

The Holy Trinity
May 31, 2026
"Knowing God"

Did you notice the comic included in today's bulletin. Over the years, on this Sunday of the Holy Trinity, I have felt like those two pastors taking a coffee break. I've felt like it is my job today to explain the unexplainable: to define the Trinity in a way that we can all understand. These days we have little patience for things that we cannot understand or explain. But God made the heavens, the earth, and everything in them; what do we know about that? God transcends our rational faculties. *"O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"* (Psalm 8:1). To worship God, you don't need to grasp Him with your mind. *"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork"* (Psalm 19:1). The creation doesn't comprehend God; it glorifies Him by simply being what He created it to be.

But we cannot do that. We are sinful, fallen creatures; like sheep who go astray, we waywardly walk away from our shepherd. We are unable to be what God created us to be. Still, God draws near to us. Though we no longer know what to say to Him to His praise, He still speaks to us. *"Where are you, [children]?"* (Genesis 3:9). *"Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"* (Genesis 3:11). God's words turn us around to face Him, though we cannot see Him. His word is truth, truth that demands the truth from us, truth that kills the lies that live within us. *"Against you, you only have a*

sinned and done what is evil in your sight” (Psalm 51:4a). God’s word also gives grace; grace that forgives, recreates, and restores us to live under Him as His trusting, obedient children. “But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared” (Psalm 130:4).

Through the Holy Scriptures, God speaks to us. How shall we answer Him? We should say to Him the very things that He says to us, for His words enter our ears and fill our hearts. They expose our sin-sickness, and they promise and give us divine healing. They open our lips so that our mouths can give God praise, joining with the rest of creation in its eternal chorus: *“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created” (Revelation 4:11).*

Through the Holy Scriptures, God speaks to us. He speaks to make Himself known to us. Again, knowing God is not a self-guided, intellectual exercise. He reveals Himself to us. And in His Scriptures, God has revealed Himself as a Unity of Three Persons. *‘Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool” (Psalm 110:1). “I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh” (Joel 2:28). “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:5) “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16) “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and*

earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matthew 11:25-27). “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16). “These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God” (1 Corinthians 2:10-12). “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14). As we listen to God’s Word, we trust, confess, and worship Him as the Holy Trinity..

That is why the Ecumenical Creeds of the Church are such a treasure, for they give us trustworthy summaries of God as He has made Himself known in His Word. As we recite them in faith, we worship the One True God, the Unity of Three Persons. We know God as He has made Himself known to us. We fear, love and trust Him, for He is our Father, whose Son has redeemed us and has given us the Holy Spirit to teach us the truth that makes us holy.

Together, we just recited the Athanasian Creed's precise proclamation of God as Trinity and of Jesus as True God and True Man. Now we are going to turn in the hymnal to page 322. There, in the left column, we are presented with The Apostles' Creed and Martin Luther's explanations of each article. But "explanation" is not the right word; these are themselves faithful confessions of each of the persons of the Holy Trinity. They lead us to faithfully confess who God is and what He has and still does for us. Let us confess them together.

The First Article

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

The Second Article

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord,

who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,

just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true.

The Third Article

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

“Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great!”

(Psalm 104:1). Amen.