

Holy Eucharist

The First Sunday after Pentecost:

Trinity Sunday

May 30, 2021

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85887946777?pwd=ei94MEdsMUh6clV6b2dUblFOQ3I2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 858 8794 6777

Passcode: 782611

Announcements

Prelude

Entrance Rite

All stand as they are able.

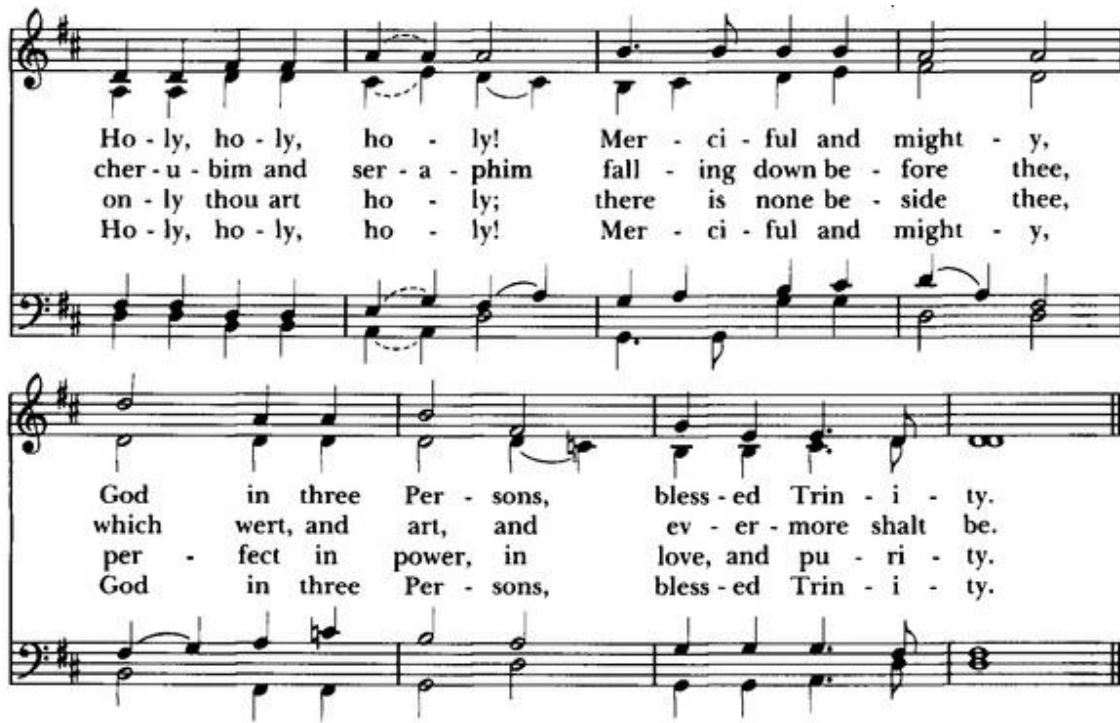
Opening Hymn

Holy, holy, holy

Hymnal 362

1 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord — God Al - might - y!
* 2 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! All the saints a - dore thee,
3 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Though the dark-ness hide thee,
4 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord — God Al - might - y!

Ear - ly in the morn - ing our song shall rise to thee:
cast - ing down their gold - en crowns a - round the glass - y sea;
though the sin - ful hu - man eye thy glo - ry may not see,
All thy works shall praise thy Name, in earth, and sky, and sea;



All standing, the Presider says

Blessed be God: + Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People

And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

The Presider begins the Collect for Purity

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid:
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Collect of the Day

Presider God be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Presider Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

All sit.

First Reading

Isaiah 6:1-8

A Reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

In 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. Seraphs 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. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And 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!" Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The 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." Then 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!"

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalms 29

- 1 Ascribe 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.
- 3 The 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.
- 5 The 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.
- 7 The 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.
- 9 And in the temple of the LORD*
all are crying, "Glory!"
- 10 **The LORD sits enthroned above the flood; ***
the LORD sits enthroned as King for evermore.
- 11 The 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 Paul's letter to the Church in Rome.

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for 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. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For 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!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and 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.

<i>Reader</i>	Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.
<i>People</i>	Thanks be to God.

