

# Holy Eucharist

June 4, 2023

Zoom link:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/85887946777?pwd=eig4MEdsMUh6clV6b2dUblFOQ3I2Zzo>

9

Meeting ID: 858 8794 6777

Passcode: 782611

# Trinity Sunday Year A

## Prelude

## Opening Hymn

*We join in proclaiming*

**Tune:** *The Ash Grove*



1. We join in pro - claim - ing the faith we be - lieve in: that  
2. O God, we have pon - dered through years of our his - tory how



God is Cre - a - tor and we are God's own. We trust in Christ  
you can be Fa - ther and Spir - it and Son. We've prayer and we've



Je - sus and glad - ly re - ceive him, for we have been  
stud - ied and called it a mys - tery that you are three



blessed by the love he has shown. Christ died and is  
per - sons and yet you are one. Cre - at - ing and



ris - en and, one with the Fa - ther, he reigns now in heav - en, still  
sav - ing, your church here re - new - ing, you still are one God work - ing



lov - ing the earth. The Spir - it of God that moved o - ver the  
man - y good ways. May we hum - bly thank you for all you are

wa - ters now moves here a - mong us, em - power - ing God's church.  
do - ing! O God in three per - sons, we of - fer you praise.

*The Presider then says*

O Lord, our Sovereign God,  
You are neither made nor fashioned by anyone.

**Wonderful beyond measure,**

**You are faithful Father, servant Son, and enlivening Spirit.**

Holy Lord, beautiful and dynamic,  
Intimately united as a society of love,

**You are our Creator and cause,**

**You are our perfect Savior,**

**You are our Intercessor and giver of spiritual gifts.**

The Lord of all has called us forth;  
Our Triune God has made us good.

**Hallelujah, bless the Lord.**

**Hallelujah, praise God's holy name!**

*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.**

*The following is sung, all standing as they are able*

## Glory to God

Canticle 20 ♩ = 130

Setting: Doug Howell

*Gloria in excelsis*

Glo - ry to God in the high - est and

14 peace to God's peo - ple, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth. Lord God, heavenly

19 King, Al - mighty God and Fa - ther, we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we

25 praise you for your glo - ry. Lord, Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the

31 Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God. You take a - way all the sin of the

36 world. Have mer - cy on us. You are seat - ed at the right hand of the

43 Fa - ther. Re - ceive our prayer. For you a - lone are the

48 Ho - ly One. You a - lone are the Lord. You a - lone are the Most High

51 Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it, in the

glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men, A - men.

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## Collect of the Day

*Presider*            The Lord 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**

Genesis 1:1--2:4a

A Reading from the book of Genesis.

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup>the 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. <sup>3</sup>Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

<sup>6</sup>And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” <sup>7</sup>So 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. <sup>8</sup>God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

<sup>9</sup>And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup>Then 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. <sup>12</sup>The 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. <sup>13</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

<sup>14</sup>And 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, <sup>15</sup>and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. <sup>16</sup>God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. <sup>17</sup>God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, <sup>18</sup>to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup>And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” <sup>21</sup>So 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. <sup>22</sup>God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” <sup>23</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup>And 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. <sup>25</sup>God 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.

<sup>26</sup>Then 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.”

<sup>27</sup>So God created humankind in God's image,  
in the image of God were they created;  
male and female God created them.

<sup>28</sup>God blessed them, and 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." <sup>29</sup>God 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.

<sup>30</sup>And 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. <sup>31</sup>God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening  
and there was morning, the sixth day.

