

OUR REDEEMER'S VOICE

June 2020



The first Sunday in June (June 7) is the First Sunday after Pentecost. The Church has set this day aside to remember the Holy Trinity. The Church has been celebrating the Trinity in its life and worship since its earliest days, as evidenced by the Trinitarian baptismal formula. The earliest known liturgies (including that contained in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus which dates to the early 200s) include many references to the persons of the Trinity, including prayers that end with Trinitarian doxologies.

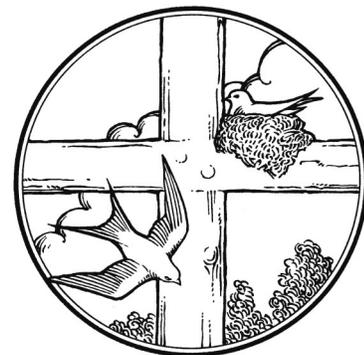
Nonetheless, there was no general feast of the Trinity in the early Church. Over time, dioceses and churches began celebrating feasts of the Trinity locally, often in response to Arianism, which denied the Holy Trinity. Early dates of the localized feasts include the first Sunday after Pentecost, or the first Sunday before Advent. Both placements have symbolic value. The post-Pentecost date celebrates the Trinity as the final celebration of the earthly ministry of Jesus, after Christ's resurrection, ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The pre-Advent date, no longer observed, ended the Church Year with the celebration of the Trinity, the source of all creation. Both show the importance of the Trinity as the foundation, beginning and end of Christian belief and experience.

Pope John XXII established the feast day for universal observance in the Western Church in 1334 AD on the present date. The Lutheran Church has always celebrated it on this date. In addition to the yearly observance of Trinity Sunday, the Church's weekly worship is strongly Trinitarian in nature.

Back when I was a youth, what we now call the Pentecost Season was called the Trinity Season. The name change to Pentecost Season was in harmony with the Liturgical Renewal movement and came to us when we adopted the hymnal named *Lutheran Worship*. (This is the same hymnal that gave us the three-year lectionary and added a weekly reading from the Old Testament.) By naming the Sundays in reference to Trinity Sunday, the Church of my youth gave a strong accent to just who we worship. I've heard that it was believed this strong accent was no longer needed as "everyone" knows that Christians are Trinitarian and worship God as the eternal "Three in One and One in Three," God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, Three Persons yet One God, "neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Essence" (Athanasian Creed).



If that is the case, then the Worship Committee is running with a different group of non-Christians than I have for the last fifty plus years. There are many mysteries in the Christian Faith. By "mystery" I do not mean something that we can discover or figure out with our own reason. Christian "mysteries" are things that can only be discovered by revelation from God. We have that revelation in the pages of our Bible. One of the deepest mysteries is the Holy Trinity. As the Athanasian Creed teaches, there is no salvation outside the Triune God and so it is the Triune God whom all Christians worship. On this side of the grave we will never really understand the Trinity, but we can worship this One True God. We do this every Sunday, but it is good that we set aside the first Sunday after Pentecost for a special focus. We worship Him who is the source of all things.



Blessings in Christ,
Pastor

Digging In

The Nicene Creed Second Article, Part 13

*And [I believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, **Light of Light**, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.*



Last month we wrapped up our discussion on the phrase "God of God." This month we turn to the phrase "Light of Light."

One does not have to be a great Bible scholar to recognize that the Scriptures use the image of light in reference to God. So, for example, to become a believer in Jesus is to become enlightened or come to the light (Luke 2:32; John 1:4, 8:12; Acts 26:23; etc.). In fact, one is warranted in saying light is one of Scriptures' favorite metaphors for God and darkness one of Scriptures' favorite metaphors for being separated from God (Matthew 4:16; Matthew 25:30; etc.).

The first spoken "word" of God, in the Genesis creation account, was "Let there be light." Christian theologians noted this, as they reflected on God's ultimate "Word," and ever afterwards they connected with the image of light as the finest biblical type for conceiving the character of God's Logos-Sophia as the illuminator and creative force.



I think I should explain "Logos-Sophia." These are two Greek words. "Logos" is often translated "Word." "Sophia" is often translated "Wisdom." The Scriptures use both words to refer to the Second Person of the Trinity. I say "often" translated because both words have a very wide range of meaning. That is why sometimes the words are transliterated instead of translated.

