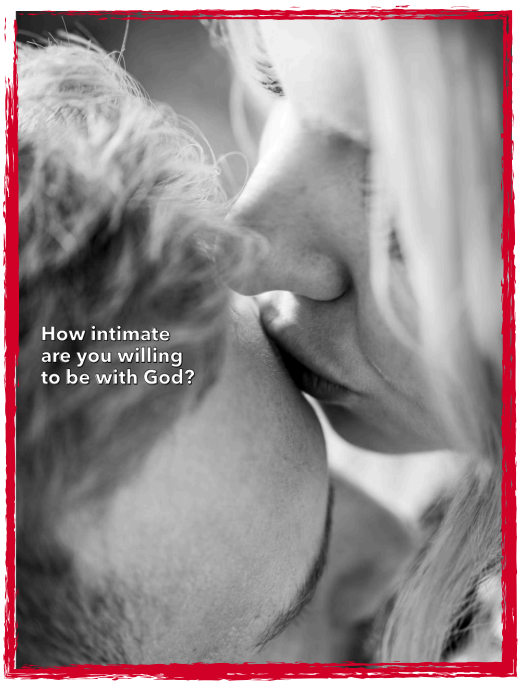
WORSHIP SERVICE PLAN
(**Traditional** & **Online Service**) (**Red**)
May 31, 2026 • Trinity • Graduation
Psalm 8:1-9; Matthew 28:16-20;
2 Corinthians 13:11-13
"Holy Kisses"
The Trinity is not an effort to put God in a box. It's a reminder of how close God wants to be.



(online only) Preparation for Worship
Gather these items for worship. If an items unavailable, fret not:

- a piece of **red** cloth
- an end table or stand
- a plate
- a cup
- a glass or bowl with water
- a triangle of some kind
- a thank you card to God for something this week
- a computer or internet-accessible device
- a lighter/match

For each item you have, thank God for the provision. For each piece you do not have, thank God you don't need it. Place the table/stand in the area you plan to worship. If more than one person will be present, place the table in the middle of where you will be seated. Drape the cloth over it. Arrange the cup, plate, glass of water, and other items on the table. Keep the Bible in front of you. Just as a side note, the traditional color used with Trinity Sunday is white. We're opting for red here to (1) emphasize the Holy Spirit and (2) give more attention to a liturgical color we like and rarely use.

Questions for the announcement loop
In preparing for Worship, consider the following:

- How intimate are you willing to be with God?
- How close do you imagine wants us to be with one another?
- What does a 'holy kiss' look like (feel like) to you?
- How does the idea of the Trinity work in your mind?

Choral Introit:
"Glory to God" by Noah Melton

Opening Sentence
2 Corinthians 13:13 (CEB)
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

We are glad you are with us! We have a few Community Notes for you to consider as we worship throughout the week, living that Christian life…

Welcome Visitors!
We are glad you are here! Our nursery is in the Education Building and our restrooms are in the buildings other than this Sanctuary.

Get Closer
The occasion of Trinity Sunday is a baked in opportunity to remember not only God's majesty and breadth of power but also how very close God wants to be with us. Whether we're talking about Creation or Salvation or Redemption, every person of the Trinity, all the aspects we treasure about God, have God mixing it up with us messily, closely, lovingly. As you move through the week, do you observe yourself approaching your own relationship with God the same way? Do you move in your human relationships the same way? What would it take for you to truly be closer to God and closer to those around you?

We Celebrate Our Grads!
While we have many graduates in our community, this weekend we are celebrating Morgan Covington's high school commencement. Literally raised in this church and currently serving her

second term as Youth Elder, Morgan is trying to embody all the lessons she's gotten from us and the world around her. So this Sunday morning we will recognize her achievement during the worship service as well as with a reception following. Congratulations, Morgan!

Estate Planning Workshop - Sunday, May 31st, 2PM to 3PM

Attorney Charlie Brown will be at Hawfields Sunday, May 31st at 2PM to talk about estate planning. We will be exploring wills, trusts, legal planning, and care choices. This is open to the public, so bring your friends, family and neighbors.

Choir Appreciation Sunday

On **June 7th**, the worship service will feature the sanctuary choir providing more music than on a typical Sunday. In addition to routine hymns and responses, the choir will present six anthems, a collection of some of their favorites. Communion is also scheduled that day so prepare for a slightly longer service, but not too lengthy. Similar to Homecoming, we invite everyone to bring a covered dish to share for a luncheon in the fellowship hall following the worship service. June 7th will be the last day the choir is in session before they enjoy several weeks "off" during the summer. We look forward to a glorious day of music making and celebrating the many contributions of the choir the past year.