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

<sup>4a</sup>These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

*Reader*                    The Word of the Lord.  
*People*                    **Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 8**

*to be prayed in unison*

**<sup>1</sup>O LORD our Governor, \***  
**how exalted is your Name in all the world!**

**<sup>2</sup>Out of the mouths of infants and children \***  
**your majesty is praised above the heavens.**

**<sup>3</sup>You have set up a stronghold against your adversaries, \***  
**to quell the enemy and the avenger.**

**<sup>4</sup>When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, \***  
**the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,**

**<sup>5</sup>What is man that you should be mindful of him? \***  
**the son of man that you should seek him out?**

**<sup>6</sup>You have made him but little lower than the angels; \***  
**you adorn him with glory and honor;**

**<sup>7</sup>You give him mastery over the works of your hands; \***  
**you put all things under his feet:**

**<sup>8</sup>All sheep and oxen, \***  
**even the wild beasts of the field,**

**<sup>9</sup>The birds of the air, the fish of the sea, \***  
**and whatsoever walks in the paths of the sea.**

**<sup>10</sup>O LORD our Governor, \***  
**how exalted is your Name in all the world!**

## Second Reading

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

A Reading from Paul's Second letter to the Church in Corinth.

<sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

<sup>13</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

*Reader*            The Word of the Lord.

*People*            **Thanks be to God.**

*All stand as they are able.*

## Sequence Hymn

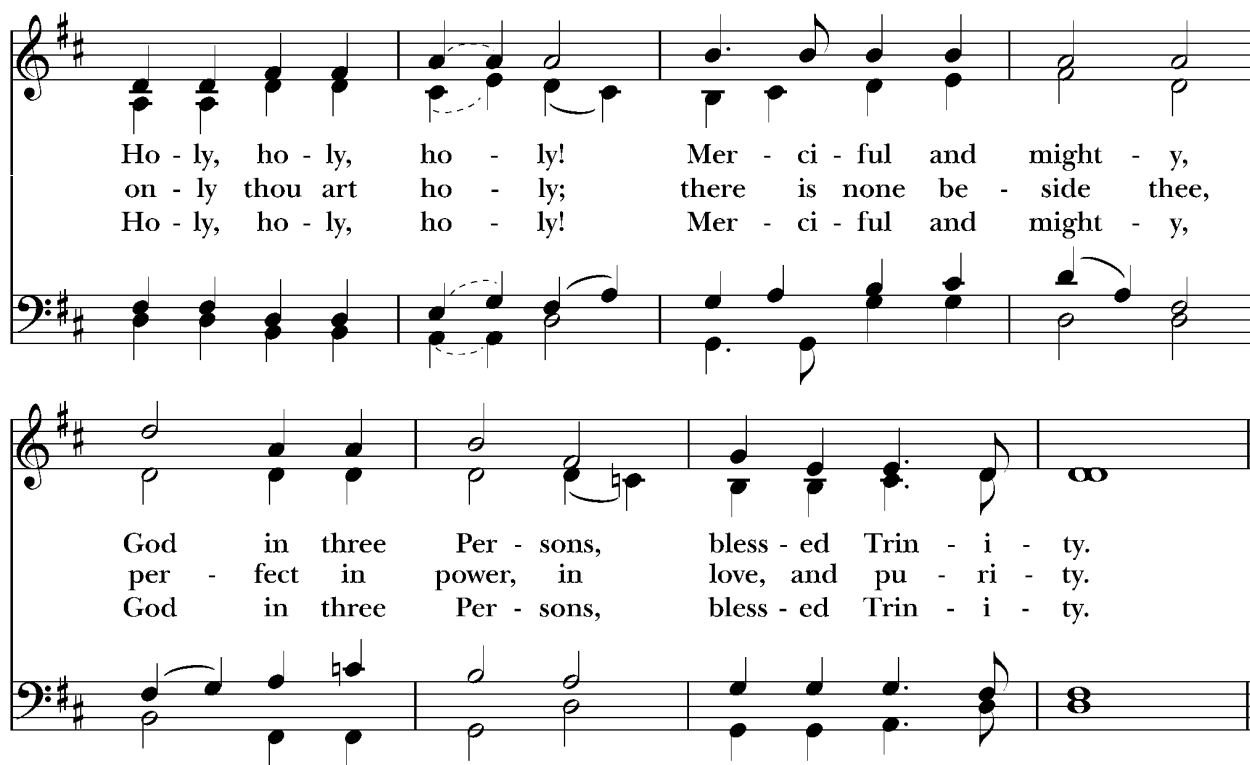
Hymnal 362

*Holy, holy, holy Lord God almighty*

1 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly!      Lord — God Al - might - y!  
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:  
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;

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the treble clef staff. The first system contains three lines of lyrics, and the second system contains three lines of lyrics. The music is written in a simple, hymn-like style with block chords and moving lines.



