**Service of Worship – Sunday 7th June 2020 (Trinity Sunday)**

**Welcome and opening words**

Welcome to our Service today. I hope you are all keeping well and enjoying this warm weather we have been blessed with in recent days (it was nice at the time of writing this!)

Today, we come to worship the Living God on this Trinity Sunday.

**I want to read to you the words of Psalm 8:**

1 LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens.

2 Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. 3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? 5 You have made them a little lower than the angels

and crowned them with glory and honour. 6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands;

you put everything under their feet: 7 all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, 8 the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. 9 LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

We continue in praising God as we sing our first hymn:

To God be the glory:

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| 1.. To God be the glory!  great things He hath done!  So loved He the world  that He gave us His Son,  who yielded His life  an atonement for sin,  and opened the lifegate  that all may go in. | 3.. Great things He hath taught us,  great things He hath done,  and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;  but purer and higher,  and greater will be  our wonder, our rapture,  when Jesus we see. |
| 2.. O perfect redemption,  the purchase of blood!  To every believer the promise of God;  the vilest offender who truly believes,  that moment from Jesus a pardon receives. | *Chorus:*  Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  Let the earth hear His voice!  Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  Let the people rejoice!  O come to the Father  through Jesus the Son;  and give Him the glory,  great things He hath done! |
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**Time of prayer:**

Living God, on this Trinity Sunday we praise you that you are a good, good Father. A ***Father*** who cares for each of His children. We praise and that you for loving us so much that you have your one and only ***Son*** Jesus Christ to be the

saviour of the world. We praise you that in and through his life we can know how you want us to live and serve you as he did. We thank you that Jesus promised the ***Holy Spirit***. We thank you for the Holy Spirit and for the way the Spirt transforms and changes us to be more like Jesus – who is God.

We thank you, God, that the Holy Spirit brings to our mind the things we have said, thought or done that have not been in line with the will of God. For those things we come and say “sorry”. Whether we know we have done wrong or not, we ask for your forgiveness and seek your blessing upon us.

So we come and confess our frailty and weakness and ask that you would forgive us.   
*I pause for a moment…..*

Lord help us to know that we are truly and fully forgiven and so we can also forgive ourselves and let go of any guilt we might feel for we are forgiven, loved and free.

Amen.

We hear now our two Bible readings….

**Bible Reading: Matthew 28:16-20 - *The Great Commission***

16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Thanks be to God for His Word.

**Bible Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13 – *Final Greetings***

11 Finally, brothers and sisters, good-bye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. 13 All the saints send their greetings. 14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Thanks be to God for His Word.

**Reflecting on God’s Word to us**

Prayer….Lord, teach us through your Word so that we may come closer to Jesus and learn more about him through the preaching today. Amen.

*Q: How are you with goodbyes? I don’t mean a goodbye after family or friends have been to visit those who you may see quite regularly, but a goodbye when you aren’t actually sure when you might see the person/people again.*

In some ways both of our readings today are set in the context of a “goodbye” - the end of one chapter and the beginning of another. In 2 Corinthians Paul is ending his 2nd letter to this church in Corinth but like any good teacher he is always wishing to teach his listeners/readers. Paul says:

**“Aim for perfection”** (2 Corinthians 13:11 - NIV)– I always recall my parents saying to me about my school/college work/exams – ‘just do your best, that is all we ask.’ Paul, having written the 2nd letter to this church that we have in the Bible, continues even in his closing words to encourage them to aim for perfection. *As Christians and as churches we, too, should aim for perfection in things of God. God didn’t give to us in a less that perfect way….Jesus was and forever will be the greatest gift we can ever receive. And we, in the church today, should aim for perfection in all we do. Working to the best of our abilities.*

**“listen to my appeal” –** (2 Corinthians 13:11 – NIV) – it is suggested that this is relating to chapter 8 when Paul asks them to give (financially) to the Macedonian churches who are poor. An example of this in URC terms is the payments we make to the M&M fund… “the strong helping the weak”.

Paul encourages them to listen to his appeal. *Giving is something we sometimes shy away from in the church today. And I think it especially important that we talk about it in this period of lockdown. For part of our discipleship and our worship is giving to God our financial offerings. How are you doing that at this time of lockdown? Chat to your treasurer as I am sure s/he will be only too happy to speak to you about it.*

Paul goes on… **“be of one mind”** (2 Corinthians 13:11 – NIV)Paul wasn’t referring here to what colour a room should be painted in the Corinthian Church….or what carpet to use in a particular room! Paul’s comment here I think means that they should be of one mind in outlook about what God’s priorities are for the Church.

*As church(es) we should be of one mind in the mission and vision we feel God is giving our churches and together as a Missional Partnership/pastorate or individual church (depending on your context).* One of the challenges in the Corinthian church is that they hadn’t been one of one mind. And when we’re not of one mind then the devil gets in and causes mayhem!

