



St. Andrew's Tidings

For the Week of May 22

Message from Margaret:

Timothy George said it all very well in *Christianity Today* (Feb. 4, 2002): Some people think that in the Old Testament we have God the Father, in the New Testament God puts on the mask of the Son, and now, in the age of the church, we have the Holy Spirit. The technical name for that heresy is modalism, and it's widespread among Christian believers. No the Trinity is not three different masks that God wears at different times in salvation history. From all eternity, before there was a world, before there was anything else, God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, was—is—in a bond of love and unity and reciprocity and community that exceeds our ability to comprehend and describe.

These first two Christian affirmations—God is one, and Jesus is Lord—have been denied and doubted and fought over by Christian theologians. In the second century, a heretic named Marcion was excommunicated from the church. Marcion said, in effect, I like the God of Jesus. He's a God of love; he's a God of mercy, a God of tenderness. But I don't like the God of the Old Testament. He's a mean God. He's a mad God. He's a God of war and violence. So Marcion cut the Old Testament out of the Bible. But the church said, No, we're not going down that road. It was perhaps the single most important decision made in the history of Christian doctrine—to say that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the God of Israel, the God of the Old Testament, to affirm that there is a fundamental connection between creation and redemption.

The divine lordship and the deity were denied in the fourth century by a man named Arius. He was sincere. He was well read. He did not deny that the bible was true. But he said, Jesus Christ is a creature. He's higher than any other creature. But he is not God. Arius denied that Jesus was the same essence, the same fundamental reality, as God.

At the council of Nicea, the church had to say, No, we can't go that way either. The one we adore and worship and love in Jesus our Redeemer is of the same essence as the father. We're talking about the one God, but the one god who

has forever known himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This says to us that the fundamental reality of God is relationship—it's community. If we can ever grasp that, we'll understand what our fundamental differences are with Islam.

The third central Christian affirmation is that the Holy Spirit is personal. This affirmation also has had a divisive history. About 70 years after the Council of Nicea, some people said they would go along with God the Father and God the Son, but they could not affirm that the Holy Spirit is God—that was just too much for them. (Wow-does this sound familiar!?) They claimed that the Holy Spirit is a force, an energy, a power, but not God. Over against these people, who were known as the Spirit fighters (because they fought against the deity of the Holy Spirit), the church declared that God is one in essence, and three in person—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

God does not exist alone—"the alone with the alone" as Arius referred to his god—but rather exists in community, in love, in reciprocity and mutuality. It is this God who has, of his own free will, opened his heart to this world he has made, and who invites us to know him, to love him, and to respond to him. He is a relational God.

Ultimately we have to admit that the Trinity is a mystery. Even in eternity, we will never comprehend it. But we are called to affirm it and believe it. And we are called to hold it without compromise in a world of religious pluralism. Long ago, Gregory of Nyssa put it this way: "It is not the vastness of the heavens and the bright shining of the constellations, the order of the universe, and the unbroken administration over all existence, that so manifestly displays the transcendent power of God as his condescension to the weakness of our human nature, in the way sublimity is seen in lowliness."

In St. Francis's *Letter to the Entire Order* (Circa 50-52) he included this prayer: *Almighty, eternal, just, and merciful God, grant us in our wretchedness the grace to do for you alone what we know You want us to do and always to desire what pleases You. Thus, inwardly cleansed, enlightened, and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit, may we be able to follow in the footsteps of Your beloved Son, our lord Jesus Christ, and by your grace alone, may we make our way to You, Most High, who live and rule in perfect trinity and simple unity...for ever and ever. Amen. Blessings and love,*

Margaret+

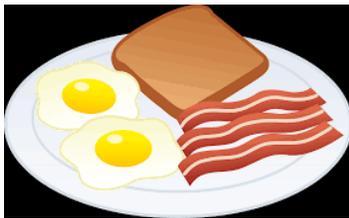


Your Vestry at Work!

