

June 12, 2022 Sunday Order of Worship Pentecost Season
Trinity Sunday

‘But the **Advocate**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.’ **John 14:26**

We are in the Season of Pentecost, also known as the Season of the Holy Spirit. And this is Trinity Sunday where we are reminded that we Christians describe God as Three in One:

1. The Creator which makes all things possible,
2. The Redeemer/Reconciler as shown in and through Jesus and
3. The Sustainer/Advocate/Holy Spirit.

Prayer: O Holy Spirit God, you come to us, and you are among us.
We are listening for your wisdom and your whisper and your song of hope.
Come as the wind that clears out the cobwebs;
come as the fire, that burns off unnecessary burdens;
come as the gentle rain that can clean and refresh us.
You are welcome here.
Teach us your truth and bring healing to your Church
and to your people. In the Holy Name of Jesus. Amen.

Jesus told us that the Holy Spirit would teach us everything and remind us of all that Jesus has taught us. He apparently had some concerns that we might not be open to learning or remembering. That happens you know, when a person has a closed mind. Or a mind that is already convinced that you are right and/or that you know it all. That makes it hard to let new information and/or ideas take root. Jesus goes on to tell us in John 16: 12 – 13a ¹²“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When God’s Holy Spirit of truth comes, it will guide you into all the truth...

So we will begin this Season of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Proverbs which is a Book of Wisdom, possibly put together by Solomon---who remembers what a complex person Solomon was from a few weeks ago?

I won’t re-tell that story but please don’t discount the Wisdom in this book of Proverbs just because the author had his shortcomings. We all fall short and can also be capable of great and good works. The Scripture reading this morning explains that Wisdom is personified as a Woman and has much to teach us if we open our minds and our hearts to the Holy Spirit of God’s truth.

Scripture Readings Proverbs 8: 1 – 4, 22 – 31

Does not wisdom call

and understanding raise her voice?

²On the heights, beside the way,

at the crossroads she takes her stand;

³beside the gates in front of the town,

at the entrance of the portals she cries out:

4 "To you, O people, I call,
and my cry is to all who live.....

"The LORD created me at the beginning^[a] of his work,^[b]
the first of God's acts of long ago.

23 Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

24 When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.

25 Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth,

26 when God had not yet made earth and fields^[c]
or the world's first bits of soil.

27 When God established the heavens, I was there;
when God drew a circle on the face of the deep,

28 when God made firm the skies above,
when God established the fountains of the deep,

29 when God assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress God's command,
when God marked out the foundations of the earth,

30 then I was right there beside God, like a master worker,^[d]
and I was daily God's delight,
playing before God always,

31 playing in God's inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

**These are the Living Words of God for God's blessed people.
Thanks be to God.**

Come Holy Spirit of God, speak through the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts that we may be guided into all Truth as revealed through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Message 'Trinity Mystery'

Yes, it's Trinity Sunday...once a year, I get to stand here and tell you all the stuff I don't know about the great mystery of the Trinity. The Trinity is something that, as my Theology text book tells me: '...cannot be completely grasped in our concepts and images.'¹ Joe Jones [A Grammar of Christian Faith](#)

A thorough search of the Bible gives us some clues but in truth, the word Trinity and the Trinitarian formulae are NOT spelled out for us in Scripture. That would be problematic for those who believe that the Bible is the ONLY place where we can encounter God

and find inspiration and salvation. Fortunately, for us, as Methodists, we believe and know from our own lives that we can experience God in a variety of ways: Through discussion with others and the right use of our minds—God is there in full Trinitarian glory.

Through transcendent and highly personalized encounters...on the beach, in the woods, at the birth of a baby, at the grave of a loved one—our Triune God is present to us in dynamic and grace-filled ways. AND

Through the traditions of the church that are passed down from generation to generation...God meets us as the Trinity in our human organizations and understandings.

Isn't God grand! And amazing! And infinitely entertaining if we are willing to open our minds and hearts to all these many ways in which our Trinity God is trying to get our attention.

For example, let's look at some of the traditional Holy Spirit understandings that have developed over the centuries. Yes, I'm talking about Doctrines and creeds. If that makes you shudder, I understand. Maybe that doesn't sound very entertaining to you but I promise that I won't go on and on. So just bear with me and, if you would, please, turn in your hymnal to #880 *The Nicene Creed* to see what the Holy Spirit aspect of the Trinity is all about.

*We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father
and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.*

Kind of complicated, I know and I can tell you that there were all kinds of arguments and discussions and disagreements about that one back in the Fourth Century, from 325 to 381. That's 56 years...Us Christians have long drawn out conflicts built into our historical DNA up to this very day but....

If you turn to #884 you will see that we can thank the Korean Methodist Church for describing the Holy Spirit in plainer language.

*We believe in the Holy Spirit,
God present with us for
guidance, for comfort,
and for strength.*

I couldn't find the date for this but it sure has a nice ring to it, yes?

*We believe in the Holy Spirit,
God present with us for
guidance, for comfort,
and for strength.*

Keep it simple, right?

