

Immanuel United Church  
Trinity Sunday  
May 30th, 2021

Welcome

Call to Worship: What Was Told, That (Jalal al-Din Rumi, 1207-1273)

What was said to the rose that made it open was said  
to me here in my chest.  
What was told the cypress that made it strong  
and straight, what was  
whispered the jasmine so it is what it is,  
whatever made  
sugarcane sweet, whatever  
was said to the inhabitants of the town of Chigil in  
Turkestan that makes them  
so handsome, whatever lets the pomegranate flower blush  
like a human face, that is  
being said to me now. I blush. Whatever put eloquence in  
language, that's happening here.  
The great warehouse doors open; I fill with gratitude,  
chewing a piece of sugarcane,  
in love with the one to whom every  
*that* belongs!

Reflection # 1:

I have learned that even though we may be used to finding God in nouns (Many metaphors of God are actually nouns for example, God is like "living water". The Lord is "my rock". ), finding God in verbs or verb metaphors reveals the divine in an unobjectifiable way. (God is revealed in the dynamic aspect(s) of the presence, rather than as an objectified entity.)

What are the verbs that strike you in the poem?

Rose "**open**"  
"**whispered**" to Jasmine so it "**is**" what it "**is**"  
The pomegranate flower "**blush**"

I **“blush”**

**“Put** eloquence” in language, that’s **“happening”** here.

The great warehouse doors **“open”**.

I **“fill”** with gratitude.

**“Chewing”** a piece of sugarcane, in love with the one to whom every  
*That “belongs.”*

In the poem “What Was Told, That” by Rumi, verbs such as open, blush, happen, fill and belong invite us to discover and enjoy God, and to notice the power of the words, the actions and the activities in new ways. Notice, appreciate and say out loud these verb metaphors of the divine in the poem. How would you use them in your life context, today?

What are the verbs you actually engaged with last week? What are the other verb metaphors you would look forward to finding and doing in this week? Which verbs help you to feel cared for, uplifted, hopeful, encouraged and open a way to God?

Prayer: Heart-Opening

I invite you to stand and place your hands over your hearts and take a few deep breaths. Then open your arms wide. Repeat this a few times as you imagine your heart and head, body and soul opening to the Divine.

This can be a great energizing exercise for the morning, as it opens us to the wonders of the new day and to the nudging of the Spirit.

Hymn: VU 371 *Open My Eyes, That I May See*

Scripture: Genesis 18:1-5

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, “My Lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on — since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.”

The Choir Anthem: *Hush, Hush, My Soul Be Calm and Still*

Reflection # 2: IF Trinity Was a Verb,

As we hear today's reading, what are the verb metaphors of the divine and of our relationship with God expressed in it? Could you try to identify them?

Appeared. Sat. Looked up and saw. Ran to meet.  
Bowed down to the ground.  
Said.  
Do not pass by.  
Bring water. Wash feet. Rest under the tree.  
Bring bread. Refresh. Pass on.  
"Do as you have said."

Who knew before Covid-19, these simple acts, the verb metaphors, would become so sacred and precious and yet at the same time impossible/restricted? "Sit." "Meet." "Do not pass by." These words, actions and activities have the power to change our lives. "Bring water and bread to strangers." And wash their feet. Offer hospitality. Share a meal as a community, as a group, as a family, as friends, as strangers. As a Trinity of more than three people, five people, ten people. At our home, in the church, in the outdoors.



Genesis 18:1-5 is the setting for the famous icon called Trinity painted by Andrei Rublev in the 15th century. Rublev likens the three visitors to the Trinity.

We suffer in isolation. We shrink when we lack human contact, warmth, connection and kindness. Just like plants. Last week was cold and the sunshine was rare, plentiful only in the afternoon. What I have learned over the month with growing indoor plants in my living room is their thriving really depends on the amount of light coming through windows. I can control the amount of water I give them; I can designate the best location to receive more light. However, I

cannot control the amount of light coming in through windows. That is determined by the weather, day by day. Just like plants need plenty of light in the right amount for each of them, in order to grow, survive, even thrive and flourish, our lives are interdependent with another's presence: human contact, warmth, love received and given, connection, kindness. Even blush.

