

The Trinity  
Matthew 28:16-20  
Colebrook Congregational Church  
June 11, 2017 / Trinity Sunday

Traditionally, the second Sunday of Pentecost is Trinity Sunday, which is not a celebration of DC Comics' series called Trinity, featuring Superman, Batman, & Wonder Woman, but where we talk about our Triune God. In short, there is one God in three persons, each equal and eternal, and of the same substance, but still distinct.

The Romans were really confused by the Early Christians. First they thought they were a type of Judaism, then not. And then they wondered, what is this talk about three gods, but they can't add a couple pagans ones like good citizens, because they insist they believe in only one God, the same one as the Jews. The Romans were lost trying to figure out what was going on with them.

Even among themselves, the Early Christians could not stop arguing about the Trinity. It got to the point that Roman Emperor Constantine, after legalizing our religion, had had enough, and effectively locked all the bishops he could find in a big room, and wouldn't let them leave until they reached a consensus. That consensus was the Nicene Creed.

How I like to describe the Trinity is three ways to experience God. Father, Son, & Holy Ghost; or Creator, Redeemer, & Sustainer.

I believe that we can experience God the Creator through Nature, God's Creation. Last Friday, at the Open Mic Night on our front lawn, Kyla & I went there with our dinner. We set up a blanket and chairs, and we ate from the bounty of Creation; we could smell the pink lilacs in the air from the Ullmans, we listened to the music and we could hear Caleb playing with his friends, we saw people gathered in the green space in fellowship, and then we saw a beautiful sunset. It was very peaceful, and I felt full of happiness, experiencing God the Creator with all my senses.

Jonathan Edwards wrote what is now called the Spider Letter. Addressed to a Fellow of the Royal Society of London, it is about his experiences observing God's Creation and his conclusions based on those observations and experiences. It is called the Spider Letter because it is about a unnamed species of spider that uses its web silk material to travel. He observed that for short distances, they use their silk line, first attached to a tree branch, and then they would lower themselves out into the openness until a gust of wind makes them swing like a trapeze into the next tree. He also observed, that for longer distances, the spider would let the silk line out, unattached to anything but themselves, until the line, caught in the wind, would change its buoyancy and it carried the spider floating through the air.

Personally, I would not have walked toward the swinging trapeze spiders or the floating through the air spiders, but Edwards did, and he concluded a number of things about God based on his experience with God's Creation. Foremost among them was that God the Creator provides us all with the means with which we need to proceed though life. Also, since it looks like a fun way to travel, the Creator has not only provided all the necessities, but also for the pleasure and recreation of all Creatures, even the insects. I really like that. How many theologians would make that type of conclusion? To demonstrate that God wants us to have fun!

I believe that we can experience God the Spirit at any time. The Spirit can be present in groups gathered in Christ's name, or individually within the heart of the believer, dwelling in us, helping us to feel that the presence of God with us at any time. The Spirit can move us, and we may or may not know why, but we respond, trusting that feeling.

I know I have told this story before, but it has been about a year, and it is a good illustration of experiencing both God the Spirit and God the Christ.

I was in Boston for the Opening Day of AmeriCorps, and I came across a box of grinders after everyone else had been through. They were unclaimed, and I knew that I did not want them. But I felt something compelling me to take as many as I could fit into my bag. My colleagues thought it was odd, but I did not care, I knew that in that moment, I had to fill my bag with them. I figured out later that I was experiencing God the Spirit, who was moving me. She was the source of that compulsion I felt.

Then, my team then started to move across Boston. After the first subway hop, we came up from underground and as we approached a choke point, because this was during the Big Dig, I noticed a man sitting where no one could avoid him, begging for change. None of my teammates gave him anything, they couldn't give any change, our pay was so small. When I got up to him, I did what I could to get out of everyone else's way and said that I didn't have change, but I had food. I opened my bag, and asked if he wanted one. I saw surprise, hunger, and relief on his face. This scene repeated over and over as I made my way across Boston distributing food.

Jesus tells us that whenever we do something to help someone else, we also do that for Him. So in that moment with that hungry man that I fed, I experienced God the Christ.

In the Bible, God is given many names, nearly all based on adjectives, descriptors, and they all help us to better know God, through those three ways of the Trinity. We too, are known in different ways, based on adjectives and descriptors. For example, I have been known at one time or another as a soccer fullback, an eagle scout, an AmeriCorps member, a baritone, a photographer, a flutist, a radio dj, a chaplain, and many other things.

Much like how we can know and experience God through the three ways of the Trinity, we are not know solely by any one of those type of things, but we are known by all of them put together. So we should ask ourselves: Who am I? How am I known? And how do I want to be known?

Please join me in the Spirit of Prayer:

Loving God, through the Trinity, we are able to know You in so many ways. May our hearts be ever open to experiencing You through Your beautiful Creation, through our service to others, and through Your unifying will. In the name of the Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, Amen.

Intercessory Prayer

[PAUSE]

Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, with awe and wonder, joy and gladness we offer You our thanks, and pray for Your creation, its nations, and peoples, for your church, ourselves and all in need.

We ask Your forgiveness, for sins known & unknown. We know that we can do better and be more aware of ourselves and of those around us.

As your disciples, we pray for all who suffer, despairing, burdened, and battered. We pray for health and wholeness for those who are unwell in mind, body, & spirit. We pray for the healing of Your creation, and the renewal of peace throughout the land. We pray for the refugee and for the victims of terrorism. We pray for all whose hands You guide, working to serve their neighbors in any way needed.

We ask for Your assistance in our lives, guiding and protecting us, keeping us safe from harm. Give us the strength we need to respond to Jesus' Call to Follow Him; or to respond to the needs of our neighbors without hesitation. Please fill our hearts with Your Divine Love as we travel Your Creation interacting with other people.

We also pray for:

The Suddath Family  
Sean Larose

Deanna Muzzulin      Sue Kenny  
Family of Greg Roberts      Becky Bodycoat

We offer these prayers in confidence and trust, our eternal God, who is Life-Giver, Life-Saver, and Life-Renewer now and forever. To you be the glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, today and through all eternity. Amen.

## Psalm 8

8:1 O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

8:2 Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.

8:3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established;

8:4 what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

8:5 Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.

8:6 You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,

8:7 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,

8:8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

8:9 O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

## Matthew 28:16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."