All stand as they are able.

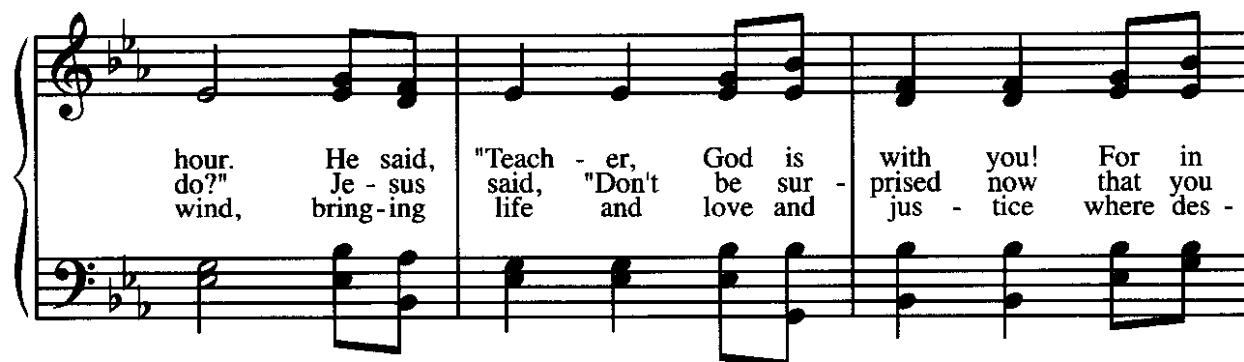
Sequence Hymn

Nicodemus Sought Out Jesus

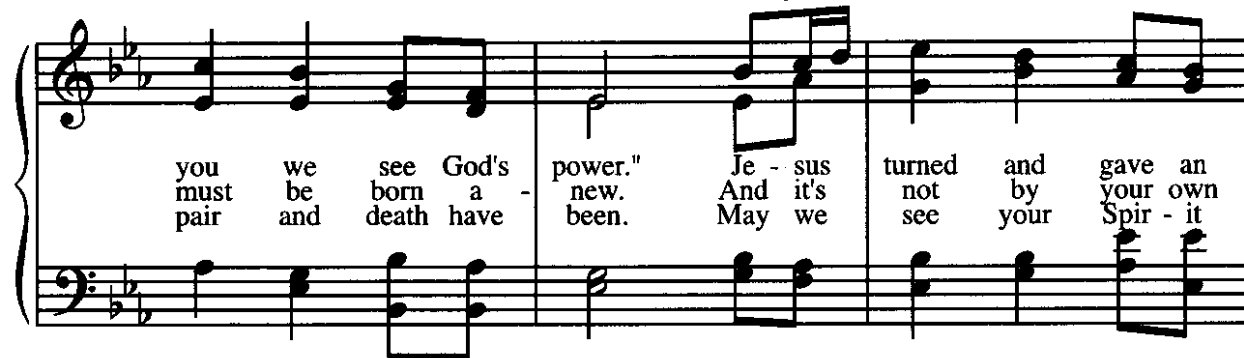
Tune: *Nettleton*



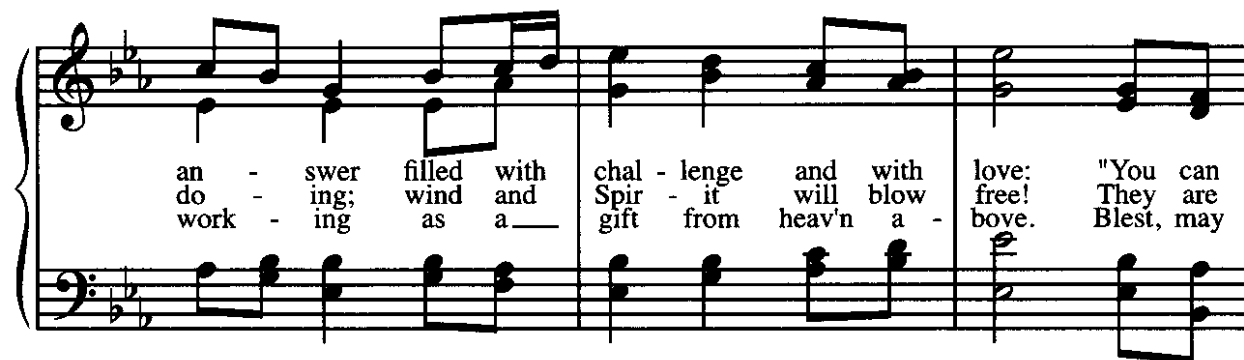
1. Ni - co de - mus sought out Je - sus at a lone - ly, qui - et
 2. "Born a - gain!" said Ni - co de - mus. "Is that some - thing one can
 3. God, your Spir - it still sur - pri - ses like an ev - er - chang - ing



