

Worship for May 26, 2024
Memorial Day Observance

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

*Call to Worship

Let us give thanks for the land of our birth with all its chartered liberties,
for all the wonder of our country's story.

We give you thanks, O God.

For leaders in nation and state, and for those who in days past and in these present times have
labored for the commonwealth.

We give you thanks, O God.

For those, who in all times and places have been true and brave, and in the world's common
ways have lived upright lives and ministered to their fellows.

We give you thanks, O God.

For those who served their country in its hour of need, and especially for those who gave even
their lives in that service.

We give you thanks, O God.

**Almighty God, and most merciful Father, as we remember these your servants,
remembering them with gratitude and strength, we hold before you those who mourn
them. Look upon your bereaved servants with your mercy. As this day brings memories of
those they have lost awhile, may it also bring your consolation and the assurance that their
loved ones are alive now and forever in your living presence. Amen.**

*Permission for one-time use in worship granted by
The Armed Forces Chaplains' Board, Washington, D.C.*

*Hymn 331 God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand

Prayer of Confession

**God of every nation, as we remember those who gave their lives for the sake of the nation,
let us be stirred to action in their memory. We confess that we have not done all that is
possible to promote peace and justice in our world. We have not loved our neighbors, let
alone our enemies. Forgive us for failing to live up to your commandments. Empower us to
work for your kingdom in this world, and welcome us by your grace into your eternal
realm.**

*Hymn Take, O Take Me As I Am

Assurance of Pardon

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.

I declare to you, in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ,
our sins are forgiven. Amen.

First Reading Micah 6:6-8
Moments With Our Young Disciples

New Testament Reading Romans 8:31-39
The Morning Message

Five words that strike terror in the heart of every preacher: “Explain the Trinity to me.”

Good luck. We stammer around and try to compare God in three persons to things found in nature- like a three-leaved shamrock. Or to the three forms of water- ice, water, and vapor. I seriously tried to get a trinity illustration out of the robin family that took up residence on our windowsill, but I couldn't really get any traction.

It should reassure me and us that generations of Christians have debated the right way to explain this doctrine. It arose around the time of the Council of Nicaea, which convened in the fourth century.

The trinity doctrine gets us in trouble with our Jewish and Muslim associates because we claim to worship one God as they do. Usually they are kind about it, but there have been some unnecessary insults hurled at those who do worship One God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In doing some research this week, I ran across an essay by Alyce McKenzie, a contemporary theologian. It is a unique take on the subject. I hope it is helpful.

She writes, There is a Norwegian proverb that goes, “ All good things come in threes.” I'd agree with that as I have three children, all daughters.

Alyce says she has friends who are parents to a young child, Katie. Good name. Katie's mom, dad and grandmother all shared in childcare for little Katie. This incidence happened when she was two.

Dad was preparing dinner. He left the oven door open while he turned around to retrieve a tray of chicken to be roasted. Then he heard the scream. Katie had come right behind him and put her hands directly on the inside of the oven door. It was right within her reach.

Of course he rushed her to the hospital, calling his wife along the way.

Katie lay quietly on a stretcher in the ER, the doctor applying medication and wrapping her burned hands. Katie kept her her eyes squeezed shut. Remarkably, she wasn't crying. But she

was mouthing over and over, these words: “Mommy, Daddy, Grandma. Mommy, Daddy, Grandma.” The Trinity according to Katie.

We can all take a page out of a two-year-old’s playbook. When we are in trouble, unable to affect the outcome of some situation, we would do well to put such a mantra to work. Mine is, “When I am afraid, I will trust in you.”

A good and effective one would be “Come, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” You see, when we concentrate on something repetitive, we can control wild-running thoughts and fears. We invoke the presence of the God who never leaves us or forsakes us.

As Christians, the witness of Scripture is to the Power of Three, even though the term never appears in scripture. But we do have many many examples testifying of the function and nature of the Triune God.

Fortunately, three seems to be easiest number to remember. The Rule of Three is a principle that suggests that things that come in threes are inherently funnier, more satisfying, or more effective than other numbers of things.

Audiences and readers are more likely to consume information presented in threes, like plays that have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The same could be said of sermons. Some preachers like to organize their thoughts like that.

There is a Latin phrase, *omne trium perfectum*. Everything that comes in threes is perfection or complete.

Then there are the *Three Little Pigs*, *Goldilocks and The Three Bears*, *Three Billy Goats Bluff*.

We sit down to eat with a knife, fork, and spoon. We hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil.

We are threatened occasionally by lions, tigers, and bears. We buy a campaign hook, line, and sinker.

We affirm that each American is entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We have three branches of government to help us achieve that end.

Robert Frost said it this way, “In three words I can sum up everything I’ve learned about life.”

“It goes on.”

And since it does go on, we should recognize that we have made it here to face another day. Let us call on the Power of the Three as we live out this day: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, acknowledging with gratitude the One who created us, the one who saves us, and the One who guides us.

*Hymn 730 I Sing a Song of the Saints of God
*Affirmation of Faith Apostles' Creed p. 35
*Hymn 581 Gloria Patri

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns
Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Presenting Our Gifts of Tithe and Offering

Offertory

*Hymn 607 Doxology
*Prayer of Dedication

*Hymn 338 O Beautiful for Spacious Skies

*Blessing

Send your peace, O Lord, which is perfect and everlasting, that our souls may radiate peace.

Send your peace, O Lord, that we may think, act, and speak harmoniously.

Send your peace, O Lord, that we may be contented and thankful for your bountiful gifts.

Send your peace, O Lord, that amidst our worldly strife, we may enjoy your bliss.

Send your peace, O Lord, that we may endure all, tolerate all, in light of your grace and mercy.

Send your peace, O Lord, that our lives may become a divine vision, and in your light, all
darkness may vanish.

Send your peace, O Lord, that we, your children of earth, may unite in one family.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

*Postlude