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Mer - ci - ful and might - y,  
on - ly thou art ho - ly; there is none be - side thee,  
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Mer - ci - ful and might - y,

God in three Per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty.  
per - fect in power, in love, and pu - ri - ty.  
God in three Per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty.

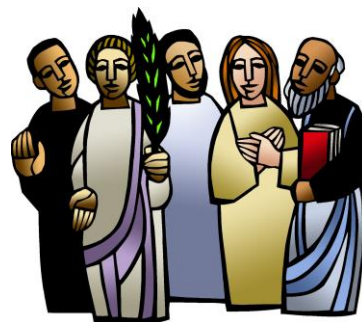
*All remain standing as they are able.*

## Holy Gospel

Matthew 28:16-20

*Gospeller* The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Matthew.  
*People* **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

<sup>16</sup>Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup>When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>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, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."



*Gospeller* The Gospel of the Lord.  
*People* **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

## Sermon

Marion VanLoo

*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

*Presider* Brothers and sisters, children of God, we have been baptized into a holy mystery. As Christians, let us pray to God, saying, “Glory to you, Holy Trinity; **We will praise you and highly exalt you forever.**”

*Intercessor* Glory to you, Lord God of our forebears. Guide your Church into all truth by your Holy Spirit. Fill our hearts with hope, so that we may fulfill the ministries to which we have been called with faith and boldness. Glory to you, Holy Trinity; **We will praise you and highly exalt you forever.**

*Silence is kept.*



Glory to you, Lord God. You delight in the human race. And so we trust that your heart breaks with the brokenhearted, with the downtrodden, and those who cry for justice in all the nations of the world. Comfort all those who suffer because of natural, social, and political disasters. Glory to you, Holy Trinity; **We will praise you and highly exalt you forever.**

*Silence is kept.*

Glory to you, Lord God. You established the heavens and marked out the foundations of the earth. Let all of creation praise you forever, for you bless us richly. We return our thanks to you, Lord, [especially for \_\_\_\_\_]. Glory to you, Holy Trinity; **We will praise you and highly exalt you forever.**

Glory to you, Lord God. We pray for our loved ones, because our hope is placed in you; and hope placed in you, O God, does not disappoint. Bless, heal, and comfort those for whom we pray, [especially for \_\_\_\_\_]. Glory to you, Holy Trinity; **We will praise you and highly exalt you forever.**

Glory to you, Lord God. We pray for all those who are bereaved of loved ones this day. Hold them and console them in your loving arms. We remember before you, O God, all those who have died, [especially \_\_\_\_\_.] Bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory. Glory to you, Holy Trinity; **We will praise you and highly exalt you forever.**

*Silence is kept.*

*Presider* For what other persons and situations shall we pray today?

O God, who on this day opened the way of eternal life to every race and nation by the promised gift of your Holy Spirit: shed abroad this gift throughout the world by the preaching of the Gospel, that it may reach to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## **Confession of Sin**

*The people kneel as they are able.*

*The Presider says to the people*

Let us confess our sins to God.

*Silence is kept.*

*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 stands and says*

Now there is rejoicing in heaven, for you were lost, and are found. You were dead, and are now alive in Christ Jesus our Lord. Abide in peace. The Lord has † put away all your sins. **Amen.**

## **Prayers for those celebrating their birthdays and anniversaries**

*Those who will be celebrating their birthday or anniversary in June are invited to the front of the church.*

### ***Prayer for a Birthday***

**O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants Selenah, Sage,... as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### ***Prayer for an Anniversary***

Eternal God, creator and preserver of all life, author of salvation, and giver of all grace: Look with favor upon the world you have made, and for which your Son gave his life, and especially upon Kathy O & Bill, David & Marion, Martin & Cynthia, Lynn & Wally, and all couples. Grant that their wills may be so knit together in your will, and their spirits in your Spirit, that they may continue to grow in love and peace with you and one another all the days of their lives. **Amen.**

*All stand as they are able*

## **Peace**

*Presider* The peace of Christ be always with you.  
*People* **And also with you.**

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

*The People then are seated.*

## Announcements

## Holy Communion

*Presider* Let us with gladness present the offerings and oblations of our life and labor to the Lord.

