

**SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN NEWCASTLE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Trinity Sunday with Communion
Online Worship – June 7, 2020
10:00 AM**



INVITATION

Thank you for joining us on-line or by phone! No matter who you are, where you are on life's journey - or where you're staying put – you are most welcome here!

This Sunday is the first Sunday after Pentecost, when we recognize the Trinity of our faith. It is also the first Sunday of the month, when our church celebrates the sacrament of Communion. Before the time of the service you will want to prepare some bread and a cup. In our tradition, these elements can be what you have at home – a slice or small loaf of bread, tortilla, rice cake, or crackers. Let it be something you alone or you with others in your house may break and share. Prepare a cup or cups of juice -- perhaps grape or cranberry -- or wine, with or without alcohol. Ultimately you want to bring to the table the elements that bring you comfort, are common to your household and the people and connect you with others.

Set these elements in the living room or kitchen where you experience worship electronically with our faith community. Perhaps you will light a candle. Perhaps you can place a flower or other symbol of faith and hope on the table. Perhaps you would like to include the photograph of someone you wish to bring into the circle of faith beside the bread and the cup. Follow your heart.

Thank you for your preparation.

*Let us now be present to the Spirit
which brings us together and loves us where we are!*

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GATHERING MUSIC

Jane Wilmot, Minister of Music

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WELCOME AND CENTERING MOMENT

CALL TO WORSHIP:¹

Leader: God beyond all names and images,

People: we worship you in faith.

Leader: God in Christ and One with human face,

People: we worship you in truth.

Leader: God who breathes, forms, moves and enlightens our lives,

People: we worship you in Spirit.

Leader: God in relationship with all creation,

**People: You are our God, from the beginning to the end. You are with us always.
Amen.**

HYMN 10

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

NICEA (NEXT PAGE)

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PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND CONFESSION:²

Merciful God, forgive us. We forget to call upon you. We do harm to our neighbors, even when we don't intend to. We neglect our spiritual lives. How can we love you, love our neighbors and love ourselves if we do not seek and receive the grace you offer us every moment of every day? Help us to do better. For we know that through the power of your Holy Spirit you enable us to do and to be more than we can think or imagine. Come now, dwell within our worship, and make us strong to do your work and will, sharing our boundless joy and hope in You. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

God has bound us together with all creation through the enduring spirit of grace. Hold fast to this truth, seekers of faith: We are forgiven, we are whole, we are loved. As we praise God, Christ and Spirit One, may we remember to share this Good News. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(Second Church follows the version of the Lord's Prayer that is offered below.*

However, you are invited to say this prayer aloud in the tradition that brings you the most comfort: debt/debtors; sins/sin; trespasses/trespass).

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON: I John 2: 1-11

² My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

³ Now by this we may be sure that we know him, if we obey his commandments. ⁴ Whoever says, “I have come to know him,” but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist; ⁵ but whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection. By this we may be sure that we are in him: ⁶ whoever says, “I abide in him,” ought to walk just as he walked.

¹ Liturgy created by Rev. Char Corbett, June 3, 2020.

² Liturgy of Invocation, Confession and Assurance written by Rev. Char Corbett.

⁷ Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word that you have heard. ⁸ Yet I am writing you a new commandment that is true in him and in you, because ^[a] the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. ⁹ Whoever says, "I am in the light," while hating a brother or sister, ^[b] is still in the darkness. ¹⁰ Whoever loves a brother or sister ^[c] lives in the light, and in such a person ^[d] there is no cause for stumbling. ¹¹ But whoever hates another believer ^[e] is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty

1. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!
 2. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! all the saints a - dore thee,
 3. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! though the dark - ness hide thee,
 4. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!

Ear - ly in the morn - ing our song shall rise to Thee;
 cast - ing down their gold - en crowns a - round the glass - y sea;
 though the sin - ful hu - man eye thy glo - ry may not see;
 All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! mer - ci - ful and might - y,
 cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim fall - ing down be - fore thee,
 on - ly thou art ho - ly; there is none be - side thee,
 ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! mer - ci - ful and might - y,

God in three per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty!
 God ev - er - liv - ing, through e - ter - ni - ty.
 per - fect in power, in love and pur - i - ty.
 God in three per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty!