Best of the 90's!

The Faith@Night Service is having a "Best of the 90's" music festival on June 7th at 6pm. come dressed in your favorite 90's outfit and, if you share your choice(s) ahead of time, we'll sing along to some favorite worship songs that shaped so many.

(10am only) Greet one another in Christ!

(10am only) Gathering Song

"Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks" GTG #240 (vs. 4)

Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord.
Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to his name.
Come let us praise the living God,
joyfully sing to our Savior.
Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord.
Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to his name.

(10am only) Prelude:

"Majesty" arr. Douglas E. Wagner

The Trinity is not an effort to put God in a box. It's a reminder of how close God wants to be.

In this moment, let us stand, take a deep breath, silence our devices, and continue in worship together. Let us make use of the *Call to Worship* that is before you…

(10am only) Call to Worship

God created all there is
And still is
Jesus redeemed the whole world
And still is
The Holy Spirit fell on so many back then
And still does
God loved and expected love out of us
And still does

Sing:

"Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty" CEL #3

Prayer of Confession/Preparation

We sometimes use the idea of the Trinity to keep our distance with God. We do that even though God wants to be close with us. It's not good that we do that. It's important to talk about our shortcomings so that we're ready to hear what God has to say. Let us begin with silent prayer…

(Please pray silently…)

Pray: Holy God, you are a father: imposing, loving, strong, keeping high expectations and sober about who we are. Jesus you are a brother who shares everything with us. Holy Spirit you are closer to us than breath, closer than even our own thoughts. God, forgive us when we impose distance between us. Forgive us when we resist the intimacy you desire and are trying to establish with us. Forgive us, please, for denying you when we should be embracing you, for not even recognizing or owning how quickly we raise our hands in protest to your transforming love. As the Trinity enters our imagination, may your efforts with us take hold. Thank you for listening, God. Amen.

(10am only) Assurance of Pardon
God's love can change everything, even the power of our sins over us. God's will that we have this power:
In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.
The Peace of Christ be with you
And also with you.

(10am only) *Gloria Patri* (Glory to God)
Glory be to the Father and to the Son
And to the Holy Ghost
As it was in the beginning
It is now and ever shall be
World without end: **Amen, amen.**

Reading of Scripture
Say: God's Word is confirmation of what God has promised all along: to be with us. Taking in God's Word is a chance for us to with God. God offers to make that happen through the power of God's Spirit. Let us take God up on that offer and ask for help to understand. Let us pray…(everyone sings)

Pray/Sing: "I Love to Tell the Story" (Refrain)
GTG #462
I love to tell the story;
'twill be my theme in glory
To tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

The Psalms are some of the most unfiltered and intimate examples of faith put to words. They teach us to lean deep into our feelings with God. Listen closely to the Word of God to us all and for God's challenge to us all…

Read: Psalm 8:1-9
The majesty of God and the role of human beings.

1 LORD, our Lord, how majestic
is your name throughout the earth!
You made your glory higher than heaven!
2 From the mouths of nursing babies
you have laid a strong foundation
because of your foes,
in order to stop vengeful enemies.
3 When I look up at your skies,
at what your fingers made—
the moon and the stars
that you set firmly in place—
4 what are human beings
that you think about them;
what are human beings
that you pay attention to them?
5 You've made them only slightly less than divine,
crowning them with glory and grandeur.
6 You've let them rule over your handiwork,
putting everything under their feet—
7 all sheep and all cattle,
the wild animals too,
8 the birds in the sky,
the fish of the ocean,
everything that travels the pathways of the sea.
9 LORD, our Lord, how majestic
is your name throughout the earth!

The Great Commission is the name we traditionally give to the very end of Matthew's Gospel. It is not just a declaration of our purpose, but of God's commitment to us in the face of Jesus' resurrection. Listen further to the Word of God to us all and for our place in God's story…

Read: Matthew 28:16-20
The Great Commission.

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. 18 Jesus came near and spoke to them, "I've received all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age."

Paul concludes this second letter to the Corinthians, not with a treatise or some challenge to scale some impossible metric. Paul simply tells them to get close: uncomfortably close. Listen further to the Word of God to us all and for our place in God's story…

Read: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Paul's conclusion to the letter.

11 Finally, brothers and sisters, good-bye. Put things in order, respond to my encouragement, be in harmony with each other, and live in peace—and the God of love and peace will be with you.

12 Say hello to each other with a holy kiss. All of God's people say hello to you.

13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

One: For the Word of God in Scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us…
All: Thanks be to God!

