



ST. PAUL

LUTHERAN CHURCH
ANAMOSA, IOWA

Holy Trinity

June 7, 2020

CREATIVELY CONNECT • INTENTIONALLY GROW • JOYFULLY SERVE

Welcome Newly Baptized: This week we welcome Marshall Fowler, and Curtis, Aydin, Bruce, and Naomi Weaver to the Body of Christ through the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion following their profession of faith. Thanks to their sponsors, Brie Wittenburg, Kaileen Weaver, and Lois Ocenosak for journeying with them in their preparation. Thanks too for the excellent care provided to the kids by Vickie Wacker and Susan Koppenhaver.

Welcome New Members received at the outdoor service June 7. Sally Clapp; Mike, Emma, Logan & Addie Dales; Josh, Allison, Kaden & Sam Von Sprecken; Ed Allaire

Service in the "Park"ing Lot: Weather permitting, an outdoor worship experience will be offered at 10 A.M. each Sunday on the east side of the Education Building. **Bring your lawn chairs** for versatile social distancing in the parking lot. A few spaces within earshot will be made available for those who are unable to exit their vehicles. The service will be comprised of an opening song, a reading, a brief testimonial or reflection, prayers of intercession, the Our Father, and a closing song. This service is not intended to replace the recorded Sunday service but to accentuate it. An e-blast announcement will be sent by 9:00 a.m. if the service is cancelled. **Wear your favorite Live Generously shirt.**

Forks and Friends will be providing packaged meals EVERY THURSDAY EVENING between 5 and 6 PM until further notice. Meals may be picked up at the East door (parking lot) of the Anamosa United Methodist Church.

Jones County Food Bank: To donate money, make checks payable to Jones County Community Food Bank (NOT HACAP) and mailed to 105 Broadway Place, Anamosa IA 52205. For appointment to drop off/pick up call 462-4343. **They need pancake mix to match the large donation of pancake syrup just received; also canned fruit, peas, green beans and corn.**

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Please call us if we can be of assistance. PLEASE leave a message if we cannot answer. We will return your call ASAP. We may be separated, BUT we are not alone!

Prayer Concerns: For Judy Zehr sister of Barb Kleis; for all facing issues from the corona virus—sickness or social isolation; and for the family of Taylor Ray Siebels who died last week, Taylor is the grandson of Lisa Bierman. (send prayer requests to stpaulanamosa@gmail.com; include your name, prayer recipient name, and family relationship)

Upcoming Town Hall Meetings:

Wednesday, June 10 — 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 14 — 8:30 a.m.

Topic: Saint Paul Town Hall Zoom Meetings

Time: Wednesday, Jun 10, 2020 06:00 PM

OR

Time: Sunday, Jun 14, 2020 08:30 AM

To join Zoom Meeting with computer, notebook or smart phone use this link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2391467917>

Meeting ID: 239 146 7917

To dial in, call this number and enter the Meeting ID number (a User ID number is not needed just press # as instructed) **NOTE: IF YOU HAVE A REGULAR CELL PHONE USE IT TO MAKE THE PHONE CALL. If you use a land line your phone will most likely be charged a long distance call.**

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 239 146 7917

This weekend's liturgies celebrate the central belief about the nature of God held by most Christian believers. Basically, this belief says that God is three Persons in One God, and that humans are saved by God, the Father, through Jesus the Christ by the power of Holy Spirit. God is of one essence but known through the activity of three distinct persons. The Father generates (because God is love), the Son is begotten, and the Spirit proceeds, or is sent, and remains through the ages. Each person of the Trinity is wholly God; they do not divide up the one God. While this teaching is crucial to Christians, it was not revealed completely in this form through the Scriptures. The doctrine on the Trinity, as we know it, was finally developed in the 4th century. The teaching has been redefined and reworded through the ages as people have struggled to explain how God was able to bring salvation to people through Jesus. How was the essence of God communicated through the life of a real human (Jesus)?

The Roman Catholic bishops tried to make the mystery of the Trinity a little more practical by

offering this statement based on the ancient Christian creeds: “The Christian Family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the procreation and education of children it reflects the Father’s work of creation. The family is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ. Daily prayer and reading of the Word of God strengthens the family in charity {CCC # 2205}.” This perspective suggests that if you want to experience the mystery of God, spend time around a Christian family in their Domestic Church.