The Salvation Army Domestic Violence Program is presenting:

A Celebration Unmasking the Truth About Domestic Violence.

*Your vestry will be attending this event and will be sitting together at the St. Andrew's table which will be decorated by Laura Reeves Grissett. The event is intended to raise awareness about domestic violence in our community. Anyone wishing to help support this event may drop a check or cash in the party bag provided on the **TABLE BY THE FRONT DOORS IN BYRNE HALL.***



SUMMER BREAKFAST !!

GRAB YOUR FRIENDS, REUNION GROUP, ETC. AND SIGN UP FOR SUMMER BREAKFAST WHICH BEGINS ON JUNE 5TH !!

Congratulations to Ted and Sherry Czupryk who are retiring from the Bay District Schools . Between them, they have 76 years of teaching (36 each)! They are moving to Memphis to be near son Josh, and his wife, Bailey, and new daughter, Tara. They will both teach there in Memphis. We hate to see you go! Many blessings.



GARDEN OF HOPE

A great big thank you to Tom and Teri Floore, Ann Ruple, Marsha Benton, and Wyn and Laurie Ayers for greeting Ms. Been's second graders Monday at the St. Andrew Oaks Garden of Hope and for interacting with the students and helping them learn about gardening. The students picked cabbage, green beans, a cucumber, kale, and carrots and took them back to school for the lunchroom ladies to cook for them. They also planted three new tomato plants in containers and onion sets and more corn seeds in the raised beds. Special thanks to Scot MacFarland for watering the garden during the week.

Supper at Grace

We traded with another church in April so we have to take their turn in May. So we WILL be hosting Supper at Grace the third Thursday of May AND June. That's May 19th and June 16th. We need many hands to make it light work. Hands in the morning to make sandwiches and pack lunches. Hands in the afternoon to cook and set up. Hands in the early evening to serve and clean up. We've done this so many times the process is almost automatic now, but it needs people to accomplish it! Please consider being one of those people. Contact Teri Floore and/or Diane Tate for more details and sign up on the list on the bulletin board in Byrne Hall. It's a very rewarding opportunity of serving Jesus' children!



**SEND YOUR CHILD OR GRANDCHILD TO BECKWITH
FOR SUMMER CAMP
SEE MARGARET FOR MORE INFORMATION
LET'S HAVE SOMEONE FROM ST. ANDREW'S TO
ATTEND!**

ST. ANDREW'S CONCERT SERIES COMING UP

June 19th 4:00 p.m.



Pat C

Music from the 50's, 60's, and UP!

June 26 4:00 p.m.

Andy Lagrimas and

Chad Spears

Joint Piano Performance



(Names are left on the prayer list for 3 weeks, unless specified for a longer time)

Please keep the following in your prayers: Bob, Virginia, Mike, Warren, Mary, Ed, Debra, David, Rachel, Jeremy, John, Erika, Vicky, Becky, Hong, Gail, Ronnie, Barbara, Jenn, Cliff, Patricia, Jeffrey, Jane, Ken, Gale, Nell, Sandra, Vincent, Faye, Rick, Dawn, Elizabeth, William, Adam, Melinda, Archie, Russ, Lindsey, Hank, Helen, Kathleen, Pam, Lou, Ava, Bobbie, Mason, Paul, Bobby, Dee, Rudy, Fred, Debra, Barbara, Cathy, Bobby Lee, Chris, Dylan, Kathy, Cynthia, Susan, Charley, Elizabeth, Dawn, Mary Lou, Barbara, Rick, Connie, Bea, Margaret & Bill, Dr. Benton, Lindsey, Bill & Janice, Christian, Sandi, Melinda, Rea, Roy, Lori, Larry

*We pray for our men and women in the Armed Forces at home and abroad:
Richard, David, Brian, Jason, Billy, Colin, Todd, Brett, Jordan, Jeremiah, Richard,
Ivan, James*