

This short act of worship has been produced for you by Revd Kathleen Richardson. 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 - pray for them as they pray for you.

## Call to Worship

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:  
The whole earth is full of his glory.

Collect for today – let us pray:

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**

## Hymn Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty (Singing the Faith 11)

Sing / read / pray / proclaim the words or listen to it here  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gep0009l8mc>

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!

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.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,  
though the sinful human eye thy glory may not see,  
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,  
perfect in power, in love and purity.

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!

Reginald Heber (1783-1826)

## Prayer of Adoration

Eternal God, far beyond all we can imagine and yet present with us as we pray, we praise you for showing yourself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three in one and one in three. God, our Father:

- you are eternal, parent of all creation;
- you created us in your image,
- you love and forgive us at all times,
- you inspire our praise and worship in all places,
- you care for us, and on that we depend.

Father God, **we worship and adore you.**

God the Son, Jesus Christ:

- you came in Palestine in human form,
- and you continually come to us where we are.
- you died for us on the cross,
- and you meet us in our neighbours;
- you opened new life for us by your resurrection,
- you feed us with the bread of life.

Jesus Christ, Son of God: **we worship and adore you.**

God the Holy Spirit:

- you are the life and love of God in everyone;
- you prompt our wonder,

- you fill us with joy,
- you bring order to our chaotic lives,
- you fire us with your freedom,
- you fill us with your power

Holy Spirit of God: **we worship and adore you.**

Eternal God, one in three and three in one, we worship and adore you.

All glory and praise to you, now and always.

## Prayer of Confession

When we lose faith in the goodness of creation, and doubt your presence in our world of pain,

Lord, forgive us.

When we lose faith in Jesus as the true reflection of all that you are,

Lord God, forgive us.

When we lose faith in the Holy Spirit's presence with us, helping, strengthening, enabling, guiding,

Lord God, forgive us.

Accept us, through your own steadfast mercy, through the depth of your saving grace in Jesus, and through the power of your Spirit to make us whole; that we may give glory to your holy name, today and for ever. **Amen**

## Reflection

In common with many preachers, my heart does not rejoice when I see I am planned to preach on Trinity Sunday. There are no definitive Biblical texts that excite the imagination or make our hearts leap with recognition. The Bible does not offer us clear teaching on the interior relationships of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. It took the early church three hundred and fifty years before it came up with the doctrine of the Trinity – and that was because of the disagreements and schisms in the church that were dividing Christian thought.

The Emperor Constantin called an ecumenical council to take place in Nicea in May 325. He invited 1,800 bishops of the known churches and about 318 attended, including some from Britain, each allowed to bring with them two priests and three deacons. Over a period of two months, they consulted about the divine nature of God. They produced a statement of belief, which was amended in the next Council that took place in 381. It became known as the Nicene Creed, and is still today largely accepted as the agreed doctrine of the Trinity.

I have often felt that the celebration of the Trinity comes at the wrong place in our lectionary. We start the Christian

year in Advent and think of the God who created the world and through the prophets prepared for the coming of the Messiah to reveal God's purposes. Christmas celebrates that gift of God's son; Lent prepares us for what it will mean for Jesus to redeem the sinful world; Easter celebrates victory over death; then we lead up to Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The next Sunday we celebrate the Trinity, and it could give the impression that God is finally complete – the Father, then the Son and then the Holy Spirit.

But that is not what Scripture or doctrine suggests. God is One from the beginning – creator, redeemer, life-giver, One God, three Persons in relationship.

The Creed is said today in the Methodist Church at all important occasions – Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion, Ordination – sometimes 'Let us profess the faith of the Church' sometimes in the more personal form of 'Do you believe and trust in'.

Today, on Trinity Sunday, let us profess the faith of the Church:

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,**

maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father: through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

But as someone said, “God help us when we have faith only in doctrine!”

### Reading

Let us turn to the main Biblical reading offered for us today, the well-known passage from the prophet Isaiah.

### 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!"

For Isaiah it was the year that things fell apart, the good King Uzziah died, foreign nations were attacking the kingdom, the very thresholds of the Temple are shaken. Isaiah's vision of the supreme reality of God leads to his acknowledgement of his own sin. But sin does not disqualify him and forgiveness and cleansing are given. Hope rests on someone willing to both hear and speak, and Isaiah says, 'Here am I, send me.'

John Wesley said of this passage that the Trinity is represented by the three times repeated word – 'Holy!' and by the fact that God says. "Who will go for us?" – the Trinity united in Divine Essence.

Here is the epitome of worship – a hymn of praise, an admission of sin, a declaration of forgiveness, a call into service and a positive response.

The Church today has some difficulty in proclaiming the reality of God. In the eyes of many people the church is either irrelevant or corrupt. The call for us is to make the beliefs of the church, honed through the centuries address the needs of people today.

Last Monday was the day on which we as Methodists give thanks for the life and faith of John Wesley. It was the day on which doctrine became personal for him, that his heart was strangely warmed and he wrote in his journal, 'I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. Wesley was largely responsible for the movement that made the doctrines of the church come alive for many people. To Scripture, tradition, and reason he added the understanding of experience.

The Trinity is not a doctrine to be described, nor a thesis to be believed, but a reality of God's communication with those who will respond with faith. Wesley said 'The church

changes the world not by making converts but by making disciples'.

God is still asking "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

This is personal. What do we say?

## Prayers of Intercession

Holy God, spark of life:

Creation was envisaged by you and is sustained by you.

In gratitude we pray for the world

- that its riches and resources may be used responsibly and fairly,
- that its rulers and leaders may govern with justice, compassion and humility,
- that all people will live with understanding and respect, recognising what unites us.

We pray particularly today for the immediate needs of those involved in conflict, in natural disasters and in the pandemic.

In your love and mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy One, Jesus, Redeemer and Lord:

You lived among us to teach us and show us how to live.

In humility we pray

- for people undermined by their struggle for existence,
- for those overshadowed by death,
- for those besieged by fear and anger,
- for those consumed by systems beyond their control.

In particular we pray for those who have asked for our prayers, and those whose needs are on our minds.

In your love and mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy One, Spirit and Life-giver:

You abide in your people as a constant presence and insistent voice:

In faith we pray

- guide and direct your church to be a healing presence in your world,
- compel us to discipleship that obeys your leading.

In particular we pray for those churches who face difficulties in reopening after lockdown.

In your love and mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, let us live in the light and joy of your presence as those who nurture your creation, embody your love, and bear witness to your transforming power. **Amen**

## The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is 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**

## Hymn We sing Alan Gaunt's hymn of the Trinity - God with us: Creator, Father (Singing the Faith) 8

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 judgment,  
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) ©Stainer & Bell Ltd 1998

**Blessing**

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

**Amen**

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