



Trinity Sunday - B
May 30, 2021

Key Scripture - John 3: 2

"[Nicodemus] came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God."



Theme - "I saw the light"

Welcome and Announcements

† Special requests may be made through Facebook

† Trinity is an Affirming Congregation We are Welcoming, Open, Inclusive and Accessible.

– June is Lanark Pride month; planned activities will be posted on our Facebook page.

† A Stay at Home Order has been issued. We will not meet in person for worship at least until the order is suspended.

† Services will be posted to [Facebook](#). You will find a window to our Facebook Page on our [Website](#). You will also find a link to our [Bulletin Page](#). Services are rebroadcast on COGECO (Your TV) the following Sunday 10:00 am and 2:00 pm.

† **The Annual Congregational Meeting June 13 has been postponed.** Rescheduling will coincide with the provincial reopening guidelines so that when we do meet we will be able to have more than 10 people in person present. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

We acknowledge that Trinity United Church, Smiths Falls gathers on the unceded, traditional Algonquin territory of the Anishinaabe people.

We respect both the land and the people of this land including all Indigenous people who have walked in this place.

We are grateful for our neighbours and recognize the opportunity to exercise the Ministry of Reconciliation.

Introit: VU 318 Christ Be With Me

Words: attrb, St Patrick, trans Cecil Frances Alexander 1889

Music ancient Irish hymn melody, arr Charles Villiers Stanford 1902

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Call to Worship *Gathering, Pentecost 2021 page 32 Marie Slivocka, Trinity U.C., New Glasgow, N.S., adapted, used with permission.*

We gather today to retell the stories of our faith.

We recognize the manifestation of God in creation.

We hear and try to live the words and teachings of Jesus.

We accept the presence of the Holy Spirit in the miracles of life and nature.

We acknowledge that sometimes we are like Nicodemus.

We struggle to understand the lesson being taught.

We cannot imagine being reborn as an adult;

Yet each day we renew our faith, and we are reborn.

Being born again, we envision new ways of being,

and, like Nichodemus,

with courage we move into a new reality.

Let us centre our hearts and minds as we worship our God.

Opening Prayer *Gathering, Pentecost 2021 page 32/33, Tom Walkling, Utterson U.C., Port Sydney, ON.
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Dearest Parent of all creation,
we come to you full of worries and opinions.
We are buffeted by world events
and by events in our own lives
and those of our family and friends.
And so we open our hearts and minds to you today.
God, be our strength.
Jesus, be our model.
Holy Spirit, breathe fresh energy into our spirits.
We pray this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Hymn: VU 315 "Holy, Holy, Holy"

Word Reginald Heber cd. 1820, alt

Descant ©1971 Godfrey Hewitt, 221 Wilshire Ave., Ottawa On K2C 0E6

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before the,
which wert , and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,

though the eye made blind by sin thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name
in earth and sky and sea;
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Time for the Young and Young at Heart

When Rev Christopher taped Pentecost Sunday it was 32 degrees in the sanctuary and I said to him, “You are going to have to find the coolest clothes possible to wear under your cassock—no it’s not a cassock, not an alb, what is your gown called?”

He told me that it was a Geneva gown.

A cassock is a long black robe, it was recorded as clergy attire in the 1200’s. If you watch Father Brown you will know what a cassock looks like.

Alb’s are white and often have a cincture, a type of belt, at the waist, and date back to the first century and early Christians would have worn them.

A Geneva gown, or preaching gown, dates back to the Reformation.

Clerical collars were recorded to have been worn in the 1800’s.

There are many complexities regarding the special clothing, the vestments, that clergy wear.

On a Sunday morning, a minister was telling the children about vestments and pointed to his clerical collar. He asked if anyone knew why he wore it. One child responded, “It kills ticks and fleas for 30 days.”

This has nothing to do with today's scripture passage, other than to say that Nicodemus was a Pharisee and wore certain clothing so people would know the position he held as a religious leader.

It appears he lived and worked in Jerusalem.

In this passage, it seems that he couldn't sleep; he had so many questions floating around his head, he wasn't able to settle down, shut his eyes, and rest.

The only thing he could think to do was go and see Jesus.

As an adult, there are times after a busy day, when I finally lie down, all the questions I hadn't thought about during the day pop right into my head and I can't sleep.

Some of the things are happy things—like planning my garden.

Some things are worries—will we get enough rain so the garden will grow?

Some things are sad things—I miss my family, when will I get to see my grandchildren again?"

Do you have bedtimes like that?

