



We Gather

*Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle.
This week, it would be appropriate to find a white cloth or scarf to signify Trinity Sunday.
Start by lighting the candle. The candle helps to centre us.
Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God.*

*A video of the readings, reflections and prayers is here:
<https://vimeo.com/426480344/585f819458>*

Note: after recording my reflection on the readings, I felt there was something more to be said. The service video includes my shorter and later reflection. For a more full exploration of the readings, go to the additional link:

Acknowledgement of Country

We recognise the stewardship of the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation for the land on which we gather today.

From river to ocean
from campfire to hearth
may the First People
who have cared for this land
be blessed.

From breath to song
from step to dance
may those who follow your Songlines
guide us on the journey
to living honourably in this place.

From greeting to Amen
from silence to chorus
may our worship
join with the voices
of the First Peoples
of this Land.

Introduction

Today is Trinity Sunday. It is the only festival of the church that is set to focus on a doctrine, rather than an event in the life of Jesus (birth, epiphany, baptism, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension) or the early church (Pentecost). The doctrine of the Trinity was developed in the 3rd and 4th centuries as the early church struggled to more fully understand and communicate their faith. Put simply, Trinity is the understanding of God in three "persons": Father, Son and Spirit; or Creator, Redeemer and Breath of Life. God is all of these - distinctly and at once - relational, communal.

There is no specific biblical reference to the doctrine - it is implied, hinted at - and it is not the only way the Bible describes the nature of God. So the doctrine may help in our understanding of God but it will never completely capture or describe God.

As we come to worship, take a moment to think about all the different names for God or images that are helpful or meaningful for you. And then consider: God is all of these and so much more.

We come to worship God who is always and ever beyond the reach of language or image and yet is also intimately known to us and delights in the world God created, redeeming it, redeeming us, and restoring all of creation to wholeness.

Call To Worship

Psalm 8 says this:

¹ O LORD, our Lord,
your greatness is seen in all the world!
Your praise reaches up to the heavens...

³ When I look at the sky, which you have made,
at the moon and the stars, which you set in their places -
⁴ what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?

⁵ Yet you made them inferior only to yourself;
you crowned them with glory and honour.

⁶ You appointed them ruler over everything you made;
you placed them over all creation:

⁷ sheep and cattle, and the wild animals too;

⁸ the birds and the fish
and the creatures in the seas.

⁹ O LORD, our Lord,
your greatness is seen in all the world!

Let us pray:

Eternal Creator, we praise you for the goodness of plants and animals, sea and sky, and humankind which you created in your image.

Holy Wisdom, we thank you for speaking to us through Scripture and music and the words of our neighbours.

Fiery Spirit, we ask you to guide us as we seek to be faithful to your Word and good stewards of your Creation.

Triune God, bless us this day as we worship, this week as we grow in faith, and all our lives as we seek to reflect your love to the world.

We pray in the name of God, Mother*, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Katya Ouchakof

<https://revgalblogpals.org/2020/06/02/worship-words-for-trinity-sunday-7-june-2020/>

Holy, Holy, Holy - Audrey Assad

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=28&v=AgHrNNM23p8&feature=emb_logo

Prayer

God of active creation, embodied compassion, and abiding presence,
we are here to respond to your call.

We pray that you will lead us to your voice
in the mountains, on the city streets,
and across the wide universe that you have created and loved.

Bless us with wonder and awe,
each and every day.

Please help us to use that awe for gratitude and to serve the entire community of creation.

Help us to see other creatures as siblings to love and care for.

Remind us to ask other creatures
about their experience of you.

Teach us to help and not to hurt,
to love and not to forget,
and to embrace with joy
all of Earth that you love so much. Amen.

Adapted from Seasons of The Spirit, Resources for Trinity, 7 June 2020

Confession

Creator of love and action, as much as we love you, sometimes we close our ears to your voice. We long to continue to listen to you, even when it is to know that Earth is in pain. Help us to be servants to all of Creation, sheltering it from harm. We humbly pray to be healers and caretakers of Earth of both suffering and beauty. Amen.

Words of Assurance

The Creator guards our lives.

Christ knows our struggles.

The Spirit guides our steps.

All speak to us from the mountains and the rivers, the cities and towns, the deserts and forests.

Adapted from Seasons of The Spirit, Resources for Trinity, 7 June 2020

We Listen for God's Voice

Reading: Genesis 1:1-2:4a

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God 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 dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' ⁷So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' ²¹So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

²⁷ So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' ²⁹God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. ³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

² Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. ²And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. ³So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

⁴ These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Reading: Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

Reflection

For a video of this reflection: <https://vimeo.com/426489076/df0e5fcec3>

Let us pray...

