

# TRINITY SUNDAY



## THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

June 7, 2020  
10:45 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas  
Link to worship videos available at: [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org)

### WELCOME

We welcome you to worship today.

In Psalm 113, it is written: Blessed be the name of the Lord, from this time on and forevermore.

**From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord be praised!**

### PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

El Shaddai

arr. James Koerts

### HYMN NO. 12

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise  
**Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.**  
**Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light, nor wanting,  
nor wasting, thou rulest in might:  
Thy justice, like mountains high soaring above;  
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love**  
**To all, life thou givest, to both great and small.  
In all life thou livest, the true life of all.  
We blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,  
then wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.**  
**Thou reignest in glory; thou dwellest in light.  
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight.  
All praise we would render; O help us to see  
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee!**

ST. DENIO

PRAYERS OF PRAISE AND CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Let us pray ... We praise you, Wondrous God, because your mercy has no end and the treasure of your bestowing goodness is infinite. Forgive us, though, of failures to live up to your loving and steadfast purposes. We have been obsessed with our own desires, which disregard and disrespect others. Hear us now, as we come before you in a time of confession through silence.

As the only Source of true pardon, restore us to a repaired and empowered life, for faithfully serving among all of your people in the way and spirit of Jesus Christ.

Friends, let us hear and share with gladness the blessed news of the Gospel:

**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!**

SCRIPTURE READING

Exodus 33:14-23  
Matthew 14:34-36

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN NO. 406

We Are Standing on Holy Ground

HOLY GROUND

**We are standing on holy ground, and I know that there are angels all around;  
let us praise Jesus now; we are standing in his presence on holy ground.**

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

The Relational Trinity of God's Goodness, Graciousness, and Compassion

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING, INTERCESSION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us begin our prayers of thanksgiving and intercession this morning with each of us praying in silence for self and others . . .

With humble thankfulness, Holy Sovereign, we acknowledge your unspeakable love to us. We glorify you for your matchless goodness. Therefore, not trusting in our own worthiness or righteousness – but only in your grace – we offer once again to you the prayers from our deepest concerns.

O our Strength and Sure Defense, anoint with healing all who are afflicted, downcast, struggling, and despondent. Support the oppressed. Deliver the tempted. Sustain the ill and injured. Empower each one beyond tears of bereavement; and daily be to every person a holy shield and guide. Now, again, we pray as Jesus taught:

**Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

The Church of Christ Cannot Be Bound

ST. PETER

**The church of Christ cannot be bound by walls of wood or stone.  
Where charity and love are found, there can the church be known.**

**True love will not sit idly by when justice is denied.  
True mercy hears the homeless cry and welcomes them inside.**

**If what we have we freely share to meet our neighbor's need,  
then we extend the Spirit's care through every selfless deed.**

**The church of Christ cannot be bound by walls of wood or stone.  
Where charity and love are found, there can the church be known.**

Lift Every Voice and Sing  
(For lyrics, see Hymn No. 339)

music by J. Johnson

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## PENTECOST OFFERING

*One of four Presbyterian Church (USA) Special Offerings*

This offering helps the church develop and support its young people and also addresses the needs of at-risk children. Presbyterians have raised more than \$15 million for these ministries. Make your check or online payment payable to First Presbyterian Church, MEMO: Pentecost Offering.

Mail your check to First Presbyterian Church, 1100 Carter Creek Parkway, Bryan Texas 77802 or give your gift online. Go to [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org), click **Give** in the upper righthand corner on the homepage.

## PAM MUSIC & WORSHIP CONFERENCE—ONLINE (JUNE 21-26, 2020)



This VIRTUAL conference offers a full week of worship and music for musicians, clergy, laypersons, choirs, youth, children, and families. Guided by the principles of Reformed worship, conferees explore opportunities for vital worship experiences and enriching the liturgical life of the local church. With no registration deadline, the fees are as follows:

Adults and Youth: \$250 (non-PAM member); \$175 (PAM member)

Children: \$100

### *Attend from Anywhere!*

Save money on housing, food, and even the conference registration rates!

### *Outstanding Conference Faculty Delivering Interactive Masterclasses*

Eric Nelson, Mark Patterson, David Harris, Anne McNair, Victor Johnson... learn from the best!

### *Go at Your Own Pace*

Attend the virtual events streamed live or watch them later.

**Partial scholarships available.** To learn more, contact Karen in the church office at [office@fpcbryan.org](mailto:office@fpcbryan.org).

