

May 30, 2021 Holy Trinity Sunday
Service of Word and Prayer

We are using parts of the Service of the Word liturgy this morning, from your green hymn book, the Lutheran Book of Worship, page 126. The prayers are based on Sundays & Seasons. Shut off all the distractions in your home. Perhaps print out copies of this for all. Enjoy the quiet for a bit – take in some deep breaths. Light your candle. May your family be blessed in this time together.

The Gathering

Greeting: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Call to Worship: Creator of earth and sky, of endless space and burning stars, we come together in the belief that we are important to you. You created us; you sustain our lives; you fulfil us with hope. We give thanks for the miracle of spring and for the power of new life within us and our world; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn: ELW 413 / LBW 165 - Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Lord be with you ~ and also with you.

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 by your Spirit, that we may proclaim all that Christ has revealed, through one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Word

The First Reading is from **Isaiah 6:1-8**

Psalm 29, is found on page 228

The Second Reading is from **Romans 8:12-17**

Please rise for the gospel lesson. ***Holy, Holy, Holy, our hearts adore you. Our hearts are glad to say the words: you are Holy God.***

Gospel: **John 3:1-17**

Sermon for today was crafted and is delivered by Rev. Douglas Reble

Assistant to the Bishop, Eastern Synod

Are you familiar with the name Chris Hadfield? I suspect many of you are. He is the Canadian astronaut who, when he was in space, twittered and sang himself in to the hearts of our country, young and old alike. Are you familiar with the name Russell Schweikert? I suspect many of you are not. He is an American astronaut who flew on Apollo 9. After he returned to earth from his space adventure, he wrote these words:

“When you are in space you see the earth not as something big but as a small thing out there. And the contrast between that bright blue and white Christmas tree ornament and the black sky, that infinite universe, really comes through, and the size of it, the significance of it. It is so small and fragile and such a precious little spot in the universe that you can block it out with your thumb, and you

realize that on that small spot, that little blue and white thing, is everything that means anything to you – all of history and music and poetry and art and death and birth and love, all the tears, joy, all of it on that little spot out there that you can cover with your thumb.”

It is all a matter of perspective, is it not?

Truth be told, our lives are lived on the basis of our perspectives. The graduates that we honour at this time of year have a perspective that can no doubt be described as on top of the world. And why not? They are celebrating a significant accomplishment whether it is graduating from high school, university, or community college, whether they took online course because of Covid or not. But soon that perspective will change and life will be seen through the nervous eyes of someone starting their post-secondary education or from the bottom rung of the job ladder. We all see different things at different times. It is all in the perspective.

The story is told of a wealthy man, he made his money in oil, who commissioned Pablo Picasso to paint a portrait of his wife. When the portrait was completed, the man was shocked to see the image that had been created. “Why that looks nothing like my wife. You should have painted her the way she really is!”

Picasso took a deep breath and said, “I’m not sure what that would be.”

Without hesitation, the man pulled out his wallet and removed a photograph of his wife saying, “There, you see, this is how she really is!

Picasso, bending over, looked at it and replied, “She is rather small and flat, isn’t she?”

Perspective. Today is Holy Trinity Sunday on the church calendar, the only Sunday set aside during the entire year to honour a doctrine. As students of the Bible know, the word “trinity” is found nowhere in scripture but the doctrine of the Trinity comes from a faithful reading of that scripture with an attempt to give a reasonably adequate understanding of God. We find the creator God making an entire universe out of nothing but a spoken word. We see God as redeemer in the person and work of Jesus Christ, God in human flesh. We see God as sustainer in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. “God in three persons, blessed Trinity” as the hymn writer has it. It is all in the perspective.

On this day, a goodly number of preachers will try to explain the mystery of the Trinity, how can one God be three persons? Some will use the illustration of H₂O, depending on the circumstances we find these same elements in either water or ice or steam, some composition of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen, but three different ways of experiencing these elements.

Or I might say to my wife Sharon, I am husband; to my sons, I am father; to many others I am Pastor Doug or friend. Same person but from different perspectives. None of these examples is exactly accurate in explaining this mystery of the Trinity, but suffice it to say, no matter what we say about God, it will never be enough. What we do say, will depend upon our perspective. Beyond that, we can let it go with the words of the psalmist, again from Psalm 8: "O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth."

Perspective. One more story. A man had an awful day at work. Everything had gone wrong. There was one interruption after another and he was never able to complete his work. When he entered the door that evening, he knew that his husband must have had a similar day. You could see it in his face. So, to set the process straight, or get the upper hand, from his perspective, he began, "I have had the worst day of my life. At work today it has been nothing but bad news, bad news, bad news. I don't know what kind of day you've had, but if at all possible, can you share some good news with me?"

His husband, a thoughtful and loving person, considered his request for a moment and then responded. "Of course, I can. You know we have four beautiful children?" He agreed. "Well," he said, three of them didn't break a leg today."

Perspective. Friends, I have a question for you. From what perspective will you view life, later today? From what perspective will you view life this coming week? Covid or no Covid. It will make a difference.

Through the eyes of the world, it was another brutal murder in a brutal existence. Through the eyes of faith, it was God so loving the world that God gave God's only Son so that all might live. John 3:16, from today's Gospel reading for Holy Trinity Sunday. It's all a matter of perspective.

Though the eyes of the world, Saul of Tarsus was another religious fanatic bent on terrorism. Through the eyes of faith, Saul would become Paul, the writer of First

Corinthians, Chapter 13: “And now faith, hope and love abide, these three, and the greatest of these is love.” It’s all a matter of perspective.

Through the eyes of the world, those who are poor and hungry and sick and imprisoned and vulnerable are a burden. Through the eyes of faith, they are our sisters and brothers, the people of God who we are called to love and serve and to do it in word and actions, the most clear, caring, loving and just ways we can.

Through the eyes of the world, we are too small and powerless to make a difference. Through the eyes of faith, we know that when we go into the world this coming week and in the weeks to follow, we do not go it alone, we go with each other, and our God goes with us and that is power. It’s all a matter of perspective.

Through the eyes of the world, you and I are unbelievably insignificant – just one of six billion plus. Through the eyes of faith, we are incredibly important. God knows us so intimately that even the hairs of our head are numbered.

My dear friends in Christ. How will you see things today? How will you see things tomorrow? How do you live your life? Through the eyes of the world? Through the eyes of faith? Remember, it’s all in the perspective. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

Hymn: ELW 412 - Come Join the Dance of Trinity

Our Response

OFFERING PRAYER Gracious God, receive our gifts as you receive us. You walk beside us and you meet us in hunger with bread from heaven. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ our saving grace. **Amen.**

Prayers of the People by Maureen Rueckwald

Let us come before the triune God in prayer.

A brief silence.

We pray, O God, for your holy church around the world. Revitalize and renew us, that we may be reborn once again through the waters of baptism and the blowing wind of your Spirit. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks for your power revealed to us in creation; for cedar and oak trees, for rushing waters, for the echoes of thunder. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the nations and our leaders, that led by your Spirit, they work towards a world where all of your children enjoy peace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for healing for all those who suffer, especially victims and survivors of trauma or violence. Give respite to those living with PTSD or any other mental health concerns. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for this worshipping community, and for the people of St. James Lutheran Church as they leave their building today. We pray that the splendor of your majesty and the holiness of your mystery may be glorified through our worship and our relationships with one another. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks, O God, for those who have died in the faith. We remember also those whose lives have been lost due to the horrors of war. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace. **Amen.**

The peace of Christ be with you always and also with you.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray **The Lord's Prayer:**

Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy name,
 thy kingdom come,
 thy will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those
 who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

Hymn: ELW 414 / LBW 535 - Holy God, We Praise Your Name

Benediction

God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the comforter keep you in peace. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. and share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**