

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2026
TRINITY SUNDAY YEAR A



THE GREAT COMMISSION

Matthew 28:16-20

St. John United Church of Christ

10207 Lincoln Trail

Fairview Heights, IL

Telephone 618-397-6323

e-mail– stjohnuccfairview@gmail.com

Website: www.stjohnfairview.org

Rev. Rosemary Captain

Organist – Sharon Banjavcic

Liturgy - Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay

Ushers -

(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

*Please stand if comfortably able.

Respond with words in bold print.

Bible translation – CEB Common English Bible

Next to hymnals in pews. Red

SUMMARY OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS
From “Preaching Through the Christian Year”

Fred Craddock

Trinity Sunday was introduced into the liturgical cycle of the church as the celebration of a doctrine. The texts for the day enable the church at worship to reflect upon the doctrine, but, more than that, they direct attention to the reality that called forth the doctrine in the first place. In the biblical tradition, the one God is experienced as transcendent Creator, as incarnate, and at present in and among the lives of believers.

Genesis 1:1-2:4a The Old Testament reading, the classic account of creation by the Priestly Writer, portrays God as the Creator of a magnificent, orderly universe.

Psalms 8 continues the emphasis on God’s creative work, giving special attention to the exalted status of human beings within the created order.

2 Corinthians 13:11-13 and **Matthew 28:16-20**, the concluding sections of their respective books, contain pronouncements in the name of the triune God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS

THE BELL IS RUNG

PRELUDE “Holy, Holy, Holy” Lani Smith

PENNIES FOR MISSION Strengthen the Church

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP**

(INSPIRED BY PSALM 8)

One: O Holy One, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Many: We admire the work of your hands in awe and thanksgiving!

One: O Holy One, our Redeemer, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Many: Who are we that you come to us, empower us, and give us rest?

One: O Holy One, our Companion, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Many: Let us worship the Triune God with honor and glory! How majestic are your many names in all the earth!

***INVOCATION**

Voice, Body, Spirit, we acknowledge your presence gathering us together as your church. Today, we join in worship. May we encounter you anew. We find a good place in you and with one another. You have made us in your image and enabled us to be in community with you, O God, as people called to service, justice, and caretaking. Let your name be praised. Let us receive your word. Let us embrace and live your truth. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 565**

“God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending”

***UNISON PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:**

Creator, we give thanks that creation does not end; it rests. In your created order, rest is often the time and space necessary for renewal. Transformation happens in rest. Too often, we adopt the pace of the world that adopts hurry as normative and beneficial. Yet, we know, Holy Love, that when you began the work of creation, it served to bring order out of chaos, and it was good. As we seek your goodness today, we confess that we live in chaotic times. We affirm that you have charged us to care for this creation and have made us like you. Use us then to bring order in a chaotic world and to use rest as a necessary step for transformation and renewal. Help us discern the balance of rest and work that will yield good fruit. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE**

Beloved, the God of Many Names has declared you good. You need not seek perfection. Creator has called you as a co-worker in the continual progressive acts of shaping the beloved community envisioned. The Holy One is with us in our work and with us in our rest.

***GLORIA:** Written by Rev. Dr. Christopher Grundy
**Glory to the Creator, and the Christ and the Spirit so
near. As it was from the start so it shall be forever, One
God always here. (repeat)
(end) One God always here. One God always here.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

FIRST TESTAMENT: Genesis 1:1-2:4a

World's creation in seven days

1 When God began to create the heavens and the earth—² the earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God's wind swept over the waters—³ God said, "Let there be light." And so light appeared.⁴ God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness.⁵ God named the light Day and the darkness Night. There was evening and there was morning: the first day.
⁶ God said, "Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters to separate the waters from each other."⁷ God made the dome and separated the waters under the dome from the waters above the dome. And it happened in that way.⁸ God named the dome Sky. There was evening and there was morning: the second day.
⁹ God said, "Let the waters under the sky come together into one place so that the dry land can appear." And

