

New Hope Lutheran Church

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June 7, 2020 Trinity Sunday

**ALL EVENTS FOR THE COMING
WEEK HAVE BEEN CANCELLED
except for the following**

June 9 6:30pm Council zoom meeting
June 12 6:00pm Youth zoom meeting

*Please remember to send in your offering.
We now have a **donate button** on our web site nhlc.ca*

*The office is closed, but phone messages, email and mail
are being checked regularly.*

IN OUR PRAYERS

Aline, Fred, Pentti, Esme, Martha, Derek, Maria and Kai.

Prayer of the Day

God of heaven and earth, before the foundation of the universe and the beginning of time you are the triune god: Author of creation, eternal Word of salvation, life-giving Spirit of wisdom. Guide us to all truth by your Spirit, that we may proclaim all that Christ has revealed and rejoice in the glory he shares with us. Glory and praise to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading Genesis 1:1 – 2:4

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2** Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. **3** And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. **4** God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. **6** And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." **7** So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. **8** God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. **9** And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. **10** God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. **11** Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. **12** The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day. **14** And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. **16** God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. **17** God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, **18** to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19** And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day. **20** And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." **21** So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **22** God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." **23** And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day. **24** And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the

livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. **25** God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. **26** Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." **27** So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. **28** God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." **29** Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. **30** And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so. **31** God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. **2** By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. **3** Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. **4** This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

Psalm 8

1 LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. **2** Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. **3** When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, **4** what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? **5** You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. **6** You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: **7** all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, **8**

the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. **9** LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 13:11 – 13

11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. **12** Greet one another with a holy kiss. **13** All God's people here send their greetings.

Gospel Matthew 28:16 – 20

16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. **17** When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. **18** Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** 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, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

June 7, 2020 – Trinity Sunday "Unique"

Today is Trinity Sunday, the day we celebrate and remind ourselves of the uniqueness of God. Over the course of human history humankind has come up with a variety of versions when it comes to gods. The Greeks and many other societies had a multitude of gods who interacted with each other in both good and bad ways, but were each limited in what they could control. And so, you had gods of harvest and fertility, gods of war; that sort of thing.

In this way the Jewish religion was rather unique since it has only one God and everything is under the control of this one Creator. The coming of Jesus however, enlarged our understanding of God, to also see God as the Redeemer. And after Jesus' ascension came Pentecost Sunday when the promised Holy Spirit was revealed to believers. Rather suddenly (considering the length of human history), that singular God has 3 different sides, yet is still one God.

Explaining all this without somehow getting sidetracked into a variety of heresies is pretty much impossible. *Lutheran*

Satire illustrates this in a slightly irreverent way (<https://lutheransatire.org/media/st-patricks-bad-analogies/>), if you are interested. For hundreds of years Christians attempted to define the Trinity by bringing forward the Apostles Creed, then the Nicene Creed, and finally gave up after coming up with the Athanasian Creed – which you may recall goes on for several pages attempting to make sense of it all. For that reason we have to be content with considering the Holy Trinity to be a mystery; something that cannot be fully comprehended or explained by mortals. Explaining the Trinity isn't the point; trusting the presence and power of the triune God is.

What the creeds are trying to point to is our experience of God, and attempting to put an experience into words can be a very difficult, if not impossible, process. In a similar way, when Jesus spoke about the Reign of God, he compared it to a mustard seed, to expensive pearls, to yeast in flour, or a net catching fish. Very few people understood at the time because none of those describe the experience fully. And that's because being part of the Reign of God is an experience, not something simply described.

What I want to point out today is that God is very unique amongst all the made up gods of history, or even the gods of today. Perhaps you don't think anyone worships made-up gods today, but if we define a god as *that which one places their highest value and trust in*, its pretty easy to see the current gods people worship these days. Some place their highest value on accumulated wealth or net worth. Some value power (having it and gaining more) above all else. Some put their highest trust in themselves and their reputation. Possibly the most popular god today is a very selfish god called "ME".

In contrast to such gods that seek out greedy wealth or violent power or selfishness, the Triune God looks to find selfless modesty and an attitude of loving service. Jesus spoke about the power of being last instead of first, the blessings of poverty over riches, and the supremacy of loving others over hatred. Those aspects of God make God very unique, and as God's followers we too are to be unique in the same ways. So how do we find that uniqueness?

There has been a lot of chaos in the world recently. What began as peaceful protests to injustice has resulted in violence. Massive storms have taken lives and destroyed property. Some governments have put their economies above the lives and health of the very people they are to serve.

Responses to this chaos are varied; from total outrage to silence, depending on whom people are listening to. Some of us may feel like we've lived through this before, and see a pattern from decades ago, patterns of human behavior that have been just hiding under the surface. The gods of violence, greed and selfishness are that predictable.

So how can we break some of those patterns for good? I would like to suggest we need to be unique, just as God is unique. It is a time to step out of established comfort zones and show a unique love for our neighbor; first of all by protecting them from getting infected, but also by letting others know they are not alone. It is a time to fight fear with acts of caring love. It is a time to do more than stand in front of a church with a Bible, but actually open that Bible, study what is said there, and act on that wisdom found in the words written.

As I mentioned earlier, we cannot understand the relationship of the Trinity through words alone, because it attempts to speak about an experience meant for each of us. While we are currently hampered from our normal actions as followers of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, this is a time to be imaginative, to be creative, to think outside of the box as to how we can better serve others, and enlarge our own experience of what it means to be part of the Reign of God.

Today then, as followers of the very unique God, let us explore how we can serve the world in a more unique way. Let us be bold in our choices so that we too will experience what it is to "*go and make disciples of all nations*". Amen.

Prayers

Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

God of community, you form us as your church. Guide our bishops, pastors, deacons, and all the baptized in sharing your life-giving good news with all the world. Strengthen us to be bold in our proclamation to others.

God of creation, you called everything into being. Sustain this world with your renewing care. Inspire us to see waterways, plant life, birds, fish, insects, and mammals as all being part of your creation, and call them good.

God of counsel, all authority belongs to you. Encourage the leaders of this and every land to seek peace, equality, and unity. Instill wisdom in advocates who work toward justice in often ignored communities especially those communities which have seen violence in recent weeks.

God of care, you created us in your image. Help us see your likeness in one another. Open our eyes to see and attend to all who face illness and suffering of any kind. Console, heal, and nourish those with health issues. Bless those who care for the ill in these times, that their own health may not suffer.

God of compassion, you comfort us in our grief with the promise of the resurrection. We give you thanks for the saints of all time and in our lives. Be with all who are grieving losses in their lives. Bless and comfort them with your presence.

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**