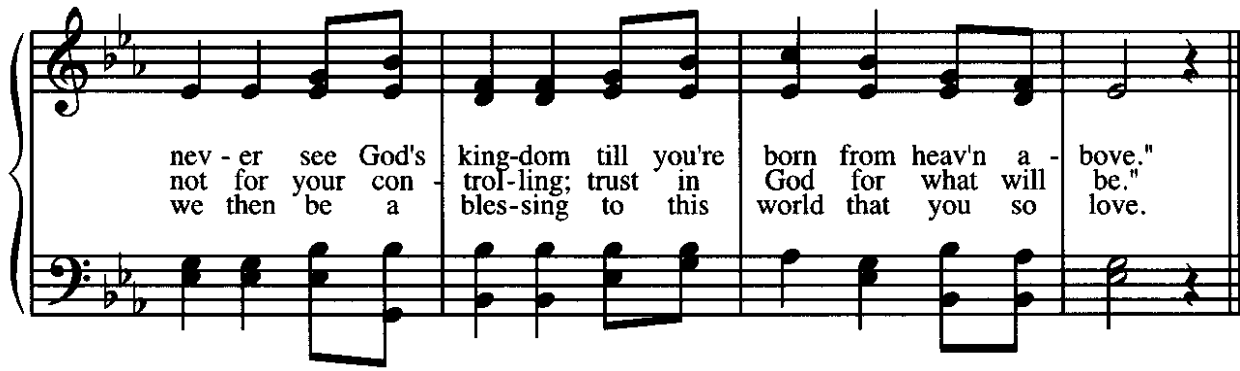
hour. He said, "Teach - er, God is with you! For in
 do?" Je - sus said, "Don't be sur - prised now that you
 wind, bring - ing life and love and jus - tice where des -



you we see God's power." Je - sus turned and gave an
 must be born a new. And it's not by your own
 pair and death have been. May we see your Spir - it



an - swer filled with chal - lenge and with love: "You can
 do - ing; wind and Spir - it will blow free! They are
 work - ing as a gift from heav'n a - bove. Blest, may



Holy Gospel

John 3:1-17

Priest

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

People

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He 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." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus 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?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The 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." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? 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. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 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. 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."



Priest

The Gospel of the Lord.

People

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sermon

All stand as they are able.

Nicene Creed

Presider Let us affirm the faith of the Church using the words of the Nicene Creed:

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**
**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**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.**
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

All remain standing.

Presider: Holy Trinity, One God, the whole world is filled with your glory: Hear the prayers of your children as we say: Ascribe due honor to God's holy Name; worship the Most High in the beauty of holiness.

Intercessor: Abba! Father! You have filled your Church with your Spirit and adopted us as your own children. We pray for our bishops Bonnie, Michael, Justin, Moises, Elizabeth, Donald and Craig, all ministers, priests, deacons, ministry teams, those in formation; and our sisters and brothers worshipping at St James', Dexter; and Christ the Savior, Santiago, in the Dominican Republic. Inspire us to speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen. Ascribe due honor to God's holy Name; **worship the Most High in the beauty of holiness.**

Silence is kept.

Your Son Jesus, the Son of Man, was lifted up to give the whole world eternal life: Send Christ's compassion and understanding to all who exercise roles of power and authority, that they may be led by the Spirit of God in the ways of justice and peace. Ascribe due honor to God's holy Name; **worship the Most High in the beauty of holiness.**

Silence is kept.

