

Call to Worship and Opening prayers

God beyond us, God with us, God inside us, **We come to Worship you.**

God Outside us, God Among us, God Within us, **We come to praise you.**

God Above, God beside, God below, **We come to Thank you.**

God of Majesty, God of Love, God of power, **We come to acknowledge you.**

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, **We come to Honour you.**

Loving God, For all you are, All you do, All you mean, We give you our thanks, And offer our worship, In the name of Christ. **Amen**

We thank You, God, for a love so strong, that You would fashion a universe place within it a world, and give life to creatures so that You could have someone to love. That You would confront the worst that people can do and conquer without drawing any blood, but Your own. That You would breathe Your Spirit into what You made, allowing human hands to share in building your life and purpose in the world. That You would live in that which You created, and inspire love for You in our hearts, so that when we take the time to look we would find you in each other and share the love we have found in You. **Amen.**

God, we confess that we are an impatient and selfish people. When you offer us the promise of a new future, we complain that you don't get there fast enough. When you provide for our needs, we complain that it isn't enough. And when our bad attitudes and negative outlooks cause us to stumble, we blame you. Holy God, forgive our sinful ways. Teach us to be patient. Instruct us to be grateful. Guide us to be responsible and humble. As we turn ourselves around and look to the cross, let us experience your grace and your gift of new life.

We take a few moments now to place into your hands all that we have been and what we are at the moment, and all we are yet to become.

People of God, be certain of this: Forgiveness is real. Starting afresh is real. The refresh of our thoughts, feelings and motivations is real. Sisters and brothers in the family of God, Know that through Christ, our sins are forgiven, this day and every day thanks be to God. **Amen**

Reading: John 3: 1 – 17: -

3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. **2** He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." **3** Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.[a]" **4** "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" **5** Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. **6** Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit[b] gives birth to spirit. **7** You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You[c] must be born again.' **8** The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." [d] **9** "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. **10** "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? **11** Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. **12** I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? **13** No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.[e] **14** Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,[f] **15** that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him." [g] **16** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. **17** For

God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Sermon: -

Many of us love a good mystery. Some of us probably have favourite mystery writers whose novels we love to read. Agatha Christie or John Grisham. It's no accident that the television manages to entertain us with mystery programs like Sherlock and Morse or Line of Duty. But when it comes to today, Trinity Sunday, our service is devoted the great mystery of The Trinity. However this rich mystery does not lend itself to easy summaries. We ask too much of language when we expect it to carry this profoundest mystery of all. God: **Father, Son and Spirit.**

Shall we Dance? A strange question, you might think. But really – **Shall we dance?**, with God, with Jesus, with the Holy Spirit this morning. Trinity Sunday is summed up for me in a Dance. A perfect synergy of God: Father, Son, And Holy Spirit. Perfectly Balanced, Perfectly fluid, Perfectly rhythmic.

No matter how we see or encounter God: Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, it is GOD. But in the quest to understand, what is mind-bogglingly divine, we often tie ourselves up in knots, with images, with trying to describe the indescribable, immense, awesome God, that is our God. So, I am always grateful that on this Sunday we encounter with Nicodemus and his 'in the middle of night' encounter and conversation with Jesus. As Nicodemus headed out onto the roof that night, I often wonder what he was thinking about, as he prepared to question Jesus. He clearly knows Jesus, or knows of him. He's heard the stories of what Jesus is doing. But he can't get his head around how all the things he's heard, and seen all add up. He just can't get his head around it. I wonder – when we think and talk about the trinity: Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit. Are we struggling to understand spiritual truths?

Part of the adventure of faith is grappling to know and understand God more fully more profoundly and to be changed by that knowledge and relationship. I know I do. And I know here Nicodemus is asking some very human questions, trying to rationalise, trying to understand. He asks, doesn't he: Born from above? Born again? Why be born again? And how does one get born again? And what's this business about being born of the Spirit? You have to commend Nicodemus here, because in the face of asking these huge questions, of what he's seen, heard and believes, he could have asked an run away.

