

## **Trinitarian Conversations**

In our general church meeting in May, we used Rublev's icon of the Trinity as a focus for our reflection. The characters in the icon, are actually the three angels visiting Abraham at the Oak of Mamre (Genesis 18:1-8) but the general consensus is that these characters represent something of our God in three persons; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In our meeting, then, we spent some time reflecting on the communication between the three persons of the Trinity. We identified the dynamic, communicative, diverse, relational nature of the Trinity, being as it is an image of a community, of a dance, of a conversation. Certainly, one of my favourite metaphors for the Trinity is a conversation or a dialogue. Three persons intimately conversant with each other, chiming in beautiful dialogue, revealing something of the truth as a result.

Conversation, dialogue, is an essential part of community. It's how we get to know each other, it's how we pass on news, it's how we come to agree and disagree on ways forwards and solutions to problems.

So there is something in this icon of the conversational, dialogical, conferring nature of a God in three persons who lives in relationship and, through the framing of the scene, invites us into participation. There is space for us at the table, we are free to speak into the encounter, to influence, in conjunction with the three persons, something of what might result.

So what shape might our conversations take if we understand them to be trinitarian conversations? Conversations in which we not only speak ourselves, but in which we make room for a God who creates, a son who models and a spirit who inspires.

After our recent elections the framework for a new local government has been established. What is critical now more than ever in our civic lives is that we engage in robust, respectful, honest and trinitarian conversations. Conversations with dignity at their heart, conversations that seek truth and justice, conversations that result in creative ways forward – paths ahead that see us walk alongside each other, comfort each other, be constructive with each other, particularly those we most profoundly disagree with.

Trinitarian conversations are fertile environments; closed conversations leave no room for thriving. Trinitarian conversations leave space for all to be heard – are arenas of concentrated attention and thoughtful responses. Trinitarian conversations are melting pots out of which new life is possible and new relationships formed.

So, it is critical at this moment in our city's life that we commit to trinitarian conversations with each other, especially those we disagree with. But it is also crucial that we are having such conversations with each other in our church context. It is my prayer that our life together at Brunswick may be lived in the spirit of a trinitarian fellowship – a fellowship that honours the difference, that provides space for that difference to express itself and the creativity to imagine a future together, as a church fellowship with that difference held in tact within a larger, loving relational dynamic.

*Deacon Bill*