Especially in this time, visit the church website, [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org), for the newsletter, announcements, worship bulletins, devotionals for children and adults, updates, etc.

Like us on **Facebook** at: [www.facebook.com/FPCBryan](http://www.facebook.com/FPCBryan)

**NEW!!!** on **Instagram**: [www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com).

Search for and follow **fpcbryantx1867** and/or **fpcbryan\_youth**

Help FPC-Bryan's YouTube channel achieve 400 subscribers to be eligible for a custom url!

On [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), search for First Presbyterian Church of Bryan, Texas, then click **SUBSCRIBE**

Our newsletter, **The Chimes**, continues to be available online, emailed to FPC-Bryan friends, and mailed to local FPC-Bryan members with the printed bulletin and sermon to those without technology. Until further notice, it will not be mailed to its full distribution list. The deadline for the next issue of the newsletter is **NOON, TODAY**, and will be distributed on **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10**. This newsletter will cover news from June 18 to July 1.

**STAY CONNECTED!** with others in this community of faith at Church Updates—FPC-Bryan's online tool for church-related announcements, ways to serve, and current prayer needs. This online tool is "REAL TIME," and users receive a weekly reminder email on Thursdays to view new posts.

Login and create your password-protected account at <https://fpcbtx.churchupdates.org/login>.

For more information, contact Karen in the church office, 979.823.8073 or [office@fpcbryan.org](mailto:office@fpcbryan.org).



# A WARM WELCOME!

*We are delighted to have you worship with us today.*

## WORSHIP NOTES

### PREACHER

Rev. Ted Foote

### LITURGISTS

Rev. Emily K. Béghin

Rev. Dr. George E. Klett

### MUSICIANS

Michelle Lassiter, *Pianist*

David Kipp,

*Director of Music Ministries*

### COVER ART

Celtic Trinity Knot (gold)

intersected with

the circle of God's eternal love (green)

### CHANCEL FLOWERS

In loving memory of

Ruth & Alan Alter

by

their children

### AUDIO/VIDEO

Emily K. Béghin

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Hymns from

*Glory to God:*

*The Presbyterian Hymnal*

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## THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

TRINITY SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2020

**10:45am ONLINE WORSHIP-**

**To view, visit [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org)**

5:45pm Youth (GR 6-12) Sunday Fun Day-DIGITAL

*(Watch your inbox for details via email!)*

MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2020

TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2020

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2020

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2020

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2020

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2020

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, JUNE 14, 2020

**10:45am ONLINE WORSHIP-**

**To view, visit [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org)**

5:45pm Youth (GR 6-12) Sunday Fun Day-DIGITAL

*(Watch your inbox for details via email!)*

For regularly scheduled meetings/gatherings,  
please be in touch with your group's  
moderator, leader, coordinator, or facilitator  
to determine alternate meeting options/platforms.

## The Relational Trinity of God's Goodness, Graciousness, and Compassion

Exodus 33:14-23 and Matthew 14:34-36

June 07, 2020

Ted V. Foote, Jr.

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas

For the past 700 years, the Sunday following the celebration of Pentecost has been designated as Trinity Sunday. That would be since about 1320, give or take ten years. This means that multiple centuries passed after the Holy Spirit blessed and inspired disciples of the crucified and resurrected Jesus in Jerusalem, until disciples of Jesus in the evolved church thought it would be positive to have a Sunday designated to celebrate God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or as God who is Sovereign, Son, and Spirit. Of course, God was not always known that way. For the first 300 years after Jesus, preaching, teaching, and writing occurred with multiple opinions about who Jesus was in relation to God. Only in the 300s and 400s did the emerging institutional church begin to take votes as to what the preferred answers were for the majority of those voting. That's how "orthodoxy" evolves. It's not the only right answer. It is, rather, the best answer considered by a majority of those voting at a given time. And people have persecuted one another and killed each other when disagreeing in the extreme about how God is God.

Sometime between when I was ten years old and received as a church member upon profession of faith in Jesus and when I was 25 years old and a senior student at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, I learned the simple rhyme: "One in three and three in one. There you have the mystery of the Holy Trinity." While that rhyme would have worked for an answer in my Gatesville, Texas First Presbyterian Church membership and confirmation-of-faith class in the spring of 1963, at Austin Seminary between 1975 and 1979 it would have earned me a failing grade for being overly simplistic. Let me share with you a story from 39 years ago of two conversations a few months apart which have shaped my thinking ever since about "how God is God."

