

Welcome, Announcements, and Land Acknowledgement

*As we come to worship in Jesus' name we acknowledge with gratitude and respect the Lkwungen people – the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ – on whose traditional and unceded territory we gather. We commit ourselves to just and respectful relationships within our congregation and our neighborhood.*

➤ *Don't be afraid (repeat)*

Call to Worship

Ascribe to the Lord all glory and honour.

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

Come and worship the Lord in holy splendour.

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

To the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

**be all honour and glory, now and forever. Amen**

† Gathering Prayer / The Lord's Prayer / Words of Hope

God of all glory, on this first day of the week you began creation – bringing light out of darkness. On this first day, you began your new creation – raising Jesus from the darkness of death. On this Lord's Day, grant that we – those created by water and the Spirit – may be joined with all your works in praising you for your great glory.

God of mercy, as we gather to celebrate in worship as a community of faith we recall with sorrow the times when we forget you and are divided one from the other. How often our thoughts, our words, and our actions, have betrayed the goodness you have shown to us. Forgive us, gracious God. Mend what is broken. Heal the wounded relationships that separate us from you and one another.

Through Jesus Christ – in union with the Holy Spirit – we praise you now and forever as we are bold to pray ...***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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen***

God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Hear the good news – in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

➤ *Holy, holy, holy*

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## † Prayer for Understanding

**Holy One, you have disclosed yourself to us as a creator, redeemer and inspirer. We have named you Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We worship you as One God – source and goal of things seen and unseen. Continue to enlighten us through scripture today, that we may walk without stumbling. Amen**

## Scripture

**Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 [OT 590]**

Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out:

*“To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live. The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth – when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world’s first bits of soil. When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.”*

**Psalm 8 responsive/displayed**

O LORD, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

**Your splendour is chanted above the heavens by the mouths of babes and infants you have set up a defense against your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.**

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

**Yet you have made them a little lower than the angels, and crowned them with glory and honor.**

You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

**O LORD, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

**Romans 5: 1-5 [NT 155]**

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing

that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

**John 16: 12-15** [NT 110]

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Message**

Today we celebrate God's abundance as we bring donations of potatoes for the many people in need in our community who use the resources of *Our Place*. We also celebrate God's abundance as we gather for a meal after worship. And we celebrate the abundance of God in relationship as we wrestle with the doctrine of the Trinity.

The Sunday after Pentecost each year is designated in the church calendar as Trinity Sunday – the only day in the church calendar that celebrates a doctrine rather than an event or a story. Pentecost marks a particular event – the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the fledgling church. Christmas marks the incarnation, the birth of Jesus – Good Friday, his death – and Easter, his resurrection. But today has no particular event in mind. It focuses instead on a theological question about the nature of God – a theological abstraction. Today we celebrate an idea we can't quite wrap our heads around, no matter how hard we try.

It is an immense question – God is too big, too wonderful, too amazing for us to get anywhere near a complete understanding. Only God knows the whole of God, but the question of God's nature remains, so we continue to explore – to seek – to attempt to articulate the mystery that is God.

Most of us have heard – or delivered – sermons that attempt to explain the three-in-one: *The Trinity? Oh, well, it's sort of like water! Liquid, vapor, and ice – three phases, one entity. The Trinity is like that! Or... Think of a tree! The roots, the trunk, and the branches. Three parts, one tree. Or an egg... The shell, the egg white, and the yolk. Or a triangle... Or a three-leaf clover... Or a human family – father, mother, child...*

All these analogies fall short, and none of them address the deeper question: Why should we care? What difference does the three-in-one make? Fine, God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But so what?

And the “so-what?” question is an essential one. Many of us are tired. Physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Some of us are struggling with illness. Or loss. Or troubled relationships. Or financial hardship. Some of us are lonely, disappointed, angry, and heartsick. Some of us are barely hanging onto belief in one God. And now we are supposed to contemplate three? Why?

In our Gospel reading this week, Jesus tells his disciples, *I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*

*I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.* Do you hear the tenderness in those words? The kindness – the depth of patience, perception, and forbearance Jesus offers to his disciples? He doesn’t burden their frightened, skittish, saturated souls with more than they can handle. Instead, he promises them the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of ongoing revelation. That Spirit slowly guides the disciples — and by extension, all of us — into a fuller knowledge and comprehension of everything Jesus left unsaid.

The good news for today is that we don’t have to understand everything right now. I don’t have to find the perfect analogy or metaphor to explain the three-fold fullness of God. (Thank heaven for that!) The Trinity is a great and holy mystery. We can first stand in humility before it, acknowledging that exploring the nature of it pushes us to the limits of what human language can illuminate. It is to become speechless. It is fall to our knees and say, *“I cannot hold the singularity, the otherness, the strangeness of this God. I cannot domesticate or tame God.”* All we can do is seek the truth with our whole hearts, and trust that Jesus’ promise holds. All we can do is await the Spirit who will come and reveal God's truth to us in God's time.

The truth of God will always exceed us. The truth of God will always be more than our tiny, easily overwhelmed minds can bear. The truth of God will always confront, convict, and remake us, even as it soothes and affirms us.

God the parent is our creator and protector. We can see God as high and mighty and powerful – creator of all that was, is, or ever will be. We may envision God as a loving yet stern parental figure, making rules and dispensing judgment. We think of God’s providential and eternal love. God the Father – Creator God – is not the whole of God... but it may be enough for now – sufficient for our needs today – and maybe the beginnings of a deeper understanding...

God the child is our redeemer and our friend – Jesus the Christ. We recall the gospel message – sacrifice and resurrection. We may focus on the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus. We think of his healing, teaching and caring gift to the world and the grace offered to all. God the Son – Savior and Friend – is not the whole of God... but it may be enough for now – sufficient for our needs today – and maybe the beginnings of a deeper understanding of the whole of God...