*The people stand as they are able when the offerings are presented and placed on the Altar.*

## Offertory Hymn

## Doxology

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

*The people remain standing as they are able*

## Great Thanksgiving

*Presider* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Presider* Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them to the Lord.**

*Presider* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **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 powerful hand, and in the power of  
your Spirit, raised your incarnate Son from the dead.  
In your tender 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 and sing the glory of your praise:



5  
God of po - wer and might. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly

9  
God of po - wer and might. Hea - ven and earth are

12  
full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est! All

15  
hea - ven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na, ho -

18  
san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est!

24 *molto rit.*  
Bles-sed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD.

*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;

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 all for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it,  
 in remembrance of me."

Great is the mystery of faith:

*Presider and People*

**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 relationship, 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, one 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, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## **Breaking of the Bread**

*A period of silence is kept.*

*The Presider says*

God of promise, you have prepared a banquet for us.

**Happy are those who are called to the Supper of the Lamb.**

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

*All are welcome to receive Holy Communion.*

*After Communion, the Presider says*

Let us pray.

*Presider and People*

**God of abundance,  
you have fed us  
with the bread of life and cup of salvation;  
you have united us  
with Christ and one another;  
and you have made us one  
with all your people in heaven and on earth.**

**Now send us forth  
in the power of your Spirit,  
that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world  
and continue for ever  
in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

## **Blessing**

*A priest blesses the people, saying*

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.

And the blessing of God Almighty, + the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

## **Closing Hymn**

*Now thank we all our God*

**Hymnal 397**

1 Now thank we all our God, with heart, and hands, and voices,  
 2 O may this boun-teous God through all our life be near us!  
 3 All praise and thanks to God the Fa-ther now be giv-en,

who won-drous things hath done, in whom his world re-joic-es;  
 With ev-er-joy-ful hearts and bless-ed peace to cheer us;  
 the Son, and him who reigns with them in high-est hea-ven,

who from our mo-ther's arms hath blessed us on our way  
 and keep us in his grace, and guide us when per-plexed,  
 e-ter-nal, Tri-une God, whom earth and heaven a-dore;

with count-less gifts of love, and still is ours to-day.  
 and free us from all ills in this world and the next.  
 for thus it was, is now, and shall be, ev-er-more.

## Dismissal

*Minister* Go forth into this world. Don't be afraid. Don't be ashamed to be people of love. And go forth into this world and help us to change it from the nightmare it often is, into the dream that God intends.

*People* **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!**

## Postlude

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### This week in prayer

**Please remember these persons and congregations in your prayers this week:**  
**Our Bishops** Bonnie, Michael, Justin, Moises (TEC); Elizabeth, Donald and Craig (ELCA)  
**and for** all priests, deacons, Ministry Teams, and those in formation

**Anglican Cycle of Prayer:**

June 4 The Episcopal/Anglican Province of Alexandria

**Diocese of Michigan Cycle of Prayer:**

June 4 All Saints, Brooklyn, St Patrick's, Madison Heights; St Mark's, Haina, DR

**St Barnabas Cycle of Prayer:** Rick, Julie, Jim, Mary G

**and our continuing prayers for:** Bob, Carlos, Robert, Selenah, Jim M, Mardi

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**Faith in Action** is in need of our continuing help. You may bring your donations of food and/or funds 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** is **June 18**. Please contribute as generously as you can.

