

Church of St John the Evangelist, Elora
Trinity Sunday
June 12, 2022
Canon Paul Walker

It is rare to describe something as consubstantial and coeternal, but these are two of the characteristics of the Christian God which are summarized in one of the most challenging and difficult ideas in the Christian faith: the Trinity. And today is Trinity Sunday. It is the only day in the Christian calendar that does not mark an event or a person, but rather seemingly an idea.

In the 39 Articles of Religion, listed in the back of the Book of Common Prayer, the first Article is on the Trinity. It reads:

THERE is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Well that's a dense description of something that is apparently the foundation of the Christian faith.

We have concluded the seasons of Christmas, Epiphany, Lent and Easter, and on the 50th day we celebrate Pentecost. And now, having celebrated the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the coming of the Holy Spirit - all events in chronological order - the very next thing we do is to hear about the Trinity.

Today we are reminded that this whole activity of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is at its core a blessed and eternal fellowship, an intimate communion, bound together in love for all time. The three members of this God-head are so committed to one another that they are constantly lifting up the other, listening to the other, speaking of what the other says, honouring the other, and giving of themselves to the other. This fellowship is always and forever one.

Metaphors to describe the Trinity are of course always lacking, but here's one that I like. Visualize a wooden bench in the park, and as you approach it you see that someone has carved the shape of a heart in the bench; and inside the heart are two names, "Father + Son", with the



words carved underneath that say, “*Forever*”. The Holy Spirit would be the heart shape and the words “Forever” underneath.

This whole idea of Trinity is important to hear after the narrative arc of the incarnation is now completed. After the birth, death, resurrection and ascension of the Son is over; and after the promised Holy Spirit has descended, we hear about the Trinity, because after all, this is the image we are made in. This is the name that we are baptized in. This is the name we are blessed in. This is the name we are committed to when we die.

All of this is telling us that community is really important. Relationships are really important. How we honour one another and listen to one another is really important. How we treat the environment is really important. How we respond to our indigenous neighbour is really important.

Because if this is the image we are made, then we are designed to be in relationship with others. If this is the image we are made in, then God has brought us all into this fellowship of love,

devotion and honour for all time; and the remarkable thing is *we* had *nothing* to do with it. The other remarkable thing is this communion will *never* be broken and it is constantly looking outwards.

So back to the park bench. Inside that heart carved in the bench is your name, and your name, and your name. In fact if you look closely you begin to see all your names, and names you may not even recognize, and some names that may even surprise you. It is the glory of God that we and all of creation are brought into this fellowship and *nothing* will ever change it.

The repeated invocation of the Trinity is intended to remind us of this great act of salvation, and hopefully inspire us to live our lives out of this knowledge: that we belong to one another because we belong to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for all time. Amen.