God of many names, you who are reflected in all that we see and so much that we are yet to understand, speak into our hearts and minds today that our lives, and the lives of our communities, might be transformed by your grace and love. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

This past week

Here in Australia, we have marked a week for Reconciliation, beginning with Sorry Day, the anniversary of the national apology to indigenous peoples for the way they were treated over two centuries of colonial imperialism; and ending this week on the day marking the moment 28 years ago when the High Court recognised the rights of indigenous people to native title to the lands and waters that had been taken from them. We have watched in dismay at the events unfolding in the United States where violence in word and deed continues to be perpetuated, where the dignity of people of different race and colour is denied, where the rich and powerful continue to use violence to suppress and deny freedom; where the Bible has been used to threaten and harm rather than to embrace and to reconcile.

In the midst of it all, we have begun to emerge from our enforced hibernation into a world that has been changed by the ongoing threat of the COVID-19 virus. Over two months ago now, our leaders made a call, and our communities responded, and for now, at least, it seems that we can risk at least a limited amount of movement and gathering.

And on Friday, 5 June, we recognised World Environment Day.

And so I am asking questions such as - who am I in the midst of all this?
Which leads me to ask, who is God?

As the psalmist says (Psalm 8),

³ When I look at the sky, which you have made,
at the moon and the stars, which you set in their places -
⁴ what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?

⁵ Yet you made them inferior only to yourself;
you crowned them with glory and honour.

⁶ You appointed them ruler over everything you made;
you placed them over all creation...

This Creation is the creation of God who declares it to be "good".
This is the creation that God labours over and then rests.
This is the creation that God delights in and yet despairs over,
This is the creation God loves so much that God will send God's son, embody the humanity God created, enter its life and its death, in order to draw the Creation, all it contains, close to Godself.

"When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted." (Matthew 28:17).
Here are Jesus' disciples, on a mountain in Galilee, face to face with their friend and teacher, risen from the dead, the Christ.
They worshipped him...
but some doubted.

Isn't that us?!
And, sometimes, isn't that each one of us?
We worship the risen Christ, yet sometimes there is a niggling doubt - who is this? What is this all about?

The good news is, any doubting of ours does not deter Jesus.
He still stands before us, reminding us of his authority over all the cosmos, and still sending us into the world to make disciples, to baptise, to teach.
And wherever we go, God is with us, for all time.

So confident that God is with us - for all time - we can return to the question, who is this God?

Today's readings invite us to start at the beginning - Genesis 1 - the beginning of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Now before we get too excited about the details of the creation story recorded for us in Genesis 1, we need to remember that this is not the only creation story contained in the Scriptures. Have a look at Genesis 2 - another creation story - where the order of created things is quite different. Have look at John 1 where the presence of the Word is highlighted (but not mentioned in Genesis).

So what does the creation story in Genesis 1 have to reveal to us about who God is?

First, this story of creation is joyful and abundant. It is very different from creation stories coming from other traditions of its time. This creation is not born out of violent conflict, but is born of goodness and peaceful ordering. God orders the chaos, shaping and nurturing life.

It is also a story that is deeply reflective of the cosmology and understandings of its time. It comes from a world where the earth is flat, where the heavens are above our heads, just out of reach, where the depths of the seas are mysterious and terrifying. This story was never intended to describe the scientific creation of the universe and the 6 days of creation is describes was never meant to bound the limits of God's creativity. It is a story, a "myth" in the sense of it being a way of describing a deeper, perhaps indescribable, truth. And in its imagery, points to a number of truths - the God who moulds and shapes the land and the sea, the moon and the sun, who plants the trees and the plants and breathes life into animals and birds.

It is thought that this story was written while the people of Israel were in exile - while they are away from cultural patterns that identified them - reminding them of who God is and who they are. Some scholars think that by the time it gets written down in the form we

have it, it may have been a kind of litany, the repetitive phrases being part of how we remember. The language is poetic and rhythmic, perhaps echoing a rhythm that is woven into the fabric of the creation.

So what about humanity in all this?

²⁷ So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

This is the God who shares God's very self in the creation of humankind.

Male and female will bear the image of God, reflecting God to each other and to the world around them.

We, you, me, indeed every human being on this earth, each one who has been, and each one still to come, carrying, reflecting in our being, the image of God's being.

The radical sense of this comes in the ancient understanding that one's identity was everything - in a world where the threat of identity threat is very real, perhaps it still is - but this God doesn't preserve God's identity only for God's self, God shares God's self with us.

This God, gives of God's self God's very being.