WORDS: Reginald Heber, 1826, alt.
 MUSIC: John Bacchus Dykes, 1861

NICAEA
 11.12.12.10

Oh Dear Friends: It's been an overwhelming week, hasn't it?

That's an understatement. So far, the entire year of 2020 has been overwhelming. Frightening. Maddening. Disruptive. And sickening - in more ways than just the Corona virus which still plagues us the world over.

Sickness and health, Sin and Love, Good and Evil, kindness and hatred, life and death – things we all carry in each of us as humans - they are clashing, we are clashing, and the impact is literally spilling out into the streets. Ever so human, we get stuck, watching and focused most on the death and destruction of it all. The video of the gasping last breath of George Floyd; the security footage of burning neighborhoods and looted stores; signs held up for peace met with hand signals of white power. The priceless value of black lives set against the insurance value of lost or stolen property; The batons of young police officers striking the breasts of old peace activists. The respect for civility being run over in the streets at midnight. Violent Government power flexing its muscle on peaceful Holy Ground.

Whose lives matter more?

Whose liberties are being threatened more?

Who is right and who is wrong?

Which side of history will you stand on?

Black or White? Police or Protesters? Young or old? Healthy or ill?

As if living in this complex and beautiful life can be summed up in only dualities, and human-made ones at that.

The upheaval is global: from Minneapolis, to Washington DC, from London to Seoul. Our national unrest is as urban as New York City and as rural as Guilford, Maine. The anti-racism protests are occurring as far as Perth, Australia, the farthest city on Earth from Newcastle, Maine and they are as close as Veteran's Park next to our beloved church. I would further guess that the conflict resides as intimately as in our own hearts and minds – our very own breath.

In these days, so many have asked me: Pastor Char, are these the apocalyptic times? Is the white horse riding in our midst? Will we be okay? Is the world coming to an end? Will we survive this?

To which I often wonder – what is it this person truly wants to survive? Disease or Disease? In 2020, today, perhaps it's both.

I find that often in these times, I do not know what to say when I'm asked those kinds of questions. Some days I'm even asking them myself.

Lately I've had to draw deeply from the well of God that feeds me. It's so easy to get caught up in the angst and worry, the fear, the frustration and the flaming anger that bubbles up without warning.

I'm so afraid my fear of the unknown and my outrage over injustice will consume me.

All week I have started my prayers each morning this way:

Oh God, I am SO not perfect. But I hope to check myself In every way I stumble. Where have I staggered in the way of Love? Oh Breath of Life, lead me on and make me humble. Amen.

³ Meditation written by Rev. Char Corbett, May 5, 2020.

And then, when I am in trouble, when I can't find a word of my own to speak peace in the face of grief, anger or fear, what do I do? I sit down and I open my Bible.

Turning to 1 John 2:1-11 this week has helped me. It's not an epistle I often turn to. Usually I go for the Psalms or words from the Prophets in the Old Testament or I reach for the Gospels. But someone posted this scripture on Facebook this week, I turned to it and it has been a true balm. And I will share the three reasons why, perhaps in the hope that it will serve you.

The first reason is because the author of 1 John is compassionate and kind.

Written in Ephesus about 100 years after Jesus' resurrection, it was likely a pastor or elder of the church that wrote this letter. Or maybe it's a sermon, it kinda reads that way. Anyway, it was written in times of trouble and its intent was to espouse God's Love, light and fellowship through Jesus Christ in a time of deep schism in the community. Not only was the Christian community being persecuted by the Roman Empire, but there were factions within the household of faith over just who Jesus Christ was: God in the flesh or Jesus' spirit after death?

These deeply pastoral words are written with deep concern and affection for this threatened and struggling community, the author even calling the people "my little children." It was an endearment, much like when I call all of you Dear Friends.

