

*This short act of worship has been produced for you.
If you are well enough and able,
why not spend a few moments with God, perhaps at a time
when you would normally be sharing with others in church
and pray for them as they pray for you.*

AN ACT OF WORSHIP AND REFLECTION FOR TRINITY SUNDAY

Call to worship

Let us worship -

God the Father who in love created us,
God the Son who in love saves us,
God the Holy Spirit who in love lives in us.

StF 8 God with us: Creator, Father

Sing / read / pray / proclaim the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ftfZDbpuJg>

God with us: Creator, Father,
bringing everything to birth;
Mother of the whole creation,
fire of stars and life of earth;
Down the countless years composing,
from the earth's evolving night,
love's response to love, and forming
mind and soul to seek your light.

God with us: Redeemer, Brother,
Friend for ever at our side,
here, in flesh, you walked among us,
taking up your cross, you died.
Crucified, despised, rejected,
Perfect Love, who shared our shame,
streaming from the cross, your judgement,
full of mercy, clears our name.

God with us; Unwearied Spirit,
from the birth of time and space,
surging through unconscious being,
joyful, Life-creating Grace;
through the centuries you find us;
you, as God, inspire our prayer;
Life and Power at work within us,
Love for ever, everywhere!

God, Transcendent, far beyond us,
closest Friend, unfailing Guide;
through the ages, wronged, affronted,
in your poor, still crucified!
God with us; convict, forgive us;
by your holy love destroy
all that hinders peace and justice;
fill this aching world with joy!

Alan Gaunt (b. 1935)

Prayer of adoration

God the Father, you created the universe in all its vastness and variety.

You made us in your own image, and, when we fell into sin, you sent your Son, Jesus, to be our Saviour:

we worship and adore you.

God the Son, for our salvation you came to this earth, lived a life of love, died for us on the cross, rose from the dead and gave us the Holy Spirit:

we worship and adore you.

God the Holy Spirit, you come into our lives, transforming, renewing, strengthening, guiding us into the way of Christ. You call us into the life of faith and gather us with all the people of God into the fellowship of Christ's Church:

we worship and adore you, now and for ever. Amen.

Prayer of confession

A time of silence to remember our own sin and unworthiness

Forgive us, loving Creator when we have failed to honour you in our worship and in our lives.

Forgive us, loving Saviour, when we have failed to follow you in service and obedience.

Forgive us, loving Spirit when we have failed to receive you in one another and to trust your power in our lives.

Assure us of your forgiveness, keep us connected to your living presence, and through your power at work within us renew our faith and our intentions to serve you in your world.

The good news is that God does forgive. Let us accept with joy.
Amen.

Bible readings

I have chosen today to use a passage from the Hebrew Scriptures that is suggested for this evening, and the reading from Mathew's gospel of the commissioning of the disciples.

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 was 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!”

Matthew 28:16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Reflection

I remember hearing the great Methodist preacher Colin Morris talking to a group of students ‘I advise you’ he said ‘to block Trinity Sunday in your diaries’.

Many have tried to describe the Trinity, using images like water, steam and ice, or phrases like ‘one in three persons’. We are not helped in that the Trinity is not in fact a Biblical term. It was first used by Tertullian some 200 years after the beginnings of the church to try to root out some heretical ideas about the

relationship between Jesus and God. But it is nevertheless a Biblical concept - better experienced than described!

And it didn’t start in the New Testament either. It is not that God reigned alone until Jesus was born and then the Holy Spirit joined in at Pentecost. In the Biblical concept of creation God was there from before the beginning of the world in Power, in Word, and in Spirit.

I want to turn to that reading from Isaiah 6. Isaiah was a prophet, some think he may have been a priest, in Jerusalem some 700 years before Jesus. God’s call to him came in a vision in the Temple. Isaiah says it happened in the year that King Uzziah died. This is not just to date it – it is perhaps more to explain it. The Hebrew Scriptures record the reign of Uzziah as being great and powerful and just – second only to Solomon. All the kings were regarded as anointed of God, some deserved it more than others, but Uzziah was a good king. He managed to stave off the powerful forces that conquered other small nations and he built up the riches and power of Judah and ruled wisely. But he contracted leprosy and was forced into isolation and confined in his own house, with his son acting as regent. Without his wise leadership the country deteriorated, the enemies attacked, the Temple fell into disrepute and we read in the early chapters of Isaiah that Isaiah believed the judgement of God was against his people.

Then Uzziah died. Isaiah can see nothing other than the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah, but as he entered the Temple in despair, he had this vision in which God appears in glory, takes away his feelings of guilt and unworthiness and calls and commissions him to speak on God's behalf to the people.

Here is the experience of what will much later be developed as the understanding of the three persons of the Trinity – Creator with power and glory; the Son, Redeemer who enters fully into humanity, dies that we might have forgiveness and opens the way for us to know God as Father; and the Holy Spirit who by working within us makes it possible for us to live and communicate lives of faith. God beyond, with and within.

When we turn to the gospel reading from Matthew, we see what Matthew records as the last appearance to the disciples of the risen Jesus.

