



## **Trinity Sunday**

***June 7, 2020***

**St. Matthews United Church of Christ**

**Worship, 9 am Sundays in the Grove**

102 Church Rd, Kunkletown, PA 18058

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[www.stmattsucckunkletown.com](http://www.stmattsucckunkletown.com)

***"A faithful family reaching out to serve Christ"***

## CALL TO WORSHIP

From Psalm 8

(L) The LORD, our God how majestic is your name in all the earth!

**(P) You have set your glory above the heavens,**

(L) When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
what are mortals that you are mindful of them?

**(P) You have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor.**

**O Lord our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

(L) Let us worship our God.

## OPENING PRAYER

(L) Holiness, Word, and Power,  
you reveal yourself as one God in three persons,  
a mighty, creative, life-generating dance who invites your creation to join you.  
Catch us up in your love and lead us into your world to call others to follow you  
with singing and rejoicing. AMEN.

## CALL TO CONFESSION

(L) Creation displays the glory of God, but our sin keeps us from rejoicing in the love God reveals.  
Yet Christ Jesus the Son carried our sins to the cross, and the Holy Spirit breathes new life into us  
so that we can praise God, our Maker, Savior, and life-giving Spirit.  
Let us confess our sins, that we may receive such grace.

## UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Presence, Life, Fire, God who is Three in One, we confess we have turned away from you.  
We gaze upon ourselves as if we are worthy of worship.  
We take your creation into our hands, not to love, but to use and then to discard.  
We are quarrelsome, selfish, intolerant, and prejudiced.  
We do not deserve your love and care, but we pray for mercy because you are merciful.**

**Flame of Love, purify us from sin; Eternal One, lead us to your truth.**

**Risen One, baptize us into union with you.**

**Triune God, transform us into faithful disciples who worship you alone. AMEN.**

## MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

### ASSURANCE OF PARDON

(L) The Holy One of Israel, the Redeemer of the world,  
and the Holy Spirit who comes as the breath of new life  
forgets the sins of all who repent.

I declare to you therefore, that you are forgiven,  
in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God and Mother of us all. AMEN

## THE READING OF SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 13: 11-13

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

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

**THE MESSAGE**

**"Some Doubted"**

The Rev. Suzanne Brooks-Cope

Have you ever played a game with house rules that allowed for a "Do Over?" You may have been playing kick ball as a child, or ping pong with your Dad or a board game and you asked to have a do over. Your turn didn't go well, and your other players allowed you to take your turn all over again. It is a little like a mulligan on the golf course—a free shot given a golfer in an informal golf game when the first shot was poorly played. I remember a lot of do overs or mulligans when playing miniature golf.

Would any of you like a "Do over" for 2020?

I would take a "do over" for 2020 if we could just reset the clock to January 1 and start this year all over again. We could rid ourselves of COVID19 and prevent it from spreading all over the world. We could stop the death of George Floyd before it happened and prevented the protests and riots that have plagued our nation for the past week and a half. Hopefully, we would look at our justice system and fix the inequities that have led to the turmoil of the last couple weeks. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, once chanted, "there is no peace without justice." ... A "Do Over" sounds like a nice idea at this moment—as long as it would give us the chance to mitigate the tragedies that we have experienced this year.

My heart has been breaking these past two weeks. It has been hard enough dealing with the fact that over 100,000 Americans have died of COVID19 this year—that is 42,000 more Americans than died in the Vietnam War. 380,000 have died globally from the pandemic. But this past week has been heart breaking to see our nation implode and tensions rise—to witness the video of George Floyd dying while handcuffed, proclaiming he couldn't breathe and calling out for his mother. Our nation is more polarized and divided as ever. It doesn't resemble the America we all love at this moment.

In the midst of this chaos, falls Trinity Sunday. Our Gospel Lesson is the only appearance of the Risen Lord to the remaining eleven in Matthew's Gospel. It is commonly called the Great Commission passage. I find comfort in that fact that as the disciples met with Jesus on the mountain top, they worshipped him, but we are told in the midst of the worship, some of them doubted. These are the 11—they were the ones who traveled with Jesus for 3 years and heard him speak, touched him, ate meals with him, and witnessed his power. Yet still they doubted. If they could doubt in the midst of their struggles, it is okay for us to doubt and struggle as well. There are times we all want to shout out to Jesus just like the father of the boy with epilepsy in Mark 9 saying, "I believe, help my unbelief."