In my lived experience, you know someone deeply cares for you when they mutually tackle the big problems head on with you. And there's no bigger problem than the universality of sin. Recognizing that sin painfully breaks relationship with God and one another, this author speaks of sin openly: not in terms of punishment, judgement or scolding – but rather, by seeking to love the people into goodness and forgiveness, encouraging the people to both know and imitate the life of Jesus Christ.

This compassionate, kind and caring approach to holding us accountable for who we are and how we act in the world is a balm if we receive it as the gifts of grace and forgiveness that Jesus Christ intends it. So healing, so life changing, so eternal.

Follow the commandments. Walk as Jesus walked.

It's not either or. It's both.

The second reason these words sooth me is because I'm reminded we're not in it alone.

No. We have an advocate. Those who follow the commandments and remain disciplined in the ways of God will have a comforter, a supporter, a helper in times of trouble.

Did you know that before we Christians understood the term of "Advocate" as the Spirit of Christ, that this was a common Greek term, often used in a court setting to navigate a problem that needed resolving? A Parakletos, "Comforter," was someone called to your side as a helper and counsellor, a witness in someone's favor to plead their cause. Parakletos can be defined as, "one who lends their presence to their friends."

To advocate, to comfort, to lend presence – this is what I'm seeing in the protests that have rocked our world these past two weeks. Whether you, or our neighbor or I will ever agree on the strategies, tactics and words being used to address the sin of racism is one thing. But we cannot deny that the movement for anti-racism has needed and now includes advocates, allies and victims of racial violence coming together to lend their collective presence against the sin of systemic racism. There is a spirit, a synergy of change that is growing. And if we focus on the fear, the anger and the broken windows instead of listening for and responding to

the love for life that undergirds this movement, we will miss the greatest opportunity to heal the brokenness – the sin of racism - that has undermined the brilliance of our Constitution and our country for 400 years.

Can you imagine how great our nation, and our world will be, **when** this sin of racism is finally wiped from our hearts, our policies, all of our economic, educational, healthcare and policing systems? The very hope of it fills me with gladness and a devoted determination to do my part, my work, to make this healing happen.

Finally, these words from 1 John are a balm for my heart because in the chaos all around me, these words offer a simple checklist of how to live:

- 1) Be in relationship with God.**
- 2) Walk as Jesus walked.**

It means for us that the manner in which we live our lives and our faith matters. We are encouraged to avoid living lives where our knowledge turns to pride and turn instead to a knowledge that leads to love. This love will exhibit itself in how we live out the Word, keep the commandments and try to be Jesus-like in all our living.

1 John says “The darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. Whoever says, “I am in the light,” while hating a brother or sister is still in the darkness. Whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light and in such a person there is no cause for stumbling.”

Balm for the soul.

True faith is the source of our right conduct.

These words from Charles Harold Dodd, an influential New Testament scholar and Protestant Theologian of the mid-20th century, helped us to understand that the kingdom of God is a present reality and not some future apocalyptic event. And with this insight, he offers this reflection about 1 John, which I find helpful when thinking of how this sin of racism will be forever banished. He said, “The Gospel speaks to our condition when it assures us, not only that God loves the world and is ready to forgive our sins but that God’s love has been expressed concretely and objectively in history to provide a means of sterilizing human wickedness and effecting a forgiveness which is not merely an amnesty or indulgence but a radical removal of the taint.”⁴

Dear friends, God is here, Christ leads the way, we are not ever alone and if we Love one another and really mean it, really practice it unconditionally, this darkness, this sin of racism, will disappear in the brilliance of God’s light.

The True Light is already shining.

Oh God, we are SO not perfect. But we hope to check ourselves in every way we stumble. Where have we staggered on the way of Love? Oh Breath of Life, lead us on and make us humble.

Amen.

⁴ The Interpreter’s Bible Commentary, Volume 12, p. 228. Abington Press.

BLESSING FOR ALL WE HAVE AND GIVE

Generous Spirit, we thank you for all that we have – for all of it comes from you. We gratefully return a portion of what we have to sustain and support the work and service of our church, in faith and hope everlasting. Amen.

ANTHEM FOR COMMUNION “The Gift of Love” arr Hal Hopson
Linda Blomquist, Soloist

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YkwhF0QcRF_2eLudipVcl-gClT9_5cCc/view?usp=sharing

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION⁵

Communion will be shared together virtually from our own homes.

