

Worship for June 4, 2023  
Trinity Sunday

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

\*Call to Worship *Carmina Gadelica, Vol. III*

Bless to me, O God, each thing mine eye sees;

**Bless to me, O God, each thing mine ear hears;**

**Bless to me, O God, each fragrance that goes to my nostrils;  
the Three that seek my living soul.**

Bless to me, O God, each taste that goes to my lips,

each note that goes to my song, each ray that guides my way,

each thing I pursue, each lure that tempts my will,

**the zeal that seeks my living soul;**

**the Three that seek my heart;**

**the zeal that seeks my living soul;**

**the Three that seek my heart.**

\*Hymn 2 Holy, Holy, Holy

Prayer of Confession

**God of grace, love, and communion,  
we confess that we have failed to love you  
with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength,  
and to love our neighbors as ourselves.**

**We ignore your commandments,  
stray from your way, and follow other gods.**

**Have mercy on us.**

**Forgive our sin and raise us to new life  
that we may serve you faithfully  
and give honor to your holy name. Amen.**

Response Take, O Take Me As I Am

Assurance of Forgiveness *Romans 8: 34; 2 Corinthians 5:17*

Hear the good news!

Who is in a position to condemn?

Only Christ,

And Christ has died for us,

Christ rose for us,

Christ reigns in power for us,  
Christ prays for us.  
Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation.  
The old life is gone;  
a new life has begun.  
Know you are forgiven and be at peace.

Time With Our Young Disciples

Recognition of High School Graduate, Capri Roma.

Gospel Reading        John 16:12-15  
Morning Message

Today is Trinity Sunday. If you think of the church year as the face of a clock, we are right about at 6:00. Starting off the church year with Advent, at the end of November, we have moved through Christmas, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost. And now we come to Trinity Sunday. We are half-way through the cycle of church seasons.

Next week, we begin a long stretch of time- Kingdomtide, also called Ordinary Time. It is called Ordinary Time, not because it is insignificant, but because it refers to the orderly counting of weeks that ends on Christ the King Sunday, or 11:59 on our clock, the last Sunday of the liturgical year. From now until then, our objective is to follow the Great Commission, going into all the world, making disciples, building the kingdom of God.

Trinity Sunday calls us to celebrate God in three persons: God, the Father, or Creator, God the Son, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, and God, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, also called the "Paraclete."

The doctrine of the Trinity is among the most difficult concepts to explain. Many a well-meaning Christian has been called out or even condemned as a heretic over the proper way to explain the Trinity. Which is a good reason why I won't attempt to define it, but will simply suggest that we understand the three natures of God- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as the Holy Other, existing together eternally.

The term "Trinity" does not appear in Scripture. The doctrine took shape in the early Church as it began to discern, to witness, to understand God's relationship to human beings, to you and to me.

Today's Old Testament text directs our attention to the creation story, the work of God, accomplished in the span of six days, as described by the author of Genesis. Sometimes, with the prospect of a long, cold winter ahead of us, I've wished we lived in a warmer, less harsh, climate. But, then a beautiful Christmas Eve snowfall blankets everything, as it did a few years ago, and once again I am reminded of how much I enjoy each season in its turn, and how our lives crave a sense of order.

Ed went out to run some errands one night in early summer. I received a text from him immediately that directed me outside to see a remarkable sight: against a blue and purple sky, was a circular fuchsia rainbow. Incredible. It left me in awe of a sky that is always changing, with colors in dynamic shades and combinations. God surprises us in new and fresh ways all the time. God's wonders are new every morning and sure as the sunrise. In nearly 65 years, this was the first circular rainbow I had ever seen. It was awesome.

All of nature has its genesis in the mind of God. And you and I can't even raise a blade of grass without the mind of God to give it form and function and life.

Did you notice as we read this text, that when God completes his work each day, God leans back and considers the results, and then pronounces it "good?" The day God created man and woman is declared "very good."

