

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
A Family Connecting in Christ



THREE IN ONE

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WELCOME TO ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Trinity Sunday

June 7, 2020

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we see and hear people - on the streets and in the halls of government - attacking, fighting, struggling, at odds with each other as they pursue their own agendas.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY... we see and hear our Triune God all on the same page, working together to show their love to our world, even as we are so at odds with ourselves and with God.

OPENING HYMN

"Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest"
Hymn 177

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,
And make our hearts your place of rest;
Come with your grace and heav'nly aid,
And fill the hearts which you have made.

To you, the Counselor, we cry,
To you, the gift of God most high;
The fount of life, the fire of love,
The soul's anointing from above.

Your light to ev'ry thought impart,
And shed your love in ev'ry heart;
The weakness of our mortal state
With deathless might invigorate.

Drive far away our wily foe,
And your abiding peace bestow;
If you are our protecting guide,
No evil can with us abide.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And you, from both, as Three in One
That we your name may ever bless
And in our lives the truth confess.

Praise we the Father and the Son
And Holy Spirit, with them One,
And may the Son on us bestow
The gifts that from the Spirit flow!

M: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

First Lesson

Romans 1:18-2:1

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. ...

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

Confession and Absolution

Today we use one of the tools and treasures in Christian Worship, found on page 154 and also printed out for you here.

M: In the name of our God, to whom all hearts are open and from whom no secrets are hidden. Amen.

Minister and Penitent:

O Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy,
and in your faithfulness, come to my relief.

Do not bring your servant into judgment,
for no one living is righteous before you.

Answer me quickly, O Lord; my spirit fails.

Do not hide your face from me, for I have put my trust in you.
Show me the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.
Teach me to do your will, for you are my God.

Penitent:

Almighty God, merciful Father,
I, a troubled and repentant sinner,
confess that I have sinned against you
in my thoughts, my words, and my actions.
I have not loved you with my whole heart.
I have not loved others as I should.
I am distressed by the sins that trouble me
and am deeply sorry for them.

Here the penitent may confess specific sins.

Minister:

Jesus says to his people, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven."
His death paid for the guilt of your sins and the sins of the whole world.
Do you believe this?

Penitent:

Yes, I believe.

Minister:

Because of the promise of our Savior Jesus, I forgive you all your sins.
Be assured that you are a dear child of God and an heir of eternal life.

Minister and Penitent:

O Lord, my God, I called to you for help, and you answered me.
I thank you for the love you have shown me in Jesus Christ, my Savior.
Through him you have rescued me from the guilt of my sin
and given me the peace of forgiveness.

Help me fight against temptation,
correct whatever wrongs I can,
and serve you
and those around me
with love and good works.
In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

HYMN

"Triune God, Oh, Be Our Stay"
Hymn 192

Triune God, oh, be our stay
And let us perish never!
Cleanse us from our sins, we pray,
And grant us life forever.

Keep us from the evil one;
Uphold our faith most holy,
Grant us to trust you solely
With humble hearts and lowly.

Let us put God's armor on,
With all true Christians running
Our heav'nly race and shunning
The devil's wiles and cunning.
Amen, amen! This be done; So sing we, Alleluia!

Second Lesson

Titus 3:1-8

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but

because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying.

And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

HYMN

"God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It"
Hymn 737

God's own child, I gladly say it:
I am baptized into Christ!
He, because I could not pay it,
Gave my full redemption price.
Do I need earth's treasures many?
I have one worth more than any
That brought me salvation free,
Lasting to eternity!

Sin, disturb my soul no longer:
I am baptized into Christ!
I have comfort even stronger:
Jesus' cleansing sacrifice.
Should a guilty conscience seize me
Since my baptism did release me
In a dear forgiving flood,
Sprinkling me with Jesus' blood?

Satan, hear this proclamation:
I am baptized into Christ!
Drop your ugly accusation;
I am not so soon enticed.
Now that to the font I've traveled,

All your might has come unraveled,
And, against your tyranny,
God, my Lord, unites with me!

Death, you cannot end my gladness:
I am baptized into Christ!
When I die, I leave all sadness
To inherit paradise!
Though I lie in dust and ashes
Faith's assurance brightly flashes:
Baptism has the strength divine
To make life immortal mine.

There is nothing worth comparing
To this lifelong comfort sure!
Open-eyed my grave is staring:
Even there I'll sleep secure.
Though my flesh awaits its raising,
Still my soul continues praising:
I am baptized into Christ;
I'm a child of paradise!

Text: Erdmann Neumeister, 1671–1756; tr. Robert E. Voelker, b. 1957 © 1991
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GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go 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 I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The sun beams on behind the clouds
And in the dark still grace abounds
All is well because of God's great love
The road of disappointment runs
Where unseen mercies wait for us
And all is well because of God's great love.

Chorus

How brightly shines the love of the Father
In our Savior, Jesus Christ
With faithful hands
He fulfills ev'ry promise
He will never leave our side.

He feels our weakness, knows our need
And for our good He intercedes
All is well because of God's great love
Through ev'ry failure, ev'ry fear
The Lord of comfort draws us near
And all is well because of God's great love.

Chorus

His coming soon will fill the sky
And all that's wrong will be made right.
With newborn eyes we will behold
The glory of the risen Lord.
All will be well because of God's great love,
Yes, all is well because of God's great love.

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

“All is well.” It doesn’t look or feel that way, does it? Day after day of COVID reports, hundreds and thousands sick and dead, millions of jobs lost, paychecks cut. Day after day of wondering if we, if someone we know will be the next. Day after day cooped up, pressure, stress rising. It doesn’t look or feel “All is well,” does it? And what is it that breaks the news cycle? Something worse than a virus. Man’s inhumanity to man. A knee to the neck followed by riots, looting, cars and stores torched, going up in flames and smoke.

And yet we sing: “All is well.” How can we do that? What makes “all well”? Is it a numbers thing? 20/20, 118 over 78, a check for \$1200, \$2400, who knows how many hundred? What makes “all well”? Is it green grass, blue skies, birds singing like nothing is wrong? What makes “all well”? Is it a patio, a deck, retirement funds, all comfy and cozy? We know it can’t be that. Because we all know what can happen to that recipe for “All is well.”

So how can we sing: “All is well”? Well, we have something better than the world’s recipe for “all is well.” We have something better than good numbers, a patch of green grass, and a comfy retirement ahead of us. If that were all we had, we would be left with - in Paul’s words - a spirit of fear. That’s what we see in so much of our world, isn’t it? A spirit of fear. And we can still feel it in ourselves. For some people, that spirit of fear sounds like hopelessness, anxious, worried

hopelessness: "What's next? First it was COVID, now it's the riots, what's next?" For some people, that spirit of fear is the fear of a guilty conscience, the fear of death, the fear of God: "After what I've done, I'm doomed; I'm damned. How can I face God like this?" For some, that spirit of fear goes the other way - making excuses, blaming, patting ourselves on the back: "It's not my fault. Look what they did. I like myself just the way I am." And for more and more people, the spirit of fear is fear of the Facebook gods: "I'm not good enough; I don't have enough; my house isn't nice enough; my pictures aren't perfect enough; my life isn't fun enough, exciting enough; I'm just not good enough." However it looks, however it sounds, that spirit of fear chokes on "All is well."

So how can we sing: "All is well"? We aren't ruled by that spirit of fear, at least we don't have to be. When we see grocery stores and drug stores going up in flames and smoke, when we see what other people do, it's easy to think: "How could they? Don't they realize what they're doing?" But think about it - where the spirit of fear rules, if I see no hope for a better future, why not tear things up? What do I have to lose? If I see myself always getting the short end of the stick, why not take what I can get? If I see myself treated like I'm a nothing, why not go on a tear? "One way or another they'll have to listen to me." We've all done it. And we've all told ourselves how right we were for doing it. But it didn't make "all well," did it?

So why can we sing: "All is well"? Because we don't have to be ruled by hopelessness, emptiness, the fear of worthlessness. Instead of being ruled by a spirit of fear, we have a spirit of adoption; we have been adopted into the family of God. Instead of ignoring us, belittling us, kicking us to the curb, God has adopted you to be his children! After all we've done? Instead of judging us, condemning us, damning us, God forgives you. Instead of making us pay for what we have torn up, Jesus stepped in for us and he paid. Instead of waiting for us fix ourselves, to make ourselves right, Jesus stepped in for us and he lived the right life we need to face God. So now what? Instead of being set off to the side, God makes you, me, us, his heirs, co-heirs with Jesus Christ, the Son of God himself!

What God has for Jesus, God has for you! You have heaven ahead of you - heaven where there is no sickness or death, no racism or classism, no hurt or heartache, no anger or frustration. You have heaven ahead of you, heaven where you get to sit with Jesus and rule with Jesus forever! Think about it! No matter your past. No matter how this world treats you. No matter what. With Jesus, by the love of God, you are a somebody. Through the grace of Jesus, you are loved and precious, right with God, right for heaven. And with the connections you have with the Holy Spirit, you have a future!

What does that mean? Listen to what Paul says in the rest of this chapter! **“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him ... If God is for us, who can be against us? ... There is nothing in all creation that can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!”**

What does that mean? Even when the numbers aren't right - “All is well!” Even when the grass is brown and the sky is gray - “All is well!” Even when retirement isn't looking so comfy or cozy - “All is well!”

Yes, all is well. We can sit out on our decks and patios, sit back and relax in our comfy chairs, and let out a contented sigh - “All is well!” Yes! Yes, we can! And no, no we can't. At least not for long. The Spirit of God, the heart of God, the Jesus in you isn't content to sit, at least not for long.

Why? The world is not well; the world is groaning. All around us people are not well; so many broken and hurting; so many taking out their hurt on others.

You know what some say: “That's their problem.” Or “Why don't they ...?” You know what some say: “It's not our fault.” “They brought it on themselves. They bring it on themselves.” You know what some say: “That's too bad; that's so sad.” Or “It is what it is ... whatever.”

The Father could have looked at us and said the same thing. The Son could have looked at us and said: “I'm not cleaning up their mess.” The Spirit could have looked at us and just shook his head.

Instead God so loved the world he gave his one and only Son. And Jesus, he stepped in to clean up our mess. More than that, he took our place in this mess, and did his work in this mess, to give us a place with him in the family of God. And the Spirit, he doesn't just shake his head; no, he moves in you. He moves in you - not just to comfort you, but to power you to live lives that share the love of God and the grace of Jesus with the world around you. Why? So more and more can sing with us "All is Well." Amen.

HYMN

"God of Grace and God of Glory"
Hymn 523

God of grace and God of glory,
On your people pour your pow'r;
Crown your ancient Church's story;
Bring its bud to glorious flow'r.
Grant us wisdom; grant us courage
For the facing of this hour,
For the facing of this hour.

Lo, the hosts of evil round us
Scorn the Christ, assail his ways.
From our fears that long have bound us,
Free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom; grant us courage
For the living of these days,
For the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness;
Bend our pride to your control;
Shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
Rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
Lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
Lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation
To the evils we deplore;
Let the gift of your salvation
Be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
Serving you whom we adore,
Serving you whom we adore.

PRAYER

Good God,
gracious Father,
creator of us all,
have mercy on us.

O Jesus,
Son of God and Son of Man,
our brother,
have mercy on us.

True Spirit,
moving over us,
Lord and giver of life,
have mercy on us.

Look at our world, broken by sin.
Look at our hearts, broken in grief.
Look at our minds, shaken in confusion.
Have mercy on us.

Notes on this prayer for Trinity Sunday:
Prayer Source: (edited from) Paul C. Stratman.

References to Father, Son and Holy Spirit at the beginning, middle and end reflect characteristics of traditional litanies.

The opening phrases "Good God," "O Jesus" take the exclamations people often make when hearing bad news and develop them into petitions.

The shortening of responses "have mercy on us," "have mercy, Lord," "have mercy," and finally "Mercy!" are intended to show a growing weariness.

Forgive our shortsightedness, and open our eyes.
Forgive our hate, and empower us to love.
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Have mercy on us.

On those who are angry,
on those who are hurting,
on those who are weary,
on those who work for peace,
on those who protect and serve,
on those who suffer loss,
on those who are vulnerable,
have mercy, Lord.

Give wisdom to those who lead,
give patience to those who wait,
give healing to those who hurt.
Have mercy, Lord.

Father, from one man you made every nation of humanity,
you make the sun shine and the rain fall on the wicked and the good,
you so loved the world that you gave your only Son,
have mercy.

Jesus, you took on human flesh and became the brother of our human race,
you suffered great injustice to bear the sin of the world,
you are the tree of life whose leaves bring healing to the nations,
have mercy.

Holy Spirit, you moved the apostles to speak the languages of all nations,
you let your Word go out to all people,
you call and gather your church from all the world,
have mercy.

See our world and our nation.
Help the helpless,
strengthen the weak,
soften the hardened,

warm the loveless,
cool the angry,
cleanse our hearts.

Mercy!

Father and maker of all, you let this world stand because you are gracious. Work your grace within us so that we imitate you as your beloved children, and live our lives in love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Jesus, Savior of all people and lover of all souls, show us what love is by opening our eyes to see how you love. You welcomed both “sinners” and “saints,” and taught them all the way of love. When you were dying you forgave those who didn't know what they were doing. You gave your friends who deserted you your greeting of peace. Empower us to love, to forgive, and to share your peace; Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Holy Spirit, you caused Scripture to be written that we might know Jesus and follow him in true love. You give the spark of faith and you fan faith into flame. Move us to put our faith and hope to work with an active love, that we listen before speaking, think before acting, and consider the needs of others before our own.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“May the Peace of God”
Hymn 745

May the peace of God our heav’nly Father,
And the grace of Christ the risen Son,
And the fellowship of God the Spirit
Keep our hearts and minds within his love.

Refrain

And to him be praise for his glorious reign
From the depths of earth to the heights of heav’n.
We declare the name of the Lamb once slain—
Christ eternal, the King of kings.

May this peace which passes understanding,
And this grace which makes us what we are,
And this fellowship of his Communion
Make us one in spirit and in heart.

Refrain

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