

Light the Christ Candle

Welcome -by *Laura Turnbull*

I welcome you in the name of Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit. Today is Trinity Sunday. We focus on the triune nature of God – the one who is Eternal Parent, Resurrected One, and Awesome Spirit.

Announcements

Introduction of Theme -a dialogue between two people, by *Gord Dunbar, Kincardine PC, Kincardine, ON*

Now that you're finally going with me to church this Sunday, there are a couple of things you need to know.

Like what?

Well, you need to know the key players, the key figures, you know, the ones who are the very reason we come to worship.

Kind of like the founders or something? Well, who are they?

Okay, now listen closely. (*pause*) There is one God.

One God. That seems easy enough. What do you call this God?

We call our God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Now, just wait a minute. You told me there is one God, right?

That's right.

And God has three names?

Well, not three names, three persons.

Three persons?

That's right!

So, which is it?

So, which is what?

Which person is the reason we are all here?

The ones I told you.

But you told me three persons!

That's right ...

What's right?

God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Or said another way, Creator, Christ, and Spirit.

So, you have three Gods?

No, one God.

So, which is it?

Which is what?

Father, Son, or Holy Spirit? Creator, Christ, or Spirit?

Yes!

Yes to what?

That's God's name!

Which god?

Our one God.

But you gave me three names.

Three persons, one God.

Why three persons? Why not just one person?

Because they aren't all the same.

But you just told me there is one God.

There is! It's a wonderful mystery, isn't it?

Yeah, and the mystery is getting deeper. So, which is it?

Which is what?

Which name is the name of your God?

I told you ... Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ... or Creator, Christ, and Spirit.

But that is three, or maybe more.

Yes, but there is only one God.

I don't think I want to go to church with you today!

What is the problem?

You won't tell me the name of your God!

But I have told you the name. Creator, Christ, and Spirit. Or Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Let me get this straight. There is only one God.

Right.

Is it God the Father?

And God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

And God the Creator is the same as God the Christ?

No, they are different.

Aha!!! There are two Gods!

No, just one.

Well, what about the Holy Spirit?

Same thing.

How can you imagine or explain this, how this can be, three in one – separate yet together – all in one God?

I think you just did.

I have?

Sure, three in one. One God. Creator, Christ, and Spirit.

It doesn't seem very logical.

Sometimes logic isn't the answer. Some things we need to accept by faith.

Faith?

Faith!

You know, I don't think I am ever going to completely understand the Trinity. Why don't we just go to the baseball game this afternoon. By the way, who's on first?

That's right!!

Oh, no! Here we go again ...

Call to Worship -by *Karen Pryznyk, Okotoks, AB*

L: Today we come to worship our Three-in-One-God:

P: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

L: Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer

P: Maker, Lover, and Keeper

L: The Source and Model of all loving relationships, eternally giving and receiving in a circle of love.

Choir

Gathering Prayer -by *Tom Walkling, Utterson UC, Port Sydney, ON*

Dearest Parent of all creation: We come to you full of worries and opinions. We are buffered by world events and by events in our

own lives and those of our family and friends. And so, we open our hearts and minds to you today. God, be our model. Jesus, be our model. Holy Spirit, breathe fresh energy into our spirits. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Gathering Hymn -Lyrics by Catherine Stuart, while at River John-West Branch PC, River John, NS
(Tune: VU 374)

Glory be to God, Creator, Glory be to God, the Son. Glory be to God, the Spirit, Holy Mystery, three in One. Let your Spirit dance within us, As we worship you this day. Let your love enfold us gently, In our work and in our play.	Glory be to God, the potter, Mould and shape us as we grow. Let your loving hands surround us. Be the joy we deeply know. Teach us how to feel your presence, As we seek to see your face. On the journey, as we travel, May we find your warm embrace.	Glory be to your Son, Jesus. Let his light shine all around. May he welcome friend and stranger, To this place on holy ground. Let us reach so we can touch him, To find healing, love, and grace. In our need and in our hunger, May he feed us in this place.	Glory be to you, the Spirit, Holy breath and source of life. May you stir us into action, Seeking peace in place of strife. Walk beside us, move in places, Call us to your joy anew, So that we may seek to serve you, In the things we say and do.	Holy Mystery, faith unfolding, Dazzle us once more we pray. Grateful for your loving actions, Let your web of life not fray. With your wisdom and compassion, May we love the earth we share, Living wholly, laughing deeply, Singing your joy everywhere!
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Prayer of Confession -by Fraser Williamson, Loring PC, Port Loring/Golden Valley, ON

