



# Church on the Cape Newsletter



June 2026

## From The Pastor's Desk

### The Holy Trinity

The Christian understanding of God as a Holy Trinity is often maligned and frequently seems to puzzle us. Perhaps it is comforting to realize that this is not new—its been doing that for most of Christian history! However, it is so central to our language and experience that it is worth examining it carefully.

The doctrine as it was finally and contentiously crafted is not present in scripture—that is true. It took close to two hundred years of Christian practice and theology to come to a preliminary agreement and a millennium to reach disagreement about the final form of this doctrine. The doctrine united Christians in their understanding of faith, but sadly in two different families. The western church, led by Rome, united around one expression and the eastern church, centered in Constantinople, united around another. That gets us a little ahead of the story though, so let's step back a bit.

It all started with Jesus and how the disciples experienced and understood his reality. By the time the first Christian scriptures were written, followers of Jesus had come to understand him as the incarnation of God—God present in human form. It is hard to know if Jesus understood himself that way, but it is clear that his followers did. The early Christian writings also made it clear that when Jesus left this world, when he was no longer present in body, he was not gone, but still present in Spirit. The disciples and the church clearly experienced the “Spirit-presence” of Jesus in their midst leading, guiding and empowering them.

The challenge, then, became how to speak of this reality and this experience. How would they describe the reality of God that they knew in a way that would do justice to that reality? They knew that God was eternal and somehow beyond creation. God was, in fact, the creator of was, in fact, the creator of all things and those things existed within the reality of God.

Somehow, this same God became truly and authentically present on earth as a human being named Jesus. How did they make sense of this? Not only that, but Jesus spoke of God's Spirit and they felt and knew that this Spirit was still real and working in the world without bodily form. They also rejected the notion that this meant there were multiple gods. Somehow this was all part of the one and only God who was able to be all of these realities at one time.

Thus was born the quest to describe that reality theologically. The basic affirmation was that God was one yet existing as three hypostases or personae. The Greek word hypostasis, which they first used, was born out of Greek theater and referred to the masks that actors wore to define the character they played. That got translated into the Latin word personae, which gives us our English word, person.

It is clearly a kind of paradox to think of one being in three separate forms. It is most helpful to return to the realm of our experience and remember that we continue to be able to experience God through these three realities—the eternal creator and source of being, the human being who lived the same life we do and the Spirit that continues to be present to us in unique and powerful ways.

What, then, of that sad disagreement? It had to do with the relation of the Holy Spirit to the other two persons. The western church came to assert that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the son, the eastern church insisted on retaining the original language of the Nicene creed that the Spirit proceeds from the father without mentioning the son. That was the defining theological disagreement that led to the first formal division in the Christian church in 1054 creating the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox family of churches. While we have found creative ways to further divide the church, this first schism still stands between east and west and it all originates with trying to understand the Holy Trinity.



## Bible Readings

### June 7 | 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

- Gen 12:1-9;
- Ps 33:1-12 (UMH 767)
- Rom 4:13-25
- Matt 9:9-13, 18-26



### June 14 | 3rd Sunday after Pentecost

- Gen 18:1-15 (21:1-7)
- Ps 116:1-2, 12-19 (UMH 837)
- Rom 5:1-8
- Matt 9:35-10:8 (9-23)

### June 21 | 4th Sunday after Pentecost; Father's Day

- Gen 21:8-21
- Ps 86:1-10, 16-17 or Ps 17:1-7, 15 (UMH 749)
- Rom 6:1b-11;
- Matt 10:24-39

### JUNE 28 | 5th Sunday after Pentecost (Green)

- Gen 22:1-14
- Ps 13 (UMH 746)
- Rom 6:12-23
- Matt 10:40-42



### CALLING ALL GRADUATES

If you have a family member or loved one graduating from preschool, kindergarten, middle school, high school, college, higher ed, or a program of any sort, please email or call the office with the name of the graduate, their relationship to you, and where they are graduating from, no later than June 11th at 3:00 pm. All names will be read aloud during worship on June 14th.

### UPDATING THE DIRECTORY

Let's put some faces to your names! We are in the process of updating our church directory. Please take time to review your entry and make sure your photo is updated and information is correct. If you require assistance let the office know!

### Newsletter Editor Volunteer Opportunity

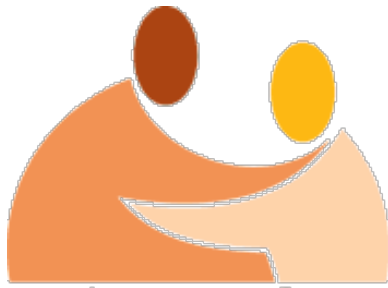
We are looking for a dedicated volunteer to assist our Newsletter Editor with putting together our once-a-month publication! If you have a few hours to spare each month, a good eye for detail, and a desire to help keep our community connected, we would love to have your help.



### JUNE IS BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

COTC will celebrate with a presentation by Olivia Airey from Alzheimer's Association on June 28, immediately after our worship service. Olivia will share information about the 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's, the differences from dementia, importance of early detection, new treatments, healthy habits and resources. If you've ever wondered how you can enter a room and wonder how and why you are there? Find your car keys in strange places, have trouble remembering words and names, perhaps this information will help answer those questions.

The presentation is about 60 minutes followed by Q&A time. We will be circulating clip boards with a sign up form during church service for the next 3 weeks. Further information about what location in the church will depend on the number of participants. Don't miss this valuable information!



## A Time to Share

"Although you've never seen him, you love him. Even though you don't see him now, you trust him and so rejoice with a glorious joy that is too much for words. You are receiving the goal of your faith: your salvation." 1 Peter 1:8-9



### FOUR COMPELLING REASONS WHY I BELIEVE IN GOD by Charlie Benore

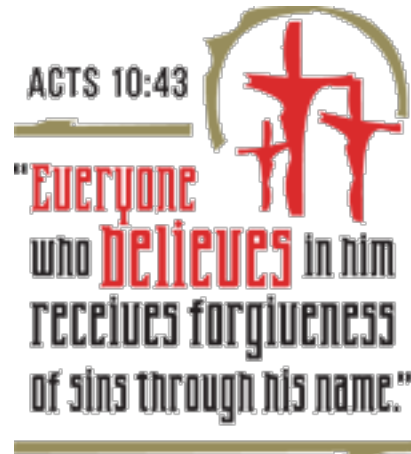
Rereading this article from time to time has helped me maintain and strengthen my faith. I hope reading it for the first time, or rereading it, will be helpful to you, too.

*Believing in God is essential to salvation and is the most important subject one can think about.*

### THE FIRST REASON IS THE FORETELLING BY THE OLD TESTAMEN OF THE COMING OF JESUS, AND EYEWITNESS CONFIRMATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT HE DID

A) Several Old Testament prophecies, many years before the earthly life of Jesus, tell of His coming and sacrificing

His life for our sins so that those who believe in Him will have everlasting life.



It is important to avoid revisionist history in testing the prophecy outcomes, and we are blessed in this regard to have the Dead Sea Scrolls. According to experts, there are reportedly 800-plus manuscripts in the Dead Sea Scrolls' Qumran discovery, with about 220 from the Hebrew Bible. Except for Esther, each of the manuscripts is present, although most are fragmented and contain missing pieces.

The ability to trace the Old Testament Scripture so far back in time lends strong credence to the reliability of the Bible we have today. These manuscripts are said to date between 150 BCE and 70 CE. One of the found manuscripts, Isaiah, is said to be virtually complete.

Among these books, Isaiah 53 is especially important to me because it foretells the suffering and death Jesus incurred in fulfilling God's plan for our salvation many years before Jesus resided on Earth. Selections from the Common English Bible follow:

"He bore the punishment that made us whole; by his wounds, we are healed."  
"Like sheep, we had all wandered away,

each going its own way, but the Lord let fall on him all our crimes." "The Lord's plans will come to fruition through him."...my servant will make many righteous and will bear their guilt."

"Therefore, I will give him a share with the great, and he will divide the spoil with the strong in return for exposing his life to death...."

According to several sources, over 100 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled are noted in the Old Testament.

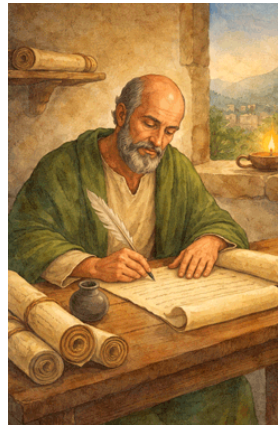


The Old Testament prophecies range in time from 500 to 1200 years before Jesus' birth, and the New Testament, and some are very specific, such as:

- "a Child is born." (Isaiah 9:6);
- "...the deaf shall hear," "the blind shall see." Isaiah 29:18
- "Behold, your king is coming to you, he is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey...." Zechariah 9:9
- Soldiers "divide my garment...and for My clothing they cast lots." Psalm 22:18
- "...his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day...." Deuteronomy 21:23.

*The Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled, reference by reference, in the New Testament. These prophecies, inspired by the Word of God, were proven and affirm God's Word in Scripture.*

B) Like the Old Testament, the New Testament also has an early history testifying to its authenticity. Reportedly, several of Paul's letters date from around 50 CE, and the Gospel of Mark 66-70 CE. The earliest complete copy of the New Testament, the Codex Sinaiticus, dates to the 4th century. The New Testament clearly describes the life of Jesus with us, thanks to those who authored it, including several who served as eyewitnesses.



