



Order of service

Date: Sunday June 7th, 2020

Trinity Sunday

We acknowledge that we are worshipping on the traditional lands of the Boon Wurrung people, of the Kulin nation, and pay our respects to elders past and present.

DON'T FORGET YOU CAN LOG INTO THE CHURCH WEBSITE AND SEE MUCH OF THIS BY VIDEO ON THE FRONT PAGE!!!!

INTROIT –

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: In the name of the Three who are Love:
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Leader: The Three who are over my head:

All: The Three who are under my tread.

Leader: The Three who are over me here:

All: The three who are over me there.

Leader: The Three who in heaven do dwell:

All: The Three in the great ocean swell.

Leader: Pervading Three, O be with me:

All: Pervading Three, O be with me.

Leader: Eternal God and Father,
You create us by your power
And redeem us by your love:
Guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,
That as we give ourselves in love and service
To one another and to you,
We may reflect your nature here on earth,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Let us worship God!

Introduction for video

WELCOME

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all!

And also with you!

Opening prayer

For my shield this day I call: Almighty power, the Holy Trinity.

Faith in the Three, trust in the One:

Creating all through love; In faith I trust in the Father of all:

He is my refuge, a very strong wall. For my shield this day I call:

Christ's power in his coming.

Christ's power in his dying.

Christ's power in his rising.

The mighty Spirit who breathes through all.

Faith in the Three, trust in the One:

Making all through love. Amen.

Reading 1 – Psalm 8

¹O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

²Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.

³When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon, and the stars that you have established.

⁴What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

⁵Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honour.

⁶You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,

⁷all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,

⁸the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

⁹O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Prayer of confession

Leader: The Father is always present.

All: Forgive us for not reflecting your faithfulness.

Leader: The Son is always self-giving.

All: Forgive for living for ourselves.

Leader: The Spirit always leads us on.

All: Forgive us for holding back.

Leader: Almighty God, who forgives all, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal.

All: Amen.

Words of affirmation

Triune God, we need you to come to us again
as God,
as Saviour,

as Counsellor.

Thank you that our forgiveness, healing and growth
lies not in how hard we work,
but in how gracious you are.
Hear again the Good News.
Our sins are forgiven.

ALL: Thanks be to God! Amen.

EARLY WORD – Names for God.

Hi kids, and others. Today in the church we are celebrating Trinity Sunday. It is always the Sunday after Pentecost Sunday.

And it is a kind of strange Sunday because we think about God being three things in one – I know confusing. If you have been to church a bit you might have heard someone in church say, it might have been me, “in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit...”

This is the sentence that makes us think about God as the three-in-one.

Now because that is a little confusing to do the maths behind that (and maths is not my strength), let’s come at it a different way.

You all have names. Probably a first name, a middle name and a last name.

And these names are given to you for reasons. Ask your parents how come you got the names you have.

But sometimes, well often, many of us get other names called “nicknames”. In case you were wondering where the term nickname comes from, we understand it comes from an old English word about 300 years ago that means “additional” or extra.

Nicknames can be given to us as a short version of one of our names, or something to do with our appearance, or our job, or something we have done and so on. So for many of us we can have many names.

The same goes for God. God has many names that we have given God. Things like God, Jehovah, Elohim, and other things like Holy, Almighty, Father, and still others like giver of good, creator, spirit, love.

Whatever name we have given God over time, they are mostly to do with how God acts or what God is like.

So whilst today we think of the names – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – the Trinity, we know that God is known by a whole bunch of other names. You might like to rewind a little to see the names I mentioned before and talk with your parents about why you think God got that name.

Well that is all for now. For all you children going back to school tomorrow for the first time in many weeks, I hope it goes well. Remember, stay safe and wash your hands.

SHARING OUR STORIES –

2nd READING: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13;

¹¹Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹²Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. ¹³The grace of the

Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Prayer – Little trinities

In love Lord, we give you thanks for the little trinities that reflect your nature to us:

For the tender kiss, the friendly hug.

For the man and wife who make love and conceive.

For the babe who sucks its mother's breasts.

For the child playing with its parents.

For the fellowship of the airwaves, of sport, music and dance.

For the sun that is fire, light and warmth.

For the water that is liquid, steam and ice.

May the love of the Three give birth to a new community.

May the friendship of the Three give birth to a new humanity.

May the life of the Three give birth to a new creativity.

