

SERMON STARTER

PEACE WITH JUSTICE SUNDAY



This sermon starter is part of the Peace with Justice Sunday pastor and leader kit and connects with the theme “The Trinity’s Expansive Love: A Call to See, Listen, and Act.” It can be adapted for your context and integrated into your worship service with the other material in the kit. **It is based on the scriptures Psalm 8 and John 16:12-15.**

Step outside at night and look up, be in awe. The sky stretches wide, the scattered stars flicker like embers from an ancient fire. The vastness is humbling. The psalmist felt it too:

“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?” (Psalm 8:3-4)

It’s a question not just of awe, but of responsibility. If the Creator of all that is—galaxies, oceans, mountain ranges, ants, shrews, duckbill platypus and the very breath in our lungs—is mindful of us, then surely, we are called to be mindful of one another. If the Spirit of truth still moves, guiding us into what is just and holy, then what does it mean for the Church to listen and respond?

That’s what Trinity Sunday is about. Not a theological puzzle to be solved, but a love too big to be contained. God is beyond us, with us, and within us. Always creating. Always speaking. Always calling us forward. The Trinity reveals that God’s very nature is relationship, movement, mutuality. And yet, too often, the Church settles for stillness when God calls for motion.

MAKING IT STICK: CONSIDER THIS ILLUSTRATION

Imagine a great dance—one so beautiful and intricate that no one is left out. Not a performance where some are spectators and others are center stage, but a dance where the invitation is always open, where the movement expands to make space for more. That’s the Trinity. God is not static, but dynamic. And we are meant to step into the rhythm.

Or consider this: a table big enough for everyone. A table where those who are typically pushed aside are given the best seats. A table where the hungry are fed, the unheard are listened to, the weary are given rest. If the Trinity is a relationship of radical love, then that is what the Church is called to be—a people who practice the expansive hospitality of God. So here’s the challenge: if we claim to follow this Triune God, are we moving as God moves? Are we making space for the people God is mindful of? Because the world does a good job of deciding who is and isn’t worth seeing.

The mother fleeing violence with her child is unseen.

The worker in the fields, harvesting the food that fills our tables but unable to afford a meal, is unseen.

The refugee waiting in detention, longing for safety and belonging, is unseen.

God sees them. And if we are truly listening to the Spirit, we will see them too.



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THE SPIRIT STILL SPEAKS—ARE WE LISTENING?

Jesus tells the disciples, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, the Spirit will guide you into all the truth.” (John 16:12-13)

What a profound statement. The truth is still unfolding. Revelation is ongoing. The Spirit continues to lead us beyond where we are now. And that means there are things we have yet to learn, things we have yet to acknowledge, things we have yet to change.

This is where the Church struggles. Because the Spirit doesn't just affirm what we already believe. The Spirit challenges. The Spirit unsettles. The Spirit forces us to ask hard questions about who we are and who we are becoming.

And let's be honest—there have been times when the Church has resisted. When staying silent seemed easier than speaking up. When comfort felt safer than courage.

But silence is not an option for a people shaped by a God who speaks. And comfort is not an option for those called to follow a God who moves.

A CHURCH THAT IS UNAFRAID TO SPEAK

Oscar Romero, who gave his life for justice, said, “A church that does not unite itself to the poor is not truly the Church of Jesus Christ.”

The Church was never meant to be a quiet institution concerned with its own survival. It was meant to be a prophetic voice—one that stands with those the world ignores, one that refuses to accept injustice as

inevitable, one that doesn't just talk about love but embodies it. And yet, too often, we hesitate. We tell ourselves that speaking up is too risky. That may cost us members. Those people might misunderstand. That's just not our fight.

- But when did God ever call the Church to play it safe?
- When did the Spirit ever lead people into silence?
- When did God's love ever have borders?

The world doesn't need a Church that only talks about Trinity. It needs a Church that lives the Trinity. A Church that moves outward, making room for those on the margins. A Church that risks something for the sake of justice. A Church that refuses to be complicit in systems that harm God's children.

So here's the question: What would happen if we actually lived this way?

- What if we decided that our churches would be places where no one was unseen?
- What if we risked relationships that made our hearts bigger?
- What if we followed the Spirit not just into comfort, but into transformation?

Faith doesn't end when worship is over. It begins when we step out the doors and decide to live differently.

And that's the challenge—not just for today, but for the season ahead. What if this summer, what if this stretch of Ordinary Time, became anything but ordinary? What if this was the time when our churches became bolder?



SPECIAL
SUNDAY

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When we stopped worrying about being polite and started being prophetic? What if we let the Spirit shake us up in ways that change how we move in the world?

PRAYER

God who sees, help us to see. God who speaks, help us to listen. God who moves, help us to follow.

May we step boldly into love that does not stay safe, but risks itself for the sake of others. May we refuse smallness and choose the expansive life of the Spirit. May we be a church without locked doors, without barriers, without fear. For you, O God, are mindful of us. And the Spirit is still moving. The only question is, will we follow? Amen.

PREACHING NOTES & IDEAS FOR LINGERING IMPACT

- **Tactile Engagement:** Invite people to physically step forward during the sermon—perhaps in response to the idea of joining God’s movement. Or have a table set at the front of the sanctuary, visibly open, and talk about who is missing from it.
- **Personal Connection:** Ask the congregation to consider times when they’ve felt unseen. Then challenge them, who in their community might feel that way right now?
- **Summer Commitment:** This is not just a one-time call but the beginning of a season of action. Consider launching a justice initiative this summer—maybe a book study on faith and justice, a commitment to serve immigrant communities, or a letter-writing campaign for policies that protect the vulnerable.
- **Provocative Question:** What is one thing your church is afraid to talk about? Why? What would happen if you trusted the Spirit enough to go there?

This isn’t just another Sunday. It’s an invitation. A challenge. A moment that could change everything.

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