But he **Stays**, and he listens to everything Jesus said. But is also important to know that Nicodemus started the conversation in what could be interpreted as a confrontational way: "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher, come from God". And Jesus knows that Nicodemus is a Pharisee (a teacher of the Law). Jesus – rebukes him "You are Israel's Teacher, and you do not understand these things". OUCH! I wonder if Jesus reacts this way because in some ways Nicodemus is trying to show-off his knowledge, maybe even trying to catch Jesus out. The truth here, is that Jesus, wants people to be in relationship with him, with God, with the Holy Spirit. Not because of mighty acts, or the showstopping miracles, but because God, in Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit offers a relationship of LOVE. And he wants Nicodemus and the whole world to understand that. Forgiven people forgive; welcomed people welcome others; the recipients of grace bestow grace.

Those who have been drawn into the abounding life of the Triune God find themselves spreading kindness and goodness and joy. People become like their God. In the Trinity, we see a pattern of relation-ship that speaks of how we are to be towards others and towards the world. That means community, a society of persons moving constant-ly out towards one another in self-giving, living and being in that perfect oneness we call by the name of 'love'. He wants to be all for all—our light in the darkness, our hope in the midst of the world's despair. He doesn't want to be a side show, or a sometime friend. He wants to be the center of our lives and hopes and dreams.

Then we to get verse 16: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him, shall not perish but have eternal life."* We might look at that verse, and like Nicodemus, say: How can these things be? How do we hold onto this truth, When the road gets slippery, When we wonder off course, Or the light fades and find ourselves alone and in the dark? In the middle of this global uncertainty. In broken relationships. In surviving having been made redundant. We need all of God, all of the time, and in all God's love, To navigate this world. To navigate our lives and encounters in the world And to make sense of our place and purpose within it.

Only in the power of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Can we do that, and do it so that all might come to know and be in relationship with God. Our God of Love, for all. The Dance of God (father, son and holy spirit) is so important because in this passage, and in the powerful words of Isaiah, we are invited to join in the dance – because 'God so loved the world...'. In my mind's eye I can see a picture of God is always ready and waiting with a hand out-stretched to you asking, "Will you dance with me? Never mind that you don't know how to do this, I will lead, but will you follow?" How will we join in the dance of the trinity?

So, I end with some words of reflection by Malcom Guite:

In the Beginning, not in time or space, But in the quick before both space and time, In Life, in Love, in co-inherent Grace, In three in one and one in three, in rhyme, In music, in the whole creation story, In His own image, His imagination, The Triune Poet makes us for His glory, And makes us each the other's inspiration. He calls us out of darkness, chaos, chance, To improvise a music of our own, To sing the chord that calls us to the dance, Three notes resounding from a single tone, To sing the End in whom we all begin; Our God beyond, beside us, and within. **Amen**

Prayers of Intercession:-

We come boldly to the throne of grace, praying to the almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for mercy and grace. Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Father of heaven, whose love profound a ransom for our souls has found: We pray for the world, created by your love, for its nations and governments ...Extend to them your peace, pardoning love, mercy and grace. Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Almighty Son, incarnate Word, our Prophet, Priest, Redeemer, Lord: We pray for the Church, created for your glory, for its ministry to reflect those works of yours ... Extend to us your salvation, growth, mercy and grace. Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Eternal Spirit, by whose breath the soul is raised from sin and death: We pray for families and individuals, created in your image, for the lonely, the bereaved, the sick and the dying ... Breathe on them the breath of life and bring them to your mercy and grace. Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Father, Spirit, Son, Mysterious Godhead, Three in One: We pray for ourselves, for your Church, for all whom we remember before you ...Bring us all to bow before your throne in heaven, to receive life and pardon, mercy and grace for all eternity, this day and forever. **Amen**

Lords Prayer

We join together in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples:-

Our father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name,

Thy kingdom, thy will done,

On earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread

Forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass against us,

**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 – SOF 559 To God be the glory

1 To God be the glory, great things he has
done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
who yielded his life in atonement for sin,
and opened the life-gate that all may go in:

*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 has
done!*

2 O perfect redemption, the purchase of
blood,
to every believer the promise of God!
And every offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives:

3 Great things he has taught us, great things
he has 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:

Frances Jane van Alstyne (Fanny Crosby)
(1820–1915)

Blessing

Our worship has not ended –
It has only just begun –
For God is with us every moment of every day!

Go Then, and offer the worship he desires,
To do justice
To love kindness,
And walk humbly with him,
Every step along our way.

The Blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Rest, remain and abide with you all,
With those you love,
And those you are called to love
Now, in the name of Christ.

Amen.