**Trinity Sunday** WORSHIP AT HOME: 30th May 2021 John 3v1-17

Welcome to our act of Worship

Call to Worship *Isaiah 6v3*

‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.’

HYMN

**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.

HP8, MP, RS661, STF53

*Prayer of Praise*

God the Father, for creating us,
for our beautiful world and for the strength of your love: **we praise you.**
Lord Jesus, for your words in Scripture, for your giving of yourself, for the strength of your love:
**we praise you.**
Holy Spirit,
for your presence in us, for all that you inspire through us and for the strength of your love:
**we praise you. Amen.**

*Prayer of Confession*

When we have forgotten
that you are the Father of all,
the Beginning of everything:
Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

When we have not recognised you
in our sisters and brothers in Jesus;
when we forget that we are Christ's body:
Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

When we have forgotten
that you live inside us,
that we are home to the Holy Spirit:
Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

When we have forgotten
that Love is the most important thing in the world,and that you show us the wonder of Love
as Father, as Son and as Spirit.
Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

*silence*

You are the voice who tells that all is well.
You are the song of forgiveness.
You are the One which reassures us.
Holy Trinity of Love,
we rest in you. **Amen.**

HYMN *T “God beyond all names”*

**God, beyond our dreams,**

you have stirred in us a memory,
you have placed your powerful spirit

in the hearts of humankind.

*All around us, we have known you;
all creation lives to hold you,
In our living and our dying
we are bringing you to birth.*

God, beyond all names,

you have made us in your image,
we are like you, we reflect you,

we are woman, we are man.

God, beyond all words,

all creation tells your story,
you have shaken with our laughter,

you have trembled with our tears.

God, beyond all time,

you are labouring within us;
we are moving, we are changing,

in your spirit ever new.

God of tender care,

you have cradled us in goodness,
you have mothered us in wholeness,

you have loved us into birth.

HP, MP, RS, STF49

Ministry of the Word of God

Lectionary Bible readings for RCL Trinity Sunday Year B Isaiah 6.1-8; Psalm 29; Romans 8.12-17;

***John 3.1-17 Nicodemus Visits Jesus***

**Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2He 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.’ 3Jesus answered him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’ 4Nicodemus 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?’ 5Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7Do not be astonished that I said to you, “You must be born from above.” 8The 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.’ 9Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’ 10Jesus answered him, ‘Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?**

**11 ‘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. 12If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.**

**16 ‘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.**

**17 ‘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.**

This is the Gospel of Christ.

**Praise to Christ our Lord.**

Reflection

It might seem inappropriate during the ongoing pandemic and all the major issues facing the planet to speak about the Trinity. But the image of the inter-connectedness of God can be both supportive and affirming. It reminds that God is not distant or far removed but is with us in the here and now.

John 3.16 – **‘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.’**  As we reflect on what is says about God and what God has done, so we find ourselves face to face with the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Three points about the verse – firstly **God**. Our belief in the Trinity is there is only one God who is the source of everything.  In Biblical language, he is the Creator, but not just of the universe we inhabit but of everything that is and beyond what we know. Since we are ‘products’ of the universe, and limited by its boundaries, it is exceedingly difficult for us to imagine the existence of anything outside the universe, let alone speak of it.  This is why debates about the existence of God are often so sterile, because they constantly risk talking about God as if God belongs within the universe, along with you and me, and can therefore be thought about, investigated and discussed just like anything else within the universe.  But if we do that we misunderstand the basic nature of God. As Isaiah puts it, ‘My thoughts are not your thoughts nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.’ (55v8-9)

So how can we possibly know this mysterious and unknowable God?  How can we speak of God who cannot be contained by words and who causes us to fall silent? Surely we cannot, unless God chooses somehow to make himself known?  This is what the Gospel states has happened:  **God so loved the world that he gave his only Son**.  God has taken the initiative and reached into the created universe where we exist.  God has entered our world, in the words of the 16th century theologian John Calvin he has ‘accommodated himself’ to us.

That is what the message of Jesus is all about.  God becoming human.  And in becoming human and dying on the cross, Jesus revealed God’s love, his compassion and mercy, his generous and sacrificial self-giving, his desire to heal and make whole, his authority over the created world and over the powers of sin and death.  Jesus reveals God’s nature.

Jesus also reveals to us our true human nature.  He shows that we are most human when we are most like God – compassionate, forgiving, generous, self-giving.  Jesus reveals even more.  Jesus describes himself as the Son, and God as his Father.  Whilst there is only one God, within God there is the Father and the Son.  There is love and trust.  There is giving and receiving.  There is intimacy and relationship within the very nature of God himself.  The Trinity is the reason why we can say that God is love, which suggests that to be fully human, to be whole and fruitful as people, we need to be sustained by relationships of mutual trust and love, within which we can know and be known.

