

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”



Holy Trinity Sunday
May 30, 2021



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! We continue to do our best in providing the safest environment possible for you to worship our Risen Lord with your whole heart, even during these COVID-19 times. Here are the precautions we are taking on behalf of our whole community of faith, so that we best care for one another and those we are around during the week.

- We ask you wear a mask the entire time you are in the building, unless you have a medical condition preventing you from doing so.
- Bulletins and individual Communion elements are available for you to pick up as you enter from the back of the sanctuary. The Communion elements are available in wine and grape juice form as well as wheat and gluten-free wafers. We will partake of the body and blood of Christ together from our respective seats.
- There will not be a separate time for an offering to be collected for supporting our congregational and wider-church ministry, and so an offering basket is placed beside the bulletins and Communion elements, for those who wish to give this day.
- We are asking you to refrain from singing, as we do our best to minimize the spread of droplets and aerosols around our masks. You may do so in your heart, where we believe God hears just as well as if spoken or sung aloud. We, also, ask that you continue participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print, but doing so in a whisper voice.
- There will not be a time for sharing of the peace, but we encourage you to do so with one another before or after the worship (while maintaining the physical distancing recommendations of six feet).

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we will always err on the side of caution while knowing that we can still transmit the virus even with the full vaccination.

Holy Trinity Sunday

When we say God is the triune God, we are saying something about who God is beyond, before, and after the universe: that there is community within God. Our experience of this is reflected in Paul's words today. When we pray to God as Jesus prayed to his Abba (an everyday, intimate parental address), the Holy Spirit prays within us, creating between us and God the same relationship Jesus has with the one who sent him.

Prelude *Come, Thou Almighty King* (CULLI)

*Thanksgiving for Baptism

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at our baptism, remembering our everlasting bond with our Risen Lord.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ,
let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We thank you, risen Christ,
for these waters where you make us new,
leading us from death to life, from tears to joy.
We praise you, Holy Spirit,
for coming to us in these grace-filled waters of rebirth,
like rains to our thirsting earth,
like streams that revive our souls,
like cups of cool water shared with strangers.
Breathe your peace of serenity
on your whole church when we hide in fear.
Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness.
Send us as loving companions on our journey
as we share your new life among us.
Make us one, risen Christ.
Cleanse our hearts.
Shower us with life.

To you be given all praise,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God,
now and forever.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn *Come, Thou Almighty King*

#408

Text: source unknown, c. 1757, alt.

- 1 Come, thou almighty King,
 help us thy name to sing;
 help us to praise;
 Father all-glorious,
 o'er all victorious,
 come and reign over us,
 Ancient of Days.

- 2 Come, thou incarnate Word,
 merciful, mighty Lord;
 our prayer attend.
 Come and thy people bless,
 and give thy word success,
 and let thy righteousness
 on us descend.

- 3 Come, holy Comforter,
 thy sacred witness bear
 in this glad hour!
 Thou who almighty art,
 rule now in ev'ry heart,
 never from us depart,
 Spirit of pow'r.

4 To thee, great One in Three,
eternal praises be
hence evermore!
Thy sov'reign majesty
may we in glory see,
and to eternity
love and adore.

Prayer of the Day

God of heaven and earth, before the foundation of the universe and the beginning of time you are the triune God: Author of creation, eternal Word of salvation, life-giving Spirit of wisdom. Guide us to all truth, that we may proclaim all that Christ has revealed and rejoice in the glory he shares with us. Glory and praise to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Lesson

Isaiah 6:1-8

This reading narrates Isaiah's vision of the Lord surrounded by angels. They sing "Holy, holy, holy," a song the church sings at the beginning of the great thanksgiving. This liturgical text invites the church and all creation to sing in praise of God's glory. That glory is God's mercy toward sinners.

¹In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. ²Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

⁴The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. ⁵And I said: “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

⁶Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: “Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.” ⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!”

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

¹Ascribe to the Lord, you gods,

ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

²**Ascribe to the Lord the glory due God's name;
worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.**

³The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders;
the Lord is upon the mighty waters.

⁴**The voice of the Lord is a powerful voice;
the voice of the Lord is a voice of splendor.**

⁵The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees;
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

⁶**the Lord makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

⁷The voice of the Lord
bursts forth in lightning flashes.

⁸**The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

⁹The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare.
And in the temple of the Lord all are crying, "Glory!"

¹⁰**The Lord sits enthroned above the flood;
the Lord sits enthroned as king forevermore.**

¹¹O Lord, give strength to your people;
give them, O Lord, the blessings of peace.

Second Lesson

Romans 8:12-17

In describing the new life of faith, Paul refers to all three persons of the Trinity: the Spirit leads us to recognize that we are children of God the Father and joint heirs with Christ.