Regardless, if it is one's joys or one's worries, we can always bring them to Jesus; especially, when we have worries.

I like to pray Jesus' name and ask that he take my concerns for one night.

That is it. In my mind I see myself handing them over for one night.

I've found that answers and comfort often come after a good night's sleep and I thank God for that.

We can be like Nichodemus and bring all of our questions to Jesus and know Jesus will listen.

Children's Prayer

“Dear Jesus, when worries keep me from my rest, please, take my concerns for just one night. With you holding the things that would keep me awake, I know I will sleep easy—thank you.” Amen

Scripture

Prayer of Illumination:reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from Feasting on the Word* Worship Companion, Copyright 2015. Page 2

Come, Holy Spirit, giver of life;
breathe into us that we may hear a word of truth this day.
Draw us into communion,
enable us to live,
conspire to make us one with you
for the world you so deeply love. Amen

Psalm 29 VU p. 756

R: Glory, glory, glory to our God.

Ascribe to God, you powers of the heaven, ascribe to God all glory and strength!

Ascribe due honour to God's holy name, and worship in the beauty of holiness.

R: Glory, glory, glory to our God

God's voice is over the waters – God's glory thundering across the great waters.

God's voice is power, God's voice is full of majesty.

God's voice shatters the cedars, splinters the cedars of Lebanon.

**God's voice makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
Mount Hermon stampede like a wild young bull.**

God's voice forks into tongues of fire, God's voice shakes the wilderness,
sets trembling the wilderness of Kadesh.

**God's voice causes the oaks to whirl, stripping forests bare; and in
the temple all cry: Glory!**

R: Glory, glory, glory to our God

God sits enthroned above the waters,

God is enthroned as sovereign forever.

You give strength to your people, O God.

Now give to your people the blessing of peace

R Glory, glory, glory to our God

John 3: 1—17 NRSV

Nicodemus Visits Jesus

3 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews.

² He came to Jesus^[a] by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God."

³ Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above."^[b]

⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?"

⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.

⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.^[c]

⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You^[d] must be born from above.’^[e]

⁸ The wind^[f] blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

⁹ Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?”

¹⁰ Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹ “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you^[g] do not receive our testimony.

¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?

¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.^[h]

¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.^[i]

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Footnotes

1. [John 3:2](#) Gk *him*
2. [John 3:3](#) Or *born anew*
3. [John 3:6](#) The same Greek word means both *wind* and *spirit*
4. [John 3:7](#) The Greek word for *you* here is plural
5. [John 3:7](#) Or *anew*
6. [John 3:8](#) The same Greek word means both *wind* and *spirit*
7. [John 3:11](#) The Greek word for *you* here and in verse 12 is plural
8. [John 3:13](#) Other ancient authorities add *who is in heaven*
9. [John 3:15](#) Some interpreters hold that the quotation concludes with verse 15

Meditation

“Fantasia on ‘Old Hundredth’” (Wilson)

Reflection “I saw the Light”

Hank Williams Sr., I Saw The Light lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC,
Warner Chappell Music, Inc.,
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I wandered so aimless, life filled with sin
I wouldn't let my dear savior in
Then Jesus came like a stranger in the night
Praise the Lord, I saw the light

**Refrain: I saw the light, I saw the light
No more darkness, no more night
Now I'm so happy, no sorrow in sight
Praise the Lord, I saw the light**

(Music)

Hank Williams Sr. knew of which he wrote and sang. In his gospel song, “I saw the light” he talks of no more darkness, not more night, yet he also says that Jesus comes at night.

Scripture may have many instances where light seems to be the end all and be all; our scripture passage this morning certainly speaks about light over dark.

Scripture, also, tells us that there is a wonder and holiness in the dark too.

In Genesis, the first thing God did was to form the night out of the chaos. God moves the light to one side and names it day and the darkness is night. And God says that it is good. (Genesis 1)
They are the same coin.

Light and dark work hand in hand to help the Israelites escape from Egypt—God in a pillar of fire led them at night. (Exodus 13:21)

Jesus was born at night. (Luke 2: 7) and

The heavenly host filled the sky—it would have been a poor showing during the daylight hours, or how about the Magi—if they couldn’t see the star in the east, where would they have ended up?(Luke 2: 9-15; Matthew 2:1-10)

We would do well to echo the psalmist words.