Of course, that's not the end of the story because if you turn to #885, *A Modern Affirmation of Faith* you will read:

*We believe in the Holy Spirit
as the divine presence
in our lives,
whereby we are kept in
perpetual remembrance
of the truth of Christ,
and find strength and help
in time of need.*

That seems so much in line with John 16:13:

¹³ When God's Holy Spirit of truth comes, it will guide you into all the truth... AND John 14: 26: '*...the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.*'

Perpetual remembrance of the truth of Christ...that is the work of the Holy Spirit.

So that's just a tiny sampling of how the greatest minds of our tradition keep trying to put into words the complexity and beauty and harmony of the Trinity. Defining, refining, and understanding stuff sometimes seem like the most urgent things that we need to do in order to deal with the complexities of our lives and then to calm down and be at peace.

But what are we to do when we face the unfathomable mystery of the Trinity? And yes, once a year, I get to stand here and make a case for living with uncertainty about all the fine points of that concept. Living with an incomplete grasp of the power and presence of the divine and Trinitarian God who we worship—AND make it somehow palatable and sustainable to all of you.

So here's my 2022 stab at it. I'm going to make 1 observation from my life experience and then give you 3 little things to think about.

Observation: Trinity is so vast and complex and multi-dimensional that many people, myself included, choose an aspect of the Trinity that is most meaningful to us and then center our faith practices and understanding round that part of the Trinity that moves us the most.

I find myself praying to God more than to Jesus...as much as I love Jesus and as committed as I am to following Jesus... God is my 'go-to'—in the name of Jesus who offers us the Advocate and Holy Spirit.

Other people I know have such a special relationship with Jesus that their prayers, their meditations and their focus is always on Jesus who loves us. Jesus as brother, as teacher, as savior. Jesus as the son of God and the bringer of the Holy Spirit: Jesus is their 'go-to.'

And I have known people who live in the power of the Holy Spirit as fully and completely as they possibly can. They are listening and sensing the Holy Spirit around them in all the places and with all the people in their lives. Because that is where they get their comfort and healing and strength and who doesn't need that. At the same time, they never forget that it's God's Holy Spirit they are 'going to' and that Jesus has made that Holy Spirit available to them in a special way.

And God understands that our limited human brains gravitate towards the holiness experience that has had the greatest impact and meaning for us individually. And that's OK—as long as we keep an open mind and an open heart and remember that our 'go-to' is not the full and complete story. And occasionally, or in a more disciplined and intentional way, we can also include the other parts of the Trinity our faith journey and in our understanding.

There is, In fact, No one single and only right way to be in relationship with God. And God knows that and is OK with that.

So keeping that in mind, I offer you 3 thoughts.

Three thoughts:

1. Look to the Proverbs reading this a.m. and take comfort that the presence of Wisdom is all around us, waiting for us to notice.

² On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;

³ beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries out:

⁴ "To you, O people, I call,
and my cry is to all who live.....

God's Holy Spirit wisdom is all around us from the very beginning of time. Even before the development of math and art and music and language.

"The LORD created me (Wisdom) at the beginning of his work,
the first of God's acts of long ago.

²³ Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth...

²⁷ When God established the heavens, I was there;
when God drew a circle on the face of the deep,

²⁸ when God made firm the skies above,
when God established the fountains of the deep,

²⁹ when God assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress God's command,

when God marked out the foundations of the earth,

³⁰ **then I was right there beside God, like a master worker.**

That's another name for the Holy Spirit: *master worker from and for all time!*

2. Be humble before the Lord: It's OK to admit that you don't know it all about God and the Bible and Jesus and the Spirit. Nobody does! Do you know everything there is to know about anything? Probably not. And there is no shame in admitting that and trusting that God knows and that's good enough. I have friends who say prayers like: *Thank you God for being the One who Knows so that I don't have to worry about it.* I know people who write little notes to themselves to remind them: *God knows it all and does NOT Need my help today.* There's nothing wrong with being a small, tiny little star in a great big universe, surrounded by a million, billion other stars and planets and black holes. Be humble. God's got this covered.

3. Don't forget, no matter what your Go-to part of the Trinity is, that you can Trust that the Holy Spirit is Present and available to provide you with strength and help and guidance and comfort. The Holy Spirit will come to you if you ask and seek and listen. That is how you can be guided into all the Truth that you need for your personal circumstances. With an open mind and an open heart:
 - You will be reminded of what Jesus came to teach us.
 - You will be given power to speak when it's time to speak. And to be silent when it's time to be silent.
 - You will grow in your ability to love and to be loved and to share love, God's love.
As it says in Romans 5...the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. You can trust that God is with us through the love and power of the Holy Spirit, as told to us by Proverbs and by Jesus.

So I hope that's enough Trinity talk for this year's Trinity Sunday. More will be revealed!

And I just love it that the Proverbs scripture ends, as I am doing, telling us that Wisdom is *daily God's delight, playing before God always, playing God's inhabited world, and delighting in the human race.* We are a joy and a delight to God's Holy Spirit. A good thing to remember as we look forward to our picnic today. Joy, delight, wisdom, humility and trust...That is a very powerful understanding right there. Come Holy Spirit Come!

As we consider all that has been said here, let's sing verses 4 and 5 of #500 unless you prefer to simply open your hearts and minds to the Holy Spirit who is just waiting to show you the truth, the hope, the love of God.

ⁱ Grammar of Christian Faith: Systematic Explorations in Christian Life and Doctrine, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc 2002 Oxford, UK, Vol. 2, p.484