¹²Brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—
¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death
the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are
children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you
have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶it is that very Spirit
bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs,
heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may
also be glorified with him.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

*Gospel

John 3:1-17

Jesus' miracles prompt Nicodemus to visit him in secrecy. Jesus tells him about being born of the Spirit and about the Son who has been sent by God to save.

¹Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." ³Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." ⁴Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

¹¹"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *Come, Join the Dance of Trinity*

#412

Text: Richard Leach, b. 1953

- 1 Come, join the dance of Trinity,
before all worlds begun—
the interweaving of the Three,
the Father, Spirit, Son.
The universe of space and time
did not arise by chance,
but as the Three, in love and hope,
made room within their dance.

- 2 Come, see the face of Trinity,
newborn in Bethlehem;
then bloodied by a crown of thorns
outside Jerusalem.
The dance of Trinity is meant
for human flesh and bone;
when fear confines the dance in death,
God rolls away the stone.

- 3 Come, speak aloud of Trinity,
as wind and tongues of flame
set people free at Pentecost
to tell the Savior's name.
We know the yoke of sin and death,
our necks have worn it smooth;
go tell the world of weight and woe
that we are free to move!

- 4 Within the dance of Trinity,
before all worlds begun,
we sing the praises of the Three,
the Father, Spirit, Son.
Let voices rise and interweave,
by love and hope set free,
to shape in song this joy, this life:
the dance of Trinity.

*Prayers of Intercession

On this festival of The Holy Trinity, let us pray to the triune God, responding to each petition with the words, “we praise your name.”

A brief silence.

Universal God, strengthen leaders of the church for their ministries; that theologians manifest the triune mystery for our time; and that all the baptized be renewed in faith. O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, **we praise your name.**

Cleanse the mighty waters of the earth; that cedars and oak trees be nurtured; and that wildernesses be protected. O God, creator, gardener, and keeper, **we praise your name.**

Embolden leaders of nations to enact justice for all their people; that prejudice against those of different nationality or color or language cease; and that democracy flourish around the globe. O God, fortress and protector, **we praise your name.**

Help all your precious children to shun the use of violence; and that, in remembrance of all the soldiers and civilians who have died in warfare, humankind maintain peace between nations, on our streets, and in our homes. O God, judge, peacemaker, and shield, **we praise your name.**

We long for this global pandemic to end; that vaccines be fairly distributed; that the suffering be comforted; that those who are ill be made whole. O God, healer and nurse, **we praise your name.**

We hope that this summertime offer refreshment to everyone; that relatives and friends find joy with one another; that travelers be kept safe; and that refugees find safety. O God, friend, companion, and homeland, **we praise your name.**

In remembrance of all who have died in the faith, we join with Mary to sing a magnificent of praise. That with all the saints, at the end of all things, we receive your eternal life. Holy God, **we praise your name.**

Into your endless love we commend all for whom we pray, trusting as did Jesus in your grace and might, now and forever. **Amen.**

*Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy God,
Breath of life and Fire of love:
with a mighty wind you brought creation into being,
and by a pillar of fire you led your people into freedom.
We praise you for the gift of your Son,
who brought forth the Holy Spirit on his disciples of every race and nation.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,
his death, resurrection,
and the sending of the holy and life-giving Spirit,
we await his coming again to renew the face of the earth.

Holy Spirit, pour out your new life upon us and upon this meal:
anoint us with your gifts of faith, hope, and love,
that, with thankful hearts,
we may be witnesses to our Risen Lord.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
both now and forever.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Communion

Music Interlude *Prelude on "Nicaea"* (WILLIAMS)

Prayer after Communion

Wellspring of joy,
through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts.
Satisfy the hunger still around us,
and send us as joyful witnesses,
that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom
to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.
The God of life,
Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

Text: Reginald Heber, 1783-1826, alt.

- 1 Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!
- 2 Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wert and art, and evermore shalt be.
- 3 Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye of sinfulness thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in pow'r, in love and purity.
- 4 Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Dismissal

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Postlude *For the Beauty of the Earth* (LARSON)



Starting next Sunday, June 6, through July and August, we will worship together from our parking lot. Pick up a bulletin and Communion from the side driveway, and find a spot for us to still come together and worship our Risen Lord!

