



**A Sermon for Trinity Sunday
May 26, 2024**



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New Life Episcopal Church, Uniontown, OH

Click Here for today's Readings:

[First Sunday after Pentecost – The Episcopal Church](#)

Isaiah 6:1-8, Romans 8:12-17, John 3:1-17, Psalm 29 or Canticle 13

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

Good morning

This is Trinity Sunday. It is also Memorial Day weekend. I'll come back to the first part later.

This is a date in which we remember those who have served.

A date that we honor those who, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, gave their last full measure of devotion.

We remember those who picked up their dedication, left their family, and travelled across the world to defend freedom and fight injustice.

Let me give you a very brief history of Memorial Day.

It was a tradition that started after the civil war. It was originally called Decoration Day or Remembrance Day, a date to decorate the graves of the fallen dead. Over the following couple of decades, it became formalized by numerous veterans' organizations until it was recognized and established at the federal level as a result of the two world wars.

As we have a number of veterans in this congregation, I thank you for your service and recognize your sacrifice.

I am not yet done with Memorial Day but let's go back to Trinity Sunday for a moment.

One of my favorite things to talk about on Trinity Sunday is Saint Patrick. Many traditions and tales surround the ministry of Saint Patrick. The driving out of snakes, the use of the Shamrock to describe the Trinity, and of course his breastplate. A muscular hymn and prayer of protection in Old Irish Gaelic.

But let's talk about Patrick himself. What was his journey? He was born towards the end of Roman rule in Britain to a minor official who was also a deacon in the church. Patrick was captured as a teenager in a raid by coastal Irish pirates and spent several years in the Irish wilderness as a shepherd enslaved by his captors.

I could call this period of loneliness and isolation a long dark night of the soul, but Patrick actually used it to deepen his faith through prayer and seeking forgiveness from God for his youthful Ignorance. After six years he heard a voice telling him that his ship was ready and he crossed 200 miles to the shore, boarded a ship, and travelled back to the continent.

After returning home to his family after a series of adventures Patrick continued to study Christianity until one day, he had a vision. It was a dream, a prompting from the Holy Spirit. A calling – from the Irish, appealing to him to come back and walk among them. The voice of the Irish.

Acting on his vision, Patrick was ordained and returned to Ireland, not to judge the peoples of his enslavement, but to save them and to spread the word of God to those who had called him.

One of the components of the breastplate which invokes a binding of the Trinity to the person is a series of statements of Christ companionship and protection.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Patrick had to face powerful regional chieftains and druidic priests that were resistant to say the least to his teaching. One of the sections of the original prayer calls for the protection of the preacher by the Trinity against hostile savage powers, false prophets, heresies, and other things that bind the soul and also calls to protect the prophet from potential physical injuries.

Patrick is by far not the first prophet or missionary to receive a calling in a dream. We heard Isaiah talk about his dream of the seraphim attending the enthroned Lord in his heavenly temple. How prepared was he to see this? Didn't he call for a cleansing experience, so he was prepared?

But no longer does our faith journey and mission require a live coal on our lips for us to be prepared to have the spirit speak through us. What did Jesus talk to Nicodemus about how much are we refreshed by being born of the spirit. Not just born again but born of the spirit. Not just eternal life but the quality of life lived in the presence of God.

God so loved the world. The world that came into being through his Word, the LOGOS, that is his son. That he gave that only son, to save the world from the loneliness and separation from God. Sent, not to condemn the world, but to save it, and bring it back into the fold of God's Love.

Most of you know that I served. I am a veteran. I left my family and travelled across the world and in those first few weeks in the Navy, while I was at sea, I experienced that sense of loneliness and abandonment.

I had grown up in the church, had positive faith experiences, was very involved in aspects of religious service. But leaving the faith of my youth behind, I only occasionally attended, only major festival church events, attending while I was visiting home, But I felt generally disconnected from the church experience.

I had my own long dark night of the soul. However, within the first few weeks of returning I had a feeling of spiritual connection. I was home. The sermons at church felt especially directed at me. I was returning to the fold of the communion of Saints. But now it was the faith of my adulthood.

Like Patrick before me on this Trinity Sunday, I invoke the Trinity, I bind myself to the Trinity. God the father, the creator of the cosmos, the incarnation of Christ, the living, breathing word of God, the cherubim, and heavenly servants of Yahweh.

Now let's not forget about the spirit. Especially consider what Barbara said last week at Pentecost. The spirit is in everything. It was the breath of God that moved across the waters. It is the inspiration that God sends to us. It is the murmur in your ear, in your heart.

An expression of God's will in action, prompting you, questioning you. Giving you a vision. What will your response be?

Here am I lord, send Me.