

The Bride Valley United Service for Sunday 30th May 2021
Trinity Sunday
Especially remembering members of Holy Trinity Church in Swyre

Opening Sentences

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name; worship the Lord in holy splendour.
Psalm 29 verses 1-2

Hymn: Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!

sung by St Martin's Voices

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wert and art and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy, there is none beside thee
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!
all thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.

Reginald Heber (1783-1826) (Public Domain)

Invitation to Confession

By the mercies of God, let us confess our sins and present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to him, which is our spiritual worship.

Prayers of Penitence

You raise the dead to life in the Spirit:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

You bring pardon and peace to the broken in heart:
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

You make one by your Spirit the torn and divided:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Collect

Holy God, faithful and unchanging: enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth, and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love, that we may truly worship you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 6 1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

New Testament Reading: Romans 8.12-17

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh - for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Gospel Reading: John 3 1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So, it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Sermon

Great is the mystery of faith ...

Trinity Sunday is a special Sunday in the church calendar. It has been celebrated since 1334 when Pope John XXII fixed it as the Sunday after Pentecost. It is a Sunday which is not tied into any special event. We do not have to celebrate any special events or rituals. Instead it is a day when we just celebrate God himself, it is a day to focus our hearts and minds just on Him. It's a little bit like celebrating birthdays really - when all we do is celebrate that person being with us.

But, of course when we celebrate God we have a problem of sorts, do we celebrate God the Father, Son or Holy Spirit? Should we have 3 days, one for each! This is the difficulty for us as Christians.

Let's see what the doctrine is;

1. God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. Each person is fully God.
3. There is one God.

Confused?!

Don't worry - The doctrine of the Trinity is one of those subjects which leaves everybody feeling confused but we use it simply to describe how amazing God is. God is so big, so wonderful and so far beyond our imaginations that to our minds he really doesn't seem to make sense! God is a mystery. So, if somebody comes up to you and says, go on then, you're a Christian explain the Trinity then your response could be simply to say

The Trinity is a way of us saying as Christians that God is much bigger and more complicated than we will ever know ... God is a mystery that we humans cannot solve.

In our gospel reading Jesus makes this clear when speaking to Nicodemus:

“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly

things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?"

So why is it so important to see God as Trinity?

It gives us a balanced view, protecting us from an inadequate perspective of God.

It is biblical, it is seen throughout the New Testament.

And how do we experience God as Trinity?

It shows our source and destiny as LOVE

It gives us a model for our relationships and it challenges our fundamental values.

As human beings it meets our basic psychological needs, giving us;

a point of reference - FATHER

an inspiring role model - SON

a helper/facilitator - Holy Spirit.

God meets us wherever we are and meets our need of him in such a basic way.

Celebrating God today here across the Bride Valley seems to me an easy thing to do. We have just held our annual meetings where we reported on a difficult year, 2020, who would have thought we would see such a year in our lifetime and it has continued on into 2021, but the thing we have all realised throughout is the abundance of God. Despite our churches being locked we have continued to worship in one form or another. God is ever present with us.

A Christian presence has been present across each community, we've seen it in the way people have rallied around to help each other out. We've especially seen it in the way we have conducted funerals, communities lining the streets to give thanks for a life well lived, but ended in the time when we are unable to pay our respects as we normally would so we have found a way.

We had plans last year to change things slightly, but then the virus came along and things changed quite dramatically. We have plans for the future, our fresh expressions of church, a breakfast church in Shipton Gorge and an afterschool club at Thorners School in Litton Cheney and more in the pipeline.

I'm excited to see the continuation of God at work here among, sometimes where we expect, but often in the unexpected too, in the inspiring conversations, in one of the God moments, where it is clear that the Holy Spirit is among us and reaching out before us.

Today, as we celebrate God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, let's give thanks for all that means in our lives as individuals and as a worshipping community, united across the churches throughout the Bride Valley and across the whole world.

Let us pray: Holy God, we thank you for all that you are, all that you do among us and what lies ahead for our future. **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession (prepared by Sue Taylor from Holy Trinity Church in Swyre)

Gathered together in the love and fellowship of God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit; let us pray for the church and for the world and let us thank God for his goodness.

Beginning with the Trinity Prayer:

Praise God who made us,
Praise his Son who redeemed us,
Praise the Holy Spirit who abides with us.
Praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Blessed Trinity.

Father of all, we your church, give thanks and praise for all those, especially here in the Bride Valley who walk with us on our journey of faith. May we grow in grace that we shine as a light in the world.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

In the world we ask a blessing on the people of Jerusalem that there may be an end to conflict between different races and religions. We pray for politicians throughout the world, that they may grow in wisdom and integrity.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

We pray for all churches throughout the world which are dedicated to the Holy Trinity, that they may be places of inspiration, peace and consolation to those who enter.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Loving Lord; we know your presence with us always; in times of sadness and in times of joy. In times of health and in times of illness. We bring before you today all those who are sick in body or anguish of mind. In a moment of quiet we remember anyone known to us personally who needs our prayers today.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

We pray for all those among our families and friends who have died; those we love but see no longer. May they all rest in peace and rise in glory.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Rejoicing in the fellowship of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the Saints and Angels, we commend ourselves and all people to God's unfailing love.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers, for the sake of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

And now we join our prayers together in the words of the Lord's Prayer:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Hymn: How shall I sing that majesty

recorded remotely by the Choral Scholars of St Martin-in-the-Fields, and edited together

How shall I sing that Majesty
which angels do admire?
Let dust in dust and silence lie;
sing, sing, ye heavenly choir.
Thousands of thousands stand around
thy throne, O God most high;
ten thousand times ten thousand sound
thy praise; but who am I?

Thy brightness unto them appears,
whilst I thy footsteps trace;
a sound of God comes to my ears;
but they behold thy face:
they sing because thou art their sun:
Lord, send a beam on me;
for where heaven is but once begun,
there alleluias be.

How great a being Lord, is thine,
which doth all beings keep!
Thy knowledge is the only line
to sound so vast a deep:
thou art a sea without a shore,
a sun without a sphere;
thy time is now and evermore,
thy place is everywhere.

John Mason (c.1645-1694) (CCLI 2420116, One License 48445)

The Peace

God has made us one in Christ.
He has set his seal upon us and, as a pledge of what is to come,
He has given us the Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts.

2 Corinthians 1.22

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

Today's service was prepared by the Reverend Jane Williams: Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, material from which is included in this service is copyright of The Archbishop's Council (2000)