**“live in peace”** (2 Corinthians 13:11 - NIV) Certainly the Corinthian Church had had some rocky and somewhat volatile moments in their life. Paul encourages them to be at peace and harmony with one another. *Likewise, in the Church today there can be fallouts and disagreements – we’re only human. But it is important that we work and strive for peace and unity in the Lord.*

***The second “goodbye”*** comes from our reading from Matthew 28:16-20.

In the first few verses of chapter 28 we read of the Resurrection of Jesus. You may recall as part of that account (Matthew 28:8-10) we read of the two Marys meeting the risen Jesus.

Jesus gave them a message for his disciples that that they were to meet him in Galilee. Fast forward several verses and we have the verses we’re exploring today!

The eleven disciples met Jesus on the hillside in Galilee. We are told that some of the disciples “doubted”. This word in the original Greek language doesn’t mean strong doubts but a “hesitation”.

Some commentators suggest that post Resurrection there was a mystery about Jesus. Tom Wright, a New Testament Theologian, in his book, “Resurrection of the Son of God” is one who holds to this viewpoint.

And how can you blame those closest to Jesus – who I think may have been a larger group that the 11 disciples. They had been some rollercoaster of emotion over the last days/weeks. They has seen Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey…they had seen him welcomed as a hero figure!

They had then seen the tide turn and the authorities clamp down and arrest Jesus. Give him a botched trial. Then seen him flogged, beaten, tortured, crucified, placed in a tomb and then rise again from the tomb.

Some of them had seen him risen others had not. And now they are on a mountain top in Galilee stood in front of Jesus as he gives them his instructions.

Jesus, now, as he could so often in his earthly ministry, he read his disciples well. He knew there were doubts/hesitation and he came to them with the powerful words in Matthew 28:18 – NIV **“Then Jesus came to them and said, “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”**

He gave them the assurance that he was still who he was previously. If anything, his power is greater than before not diminished. He came with the authority of heaven and earth!

He then hands the baton onto his disciples. There is in many ways a totality about what Jesus is saying…. He talks about **“all authority”** and now he instructs them to make disciples of **“all nations”**

No longer was their geography limited….they were to go to everyone and share the good news…and not only that but make disciples of them too! And following the people becoming followers (disciples/learners) of Jesus they were to be baptised and taught all about Jesus!

*I wonder in the church today, if we have lost some of this commission. These words are as much for us today as they were for those 11 men and the larger group of followers some 2000+ years ago. We’re not all called to be evangelists…but we are called to share our faith stories with those in our communities.*

*Sometimes we can lack confidence in ourselves. We worry that we might be mocked…made fun of… that people may ask us difficult questions. Nowhere did Jesus say we had to have all the answers to every question that people might ask us. I have said before that no one can deny our story or our experience of God.*

*For some of us that comes like a Damascus Road experience…for others of us our faith journey is gradual. What is important is that we start that journey and allow Jesus to lead us, guide us, and strengthen us.*

And like the commission is as much for us today in the Church, so is the promise of Jesus:

**“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”** (Matthew 28:20b)

I don’t think it is any accident that this reading comes the week after we have celebrated Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit came upon the followers of Jesus and empowered them to be the men and women he wanted them to be.

I think we shouldn’t overlook the final 7 words Jesus is with us **“to the very end of the age.”**That is now, today, for you and for me. And on this Trinity Sunday when we are encouraged to think about the threefold nature of God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) we can only know God in a relationship with Jesus. As we read in Colossians 1:15 **“He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God.”** (NIV) [brackets mine]

And we can now know Jesus through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As we ask the Holy Spirit to come into our lives. It is the Holy Spirit of God that will empower us to be the people God desires us to be. We simply have to ask for the Holy Spirit to continue to refresh us and fill us.

Amen.

**Song: Lord, send us to the lost**

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| 1.. Lord, send us to the lost,  where brokenness abounds,  where we can show the Father's heart.  Where we can feed the poor,  where we can warm the cold,  and comfort those who weep and mourn.  Jesus, with Your compassion;  send us to all the earth. | *Chorus:*  With mercy, with justice,  Lord, send us to the lost;  with lives that resound  with the message of the cross. |
| 2.. Lord, open up our eyes,  to see the Father's heart,  to know what grieves Your spirit, Lord;  that we take up our cross,  dying unto ourselves,  we do the things that please Your heart.  Jesus, with Your compassion;  help us display Your love. | *Chorus:*  With mercy, with justice,  Lord, send us to the lost;  with lives that resound  with the message of the cross.  (x2) |
| 3.. Whatever we do for the least,  wherever we are called to go,  we will serve You faithfully.  With gifts unseen and works untold,  and blessings sown that no-one knows,  send us out to all the earth, Jesus. | *Chorus:*  With mercy, with justice,  Lord, send us to the lost;  with lives that resound  with the message of the cross.  (x2) |
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**Prayers for the world, the church and ourselves**

Living God – we pray for the world. The world you created. We pray for help in caring for our world and the whole creation. We pray for wisdom in how we use the resources of this planet.

We pray that we would share the resources with those less fortunate than ourselves.

We pray for those in the world who starve and thirst. We pray for those who are used, abused and sold into slavery. For those who make perilous journeys because they are promised a better life.

