

GATHERING SONG *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!* (ELW 413) vv 1,2,4

1 Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
 Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
 Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
 God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
 which wert and art, and evermore shalt be.

2 Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
 casting down their golden crowns around the
 glassy sea;

4 Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
 All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and
 sky and sea.
 Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
 God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty Creator and ever-living God: we worship your glory, eternal Three-in-One, and we praise your power, majestic One-in-Three. Keep us steadfast in this faith, defend us in all adversity, and bring us at last into your presence, where you live in endless joy and love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Psalm 8

¹ O Lord, our Sovereign,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!
 You have set your glory above the heavens.
² Out of the mouths of babes and infants
 you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
 to silence the enemy and the avenger.
³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your
 fingers,
 the moon and the stars that you have established;
⁴ what are human beings that you are mindful of
 them,
 mortals that you care for them?

⁵ Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
 and crowned them with glory and honour.
⁶ You have given them dominion over the works
 of your hands;
 you have put all things under their feet,
⁷ all sheep and oxen,
 and also the beasts of the field,
⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
 whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
⁹ O Lord, our Sovereign,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!

SECOND READING: Romans 5:1-5

Paul describes the life of faith with reference to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Even now, we have peace with God through Jesus, and our hope for the future is grounded in the love of God that we experience through Christ's Holy Spirit.

A reading from Romans.

¹Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

GOSPEL: John 16:12-15

[Jesus said,] ¹²"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

MESSAGE – Reverend Kendra Nolde

A young girl watched her father tilling the ground for the garden he planted every year. After working the soil, her father would spend a few days planting seed. Then there was setting up the row markers, stringing lines for the peas and other tasks that took many days. Year by year, the girl watched her dad, and how there was always that look of satisfaction when her father would have the whole garden laid out. He would wipe his brow and lean on the top of his shovel and look out over his work for the longest time. It was kind of like: “And he looked over all he had made, and it was good.”

The girl watched. She was a spectator. Then one spring everything changed. She was watching her dad watching his garden, when she was called over. Her father put his arm around her shoulder and said, “This is yours to take care of now!” She was stunned. Suddenly her role radically changed. What once seemed like a regular back yard garden now looked like acres and acres of garden to care for! “This is all yours to take care of now?” It seemed an impossible task. How could she even conceive of taking care of something that only her father could produce?

“What are human beings that you are mindful of them?” The psalmist asks. “And yet you have given them dominion over the works of your hands.” In other words, God said, “This is yours to take care of now.”

This past weekend was our annual Central States Synod Assembly — I say “annual” — yet because of the pandemic this was actually the first time we were able to gather together in person from congregations across Missouri and Kansas. The theme of the Assembly was: United with Christ: All Creation Groans. All Creation Sings. Our guest speaker was Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lebeda, an ethics professor from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. She began her talk by reminding us that in Genesis, when scripture says God put human beings into the garden to till and keep it — those words in Hebrew actually mean something more like “to serve and preserve it, to care for and tend” it. Yes, this garden is yours now — to serve and preserve, to care for and tend.

In observance of Earth Day several years ago, the Associated Press asked astronauts who had returned from space to recall what it felt like to look back at the earth. Apollo 8 astronaut Bill Anders was the one whose 1968 pictures of our lovely, fragile planet became famous as “Earthrise”: a crystal blue drop, hovering in the darkness of space, peaks over the horizon of a desolate and grey lunar landscape, its leading edge flooded in light, the lower half disappearing, seemingly melting away into the darkness that surrounds it. What was it like to look back at earth? Anders said: “We came all this way to explore the moon, and the most important thing is that we discovered the Earth.” Anders went on: “[The earth] was the only color we could see in the universe... We’re living on a tiny little dust mote in left field on a rather insignificant galaxy. And basically this is it for humans. It strikes me that it’s a shame that we’re squabbling over oil and borders.”

“O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!... When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars you have set in their courses...”. We long for the peace that came over us as we saw, for the first time, the inexpressibly graceful pictures Anders took of our blue, swirling oceans and clouds, fertile land and fragile atmosphere. And yet, we also see ourselves in the vast expanse of space, hanging there, small and vulnerable, held by the tender hand of God, and we know that all creation groans in the midst our current climate change and environmental crisis. Dr. Moe-Lebeda shared that according to some scientists, the next 5-7 years will be the most critical in human history, critical in terms of the groaning creation being tended and preserved for our children and grandchildren.

Dear beloved of God, the heart of Psalm 8 makes it clear that the whole issue of whether the air is fit to breathe, or the water is fit to drink, or fit for creatures to live in, or for enough crops to be grown in the midst of drought, war, or disaster — is not primarily social or political — it is spiritual! Indeed Psalm 8 goes to the core of the real meaning of stewardship. Stewardship — not as a special time of the year when we receive our annual pledges to support our ministries, not even as the filling out of time and talent sheets — no, stewardship as every person of faith living as a partner with God in the care of creation. This is yours to take care of now, to serve and preserve, to care for, tend, and mend.

