bold in our proclamation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of counsel, all authority belongs to you. Encourage the leaders of this and every land to seek peace, equality, and unity. Instill wisdom in advocates who work toward justice in often ignored communities.

During this time of pandemic encourage leaders to put aside politics and work together for the betterment and health of all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of care, you created us in your image. Help us see your likeness in one another. Open our eyes to see and attend to all who face oppression and suffering. For the sick and infected: God, heal and help sustain bodies and spirits. Contain the spread of infection. Console, heal, and nourish all in need (*especially all we name now*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

For our vulnerable populations: God, protect our elderly and those suffering from chronic disease. Provide for the poor, especially all those who feel they have nowhere to turn. Hear us, O God. **Your spirit is great.**

God of companionship, you accompany this body of faith. As the rhythms of summer begin, protect all who travel, renew all who will enjoy a time of Sabbath, and shelter all who need to be protected. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of compassion, you comfort us in our grief with the promise of the resurrection. We give you thanks for the saints of all time and in our lives. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **Offering Prayer**

God of goodness and growth,  
 all creation is yours,  
 and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.  
 Water and word, wine and bread:  
 these are signs of your abundant grace.  
 Nourish us through these gifts,  
 that we might proclaim your steadfast love  
 in our communities and in the world,

through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song.  
**Amen.**

## Blessing

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,  
 nor things present, nor things to come,  
 nor powers, nor height, nor depth,  
 nor anything else in all creation,  
 will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.  
 God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ,  
 and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,  
 bless you and keep you in eternal love.  
**Amen.**

## Sending Hymn:

### Go, Make Disciples



“Go, make dis-ci-ples, bap-tiz-ing them, teach-ing them.  
 Go, make dis-ci-ples, for I am with you till the end of time.  
 Go, be the salt of the earth. Go, be the light for the world.  
 Go, be a cit-y on a hill, so all can see that you’re  
 serv-ing me. Go, make dis-ci-ples.”

Text: Handt Hanson, b. 1950  
 Music: GO, MAKE DISCIPLES, Handt Hanson  
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**Dismissal: Go in peace. Christ is with you.** Thanks be to God.