



# First Parish of Westwood, UCC

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**May 30, 2021, 10:00 a.m.**

**Trinity Sunday**

Andrei Rublev, "The Trinity," c.1410

## **GATHERING FOR THE WORD**

### Meditation

*The God who does not need nor care for the creature, or who is immune to our suffering, does not exist. The God who is too hidden for us to know, or too powerful to evoke anything but fear, does not exist. The God who watches from a distance as an uninvolved, impartial observer, does not exist. The God conceived as a self-enclosed, exclusively self-related triad of persons does not exist. The God who keeps a ledger of our sins and failings, the divine policeman does not exist. These are false gods, these are fantasies of an imagination that has become detached from the rule of God's life as revealed in Jesus Christ.*

Mary LaCugna, God For Us, p. 397

### CHIMING

### GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CENTERING

*Sighing Wind*

Felix Mendelssohn

### HYMN 277, vs. 1

Reginald Heber, 1826

*Holy, Holy, Holy*

NICAEA

*Holy, holy, holy, God the Almighty! Early in the morning we praise your majesty.  
Holy, holy, holy, Merciful and mighty! God in three persons, blessed Trinity!*

## **ENGAGING THE WORD**

### A WORD FOR ALL AGES

*When God Made You*

Matthew Paul Turner  
Read by Richard Edens

\* Please stand as able.

**Bold** text is for congregational responses.

LESSON

John 3:1-10, 16-17, *NRSV*

*In this passage, we are told of a **Father** who gives birth, a **Spirit** that blows freely, and a **Son** who rescues us from captivity to sin and death. We are given good news of God creating new life, sustaining us in times of challenge and redeeming us from bondage.*

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

MESSAGE

Rev. Richard Edens

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

ANTHEM

*We Come to You for Healing, Lord*  
First Parish Choir

Ruth Elaine Schram

***RESPONDING TO THE WORD***

OFFERING OURSELVES TO GOD AND TO ONE ANOTHER

Call to the Offering

Offertory

*Day by Day*

Oscar Ahnfelt

Doxology

\* Dedication of the Offering

## GOING WITH THE WORD

HYMN

*The Play of the Godhead*

PERICHORESIS

Mary Louise Bringle, 2000

*This relatively new hymn gives life to the theological term perichoresis, a mutual, encompassing interaction, sometimes called “the threefold dance of the Trinity.” Stanza two notes various “natural analogies” for the Trinity (steam / water / ice; root / shoot / fruit) which were esteemed in the early church. We have printed all three verses and have asked the choir to sing the first verse for you.*

*The play of the Godhead, the Trinity's dance,  
embraces the earth in a sacred romance:  
with God the Creator, and Christ the true Son,  
entwined with Spirit, a web daily spun  
in spangles of mystery, the great Three-in-One.*

*The warm mists of summer, cool waters that flow,  
turn crystal as ice when the wintry winds blow.  
The taproot that nurtures, the shoot growing free,  
the life-giving fruit, full and ripe on the tree:  
more mystic and wondrous, the great One-in-Three.*

*In God's gracious image of co-equal parts,  
we gather as dancers, uniting our hearts.  
Men, women, and children, and all living things,  
we join in the round of bright nature that rings  
with rapture and rhythm: creation now sings!*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*In the Garden*

C. Austin Miles



### Church Staff

Rev. Dr. Jill Edens, Interim Pastor  
Rev. Richard Edens, Interim Pastor  
Dr. Sarah Tocco, Director of Music  
Margery Eramo, Faith Community Nurse  
Meg Kara, Church Administrator  
Denis Wholey, Sexton

**Welcome** to First Parish of Westwood, an Open & Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ.



**“We believe in God’s continuing testament in the world.”**

As the “*God is still speaking*” church we believe, as did our historic predecessors, there is more truth and light to be revealed in God’s holy Word. We take the Bible seriously, but not literally, relying on God’s Spirit to guide us in ways that are faithful and relevant for people today. We believe the church’s role is to speak words of love, and also to challenge the powers that oppress people everywhere.

**“We believe in extravagant welcome.”**

“*No matter where you are on life’s journey, you’re welcome here,*” is more than a slogan - it is a theological principle. Jesus’ ministry was about expanding the circle of those who were included as his disciples. We believe the church should be a place of welcome for people of all ethnicities, genders, and expressions, abilities and ages, regardless of political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin or income.

**“We believe in changing lives.”**

In our families, our church communities and around the world, we believe in God’s power to change lives. Our human effort guided by prayer and the community of faith helps us to express the life changing message of Jesus. We believe it is the church’s role to give generously of its resources and time to make the world a better place and share the hope we have found in Christ.

I happened across a metaphor for the Trinity, in Tertullian, of all people, arguably the most curmudgeonly theologian of all the curmudgeons of the early church. It’s an image of the Trinity as a plant, with the Father as a deep root, the Son as the shoot that breaks forth into the world, the Spirit as that which spreads beauty and fragrance, “fructifying the earth with flower and fruit.

Kathleen Norris, “Trinity,” *Amazing Grace*

## Today

**Jim and Ruth Aldinger** are our Ushers.

**FLOWERS** are given by the Miller Flower Fund in loving memory of Ruth and Herm Miller.



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