Today is Trinity Sunday, when we remember that the very nature of God is relationship and participation. We cannot live as spectators of the dance of the Trinity. A hand reaches out to pull us into the Trinitarian actions of holy creation, holy salvation, and holy community. An arm is thrown over our

shoulders, and we are told: this is yours now too, to take care of. We are partners with God in the greatest work in the universe, stewards of a marvelous blue island garden in an awesome universe. We are called to work toward establishing the true worth and dignity of every person. We affirm our baptism by saying we will strive for peace and justice in all the earth. The task is phenomenal and the trust God has placed on us is nothing short of astonishing. It is the trust of a God who doesn't give gifts grudgingly, but breathes into us God's very own life-serving love to live within us and through us. Dr. Moe-Lebeda asked us at the Assembly: what would we do if we really believed this? What would we do if we really believed, trusted that united in baptism, we could embody God's creating, healing, liberating love? Some things may seem small — using mugs and coffee cups rather than disposables — offering a community garden — providing pantries with food and hygiene supplies. Could we trust the power of small actions and maybe also speak and show up in other ways that God has yet to reveal?

I invite you to join me in reading a paraphrase of Psalm 8 by Nan Merrill as our closing prayer:
When I look up at the heavens, At the work of Love's creation, At the infinite variety of your Plan,
What is woman that You rejoice in her, And man that You do delight in him?

You have made us in your image, You fill us with your Love;
You have made us co-creators of the earth! guardians of the planet! to care for all your creatures, to tend the land, the sea, and the air we breathe; all that You have made, You have placed in our hands.
O Love, my Beloved, How powerful is your Name in all the earth! Amen.

(Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Wholeness by Nan C. Merrill)

HYMN OF THE DAY *Come, Join the Dance of Trinity* (ELW 412) vv 1,2,3

1 Come, join the dance of Trinity,
before all worlds begun--
the interweaving of the Three,
the Father, Spirit, Son.
The universe of space and time
did not arise by chance,
but as the Three, in love and hope,
made room within their dance.

2 Come, see the face of Trinity,
newborn in Bethlehem;
then bloodied by a crown of thorns
outside Jerusalem.
The dance of Trinity is meant
for human flesh and bone;
when fear confines the dance in
death,
God rolls away the stone.

3 Come, speak aloud of Trinity,
as wind and tongues of flame
set people free at Pentecost
to tell the Savior's name.
We know the yoke of sin and
death,
our necks have worn it smooth;
go tell the world of weight and woe
that we are free to move!

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

United in Christ and guided by the Spirit, we pray for the church, the creation, and all in need.

One God, giver of life, you established peace through your Son and gave your church the hope of sharing in your glory. Enliven us by your Spirit to speak and act in love for the sake of the world. We offer prayers for the ministry of the following faith communities within the Central States Synod: Assaria Lutheran in Assaria, KS, Our Savior's in Camdenton, MO, Sedgewickville Parish which includes: Sargent's Chapel in Sedgewickville, MO and Sedgewickville Lutheran in Sedgewickville, MO

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Creator of all, you rejoice in creation and have given humankind responsibility for the works of your hands. Instill in everyone your Spirit of care for the earth, especially in areas threatened by ecological devastation.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Loving Redeemer, you delight in the human race. Move the hearts of world leaders to seek wisdom, speak truth, and care for all endangered by poverty, prejudice, or violence. Further the work of international collaboration and peacemaking. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Abiding Comforter, you call out to all who live. Restore severed relationships and protect children who lack trustworthy caregivers. Grant hope to those who are experiencing fear, pain, or grief. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Holy Three, you are community and you create community. Build up ministries that support those who are isolated or lonely. Give endurance as we nurture vital relationships in our congregation and beyond. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Holy God, we remember your saints for their strong faith and witness, even unto *death* especially the Emanuel Nine, whom we commemorate this week. Console grieving families. Stir up in us the resolve to end the sin of white supremacy and pursue the courageous path of justice. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God of every time and place, in Jesus' name and filled with your Holy Spirit, we entrust these spoken prayers and those in our hearts into your holy keeping.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING

The God of peace, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you, comfort you, and show you the path of life
this day and always. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG *Holy God, We Praise Your Name* (ELW 414) vv 1,2,4

1 Holy God, we praise your name;
Lord of all, we bow before you.
All on earth your scepter claim,
all in heav'n above adore you.
Infinite your vast domain,
everlasting is your reign.

2 Hark! The glad celestial hymn
angel choirs above are raising;
cherubim and seraphim,
in unceasing chorus praising,
fill the heav'ns with sweet accord:
"Holy, holy, holy Lord!"

4 Holy Father, holy Son,
Holy Spirit, three we name you,
though in essence only one;
undivided God we claim you
and, adoring, bend the knee
while we own the mystery.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.