The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, notes: "...Christ died for our sins in line with the scriptures, he was buried, and he rose on the third day in line with the scriptures. He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve, and then he appeared

to the more than five hundred brothers and sisters at once – most of them are still alive to this day, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all, he appeared to me, as if I were born at the wrong time."

C) Moreover, there are records of Jesus' time on Earth from two historians and artifacts confirming the events, people, and places depicted in Scripture. *Tacitus (A.D. 55-120), a leading historian of his time, writes, "Christus (Greek for Christ), from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus...."*

Another is Josephus's Record, published in his "Jewish Antiquities" in the year 93. "About this time, there lived Jesus, a wise

man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many Greeks. He was the Messiah.

And when, upon the accusation of the principal men among us, Pilate had condemned him to a cross, those who had first come to love him did not cease. He appeared to them, spending a third day restored to life, for the prophets of God had foretold these things and a thousand other marvels about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared."

*While Josephus' record is controversial to some because it seems too detailed and may have been later embellished, it is, nonetheless, at its core, supportive of the earthly existence of Jesus.*

*Josephus also wrote of James: "the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ."*

**D)** From another historical perspective, several important artifacts support people, places, and events in Scripture. Several of the most important include the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are already mentioned and described as the most remarkable discovery, with minimal differences between the Scrolls and the Old Testament Hebrew texts. According to experts, these differences do not alter the meaning of God's Word in the Bible.

There are two scrolls named the Ketef Hinnom Scrolls, which have citations of biblical texts in Hebrew that are reportedly

even earlier than the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Tel Dan Inscription refers to the House of David, Israel's king and ruler. Also among the many findings is the Pilate Stone, which mentions Pontius Pilate, the Prefect of Judea.

## SECOND IS INTELLIGENT DESIGN

a) Intelligent Design professes that the universe and humans are so complex that they cannot be explained except with an intelligent cause. I know no one or what, for example, could have created the planets where on Earth we have adequate temperatures, water, gravity, ozone protection, proper orbit, and the like that, provide for human life. Who or what force other than God has that creative power?

Noted theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, in "The Grand Design," offers an answer. He believes that the Big Bang, or the creation of the universe, was inevitable because of laws such as gravity and occurred spontaneously out of nothing.



His theory of creation has been criticized for not having a "first-order event" or an explanation for how gravity and other forces were present that created the universe, along with the laws of nature to control the universe's growth and keep it intact and functioning.

*Could there be a force beyond our scientific comprehension that did so? The vastness of space, the complexity of the solar system, and the fact that at least one of the planets supports life point to an*

*Intelligent Designer. The Intelligent Designer, I believe, is God.*

b) On another scientific front, Darwin's "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection" suggests that humans were the result of biological evolution, where all life on Earth evolved over time from a single ancestor, in contrast to the beginning of humankind as Adam and Eve.

According to this theory, the first replicating molecule's evolutionary path ultimately led to different animal types and human beings.

There are objections to this theory, such as Intelligent Design, where it is held that only a supernatural force could accomplish the biological diversity of life and the complexity of the human anatomy. Notably, there also needs to be a "first-order event" to explain how the first molecule got here. A beginning organism from somewhere needs to be present for evolution to occur.

*Intelligent Design by God is, I believe, a more compelling answer to how we got here. Science is useful for showing how natural law works, but not about the origin of our planet and its inhabitants. Psalm 19:1 proclaims, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork."*

### THIRD IS THE CONSCIENCE OR THE MORAL GUIDE WE HAVE

As far back as I can remember, my Mom and others would guide me to what was right and wrong in the normal course of

being a youth, but as I grew older, it became apparent that my sense of what was right and wrong was much broader and deeper. The question is, where did this recognition come from?

In my studies, I especially liked the Gospel of John, and there I found that my conscience extender was the Holy Spirit. "I have spoken these things to you while I am with you. The Companion, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I told you." John 15: 25-26



"I will put my instructions within them and engrave them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. They will no longer need to teach each other to say, "Know the LORD!" because they will all

know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. for I will forgive their wrongdoing and never again remember their sins."

Jeremiah 31:33-34

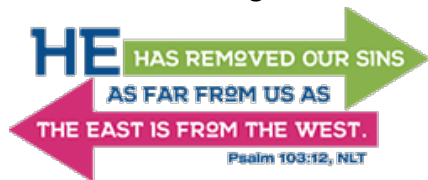
*Our Lord planted into our hearts and minds a helper – the Holy Spirit – who shows us how to live, right from wrong, and is always by our side, helping us to be righteous.*

### FOURTH IS THE EARTHLY REWARDS OF PEACE AND JOY

Because Jesus died on the cross to save

us from our sins, and since I sincerely believe, love, and have faith in Him – and endeavor to follow His commandments – I have forgiveness of my sins and, in turn, peace in my mind and joy in my heart.

"He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the Earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him, as far as the East is from the West, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."



Psalm103:10-12

Beyond the Lord's instructions planted in my heart and mind, my "earthly knowledge" of them benefitted from Catholic grade school. Later, my understanding grew by attending church, being inspired by several ministers and church families, studying the Bible, and reading books by biblical scholars.

However, I still wondered from time to time about the strength of my faith in God. Then, one day, on my walk to church meditation, I realized why I was doing so.

*I was doing so because of my love of God. And this love empowered me to finally say with sincerity, truthfulness, and conviction from my whole mind, heart, and soul that my belief in and love of Him was sound, true, and strong.*

*Concurrently, I could feel a smile coming to my face and a wonderful feeling of being close to God and acceptable to Him.*

*There was relief, peace of mind, and joy in my heart. It was truly a glorious experience for me.*

In closing, there is comfort in Matthew 11:28-30. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."



## BELIEF ABOUT OR BELIEF IN?

An aerialist, who specialized in riding a bicycle on a tightrope across waterfalls, set up his equipment across Niagara Falls. A great crowd gathered to watch him ride across the roaring waters. Not only did he complete the trip over, but he returned riding backwards! The crowd was in awe of his ability. He asked the crowd, "Do you believe I could do it again with shoulders?"

"Yes," they all shouted as one.

"Which one of you will ride with me then?" he asked.

No one spoke up. That's the difference between believing about Jesus and believing in Jesus. When we believe in him, we trust our whole life to him.

Source: Newsletternewsletter

## May Sunday School News

As the Sunday School year winds down, May has been a busy month in Sunday School. We know spring schedules get very busy with sports, good weather, parties, and general spring business. We treasure each Sunday we see the children in church.

Mother's Day was a lot of fun. Sophie had the teachers to herself and reported to a group of children the following week; "Last week I was the only kid. We made flowers. It was great!" It is not clear what Sophie was referring to when she said 'it was great' – being the only child or making flowers? Maybe a little of both. The flower was made by tracing Sophie's hands. On the petals of the flower, she decorated and dictated all the reasons why she loves her mom. As Diana started to tell Sophie what they were going to do that morning, Sophie stopped Diana and reminded her that they had not said the Lord's Prayer and that she wanted to do that. Diana shared, "I loved how much of it she could remember on her own."

Following that week was a lesson that focused on prayer. The children talked about why they pray, who they pray for, when they pray, and how they pray. Class began with a scavenger hunt looking for pictures of people or things that might encourage prayer – a crying baby, a wedding couple, a tasty meal, an old man, a child riding a bike, and an ambulance. Each picture sparked a discussion on what we might pray for in that situation and what we might say. Isabella shared that every time she sees an ambulance she says a little prayer, "Please God watch over them," The day ended with each child making a prayer cup to take home to collect prayers in.

The next week the church was ready for Pentecost. There were balloons and streamers everywhere. The children were delighted and said it felt like a real party. In class they celebrated Pentecost by making pinwheels to catch the wind from the Holy Spirit. There were balloons blowing in the fan, and a feeling of joy everywhere. While a healthy snack is the norm in Sunday School,

Pentecost was the exception. The children decorated (and ate) cupcakes and sang Happy Birthday to the church! Jake and Isabella said, "it was the best day in Sunday School!"

Please be sure to join us for Children's Celebration Sunday on May 31<sup>st</sup>. The last day of Sunday School will be June 7<sup>th</sup>.

Article by Carol Nason

## Thanks To Our Helpers



## **Church on the Cape A United Methodist Church**

We of The Church on the Cape represent various religious and cultural backgrounds and lifestyles. We are young, old, middle-aged, single, married, widowed, divorced, parents, grandparents, and members of extended families.

Above all, we are people who take risks, make mistakes, confess, repent, and try again.

At the center of our community is Jesus Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection are the reasons we are together. The life and hope in this community have more to do with Christ's faithfulness to us than ours to Christ.

Whether you are searching for a faith community or just passing through, we want you to feel at home. Whoever you are, whatever your history, your scars, your gifts; You are among people like yourself.

Join us from wherever you call home. If you like what you see here, we post our virtual Hymn Sing and Sunday Worship Service on our website, [www.churchonthecape.org](http://www.churchonthecape.org).

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