³When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
who are [we] that you are mindful of [us], (Psalm 8:3-4a)

Nichodemus was a Pharisee. He was very mindful of “ the Law that God gave to Moses and believed that it was twofold, consisting of the Written Law and the Oral Law—i.e., the **teachings** of the prophets and the oral

traditions of the **Jewish** people.” (<https://www.britannica.com>) This understanding formed who he was.

I think he was brave and wise to come to Jesus by night.

Brave: I recently was reminded that fear is a reaction and courage or bravery is a decision. Roman occupiers ruled the land and were set up in Jerusalem. Curfews were probably in place and soldiers patrolled parapets and the streets—the Romans did everything they thought necessary to prevent insurrection. Going out at night took courage, especially during Passover, when the city would have swollen from 1 to 2,000 people to a million.

Wise—Nichodemus realised there were questions he needed answers to and that Jesus was the one person to help him—day or night. As a Pharisee, he would have stood out if he had gone by daylight—drawn attention to himself and who he was visiting. Just prior to this passage, Jesus had cleansed the Temple. Jesus was already on the Roman radar as a trouble maker. Visiting at night was a wise thing to do.

“ Just like a blind man, I wandered along
Worries and fears I claimed for my own
Then like the blind man that God gave back his sight
Praise the Lord, I saw the light.” **R.**

(Music)

Hank Williams struggled most of his life with alcoholism. He began his career, apparently, at the young age of 12; fellow musicians introduced him to alcohol. Hank was born with a mild undiagnosed case of spina bifida occulta, this was severely aggravated after he fell on a hunting excursion and this caused him constant lifelong agony. Hank used drink and drugs to help ease that pain.

I think that Nichodemus had a pain in his gut that kept him from a goodnight's sleep. He had a burning need. He found relief the best way he knew how. He went to Jesus.

Jesus says: "just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. [1]"

The book of Numbers tells us of Moses holding up a brass serpent and all who looked at it were healed.

The Greek symbol of two snakes entwined around a rod still is a medical symbol noted today.

Several sources say that the symbol of the healing snake, in both the Hebrew tradition and the Greek, was written about the same time.

Hank Williams never overcame his illness of addiction, yet he knew deep in his heart that Jesus was the one to make him whole, to redeem him. Nichodemus hears Jesus' words and never turns away.

I was a fool to wander and stray
For straight is the gate and narrows the way
Now I have traded the wrong for the right
Praise the Lord, I saw the light. **R.**

(Music)

There was a lot of sorrow that continued in Hank Williams senior's life. He walked a very winding path, but this song, "I saw the light," became the closing song for each of his performances. His hope was in the Lord.

Nichodemus is absent from the last part of our scripture reading this morning, but he doesn't vanish from scripture. He is mentioned twice more—by name. He, too, placed his hope in the Lord.

Regardless of the path—the way you or I are on, we too can always seek out Jesus, day or night, and place our hope in the Lord, our redeemer—our light. **Amen**

Hymn: VU 87 “I Am The Light of The World”

Words: Jim Strathdee 1967 Music: Jim Strathdee 1967 copyright © 1969 Desert Flower Music Used with Permission CCLI 3273096

Refrain: “I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!”
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery
Of what you were meant to do and be.

1. When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and the shepherds have found their way home,
the work of Christmas is begun: *R*

2. To find the lost and lonely one,
to heal the broken soul with love,
to feed the hungry soul with love,
to feed the hungry children with warmth and good food,
to feel the earth below, the sky above! **R**

3. To free the prisoner from all chains,
to make the powerful care,
to rebuild the nations with strength of good will,
to see God's children everywhere! **R**

4. To bring hope to every task you do,
to dance at a baby's new birth,
to make music in an old person's heart,
and sing to the colours of the earth! **R**

Invitation to the Offering

The work of the church continues even though we aren't meeting in person. The Stewardship Team thanks you for your support. Your offering may be made by making an arrangement through the office, you may mail a cheque, donate through the donate button on the web site, or sign up for PAR, pre authorized remittance.

We thank God for our ability to always begin anew.
With thankful hearts we bring our offerings,
for the work of God's church.

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Dear God, your love overflows in the gift of your Spirit.

Bless these gifts that we offer
that they may spread your blessings
in a world of hurt and need;
in Christ's name. Amen

Hymn; MV 10 "Come and Seek the Ways of Wisdom"

Words: Ruth Duck, 1993 Music: Donna Kasbohm 1995 © The Pilgrim Press; Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #735850-A

1. Come and seek the ways of Wisdom.

he/she who danced when earth was new.
Follow closely what he/she teaches,
For his/her words are right and true.
Wisdom clears the path to justice,
showing us what love must do.