O God, our God, how glorious is your name in all the earth! In the beginning, you spoke, and your breath filled us with life! O God, our God, how glorious is your name in all the earth! When we drifted away, you were still with us. You sent your Son, so that we would know your love as he has known your love. After your Son returned to you, you sent the Spirit to us so your love continues to live among and in us. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Holy Trinity! Your love is three in one! Now, in silence, we open our hearts to God in confession and in hope! (a time of silent prayer) O God, our God, how glorious is your name in all the earth! Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Holy Trinity! Your love is three in one!

Words of Assurance -by Elaine Bidgood Sweet, First Presbyterian Church, Moorhead, MN

Nothing can separate us from the love of God, not hardship, not distress, not illness, not even death, not one thing, not one action. Hallelujah! I say again, nothing can separate us from the love of God, nothing in our past, nothing in our future, no sin minuscule or mighty; nothing can separate us from the love of God. Hallelujah! We are a forgiven, loved, and cherished people. Thanks be to God!

Offertory Prayer -by Diane McKenty, Grey Street UC, Winnipeg, MN

With thanks, we dedicate our offerings to you, God the Parent, God the Child, God the Spirit, the triune God of our faith. Accept these gifts of time, talent, and treasure. Use them as a blessing, these gifts given today with love and gratitude for all that you have shared with us. Amen.

Hymn Teach Me, God, to Wonder, VU # 299

Teach me, God, to wonder, teach me, God, to see; Let your world of beauty capture me.	Refrain Praise to you be given, Love for you be lived, Life be celebrated, Joy you give.	Let me, God, be open, Let me loving be, Let your world of people speak to me. Refrain	Let me, God, be ready, Let me be awake, In your world of loving my place take. Refrain	Teach me, God, to know you, Hear you when you speak, See you in my neighbour when we meet. Refrain
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Children's Ministry

The Lord's Prayer

Children Leave for Sunday School

Scripture Readings

Genesis 1:1-2:4, The Beginning (NIV)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning - the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning - the second day.

And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. God made two great lights - the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas and let the birds increase on the earth." And there was evening, and there was morning - the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God, he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground - everything that has the breath of life in it - I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

Hymn *Holy, Holy, Holy*, VU # 315

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!	Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,	Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,	Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;	Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;	Though the eye made blind by sin thy glory may not see,	All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,	Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,	Only thou are holy, there is none beside thee,	Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!	Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.	Perfect in power, in love, and purity.	God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Reflection *At Table with the Trinity*, Editor's Postlude, The Gathering, Pentecost 1 2020 (Year A)

-by Susan Lukey, Editor, *The Gathering, Pentecost 1, 2020*

I have several icons hanging by my bed, rooting me in my father's Ukrainian Orthodox heritage. My favourite is of the Trinity – three figures, feminine in form, seated at a table, the colours of their robes depicting who they are in the Trinitarian relationship – created by Russian painter Andrei Rublev in 1425 CE.

Trinity is something hard to explain. We've all sought our images with which to give shape to the theological concept: shamrocks; the ice, water, vapour cycle; three-in-one shampoo. But my favourite is this icon of the Trinity seated at the table.

We are a Trinitarian church. We baptize in the name of the Trinity: in the traditional formulation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We explore expansive formulations such as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Yet, I don't think we talk about Trinity very much anymore or wrestle with what the Trinity means for us as a church. We pray to God. We learn from and follow Jesus. Some may tend to refer more to the Spirit. They are all there, the three who make up the Trinity, but I think that there has been a Trinitarian collapse. We speak of each of the three, but less of the relationship, the three in one. Perhaps because it is hard to explain, we've danced away from the concept – or maybe that's just me!