May the togetherness of the Three give birth to a new unity.

May the glory of the Three give birth to a new society.

In the name of the three. Amen.

Preaching – What's the point of Trinity?

Jesus said, "Who do men say that I am?"

And his disciples answered and said, "Some say you are John the Baptist returned from the dead; others say Elias, or other of the old prophets."

And Jesus answered and said, "But who do you say that I am?"

Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Logos, existing in the Father as His rationality and then, by an act of His will, being generated, in consideration of the various functions by which God is related to his creation, but only on the fact that Scripture speaks of a Father, and a Son, and a Holy Spirit, each member of the Trinity being coequal with every other member, and each acting inseparably with and interpenetrating every other member, with only an economic subordination within God, but causing no division which would make the substance no longer simple."

And Jesus answering, said, "What?"

You know it really is true that theology was never meant to mess with our heads, but somehow that seems to have happened.

The intent I believe of all theology is to assist us to figure out who God is and what this God wants of us. And I know that sometimes it appears not to be doing that.

Often this has been the type of criticism thrown at the idea of the Trinity itself as well as attempts to explain it.

Yes, today then is Trinity Sunday, and going against wise convention I am going to do some theology with you today around the Trinity.

Back in 1998 in a sermon from another place I wrote this...

God has many faces. The ones the bible shows us are still active. God is still creating. Wisdom is still playing and calling us to account for our care or lack of for the environment. Jesus is still calling us to walk the way of the cross, is still giving us this peculiar peace of God, is still breathing the Spirit on us. The Spirit continues to fill our hearts with God's love, to know we are loved and to love others, is still calling us on into new places and speaks to us in ways and about things that were not known of two thousand years ago.

God has many faces. Some male, some female, some neither and some both. God is Trinity, and God is rainbow. God is the many and God is the one. God is ultimately mysterious, and yet meets us here and now in this time of worship, in the breaking of the bread and in every ordinary moment of our lives if only we can see. How we understand God, what face of God we choose to see, shapes our understanding of how we think God acts in our world, and how God deals with me.

It is interesting looking back on previous thinking about things theological and biblical. I guess I still hold to those things but let me go a bit further today.

Often people depict God in ways that are quite frankly made in the image of humankind. For example, one writer, note they are from America, puts it like this...

If I'm honest, it's disturbing to consider my pictures of God. There is God as Candy Man or Sugar Daddy who reinforces my self-aggrandizing narcissism. Sometimes God feels like the Absentee Landlord or Reclusive Neighbor. I know that He exists, but He feels hidden, silent, incommunicative, and far away. At least the Psalmists experienced and wrote about this image. God as Vending Machine, Concierge, or Short Order Cook is there to cater to my whims. To make my problems disappear there is God as Magician, and to engineer a parking space or fine tune some petty detail of my life there is God as Puppeteer. When I feel the weight of my faults and failures, God looms as a High School Principal, Probation Officer, or Divine Accountant. He snoops around in the dirty details of my life, exposes me, and I am found in arrears. In election season we get God as Partisan Politician to reinforce the worst sorts of patriotism (those that join throne and altar). This tribal deity inhabits both Republican and Democratic precincts. Over the 4th of July, God as National Mascot makes His appearance to reinforce our illusions of exceptionalism, that America is bigger, better, stronger and holier than any country on earth.

I guess the theology of Trinity also attempts to prevent this type of thing from happening and is an attempt to come to grips with God on God's terms.

But only in as much as it builds the community.

One scholar has unfolded an understanding that I find helpful. Biblical scholar, Sarah Dylan Breuer shares an exciting discovery.

I was excited by the writings of African theologians who spoke of ubuntu, a word from the Nguni language in Africa which Desmond Tutu (in [No Future Without Forgiveness](#)) describes as meaning that "my humanity is caught up, is inextricably

bound, in yours ... a person is a person through other persons." "A person with ubuntu," Tutu says, "is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole." That's a thoroughly biblical idea that a humanities gal like me can get excited about. Ubuntu is not just an abstraction -- it's an idea that has been and can be incredibly powerful in helping communities heal and reconcile. In South Africa in the aftermath of apartheid, ubuntu inspired the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, put an end to the spiral of violence that had enveloped so much of the nation. The tortured could look in the eye the very people who had tortured them and say, "What you did to me was a crime because I am a human being and not an animal. And you are responsible for it because you are a human being and not an animal. My humanity is tied up in yours. My humanity is affirmed by my choice today to treat you as a human being, who even now can make the choice not to behave hurtfully. Wounding you and punishing you will not heal me. I forgive you."