We have come through a period of tremendous unrest and unspeakable violence raging through the land. Tempers rose in public, in private, and even around our dinner tables. Ed and I were invited to the home of close friends one night for dinner. Ed mentioned someone serving in public office and our host said, "We don't talk about that person here." The tension was so great that just speaking someone's name had the potential to hijack a pleasant evening.

I don't know about you, but, I've wondered many times how we could have fallen so far from what God had pronounced "good."

As the months, and now years, of the Covid pandemic wore on, the divisions became chasms, communication was strained to the breaking point and sometimes the result wrought destructive actions

A person who serves in a high public office was interviewed during the chaotic summer months. She wanted to encourage the American people to be hopeful. She is a woman of Christian faith who said that this world God created is still good, very good. That has not changed. God still creates. God still redeems. God still comforts and sustains. In her opinion, we would emerge from these troubled times, hopefully as better citizens, better caretakers of one another.

The follow-up question came swiftly: where do we find this hope?

I hope to never forget her answer: Hope is found where it always is, between faith and charity, or love. We recall this truth from the love chapter of Paul's letter to the Corinthians:

“Faith, hope, love abide, these three. But the greatest of these is love.”

So, with faith as our sure foundation, and acts of love our goal, how did we start to turn this around?

The Rev. Stephen Bryant, of the Upper Room Ministries, offers this thought:

“The call of Christ leads us to share in his life, his suffering, and his ministry, to do each day what he would do in our place. And he asks the questions we are all asking, “Where do we begin? What would Jesus do in our place?”

Bryant recommended three practices:

1. We reach into our hearts. We face the evil that hides out in our own hearts and repent of it.
2. We reach up to God, turning away from sin and turning toward God. God will give us courage and insight and language we need to communicate effectively across race and culture.
3. We reach out to our community. Jesus started where he was, in his own community. Churches, community leaders, the health care system, businesses, schools, law enforcement- it takes all of us working in concert to change the complexion of our shared experience, to climb out of the depths of the pandemic and the social unrest we've suffered. Charity, the old-English word for love, does still begin at home.

Three years ago, we were watching our grandson, Tad, while his parents moved the family from Charlotte to Raleigh, NC. He was so easy to entertain. He would stand at our patio doors, inside or out, watching for the wildlife to show up. Rabbits, squirrels, birds, and an occasional blue-tailed lizard.

For hours, it seemed, he would watch in anticipation, jumping and bouncing, and calling to them, obviously trying to establish some form of communication. Waving at them, hoping to coax them to come just a little closer. If we weren't nearby, he would run and urge us to come quick so we could witness with him the wonder of God's good creation. Pure delight.

We have a lot to learn from children. Tad seemed to know instinctively where hope was. Right there between faith and love. And as a result, he delighted at the appearance of creatures unlike himself, who navigated the world unlike he does. Creatures who will never speak his language. But, with whom he shared his bread, the warm sun, the cool, dewy grass of the morning.

That summer, Tad learned new things about this good creation. He learned to ride a two-wheeler. He could read some words. Life was sweet. Now, going on six, he has much more mastery over his body. He ran a 3K yesterday and he is learning karate. He knows well that that actions and attitudes have consequences. He has suffered the death of his dog, Seneca. He knows that when he thinks of her, he feels sad and will sometimes cry. He is growing and changing.

But one thing hasn't changed: he can always go to Mommy or Daddy for help, for comfort, for solace, for love.

One thing has not changed for us: we can always turn to God, whom Jesus called Father, for our needs as well. And, it is good. It is very good.

\*Affirmation of Faith      The Apostles' Creed

\*Hymn Gloria Patri (inside front cover)

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Presenting Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

\*Hymn Doxology(inside front cover)

\*Prayer of Dedication

\*Hymn 469 Grace Greater Than Our Sin

\*Blessing

May God bless you this week,

from morning's waking til night's folding.

Bless your comings and goings,

the spinning of your labor and lives.

May the ones you meet, even those with whom you compete, be the better for it.

God bless this week.

God bless this journey.

God bless your work and your leisure. Amen.

William John Fitzgerald, *A Contemporary Celtic Prayerbook*, Chicago, IL, 1998.

\*Postlude