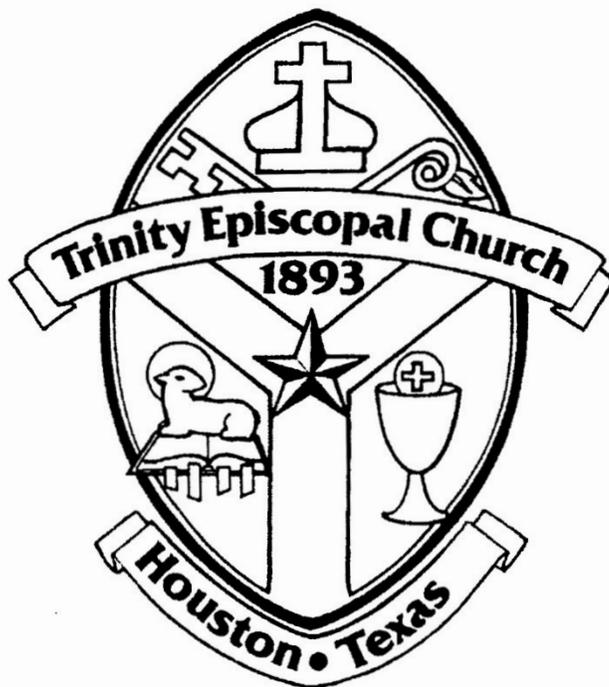


A SERVICE OF HEALING

CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA, BARBARA OF NICOMEDIA, AND
MARGARET OF ANTIOCH, MARTYRS
c. 300

NOVEMBER 24, 2021
6:00 p.m.



The Reverend Hannah E. Atkins Romero, Rector
The Reverend Luz Cabrera Montes, Curate
The Reverend Canon Dr. Henry L. Atkins, Jr., Theologian in Residence

Alex Jones, Organist and Choirmaster
April Sloan-Hubert, Co-Director of the Trinity Jazz Ensemble
Pelayo Parlade, Co-Director of the Trinity Jazz Ensemble

***Making God's Presence Real
By Sharing Christ's Life-Changing Love***

A Public Service of Healing

Catherine of Alexandria, Barbara of Nicomedia, and Margaret of Antioch, Martyrs
c. 300

November 17, 2021

The Word of God

Presider: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Presider: Let us pray.

After a period of silence, the Minister then says the following Collects.

Gracious God, we commend to your loving care all who suffer, especially those who come here seeking your healing grace for themselves and for others. Give them patience and hope in their distress; strengthen and uphold them in mind and body; and grant, by your intervention, that all your people may be made whole according to your desire, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Embolden your church, O God, with the stories of your saints Catherine, Barbara, and Margaret, that we might face all trials and adversities with a fearless mind and an unbroken spirit, knowing that we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ who strengthens us. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Lesson

Judith 12: 16-13:10

Then Judith came in and lay down. Holofernes' heart was ravished with her and his passion was aroused, for he had been waiting for an opportunity to seduce her from the day he first saw her. So Holofernes said to her, 'Have a drink and be merry with us!' Judith said, 'I will gladly drink, my lord, because today is the greatest day in my whole life.' Then she took what her maid had prepared and ate and drank before him. Holofernes was greatly pleased with her, and drank a great quantity of wine, much more than he had ever drunk in any one day since he was born.

When evening came, his slaves quickly withdrew. Bagoas closed the tent from outside and shut out the attendants from his master's presence. They went to bed, for they all were weary because the banquet had lasted so long. But Judith was left alone in the tent, with Holofernes stretched out on his bed, for he was dead drunk. Now Judith had told her maid to stand outside the bedchamber and to wait for her to come out, as she did on the other days; for she said she would be going out for her prayers. She had said the same thing to Bagoas. So everyone went out, and no one, either small or great, was left in the bedchamber. Then Judith, standing beside his bed, said in her heart, 'O Lord God of all might, look in this hour on the work of my hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem. Now indeed is the time to help your heritage and to carry out my design to destroy the enemies who have risen up against us.'

She went up to the bedpost near Holofernes' head, and took down his sword that hung there. She came close to his bed, took hold of the hair of his head, and said, 'Give me strength today, O Lord God of Israel!' Then she struck his neck twice with all her might, and cut off his head. Next she rolled his body off the bed and pulled down the canopy from the posts. Soon afterwards she went out and gave Holofernes' head to her maid, who placed it in her food bag. Then the two of them went out together, as they were accustomed to do

for prayer. They passed through the camp, circled around the valley, and went up the mountain to Bethulia, and came to its gates.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Psalm 119: 97-104

- ⁹⁷ Oh, how I love your law! *
all the day long it is in my mind.
- ⁹⁸ Your commandment has made me wiser than my enemies, *
and it is always with me.
- ⁹⁹ I have more understanding than all my teachers, *
for your decrees are my study.
- ¹⁰⁰ I am wiser than the elders, *
because I observe your commandments.
- ¹⁰¹ I restrain my feet from every evil way, *
that I may keep your word.
- ¹⁰² I do not shrink from your judgments, *
because you yourself have taught me.
- ¹⁰³ How sweet are your words to my taste! *
they are sweeter than honey to my mouth.
- ¹⁰⁴ Through your commandments I gain understanding; *
therefore I hate every lying way.

