



Johnsville United Methodist Church

Union Bridge, MD

Our mission is to nurture the members of the congregation in developing a personal relationship with God and to share His word and His love with the larger community.

PRAISE, WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION

June 7, 2020 – Trinity Sunday

PRELUDE “Spirit of the Living God” (Iverson) Diane Jones

WELCOME

* OPENING HYMN “All Creatures of Our God and King” UMH 62

1. All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing,
O praise ye! Alleluia!
O brother sun with golden beam,
O sister moon with silver gleam!
O praise ye! O praise ye!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

2. O brother wind, air, clouds, and rain,
by which all creatures ye sustain,
O praise ye! Alleluia!
Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,
Ye lights of evening, find a voice!
O praise ye! O praise ye!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

3. O sister water, flowing clear,
make music for thy Lord to hear,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
O brother fire who lights the night,
providing warmth, enhancing sight,
O praise ye! O praise ye!
Alleluia!! Alleluia! Alleluia!

4. Dear mother earth, who day by day
unfoldest blessings on our way,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,
let them God’s glory also show!
O praise ye! O praise ye!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

5. All ye who are of tender heart,
forgiving others, take your part,
O praise ye! Alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
praise God and on him cast your care!
O praise ye! O praise ye!
Alleluia!! Alleluia! Alleluia!

6. And thou, our sister gentle death,
waiting to hush our latest breath,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou ledest home the child of God,
And Christ our Lord the way has trod,
O praise ye! O praise ye!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

7. Let all things their Creator bless,
and worship him in humbleness,
O praise ye! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One!
O praise ye! O praise ye!
Alleluia!! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Call to Worship (Gen 1, Ps 8)

One: God, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

Many: Your glory surrounds and enfolds us.

One: Your image resides within us and completes us. You made us but a little lower than the angels.

Many: How majestic is your name in all the earth.

Opening Prayer (Gen 1)

Triune God, your Spirit danced over the waters, your Word was spoken, and the glory of your creation sprang forth: sun and moon, earth and sky, creatures beyond count.

We thank and praise you for putting your image within us and for creating us but a little lower than the angels. Abide in us, as you abide in the fullness of your holy mystery.

Teach us to be caretakers and stewards of your good earth, that we may walk gently upon the meadows, and leave puddles of light wherever we tread. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Father I Adore” (Coelho)

Diane Jones

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Gracious Triune One,

Open our hearts and minds to the many ways that you appear to us, in unique ways, so that we might see you. We thank you that you make every attempt to reveal yourself to us to help us on our spiritual journey. You are gracious to us even when we turn from you. Forgive us Holy One, when we intentionally turn from you. Forgive us when we act out due to our anger, fear, and disobedience to you. Wash us clean and make us whole in You and in Your Son, Jesus. Help us to seek You first in all things. Help us to rededicate ourselves to your service. Use us to reach out to those who do not know Your Son, Jesus, that they may come to know Him, and have new life. Give us discernment, strength, and courage to make disciples in your Holy name. In the confidence of your disciples let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples by saying these words....

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

HYMN

"Morning Has Broken"

UMH 145

1. Morning has broken
like the first morning;
blackbird has spoken
like the first bird.
Praise for the singing!
Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing
fresh from the Word!

2. Sweet the rain's new fall
sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall
On the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness
Of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness
Where his feet pass.

3. Mine is the sunlight!
Mine is the morning
born of the one light
Eden saw play!
Praise with elation,
praise every morning,
God's re-creation
of the new day!

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Hebrew Scripture Lesson: Psalm 8

¹O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

²Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.

³When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established;

⁴what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

⁵Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.

⁶You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,

⁷all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,

⁸the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

⁹O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

11 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. ¹²Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of^{*} the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon

“The Trinity that Lives in Us”

Rev. Shari McCourt

Today is Trinity Sunday in the calendar of the Christian Year. First, the word “Trinity” is not found in the Bible. That is actually not that unusual because there are a number of theological concepts not found explicitly in the Bible that scholars and Church history and tradition have validated over the past 2,000 years. The absence of direct teaching from the Bible on the Trinity makes it hard to find a passage of Scripture from which to launch out for a sermon.

The passage we read today has hints of a Trinitarian relationship between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, but you have to look carefully for it. Rarely is Trinity preached on directly because it is a topic, a concept, from the academic discipline called “systematic theology.” Systematic theology, is the attempt by Christian theologians to craft a coherent understanding of the work of God. They use Scripture, Church tradition, and the overarching philosophy or in Methodism “Reason”, and our experience to proof out the concept of the Holy Trinity.

The topics of systematic theology tend to be conceptual, and often difficult to explain in a way that doesn't put us all to sleep. Believe it or not, I enjoyed and did well with this subject in seminary. So wake up or your will ruin my track record. (LOL)The primary reason Trinity is not preached is because it is one of those doctrines that Christians worldwide affirm, but have great difficulty explaining.

When I was in seminary, I remember having long discussions in and out of class with colleagues about this topic, all having a difficult time bringing this home for all of us to understand.

The idea of One God in Three Persons — three-in-One — is a concept we often have difficulty getting our heads around.