God the spirit is our sustainer and advocate – the one who breathes life and faith into us. We can feel the presence and power of God in the Holy Spirit. We think of images of fire and wind and dove. We seek the guidance of the spirit in our daily lives and hope to bear fruit of the spirit

as we journey in faith. God the Holy Spirit – Sustainer and Breath of Life – is not the whole of God... but it may be enough for now – sufficient for our needs today – and maybe the beginnings of a deeper understanding of the whole of God – a pointer to a bigger God...

Maybe yesterday you knew God through the wonder and beauty of the created world. Perhaps today you will come to know God through the inspiration of the spirit and tomorrow by the gift of grace revealed in the story of Jesus. The God who created the universe is also the God who lived among us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and is the same God whose Spirit moves us in our moments of spiritual clarity.

In Proverbs, we hear Lady Wisdom – the Holy Spirit – singing: *When the Creator separated the sky from the ocean and the ocean from the land, I was beside the divine like an eager child. I was a source of joy to God because of my exultation of creation – I celebrated God’s creation and rejoiced in humanity.*

The nature of God is one of relationship – loving relationships that are extravagantly self-giving. Rather than becoming rivals of one another, they delight in one another and strive to glorify one another.

Before there was ever a doctrine of the Trinity, there was an experience of the God in myriad ways. As the early church encountered the living God and attempted to describe their experience, the idea of the Trinity emerged. Christian faith is not about explanations, it is about experience – about a relationship with the divine – and it is, in so many ways, a marvelous mystery.

I believe in one God: Father – Son – Holy Spirit / creator – redeemer – sustainer / parent – sibling – breath / use the names and metaphors that nourish you. I believe that God is one, and that the one God is revealed in different expressions – available to encounter you and me in a relationship that is personal and ever-evolving – a living relationship.

The God whose voice thunders across the chaos in creation – whose very word is enough to bring into being that which was not before – is the same God who sits weeping at the death of Lazarus.

The God who hangs weak and broken – dying on a crude wooden execution scaffold – is the same God who shakes the earth – bursting open prison doors and shattering manacles from the feet of the prisoners.

The mystery of the mighty God of the cosmos – the mystery of the vulnerable God who walked among us – the mystery of the God nudging and whispering within us – are all the same mystery – the same God. God will always be bigger – more diverse and more surprising than we can get our head around.

There are different ways into the nature of God. They all lead us to the same God. They all reveal something of what God is like, and they are all absolutely right. The fact that Trinity Sunday does not commemorate an event, or a particular story, does not mean that we can’t enter into the

experience of it, or know something of its meaning through the stories of our own experience. As we explore the Trinity – are reminded of the many faces of God – we come to know what it has to do with our own faith and our life together as the people of God.

There is more than one way to enter into the mind of God – to know God’s amazing love – to know the touch of God’s blessing – to understand God’s glorious revelation – to know God’s presence in our lives... and thank God for that. **Amen**

➤ *Creator God, creating still* 286

#### † Offering

The season of Pentecost celebrates the outpouring of God’s Spirit upon the Church with the gifts needed to serve others in Jesus’ name. Let us offer God our gifts this day with grateful hearts and the generosity revealed in Christ himself.

➤ *Praise God from whom all blessings flow* 306

**Holy God, we give thanks for the many ways in which you touch and bless our lives. Your holiness inspires us to be more holy; your love causes us to be more loving; your life in us brings to birth dreams and visions for a better and more just world. We offer these gifts and our lives in thankfulness for all you have done and are doing in our lives. Amen**

#### † Pastoral Prayers

We thank you O God for how your Wisdom calls to us – for how your Spirit speaks to us – for how your Word reaches out to our souls. Grant O God that each one of us may have a growing faith and a deepening love, that we may confess with our lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that he is risen from the dead. We thank you O God, for the witness of our congregation in Victoria.

➤ *Father, I adore you* 292 – verse 1

God who wears the many faces of hope, we pray for all who feel despair or anxiety in these challenging days. Lift up in love those who find their illness unrelieved. Comfort those who grieve the loss of someone dear or some important opportunity. Support those who are denied dignity by the attitudes or actions of others and sustain those who long for healing of some kind. Hear us in this time of silence as we name before those on our hearts this day...

Merciful God, we pray for those whose names or concerns have come quickly to our minds – we pray both in thankfulness and in intercession. Give each one recovery of courage and peace of mind.

➤ *Jesus, I adore you* 292 – verse 2

God of one loving heart, draw the human family together in the love that unites us with you. We pray for our nation and our local communities in this time when different experience and opinions so easily divide us. Lord of Peace, we pray for all nations, that there may be an end to all injustice, poverty, and persecution. We especially pray for a just reconciliation between warring factions throughout our world.

Where we have acted without regard for the needs of others, inspire us to work for justice and fairness. Where we have been blind to the pain of the oppressed, open our eyes to opportunities for reconciliation and caring. Guide the peoples of Canada to establish relationships of mutual respect and honour with indigenous communities, and celebrate our diverse gifts together.

➤ *Spirit, I adore you* 292 – verse 3

Most loving God, source of all grace, light, and peace, restore to all people the joy and health of your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and evermore. Amen

➤ *God, who stretched* 305

#### Blessing

For all that God can do within us – for all that God can do without us... **Thanks be to God.**

For all in whom Christ lived before us – for all in whom Christ lives beside us... **Thanks be to God.**

For all the Spirit wants to bring us – for where the Spirit wants to send us... **Thanks be to God.**

➤ *Sing amen* 264