Second Lesson

Acts 11: 19-26

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews. But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord. News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians."

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

The Gospel

Matthew 11: 25-30

At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

A Litany of Healing

The Celebrant introduces the Litany with this bidding

Let us name before God those for whom we offer our prayers.

The People audibly name those for whom they are interceding. A Person appointed then leads the Litany

God the Father, your will for all people is health and salvation;

We praise you and thank you, O Lord.

God the Son, you came that we might have life, and might have it more abundantly;

We praise you and thank you, O Lord.

God the Holy Spirit, you make our bodies the temple of your presence;

We praise you and thank you, O Lord.

Holy Trinity, one God, in you we live and move and have our being;

We praise you and thank you, O Lord.

All you Holy Angels, Archangels, and bodiless powers of heaven;

Stand beside us to guide and guard us on our way.

Holy Mary, Mother of God;

Pray for us and the people of the world.

For all who grieve the death of family, friends, and citizens;

Give them courage and strength to meet the days ahead, O Lord, and the consolation of your love.

Pour out your healing grace on all who are sick, injured, or disabled, that they may be made whole;

Hear us, O Lord of life.

Grant to all who seek your guidance, and to all who are afraid, anxious, or overwhelmed, a knowledge of your will and an awareness of your presence;

Hear us, O Lord of life.

Give peace, courage, and hope to all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit;

Hear us, O Lord of life.

Restore to wholeness whatever is broken by human sin, in our lives, in our nation, and in the world;

Hear us, O Lord of life.

Bless physicians, nurses, and all others who minister to the sick and suffering, keep them safe and healthy, and grant them wisdom and skill, sympathy, and patience;

Hear us, O Lord of life.

Open our eyes to see that you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth and that our life and death are with each other;

Hear us, O Lord of life.

Give us compassion for those in need, patience in this time of distress in our country, and love for our neighbors;

Hear us, O Lord of life.

Let our hearts be not afraid;

Hear us, O Lord of life.

You are the Lord who does wonders:

You have declared your power among the peoples.

With you, O Lord, is the well of life:

And in your light we see light.

Let us pray:

A period of silence follows.

God of all power and love, we give thanks for your unfailing presence and the hope you provide in times of uncertainty and loss. Send your Holy Spirit to enkindle in us your holy fire. Revive us to live as Christ's body in the world: a people who pray, worship, learn, break bread, share life, heal neighbors, bear good news, seek justice, rest and grow in the Spirit. Wherever and however we gather, unite us in common prayer and send us in common mission, that we and the whole creation might be restored and renewed, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Confession of Sin

The Celebrant says

Let us confess our sins to God.

Silence may be kept.

Minister and People:

God of all mercy,

we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives.

**We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves,
and in the world you have created.**

**We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done,**

and the evil done on our behalf.

Forgive, restore, and strengthen us

through our Savior Jesus Christ,

that we may abide in your love

and serve only your will. Amen.

The Priest, stands and says

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

Prayers for Healing

The minister may invite each person to give her or his name and any particular request for prayer. The minister then prays silently, then prays aloud using one of the following forms or similar words.

I lay my hands upon you in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, praying you will be strengthened and filled with God's grace, that you may know the healing power of the Spirit. Amen.

After all are anointed

May the God who goes before you through desert places by night and by day be your companion and guide; may your journey be with the saints; may the Holy Spirit be your strength, and Christ your clothing of light, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Blessing

May God the Father bless us, God the Son heal us, God the Holy Spirit give us strength. May God the holy and undivided Trinity guard our bodies, save our souls, and bring us safely to his heavenly country; where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Dismissal

Officiant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
People **Amen.**

Catherine of Alexandria, Barbara of Nicomedia, and Margaret of Antioch, Martyrs

Catherine of Alexandria, Barbara of Nicomedia, and Margaret of Antioch were three of the most popular ancient and medieval saints, and they even attracted widespread devotion among Anglicans after the Reformation. In the mid-twentieth century, however, their popularity waned significantly as doubts about this historicity grew. The lives of all three virgin martyrs contain many elements that are indisputably either legendary or metaphorical. In recent decades, however, martyrdom accounts written in such a style have attracted increased scholarly attention as we have started to ponder the particular ways in which communities choose to remember trauma. It is striking, for example, that virtually no female martyrdom accounts include sexual violence, even though we know from other genres of writing that it was historically very common. Whatever is happening in these accounts, it is clearly not a straightforward description of the facts, but seems to be rather a recasting of trauma into something that one might actually want to remember and feel inspired by, and the kind of stories that one could pass on to one's children. In the world of historical facts, we all know that instruments of torture do not spontaneously shatter and that dragons do not explode. For that matter, we know that there are no dragons to begin with! But if the purpose of such narratives is not to convey the literal truth of what happened, but rather to portray the unvanquished spirits of these early Christian martyrs in the face of trauma, then perhaps there may be a kind of truth behind the legends after all.