that's what happened.¹⁰ God named the dry land Earth, and he named the gathered waters Seas. God saw how good it was.¹¹ God said, "Let the earth grow plant life: plants yielding seeds and fruit trees bearing fruit with seeds inside it, each according to its kind throughout the earth." And that's what happened.¹² The earth produced plant life: plants yielding seeds, each according to its kind, and trees bearing fruit with seeds inside it, each according to its kind. God saw how good it was.¹³ There was evening and there was morning: the third day.¹⁴ God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will mark events, sacred seasons, days, and years.¹⁵ They will be lights in the dome of the sky to shine on the earth." And that's what happened.¹⁶ God made the stars and two great lights: the larger light to rule over the day and the smaller light to rule over the night.¹⁷ God put them in the dome of the sky to shine on the earth,¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw how good it was.¹⁹ There was evening and there was morning: the fourth day.
²⁰ God said, "Let the waters swarm with living things, and let birds fly above the earth up in the dome of the sky."²¹ God created the great sea animals and all the tiny living things that swarm in the waters, each according to its kind, and all the winged birds, each according to its kind. God saw how good it was.²² Then God blessed

them: “Be fertile and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”²³ There was evening and there was morning: the fifth day.²⁴ God said, “Let the earth produce every kind of living thing: livestock, crawling things, and wildlife.” And that’s what happened.²⁵ God made every kind of wildlife, every kind of livestock, and every kind of creature that crawls on the ground. God saw how good it was.²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth.”²⁷ God created humanity in God’s own image, in the divine image God created them, male and female God created them.²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and master it. Take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, and everything crawling on the ground.”²⁹ Then God said, “I now give to you all the plants on the earth that yield seeds and all the trees whose fruit produces its seeds within it. These will be your food.³⁰ To all wildlife, to all the birds in the sky, and to everything crawling on the ground—to everything that breathes—I give all the green grasses for food.” And that’s what happened.³¹ God saw everything he had made: it was supremely good. There was evening and there was morning: the sixth day.

2 The heavens and the earth and all who live in them were completed.² On the sixth day God completed all the work that he had done, and on the seventh day God rested from all the work that he had done.³ God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all the work of creation.⁴ This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 8 Page 624

EPISTLE READING: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Final greeting

¹¹ Finally, brothers and sisters, good-bye. Put things in order, respond to my encouragement, be in harmony with each other, and live in peace—and the God of love and peace will be with you.

¹² Say hello to each other with a holy kiss. All of God’s people say hello to you.

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

***GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 28:16-20**

Commissioning of the disciples

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus told them to go.¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted.¹⁸ Jesus came near and spoke to them, “I’ve received all

authority in heaven and on earth. 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 teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age."

MESSAGE: "What's Next"

With thoughts from Rev. N.T. Wright
Have you ever read a book that was very exciting up until you got to the end? The end was very abrupt and confusing; all in all very disappointing. And then there are other endings that go on and on and on and, again, very disappointing because the ending never came.

The author of the Gospel of Matthew wrote the ending of his book much like that. Not that it goes on longer than we expect; it is in fact quite compact. However, it contains so much that we would do well to slow down in our reading of these final verses and ponder each line, indeed each phrase, to see how they gather up the whole gospel and pack it tight into the final meeting between Jesus and his followers.

The scene begins on a mountain. No surprises there: a great deal in Matthew happens on a mountain. What does surprise us is that, according to Matthew, some of the disciples listening to Jesus on this mountain are hesitating. The word can actually mean "doubt", though

we can't be sure how much of that Matthew means here. Did they hesitate over, or doubt, whether it was truly Jesus? Or did they hesitate over, or doubt, whether they, as good Jews who believed in only one God, should actually worship Jesus? It isn't clear.

What is clear is that the majority of them did worship Jesus and that Matthew firmly believes this was the right reaction. On several previous occasions the gospel he has used this word (worship) to describe people coming reverently to Jesus. Usually, it seems to mean simply that they prostrated themselves before him, adopting an attitude of reverence though not necessarily implying that they thought he was divine. Now, however, to jump for a moment to the last line of the book, it is clear that Matthew wants us to see that in Jesus the promise of the very first chapter has been fulfilled. Jesus is the "Emmanuel," the one in whom "God is with us". Now he declares that he himself is "with you always". The only appropriate reaction to this is indeed worship, worship of the one true God who is now, astonishingly, revealed in and as Jesus himself.

