

Order of Worship for June 4, 2023 (Trinity Sunday)

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

Opening Hymn: “Holy, Holy, Holy” - Hymn #507

Confession and Forgiveness

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

P: In that name, and with that faith--as dear children approaching a loving parent, as sinners redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, as believers filled with the Holy Spirit--let us confess our sins to almighty God.

C: **Let us seek forgiveness.**

P: Most merciful God,

C: **we have been unworthy and disobedient children. We have ignored our Father's admonitions, disregarded our Savior's instructions, grieved the Holy Spirit. We are not worthy to be called children of God. But we beg you--of Your fatherly compassion, by Your saving merits, at Your inviting call--to have mercy on us and grant us Your forgiveness.**

P: God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life. To those who believe in Jesus Christ, the heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit that they may be children of God. Rejoice in the Lord; your sins are forgiven--in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

Service of the Word

Athanasian Creed: 1-12 page 319

Prayer of the Day:

P: Almighty and everlasting God, You have given us grace to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity by the confession of a true faith and to worship the Unity in the power of the Divine Majesty. Keep us steadfast in this faith and defend us from all adversities; for You, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, live and reign, one God, now and forever

C: **Amen.**

Hymn of Praise: “All Glory Be to God on High” – Hymn #947

Old Testament Lesson: Zechariah 4:1-14

R: And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a

lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it. And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.” And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” Then he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.

“These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth.” Then I said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?” And a second time I answered and said to him, “What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the golden oil is poured out?” He said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who stand by the LORD of the whole earth.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: Acts 2:14a, 22-36

R: Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, . . . “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised Him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David says concerning Him,

“I saw the Lord always before Me, for He is at My right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore My heart was glad, and My tongue rejoiced; My flesh also will dwell in hope. For You will not abandon My soul to Hades, or let Your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to Me the paths of life; You will make Me full of gladness with Your presence.’

“Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

“‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool.’ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew 28th chapter

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

P: Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw Him they worshiped Him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

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Sermon Hymn: "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"- Hymn #621

Sermon: "Zechariah the Prophet"

Zechariah is known as the prophet of Hope. He was a prophet when the people were without hope. Israelites had returned from exile, and were beginning resettle Israel, rebuild their homes and the home of God. Yet they were frustrated because of delays and difficulties. They were becoming apathetic, wondering why they should even try. Their expectations of what their return would look like didn't match the reality.

But to those discouraged and apathetic people came Zechariah with encouragement and hope. He encouraged them to rebuild the temple, because he knew it would be a rallying point for them in the future, a tangible, physical sign of God's presence among them, giving them assurance of better days to come and faith in the future. The people were called to repentance, but given the promise of forgiveness, that God would wipe out their transgressions. They should prepare for the Messiah God would send them.

Zechariah could envision the work completed and knew the difference it would make. He would not let Israel stay mired in the doldrums. His words encouraged the community to finish the work, to begin again. He exhorted people to put away their sins, to rebuild their lives and their temple.

The book of Zechariah begins with eight visions that are intended to encourage God's people to complete the construction of the second temple. In the center of the Zechariah's first vision is a man riding on a red horse who is the Lord's Messenger. He is Zechariah's constant companion throughout his eight visions. His task throughout the visions is to explain and interpret God's actions and plans. The Lord's Messenger also intercedes for Israel. The Lord's Messenger is God's presence with Zechariah

That's clearest in the vision from Zechariah 3. "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the LORD's Messenger, and the accuser standing at his right hand to accuse him." The LORD's Messenger stands in our court! In Zechariah 3 God calls him "my Servant."

This is the same Servant Isaiah describes as stricken by God and afflicted; who bears our griefs and carries our sorrows; who was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. Later in that same chapter, God also calls the Messenger “the Shoot.” This builds on the earlier promise in Jeremiah 23:5, “Days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Shoot, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.”

What’s more, the LORD’s Messenger is also called “the Stone” which comes from Psalm 118, “The Stone the builders rejected has become the Cornerstone. The LORD did this and it is marvelous in our eyes.” In the presence of the LORD’s Messenger—who is the Servant and the Shoot and the Stone—what does the accuser say? What can the accuser say? Nothing!

The Messenger lives to rebuke the accuser! The Servant is vindicated and alive! The Shoot is flourishing and stunningly beautiful. And the Stone the builders rejected has become the Cornerstone. The LORD did this and it is still marvelous in our eyes!

The stone becomes the foundation described in the reading we heard from Zechariah 4. The Temple would be rebuilt, and God would be among his people again. But it wouldn’t happen by might or power or human effort. It would only happen by God’s Spirit that has the power to make a mountain into a plain, and to lift up valleys.