According to the life of Catherine of Alexandria, she was a young scholar and the daughter of an Egyptian government official who converted to Christianity as a teenager. When she rebuked the emperor for his cruelty in inciting persecution against the Christians, he summoned 50 of his best philosophers and orators to debate with her, but she won every single argument and many of them were converted to Christianity. The emperor then condemned her to be tortured to death on a spiked wheel, but it shattered at her touch. Finally, he had her beheaded.

Barbara's life states that because of her beauty, her father locked her up in a tower where only her pagan tutors were granted access to her. From them she became highly educated and began to consider the very nature of the physical and metaphysical world, and eventually decided that there was only one true God, and that it might be the God of the Christians. She had a third window added to her prison, and thus created place of personal prayer where she could contemplate the Trinity as the light moved across the three windows. When her father questioned this action, she professed her Christian faith to him and was executed.

The life of Margaret of Antioch recounts that she was the daughter of a pagan priest named Aedesius. Her mother died in childbirth, and so she was given to a Christian woman to nurse, and as she grew up she embraced the Christian religion. When her religion became known, she was subjected to severe persecutions, the most famous trial included being swallowed by Satan in the form of a dragon. The cross that she was holding in her hand irritated the dragon's stomach, however, and caused it to immediately explode. Eventually, after prevailing through many trials, she was executed. Margaret was one of the most popular English saints, both before and after the Reformation. Many Anglican parishes have been dedicated to her, as has the women's religious community the Society of Saint Margaret.

From Revised *Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2018*, page 587

A HISTORY OF TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Trinity Episcopal Church of Houston has existed as a house of worship and a center of its community for over a century. As such, it has adapted to the changing nature of the city, as Houston grew from a regional town of approximately 40,000 souls to a dynamic metropolitan giant, the fourth largest city in the United States. With a congregation that grew from a few founding members in the 1890s to several thousand parishioners at its peak, Trinity Church is an example of how spiritual people have contended with the challenges presented during a city's most crucial period of urban development.

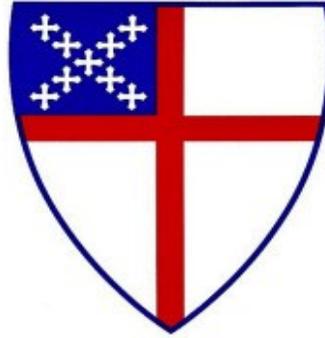
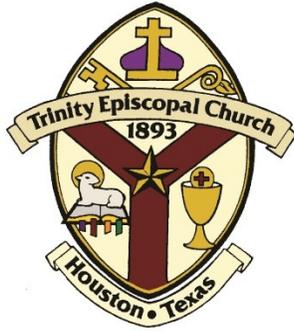
Founded in 1893 as a mission of Christ Church, Houston's first Episcopal church, Trinity located southwest of downtown. After a quarter of a century of existence in wooden buildings, Trinity parish built its present imposing structure (1917 - 1921) in Houston's South End, at the corner of Main Street and Holman Avenue. That structure, designed by Ralph Adams Cram of Boston and William Ward Watkin of Houston became an architectural landmark constructed in the neo-Gothic style with Texas limestone and a 97 foot bell tower.

During the late 1910s and 1920s, Trinity entered an era of explosive growth, paralleling that of the city, and became an important center of the Episcopal faith. The congregation's many youth and adult activities were community events that attracted wide attention among the general populace. An integral part of its city, Trinity likewise maintained special relationships with Houstonians of other faiths. With a membership numbering 1,900 parishioners in 1930, Trinity emerged as the largest Episcopal parish in the Diocese of Texas and one of the largest in the nation.

After World War II, Houston's growth presented Trinity with perhaps its greatest challenge. As the city physically expanded into the new postwar suburbs, Trinity's membership began to decline. Rather than abandon its historic location, the congregation showed itself to be steadfast. Resurrecting itself from this period, Trinity reaffirmed its mission, this time as a beacon in the inner city where it has become a leading institution in the heart of Houston, determined to enhance the quality of urban life for everyone.

While our neighborhood has gone through many changes, the parish has remained steadfast, and actively ministers to a diverse congregation and to the poor in its midst. As the Midtown Houston neighborhood began redeveloping, starting in the early 2000s, Trinity Church has rededicated itself to its spiritual mission, and has become an active part of the Midtown area for music and other creative art expressions.





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