

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Stockbridge, Massachusetts
May 30, 2021 – The First Sunday after Pentecost: Trinity Sunday

Taming the Trinity

Perhaps the most difficult concept in Christian Theology is that of the Trinity, which we celebrate this Sunday. One God in three persons—what does that mean?

This concept of God as three in one and one in three was spoken of as early as 110 AD, but was not formalized as Christian doctrine until the fourth century. But even after that time there was much misunderstanding about this now primary understanding of God. Our creeds were written and disseminated largely in reaction to those disagreements.

But in explaining the Trinity, have we domesticated God? Have we limited God by trying to define God in human words? It is a challenge to explain that which so completely beyond human understanding. We are called to have faith in a God who is so much more than our mere mortal brains can comprehend. It's no easy matter.

Welcome to St. Paul's, where we persevere to live in faith, even as we struggle to wrap our finite brains around the infinite.

Music

Doug Schmolze, guitar

Prelude:	Wachet Auf	JS Bach
After Sermon:	Minuet in E Major	JS Bach
Offertory:	Gavotte in C Major	JS Bach
After Communion:	Minuet in C Major	JS Bach
Postlude:	Bourree in A Major	JS Bach

Collect

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.*

Readings

Isaiah 6:1-8

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!”

Psalm 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.

John 3:1-17

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."

8:00 AM Sunday Service Resumes Next Week

As more of us are vaccinated, and the incidence of infection has lessened, we are reinstating our 8:00 a.m., Rite I service inside the church. This service will also be streamed live and available for later viewing - information on how to connect to these will be available on our website soon. Protocols are changing rapidly; for now, those who attend are asked to socially distance and be masked when moving around the space. (Commonwealth guidelines advise that non-vaccinated individuals should continue wearing face masks, and any may remain masked throughout if preferred.) The 10:00 a.m. service will continue outside through the summer, moving inside only in case of inclement weather. Questions? Ask Father Sam.

Greeters/Ushers Needed

We are in need of greeters/ushers for our 10:00 a.m. in-person outdoor services on June 6, 13, 27 and throughout the summer. If you are able to serve please contact Matt Fillio, mcfillio@yahoo.com.

Who better to interpret the version of the Bible read in Shakespeare's day than four Shakespearean actors?!

The familiar chronicles of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John sparkle with new light. Timely and important, the four acclaimed narrators boldly showcase the historic text making the powerful King James Version of the Gospels truly accessible to the modern ear.

Produced at the Alison Larkin Presents studio in West Stockbridge, and read by local and award-winning narrator Alison Larkin, James Warwick (star of the Partners in Crime TV series

on Masterpiece Theater), plus the critically-acclaimed Shakespearean duo Tina Packer and Nigel Gore called “Marvelous!” by *The New York Times*.

Download any Alison Larkin audiobook directly via the this link <http://www.alisonlarkinpresents.com/>, between now and June, and a FREE audiobook will be donated to the special worldwide library of Calibre. Calibre brings free audiobooks to people with sight loss, dyslexia or another disability that prevents them from reading print.

Worship Teams

(If you exchange shifts with someone, please notify the Church Office by Thursday morning at office@stpaulsstockbridge.org.)

Today, May 30

Celebrant & Preacher: The Rev. Sam Smith
Usher: Don Temples
Reader: Darryl Lafferty

Next Sunday, June 6

Celebrant & Preacher: The Rev. Sam Smith
Usher: TBD
Reader: Martha Bodine

Parish Prayer List

- People we pray for on Sundays: **Cecilia, Thelma, Cynthia, Tony**
- Long-term prayer list: **Piers, Katrina, Khali, George, Jeff, David, Doug, Barbara, ZsuZsa, Charles, Tom, Rich, Ronnie, John, George, Christy, Michael, Karen**
- Our partners at Grace Church, Great Barrington and their priest Libby; Christ Trinity Episcopal-Lutheran, Sheffield and their priest Erik; the Austen Riggs community and the Riverbrook Residence; victims of violence, abuse, persecution and disaster at home and abroad; those impacted by the pandemic
- Outreach Ministries of the Week: **Laundry Love**
- Diocesan Cycle of Prayer: **St. John's, Millville**
- Anglican Cycle of Prayer: **The Anglican Church of Mexico**

For more information about what is going on in the St. Paul's and the wider Episcopal communities visit our website, www.stpaulsstockbridge.org.