I don't know about you, but I am comforted and somewhat relieved by the word of uncertainty that was expressed by some of Jesus' closest friends as he gathered with them for the last time in Matthew's gospel. I am

grateful to know that those first disciples of Jesus also had questions and doubts. Their faith was hesitant at times. We don't have to be perfect in ours. This is a relief in the midst of a pandemic and the video of George Floyd's death which has now been ruled a homicide. Our nation is a mess. As Psalm 46 states, "The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter!" Our hearts break for all those who are angry and mad—they are justified in their anger. Our hearts break for the family of George Floyd who didn't need to die. Our hearts break for the family of Ahmaud Arbery who was just out for a run and was gunned down as he exercised. Our heart breaks for business owners whose stores have been vandalized, for all those, police and protestors alike, who have been injured in the unrest and for those who have been spat upon for wearing a mask to protect those around them. There seems to be a hurricane of suffering, anguish, and anger all around us, so I'm relieved to hear that the remaining 11 disciples had doubts about their call, their world, and their faith as well. It is good to know they are human—just like we are.

The Risen Lord met with the 11 remaining disciples and gave them a commission...Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."

They are to go and make disciples of **all nations**—not just fellow Jews, not just those who look, act, and speak like them, but to all nations. Jesus came to break down the divisions of race, class, and nationality. Jesus loved and welcomed all—the sick, the suffering, the wealthy, the powerful, women, men, Jews, and Samaritans. He calls us to go make disciples of all.

The only way to do that is to build trust...to build friendships...to reach out beyond our comfort zones and get to know the people of color and of different ethnic backgrounds in your neighborhood, in your workplaces and in your schools. Sadly, Sunday mornings are still one of the most segregated times of the week.

We live in a country that has struggled with racism since its beginning. I keep hoping and praying that it gets better, but blacks and people of color disproportionately live in poverty, struggle finding good paying jobs, are arrested more often, and go to jail and prison more often.

I have two memories that are engrained within me—both happened in my volunteer years in Baltimore City. My volunteer community rented the old convent in Little Italy in Baltimore—it came complete with a chapel, a cloistered sitting room and closets filled with nun paraphernalia that had never been cleaned out. Little Italy bordered the Baltimore harbor and the old public housing projects. My JVC community worked to get to know the kids around our neighborhood—both black, brown, and white. One day we were all playing basketball together—the convent was next to the old catholic school, so it came with a basketball court. One day, the basketball went over the fence and David, a 10-year-old black boy and I went to retrieve the ball from the street. As we were getting the ball, one of the men of the neighborhood shouted out to David, "hey N\_\_\_, go back to the plantation where you belong and get the hell out of this neighborhood." I was horrified. David was there at our invitation. Needless to say, the man and I exchanged some pointed words. He was wearing a large gold crucifix around his neck, so I started the conversation with asking what it meant to him. He replied that Jesus died years ago, and he only wore the cross for decoration. Sadly, I was not very effective in changing his cold cruel heart. I hope and pray someone else was. But my heart grieved for young David. I can't imagine being so maligned as a 10-year-old child. Those of us born white, can't imagine what it is like to be belittled, demeaned, called the N word, pulled over more frequently by police or feared just because of the color of our skin. Whites just can't imagine or understand the bigotry that people of color face throughout their lives.

The other memory occurred when I was tutoring in a poor neighborhood in Baltimore. Every third house in the neighborhood was boarded up. Rats inundated the area. The state penitentiary was only a block away and its bells and clanging bars could be heard in our tutoring center. One day when I was working with La Shawn, a sweet African American 6-year-old, she began to rub my cheek. She was rubbing it fairly hard and finally I asked, "LaShawn, what are you doing?" She replied, "I'm trying to rub the paint off your face...Only black people are nice so you must really be wearing white paint."

Friends, our prejudices and intolerances harm our children.

The epistle lesson for today states, “Agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.” We are a long way from this admonishment of Paul. We are more polarized today than at any time that I can remember. But Paul tells us to agree with one another...to live in peace. If we do, we will be blessed with God’s love and peace.