How powerful that is! If ubuntu is the fundamental reality of our relationships, human dignity is not a limited good -- and the more I honour you, the more honour there is for me. If ubuntu is the fundamental reality of our relationships, I don't have to worry about whether another person is getting off too easily. I don't have to fret about whether my colleague, my rival, or my enemy is being treated better than they deserve. If ubuntu is the fundamental reality of our relationships -- if it's true that my humanity is inextricably bound in yours and honouring your humanity affirms mine -- there is more than enough mercy to go around, and it is possible, as the prophet Amos writes, for justice to roll down like waters, and righteousness like an EVER-flowing stream (Amos 5:24). An EVER-flowing stream -- an inexhaustible and unending torrent that makes our weather this spring look like the driest August in the Sahara.

All this is true -- IF ubuntu is fundamental reality, and not wishful thinking. That could be a pretty big "if." What encouragement do we have as Christians to stake our future on that "if"?

We have the Trinity, Sarah writes. The doctrine of the Trinity tells us that God, in God's very self, is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. These aren't just hats that God wears at different times and can put aside, or different ways of being in different circumstances -- that idea was what got the Monarchians condemned. Our doctrine of the Trinity says that this is who God was, is, and will be -- fully, the eternal nature of the eternal God. And it tells us that God -- in God's very and eternal self -- is the kind of relationship, the kind of self-giving love that we as Christians strive to live into in community.

It is like I talked about a couple of weeks ago in reference to the passage from John 17. Jesus is in a relationship with God, and therefore the Spirit, that allows their own expression as it were, but at the same time they are son bound together, that each always considers the other in all things. This is what Jesus was saying he wants for his people.

Sarah continues - God in God's very self is Creator. A Creator needs Creation in order to be a Creator. Without Creation, God could not be God's self. God is love, and love that isn't narcissism requires an Other to love. So God NEEDS Creation. God needs us. God's identity is bound inextricably with us, the identity of God as

Father is inextricably bound with the identity God gives us as God's children. The hunger we have for the God who made us and loves us reflects the hunger God has for us, the hunger that gave birth to each of us and to the world in which we live. This talk of God's need might sound foreign. It was very foreign to the Greek philosophers with whom Paul was in dialogue. Greek philosophers thought of God as an "unmoved mover" who needed no one, whose power lay in complete freedom from passion. When they referred to humanity as God's children, they meant that humans share with God the ability to be rational, that we too could be freed from passion and need.

But God's eternal nature as Redeemer speaks against that. It puts the cross, the PASSION, and God's passionate pursuit of us, God's beloved ones, at the centre of the divine life. God, in God's very self, is self-giving love -- the kind of love that unconditionally treats others as worthy of love and honour.

Jesus' earliest followers didn't get that very easily -- they kept waiting for Jesus to show the world who he was by showing his power. They waited for him to throw off all this meek and mild Clark Kent footwashing stuff, put on his cape, and beat the villains into submission as a kind of superman. We're not much different sometimes -- we talk about the "Second Coming" as a time when Jesus will finally show his power by taking names and kicking butt. There was already a second coming of Jesus, though -- we call it Easter. And there was a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, as the risen Jesus came back to his disciples, and his message was "peace be with you."

Some years after that, Jesus came to Paul in blinding glory, and the message then was to follow Jesus by going to the Gentiles and heretics Paul had been previously persecuting and serve them instead. There have been billions of comings of Jesus since Easter, for Jesus promises to come wherever two or three are gathered. The Trinity tells us that God's very self, God's ETERNAL nature, is Jesus' nature, Jesus' love as revealed in scripture -- loving and forgiving others as if love and forgiveness were in unlimited, inexhaustible supply for eternity -- because they are. They are unlimited in the life of the Trinity itself.

Some speak of the Holy Spirit as flowing from the love between the Father and the Son, spilling over all Creation as the Spirit hovered over the waters before Creation had form, uniting Creation in the love of the Trinity. For this reason, the theologian [Jürgen Moltmann](#) calls the Spirit the "unifying God," God poured out over all flesh, as at Pentecost, inviting all people to join in the Trinity's loving dance, bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit -- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control -- wherever the Spirit is present.