Living God – we pray for Your Church. The Church You called into being at the very first Pentecost.

We pray for Your church in these times of lockdown when we cannot meet in the buildings we hold dear to us. But may we never forget that the church is wherever your people are meet whether in isolation or gathered together.

Bless and challenge us to in the way we are church and help us when lockdown is over not to return to the old normal…but to discern to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us and how we should be church.

Living God – we pray for ourselves and those who we are concerned about.

We pray for those who are bereaved and who are having to arrange funerals with so few people attending them. We pray for those who are sick, in hospital or at home. For those who are coming to the end of this life may they know and trust you and so be assured of life everlasting.

We pray fore the NHS and all who show care to others. Bless and protect them we pray.

And we lift ourselves to you. That we may follow the commission Jesus gave to his disciples: to go and share the Good News of Jesus so that others may come to faith.

For we offer all our prayers in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**Hymn leading us into Communion: We come as guests invited**

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| 1.. We come as guests invited  when Jesus bids us dine,  his friends on earth united  to share the bread and wine;  the bread of life is broken,  the wine is freely poured  for us, in solemn token  of Christ our dying Lord. | 3.. One bread is ours for sharing,  one single fruitful vine,  our fellowship declaring  renewed in bread and wine:  renewed, sustained and given  by token, sign and word,  the pledge and seal of heaven,  the love of Christ our Lord. |
| 2.. We eat and drink, receiving  from Christ the grace we need,  and in our hearts believing  on him by faith we feed;  with wonder and thanksgiving  or love that knows no end,  we find in Jesus living  our ever-present friend. | Timothy Dudley-Smith  Oxford University Press  ccli 169737  Streaming licence 595811 |

**Communion:**

John 6:35 & 37

**“ 35Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty…. 37 All that the Father give me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”** (NIV)

We gather from north, south, east and west at the table of the Lord. Wherever you are celebrating this communion today is holy ground. Jesus invites us receive from him the bread and wine, symbol of his body and blood and we as we share we believe we take into ourselves something of the life changing power of Jesus’ presence.

We hear from the Apostle Paul 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

**“ 23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,** 24 **and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “this is my body that is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this in remembrance of me.” 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”**(NIV)

Loving God, we praise and thank you for your creation and the beauty we can enjoy day by day.

We praise you for Jesus, our Lord and Saviour who came to earth as a baby, he grew up in difficult times and changed and transformed lives.

In his life he challenged injustice, he healed the sick, he taught people how to live, he brought from the margins those who the world had sidelined.   
In challenging injustice and those in authority he suffered and he died. And was raised to glorious new life and lives forever with you.

He promised the Holy Spirit would come and as we celebrated last week the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and transformed them.

And so we pray that your Holy Spirit would come upon us this day and upon this bread and wine that for us these symbols of earth would have heavenly power to change and to transform us so that we make become more and more like Jesus Christ.

So as we come to your table here, we bring all that we are and all that we have and offer it to you as a living sacrifice and offering. Amen.

As we heard in Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians, Jesus, at supper took bread and said: “This is my body given for you” and he instructed that we remembered him when we took the bread.

We take the bread now, we take eat, and give thanks. *(We eat the bread)*

*(we pause and give thanks)*

As we heard in Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians, Jesus, after supper took the cup and said: “This is my blood which is shed for you” and he instructed that we remembered him when we drank from the cup.

We take this cup now, we drink, and give thanks. *(We drink from the cup)*

*(we pause and give thanks)*

Friends we have taken bread and wine symbols of the body and blood of Christ. We are joined to Christ as believers in him. We have remembered and given thanks to God for giving His son that we might have life and have life to the full.

We come now to pray….

Gracious God, we give you thanks and praise that you offer us life and life everlasting when we place our trust in you. Thank you for all you did, thank you for all you do, and thank you for all that you will do. Amen.

**Closing Song: To him we come - Jesus Christ our Lord**

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| 1.. To him we come-Jesus Christ our Lord.  God's own living Word, his dear Son:  in him there is no east and west,  in him all nations shall be blessed;  to all he offers peace and rest-  loving Lord! | 4.. With him we serve-his the work we share  with saints everywhere, near and far;  one in the task which faith requires,  one in the zeal which never tires,  one in the hope his love inspires-  coming Lord! |
| 2.. In him we live-Christ our strength and stay,  life and truth and way, friend divine:  his power can break the chains of sin,  still all life's storms without, within,  help us the daily fight to win-  living Lord! | 5.. Onward we go-faithful, bold, and true,  called his will to do day by day,  till, at the last, with joy we'll see  Jesus, in glorious majesty;  live with him through eternity-  reigning Lord! |
| 3.. For him we go-soldiers of the cross,  counting all things loss him to know;  going to every land and race,  preaching to all redeeming grace,  building his church in every place-  conquering Lord! | ©The representativesd of James E Seddon/The jubilate group  ccli 169737  Streaming licence 595811 |

**Final prayer**Gracious God, may we do all we can in these current times and post lockdown to share our faith and make known the name of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen.