

Morning Service

7th June 2020

You may wish to light a candle.

Introduction – Rev Anne Taylor

Welcome to our online service on this Trinity Sunday – I know there are people joining us for worship from both near and far – Southampton, Dublin, Lisburn and across Liverpool - wherever you are we hope that our time together will help you feel the joy and peace that comes from worshipping together. For the children there is Sunday Club at Home and you can find all the activities and cartoon links on our website where you will also find the June Parish Magazine. If you have any prayer requests or you would like a phone call please do contact us. Let us worship together.



Opening Sentences

Grace and peace be with you,
and keep you in the love of Christ.

Hymn

Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty <https://youtu.be/0SHDNs7Dt5M>

The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity: keep us steadfast in this faith, that we may evermore be defended from all adversities; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Bible Readings

Epistle – 2 Corinthians 13: 11-13

read by Kitty

Finally, brothers and sisters, put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Gospel – Matthew 28: 16-20

read by Gabriel

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.'

Sermon – Rev Anne Taylor – see below

Hymn – I bind unto myself. <https://youtu.be/yH4ToVxtn9A>

Prayers

by David Poole

Let us pray for the church and for the world and let us thank God for His goodness.

Almighty God, our heavenly father who promised through your Son, Jesus Christ, to hear us when we pray in faith:

As you have founded the Church on the teaching of the Apostles, grant that we may faithfully hold and make known the traditions which they taught. Grant to all Christian people grace to follow the example of your son, Jesus Christ.

On this Trinity Sunday, let us thank God for the knowledge of the Father, through the Son and for our knowledge of the Son, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

We pray for the work of our parish team as they continue to support us all through the difficult times of lockdown. Strengthen Paul and Beverly, our Bishops and all your church in the service of Christ, that those who confess your name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

Look with compassion on the world where many strive to fulfil tasks that are too heavy for them. Give wisdom to those who have power in managing the tragic effects of the Coronavirus outbreak. Today we pray especially for nurses, carers, all who treat the victims of this disease and for all essential workers who strive to provide us with every day necessities. We also pray for the health of our world, may its leaders resolve disputes between nations, so that they may count the cost of conflict before it is too late. Bless and guide Elizabeth our Queen, give wisdom to her and all in authority. Direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and peace; that men may honour one another and seek the common good.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

Father, we pray for our local community here in Formby, for those who help to educate our children whether remotely at home, or now back in school, for all those volunteers within our community who care for the vulnerable and those in social isolation. We thank you also for the work and tireless efforts of all those striving to keep worship alive in our parish through our recorded services, on-line magazines and all the behind the scenes work that ensures the continuity of parish life. We pray also for the sick, the infirm and the elderly; be with them, guide them and give them strength to carry out their duties in the knowledge that you are there to support them.

In our cycle of prayer, we pray for the residents of St. Anne's Road, St. Anne's Path, St. Anne's Close and Brewery Lane.

Give grace to us, our families and friends and to all our neighbours, that we may serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

We pray for all those who are ill at this time, remembering especially Amanda, Barbara, Graeme, Mike, our house-bound parishioners and any others who are known to us.

Comfort those who suffer in body mind or spirit, give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them to the joy of your salvation.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

We pray for all those who have recently departed from this life, especially Cathy Pope and Jonathan Foster and for Ian Crawford and all those whose anniversary of death falls at this time. We give thanks for their lives and remember all who grieve for them.

Hear us as we remember all those who have died in the Faith of Christ, according to your promises, grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

We thank you for the saints and martyrs of every age and for those who today stand fast in their faith amid tyranny and are persecuted for their belief. They challenge us Father – challenge our apathy. Rejoicing in the eternal message of your salvation, we offer our prayers in the name of Christ, St Peter and all your Saints and commend ourselves and all people to your unfailing love

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

The Peace

Peace to you from God our heavenly Father.
Peace from his Son Jesus Christ who is our peace.
Peace from the Holy Spirit, the life-giver.

The peace of the triune God be always with you
And also with you



Taking of the Bread and Wine

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this bread to set before you,
which earth has given and human hands have made.
It will become for us the bread of life.

All: **Blessed be God forever.**

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this wine to set before you,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands.
It will become for us the cup of salvation.

All: **Blessed be God forever.**

The Lord is here.
His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is right, it is our duty and our joy, at all times and in all places to give you thanks and praise, holy Father, heavenly King, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. And now we give you thanks because you have revealed the glory of your eternal fellowship of love with your Son and with the Holy Spirit, three persons equal in majesty, undivided in splendour, yet one God, ever to be worshipped and adored.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with St Peter all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Wherever you may be let us pray together with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**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.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in the one bread.

Prayer after Communion

Almighty and eternal God, you have revealed yourself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and live and reign in the perfect unity of love: hold us firm in this faith, that we may know you in all your ways and evermore rejoice in your eternal glory, who are three Persons yet one God, now and for ever..
Amen

Hymn

Praise my soul the king of heaven. <https://youtu.be/mDe0ABw5IHs>

The Blessing

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love, defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace;. And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you, and all who you care for this day and always. **Amen.**

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SERMON – Rev Anne Taylor

I have always thought that a sense of humour is a gift that should be encouraged and certainly in St Peter’s laughter it is. During this time of lockdown it didn’t take long for jokes to appear and there are some in this month’s magazine. And of course Vicar’s are given amusing books – a small selection from my bookshelf are Milton Jones 10 second sermons (I have already past that!), Rules for Reverends, ‘101 Things to Do During a Dull Sermon’!

Of course the last book could be rewritten for these lockdown times because the choice of things to do during a boring sermon can now include fast forward, mute and make a cup of tea! All I can say is don’t try any of those when we get back together here for services.

Such a book could be useful on Trinity Sunday because it is one of those church doctrines that can be difficult to understand and is not helped by theologians (or indeed preachers!) who have made it their life’s work to make it increasingly more complicated.

Thinking about the doctrine of the Trinity I thought of the following story –

One day two men were walking along the beach discussing this and that and generally putting the world to rights. (You can picture the scene).

In a wide ranging conversation they got onto the mystery of God. However, they weren’t making very much progress. Sorting out the world seemed a much easier task!

Suddenly they came upon a young boy playing in the sand. He had dug a hole in the sand and kept running down to the sea, dipping his plastic bucket in the water, and running back up the beach to empty the water into the hole.

The two men watched him for a while as he ran back and forth filling and emptying his bucket. They found the scene amusing and it brought back memories of their own childhood. They asked the boy what he was doing and in a very serious voice he told them that he was 'emptying the sea into the hole he had dug in the sand'.

The two men smiled and walked on.

After a while one of them stopped and said to the other, 'You know we were amused by what the boy was trying to do. Yet what we have been trying to do in our discussion about God is just the same. It is just as impossible for us to understand the mystery of God as it is for that child to put the water of the sea into that hole. Our minds are like thimbles (like a hole in the sand), whereas the reality of God is as great as the ocean'.

As the story says – it is impossible for us to fully understand God. God is a mystery. But if we use our natural curiosity then mysteries are there to be solved. Because each time we understand one more small part of the mystery that is God that is one step closer in our relationship with God. And we can only benefit from that.

For centuries people have struggled – have made it their life's work - to explain and understand God. This is ultimately where the doctrine of the Trinity came from, to help us understand something more of God.

Often to understand something we separate the pieces and put them into different categories – we do it with people deciding they are a certain type and box them. And we also do it with belief – thinking of God as either Father or Son or Holy Spirit and not thinking of the interplay between the three. You usually find emphasis placed on one part of the Trinity.

There are those who find it easier to relate to God as Father – a cosmic yet personal being of Love.

There are those who focus on Jesus because in human form Jesus offers us a more personable connection –he understands what it is like to be human and vulnerable.

Last week, the Feast of Pentecost, we celebrated the sending of the Holy Spirit. Some focus their faith on the Holy Spirit as the giver of new life.

But the New Testament is quite clear that all three have a unity and have a role to play. We may at different times in our lives of faith relate better to one than the other - but we need all three.

But where does this all leave us in trying to understand the mystery of God.

It leaves us realising that by God's desire to be known and loved by us he made the first move – he first loved us and sent his Son so that we might know him better and the Holy Spirit to inspire and guide us.

The doctrine of the Trinity may have stretched brilliant minds over the centuries but I believe that God was doing his utmost to draw us into a closer relationship with him. And that invitation is open to all regardless of colour, race, sexuality, gender, education, age.

There is a beautiful Russian icon of the Trinity painted by a monk named Rublev.

It depicts the three Persons of the Trinity sitting at a table. A dish of food lies on the table. But at the front of the table there is a vacant place.

The vacant place is meant to convey openness, hospitality and welcome to all – to each of us. It signifies God's invitation to us to share in the life of the Trinity. God doesn't exclude us. He doesn't keep us at arm's length. He doesn't laugh when we struggle trying to empty the sea into a hole in the sand. He invites us to come in and sit at the table. To share life with us.

The invitation for us means that we then accept to join with all the others God has called. There is no room within God's love for rejection, injustice, racism, prejudice. He treats all his children the same with an all-encompassing love. What we have seen happen in America and the unjust killing of George Floyd goes totally against God's open invitation to every person to be loved for who they are and not to be judged. We can look on with horror but we must ask ourselves when have we planted seeds of injustice – by our comments, jokes and attitude to others?

Trinity Sunday should not just be an attempt to understand some ancient Church doctrine, but rather an opportunity to celebrate a living relationship – our relationship with God. We don't grow in isolation but only in company with others – and with God.

While fully understanding that God may remain a mystery to us what is very clear is that because God first befriended us we are no longer strangers and outsiders.

We are God's children. God welcomes us to be in relationship with him and with all the others he has invited, and as our icon shows has a place for each of us together around his table.