Friends, I urge each of you to think about the little things you can do to bring down the barriers of racism, fear, and xenophobia. There are many good books out there that can help with understanding the racial divide in our country. The Penn North East conference is urging all pastors to read “White Fragility” by Robin DiAngelo. A book that helps white people understand why we have such a hard time talking about racism. I have a small book study group that will begin reading it. There are good documentaries that can be found on PBS and YouTube. Of course, the best way is through conversation and friendships with people of different color. Build relationship of trust so you can truly talk to those who experience racism on a daily basis. Only then can we understand what people of color go through every day.

The apostle Paul urges us to live in peace. This can only be done if there is justice, understanding, forgiveness and tolerance in our world. May each of us do our part to bring about justice and peace. As the three persons of the Trinity are interconnected with each other, so are all the members of Christ’s body. As we continue to dwell with the aftermath of the pandemic and as we lament the death of yet another black man and the racism that continues to persist and persist in our nation, may we turn to our Triune God and commit to striving for justice so we can truly live together in peace. AMEN.

## **JOYS AND CONCERNS OFFERING**

*The earth and all it contains belong to the Lord, the world and those who live in it.  
With gladness, let us present the offerings of our life and labor to our God.*

(Note: Offerings may be mailed to the church office using a check or donated on our website. We appreciate your continued financial support of the ministry of the church during this difficult time.)

## **THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

### **CHARGE AND BLESSING**

The eternal Creator calls us.

The risen Savior sends us.

The dynamic Spirit empowers us.

Go into all the world, making disciples for Jesus Christ!

Go in peace and may the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**AMEN.**

## **POSTLUDE**



*On this Holy Trinity Sunday, we gather not to try to comprehend God but to bask in God's mystery, and to worship in wonder. Welcome.*

Monroe County is now in the yellow phase and we are able to worship up in the Grove on Sunday mornings at 9 am. Pastor Suzanne is generally in the office from Monday through Thursday so please call her at the church, 610-381-2442, on her cell, 904-910-3034 or contact her by email at [sbcstmts@ptd](mailto:sbcstmts@ptd). We will continue to post a video of our worship service on line for those who are not comfortable joining us in person. If you know of someone who is unable to worship at the Grove or unable to access the Sunday worship service online, please let the office know and we will mail the bulletin and message to them through US Mail.

Please check out our website under the info tab for any future updates and all our worship videos.

**[stmattsucckunkletown.com](http://stmattsucckunkletown.com)**

Also please join our Facebook page ***St. Matthew's UCC, Kunkletown PA.***

Updates will also be posted there.

The liturgy used in today's bulletin is taken from *Feasting on the Word: Worship Companion*, WJK

## **CONCERNS**

Edith Semmel, Mae Borger, Dean Zacharis, Fances Ash (Jennifer Hall's mother), Gladys Lindenmoyer, Alton and Lila Kleintop, Charlotte Christman (M. Prutzman's niece), Erica Pozza, Bobbie Christman, Scott Madden, Jeannie Anewalt, Doug Hawk, Bruce Devoncourt (friend of Katie Delbertis), Lee Sitler, George Keller, Marlene Prutzman, Janet Fowler (pancreatic cancer), Carol Popay, Donna Smith, Shirley Smith, Chapman and Mason Buskirk, Sylvia George, Jan Burger, Brayden Wunder, Kelly George, The Rev. Alan Miller, Kim Cope, Margaret Hahn, Josh and Kevin Engler; and the Family of Donald Schneider and Robert Boyer

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Kay Frable collects our Weis and Shoprite receipts**, tallies them up and turns them into receive a donation for PVEN. Please continue to save your receipts. You may drop them in her mailbox any afternoon or drop them by the church office.

**The Strawberry Festival is being postponed** and will be combined with our church picnic on July 18. Hopefully, we will be in the green zone by then. Plans are to include the car show.

**When we worship in the Grove, we ask that all worshipers follow best practices** for the safety of our members and visitors. *Best Practices will include—wear a mask— keep 6 feet apart at all times—no congregating in groups—no hugging or shaking of hands—no playing on the playground. Other practices may be added. Any who are uncomfortable joining us, we encourage you to continue sheltering at home –we will also do our best to continue our digital worship in a different format.*

**VBS is scheduled for July 20 through the 24.** The theme is Rainforest Explorers. There will be a wish list of needed items if you would like to donate something.