

Trinity Sunday Sermon

The community developer, Paul Born, recently wrote an article entitled “When community becomes ‘unessential’”. He was reflecting on the fact that the community gardens in his city of Guelph Ontario had opened as “essential”. He was wondering how they were going to manage without the community being allowed to look after them. That was a few weeks ago when we weren’t allowed hardly to walk out of our own homes.

One of the big lessons for all of us during this pandemic has been how valuable community is, how much we actually need it - physically, emotionally and spiritually. There is a palpable sense of joy when people gather on our front lawn each week for “Priest on the Lawn”. To see other people and to speak with them in person meets a deep need within. And yes, we all long to be able to give hugs to our friends and family, without fear.

This need for community, an essential need, is built into the fabric of our humanity. We are told that we are made in the image of God and that is an image, fundamentally, of community.

“At the center of all reality, at the heart of the universe, there exists an eternal divine community of perfect love.” Writes Reverend Vander Zee.

It is the eternal mystery that we call Trinity. We intentionally visit this truth each year on this Sunday, Trinity Sunday. It is a truth that deserves our attention more frequently than once a year because it is a truth that speaks to our fundamental and necessary nature.

A world made up of individuals, each one out for their own best interest, is not a world that works well. It is often devoid of compassion, love and forgiveness. It is a world that does not know peace.

A world that is based in community is a different kind of world. In community you know your neighbour by name, and maybe even by email address! You worry when you haven't seen them in their front garden for a few days and so you knock on their door or phone them. In this world it is natural to think, when you are baking some bread, that you could make a double batch and drop some off at a friend's. It is in this kind of world that if you find yourself in a difficult situation or in a particular need it isn't really that hard to call someone up and tell them.

We, of course, live somewhere in between. And this time of pandemic and social distancing has pushed at many of us, making us deeply aware of our need for community.

I've been thinking about this in light of the violence and tragedy unfolding in the States these past days. There is a powerful video on YouTube of a black man speaking into the camera. All he does is share information about himself. He starts by saying, "Before you call the police, I want to tell you...". He is a husband and father. On Sundays he teaches Sunday school at his church. He likes baseball and hockey. He is sometimes asked if he is muslim, and he doesn't mind.

What would a world that is so torn apart look like if we 'knew' each other more truly in community?

Richard Rohr explores the Trinity in his book entitled "The Divine Dance". The title itself holds a profound metaphor of God's relationship in the Trinitarian community. This divine dance of God in three persons, is like a round. No one person takes the lead (despite what various theologies might have led us

to believe). In this round there is attention to the other so that movements flow and continue to hold the dance perfectly.

It is a jarring image right now, during this time when we can't even touch our grandchildren! Yet it is an image that invites us to consider, in our bereft state, what community should look like, can look like.

If we were to “dance”, in reflection of the image of God, with one another, I believe it would be impossible for fear to rule our minds like it currently often does. I'm not suggesting that we trust everyone in every situation. However, I am suggesting that there is a lot more room for relationship, connection and love in our communities than we currently experience.

Paul Born goes on to write about the growing connections that are being made through food during this pandemic. With some disruption in the production of food, many of us are turning to local sources. We are sharing from our gardens. We are more actively supporting the food bank. We are making those extra

loaves of bread and casseroles, dropping them off at our neighbours (or being the lucky recipient of such goodies).

Having been to a conference at which Paul was the main speaker I happen to know that he is a Mennonite and that much of his understanding of community in the work he does comes from, as he put it, the basement pot-lucks at his church.

I find it interesting in this time when we cannot come around the table together to celebrate and receive the meal that Christ has prepared for us, many of us are finding new connections around food in our community.

So, though we may not gather on Sunday mornings for worship, we are being invited, as the body of Christ, to dance in community in a time when people are desperately longing for connection. The Trinity reminds us of our fundamental nature and invites us to embrace that nature more fully. It reminds us that community is indeed essential.

When we embrace this identity, neighbours are known,
communities become safer, we become more whole. And we
will likely need to do more actual dancing to deal with all those
loaves of bread we are eating!

Let us pray,

Dear Trinity, Holy Mystery

Help us to let go of our need for clarity and understanding,

That we might hold this mystery

Of Your Community

Deep in our our souls.

Recognizing our own image in Your image,

Our own need for the other

In your celebration of of the Divine Dance.

Teach us to be your people,

Not as individuals

But as Community,

In love and trust and peace.

Amen