In 1981, I was two years beyond graduation from Austin Seminary, beyond of my ordination exams, and beyond my beginning work as an associate pastor in San Antonio, when I was introduced to the Reverend Milton Bendiner. Milton was the Emeritus Director of Religious Education at Temple Beth-El, the Reformed Jewish congregation in San Antonio's Midtown and San Pedro Park neighborhood. Milton's wife had died a few years before. He did not drive. He was frequently looking for a ride to a chamber music concert or a religious studies lecture at Trinity University. After we met, since I was not married, he sometimes called and asked me for transportation, and, when I could, I agreed to drive and to accompany him. I was 27. He was probably 70. In my opinion, he was easy to be with; but he was cagy. Twice he brought up the nature of God. Both times we had just departed his house on East French Street. We were headed west. You may ask: "How can you remember that?" Because being in the presence of a person whose life was dedicated to religious education and whose European relatives perished in the Holocaust was intimidating to me, especially at age 27, when I was less skilled in faking what I didn't know than I might be today. (I said "might.")

As I was driving along that oak-lined street to a religious studies lecture, from his passenger seat, he said, "Theodore (that's how he addressed me), you know Christians talk about a Trinity, even though Jesus quoted Deuteronomy about how God is one" (Mark 12:29; from Deuteronomy 6:4). Then he stopped and was silent. After I had driven another block, I

deduced that he was waiting for me to reply. “You are exactly correct, Milton,” I said (because he asked me to call him “Milton”). “According to Jesus, quoting Deuteronomy, God is one.” He nodded affirmatively, saying nothing else on the subject. Neither did I.

Another time, just leaving Milton’s house on our way to a chamber music concert, he said, “Theodore, when Moses asked to see God’s glory, God put a hand over Moses’ eyes until God sufficiently passed. When Moses finally got a glimpse, he only saw God’s backside. According to the Scripture, God was granting what God judged as essential in Moses’ request: Granting not for Moses to behold glory, but to behold God’s goodness, which includes graciousness and compassion (Ex.33:19). Would you agree?” I said, “I get that.” At which point he asked, “Why, then, do you think some Christians act as if: (1) God’s glory is just another in a list of God’s accessible qualities? And (2) as if God does not care crucially about becoming known through grace and compassion?” I said, “Milton, you make good points. Maybe some Christians want to snuggle in God’s glory as if it is a child’s favorite blanket, and they haven’t read Exodus 33 closely enough.” He exhaled and sat back in his seat, saying, “I think they have not.” According to my friend, Milton, who died about 1996 and who, today, would be close to 110 years old: (1) “God is one. (2) God’s glory is too much for human eyes. (3) God’s goodness is graciousness and compassion.” There’s life-changing power in this “trinity” – God’s goodness as God’s graciousness and compassion.

Matthew’s Gospel Account, chapter 9, verses 20 through 22, and chapter 14, verses 34 through 36, both tell of persons desiring to touch the hem of Jesus’ shirt, or Jesus’ robe. Just to touch the cloth or the fringe of the cloth he was wearing. Why? Because, as the story is told, simply touching the hem of the cloth would change and heal a person’s life. Moses initially did not know well enough what he was asking when he learned about God’s character hundreds of years before those folks wanted to touch Jesus’ shirt, yet here is what Moses learned: (1) Glimpse the goodness; (2) then the grace and compassion of God in your midst will change, heal, and strengthen you; and, (3) through you, God will be at work to heal the pain and agony in others’ lives, to support needed change, to give strength.

If you are ever questioned – whether you ask yourself or whether someone else asks you – about the Holy Trinity, about how God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and still is considered one God, you might recite the rhyme, “Three in one and one in three. There you have the mystery of the Holy Trinity,” or it might be enough to say, with greater seriousness, greater truth, and greater accuracy, “The three genuine characteristics I sense in the centuries’ old story of God with God’s people – which God is said to value – are God’s (1) goodness demonstrated among humans and creation with (2) graciousness and (3) compassion. That’s what Moses learned and experienced. That’s what Jesus believed, taught, embodied, and shared with his life. That same graciousness and compassion from God’s goodness which Moses experienced and Jesus embodied and shared are what the Holy Spirit coaxes forth from you and me and others in relation to a world in pain and agony – a world which has the positive yearning for healing.

Sometimes it’s not so much the garment or shirt you touch as someone passes by, as it is the one who passes by touches you. God’s goodness is graciousness and compassion. Isn’t that the Holy Trinity we don’t ever need to argue about? – All honor and praise be to God.