I begin today talking about some people you know or may not know – some people who may be you or sitting just down the pew from you or whom you would never meet in a hundred years. I start with someone far away:

I am an AIDS orphan though at four years old I do not know that is what you would call me. My mother was dying already when I was born, my father died soon thereafter. My medical chart if I had one would tell you I will soon follow them. The few who are left in my village are caring for me – a little food each day – shelter from the rain. I have never heard of a god – I never will in this life. But if I could think of a being who has called me into this life I would think of a cruel and sadistic one. For what sort of being would call me into the pain and suffering and hollow emptiness I have known.

I know God is a wonderful God. All my life I have known it. I am a sixty year old man – I have never been sick a day in my life. God is good. God is love. That is what I tell my children and grandchildren. What beautiful people they all are. Bright, talented, attractive. I am so proud of them all. I love life. What a wonderful God we have.

I am a woman. My husband tells me I am the cause of his drinking. If only I would change then he could be everything I want him to be. I live for my children – for myself I am not deserving of much. Maybe they will escape the pain that was in the home I grew up in, the pain that is in this home. I know it is up to me – if I try harder, do better, I can make them more than I am. That is my hope, that is my life. They say God is forgiving but I mostly feel guilty, am guilty. So much is my fault, the fighting that went on between my parents – the shouting and hurting that is everywhere in my days and nights. I think God is not paying much attention.

I am ninety-five. I’ve had a good life. I worked hard, prayed, hoped in God. Soon I will die. I hope that God has prepared another life for me. Right now that is what really matters – life beyond death. For unless I live once more I will be like a summer flower, blooming and then fading – gone – forgotten.
I am alone – lonely – needing someone to talk to. I walk among crowds, eat in crowded restaurants, sit in churches among other peoples families. I have conversations at work but I am alone. I long for a god to walk with me, to know me as no person on earth knows me.

God? Who needs a god? I will count on me. I can think my way through any dilemma – work my way through any crisis – charm my way through any situation. Look at me – why would I ever need a god?

How many more could I speak of? Thousands – millions – billions?

All with one God. Whether they acknowledge God or not they are all created by one God – sustained by one God – loved by one God. One God in three persons.

Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

Creating, guiding, ruling, serving, suffering, dying, rising, inspiring, saving.

Seen by Isaiah in his vision – the mighty God, the Holy God whose robe is so vast that the temple in Jerusalem is filled by hem at the bottom.

Loving so much that he gave his only Son in order to save the whole world.

Listening to hear a child cry “Abba( Daddy) Father. Hearing every child’s cry and your’s too.

Received into this world from Mary’s womb, resting in manger bed.

Walking dusty Galileean roads – teaching, healing, casting out demons.

Hanging naked before his mockers until the weight of all sins crushed his life.


And in you through the Spirit.

Hearing the prayers you have not even prayed – knowing your heart and your hurts.

Spirit journeying throughout the world in words of every continent – every dialect – a word of forgiving and power and birthing faith.
Spirit able to make a home in every one – each of those with whom I began – not a god far off but a God dwelling within.

Very truly I tell you, said Jesus, no one can enter the kingdom of God with being born of water and the spirit.

Water and a word, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and the God who is spirit has found another home, claimed a life, claimed another beautiful temple.

You are the temple of the spirit of the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God will never be satisfied until everyone is. Amen.