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### Upcoming Commemorations

- June 4 John XXIII (Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli), Bishop and Church Reformer, 1963
- 5 Boniface, Bishop and Missionary, 754
- 6 Ini Kopuria: Founder of the Melanesian Brotherhood, 1945
- 7 The Pioneers of the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil, 1890
- 8 Roland Allen: Mission Strategist, 1947
- 9 Columba of Iona, Monastic, 567
- 10 Ephrem of Nisibis, Deacon and Poet, 373

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### June 4, 2023 – Trinity Sunday



**Genesis 1:1-2:4a**

This is the first of the two creation accounts in Genesis. In this account, which comes from what is known as the priestly tradition, God created, God spoke, and God established order from chaos. This order in which God creates is thoughtful, well-planned, and intentional. On each day of creation, God takes time to recognize the goodness in what was created. This



creation story presents a divine, cosmic God who not only creates but is in relationship with humanity and all of creation.

God's intentionality and work do not get left in a folder to be found 10 years later; God's love for us is eternal and our relationship with God is personal and ongoing. This particular creation story has been researched for centuries by people trying to understand its historical, literal, and original context. This is all important to understand because this Bible passage contains history: history in the context of understanding more about what it is trying to say, but also history in how it has been used. This God who loves us and created us has been used to justify actions on creation that destroy, exclude, enslave, oppress, and hurt humanity and other living things. Being made in this image and likeness of God reassures us of how much God loves us and wants our company. At the same time, being made in God's image requires responsibility on our end, namely our call to care for all creation. This story of creation is a reminder of how we are so loved by God, and also how our work of caring for the earth must continue.

- In what ways does this creation story reflect your relationship with God?
- Do you know of any ways this story has been used to mistreat others?
- Hearing this creation story today, how do you think our Triune God is calling us today? What are some of our responsibilities to care for God's creation?

### **Psalm 8**

"Who am I, that God would notice me?" These are the words that flow through my head as I read through Psalm 8. Who am I, that this cosmic and powerful God, who so beautifully crafted the world, would notice *me*? Sometimes, God can feel so far away. This distance is created either because of what God is or because of what we feel God is not. It is in this distance God came down as human, so that we can find a humble, loving, and caring creator, who does notice us. It is hard to believe sometimes that God really cares, but even in our doubts, God is present, and we are not left alone. We experience God's presence in so many different ways; some of us in hope, some of us in nature, some of us in Eucharist, and so much more. This does not stop us from wondering, where God is or how God could notice us; however, it does create space for a relationship with God that is life-giving, open, honest, filled with ups and downs, and transformative.

- Faith is not an easy journey. Have there been times where you have felt distant from God? What brought you close again?
- We believe in a triune God. How do you understand the Trinity in your faith? Is it confusing? Does any of it make sense? Do you relate to one person of the Trinity more than another?

### **2 Corinthians 13:11-13**

This is the end of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, also called its final exhortation. Paul is writing to the church in Corinth, which, through previous visits and letters, he knew was facing significant challenges – especially around division and community. It comes as no surprise then, that at the end of this letter, Paul reminds them to agree with one another, live in peace, and greet one another with a holy kiss. Through this, the grace of Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit are with them.

Paul's letters were specific to a time, place, and church. Still, the messages given then are relatable to us today as well. How many of us today are currently dealing with a challenge in our church? I write this as the Church of 2020 deals with a pandemic. While the problems may differ, the reality that the body of Christ struggles is the same. And in the same way, though we are challenged, Paul's call for unity, peace, forgiveness, and love remains crucial. While we may disagree, make-up, change, question, reform, and celebrate, this process of being the Church is not done alone as people in a building. This process of being and becoming the body of Christ is done with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. It is through this we are reminded what it means to be church, how God is in the midst of this all, and that the messages of scripture are still relevant to us today.

- Imagine Paul were writing a letter to your congregation. What would that letter include? What would Paul point out as strengths and gifts, and what would Paul point out as things needing to be changed or improved?