Through the ever-present and energizing Spirit, your Presence sustains the world and brings all life into being: Protect, comfort, and heal all who live with illness, threat, poverty, or oppression throughout the world, that they may enjoy the goodness of your blessing. Ascribe due honor to God's holy Name: **Worship the most high in the beauty of holiness.**

Silence is kept.

Glorious Trinity, One God, enable our community to be born from above, born of water and Spirit, that we may manifest your loving compassion and peace toward all. Ascribe due honor to God's holy Name; **worship the Most High in the beauty of holiness.**

Silence is kept.

Your children, O God, have not received a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but we have received a spirit of adoption, through which we ask for your aid:

Hear our prayers for _____.

Accept our praise and thanksgiving for _____.

Embrace with your eternal life those who have died, especially_____. For you did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Ascribe due honor to God's holy Name; **worship the Most High in the beauty of holiness.**

Presider: Let our prayers and praises fill your temple, O Father, as you send forth your Spirit into the world to empower your children to do the deeds of your Son and to be signs of your divine presence; we pray in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ who lives and 'reigns with you, O Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for even **Amen**.

Confession of Sin

All stand or kneel as they are able.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

A period of silence is observed.

Minister and People

God of all mercy,
**we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.**

A Priest then says

Almighty God have mercy on you, + forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Peace

All stand as they are able.

<i>Presider</i>	The peace of the Lord be always with you.
<i>People</i>	And also with you.

Then the Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Holy Communion

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. For everything in heaven and on earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom, and you are exalted as head over all. *1 Chronicles 29:11*

The People then are seated.

How the Holy Communion is prepared

The Presider, other Eucharistic Ministers, and any participating Acolytes must wash their hands, or use hand sanitizer, before celebrating and before distribution. Gloves will not be used. The Presider alone will bring the bread and wine from the credence table to the Altar at the time of the offertory. All of the elements for Holy Communion will be placed on the Altar for the Eucharistic Prayer.

The Presider alone stands at the altar, with others 6 feet or more away.

The **priest's wafer and chalice** will be uncovered in front of the Presider during the Eucharistic Prayer. They **are for the Presider alone**. They are consumed entirely by the Presider, or appropriately disposed of after the service.

The priest's wafer and the people's wafers will be kept separate at all times. The **people's wafers will be a container** on the Altar, which will remain covered throughout the Eucharistic Prayer.

During consecration, the Presider will touch the container, not the wafers.

The **distribution** of consecrated wine is not permitted at this time (as of June 19, 2020 Diocese of Michigan directive).

How the Holy Communion will be distributed

Everyone distributing communion will use hand sanitizer before they begin distribution. Gloves will not be used.

Communicants will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer before receiving. Hand sanitizer will be available at the service.

The bread will be distributed by a minister to the people where they are standing, while maintaining six feet of distance between households. (If this service is indoors, the people will come to the Altar rail in household groups one at a time.)

Masks must continue to be worn during the distribution of communion. Communicants should

only lift their mask and consume the bread when the minister has moved on to others (or when they have returned to their seats in the church).

The Minister will place the bread in the hand. The distribution will happen without directly touching the hand of the person receiving. Hand-to-mouth distribution is not permitted. If hand-to-hand contact happens, the minister will re-sanitize.

If a blessing is preferred, the blessing will be given without touch.

The people stand as they are able as a minister brings forward the alms basin.

Offertory Hymn

Doxology

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

The people remain standing.

Great Thanksgiving

The people remain standing.

<i>Presider</i>	The Lord be with you.
<i>People</i>	And also with you.
<i>Presider</i>	Lift up your hearts.
<i>People</i>	We lift them to the Lord.
<i>Presider</i>	Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
<i>People</i>	It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The Presider proceeds

Threefold and glorious God, in Fatherly joy you created all things
through the grace of your Word and the wisdom of your Spirit.

In the depth of your love for the world, you gave your only Son
that all might come to new life in your Spirit.

You rolled away the stone by your Fatherly hand, and in the power of your Spirit
raised your incarnate Son from the dead.

In your Fatherly mercy, you breathed your Spirit on the fearful disciples,
giving them the fire of your love to live as the body of your Son.



And so, adoring you with apostles and prophets, with martyrs and saints,
with angels and archangels, with cherubim and seraphim,
and with all your glorious company in bright array, we celebrate the glory of your praise.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

The Presider continues

Lord God, there is none beside you;
you are perfect in power, in love, and in purity.

You invite us to join you at your heavenly banquet that knows no end.
In this meal we recall the sacrifice of your Son, and the sanctification of your Spirit.

Send that Spirit upon us + now, that we may be made ready to be your companions,
and on these gifts + of bread and wine, that they may be for us
the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord;

who, at supper with his disciples, took bread,
gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying,

"Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup.
Again he gave you thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying,

"Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me:

Great is the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

The Presider continues

Triune God, in the dance of your love
we see your nature as utter relationship.

Be close to all who struggle in relationship
at home, in the workplace, across social divides and national thresholds.

As your three persons gaze in shared attention,
look upon those whose lives go unrecognized.

As your three members work together in true partnership,
uphold any who face the struggles of their life alone.

As your partners in threefold unity relish one another
in deep delight, revitalize those who live without joy or hope.

Make your church a community across time and space
that enjoys the gift of your life, and imitates the wonder of your love,
until all come into your presence and gaze upon your glory,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity. **AMEN.**



The Presider then continues

And now, as our Savior
Christ has taught us,
we are bold to say,

People and Presider

**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 for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

The Presider then says

This is the table, not of the righteous, but of the poor in spirit.
It is made ready for those who love God and who want to love God more.
So come, you who have much faith and you who have little,
You who have been here often
and you who have not been for a long time, or ever before,
you who have tried to follow and all of us who have failed.

These are the gifts of God for the People of God.
Christ invites everyone to be known and fed here.

The Presider then says

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, those who are not physically present here join us in offering you praise and thanksgiving. We remember your death, Lord Christ; we proclaim your resurrection; we await your coming in glory. And since they cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, we beseech you to come spiritually into their hearts. Cleanse and strengthen us all with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let us never be separated from you. May we live in you, and you in us, in this life and in the life to come. **Amen.**

All baptized persons are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

After Communion, the Presider says

Let us pray.

Presider and People

**Loving God,
we give you thanks
for restoring us in your image
and nourishing us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.
Now send us forth
a people, forgiven, healed, renewed;
that we may proclaim your love to the world
and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Blessing

A priest blesses the people, saying

God's glory has filled our hearts!

We go to empty ourselves for others.

Christ has given himself for us!

We go to give ourselves to everyone in need.

The Spirit gifts us with new life!

We go to be a blessing to everyone we meet.

And may the Wisdom of God, the Love of God, and the Grace of God strengthen you to be Christ's hands and heart in this world, in the name ✝ of the Holy Trinity. **Amen**

Closing Hymn

Lord of the dance

The musical score is for the hymn 'Lord of the Dance'. It is written for a unison voice part and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/2. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains five measures of music, with lyrics underneath. The second system contains four measures of music, also with lyrics underneath. Chord symbols are placed above the piano part: G, Em, Bm, Em, Am, and D7.

Unison

G Em Bm Em

1 I danced in the morn-ing when the world was be-gun, and I
2 I danced for the scribe and the Phar-i-see, but they
3 I danced on the Sab-bath and I cured the lame, the
4 I danced on a Fri-day when the sky turned black; it's
5 They cut me down and I leapt up high,

Am D7

danced in the moon and the stars and the sun, and I
would not dance and they would not fol-low me; I
ho-ly peo-ple said it was a shame; they
hard to dance with the dev-il on your back; they
I am the life that-'ll nev-er, nev-er die; I'll

G Em Bm Em

came down from heav - en and I danced on the earth. At
 danced for the fish - er - men, for James and the John; At they
 whipped and they stripped and they hung me on high; and they
 bur - ied my bod - y and they thought I'd gone, but
 live in you if you'll live in me;

Am D7 C/G G Refrain G Bm

Beth - le - hem I had my birth.
 came with me and the Dance went on.
 left me there on a cross to die. Dance, then, where -
 I am the Dance and I still go on.
 I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.

Em G

ev - er you may be; I am the Lord of the

Am/C D D7/C G C/G G/D D7/C

Dance, said he. And I'll lead you all where - ev - er you may

G/B Am/C Am D7 G C/G G

be, and I'll lead you all in the Dance, said he.