Children's Sermon
Adults, you'll need:
- an example or image of ice, steam and drinking water
- Make space for questions if you get them

"Different and Same"
- So we're going to talk about something strange. (Showing the picture of ice) What is this? It IS ice! It is hard, cold and can cut mountains. But what is this…? Well, that's steam! It is hot, it can float, and it can make things move like a car, a train or a boat.
- But what is THIS?…Yeah, drinking water. Big people sometimes call this liquid but it is water. You can drink it. It can be cold or hot. It gives life. You can swim in it. You can wash with it. You can float in it. Water is amazing!
- But did you know (show all the pictures) all of these things are water. They are so different and yet they are all the same water. Well, God is like that. God created everything. Jesus saved everything. The Holy Spirit moves over everything. All different. But all very much God.
- So when you're around the people who care about you, ask them how they think about God. Don't forget to pray!

(10 am only) Anthem:
"Plenty Good Room" arr. Donald Moore;
Soloists: Noah Melton, David Ealy

"Holy Kisses"
The Trinity is not an effort to put God in a box. It's a reminder of how close God wants to be.

One of the things you run into traveling around different countries is **different languages.** When you're in Germany, you expect to run into German. When in Spain you expect some Spanish. When in Switzerland you can expect French, German, Swiss German (it's a thing, I promise), and English.

But going state to state here, even within differing sections of North Carolina will get you twisted up with language differences. Think about the way we use words like "**boot" or "dinner."**

But there are also idioms. What do I mean when I say, "Hot dog"? What about "dear versus deer" or "there, their, they're"? Surely you've all heard, "Bless their heart…"?

It all represents a curious and marvelous fact about our human existence: **we're limited**. Words are a community invention. We need each other to make language work because we have to agree on what words mean in order to convey ideas. If I tell you something costs $2 but you interpret that to mean $200, we are not at all talking about the same things.

It can make it difficult at best to nail down who God is. First of all, we're trying to take an infinite, all powerful, all knowing Living God and boil said God to manageable terms. How in the world are we supposed to do that when we can't even agree on what words mean?

But the challenge isn't just present with the divine. **It's something we actually run into with each other.** Think of someone you love, deeply. How do you encapsulate them in words? How do you describe them completely? If the limits of our words have trouble describing our limited existence, what hope do we have to describe the Living God?

Yet importantly, God shows us the way. And uses our emotions as a cheat code.

Read: Psalm 8:1-9
The majesty of God and the role of human beings.

The writer, David, doesn't make the mistake of trying to capture all that God is in words. He trusts his relationship with God to steer the lyrics. The song gets written because he is relying on what he knows. God is God and we are not. God made me and everything. God partners with us to govern Creation. Oh, and God has **a cool name.**

We've talked about this before. Anytime you see "LORD" in all or small caps it's the presence of the

divine name in the text. The name shared with Moses at the burning bush. The name that has and still steers the destiny of us all. A name that summarizes the first two of the ten commandments: you shall have no other gods and no idols. "I am that I am, I will be what I will be." "Yahweh."

So is David trying to constrain God in the Psalm? Hardly. **All he's doing is conveying what it feels like to be in relationship with God.** What it feels like. No, of course it's not always easy to talk about how you feel. But that's why the Psalms are critical mass for us for talking about God. The Psalms are able to give words to us when we don't have any. They can express our range, our tensions, even our contradictions. Thank God, there's space for that with God's grace.

So when resurrected Jesus gives the gathered disciples their mission, it's with the fullness of our humanity in mind.

Read: Matthew 28:16-20
The Great Commission.

Eleven disciples, not twelve. Worship and doubt. **Our human contradictions on full display before a God who *knows* us.** Then the text says something that I think we gloss over too quickly.

Back when God shared the divine name with Moses, God said, "I have *seen* my people's oppression; I have heard their cries and am intimate with their pain; I've come down to rescue them…" (Exodus 3:7-8). It's a movement of God getting closer and closer: c**lose enough to see, close enough to hear, close enough to feel their pain, close enough to rescue.**

Here we have Jesus coming near and speaking to them. That movement, that same movement of God to get closer: closer to their fears, closer to the worship, closer to their doubts, close enough for them to hear his voice and promise:

"I will be with you every day…"

But what does that mean? Jesus is about to ascend into heaven. How is Jesus going to be with them every day? In their memories? In their lived experiences? Just last week we celebrated the giving of the Holy Spirit: the Day of Pentecost. Jesus isn't just backing us up. Jesus isn't just walking beside us or behind us or in front of us or even carrying us. Jesus is within us. Like the Tabernacle and Temple of old, with their chambers reserved for the very heart of God, **WE are the holy of holies now.** We are the places where God's Spirit, God's heart, resides.