For example, Logos can be translated "story" and so we think of Jesus as God's Story. It can be translated as "speaking" and so we think of Jesus as the "Voice of God." It can be translated "reason" or "motive," so we think of Jesus as the reason we are saved and the motive of God to save us.

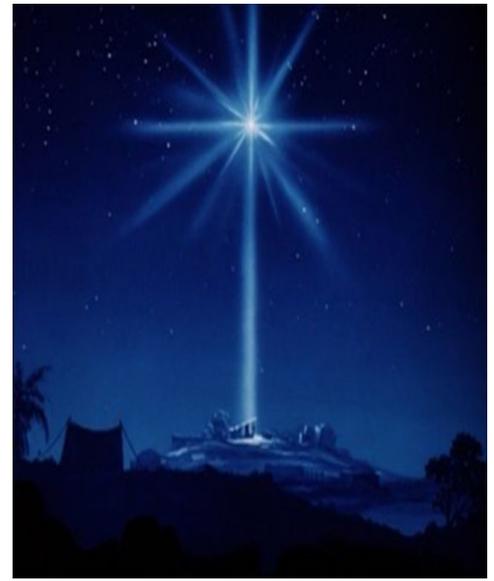
Sophia could be translated as "common sense" and so we think of Jesus as the practical way God relates to us. When we include the Hebrew background of the writers of the New Testament, we can add thoughts like "clever" and "skilled," among others, to the idea of Sophia. Therefore, Sophia also carries with it the idea that Jesus is the way God relates to us, for words like "skilled" carry with them the understanding of being able to do something. Jesus was "able" to be the master craftsman during creation, he is "able" to die for us, he is "able" to return to judge the living and the dead, etc. From earliest times, then, theologians have often simply retained the Greek words.

Now, back to "Light of Light." The psalmist spoke of the "light of God's face" falling as a blessing on Israel and of God

being "wrapped in light as in a robe" (Psalm 4:6; Psalm 104:2). By the time of the Nicene Creed, these ideas had already entered the prayer life of the Church in Evening Prayer. We still use Psalm 141 in Evening Prayer in our current hymnal (page 245). When Christians read Isaiah 9:2, they universally understood it as referring to the incarnation.

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

The appearance of God to Moses on Mt. Sinai is described in terms that suggest it is a light so intense that a mere human cannot look on it and live (Exodus 33:18-23; 34:6-9, 29-35). Moses has to veil his face to speak to the Israelites, something that must have been in the minds of the Gospel writers when they described our Lord's Transfiguration (Exodus 34:33-35; Mark 9:1-8; Matthew 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36). On that day, Jesus was revealed with the light of the Glory of the Father.



While we will continue this examination next month, it is clear that this phrase again accents the divinity of Jesus, that this divinity is not a borrowed attribute or a second-rate attribute, but is of his essence, as it is of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Yet there is no separating the three persons of the Trinity into separate gods. They are one.

So, until next month, may "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14). Amen.

Awake, My Heart, with Gladness by Dr. Carol Geisler



"By all Your saints in warfare, for all Your saints at rest, Your holy Name, O Jesus, forevermore be blest! For You have won the battle that they might wear the crown; And now they shine in glory reflected from Your throne. Praise for the light from heaven and for the voice of awe; Praise for the glorious vision the persecutor saw. O Lord, for Paul's conversion, we bless Your Name today; Come shine within our darkness, and guide us on our way." LSB 517

Many members of the religious party of the Pharisees rejected Jesus as their Messiah and opposed Him at every turn. They challenged Him with questions, trying to "entangle Him in His words" (see Matthew 22:15), hoping that He would speak against the law of Moses. Along with the chief priests, they successfully plotted the Savior's arrest and death. So, in His wise and unexpected ways, the risen Lord chose an especially angry Pharisee named Saul as His ambassador.

After witnessing with approval the martyrdom of Stephen, Saul began to persecute the followers of Jesus. "Breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord," (Acts 9:1a), Saul received permission to go to Damascus and arrest believers there. On the way, the risen Lord confronted Saul. The Lord Jesus challenged the awestruck Pharisee, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4b) Blinded by the glorious vision, Saul, who would later be known as Paul, was baptized. Summoned by his Lord to suffering and service, Paul proclaimed the crucified and risen Savior throughout the Mediterranean world.

We were once headed in the wrong direction on our own various Damascus roads, just as surely as St. Paul was: "None is righteous, no, not one ... There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:10b, 18). Just as surely as Paul once did, we dealt in hatred and rebellion against God (see Titus 3:3). Then we were called by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and claimed as God's own possession in the water and Word of Baptism. United with the risen and reigning Lord, we were baptized into His death, buried with Him, and raised to newness of life. We are called to suffer and serve for the sake of Jesus.



Jesus told Paul what he would suffer in the cause of the Gospel (see Acts 9:16), and we are also warned, "You will be hated by all for My Name's sake" (Luke 21:17). Yet we too are ambassadors for our Lord. As we go about our

daily work in life, we are always ready to testify to those who ask us about the hope that we have in Christ Jesus. We pray that they will, by the Spirit's power, come to faith and join us one day as we stand with all the saints—and with St. Paul—shining in glory before Christ's throne.

Arlen D. Besel – Ambassador

THROUGH THE WORSHIP WINDOW

June — Trinity & Pentecost:



Trinity Sunday launches us into June. The Gospel is the Great Commission Jesus gave to the Disciples and to all of us. The message continues with the sending of the Disciples not only to share the Good News but to provide healing and other miracles. The actions of His followers are recorded to encourage our actions and faith.

The Old Testament message is Moses' work with God at Mount Sinai when God reminded the Israelites of the miracles performed as they were freed from Egypt. God cautioned them not to fall away from His Word and laws.

Jeremiah complains to God that the people will not listen and plot against him. Later he is faced with a false prophet, Hananiah and reminds him of God's punishment for those who are not sent by God.

The New Testament readings are from Romans and include many familiar messages about our walk with the Lord. In Romans 8 we are told of our future with God if we remain in the faith. A very reassuring message is that we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ who loves us. Verses 38 & 39 point out that nothing in all the world can separate us from the grace of God in Christ Jesus. We should memorize these refreshing words.

In these challenging times we can rest knowing that not only is God watching over us, but His Spirit is at our side to assure we are kept safe. *If God is for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31*

Arlen D. Besel– Worship

"How's Your Diet?"

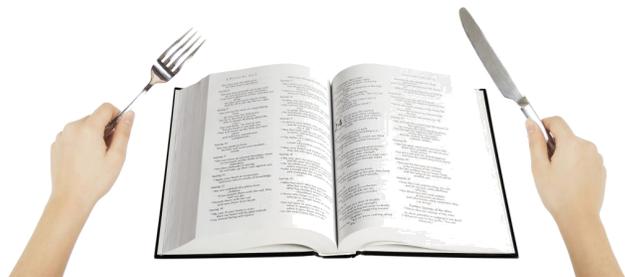
By Rev. Travis Guse, Mission Engagement Facilitator, SED Central Region

So, let me ask you all a personal question today. How has your diet been during this Covid-19 pandemic? Let's face it, perhaps not all of us are eating as well as we should be during this health crisis. Now don't worry, I'm not asking about your physical diet, though that is an essential question for all of us to consider. Instead, I'm asking about your spiritual diet. How have you been feeding and caring for your soul while sheltering-in-place at home over these last few months? Just as physical food is vital for our physical health, so spiritual food is vital for our spiritual health.



Once a crowd came looking for Jesus after the miracle of the feeding of the 5000. They desired more food for their stomachs. Yet, Jesus knew that there was a deeper spiritual hunger that they had within. Instead of offering them another miracle of food, He responds to the crowd with this declaration, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." (John 6:35) These are the same words that Jesus speaks to you today with the same promise.

Jesus sees the same spiritual hunger you have within your soul. A thirst for love. A yearning for connection. A need for hope. A desire for peace. A craving for something to believe in. A longing for eternity. And ultimately a hunger and a thirst for righteousness - a right relationship with God. Jesus not only sees this hunger, but He is the only one who can satisfy that hunger you have for He is the Bread of Life. So He says to you this day, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for you will be satisfied." (Matthew 5:6)



So, how are you doing with your spiritual diet? Are you meeting Jesus regularly in those places He promises to meet you to fill you with all your soul desires, namely His Word and promise? While I'm sure many of you are regularly taking Jesus up on this invitation, perhaps there are some of you who have been spiritually starving yourselves lately. Perhaps God seems like such a distant reality in your life. Inside, you find nothing but an unsatisfied

craving within your soul because you haven't eaten spiritually for a while. Yes, it has been difficult since the stay-at-home orders went into effect, and we could no longer gather together for public worship at our local churches. However, there are so many worship services online to choose from right now that it's like going to a buffet restaurant with all the choices and opportunities available!

Or perhaps some of you are like spiritual bulimics, gorging yourself on Sunday morning, but starving yourself the rest of the week. The truth is you need to feed your soul more than just once a week with some daily devotional supplements of the Word! Perhaps you've been feeding on spiritual junk food rather than on the hearty meal of the Gospel. While the teaching of Joel Ossteen might taste good, he's kind of like whip cream - sweet but no real substance. Sweets might be ok once in a while, but you need a regular diet of spiritual meat and potatoes every day, a meal of Christ and Him crucified. Or perhaps your soul is being poisoned by those things that the world is offering you, promising life. Instead, those things are slowly killing you spiritually.



No matter what you have been eating or how often you have been feeding your spirit during this Coronavirus outbreak, Jesus once again makes a gracious invitation to you this day. He says, "Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die." (John 6:27, 50) Jesus is both the host, and He is the gift! The table is always set so come, taste and see that the Lord indeed is good, and let Him satisfy the hunger within your soul today.

[Remember that you can join us live on Wednesday evenings as we discuss the book of Romans; these are recorded, also, as are our worship service (which are aired Sundays at 10:00 am)]

O.R.C.H.A.R.D. Update

Well, all of our plots have been rented for this growing season, our new rainwater tank is on its way, happy little plants are growing, and neighbors are eagerly awaiting God's bounty (Pastor & Kitty have a head start as some of their fall crops that didn't grow then have sprung up with delight in spring!). There is always work to be done, that's for certain. Our next workday is scheduled for Saturday, June 6th; we will, God willing, dig the water lines & install the PVC so that there is water closer to the garden space. Join us, if you are able. Happy growing, gardeners!



We will have a virtual LWML meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, June 2nd, 10:00 am; look for the link and join the meeting—we need to vote on some things, as well as perhaps discuss the fall auction. Kathy O'Malley

June Birthdays

25 Clara Streets
28 Curtis Gerzevske
29 Charlu Schott
30 Meghan Gerzevske



If we missed your special day, please call or email the church office with your info so we can celebrate with you! (302) 737-6176; secretary.orcde@outlook.com

Due to our limited activities, no calendar has been produced for June.

Pastor & Kitty will be on vacation June 8—June 21; the office will be closed, there will be no Romans Bible studies or worship services during this time. We encourage you to seek out other streamed studies and services—I'm told Pastor Loesch has something available, as do many LCMS churches in the SED.



JUNE BIBLE READINGS

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Isaiah 12:1-6
Acts 15-16 | 16 | Psalm 14
Judges 7-9 |
| 2 | Psalm 150
Acts 17-18 | 17 | Psalm 15
Judges 10-12 |
| 3 | Psalm 1
Acts 19-20 | 18 | Psalm 16
Judges 13-15 |
| 4 | Psalm 2
Acts 21-22 | 19 | Psalm 17
Judges 16-18 |
| 5 | Psalm 3
Acts 23-24 | 20 | Psalm 18
Judges 19-21 |
| 6 | Psalm 4
Acts 25-26 | 21 | Psalm 19
Ruth |
| 7 | Psalm 5
Acts 27-28 | 22 | Psalm 20
1 Samuel 1-3 |
| 8 | Psalm 6
Joshua 1-5 | 23 | Psalm 21
1 Samuel 4-6 |
| 9 | Psalm 7
Joshua 6-8 | 24 | Psalm 22
1 Samuel 7-9 |
| 10 | Psalm 8
Joshua 9-11 | 25 | Psalm 23
1 Samuel 10-12 |
| 11 | Psalm 9
Joshua 12-16 | 26 | Psalm 24
1 Samuel 13-15 |
| 12 | Psalm 10
Joshua 17-21 | 27 | Psalm 25
1 Samuel 16-18 |
| 13 | Psalm 11
Joshua 22-24 | 28 | Psalm 26
1 Samuel 19-21 |
| 14 | Psalm 12
Judges 1-3 | 29 | Psalm 27
1 Samuel 22-24 |
| 15 | Psalm 13
Judges 4-6 | 30 | Isaiah 12:1-6
1 Samuel 25-27 |