Dismissal

Minister
People

Alleluia, alleluia! Let us go forth in the name of Christ!
Thanks be to God! Alleluia, alleluia!

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REGARDING OFFERINGS TO ST. BARNABAS CHURCH

To make an offering to St Barnabas, please mail your check to the church:
20500 W Old US-12, Chelsea MI 48118-1309. Mail is being collected daily.

CONTINUING OUR DONATIONS OF FOOD AND FUNDS TO FAITH IN ACTION

Faith in Action is continuing to provide leadership in collecting donations to support households in need in the Chelsea and Dexter areas. They will be in need of our continuing help. You may bring your donations to FIA, or to Nancy who will see that they get there. **If you bring food directly to FIA**, please let Nancy know, so she can continue to keep our records of donation. If you write a check, please make it to *Faith In Action*. The **next Food Drive at the church** will be **June 27**. Please leave your donations at the church on that day.

Financial donations to help us combat the continuing effects of the pandemic can be made by PayPal at www.faithinaction1.org, by [Facebook](#), or by mailing a check to *Faith in Action*, 603 S. Main Street, Chelsea MI 48118. **If you need help, please call FIA at (734) 475-3305**

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Upcoming Commemorations

- May 31 Joan of Arc: Mystic and Soldier, 1431
June 1 Justin, Martyr, 167
2 The Martyrs of Lyons, 177
3 The Martyrs of Uganda, 1886
4 John XXIII (Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli), Bishop and Church Reformer, 1963
5 Boniface, Bishop and Missionary, 754

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Trinity Sunday Year B

May 30, 2021

Isaiah 6:1-8

This passage gives us the call story of the prophet Isaiah. It recounts how this particular person came to speak on behalf of God; prophets often go through a trial that marks them as God's mouthpiece. In Isaiah's case, that happens quite literally—the prophet's lips are marked by a burning coal. On a broader level, this passage describes one intense kind of spiritual experience. Seemingly out of nowhere, Isaiah finds himself in the presence of the Living God, and it is beyond awe-inspiring: it is terrifying. Like many before him, Isaiah's instinct is that no one can see the Lord and live. Yet he not only lives but is dramatically empowered by this experience. He is emboldened to respond to God directly: "Here am I; send me!"

- The past year has marked us all in ways we're aware of and perhaps in ways we don't yet understand. In the midst of all its frightening trials and terrible griefs, are there also ways that you find yourself empowered or emboldened?
- Is there something in your life that makes you feel unworthy to stand before God? Note that Isaiah felt unworthy, and God called him anyway. If your sense of your own worthiness were no longer in question, what do you think God might be calling *you* to do in the next season of your life?

Psalms 29

This psalm invokes the presence and power of God in a massive storm. God's voice is heard in the roaring wind, the lashing rain, the thunderclaps that shake the earth. In this cosmic scene, God rides the storm from above the sky, and the heavenly court gives praise and glory to God's might. As in the passage from Isaiah, we feel overwhelmed by the scale of God's grandeur; we feel how small we are in the vast reaches of creation. Again, this storm-riding God inspires awe and terror; yet it would have been obvious to those in the dry hill country of Israel that such storms were also life-giving: a drenching rain could be the difference between a failed crop and a successful harvest, between a hungry child and a healthy family.

- Can you think of a time when your jaw dropped in awe of nature's grandeur? Does it stretch your concept of God to imagine God as being viscerally present in such a scene?
- What is the life-giving rain that you're praying for this week? Where do you need nourishment or refreshment?

Romans 8:12-17

One way to think about this passage is that Paul is trying to expand the imagination of the Jesus-followers in Rome. The church in Rome is a radical community made up of both Jews and Gentiles, which means Paul is addressing people with lots of different received ideas about what a god or God is like. Paul is playing off of a theme that ran through many different religions in the ancient world: a god demands worship, obedience and tribute, and one always runs the risk of angering that god and incurring their wrath. Such gods were imagined to be notoriously demanding, fickle, and unforgiving.

