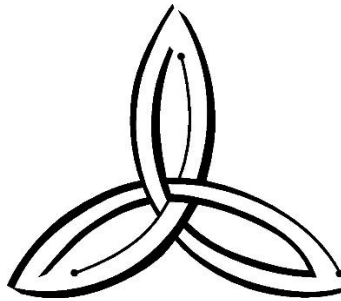




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Holy Trinity Sunday
May 26, 2024
WOV Holy Communion Setting Five: Bread of Life

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 Spirit prays within us, creating between us and God the same relationship Jesus has with the one who sent him.

We at Grace Lutheran Church strive to reflect and proclaim the love of God shown to us by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit by providing an inclusive and supportive environment through loving care and community service.

A warm welcome to all who are worshipping with us in person or online! We appreciate your contribution to the community today: with your voice, your presence, and just the blessing that you are. May you be nurtured by God's Word, empowered by the love of Christ, and stirred by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in this service this day, for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Grace Lutheran Church worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hən̓q̓əmi̓n̓əm̓ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness and to ascribe the glory due to God's name. For the voice of the Lord is powerful and full of splendor, creating the lands and the seas and flinging the stars into space. And so we cry "glory" in this house of God, where our Lord resides in this community and in our hearts, strengthening us and blessing us with peace, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: Come, Join the Dance of Trinity (#412)

GREETING

The glorious grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the lavish love of God, and the faith-filled fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE: Glory to God (WOV p. 29)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, source of all wisdom and goodness, it is through your Son Jesus that we are saved, and by your Spirit that we are united in your love that abides within us all. Teach us how to live as your people in community, that we all might see and know the life abundant that you give through your Son by the power of your Spirit. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 6:1-8

A reading from Isaiah.

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!"

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 29

¹Ascribe to the LORD, you gods,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

²**Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his 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**he makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

⁷The voice of the LORD splits the flames of fire; the voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

⁸**The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe
and strips the forests bare.**

⁹And 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.**

¹¹The LORD shall give strength to his people;
the LORD shall give his people the blessing of peace.

SECOND READING: Romans 8:12-17

A reading from Romans.

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 the Son.

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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (WOV p. 31)

GOSPEL: John 3:1-17

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Holy God, giver of life, breathe your Spirit into us that we might hear you speak, see you present, and feel you loving us until the end of time, through your Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

This past week an old classmate of mine reminded me that this year is a high school reunion year for us. And while he wasn’t really telling me anything I didn’t already know, it still felt kind of weird. Mind you, I never really had any desire to go to these things anyway, nor did it ever seem like many in our class did either, we were just that kind of class. But what made it feel weird I guess was just the sheer number of years that has already passed since we graduated... it’s been 30 years. That’s three zero years. I know, right?

And you’re probably thinking that I must be a genius child prodigy to have graduated high school as a toddler, because there’s no way that I’m that old. But as much as I would want to say nothing and leave my age as a mystery, the fact of the matter is that I’m a lot older than the toys in my office would lead you to believe.

Time waits for no one, I guess. The seconds keep ticking and they turn into hours, which turn into days, which turn into months. And before you know it, 30 years have passed. I mean, I can feel my body aging especially when I try to stand up after sitting on the floor for too long. It’s apparent that my eyesight is going every time I try to read anything smaller than a 10 point font. More and more often I find myself in front of the mirror with tweezers in my hand plucking out these greys that never seem to stop sprouting.

Last week we talked a bit about change, and let me tell you, I've changed a lot over the years. Maybe not much in my taste in music or preference in the different iterations of the Transformers universe, but I'm definitely not that newly graduated kid ready to take on the world from 30 years ago anymore. I've grown, I've matured believe it or not, I've been, in my own way, renewed.

Wait, what? You're trying to tell me that this old man is feeling renewed? I've just confessed to you all how I can't stop my aging body from aging, so how on earth can I say that I've been renewed?

Well, again last week we talked about how change will inevitably happen regardless of how much we resist it, and how scary and uncomfortable that can be. But today, I'm saying that change doesn't have to be bad, rather it can be for the good, for the better, for renewal. I mean 30 years ago I wasn't as financially independent as I am now, I wasn't married, and I most certainly didn't have kids. I wasn't as charming, as cool, or as good looking... I was this humble though. But seriously and more importantly, I wasn't as sure and confident as I am in my vocation, in my theology, or who I am as a child of God.

And this isn't to say that I've reached perfection and totality in knowledge, but when I say that I'm sure and confident in these things, what I mean is that I'm sure and confident that I can never be completely sure or confident. What I mean with those very confusing words is that I know that as a child of God, I am not just called to but also empowered to continually learn, grow, and be changed and renewed.

So what once was might no longer be, and that's ok. What once was alive might have to die to make room for new life, and that is alright. What we once knew and believed to be true might be reinterpreted into a new truth, and that might not be a bad change but rather a renewal.

I think this is what Jesus was trying to tell Nicodemus in today's gospel lesson. Nicodemus, this Pharisee, would have been like the epitome of knowledge and certainty, and would have held the respect of anyone who had the privilege to learn from him. If anyone would have reason to be confident in those times, it'd be a Pharisee. After all their years of study and discipline, they would have been the human examples for all to follow. So it's no wonder that Nicodemus would approach Jesus under the cover of night, it wouldn't be a good look for a noble and proper Pharisee to be seen colluding with backwater hick that spoke so against the tried, true, and established ways, customs, and traditions like Jesus did.

And what happens in this encounter? Jesus baffles Nicodemus with his words of wisdom and theological truths. Jesus say to him that he needed to be born again from above, and that stopped Nicodemus in his tracks. I mean Nicodemus would have known his stuff, but this stuff was a bit beyond his expertise. How could this be? Where would such a crazy notion even come from?

Of course, Jesus wasn't talking about actually going back into his mom's womb to be literally born again, that would be physically impossible and frankly kind of gross. But Jesus was talking about a change in mindset, a renewal of heart, a new birth in who we are, and recognize whose we are and the gift of life that truly is life. But in all of his learned wisdom and training, Nicodemus couldn't understand. In all of his confidence and surety in himself and his education

and knowledge, he wasn't didn't have the vulnerability to learn. Nicodemus, at this point, was too proud to be Jesus for all that he is and taught.

I mean, I get that Nicodemus would be resistant to change, much like how many if not all of us would be. I get that Nicodemus doesn't want to throw away everything he already knows for the sake of this random person that he just met, regardless of how much respect he might have for him. I get that Nicodemus was proud of his elite knowledge, patriotic toward his upstanding citizenship, and protective of his religion and culture that he loved. But all of this was just standing in his way, blocking his view from all that could be, limiting his faith and ability to understand the gospel.

The gospel that was hard for a legalistic, highly educated bureaucrat to understand. The gospel that didn't line up with the traditions and disciplines that emphasized obedience and order. The gospel of a Messiah who came not to condemn but to save, not to abolish but to fulfill, not to change for the sake of change, but to renew all people of all time, including this Pharisee named Nicodemus.

Renew him in how he sees himself not only as a wise and disciplined righteous Pharisee, but also as a fallen sinner in need of a Saviour. Not just as a respected member of the elite, but also a welcomed citizen of the kingdom and community infused with the Spirit. Not just as a descent of Abraham part of the chosen human ethnicity, but as a beloved child of God, called by name, and empowered to learn, grow, and contribute to and participate in relationship.

Relationship with God of course, but also with others in and outside of his circle, and with himself.

As it is with us. It's in this relationship where we can see God most present. It's in this relationship where we can learn most about ourselves and each other. It's in this relationship that we can be renewed in this ever changing world.

And so we see this on this Holy Trinity Sunday, this one peculiar day of the church calendar that isn't dedicated to commemorate a notable event in church history, but rather to a doctrine of theology. We see that we remain baffled by God's wisdom, but in that we can continue learning. We are made vulnerable by God's might but in that vulnerability we are strengthened and empowered by grace. We are humbled by God's mercy and forgiveness, but in that change of paradigm of God, each other, and ourselves, we are renewed and restored and blessed with the love and peace that surpasses understanding.

The thing is that I don't think we're created to understand, but we are created to learn. We aren't called to "make it" but we're called to grow. We aren't commanded to know it all, but we are commended to care about our community, love our neighbour, and be renewed by the Spirit in fellowship and relationship.

On this Holy Trinity Sunday, may we have the strength and humility to be taught by the wisdom of our Creator, saved by the grace of Christ, and renewed by the love that is revealed to us through the Communion of the Spirit. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! (#413)

CREED (WOV p. 18)

Together with the whole church united as one, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.*

On the third day he rose again.

**He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Led into community and relationship, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "in your saving love, O God," and you all may respond with hear our prayer. In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

God our Companion, all glory and strength is yours and you are above any other god. You invite us into your kingdom and welcome us into your community. May our acceptance of your invitation be a source of joy for us, that our praise to you be everlasting. In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

God the Christ, we give the glory due to your name in our gathering and worship, as you strengthen our ministry to others and let us not be held back by inconvenience and misunderstandings, but allow us to flourish in new and innovative ways in these changing times. We lift up in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; those who use this building for worship, work, and play; our partners Anglican Church of Canada and Moravian Church in Canada; and our bishops, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for Peace Lutheran Church in Abbotsford and their pastor Dean Andersen; and for Emmaus Lutheran Church in Burnaby and their pastor Timo Saarinen. In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

God our Creator, you are seen and heard in the might and beauty of the waters, skies, and lands that you have made. Help us to honour you in our stewardship of all that you have entrusted to us, and may your love and providence continue to empower us all. In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

God our Sovereign Lord, your voice is powerful and full of splendor and authority and can be heard throughout the earth. May all people of the world listen to and heed your voice, that

your wisdom and peace might abound in all the nations. We pray for the continued support for those that we've sponsored to come and live in our country: Abraham Barhane; and Solyana Amanuel; as well as for those that have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Filimon Abraha. In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

God our Saviour, you bless us with strength and healing and you grant us your peace. Be with all who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your saving love be apparent to us all. Especially we pray for Beulah; Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Kathy and Raj; Bev and family; Phil; Sukhwant; John and Betty; Kristen; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Pat and Patty; Hwee Yang; Ephraim; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

God the Spirit that unites us all, you sit enthroned forevermore and you bring us into your eternal community with you and all the saints. May the lives of those we've loved and lost continually be in our hearts and minds, that we always be joined with them and you as the one body of Christ in all times and places. In your saving love, O God, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the truth of your Son Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

PEACE (WOV p. 20)

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

DIALOGUE (WOV p. 36)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, in whom we are given the grace to be one with you and each other in the Spirit, that we might together with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth, continually praise your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (WOV p. 36)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

O Lord your works are wonderful and wise and you create great things by your might and authority. All of creation looks to you as you provide nourishment and sustenance for our souls, upon which we lean on, rely, and gather strength. You send forth your Spirit to us to renew us with the love shown to us through your Son Jesus, who lived among us as one of us to reveal your enduring glory and forgiving grace.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his friends for a meal and took some bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it and said, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And then after they ate, he took the common cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink from 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."

It is in this food that we share where we can see the Spirit working in and through us, even as we proclaim this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

O Lord, we shall sing to you for as long as we live, for all blessing, honour, and praise are yours, through Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (WOV p. 25)

Joined together in the Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see, know the relationship of community.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (WOV p. 39)

Holy God, We Praise Your Name (#414)

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Holy God, we give you thanks for giving us your Word of life, joining us by your Spirit and empowering us to be your people in the world. May we always rely on your promises of grace

and steadfast love, and may we continually praise you throughout our lives through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Spirit. **Amen.**

BLESSING

May God the Shepherd who leads and guides us, hold us in truth and freedom,
God the Saviour who lifts us up in community, bring you hope and grace,
and God the Spirit who flows through us all, bless you with peace, grant to you love, and
breathe in you the life that truly is life, now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN: As the Wind Song (ACS #943)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, joined as one through the love of God.

Thanks be to God.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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