And this act of giving of God's self is deeply and profoundly relational.

And then God establishes the place of humanity within the whole of creation.

God first blesses them and then invites them to share the abundance of God's creation.

All the plants and trees are yours for food - seemingly both humans and animals were vegetarian, according to Genesis 1:29-30.

'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' (1:28)

And here we need to be careful about how we understand and translate these ancient texts.

Let's be clear - the word "dominion" does not mean to use every resource possible until the earth is within an inch of its, and therefore, our, very existence. It does not mean to use and abuse it. The word that is translated "dominion" here in the Hebrew has much more a sense of care-giving and stewardship.

Really, what happens here is that God shares the arrangement of the order of creation, enabling creaturely creativity to shape itself - responsibly and in relationship with all other parts of creation.

Another word that has created us problems, "subdue" in v.29.

The word "subdue" is used here in an agricultural sense, speaking to a people who would have to work hard to clear land for food crops.

And it is at this point, God sees that it is "very good" and rests.

This story establishes and reminds us of the importance of Sabbath - a day of worship and rest devoted to God. In God's order of life, God give us time, time to breathe, time to catch up with ourselves, time to catch up with our God - to remove ourselves from clock-watching time (khronos) and to enter God's time (kairos).

Who is this God?

The God we are drawn to is the Creator of all things - and that creation is fundamentally good.

This God creates us, human beings, to be in relationship with God, with each other and with all of creation.

God loves us, human beings, so much, that when we wander off and do our own thing, when we mess things up, quite often spectacularly, this God continues to reach out to us. This God entered our lived experience, in life and in death, and this God sends us into all the world, all the cosmos, all the creation, to share the good news of God's love and grace. This God invites us to participate in God's creativity, to reflect God's image / God's being in the world around us, transforming the world, bit-by-bit, day-by-day.

This God is with us - Emmanuel - always.

God of abiding and active peace, guide us to sustained attention and wonder toward the bounty and rhythms of Earth. Help us to hear your voice and see your name written across this community of life, and to serve your creatures with love.

Seasons of The Spirit, Resources for Trinity, 7 June 2020

Listen / Sing - The Pilgrim Song - NCYC 2003 (see video)

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We Respond

Prayer for Others

Holy and loving Father,

God of Compassion,

We thank you for the positive circumstances we enjoy in Australia in this time of Pandemic. Be our companion Lord, our counsellor and our friend as we make changes in re-entering the community. We ask for discernment in decisions for our Congregation for future gatherings and for maintaining safety. We ask for guidance in recognising need around us and being responsive to meet these challenges. We pray for those with compounded circumstances of poor health, of anxiety and mental health issues, of loneliness, of loss and confusion. We pray for carers Lord, to sustain them, to love them and to support them.

God of Wisdom,

Help our world leaders find the space and ways to be wise. Facing conflict and unrest, protests and anger at injustice; help world leaders to find the heart and honesty to see inequity and racism. Help them to hear the voices that speak of love, and seek solutions that negotiate positive change through respect, job and education equity, respectful policing and equal access to health facilities and housing. Lord we lift the US up to you and we also hold Australia before you and the work that still needs to be done with Indigenous communities. Help us not to miss opportunities for change.

God of Hope,

We pray for hope and peace and trust in you for our community as many face unemployment and financial uncertainty. Be close to them Lord as they face fear. And be with our government as they develop policies for our country.

We pray for the many countries facing much harsher health and economic circumstances. Help us to share our resources.

We pray for our planet and government policies to face the reality of climate change.

And Father, we pray for an awakening of heart for you, that more may know your real presence in their lives. Amen.

Prepared by Michele Broad

World Environment Day (5 June 2020) - Bushfire Prayer

God our comforter,

Who walks with us through fire, flood and drought.

We pray today, and every day, for those impacted by the ferocious bushfires this last spring and summer.

We pray for those who have lost lives, family members, homes, businesses, towns and forests.

We pray for those who have lost a sense of safety, those who have lost places of refuge and comfort, and those for those for whom familiar landscapes which were once beautiful and calming now evoke memories of fear and hurt.

We pray for the difficult work of cleaning up the damage done, which in many places is just beginning, and for the rebuilding still to come in the months and years ahead. We recognise the delays caused by COVID restrictions, and the additional pain and trauma of having to deal with multiple crises at once, especially for those living temporary accommodation.

We pray that these people and communities might know they are not alone, and we have not forgotten them.

We are conscious of the great harm caused by the bushfires.

We think of the estimated 445 people, medical experts now tell us died from inhaling smoke from the fires. We think of the 3,000 people admitted to hospital with respiratory problems, and the 1,700 who struggled to breathe because of asthma*, and those who couldn't protect themselves or their children from the smoke.

