

**A service for 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2022, Trinity Sunday (StF)**

**Call to Worship: Psalm 8 verses 1 and 3 to 5**

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? You made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. Amen.

*Our opening hymn was written by an architect, James Edmeston, in 1821, with the title, “Hymn written for the children of the London Orphan Asylum” – the contemporary name for orphanage, or children’s home. Mr. Edmeston was a great supporter of the work done at the home. Hymn number 238, ‘Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us’.*

**1. Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us  
O'er the world's tempestuous sea;  
Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,  
For we have no help but thee,  
Yet possessing every blessing,  
If our God our Father be.**

**2. Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;  
All our weakness thou dost know,  
Thou didst tread this earth before us,  
Thou didst feel its keenest woe;  
Tempted, taunted, yet undaunted,  
Through the desert thou didst go.**

**3. Spirit of our God, descending,  
Fill our hearts with heavenly joy,  
Love with every passion blending,  
Pleasure that can never cloy;  
Thus provided, pardoned, guided,  
Nothing can our peace destroy.**

© James Edmeston {1791 – 1867}

***Let us pray.***

Almighty and everlasting God, Father; Son and Holy Spirit, we come to worship you today as one God in three persons. Heavenly Father, you are the creator of life throughout the universe and in your faithful love you provide our daily needs; Christ Jesus, Son of God, our Saviour, you have revealed the Father's true nature, his power and compassion by your life, death and resurrection; Holy Spirit, who led to the birth of the Church, you guide and encourage us as we seek to grow as followers of Jesus Christ. Holy Trinity, help us to remember that you are here with us, not only now but at all times. May we pray to you in faith, sing your praise with gratitude, and listen to your word with eagerness, for to you alone belongs all honour, power, glory and praise.

Amazing God, despite our sinfulness, you have reached out to us from the beginning of our history and you love us so much that you sent our Lord Jesus into the world to live our life, to die on a cross in order to break Satan's hold over us. By raising him to life on the third day, you opened heaven's gates to admit us. Through his grace alone we now have the free offer of eternal life.

So, Lord we thank you for this beautiful world, for all the good things that we enjoy, including challenges and experiences that have helped to form our character and brought us fulfilment.

However, merciful God, in the face of your holiness, we know we have fallen short of what you would have us be. In sadness we admit that we have sinned against you and our neighbours in what we have thought, said and done. We are truly sorry and turn away from what is wrong, asking you to forgive us for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord of all, you hear and answer our prayers, so we trust that you have indeed pardoned us and have granted us a new start. May the Holy Spirit enable us to love and serve both you and our neighbours as you call us to, warm-heartedly and joyfully, in Jesus' beautiful name. Amen.

***As our Saviour taught his disciples, we pray:***

**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.**

***Qadosh, qadosh, qadosh, Eloihim. Orthodox Jews begin their worship with these words – holy, holy, holy, for God is indeed holy. A Bishop of Ceylon, Rt. Revd. Reginald Heber wrote our next hymn in 1826, shortly before his death. We shall sing hymn number 7, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!'***

**1. 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.**

**2. Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore Thee,**

**Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;**

**Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,**

**Who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.**

**3. 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.**

**4. 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.**

**© R. Heber (1783 – 1826)**

***We come now to our prayers of intercession. Let us pray.***

Loving God, although the world in which we live is wonderful and self-sustaining, the news we hear speaks of its brokenness and daunts our spirits. Nevertheless, we believe that all things are possible for you, so whilst we offer ourselves to do what we can to ensure the wellbeing of our neighbours, we turn to you in situations that are beyond our power, asking

that you will reach out in mercy to rectify the results of mankind's cruelty, folly, exploitation and indifference which result in so much suffering around the world.

We pray for all churches in our city and, indeed, for the World Church, as we celebrate its birth two thousand years ago. Teach us to speak of the grace and glory of Christ Jesus with one voice and serve him in unity of mission. May the Spirit of truth and love empower us to bear the gospel light to this suffering and sin-darkened world. Renew and invigorate our calling as we seek new ways to serve our communities as we emerge from the dark shadow of Coronavirus.