### **Matthew 28:16-20**

This passage is found at the end of the Gospel of Mathew and is known as the Great Commission. Here, the risen Jesus appears to his disciples, telling them to, "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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." It is pretty clear what Jesus is asking, yet I feel unsettled as I listen to these words. My mind rushes to the different ways religion has and is currently being used to oppress or hurt others. With apprehension, I ponder what Jesus really meant. Did Jesus really want us to go and force his ways on other people? I do not imagine that force is what Jesus had in mind, since it was love that Jesus always preached. However, these are questions still being debated by churches, theologians, and Christians today. How does one make disciples, spread the Good News, and tell people about Jesus? Or in other words, what is evangelism, and when is it harmful and when is it okay?

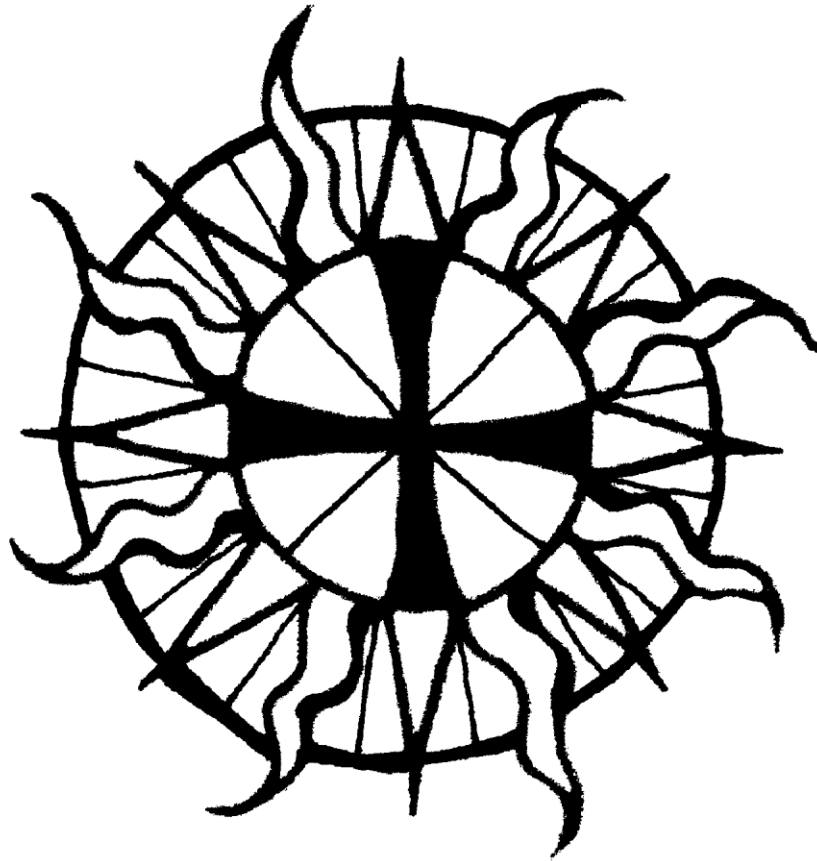
A large part of our identity as Christians is exploring how these different aspects of Christian life – baptism, the Bible, Eucharist, worship, and prayer – play out as people who are connected to many other systems. Jesus tells us not to force our ways on other people, but to explore how the ways we live as Christians connect with the other people in our lives. Just as Jesus holds a safe space for those he taught, healed, and prayed for, we ought to allow others to decide whether they want to follow him. While we live out our Baptismal Covenant and explore how that moves beyond church on Sunday, we also can hold space to invite others on the journey. This can be done through praying for a friend in need, volunteering at a homeless shelter, doing something nice for a stranger, or simply checking in on someone we know is alone. These actions we are called to may lead to a conversation about faith and God. They may simply do nothing more than put a smile on a person's face. Either way, the love we are called to is being spread.

- What is speaking to you in this passage?
- Do you think there is a place for evangelism in the modern church?
- Do you have any experiences of going out to proclaim Christ that were healthy and life-giving or negative and unhealthy?