God you have breathed life into all the creatures of the world.

As we commemorate World Environment Day, and the theme of biodiversity this year, we remember the billions of animals and insects burned to death by the fires, those starved to death in burned landscapes after the fires, and those now struggling to survive in limited remaining habitat, some of which continues to be logged. We pray for endangered species whose lives are now even more precarious because of the impact of these fires, and those newly made endangered or extinct by them. We thank you for the sobering but careful work of scientists who strive to measure the full impacts of these fires on our land and its creatures.

Holy God, we sometimes fear the future. We fear the approaching fire season, and the ones following. We fear because we know this wasn't a one-off freak event. We knew something like this was coming. We had been told of the risks.

We acknowledge that as a society we have failed to heed the warnings of our scientists, over decades, that climate change would make our fire seasons more severe and longer lasting. We have failed to act in a timely manner to reduce our emissions, even though Australia is one of the most vulnerable countries in the developed world to climate change. In our sins of omission, we have failed not only ourselves, but our children and grandchildren, who now face a greater burden and more severe impacts of climate change because of our inaction. But Lord, you are a God of grace and the hope of new beginnings. We thank you for the incredible ways bushfire communities pulled together and looked after each other during the fires. We thank you for the leading roles our church communities and church people played in this. We thank you for the chaplains of the Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network (DRCN), and for our leaders who worked to support those suffering.

We thank you that in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen again our capacity to come together as a community, to put aside differences, to listen to our scientists and other experts and work together to address a common threat. We have been willing to make sacrifices to protect the vulnerable and avert a greater harm. Help us now to bring this same resolve to the challenge of climate change.

We thank you that ultimately we know how to solve this problem. It's as simple, and as hard, as reducing the greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere. We thank you for people all around our country installing solar panels, reducing car use and eating less meat. We especially thank you for those who recognise that our faith calls us to action and who are working faithfully to care for creation and reduce their emissions. Give our governments grace and courage to act together for the common good. The time for division, denial and politicking is over. Give all of us the capacity to overcome differences and find common ground. Now is the time to act. For those suffering. For those who will suffer if we do not act now. You have given us power and agency Lord, let us use it.

And so Lord, we commit to these two things:

1. To uphold in prayer, and offer what support we can, to those communities recovering from the bushfires
2. To act together to create a safer climate future for ourselves, our neighbours and all the creatures of this world that God has made and loves.

Be with us in these actions, Lord, and in all we do. Give us not peace but determination, and the will to see change.

We ask this in Jesus's name, Amen.

Prepared by UnitingEarth

**Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-26/bushfire-royal-commission-hearings-smoke-killed-445-people/12286094?fbclid=IwAR2kEQqkEI3ZSnLRF-HX98qBUgD8rGf8ewp4ob70P5IQAHQmCjaNxfw7gnE>*

Offering

In responding to what we have read and how we have heard God speak to us, we commit ourselves to moving with God's Spirit, breathing life in the world around us.

If you make a regular financial contribution to the Kiama-Jamberoo Congregation, consider putting that amount aside now and keeping it safe.

God of all Creation, in our lives, we watch as this universe of endless beauty dances and grows. We are overwhelmed with gratitude. May our gift to you today remind us to look to the mountains and galaxies to find your wisdom every day. Amen.

Seasons of The Spirit, Resources for Trinity, 7 June 2020

Notices

Keep an eye on the website, facebook page and the e-news for updates.

If you hear of or notice anyone needing a bit of extra support, please let Kath, Janice, or one of the Elders or Pastoral Partners know.

Sing - God of Creation (Tune: Morning Has Broken)

1. God of Creation

Gentle life-giver

Present at birth, and

all through our days

Author of sunrise

Song in the night sky

Here in this place, we

offer our praise

2. Jesus, Companion

teacher and healer

friend of the grieving,

suffering, the poor

Stand with your people

whisper among us

promise of mercy

goodness for all

3. *Spirit of Comfort
blow through Creation
stir up new life, breathe
peace through our world
Healer of hearts, and
hope for tomorrow
weave all our sorrows
into new dawn*

4. *Here we give thanks for
life in its fullness
blessings received
your gifts to us all
Make us a people
filled with compassion
selflessly giving
serving your world.*

*Craig Mitchell (2010)
Used with permission*

We Go

Sending and Blessing

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 13:11-13. Let us receive these words for us today:

¹¹ Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹²Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

¹³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

We might not be able to “greet one another with a holy kiss” just now but the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God and the companionship of the Holy Spirit is with us. Always and Amen.