Here, the eleven disciples (without Judas of course, and without the women) meet Jesus by appointment on the mountain – and they worship him. We perhaps need to understand what a great departure this is for the disciples, brought up as they were as Jews forbidden to worship anyone else but God. Their experience led them to respond to Jesus as God – although we are told that even among the closest disciples there were some who doubted.

Then as the Holy Spirit is poured out on the disciples at Pentecost, the experience of the disciples begins to infuse the teaching – this is God, working through Jesus and the Holy Spirit and somehow enabling past, present and future to come together into a new call on the life of God's people.

Paul takes on the task of writing theology in his letters to the early church and probably for the first time the trinitarian concept is encapsulated at the end of one of his letters to the church at Corinth (2 Corinthians 13:13) – 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all'.

So that when Matthew later writes his gospel, he can reflect this understanding that Jesus told the disciples to make new disciples and to baptise in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. All that Jesus began to do in his time on earth is now entrusted into the hands of the disciples, and through them to us. Then he says 'I am with you always, to the end of the age', and perhaps we hear the echo of God giving his name to Moses 'I AM'.

So, I ask, what difference does it make to how we live our lives to know that God, as Creator, Redeemer and gift giver is with us? We are drawn into the relationship which God wants to have with all created beings, and invited to become agents of hope and love and healing and joy.

We have heard a lot about the R number in briefings about Coronavirus. If we pass it on to one other person, the number of infected people multiplies. Rumour has it that there are more people listening to and watching on-line services than normally come into the church buildings on Sundays. What an awesome opportunity to invite more people to experience for themselves the God who is almighty, forgiving and empowering. May you know that God with you today and every day.

Prayer of intercession

Let us hold before God all from local churches and further afield who are joining together in this act of worship, giving thanks that the mission of the church continues in a different form and praying for those we know who are struggling with grief, health, faith and anxiety.

Let us hold before God all those involved in care in the community – medical professionals and researchers, supply teams and delivery workers, teachers and child care workers, residential care staff, food bank volunteers, praying for courage and strength to work in difficult situations.

Let us hold before God politicians and broadcasters, bankers, and employers struggling to build up the economy and protect the livelihood of families, praying for compassion and integrity, and a deep sense of justice for all people.

Let us pray for ourselves –
for peace of mind that comes from confidence of faith
for hope based on the promises of God
for love that reaches out to others
for courage to face the challenges of today. **Amen.**

Collect for Trinity Sunday

Father God, you have created all things
and through Christ revealed your salvation in all the world.
Give us a vision of your glory
and by your Holy Spirit fill us with life and love
that we may praise and serve you
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

StF 518 Father, hear the prayer we offer

This hymn, written by Love Maria Willis, gives a different interpretation of Psalm 23, reflecting 'I am with you always'.

Sing / read / pray / proclaim the words or listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFoactKMJHQ>

Father, hear the prayer we offer:
not for ease that prayer shall be,
but for strength that we may ever
live our lives courageously.

Not for ever in green pastures
do we ask our way to be;
but the steep and rugged pathway
may we tread rejoicingly.

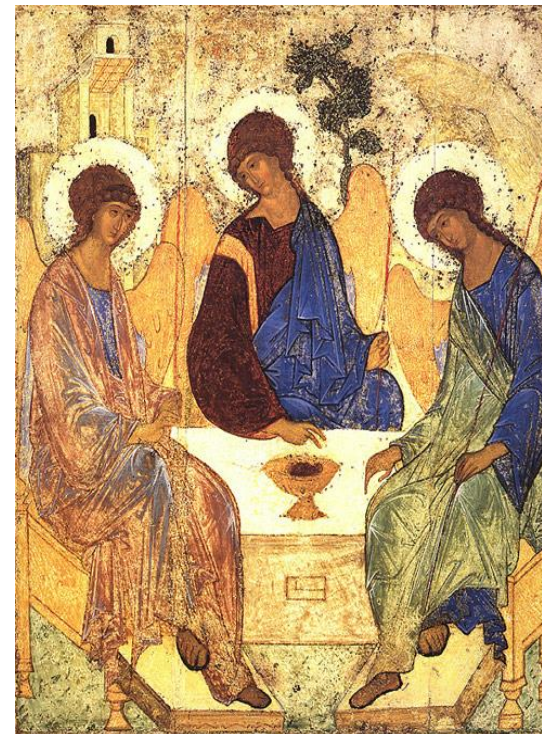
Not for ever by still waters
would we idly rest and stay;
but would smite the living fountains
from the rocks along our way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness,
in our wanderings be our guide;
through endeavour, failure, danger,
Father, be there at our side.

Love Maria Willis (1824-1908)

Blessing (taken from Roots)

May the grace of the Father be with you;
May the love of the Son enfold you;
And may the peace of the Spirit comfort you
today and always. **Amen.**



This is the famous Trinity icon by Rublev.
It is said to depict the three angels who visited Abraham.
Others see the image of Jesus and the disciples at Emmaus.
Does it speak to you?