

***“Our Living, Triune God”***

Proverbs 8: 1-4, 22-31; John 16:12-15

The Holy Trinity

Sunday June 15, 2025

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Zion Lutheran Church of Union Deposit

**Grace to you and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ! On**

Sunday, after I led church, I was able to sneak in to the end of the worship service at Zion Hummelstown, just in time to see Pastor Jim Stough and Pastor Dave Schreffler honored for their many years of faithful service. For Pastor Jim it was 60 years, and for Pastor Dave it was 20 years. Pentecost Sunday was the perfect day to celebrate, since that is the day when we commemorate the beginning of the church itself. The Holy Spirit was certainly present in the joy and worship that was shared, and in the many good wishes and congratulations that were given that day. And by the way, this week marks my 11<sup>th</sup> year as pastor of Zion, Union Deposit. ☺

But when I look at the date on the calendar, my mind moves to something sad that happened three years ago. Three years ago, my mother-in-law died of a stroke. It was very sudden and frankly, unexpected. She was only in her early seventies. Barbara lived with us for 13 years total and lived her last three years in the Sarah Todd Memorial Home in Carlisle. She had suffered from Multiple Sclerosis for decades. She was never able to work full-time as a result of her condition, but she

lived a full and meaningful life. She and Larry raised two wonderful children and she was an amazing mother-in-law to me.

I mention Barbara today because her story of faith is a testimony to the awesome and very mysterious activity of our Living God, the God that we name today as the Holy Trinity. She was raised Roman Catholic and yes it was controversial when she married Larry, who was a Lutheran. Daily life for Barb was a physical struggle that only got harder as the disease progressed, but she rarely let on that she suffered from chronic pain. We often spoke together about faith, especially since I went through seminary and ordination while she lived with us. She had an unwavering faith that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit was with her every moment of her life. She taught me what it meant to have faith in the face of adversity.

Sunday is Holy Trinity Sunday, a festival of the church that is the only festival that celebrates a church doctrine, rather than an event in the history of the Christian experience. It's not like Easter that celebrates the Resurrection, it's not like Pentecost that celebrates the giving of the Holy Spirit to the new believers. Holy Trinity is a doctrine, or a decision of a church council that defines how we understand God. And I think it's a darn good one.

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity helps us use our finite, human language to describe the indescribable. The idea of the mysterious three-in-one helps us to

understand God as creator, God as the one who redeems us from sin (Jesus), and God who sustains us on the journey (Holy Spirit). The language of Holy Trinity helps us in our worship and praise of that which is good, that which we wish to become, and that which is holy in the world.

Our Scripture readings for today speak to our very human desire to search for and to find the Living God. We are all on a life-long quest to understand who God is and how God works in the world. In our gospel lesson, the disciples are trying to understand it all. Jesus has just told them that he will be joining his Father in heaven, and they are full of anxiety and fear. He assures them that they will be in good hands while he is away. Jesus says, *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...* Jesus asks the disciples to trust that he and God are with them and will sustain them. He tells them not to fear. He is leaving them physically, but his presence will remain through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Dear Friends, the promises that Jesus made to the disciples are the same promises that hold true for us today. In fact, the promises made in scripture are gifts for all who hear the good news, and not just us Christians. The good news today is that our saving God is always with us and will never abandon us. We can rely on our faith to help us overcome the most difficult of situations. The Spirit of Wisdom and Truth, the Holy Spirit of God that existed before the creation of the earth can be the rock on which we lean our faith.

I truly believe that it was her faith that kept my mother-in-law going. She was never able to set foot in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Mechanicsburg where she was a member, but the priest or a Eucharistic Minister visited her every week for 13 years that she lived with us and at the Sarah Todd Home. Receiving weekly Holy Communion was the highlight of her week and so very meaningful for her. Jesus came to life for her as she received the Sacrament. I can't say enough about the blessing and pastoral care she received from her church.

Like Barbara, we can all point to instances in our lives when we have encountered God. I know for you, weekly Holy Communion is one of those times that God is vividly present. Sometimes God is revealed to us in our suffering and in our struggle. Sometimes we recognize Jesus when we minister to others or when someone ministers to us. Sometimes the Holy Spirit breathes life, healing, or renewal into relationships or situations that we thought were permanently damaged. And sometimes the beauty of nature simply takes our breath away. God comes to us and surprises us in so many different ways.

Like people say, God moves in mysterious ways. We might notice God in moments of healing and reconciliation. We often look back on times of suffering and notice that God was there all along. God might show up in a restored relationship or a new birth, or God might show up in a still, small voice that calls

us in an unexpected direction. One thing we can be sure of is this: God **will** show up. God always does. **Amen.**