In particular, Jesus has now been given "all authority in heaven and earth." We recall that in the temptations the devil offered Jesus this prestige, but without exacting the price that he has now paid. That would have been a hollow triumph, leading to the worst tyranny imaginable. Jesus' authority as the risen one, by contrast, is the

authority of the one who has defeated tyranny itself, the ultimate tyranny of death; his is the authority under which life, God's new life, can begin to flourish. Despite what many people today suppose, it is basic to the most elementary New Testament faith that Jesus is already ruling the whole world. That is one of the most important results of his resurrection; it is part of the meaning of messiahship, which his new life after the crucifixion has made plain.

People get very puzzled by the claim that Jesus is already ruling the world, until they see what is in fact being said. The claim is not that the world is already completely as Jesus intends it to be. The claim is that he is working to take it from where it was – under the rule not only of death but of corruption, greed and every kind of wickedness – and to bring it, by slow means and quick, under the rule of his life-giving love. And how is he doing this? Here is the shock; through us his until forward.

Many today mock this claim just as much as they mock the resurrection itself. The church in its various forms has got so much wrong, has made so many mistakes, has let its Lord down so often, that many people, including many who love Jesus for themselves, despair of it and suppose that nothing will ever change until Jesus himself returns to sort it all out. But this isn't Matthew's belief, and it doesn't fit with what we know of

Jesus' commissioning of his followers in the other scriptures, Luke, Acts, and John. It doesn't fit with Paul's vision of his task. They all agree with Matthew: those who believe in Jesus, who are witnesses to his resurrection, are given the responsibility to go and make real in the world the authority which he already has. This, after all, is part of the answer to the prayer that God's kingdom will come on earth as in heaven. If we pray that prayer, we shouldn't be surprised if we are called upon to help bring about God's answer to it.

According to "the Great Commission" the Jesus gives the disciples in the book of Matthew, there are three tasks that we are told to do. These tasks will bring Jesus' sovereign authority to bear on the world, are straightforward enough to outline, though daunting and demanding to put into practice. The first is to make disciples just as Jesus called the fishermen by the sea of Galilee. The second task is to baptize them. The third is to teach. Teach your children, your neighbors, the people you work with at your job.

So, now what do we think about the ending of this book? Is it a happy ending or does it seem like an impossible challenge. Is it a mystery? Is it a love story? What part can we play in the outcome? Amen

SPECIAL MUSIC: Video: "Here in This Place"

Rev. Dr. Christopher Grundy

PASTORAL PRAYER:

OUR FATHER'S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE: 772 "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.**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

Generous God, just as you provided for all our needs in your creative acts, you have made us caretakers of your good creation. Let us accept the call to faithful discipleship, the opportunity to trust in your provision, and the generous nature you have embedded in us.

OFFERTORY: "My Faith Is Firmly Found" J.S. Bach

***DOXOLOGY:**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING**

Generous God, Receive our gifts as acts of participation in your continuing creation. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: 76 "Send Forth By God's Blessing"**

***BENEDICTION:**

Find rest in the love of God
Choose rest by the grace of God
Embrace rest by the power of God
Trust rest because of the provision of God
And know that the God of rest goes with you
To love and serve God's creation.

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE: 571**

**O God of Love, O God of Peace
Make wars throughout the world to cease.
The wrath of human wrong restrain;
Give peace, O God, give peace again!**

THE BELL IS RUNG:

POSTLUDE: "Trinity Blessed" Benton Price

PRAYER LIST: Premie Baby James, Bennie Pointer, Ginny Ganschinietz, Patti French, Bruce Wagner, Becky Ballard, Roger Ballard, Mary Lou and Urban Baum, Ronald Bopp, GERALYN GAMON, Russ Hartmann, Lynne Knecht, Marilyn Paul, Pam and Syd Safriet, Yvonne Weber, Jackie Canterbury, our Beloved Country.

TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DOCTRINE AND A CREED IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONSIDER THESE POINTS:

- Definition: A doctrine is a set of beliefs or teachings held by the church, while a creed is a formal statement of faith.
- Purpose: Doctrines guide theological understanding; creeds express shared beliefs among members.
- Flexibility: Doctrines may evolve over time; creeds are often more fixed and used in worship.
- Usage: Doctrines inform teaching and practice; creeds are recited in services to affirm faith.
- Examples: Doctrines include concepts like the Trinity; creeds include the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed.

- Community Role: Doctrines can vary among congregations; creeds aim to unify beliefs across the denomination.