

Sermon: May 31, 2026

Flat Jesus

Blessing of Graduates

Before you were even formed, God knew you. While in your Mother's womb, God named you. At your birth, God's breath filled you with life. Today we celebrate what you have become at this moment in time. And so we pray:

God of our beginnings, we thank you for the gifts of these graduates; their excitement, their awesome wonder and curiosity, their open speech and encouraging words. Their contributions have blessed and challenged us, and we have become a richer and more diverse community because of them. As they step forward into the world that awaits them, comfort their fears with the full knowledge of your divine presence. Strengthen their resolve to walk in the footsteps of Jesus as modern-day disciples in a world that needs their spirit. Guide their feet as they move through life, protecting them from the pitfalls of darkness while they help to lead future generations into the warmth and promise of your light. We ask this blessing upon each of them. In the name of the Creator, Christ and Spirit. AMEN!

Matthew 28:16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and

of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

Burning Love

In the beginning, God's own Spirit hovered over murky, swirling chaos. In the beginning, was the Word and the Word spoke the chaos into creation: Darkness and light, land and sea, every living creature. And God's Word called out: "This is so good!"

God, the Word, and the Spirit... all present from the first moments of creation... seeking something new and dynamic. God tells us, the created ones, that God does not want to be alone. God in Community seeks our companionship and created us out of love and longing.

From those first creative moments and throughout history, God has longed to be in a loving relationship with God's people. We see the promise in God's covenants- the rainbow and the law and the empty cross. We remember the stories of times when God has sought the people out... bringing them out of slavery, leading them through the wilderness and out of exile, sending prophets and new chances over and over again. And we see the promises continue in the life and ministry of Jesus. God's promises burst forth in the light shining through an empty tomb and the cascading winds of the Spirit's presence. No matter what we do, no matter how far away we wander, our loving God never gives up.

Five hundred years ago, during the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther wrote that **"God is nothing but burning love and a glowing oven full of love."** God is love that cannot be contained... Love that leaves behind flickering sparks and burning bushes. God is Love that cannot be contained... ushering forth new creation... Love that comes down to earth

to live with us and for us... Love that continues to blow in our lives as the Spirit speaks up for us and pushes us forward into new creative opportunities.

When we say that God is Trinity, it is a way of saying that God is love and God will meet us where we are.

God is nothing but burning love and a glowing oven full of love.

And, we are created for love. From the beginning, we are created to be in loving relationships. Jesus reminded us of this when he said that the most important commandments are to love God and to love one another.

And how do we love? As Jesus... the Christ... the Word, has loved us.

Erik Erikson was a psychologist who studied human development. According to Erikson, there are 8 developmental stages that human beings experience, from birth to death. We must complete each stage before we can begin the next. The first developmental stage we live through is in infancy, when we learn trust and security. Every time a baby is held... every time a baby is sung to or read to or talked to, they learn to trust in the care that they receive. In other words, they learn that they are loved. And if they are loved, they have the foundation they need to continue through life's journey... no matter where it leads them.

You see the signs of this new relationship immediately. Within an hour of birth, a baby will draw her head back to look into the eyes and face of the person gazing at her. A few hours later, an infant will orient his head in the direction of his mother's voice. Soon the infant can actually mimic a parent's expressions. The parent responds and mimics the child's expressions and emotions within seconds.

We are social beings from the beginning: We're born to be engaged and to engage others.

Just as a baby learns to trust and love their caregivers through their interactions, we learn to trust and love the one who created us.

God is love and we are called to participate in that loving relationship and to share it with one another. That is the heart of Jesus' words to the disciples in today's reading. Go out, he tells the disciples, and share everything I have taught you. Go out and baptize people in the name of God, Three in One. Go out and call disciples to continue my work of sharing God's burning love with all the world. Go out until the whole world glows with God's holy love, baked to perfection.

God is nothing but burning love and a glowing oven full of love... and we are created to participate in that love and to share that love.

Kara was getting ready to leave for college. Raised in the warmth of her mother's love, she was both scared and excited to go out on her own. One hot August day, she packed her car with all of her belongings and drove to her new home. As she unpacked her bags, she found a note tucked into her clothes. "I love you," her mother wrote, "I will always love you and I miss you already."

The Trinity is a way of showing us that love comes to us in so many different way. Love comes in a burst of creative sparks that change the world. Love comes in vulnerability as God chooses to live life as we do. Love in the new life given to us in the Spirit. Love is God, and God is *Emmanuel*, "God with us" and God for us. "I love you," God tells us, "I will always love you and I miss you already."

The Trinity gives us a glimpse of who God is. God is more than a distant creator... God comes to us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and God comes to us through the new life that comes blowing in on the Spirit's wind.

Love that moves the sun and the other stars is poured out for in the self-giving love of Jesus and pours out onto each of us today. **God is nothing but burning love and a glowing oven full of love.** And if we are created in the image and likeness of God, then we are to find our true selves in giving of ourselves in love and in all those ways we are with and for one another.

God is nothing but burning love and a glowing oven full of love. We are created to participate in and share that love, everywhere we go.