What are we to do with that presence? How do we even talk about it? And how deeply does it go? How much closer does God want to be with us and us with each other?

Read: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Paul's conclusion to the letter.

It is at this point that we must talk about an uncomfortable subject: **intimacy.**

Now, whatever comes to your mind when I say that word, hear me say that God's goal for all of Creation and for God with it is intimacy. Closeness. Breathy knowledge that counts the hairs on your head and knows what kind of ice cream you like. Recognition of your deepest desires, hurts, grief, joys, sadness and utter satisfaction. There's a word for this musically and Paul employs this word in his farewell.

Harmony.

God wants us in harmony. Enough so that **we kiss each other**. Now before I get into that, lets talk about what harmony is. Now, the dictionary says it's a combination of simultaneous music notes forming chords and progressions that give pleasing effects. And let's face it: that really fits. Whether we're talking about sex, about a carpentry project, a classroom, an answer to long-offered prayer, the chord that forms from our lived experience gives pleasing effects.

It's one of the reasons that the **idea of the Trinity** to describe God was born. This harmony represented by Creator God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, moving as one, acting as one, and yet distinct in the ways in which we experience God. The Trinity is not an effort to put God in a box. It's a reminder of how close God wants to be. The persons of God are thought to be acting in harmony. But this harmony is not just a nice feature. It's not an add on or improvisation. It is the goal. And not just for God. It is God's goal for us.

Think of what has to be in place in a relationship in order for there to be kissing of any kind. There has to be trust. There has to be time spent, knowledge developed, experiences shared. There has to be love and understood and shared expectations. There has to be willingness, forgiveness, grace, belief. A kiss, even a holy one, is not a starting place. It's a manifestation of something God's been working toward. To get close. Really close.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Song of Reflection
"Come, Thou Almighty King" GTG #2

Offering
God chooses to love us, abundantly. We should respond by choosing to be loving, abundantly. This is why we should give and share what we have and who we are. Let us reflect together on what has been given…

(10am only) Offertory
"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" arr. Melody Bober

(10am only) Doxology
Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Blessing *(text is for the ONLINE service)*
Let there be no doubt, Great God: you love us. And we are grateful. Let there be no doubt, Great God: we should be loving in turn. As we receive the gifts you provide, may the gifts we are meant to be emerge. In the great name of Jesus Christ, we pray this together. Amen.

Prayers of the People
- Say: God doesn't just hear our prayers. God answers. Let us pray...
- "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying" GTG #469
  Lord, listen to your children praying.
  Lord, send your spirit in this place.
  Lord, listen to your children praying.
  Send us love; send us power; send us grace.
- Holy God, Thank you for wanting to be close to us, for wanting to be close with us. Thank you for being close enough to know our thoughts, to know our hearts, and to draw near nevertheless. Thank you for making it possible for us to be that close with you. And thank you for pushing us to be close with each other.
- God, you placed that need for closeness so deeply in us we sometimes forget it's there. But as the music of your love and grace plays let us dance with each other. Let us move with one another. Even where we disagree and oppose each other, teach us to do as you instruct and to kiss one another. Help us allow you to kiss us. To comfort us, to hold us, to uphold us. Help us live into your example and to become the very partners Psalm describes us to be.
- Thus, let us be Godly people. Let us make a habit of compassion and consolation. Let us make second nature your grace and mercy and sense of justice. Let us set aside safety and embrace risk-taking with you. May your healing balm reach through us to those around us, especially those on our prayer lists and those we will come to know. Help us love and give love. Help us value mercy as you do. Despite our collective answer of violence, of disdain, of division, of cynicism, of apathy, to your love, may we truly be washed by you and embrace hope instead… (take time to name your own prayers)
- Thank you for believing in us, Thank you for transforming us. Thank you for teaching us, even how to pray when words fail us, saying,
- **Pray: 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.**

Hymn of Sending
(10am) "Be Thou My Vision" GTG #450

Sending & Benediction
Let us say together our benediction…

God's dream isn't for an *elite class* of believers. God wants us *all*.

(raise your hands and say) "Get up, take heart, Jesus is still calling you…"; The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Sing: "There Is Power in the Blood" (Refrain)
CEL #329

There is pow'r, pow'r, wonder working pow'r
In the blood of the Lamb.
There is pow'r, pow'r, wonder working pow'r
In the precious blood of the Lamb.

(10am only) Postlude
"Holy, Holy, Holy" arr. Victor Labenske