2. Listen to the voice of Wisdom,
crying in the marketplace.
Hear the Word made flesh among us,
full of glory, truth, and grace.
When the word takes root and ripens,
peace and righteousness embrace.

3. Sister Wisdom, come assist us;
Nurture all who seek re-birth.
Spirit guide and close companion,
Bring to light our scattered worth.
Free us to become your people,
Holy friends of God and earth.

Prayers for the People

Prayers of the People © the IONA community from the Iona Abbey worship Book, published by Wild Goose Publications, Iona Community, Glasgow, UK. Used with permission. Pg.94, 96

Let us pray, as we now bring before God those for whom we pray:

Loving God,

You share with us the care of creation,

And call each of us by name.

We remember that those who encountered Jesus found acceptance, healing and the possibility of new life;

that the disciples, though imperfect human beings, through prayer and touch helped others to find healing in the power of your Holy Spirit.

And so, in the name of the Triune God, we pray. . .

Loving God, we hold in your healing presence those who suffer pain and ill-health, with their families, friends and those who care for them . . .

May they know the deep peace of Christ.

Loving God, we hold in your healing presence those who suffer in mind and spirit, and all who care for them . . .

May they know the deep peace of Christ.

Loving God, we hold in your healing presence the suffering people of our world and the places where people are experiencing division, injustice and violence . . .

we pray for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples that they may find hope to work for true peace and reconciliation.

May they know the depth of your peace.

Loving God, we hold in your healing presence those struggling to overcome addiction or abuse, those supporting and working with them, and all whose suffering has distanced them from those who love . . .

May they know the deep peace of Christ.

Loving God, we hold in your healing presence those facing bereavement.

May they know the deep peace of Christ.

Loving God, we give you thanks for health restored and prayers answered

...

We hold in your healing presence and peace those whose needs are not known to us . . .

And those whose names we do not know,
but who are known to you,
and we name in our hearts those who are close to us.

. . . May they know the deep peace of Christ.

May your wisdom, God, guide nurses, doctors and those who work in every part of Health Care Systems here and around the world.

We pray also for first responders and emergency service personnel.

During this pandemic we pray for front line workers and their families;

We pray for those who work behind the scenes.

May they know the deep peace of Christ.

We pray for your church, near and far.

We join our prayers with voices from around the world through the World Council of Churches as we pray for the countries of Angola and

Mozambique.

We pray with voices of the Eastern Ontario Outaouais Region for the North Gower pastoral charge. We pray for their minister, their staff and members of their congregation. May their presence continue to be a blessing in their communities.

We pray for all the churches in Smiths Falls and for our church, Trinity United, as we continue to strive to meet the needs of our community.

We pray for our minister, Rev. Christopher and his family
and for Trinity's staff and church family.
And we pray for our community . . .

May they know the deep peace of Christ.

Loving God, we pray for ourselves.
God of compassion and love
We offer you all our suffering and pain.
Give us strength to bear what needs to be borne,
healing even when there is no cure,
peace in the midst of turmoil
And love to fill the spaces in our lives.

May we know the deep peace of Christ.

In the silence of our hearts we pray this and so much more as we join our
hearts and voices as one as we pray the prayer Jesus taught his friends
when we pray to our Creator, our Mother, 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 trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

We Depart to Serve with Joy

Hymn: VU 332 “The Church’s One Foundation”

Words: Samuel John Stone 1866, Music: Samuel Sebastian Wesley 1864

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1 The Church's one foundation

is Jesus Christ her Lord;

she is his new creation

by water and the word:

from heaven he came and sought her

to be his holy bride;

with his own blood he bought her,

and for her life he died.

2 Elect from every nation,

yet one o'er all the earth,

her charter of salvation,

one Lord, one faith, one birth;

one holy name she blesses,

partakes one holy food,

and to one hope she presses,

with every grace endued.

3 'Mid toil and tribulation,

and tumult of her war

she waits the consummation

of peace for evermore;

till with the vision glorious

her longing eyes are blessed,

and the great Church victorious

shall be the Church at rest.

4 Yet she on earth hath union

with God, the Three in one,

and mystic sweet communion
with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we
like them, the meek and lowly,
on high may dwell with thee.

Commissioning & Benediction

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Go into the world to love and to serve
and may the blessing of God,
who creates, redeems, and restores,
be with you now and always.

Amen.

Choral Amen

Postlude: "St. Patrick's Breastplate" (St. Patrick)