

A Homily by the Rev. Dr. Renée Tembeckjian  
Trinity Episcopal Church  
31 May 2026  
*Trinity Sunday*



“Shall We Dance?”

I am one someone who tends to talk with my hands, tilt my head as I listen, and I often sway a bit in the pulpit or at the altar. I have always liked movement, except for one period in my life. As a 5-year-old kid in Brooklyn, my ballet teacher, Madame Lanza, wore such a scowl and was so critical, that she scared me into being still. I quit dance.

Fear will do that. It can stop us from moving freely in all kinds of situations.

In contrast, free and fluid movement are very much the focus of this day. Trinity Sunday points to the doctrine of God as one being who simultaneously exists as three persons. Many of us learned this as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Some of you hear me express it as Creator, Living Word, and Breath of Life. A cherished clergy colleague once invoked it this way: Composer, Musician, and Music itself. These are only some ways of trying to express *in* words a mystery what cannot, in fact, by its very nature, be confined *to* words.

For this parish, of course, there is an added dimension, in that this is the very mystery for which we are named. If you were to turn around and look way up above the center doors, you would see a stained glass window of a Trinity shield. It is a kind of map.

It is a triangle of three points (or persons) – Father Son, Holy Spirit. The Latin words *around* those names convey that they are distinct from one another – the Father *is not* the Son *is not* the Spirit. But the words *inside* the triangle convey their interconnection as one God – the Father *is* God, the Son *is* God, the Spirit *is* God.

But the Holy Trinity is more than static architecture or a fixed state of being. In a more vivid and life-giving way, it has been likened to a dance *among* those three persons. So, think of that Trinity map being more like those shoeprint silhouettes on the floor of a dance school, guiding us through the movement.

And that dance has its own theological name – perichoresis – *peri*, as in “around” and *choresis*, as in “choreography.” In other words, the Trinity is a sacred dance within and among the persons of God.

It is not a description of what God *does*. It is a mystery of who God *is*.

Now, to be clear, the word itself, *Trinity*, does not appear in scripture, but we do hear Trinitarian language: From Matthew's Gospel: *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.* There is also St. Paul's blessing: *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

A Trinitarian viewpoint (one God in three persons) is a lens, a window, through which we contemplate the inherent integrity and wholeness and beauty of God. Through this lens, we also see powerful implications for the way we are called to live in this world. It conveys one perfect whole, in which all parts – all persons – are unique and distinct while being equally valued, respected, and loved.

*That* is the sacred dance of God and within God, into which we are invited to participate...

...because a Holy Trinity is not each person for himself, or three in conflict, or two against one. There are no winners and losers, no secret favorites, no insiders versus outsiders, temporary alliances or transactional conveniences. There is no coercion, shame, or threat.

Not so much with institutions, secular or religious, invoking that holy name, uses power, greed, or supremacy to frighten or oppress freedom of movement, driving many in this world to quiet the dance entirely.

God does not intimidate. God *invites*. And God's dance card is infinite, with endless room for all names, across all time, to be written in. God seeks partners of every manner and kind to join the sacred movement of all creation and take a spin on the dance floor of this human life.

So, on this Trinity Sunday, try to imagine God as a dynamic, passionate partner, inviting you into a dance of sacred relationship – in which *you* are both a distinct human being and, at the same time, part of a marvelous and mysterious and beautiful whole.

Imagine that God is inviting *you* to see, think, pray, and act in ways that may well feel like new dance steps. When you sense a prompting within your own heart and mind, inviting you into larger, deeper, and more gracious movement in your own life, imagine this being the Holy Trinity asking you, *May I have this dance...?*

Dare to say, *Yes*.

Don't be afraid. Let go a little. Lean into your partner. Trust those arms to surround you and hold you. Allow yourself the freedom to enjoy your very own dance with God.

And then, take the next step – find someone in this world whose dance card is empty, someone marginalized or ignored, someone lonely or forgotten, and invite them to dance with *you*.

Amen.