

“O Lord, our God, how majestic is
your name in all the earth.” AMEN!

So, we have put the red away but recognize
the fire of Pentecost still burns within us as
we stand in the threshold between
Easter and the Pentecost season.

Today is the feast day of Holy Trinity Sunday.

A place in the church year to recall
the relationship of God as three in one.

“Ah, the Holy Trinity!

The Christian doctrine that inspires
passionate sermons,”
said no one ever! :-)

I remember preparing to go
to seminary and thinking, finally,
I am going to get all the answers! :-)

The mystery of the Trinity will be explained...

I will receive the secret (but sacred) instruction and
the key to understanding the purpose of
the church will be revealed.

You can probably guess that
my wishes were a bit,
shall we say, immature.

Even at 37 years old!

It was immature to think that seminary, or
any other place of instruction, was going
to open up of the head and
a dump in information and knowledge.

Sure, there's learning and academia going on
but the real, and lasting, education is
really wrapped up in relationship
and community.

The real education is always happening and
constantly broadening us,
inside and outside of institutions.

It's like the more you know,
the more there is to learn.

And when we think of it this way,
we may conclude that
we are always immature, aren't we?

I mean at the deepest sense of the definition.

We move forward and grow, hopefully
more mature than we were yesterday. (Pause)

So, today instead of trying to explain
the Trinity with metaphors and similes,
let's look at ourselves.

See our desire for community and our
need of relationship...

Now, there are many things that bring
the feeling of joy at St. Stephen.

And to put them into words,
in the short time of the sermon, seems
to be pretty self congratulatory!

But some things need to be expressed
for us to continue in our education and
relationship together.

Not only pastor to congregation relationship,
but person to person and of course,
congregation to God while recognizing
God with us.

So, for starters, joy is recognized in
what happens between us when a song is

lifted up from time to time in the sermon.

You know that not all congregations
would be open to the way God works
in secular music.

And that this place is open, even encouraging,
this ol' pastor to sing... is - well -
joyfully refreshing!

Openness, like laughter, and risk builds relationship.

Also, there's the work of organizing things
like CPR/AED training.

That was community led, not pastor led.

You did that!

Leaders hoped for 10 people and
there was more than double that.

Another example, of refreshing joy is to see
the generous giving.

Whether in regular offerings or
financial gifts in special circumstances.

Giving with consistent donations for

the work of the church assists
the giver in spiritual maturity and provides
for the work of the church.

This builds our community.

Then there is our sharing of resources with
our ministry minute connections...

The gathering of the gifts we will take
to the synod assembly that will benefit
the Harbor House in Orlando,

a place of refuge for women and
children fleeing domestic abuse is growing.

These ties we have with others
within our community of Tallahassee and
beyond - nurture relationships and
we find mutual growth in maturity
and in joy.

So it is here, that I'd like to direct us
to Dance with the Trinity.

You might remember last we week talked about
the mystery of God
doesn't mean God is unknowable,
just that we don't know everything

there's to know.

The truth is, through Jesus and the Spirit,
we know a lot about the Creator!

So we let ourselves know that
the Trinity is God's expression of
relationship and community.

Sure, the Trinity is a way of knowing God,
but more importantly we can know that
the Trinity is not just about God,
it's about us, too. (Pause)

As the gospel told us today, the disciples
went to find Jesus in Galilee.

Matthew is specific to tell us
that it was just the eleven here.

The “dudes” have gone up the mountain,
as Jesus had directed them, and Jesus came
to them and I just love the next verse.

“When they saw him
they worshipped him;
but some doubted.”

Huh! C'mon guys, still?

Apparently “seeing is not believing.”

This is critical for us to know,
that for even the eleven, we find
that human beings encounter challenges
to their confidences on belief.

And yet, God was still with them,
just as God is still present among us,
even amidst doubt or unbelief. (Pause)

So take the collective breath and be at peace.

For it is in this community and in this relationship
that the basic building blocks of life exist.

All levels of maturity gather in one place and
the recognition exists that
the community of God has more power
than people think.

And Power is not inherently a bad thing.

The Ancient Greek word is *dynamis* from where
we get the English word for “dynamite.”

This explosive power of the Holy Spirit erupts
inside us and we are changed for the better
within and on the outside.

As it was read in the last line of the Genesis text...

“These are the generations of
the heavens and the earth” (2:4a).

The process of coming or bringing into being.

A power generated from God.

A power that is not used to dominate or subjugate.

We don't conquer the world for Christ
like the way of imperialism.

We go by the way of peace and justice.

The true way of peace like that we
read of in Paul's letters or in any of
Jesus' teachings.

The authority and power of Christ's call
to liberate the world.

It's wrapped up in the power God has given
to Jesus and the power
Jesus conveys to followers
no matter what gender.

The power to do justice.

Politicians should pay attention.

The church, as an institution,
should pay attention.

It is only in Matthew that Jesus said,
“Go and learn what this means,
I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.”

Sacrificing others (human or animal) is not
how we stay close to God.

God is here, God is with the world.

So, if we feel any disconnection from the Lord;
any separation from the Holy Spirit...

a good place to start is to look at what
we are doing in the sent places.

It can be the sent places like where
we went yesterday to install two handrails at
the food pantry in Seminole Manor and
the yard work we did there,

but the sent places are also the grocery stores,
the banks, the restaurants we find ourselves in.

What we do in the sent places has
the holy power to break down
community or to build it. (Pause)

So, we dance the passionate dance about
what will be next for this congregation.

What ever the mission is/continues to be...
it's going to look like community.

AMEN!