INVITATION

This morning you are invited for Holy Communion in the Body of Christ.
That Body of Christ is not the loaf of bread you see on my plate on your screen.
The Body of Christ is not even the bread on your table.
The Body of Christ is us as we are strengthened by sharing together this meal of hope and grace and presence.

We pause to honor with tender memory the holy table in our church home and to consecrate with love for all God’s children these many holy tables in our home churches.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

LEADER: We Are the Body of Christ dispersed and gathered at the same time, which is always true though we do not always see it. Therefore, In your many kitchens, and living rooms, rest your hands lightly upon these elements which we set aside today to be a sacrament. Let us ask God’s blessing upon them and upon us and upon all those who are in our prayers this morning.

Unison: Gentle Host, rest upon us as you rested upon water and light, earth and creatures, human beings, all in your image, and holy Sabbath. Send your Spirit of life and love, power and blessing upon your children who are staying at home so that this Bread may be broken and gathered in love and this Cup poured out to give hope to all. Risen Christ, live in us, that we may live in you. Breathe in us, that we may breathe in you. Amen.

Leader: As we pray, we offer the prayers on our hearts and minds this morning...Amen.

WORDS OF REMEMBERING:

We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: “This is my body, broken for you. As often as you eat of it, do so in remembrance of me.”

In the same manner, Jesus took the cup, blessed it and gave it to the disciples, saying: “This is the new covenant in my blood, poured out for you. As often as you drink of it, do so in remembrance of me.” By eating this bread and drinking this cup, We proclaim Christ’s birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection, and we live forever in the hope that Christ will come again.

⁵ Communion liturgy adapted 6/2/2020 from Maren Tirabassi’s “*Holy Communion Liturgy for June 7, Often Called Trinity Sunday*,” written 5/28/2020 and posted at <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/>.

SHARING THE ELEMENTS:

Leader: Let us at our many tables receive the gift of God, the Bread of Heaven.

Unison: We become the Body of Christ in the Bread we share.

Leader: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God, the Cup of Blessing.

Unison: We are one in Christ in the Cup we share.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

Leader: In thanksgiving for this meal of grace, rejoicing that, in the holy dispersion of virtual worship, we claim the risen Christ's love is never limited, but the light by which we live by,

Let us pray ... **O Holy One, our tongues have tasted the good news and our lives are filled with the Spirit that hovered over creation and blew fresh hope into the world.**

Creator, open our hearts. Help us to walk with you in faith, speaking and praying words of peace. Holy Spirit, fill us with this blessing to be shared — that it is good. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN 220 "Breathe on Me, Breath of God" (NEXT PAGE)

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BENEDICTION⁶

Go in peace in the name of God, The Christ and the Holy Spirit, who created you, who redeems us and who will forever sustain all creation. Amen.

VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR CHECK IN (ZOOM ONLY)

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Today's Worship has been prepared, sent out, offered and led by:

- ▶ **Bill Bausch**, Communications & Technology Support; Snippets Meister
- ▶ **Rev. Char Corbett**, Pastor
- ▶ **Jim Corbett**, Videographer
- ▶ **Katie Corbett**, Set Manager (she's managing the 4 cats & 2 dogs!)
- ▶ **Anne Merrill**, Floral Arrangement
- ▶ **Linda Blomquist**, Soloist
- ▶ **Jane Wilmot**, Minister of Music

⁶ Benediction written by Rev. Char Corbett, May 28, 2020.

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

1. Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life a - new
 2. Breathe on me, Breath of God, un - til my heart is pure,
 3. Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am whol - ly thine,
 4. Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I nev - er die,

that I may love what thou dost love, and do_ what Thou wouldst do.
 un - til with thee I will one will to do_ and to en - dure.
 un - til this earth - ly part of me glows with thy fire di - vine.
 but live with thee the per - fect life of thine e - ter - ni - ty.

WORDS: Edwin Hatch, 1886, alt
 MUSIC: Robert Jackson, 1894

TRENTHAM
 SM