Similarly, Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM, in a recent book, *The Divine Dance: The Trinity and Your Transformation*, resurrects an image from the early church to inspire a modern conversation about the Trinity. He uses the term, *perichoresis*, or circle dance, to describe the interaction of the three persons, “sounding through” each other, in continuous loving creative motion. We are invited into the dance just as Jesus was. Will you say yes to the invitation?

First Reading: Genesis 1:1--2:4a

¹In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give

light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” ²¹So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

²⁷So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them;

male and female he created them.

²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” ²⁹God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

^{2:1}Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. ²And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. ³So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

^{4a}These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Some ideas about God are suggested in today’s passage from Genesis. They contrast with the prevailing creation account of the ancient world provided in the *Enuma Elish* from neighboring Mesopotamia. The Hebrew creation account of Genesis 1:1-2:4a presents a completely different account of the world’s origins. God, the author of creation in Genesis 1-2:4 is fiercely

monotheistic. Other cultures suggested there were multiple deities, a pantheon of gods and goddesses, in competition for creation and with creation, from humans to the fierce sea creatures. According to Genesis, not only is there one God, but this God is sovereign and powerful. Yahweh God says, and it happens. God does not have a singular specified area of competence, but rather is the creator God of all things. God competes with no other power. In God's power, there is no spatial limitation:

- “God created the heavens and the earth” (1).
- “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters” (6).
- “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear” (9).

Similarly, God has no temporal limitations:

- “In the beginning” (1).
- “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years” (14).

As well as creating the vast cosmos, God also created the animal and vegetable life, a meaningful feat for an agrarian society like ancient Israel. {adapted from Roger Nam, the Working Preacher, June 7, 2020.} What images for God does this story conjure for you?

Psalm 8

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

² Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

³ When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

⁴ what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? ⁵ You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. ⁶ You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: ⁷ all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, ⁸ the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

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

Second Reading: Paul's Second Letter to the Christian community in Corinth, Greece 13:11-13 {NRSV}

[Paul writes:] ¹¹ Finally, 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. ¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. ¹³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

There had been much discord in this young Christian community and Paul had taken great personal interest in helping them to heal their disunity. The discord had been experienced in various ways: the

wealthy were not looking out for the needy; people were getting drunk at the “Eucharistic” gatherings; some were holding certain gifts of the Spirit up as superior, in particular, the gift of speaking in tongues became so prominent at liturgies that people who had not received this gift were looked down upon or felt like outsiders because they did not know what was occurring; and, certain illicit (fertility) sexual practices influenced by the Greek culture were still being practiced by members of the baptized community.

Paul painstakingly addresses these various issues in two letters (an entire third letter may be lost to us or combined into this one), and today's reading is the concluding exhortation from the second letter. In it, we hear Paul encouraging these Christians to seek unity and peace. He acknowledges that their attempts to seek reconciliation will be made fruitful through the presence of the God of love. The holy kiss is the clearest sign of the love, trust and respect needed to authentically share the Eucharist. (This practice is still found in the Eastern Christian Churches and in many Protestant communities where people exchange the kiss of peace immediately after the Creed. They use this as a gesture of reconciliation before they bring their gifts to the altar of the Lord. Judas' kiss of Jesus in the Garden was a horrible act of betrayal because it misused the respect and loyalty normally conveyed by it.)

Finally, we hear Paul's departing wish: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.” As Paul intended, it reminds us that when we pray, when we live our Christian mission, we do it standing in the midst of the Triune God with whom we share a common origin. We join as God's community and God is really present.

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

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

We North American Christians have the eleven apostles who encounter the resurrected Jesus in this gospel account to thank for the opportunity to profess our faith. Jesus gave them the great commission: go out and baptize, teach, and tell everyone (all creation) that the Spirit of Jesus is with them always. Up to this point, the Jewish followers of Jesus had been unconvinced of their need to spread the good news of Jesus to others {Gentiles}. In fact, they weren't yet sure what the good news was because in Matthew's gospel, the apostles go north out of Jerusalem to Galilee without any evidence of Jesus' resurrection, other than the words of some of the women. They were forlorn and feeling abandoned, yet were

inspired enough to follow the angel's directions given at the tomb. The apostles weren't sure what was to happen next and their minds were confused.

In order to save face and avoid further interest in "this Messiah named Jesus of Nazareth," the Roman officials and Jewish elders had trumped up public charges that it was Jesus' disciples who stole his body from the tomb. When the apostles reached the mountain in Galilee (an implied reference to the mountain where the transfiguration was experienced), the appearance and speech by Jesus reported here fulfilled what they had longed for: a sense of security that comes with direction from a Messiah/God who would be with them until the end of time. Jesus told them that they must not fear spreading the message of God because they have Holy Spirit to guide and protect "the Church (*ecclesia*)" until the fullness of God's Kingdom at the end of the world. This was indeed good news! And they *did* share it!

This Trinitarian formula for baptism developed over fifty years and reflects what was being said in Matthew's community around 80 CE. When they began to take seriously the great commission to spread the Good News of Jesus and people, responding with enthusiasm, asked to join their community and way of life, the Matthean leaders needed to develop a process of preparation for joining the local Body of Christ. This final paragraph of Matthew's gospel was likely recited at baptisms because it contains the mission statement for the baptized with a reminder that it is God who works through us in all ages. Recall, baptisms were *normally* performed on adults who publicly professed faith in Jesus as Christ after having gone through a lengthy process of trust-building, reflection and study.

Taking it home:

Maybe this is a no brainer, but if our God is a community living in love, and we're created in the image and likeness of God, don't we have a social responsibility to love built right into us? To deny responsibility for other people is to deny God. In what ways do you and your family promote social responsibility?

What characteristics best express how God has been revealed to you? {Ex. Generous, consoling, stern, creative, mysterious, love...} In what way(s) are you called to more fully reveal the God image in you?

Do you think our image of God promotes social responsibility?

Could God "destroy" the world and remain God? What's a more positive way to phrase how God transforms the world?

Describe a time you were offered a gift that you were not yet ready to accept (i.e. a computer that led to unsupervised internet surfing and unhealthy viewing). If "no thank you" was not a possible response, it wasn't truly a gift.

This is an ideal, but spend a few minutes entertaining it: In what ways does your family reflect the love shared by the Father, Son, and Spirit?

Write a living stone note to a former teacher or pastor or spiritual leader or parent about how s/he created a foundation for your life.

Mindfulness (set aside five minutes. breathe and read through three times. Which words or ideas hold energy for you? What images and feelings emerge in your imagination?)

"A lot of us pray as if prayer is really twisting the arm of God or convincing God to do something. We think by saying more words we'll talk God into it. We think, "If I say it one more time, God will agree with me." That very attitude is an alienating attitude. It keeps us in the role of doing it "right" or often enough to convince an unready or unwilling God. Wrong, wrong, wrong! – [Richard Rohr](#)
"And we must—absolutely must—maintain a fundamental humility before the Great Mystery. If we do not, religion always worships itself and its formulations and never God." – [Richard Rohr, The Divine Dance: The Trinity and Your Transformation](#)

Declaration on the Way:

Church, Ministry and Eucharist,

is a declaration of the consensus achieved by Lutherans and Catholics on the topics of church, ministry and Eucharist as the result of ecumenical dialogue between the two communions between 1965 and 2015.

"Another significant inspiration is the 2012 document of the international Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*. This Declaration on the Way responds to two of the "ecumenical imperatives" with which the report concludes:

1. Catholics and Lutherans should always begin from the perspective of unity and not from the point of view of division in order to strengthen what is held in common even though the differences are more easily seen and experienced.
2. Lutherans and Catholics must let themselves continuously be transformed by the encounter with each other and by mutual witness of faith.

The leadership of Pope Francis, who has frequently stressed the importance of ecumenism for the church's mission, also inspires this Declaration. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, he declared: The credibility of the Christian message would be much greater if Christians could overcome their divisions and the Church could realize "the fullness of catholicity proper to her in those of her children who, though joined to her by baptism, are yet separated from full communion with her." We must never forget that we are pilgrims journeying alongside one another. This means that we must have sincere trust in our fellow pilgrims, putting aside all suspicion or mistrust, and turn our gaze to what we are all seeking: the radiant peace of God's face."