



# Grow! Pray! Study!

Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish—Weekly Guide—May 27, 2018  
Trinity Sunday

## 'Where the Path Begins'

### A Sermon by

Rev. Dr. Chris McNeill

### Scriptures:

Isaiah 6:1-8

Psalms 29

Romans 8:12-17

John 3:1-3; 16-17

### Scripture Lesson — John 3:1-3; 16-17 New King James

3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

<sup>16</sup> By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup> But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

### Quotes:

Nicodemus "has inherited a great tradition, for he was a Pharisee; he has tested it in the experience of life; he has conformed to it his habits of conduct, speech, thought and feeling. How can he break away from all this and begin again? It is as hard as it would be literally to return to his mother's womb and be reborn." —William Temple

"God is HUMAN ... It is the great error of humanity to believe that it is human. We are only fragmentarily human, fleetingly human, brokenly human. We see glimpses of our humanness, we can only dream of what a more human existence and political order would be like, but we have not yet arrived at true humanness. Only God is human, and we are made in God's image and likeness — which is to say, we are capable of becoming human."

—Walter Wink [Just Jesus, My Struggle to Become Human](#)

### Letting Go

I grew up most weekends on the South Carolina coast. When I was a wee little lad, I played in the shallow shore, getting pummeled by waves, and coming up coughing salt water. When you're five you're fearless. Innocent. I believed the earth was flat and that there were cinder block walls on either side of the ocean to hold the water. I wasn't sure what happened further out. Did I have a perfect vision for the world and how it works? No. Do I now? Still no. Some folks grew up in the Garden of Eden; I grew up in the sea.

The same water I enjoyed also became a place of terror on more than one occasion as I nearly drowned: once on a surfboard, once on a raft, and once being turned upside down in an inner tube. I got scared. I pulled as much safety as I could around me. I was suspicious of the water.

This is what happens to us in life. We go from trust to anxiety as the effects of Adam and Eve's breaking of divine relationship creep in. To survive, we have to be born again. Friedrich Schleiermacher wrote, 'Faith is the feeling of utter dependency.' God is not who WE say he is. All we have is a glimpse like a child standing in the shallows. We see Jesus and put two and two together about his relationship with Abba and we do the same thing with the Advocate and we come up with the Trinity over hundreds of years. But God is much more than our doctrines and we do our best.

----So the first step in being born again is realizing you are completely dependent on God.

----The second is realizing we are in complete poverty as we stand in God's mystery. We couldn't do enough good deeds to bring us all the comfort we need. We humbly need Christ.



# Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish

3827 Broadway, Hou, TX 77017 — NEW # 713.986.5199 [www.ServantsNow.org](http://www.ServantsNow.org)

## Weekly Guide — May 27, 2018

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----The third thing we do in the process of being born again is to live with compassion. I know a pastor who tore off his shirt to use as a tourniquet for a stranger. He risked a lot but he did what he felt he had to do. Later he thought about the realities of HIV/AIDS but in the moment he lived in compassion to save another human being.

Much of our community is living like the pummeled child crawling on the beach after being walloped by the sea. We are suspicious of one another. We get to believing we can grab guns and explosives and harm and kill others. We have come to believe we have that power and right. And the cycle continues. Until we let go of the weapons in our vengeful hands and poisonous mouths.

Jesus said we need to be born completely again. We need to realize we don't know a fraction of what we think we do. We are utterly dependent on God. We do our best but our best will never give us what we need. Enter the poverty of the lifted up cross. He made it his so he could be yours. In order to be born, you have to let go.

### Prayer:

#### Prayer of Confession

Gracious God,

You call us to a new land, a new birth. Yet our feet and our spirits hesitate.

Forgive our laziness.

Forgive our fear.

Forgive our selfishness.

Forgive our comfort.

Be for us the pillar of cloud by day, the pillar of fire by night.

Lead us into the new birth of water and the Spirit.

Assurance of Pardon (John 3:16-17)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. . . . May the peace of Christ be with you. (continued next column)

### Seven Truths of Prayer (Gregg Metcalf)

1. As you pray, let prayer be your **first** choice and not your last choice
2. As you pray, let your **gaze** be on God and your **glance** on your requests.
3. As you pray, pray from **conviction** and not from **crisis**
4. As you pray, pray seeking the **help** and **aid** of the Holy Spirit
5. As you pray, fill your prayers with **praise** for God and for all that He is
6. As you pray, make your focus on **spiritual principles** for growth, rather than **stuff**. God is not a heavenly vending machine in the sky or a genie to take out and rub.
7. As you pray, always remember God is **worthy** of our time, effort, and energy, so pray without ceasing

## Lifting up Our Church Family in Prayer

### Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving:

For all of our leadership past, present, and future

For those who live with open hearts and hands

### Prayers for Health and Healing:

Pastor Chris McNeill, Annie Gaspar, Nelda Zamora, Ruben & Elida Espinoza, Edna Henry, Wilma Beverly, Winna Bjornaas, Edith Owens, Patsy Welsh, Walter Welsh, Gloria Rae, Ruby Bolton, Justine Baly, Christopher Huron, Virginia Hardwick, Bobby Malek, Nathan Fleming, Anne Wofford, Alsine Ryan, Bob Allen, Ruth Allen, Wanda Arnold, Doann Flores, Astrid, Harry Rogers, Kim, Kailey, Mason, Mike Young, Alfred Wendelken, Eleanor Robinson, Bobbie Latham, Ed Pierce, Kevin Chapman, Ruben & Mary Espinoza, Juan & Maritza Zamora, Daniel & Tommie Mascorro, Bernice Steele, Nadine Bishop, Carroll Latham, Charles Robinson, Carolyn Dean, Jean Nichols, Leonard, Ashley Urbaniak, Doris Grauerholz, E'mile Landry, Kaylee Barfield, Stephannie Bryant, Jimmy McGee, Luis Ricardo Ochoa, Carol Siler, Julius Trotter, Charles Jager, Crossroads Community

### Prayers for Hope:

Please let us know your prayers and hopes by noting them on the Registration pads with your name.

### Prayers for Our Church, Our City, Our State, Our Nation:

Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish, its pastors and its people, City of Houston, Texas, the United States of America, and members of our Armed Forces and their families

### Prayers for our Covenant Mission Partners:

Crossroads, Mission Milby, Technology For All, Southeast Area Ministries, and Justice For Our Neighbors

### Regular Sunday Schedule

—9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Small Groups

—10:30 a.m. Celebration Worship Sanctuary