*This Bible study was written by Mina Dezhbod*

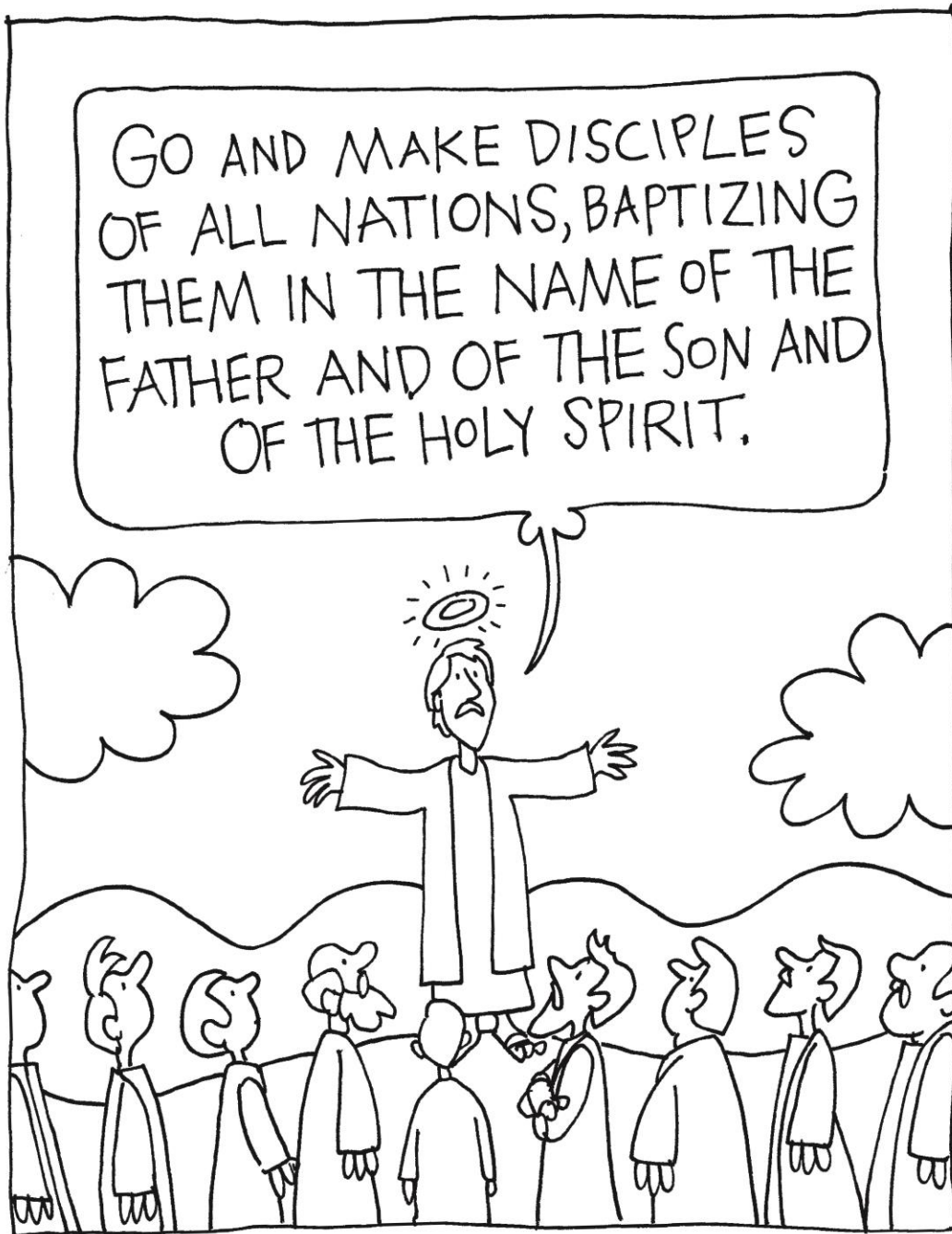
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**Prayer of Absolution** from the *BCP*, p.451.



**Our Mission:**

We seek to grow as diverse disciples of Jesus Christ, and to serve Jesus by serving others in the world, guided by the values of Ancient Rites, Open Minds, and Affirming Hearts.



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