The fruit of the Spirit -- qualities characteristic of loving relationships -- makes clear what is implicit in the doctrine of the Trinity -- that God in God's very self is relationship. God is love. Love never, ever exists in a vacuum. It only ever can exist in relationship.

And we are made in God's image, in the image of Love. To be God's self, God needs Creation, needs to forgive, needs to unify in love. We humans, made in God's image, also need others, need to forgive, need to unify to become most fully our true self, the self, God made us to be.

God's self is revealed in Creation, in the forgiveness spoken from the cross, in every relationship that bears the fruit of the Spirit; we find our self in God as we enter into

those relationships with others, as we love them in ways that are creative and self-giving and uniting, as we experience God's love through them.

God is love. The Triune God is ubuntu, is love found in loving, is self, found in self-giving, is unity in relationship, is now, is then, is ever, is everywhere.

And so ubuntu is not wishful thinking; it is the rhythm of the life of the Trinity, of the universe. As Thomas Merton writes in [Love and Living](#):

“Love is our true destiny. We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone -- we find it with another. We do not discover the secret of our lives merely by study and calculation in our own isolated meditations. The meaning of our life is a secret that has to be revealed to us in love, by the one we love. And if this love is unreal, the secret will not be found, the meaning will never reveal itself, the message will never be decoded. At best, we will receive a scrambled and partial message, one that will deceive and confuse us. We will never feel real until we let ourselves fall in love -- either with another human person or with God.”

Sarah concludes - Love is the image in which we were created. Let us confess our faith in the Trinity -- the God who is fully, mysteriously, and eternally the Creator, the Redeemer, the Sustainer – and confess it not just in the Creed but with our lives, with our passion, with our offering of ourselves to God for the sake of all whom God loves.

Friends, the Trinity is not merely some creation of theological minds with nothing better to do. It is a way for us to better understand God – who God is, how God engages with the world, how we are bound to God and what that means for our lives.

What this means is “ubuntu”. I am bound to you whoever and wherever you are. That is why what is taking place in the United States of America right now concerns us.

Trinity is flowing through the mess of it all whispering – join me; is calling through the voices of grieving people – speak your pain but in peace, in peace; is shouting from the aching hearts of a hurting people – lead us in love, please lead us in love. This is ubuntu – the call to live together through mutual care rather than mutual strife.

This is what Trinity seeks us to understand about God, and how we as Christians are called to live in this world.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE –

To us from God:

Oh, my people,

the confetti of stars,

the birds calling “Surprise!” from every tree,

Spring standing again on your front porch

in her flowery dress with an armful of blossoms

if only you would open the door,

the little rise in you when you see one glorious thing,

these are my prayers to you.

The ache for me in your meditations,
the questions your heart asks without you,
the invisible possibility that this enemy
could become a friend,

these are my prayers to you.

Those words in the closed book, the unopened letter
about forgiveness and release,
these are my prayers to you.

Your sorrow over the world and its woes,
your hesitation at the news,
your deep weary sigh,
these are my prayers to you.

The mystery of the light
folded into what is,
what I am about to do,

these are my prayers to you.

Oh my people, in your mercy,
hear my prayer.

And now please God, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

We pray for the family of George Floyd, his friends, for all people of colour in the USA who never felt safe and feel even less safe now. We pray for those who struggle in the wake of Covid 19 in that country and who now see fit to lash out or loot or destroy.

We pray for those protesting in the USA to do so peaceably, for those who have a voice in this matter to speak it wisely and graciously.

We pray for the various leaders in USA to wield their power with care.

WE pray for that nation on the brink of something destructively overwhelming.

We pray too for our nation, Australia. For people of colour here who know the truth of the American problem.

We pray for our nation and its people as they gradually move from isolation back into mixing with others. May we not become complacent in this and still live our days with regard for others in this matter.

We pray for all those affected by the Covid 19 pandemic, however that effect might look.

All these words we bring in the name of the Risen Christ who taught us to pray together, saying:

**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**

BLESSING –

Into the Sacred Three I immerse you.
Into their power and peace I place you.
May their breath be yours to live.
May their love be yours to give.
And may God the Creator
Hold the ground firm under your feet,
God in Christ walk before you on the way
And God the spirit be a cloud of grace around you.
May the blessing of the Sacred Three
Be upon you, now and always. Amen.