The Trinity in *The Shack*

Several years ago, an interesting book titled *The Shack* became a bestseller. Recently, I saw the movie, again. The story was compelling, but one aspect of that book sparked discussion and disagreement among Christians. William Paul Young represented the Trinity in a very unique way. For God the Father, Young portrayed God as middle aged, African American, woman, who was outgoing, warm-hearted, kind, wise, and could easily be anyone's friend. God the Father was portrayed in a manner that was most easily understood by the main character in the story. For God the Holy Spirit, Young's persona was that of an Asian woman dressed in bright colors and seemed to be in many places at one time. The main character was able to accept this portrayal of the Holy Spirit, a loving entity who is in all places at all times, and always available to us. His portrayal of Jesus, was much like I have always seen Jesus, dress comfortably in jeans, flannel shirt, and tool belt, who walked and worked along-side of people. The main character readily incorporated Jesus into his life as a friend, confidant, and one who demonstrated trusted wisdom.

Each of these personas of God exhibited unique characteristics, and each had a specific role to play in the fictional story. The author's story is creative and provokes much conversation as to how we see the fullness of God working in our lives. I personally, enjoyed it, and recommend it. If one was hoping to have a better understanding of Trinitarian theology, it might not be your best source. The Shack's depiction of the Trinity could be used for a book study to further explore one's own perception of how one sees the Holy Trinity in the midst of your individual spiritual journey.

Early Creeds Address Misunderstandings About the Trinity

It has been difficult for Christians from the early church down to the present to understand the Holy Trinity. Some attempts have failed miserably to capture the three-in-oneness of God, completely. These imperfect attempts to define the Trinity became early Christian heresies. A heresy is a doctrine or teaching that is incompatible with the Church's view of Scripture and the traditional understanding of those who have gone before us.

In order to correct the theological conversation, the early Church developed creedal statements that expressed what the Church believed. The first was the Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed simply affirms in three statements a belief in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But, The Apostles' Creed left the door open for misunderstanding about the Trinity, so the Nicene Creed was developed from 325 AD, and took its final form in 381 AD. It included detailed explanation of the person of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. These details were included to correct the notion that God the Father was superior to God the Son or God the Holy Spirit. The "essence" of all three persons of the Godhead was, in other words, the same.

What is most important to me and most likely all of us is — our understanding of the Trinity is based on what we see God has done and is doing in the world. In the Old Testament, God is Creator of both the world, and of the nation of Israel through whom God will bless the world. Of course, God is present as Spirit, and the Messiah is both prophesied and foreshadowed in various appearances of God, such as the angel who wrestled with Jacob. But primary on the stage of the unfolding drama of the Old Testament is the God. In the New Testament Gospel accounts, the emphasis is upon Jesus — his birth, his baptism, his message, his life, his death, and his resurrection. But God the Father approves his Son, and the Holy Spirit descends upon — anoints — Jesus for ministry. In the New Testament Book of Acts and the epistles, the Holy Spirit is at the forefront, equipping, enabling, guiding, and empowering the early church.

Why Should We Care? How does this all work for us?

The Trinity Doctrine is important, but doctrine comes from the lived experiences of God's people as they interpret the work of God in the real world. Understanding the Holy Trinity, and becoming aware of the uniqueness of the One-in-Three and Three-in-One helps us to have a balanced view of all three persons of the Trinity, so that we can better interpret the work of God in this world. For instance, if we emphasize some aspects of God in the Old Testament, and subordinate Jesus and the Spirit, then we come away with a picture of a god of wrath and judgment, who has little compassion. If we emphasize the person of Jesus to the exclusion of God the Father and the Holy Spirit, we miss out on the fact that God sent Jesus because "God so loved the world..." The purpose of God is to redeem the world, not just the individuals in it. Salvation is the work of God, and that salvation extends not just to individuals but to God's creation as well. Finally, if we emphasize the Holy Spirit, and the charismatic experiences and gifts of the Spirit, it is easy to lose sight of God as Creator, Son as Redeemer, and the role that the Holy Spirit played and plays in both of those aspects of God's work.

Lessons from the Trinity

First, in the doctrine of the Trinity, we find our model for community. As God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit relate to one another, they demonstrate love for each other. They work in concert to accomplish the purpose of God in the world, and help us get the idea of community. This idea of the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit is like a divine dance, interacting with one another, expressing love for one another, and complementing the work each has to do.

In the passage we read today, we find some of these elements of mutuality. Jesus says that the Spirit will guide his disciples, glorify Jesus, take what belongs to Jesus and give it to the disciples. But, everything Jesus has comes from the Father, and that is why the Spirit can make it known to the disciples. If that sounds like circular reasoning, it is! God the Father creates, God the Son redeems, God the Spirit illuminates and equips.

In this divine dance of mutuality, each person of the Godhead complements and builds on the work of other members of the Trinity. In the doctrine of the Trinity, we find our mission. Jesus stated to the disciples, "As the Father has sent me, so send I you." Just as God the Father sent Jesus into the world, so Jesus sends us into the world to do the Father's work, equipped and accompanied by the Spirit of God. Whatever work we have to do in this world, we do from the standpoint of the Triune God — Father, Son and Spirit — who created, redeemed, and enabled us to do so.

So, let me encourage you today to think about the Trinity — God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. As followers of Jesus, we are loved by the Father, and led by the Spirit. All three persons of the Godhead are at work in our lives, in the life of this church, and in the life of this world. As we live in new awareness of God in all God's expressions as Father, Son, and Spirit, our spiritual lives will deepen, our vision of God's kingdom will expand, and the work that God has chosen for us will take on a new vitality and urgency. Amen!

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Many thanks for your faithfulness in supporting the ministries of the church.