For a people who felt forgotten by God, Zechariah’s words were just what his community needed to hear. He did his job well for the Bible tells us that after a work stoppage of 16 years the work to rebuild the temple began again and was completed. And a rebuilt temple makes—as they say—all the difference in the world. It is a permanent sign of God’s presence with his people.

But after the visions to encourage the people to rebuild the temple and to remind them of God’s presence with them, Zechariah looks further ahead. After the temple’s completion, historical realities of life still fell short.

Zechariah 9–14 addresses these unresolved promises, indicating how God’s kingdom will advance so that he reigns for eternity, how he will be with his people forever.

Suffering, however, will precede the final celebration. The cross will come before the crown. Chapters 9–14 temper the positive features in chapters 1–8. Zechariah prevents us from embracing an illusory optimism or a theology of glory.

The book’s first eight chapters mostly exhibit the “now” of God’s kingdom, the present Zechariah was in. On the other hand, chapters 9–14 announce the “not yet” of the divine plan which will be consummated through the Messiah’s rejection, death, resurrection and Second Advent. Everyone suffers in the last six chapters; God’s people, their enemies, the coming Messiah and, most surprising of all, God himself gets pierced in the battle.

Zechariah’s oracles present these Messianic visions from different angles. The Messiah is a lowly King endowed with salvation; he is a rejected and pierced shepherd; he is a powerful king who will sit on David’s throne. His ministry is marked with suffering but ends in glory.

Zechariah envisioned a leader, a Messiah, who would live without the excesses and failures of previous kings. The messiah would be one who would live righteously and lead justly. What better way to express his vision than to write of a king “triumphant and victorious, yet humble and riding on a donkey?” People would understand that unlike other leaders who rode horses, symbols of victory in war, Israel’s leader would instead ride a donkey. He would lead by persuasion, not by coercion, physical or military force of any kind. This leader would rule not just Israel, but all nations.

With the use of the image of the leader riding on a donkey, Zechariah was able to pull together opposites representing the best and worst of times, hope and despair, with the expectation that with God, all would be right with the world. The king would destroy the weapons of war, and bring peace to the nations.

The king comes. Rejoice, God keeps His promises! They were God’s people. The Messiah was coming to them! Nothing could stop God from fulfilling his promises made throughout the century. The people should turn from frustration to exaltations, from heaviness to happiness. The Messiah was coming to them.

The Gospel writers all see Jesus’ actions on Palm Sunday as fulfilling this prophecy. Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, a symbol of humility. He came in peace, though he could have turned the cheering crowd into an army or called down an angelic army himself. He came to be king, but not the king the people expected. He came to save them, but not in the way they were expecting. Instead of dragging defeated captives behind him, the poor and lowly made up the crowd cheering him on.

Today is the day we celebrate Trinity Sunday, when we remember the Triune nature of God. And at first, that can seem to be confusing. A God that we cannot understand, a God who is Three in One and One in Three, who is Three Persons yet One God, seems unapproachable and incomprehensible.

Yet the Trinity reminds us that God comes near to us. God the Father is active in providing all that we need, sustaining creation. In Jesus, God became flesh, moved into the neighborhood, and faced all of the trials and temptations we do, yet remained without sin. Instead of being in the temple, God came in Jesus in the flesh. Through the blood of Jesus, we have been made holy. Because Jesus is advocating for us with the Father, we can approach the throne of grace with confidence. We have been declared righteous before God. And the Holy Spirit, whose work we celebrated last Sunday, works in us to create faith, and enlighten us.

Expectations meet reality. The reality is that Jesus suffers and dies. The reality is that we are called to take up our cross. The reality is that sometimes prayers go unanswered, hopes are dashed and deliverance from debt and depression doesn’t come.

There is so much we don’t have—yet. But there is so much more that we do have—now! “Behold, your King comes to you, righteous and saved, riding on a donkey and delivering shalom!” God is with us, and always will be. That’s a promise we can trust.

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Sharing Our Ministry:

Prayer of the Church:

Offering Voluntary:

Service of the Sacrament

The Preface:

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

P: It is truly right to give thanks to You almighty God, heavenly Father because You work in perfect union with Your Son, Christ Jesus, who You sent into this world to save us. And the Holy Spirit who proceeds from You and the Son to wake us from death in sin to new life in Christ. Therefore we join with all the company of heaven in giving praise to You.

Lord's Prayer:

The Words of our Lord:

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

Distribution: *"O Blessed, Holy Trinity"* – **Hymn #876**
 "Glory to God, We Give You Thanks and Praise" – **Hymn #946**

Prayer After Communion:

P: Almighty God, our Father, dwelling in majesty and mystery, renewing and filling creation by Your eternal Spirit, and revealing Your glory through Your Son, Jesus Christ, cleanse us from doubt and fear, and enable us to worship You, with Your Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, living and ruling, now and forever

C: Amen.

Blessing: (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *"Glory Be to God the Father"* – **Hymn #506**

Postlude: