Worship Resources for June 11, 2017—Trinity Sunday

Revised Common Lectionary: Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; Matthew 28:16-20

Narrative Lectionary: Series on Psalms, Psalm 100 (John 1:14-17)

On Trinity Sunday, we are reminded of not only the Triune God, but the tri-relational nature of God: God, Others, and Nature (one of the first things I remember learning in systematic theology). God, who speaks in the plural, creates, sends forth the wind from God (or spirit—wind, spirit, and breath are the same word in Hebrew), and calls us as human beings to be stewards of the earth, to care for the earth as God cares for us. God makes all things good, and the commandment to all the creatures are to be fruitful and to multiply, to fill the land and the water and the sky. Humanity was created in the image of God, to have the same dominion over the world that God had, which was to bless and create.

The psalmist considers the works of God in Psalm 8, and wonders why God is mindful of human beings who are insignificant in the creation of the universe; yet God has made them a little lower than God (or the angels in other versions), and has put the world under their feet. By this, the psalmist is awed at the responsibility, and the trust that God has given us as human beings.

The ending of the second letter to the Corinthians uses the threefold blessing, invoking the name of Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit together. These three verses show that the early church recognized this triune relationship early on and often used it as a benediction.

Jesus gives the Great Commission to the disciples in Matthew 28:16-20. The disciples have gone to a mountain in Galilee where Jesus had directed them to go. Mountains were often seen as sacred spaces in the ancient world, the place where heaven and earth met, where the gods of the pantheons of Greece and Rome dwelled. In the Hebrew scriptures, mountains were thin places where God spoke to Moses and Elijah and other prophets. While some disciples still harbored doubts, Jesus still calls them to go out into the world with the authority of Christ, baptizing in the names of the triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And Jesus reminds the disciples that he is with them always, until the end of the age.

The Narrative Lectionary begins a five-week series on the Psalms paired with the Gospel of John. The psalmist calls upon the people to praise God as they prepare for worship in Psalm 100. The psalmist declares that God is the creator who has made the people, who are the sheep of his pasture. This ancient call to worship calls the people to enter God’s presence with gladness and joy.

John 1:14-17 declares that Jesus is the Word that became Flesh and lived among us, testified by John, and grace and truth come through Jesus Christ, who reveals God the Father’s glory.

In the Christian tradition, we cannot talk about the Triune God without talking about creation, and how God’s work in creation is tri-relational in nature. Through Christ this truth has been revealed, that we are children of God, created in God’s image, and called by God to care for the rest of creation. In light of recent events, more than ever the church is challenged to live into the fullness of God’s call, to counter the world humanity has created that is based on consumption, rather than the world God created based on the fullness of life for all.

Call to Worship (from Psalm 100)

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth!

 **Worship God with gladness; Come into God’s presence with singing.**

Know that the Lord is God.

 **It is God that made us, and we belong to God.**

We are God’s people;

 **We are the sheep of God’s pasture.**

Enter God’s gates with thanksgiving;

 **Enter God’s courts with praise!**

Give thanks to God, bless God’s name;

 **For the Lord is good.**

God’s steadfast love endures forever;

**God’s faithfulness to all generations.**

Prayer of Brokenness/Confession

Creator God, we confess to You that we have broken away from Your intention for us. We have abused the earth rather than caring for it. We have consumed without cultivating. We have burned and mined and razed and cleared out, rather than using only what we need, and making sure there is enough for other human beings as well as other creatures. We confess that we have failed to hold our leaders accountable and we have failed to make Your Creation a priority in choosing our leadership. Forgive us, and hold us accountable. Call us back to understanding that the way we care for the earth reflects the way we care for You, just as the way we care for one another reflects our love for You. In the name of Christ Jesus, who redeems us and calls us to repentance, we pray. Amen.

Blessing/Assurance

God is the one who renews our spirits, renews our hearts, and renews the earth season by season. God is planting something new in you. When you let the old die, the new takes root and grows strong. Grow in God’s love and forgiveness, and let the ways of selfishness die. Let God’s love cultivate in you, so you may grow into God’s intention: a beautiful co-creator with God. Amen.

Prayer

Triune God, You created out of relationship and created us to be in relationship: with You, with others, and with all of creation. When we fail to care for creation, we fail to care for others, and we fail to care for You. When we insist on old ways because they are easier, and cause harm to the environment, we have failed to love our neighbors as ourselves. When we choose profits over the planet, we choose money, the false idol, over You, O God. Call us back to Your ways, to choose relationship with others and with creation, for when we do so, we are choosing You. You created us in Your image. You created the world and all of its creatures and declared it good. Triune God, Three-in-One, remind us always of Your love for us that is tied into the love and care of the earth. Amen.