In today's reading, three men are referred to as angels or messengers of God. As Abraham offers gracious hospitality to his guests, he is actually offering hospitality to angels. This is reflected in Hebrew 13:2: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." We struggle and find this Covid time very weary and painful because the opportunities to imitate/emulate God's verbs/metaphors/activities - - based on relationship and connection - - are severely restricted, such as "sit" "meet" "Do not pass by." "Bring bread and water to strangers." "Wash their feet." "Let them rest and refresh themselves." God is alive and experienced and becomes enjoyable when these verbs are exchanged mutually and freely among people. We thrive and flourish, when we can do God's activities. Hospitality is a good, effective way to fight spiritual separation. Compassion and care, openness and affection in actions toward companions, plants and pets, friends, children, parents, neighbour and strangers who are in the community we serve. In the story, the three angels/visitors tell Abraham, "Do, as you have said". Even the smallest. Even the hardest.



Trinity is not just a doctrine passed on since the early church councils at Nicea and Constantinople in May AD 325. If we can think of Trinity as a verb, *IF Trinity was a verb*, it would be the internal *activity* of radical love among relationships, in the holy and living community. That is, God is simultaneously one *and* three, one *and* multiplicity. God invites us into a variety of states of being, and changes of being. God is the changing and constant state of being in motion. God is in the dynamic dance of the three in one. God is never static.

Think about the art of juggling with three objects. Last week, Jah-bi and I hilariously enjoyed learning how to juggle on YouTube as a part of his remote-learning Gym class. We started with the easy success of throwing one plastic bag high and grabbing it gently from up (show the hands in motion). Then, we were instructed to

cross-catch two open plastic bags. The third step was to try juggling with three plastic bags, throwing them high and catching them in the order they were falling. Plastic bags come down much more slowly than folded socks. I was so thrilled to make my first juggling success with three open plastic bags! No luck with socks yet.

God as Trinity is revealed to us as the dance of the three / the dance of the multiplicity, as an internal, intimate *community* within God's very being. God is the radical love among the three persons of the Trinity: Creator, Christ, Spirit; an ecstatic dance of the three persons. God as Trinity, as verb, as dance, breaks down separation, dissolves boundaries, fights isolation, challenges individualism that causes us to suffer and shrink.

In today's reading, Abraham recovers holy hospitality with three visitors. Three strangers. Three angels. Abraham recreates a community that impacts his life and his spirit with joy and purpose. With the act of radical love and hospitality, we experience, as an individual and as a community, how to become alive and flourish. On this Trinity Sunday, let us hold and treasure the mystery of Trinity as we wait for God.

Etymologically, the root of the word God is to *call*. God as a verb, *call*, invites us to sit, rest under the tree, encounter the holy both in the unexpected and familiar places, to break bread and quench our soul's thirst with the love-light that streams through each other's summer windows.

Hymn: MV 144 *Like a Healing Stream*

<https://youtu.be/gmehfPn4aso>

Prayers of the People:

Holy and Living One,

You *call* us to dwell in the joy of your presence.

You *open* the doors of your great warehouse for us to find the tools we need.

You *fill* us with gratitude.

We find ourselves in love with you, you to whom every beautiful and life-giving and changing verb and noun *belongs*.

Roses. Jasmine. Blushing pomegranate flower.

May the gentleness of your spirit which lures us into new excitement and hope *happen* here, with us today, we pray.

We wait for your arrival,

your gentle landing to our heart like a humming bird looking for the moment of sweetness while flapping its wings without cease.

God, we are tired, weary, constantly worried and concerned.

Be our breath, God.

As we breathe in, fill us with your peace.

As we breathe out, help us exhale any tension we may hold,  
so that we know that we are enough.

We are exactly who You have created us to be.

Help us live into that beautiful creation.

In this moment, we are enough.

You are peace.

No more and no less.

In you, we take joy and courage to rest and have our being fully through accepting vulnerability.

We pray for those who are in our hearts and prayers and are in need of God's healing touch.

May we bring your peace and comfort to those who are sick or in hospital, to those who are mourning loss, to those who are lonely or depressed, to those we name aloud or in our hearts. "Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten. Those who seek God shall never go wanting."

Amen.

Taize chant: VU 290 *Nothing Can Trouble*

**Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.**

**Those who seek God shall never go wanting.**

**Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten. God alone fills us. (X3)**

Benediction:

**As you leave this place today,**

**may God's face shine upon you,**

**may Jesus walk beside you,**

**and may the Holy Spirit fill you. Amen.**