God of Shalom, we pray for peace throughout the world, though our attention is concentrated at present upon the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. In your mercy Lord, bring about a negotiated peace that enable Ukraine to continue as a sovereign democracy. Reach out to the Ukrainian people, from President Zelenskyy and his advisors, the armed forces and militia, that they may remain steadfast, courageous and undaunted, so they will be able to resist Russia's might and frustrate the Kremlin's aims. We pray for the civilians, mainly women, children, the elderly and disabled, who are trapped in cities that are being bombarded by Russian forces. Hold them close in your care that they may be comforted and protected. May friendly countries provide support not only during the war, but for the time it takes to rebuild Ukraine from the ashes of destruction. Remember, too, Ukrainian refugees, who are fleeing to friendly countries. Bless those lands and people who offer shelter and support for as long as it is needed and may their compassion ease the trauma of the refugees.

Gracious Lord, inspire and guide the leaders of all nations and opposition groups in the way of peace. Teach them to eschew the use of violence to achieve their aims: instead may they seek to follow the way of justice, mercy and peace. Teach us also to act justly and to care for our neighbours, especially people whom we find it difficult to like.

Lord, we pray for people who campaign for a fair and proper use of the world's resources, including the distribution of vaccines to impoverished countries where COVID19 is rampant and vaccines to counteract the outbreak of monkeypox. We pray for organizations like All We Can and Christian Aid that are working to provide desperately-needed aid to famine-stricken Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Sudan and Yemen that they receive the support they need.

We pray, too, for people in this country who are struggling to live as the cost of energy, fuel and food increases to record levels. We thank you for those who supply and run food banks and for organisations like the Salvation Army which help the poor. Guide the Government, business leaders and local councils to find ways of helping the poor.

We pray for neighbours who are sick in body, mind or spirit; those who are in any kind of need or trouble; neighbours who are living with depression or whose relationships have broken down and everybody who mourns the loss of somebody dear, particularly everybody who has been unable to mark their loved-one's passing because of restrictions at funerals and gatherings. Lord, help us to offer them both practical support and friendship, but warm them with your love, so they may find comfort, healing, courage and enduring peace.

Abba, Father God, look upon us, our families and our friends with compassion. Teach us to bring the light of the gospel message into the darkest corners of your kingdom for as long as we live, in the glorious name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **Our reading is the Letter to the Romans chapter 5 verses 1 to 5**

Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He has brought us by faith into this experience of God's grace, in which we now live. And so we boast of the hope we have of sharing God's glory! We also boast of our troubles, because we know that trouble produces endurance, endurance brings God's approval, and his approval creates hope. This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us. Amen.

*The writer of our next hymn, Christopher Wordsworth, was a nephew of the great William Wordsworth. Christopher did not do too badly: he became Bishop of Lincoln! We shall sing hymn number 301, 'Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost,'*

**1. Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost,  
Taught by thee, we covet most,  
Of thy gifts at Pentecost,  
Holy, heavenly love.**

**2. Faith that mountains could remove,  
Tongues of earth or heaven above,  
Knowledge, all things, empty prove  
Without heavenly love.**

**3. Prophecy will fade away,  
Melting in the light of day;  
Love will ever with us stay:  
Therefore, give us love.**

**4. Love is kind, and suffers long,  
Love is meek, and thinks no wrong,  
Love than death itself more strong:  
Therefore, give us love.**

**5. Faith, and hope, and love we see,  
Joining hand in hand, agree;  
But the greatest of the three,  
And the best, is love.**

© Christopher Wordsworth {1807 – 1885}

**Address: "The Holy Trinity"**

The concept of God in three forms, Father, Son and Holy Spirit has always been challenging for preachers, so much so that some I know arrange to be on holiday on Trinity Sundays. I am, therefore, indebted to St. Patrick for his explanation to would-be converts in Ireland during the middle of the Fifth Century. At the time, St. Patrick faced bitter opposition to his preaching, especially when he talked about God as the Three-in-One. How, they demanded, could one God have three persons?

St. Patrick looked around for inspiration, no doubt praying for Divine guidance, when he saw some shamrock growing close by. He picked up a single trefoil and asked how many stalks it had. Thus, having established it as one plant, he showed that this one plant had three leaves built into it and declared the Trinity to be similar: the top leaf represented God the Father; the one on the right for Christ Jesus, the Son and the one on the left the Holy Spirit, God's power living in believers.

So, what then is the Trinity all about? The Hebrew Bible, or Old Testament tells us about God the Father, who not only created all life, but sought to reveal himself to human beings through covenants and the prophets. The gospels record how, after repeated failures to get human beings to understand his true nature and to turn to him, God the Father took human form in Christ Jesus. His exemplary life, his healing and teaching revealed God's wisdom and loving nature, whilst his death and resurrection brought into being a new covenant between human beings and God, one in which we are his children, in which we can call him, Abba, Daddy! Acts tells us how the Holy Spirit, which Jesus told his followers would comfort, strengthen and inspire them, came at Pentecost. This gift of the Holy Spirit transformed Jesus' followers from frightened, indecisive failures, who lacked both confidence and direction, into a dynamic force who changed world history. When he came, the Holy Spirit filled them almost as though God was breathing new life into their bodies. So these men and women experienced a new life and Luke's description in Acts is of the **KIND** of life as being fired up, burning with zeal for God.

As Twenty-first Century disciples, we should take up the challenge to work in unity, even if details of our faith and worship differ. Just as the Holy Trinity are different – Father, Son and Spirit – they are one Being, working for one end, so we need to use God's great gift of love to serve our communities – indeed, to serve the world and not just fellow-Christians. The Good News we have is for everybody. No one is outside the scope of God's love – even people we find it hard even to like, or understand. At Bridge Court and Waterside House worship is ecumenical, as is my chaplaincy. I wear an ichthus as sign of faith, rather than a Methodist orb, not because I am in any way ashamed of my denomination, but because I believe strongly that churches united in love and outreach will be more adept in fulfilling Christ's commission. I pray that the unity we share here can be repeated in the wider Church and its institutions, for if it does, we will be much more effective in our service of the triune God. Amen.

*'There's a spirit in the air, / Calling people everywhere: / Praise the love that Christ revealed, / Living, working, in our world.'* We close our worship with a hymn by Brian Wren. Hymn number 326, 'There's a Spirit in the air,

- 1. There's a Spirit in the air,  
Telling Christians everywhere:  
Praise the love that Christ revealed,  
Living, working, in our world.**
- 2. Lose your shyness, find your tongue;  
Tell the world what God has done:  
God in Christ has come to stay;  
We can see his power today.**
- 3. When believers break the bread,  
When a hungry child is fed,  
Praise the love that Christ revealed,  
Living, working, in our world.**
- 4. Still his Spirit leads the fight,  
Seeing wrong and setting right:  
God in Christ has come to stay;  
We can see his power today.**

5. When a stranger's not alone,  
Where the homeless find a home,  
Praise the love that Christ revealed,  
Living, working, in our world.

6. May his Spirit fill our praise,  
Guide our thoughts and change our ways:  
God in Christ has come to stay;  
We can see his power today.

7. There's a Spirit in the air,  
Calling people everywhere:  
Praise the love that Christ revealed,  
Living, working, in our world.

© Brian A. Wren {born 1936}

1. The Spirit lives to set us free,  
Walk, walk in the light;  
He binds us all in unity,  
Walk, walk in the light. *Chorus:*  
*Walk in the light,*  
*Walk in the light,*  
*Walk in the light,*  
*Walk in the light of the Lord.*

2. Jesus promised life to all  
Walk, walk in the light;  
The dead were wakened by His call,  
Walk, walk in the light. *Chorus:*

3. He died in pain on Calvary,  
Walk, walk in the light;  
To save the lost like you and me,  
Walk, walk in the light. *Chorus:*

4. We know His death was not the end,  
Walk, walk in the light;  
He gave His Spirit to be our friend,  
Walk, walk in the light. *Chorus:*

5. By Jesus' love our wounds are healed,  
Walk, walk in the light;  
The Father's kindness is revealed,  
Walk, walk in the light. *Chorus:*

6. The Spirit lives in you and me,  
Walk, walk in the light;  
His light will shine for all to see,  
Walk, walk in the light. *Chorus:*

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***Benediction.***

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and for evermore. Amen.