Yet, I love this image of the Trinity seated at the table. It speaks of relationship. It speaks of sharing resources and conversation. All three are engaged, each with the others. They are seated with equal rank at the table. No one is at the head with someone else relegated to the foot. The energy at the table is of gentle humility, rather than power and authority. Each of the three needs the others to make this gathering at table possible.

At a recent ministerial meeting in our town, the conversation turned to who was invited to sit at the table as churches in town. It was not an easy conversation. Lines were drawn and judgements quickly declared about who was welcome. A specific, "right" doctrine became the standard. It is a story many of you may well know. The table was fenced and, while we from the United Church may have been able to agree to the proposed "right" doctrine, we couldn't agree to closing the table to others who wanted to be there.

It seems to me that it is more important than ever to consider this image of the Trinity, seated at table together in gentle humility and grace. There is space at this Trinitarian table for others to come and share in the conversation. Engaging this image of the Trinity and the wisdom of the Trinity calls us to ask, "Who is invited to sit at table with us in our church? Are there those who would not feel welcome? What is that? What can we do, or stop doing, in order to create the welcome? How will we trust the Trinity to guide us through the discomfort and tension?"

There is a tension alive in the Trinity. This tension is not a negative energy, but one that invites us to engage and dance and converse. God is one but three. Jesus and Spirit are not God, but they are! We need to live in that tension and embrace that tension, rather than just dealing with each member of the Trinity separately. We need to jump right into the centre of the Trinity and explore what gifts come as we recognize all three acting and interacting in our world.

Then we may learn how to deal with the tensions in our world – tensions between cultures and between political parties, between those with differing views of the world, and between those who long for the past and those who are worried about the future we are creating on this planet. It seems to me that if we seat ourselves at the table with the Trinity, we might just learn what it is to make space for everyone at the table and how conversations can bridge rather than divide as we learn to creatively welcome the tension of those conversations.

Prayers of the People -by Tracy Murton, Saskatoon, SK

Holy One, our voices rise together in thanksgiving for all the beauty that surrounds us. For the beauty of space to pause in the summer, at work, at study, or at play, alone, with family, with friends, with creation, with pets, with community, with other pilgrims, all time to proclaim the sacredness of the spiritual practice of prayer.

For the beauty of your creation: the mountains, the prairies, the birds, the forests, the oceans, the tundra, the rivers, and the animals all proclaim the miracle of your handiwork around us.

For the beauty of your people throughout the world: communities gathered in homes, in sanctuaries, in tents, in gymnasiums, in chapels, in cabins, and in sacred spaces, all proclaiming the mystery of faith that draws us ever closer to you.

For the beauty of this United Church of Canada: the struggling, the celebrating, the discerning, the laughing, the wondering, the crying, and the praying, all yearning for the wisdom and integrity to be your hands and feet in our communities, struggling for justice and peace.

Help us on this journey together to be ever mindful of the abundance and the beauty in our lives, in our church, in our communities, and all around us. We ask this in the name of the Christ who walks with us on every path as our companion and our guide.

Parting Hymn Trinity Hymn, lyrics by Bill Steadman, written for Bay of Quinte Conference, 2006

(Tune: VU # 2)

God, Creator, you have shaped us,
Formed the earth and sky above;
As we live our lives with passion
Help us serve with grace and love.

Christ, companion, may you guide us,
Lift each heart and soothe the soul;
You, our teacher, prophet, healer,
Light our path and make us whole.

Holy Spirit, blow among us;
Give us hope for each new day;
Show us courage, grace, and wisdom,
As we travel on our way.

Benediction -by Karen Pryznyk, Okotoks UC, Okotoks, AB

Three-in-One God, when we try to imagine you, we paint a feeble picture. Three-in-One God, when we say we understand you, we are just fooling ourselves. Three-in-One God, when we are certain we know you, we are certainly wrong. Help us to worship you anyway, because we know we have been called. We trust in your love, and we rest in your presence.

Choral Amen

Extinguish the Christ Candle