Praying Together

... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating: Gayle Agg, Bob Buettner, Joan Clarke, John Crawford, Nicole Crawford, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Donna Franz, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Judy Jones, Matt Jones, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Andrea Lanzalaca, Sara Mendes, Phyllis Nemeth, Bernice Novak, Don Rusher Jr, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tom Susanek, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Linda Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family

LAST WEEK

General Fund receipts for week ending 5/23/2021: \$1987

Lectionary Blog: Nicodemus and the Heavenly Temple



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In this week's readings, we return to the scene between Jesus and Nicodemus. This man was a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin and, in the very least, sympathetic to Jesus' cause if not an outright member of the movement (John 7:50-51; 19:39-42). Initially, he simply paid Jesus a compliment: "You are a teacher who has come from God!" Jesus wasn't content to say "thank you" and move on. He wanted to use the opportunity to teach about both where he was coming from and where he was going.

Jesus pointed out, in effect, that Nicodemus already knew quite a bit about him. After arguing that humans only heard the wind/Spirit but didn't know where it came from and where it went (John 3:8), Jesus pronounced the maxim that "we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen" (11). Remember, Nicodemus began the conversation by announcing that Jesus had come from God because of the clear signs that God was with him. Nicodemus testified based on what he had seen, which led him to claim that Jesus had been sent from God.

I believe Nicodemus is unfairly judged based on this conversation. Obviously, he was held in high regard by the Gospel writer. Being born again is a difficult concept to understand, even thousands of years later after its entry into popular thought and language. Christians say "born again," but it means different things according to which tradition or denomination is speaking. I don't think that Jesus or Nicodemus were offended by the conversation they had. Their words don't seem to have ruptured the relationship. After all, Nicodemus stood by Jesus even when his disciples fled (John 19:39).

In this passage, I think Jesus is challenging Nicodemus to feel the weight of his own words. Nicodemus probably didn't realize how correct he was when he said that Jesus came from God and God was with him. Jesus raised the stakes by saying that he had come to do a greater salvific work than Moses (John 3:14), and that he, himself, would be lifted up in order to save the world.

That was where Jesus was heading, but what can we say about where he was coming from?

Jesus said that no one has gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven (13). That said, God had granted visions of the heavenly throne room from which Jesus came. This week's passage from Isaiah contains a description of the place where Jesus had been hanging out since before the creation of the world. God is on the royal throne amid the heavenly temple. God's garments fill the building. Multi-winged flying, flaming serpents hover over God and continually sing praises (Isaiah 6:2-3). Their voices cause the heavenly temple, as robust a building as it must be, to shake (4). This is a terrifying, deeply holy scene. And this was Jesus' experience for millennia before his advent on earth.

Psalm 29 provides further details. God's glorious voice thunders over the waters (3) and the throne of the Lord is over the flood (10). Remember that, in many ancient near eastern cosmologies, creation was at least partially a war for control over the waters. That's why so much of Genesis 1 is about separating waters and establishing boundaries that they cannot transgress. When God wished to unmake the world in the Noah story, it was surrendered back to unordered and undifferentiated water. The fountains of the deep mingled water with rain from the sky (Genesis 7:11). God's throne is established over the managed forces of watery chaos. But God's voice also shakes the forests, mountains, sky and desert (Psalm 29:5-9).

In short, God's overwhelming power is palpable throughout creation at all times! The experience of being in God's presence is to be surrounded and confronted with overwhelming power. Continually. For thousands of years. This is where Jesus came from.

So, yes, Nicodemus had a lot to learn about what being born again meant. But he also testified to the truth, probably even more so than he realized, when he said that Jesus was sent from God and that God was with him. It remains for us all to meditate on the love and power of God that would send Jesus from a loud, shaking throne room in the heavenly temple, which is barely held together against the manifestation of God's powerful presence, to be lifted up on a Roman cross to save the world.

Cory Driver is a minister of word and service, and the director of the Transformational Leadership Academy in the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. He earned his doctorate in Jewish religious cultures from Emory University, Atlanta. Cory lives with his family in Indianapolis.

Trinity Sunday

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. John 16:13 (NIV)



The puzzle is based on John 16:12-15

P O T F N Z D D O G W F Y K Y
V Q R W M E O X B E A R N Q S
J I O H H C U I R Z T J J V J
S N M E Y Q J K P H R N X O J
K K L A B E L O N G U T N L P
B C X R A W E Q V A T T Y E F
P B C S M M Y G E O H N F N Y
J E L U O Y S U J P S P E A K
D O T C I T L I R Q T H V I Q
Q C I I N H Y D M I O Z Y J N
D N V F A T H E R K W X I K J
B R V S I A R I G L O R Y G O
H S X W H O P H W C H R T W A
E P J U M S Q Y W F L Y Z F H
A Q N U Y Y F A S G M Q W F Y

COME
BELONG
SPEAK

TRUTH
GUIDE
FATHER

MORE
SPIRIT
BEAR

HEARS
GLORY
KNOWN