What of the **Holy Spirit**?  The Spirit is not explicitly mentioned in John 3.16, although earlier in his conversation with Nicodemus Jesus mentions about the need to be born of the Spirit.  The Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus continuing his work in the world and mediating his presence in the world, often through the followers of Jesus.  It is the Spirit who works within the world to bring it back to God.  Do you find yourself longing for something more, for a greater sense of meaning in your life, a stronger sense of worth and purpose?  That is the Holy Spirit, drawing you towards the life of God.  Do you find yourself looking at your own life from time to time, wishing you could be a better person, wishing you could wash away some of the things you have done, wanting to be more generous, more tolerant, more considerate?  That is the Holy Spirit, opening your eyes to the truth of your own humanity and your need of renewal.  Above all, it is the Spirit who helps us to believe in Christ, who helps us to love him, who makes us want to be united with him.  Everyone who believes in the Son and finds eternal life, does so because the Holy Spirit makes it possible.

God who is Trinity is really about LOVE.  Love stretching from before the foundation of the cosmos into eternity, out of which the world was born.  Love taking human form and reaching out to us on the cross, love bearing all pain, never giving up, enduring even unto death, and on into resurrection.  Love poured out at Pentecost to transform hearts and lives, to energise and expand, to release and to heal.  Love we are invited to receive and to share. As John states:  **‘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.’**

Prayer of Response

May the Holy Trinity inspire, uphold and challenge us to think more deeply, to act more kindly
and to love more widely. **Amen.**

HYMN *T Enfolding (John Bell) Metre 55.9.555.4.*

**God to enfold you,**

Christ to uphold you,

Spirit to keep you in heaven’s sight;

So may God grace you,

heal and embrace you,

Lead you through darkness

into the light.

HP, MP, RS, STF648

Our Prayers

God who loves the world,
as the shape of the global pandemic changes we pray urgently for our world. We pray for the countries that are facing rising cases of coronavirus and severe oxygen shortages. For India, Argentina, Nepal, Pakistan and the many others with infections surging. For health systems struggling to cope and politicians making choices that will have far-reaching impacts on their populations, we pray for resources and good decision making. We pray that rich nations play their part in vaccination programmes across the globe and bring an end to this crisis.

God who loves the world,
**hear our prayer**.

God who gave his son,
We are shocked at the images of the bodies of children washed up on a beach in Libya. The human cost and tragedy of the migration crisis across Europe is highlighted so poignantly in these pictures of lost children. God who gave his only son, we pray for your compassion on these desperate families. Help us to view displaced people with kindness and care and, despite the political and social complexities, to be people who offer welcome and warmth.

God who gave his son,
**hear our prayer**.

God of life not death,
in the week that marks a year since the death of George Floyd we pray again for those in our world who face injustice. We pray for people whose lives are in danger because of the colour of their skin, their beliefs, or because of their difference. Thank you for those who are actively involved in fighting injustice: give them energy and purpose as they strive to bring life and wholeness to people who live in fear. We pray particularly for the causes we know about and support, but also give *us*eyes to see the inequality, unfairness and exploitation around us and the wisdom and strength to do something about it.

God of life not death,
**hear our prayer.**

God of salvation,
thank you for the freedom we find in you. As so many of our young people come to the end of their formal schooling this week and face the freedom of the summer holidays, we pray that they would have a time of restoration and recuperation. Give our young people opportunities to process the last year and a half and to feel that as one chapter ends another is starting. We pray they would have hope for the future and a deep sense of peace and calm.

God of salvation,
**hear our prayer**.

God of eternity,
we praise you that you love this world so much you gave you son. Thank you that you sent your son not to condemn this world but to save it. Help us to live in the light of this truth and all of your promises this week.

God of eternity,
**hear our prayer**.

The 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,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

HYMN

**(Thou) God, whose almighty word,**
chaos and darkness heard,
and took their flight:
hear us, we humbly pray,
and where the gospel-day
sheds not its glorious ray,
let there be light!

Saviour, who came to bring
on your redeeming wing
healing and sight,
health to the sick in mind,
sight to the inly blind:
O now to all onekind
let there be light!

Spirit of truth and love,
life-giving, holy dove,
speed forth your flight!
move on the water's face
bearing the lamp of grace
and, in earth's darkest place
let there be light!

Gracious and holy Three,
glorious Trinity,
wisdom, love, might:
boundless as ocean's tide
rolling in fullest pride
through the world far and wide,
let there be light!

HP29, MP699, RS38, STF103

Blessing

Go in the name of the Father
who created and nurtured us.
Go in the name of the Son, Jesus our Lord,
who taught and teaches us.
Go in the name of the Holy Spirit
who inspires and burns within us.
Go in the presence of our triune God.
**Amen.**

**A children's prayer song for Trinity Sunday**

*(Tune, ‘Twinkle, twinkle little star’)*

God is Father,
God is Son,
God is Spirit,
Three in One.

Keep us safely day by day,
Keep our feet right on the way.
Show us how to do what’s right,
Fill our lives with heavenly light.

*(Repeat verse one.)*

Rev David Coppard Superintendent @ Wiltshire United Area

Team Chaplain @ Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton

***Our churches may not all be open, but the Church is active and alive.******This is service is offered to any and all, with love and prayers.***

CCL LICENCE

Steeple Ashton Methodist CCL 291605

Warminster United CCL 1221052

Westbury Methodist CCL 781988

Westbury URC CCL 293641