Paul is trying to get the whole Roman church to grasp that the God revealed in Jesus Christ is radically different than that, and how that matters for their lives. God is not a slave-master who keeps believers in line through fear, Paul insists. God is a loving Father who wants nothing more than for God's children to flourish ("Abba" is even more intimate than that,

meaning “Papa,” “Dad,” or even “Daddy”). To be called by the Spirit and become a follower of Jesus means that we also relate to God like Jesus did—as this fiercely loving, infinitely forgiving *dad*. Jesus shows us what it looks like to live as a child of this gracious father: not seeking status or gain above the other children but struggling humbly for the liberation and healing of all our siblings.

- Is there an arena of your life where you’re trying to score points with God, or to compete against others for approval? What would it mean to let go of that impulse to measure up, trusting you’re already the object of God’s delight?
- Paul was writing to the Roman church to address its internal divisions: God’s children were fighting with one another. Is there someone you’re in a fight with right now? Does it change your perspective on that to think of them and yourself as children of a loving father who delights in you both?

John 3:1-17

Nicodemus knows that there’s just something about Jesus. But he also knows that the miracles and signs that Jesus is doing represent a critique of the Temple system—and Nicodemus has a position of power and privilege in that system. He senses that Jesus is the real deal, but he also senses that if that’s true, he’ll have to reevaluate almost every part of his life. Still, there’s something undeniable about Jesus, something that promises a larger life than the one he has now. So, Nicodemus comes to Jesus curious and cautious, under the cover of darkness.

And poor Nicodemus: right away, he’s in over his head. Jesus tells him that he must be born “from above”—that he must let go of the identity and a status that has been working pretty well for him so far, and embrace a new identity, as a child of the God who loves the world so much that he sent his Son to redeem it. But there’s a gentle joke here in the text at Nicodemus’ expense: the Greek word meaning “from above” also means “again,” and Nicodemus gets confused.

- Is there a part of your own faith journey that you look back on and gently, generously chuckle at yourself? It’s hard for all of us to get our heads wrapped around God’s infinite love, and we all get sidetracked or scrambled. Can you picture God—our infinitely forgiving father—smiling at you as you try to puzzle it out?
- What’s something that’s drawing you forward on your faith journey right now? What about God’s promises revealed in Jesus feels like “the real deal?” Is there a part of your life or identity that you might have to let go of to take that step? Does that feel scary, or freeing, or both?

This study was written by Carl Adair.

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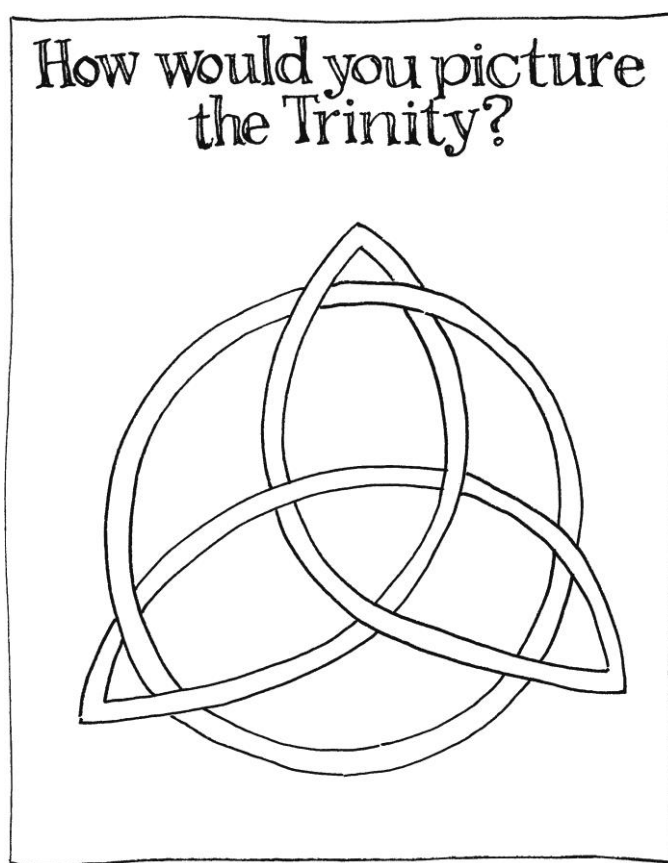
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