

Prayers of Concern

Where there is conflict between nations and within nations; where people live in fear of the bullet and the bomb; where parents weep for children who have been killed:

God of peace, may your peace be known.

In homes filled with anger, cruelty and neglect; where there are no safe places; where poverty and addiction bring suffering and pain:

God of peace, may your peace be known.

To those whose minds are tormented by depression; to those whose hold on life is fragile; to those whose lives are filled with stress:

God of peace, may your peace be known.

To those who are nearing the end of life; to those who love and care for them:

God of peace, may your peace be known.

May your peace be known to us, and may we be bearers of peace in our world.
Amen.

Please add your own prayers or use prayers from the District prayer sheet.

The Lord's Prayer **Our Father...**

Offering: Almighty God, take the gifts of time and money I set aside. Bless them and use them in the work of your church and for your Kingdom. Amen

Hymn: [StF 404 / H&P 315](#): God's Spirit is in my heart

A Closing Blessing

God to enfold you, Christ to uphold you, Spirit to keep you in heaven's sight; so may God grace you, heal and embrace you, lead you through darkness into the light. *John L Bell, Singing the Faith 648*

Prayers from Roots for Worship except where stated

District Worship for Trinity Sunday 7th June 2020

Prepared by Rev Richard Andrew, Chair Darlington District

Preparation: *Take a few moments to be still and remind yourself that you are in the presence of God, your Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. If you have a candle you might like to light it and watch it flicker in the motion of the air in your room. Say or sing these words a few times – 'Be still and know that I am God'.*



Prayer of Approach:

O God, you are at the heart of creation. Your word brings life into being; your peace gives living its fulfilment; your Spirit unites us into your Son. We draw near, seeking your love in our hearts; your wisdom in our minds, your power in our lives. Receive us with grace in the name of your Son. Amen.

Hymn: [StF 11 / H&P 7](#): Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!

If you have access to the internet there is a beautiful version of this hymn sung by Audrey Assad at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgHrNNM23p8>

A Prayer of Adoration based on [Psalm 8](#)

O Lord, our sovereign, **how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

Your glory reaches beyond the highest heavens,

O Lord, our sovereign, **how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

By the youngest to the eldest your praise is spoken forth,

O Lord, our sovereign, **how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

In sky, on land, and in water your creativity is seen,

O Lord, our sovereign, **how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

Amen

Prayer of Confession

Holy God, Maker of all, have mercy on us.

Jesus Christ, Servant of the poor, have mercy on us.

Holy Spirit, Breath of life, have mercy on us.

(Silence)

I confess to my brokenness: to the ways I wound my life, the lives of others, and the life of the world. May God forgive me, Christ renew me, and the Spirit enable me to grow in love. Amen
(Iona Community, adapted)

Reading: [Matthew 28:16-20](#)

A Reflection on the Bible Passage

There is a famous story told about St. Augustine of Hippo, one of the Church's greatest writers on the Trinity. One day he was walking on a beach contemplating the mystery of the Trinity. He saw a boy in front of him who had dug a hole in the sand and was going out to the sea again and again and bringing some water to pour into the hole. St. Augustine asked him, "What are you doing?" "I'm going to pour the entire ocean into this hole," said the boy. "That is impossible, the whole ocean will not fit in the hole you have made," said St. Augustine. The boy replied, "And you cannot fit the Trinity in your tiny little brain."

There is an important truth in this story. God is not something that we can capture or explain. God is God and we are human. God is mystery – not a mystery like an Agatha Christie novel which can be solved if only we have the right clues, but mystery in the sense that God is incomprehensibly bigger and greater than anything than we can imagine or explain. God's mystery is something, as our sisters and brothers in Eastern Orthodox churches would tell us, to be entered into, to be lived. The prayer of confession we have used from the Iona Community is an invitation to participate in the life of God. The same is true of the gospel passage – it is an invitation to participate. And there lies the crux. The Trinity is not something which we have to explain as if what is required of us is a conjuring trick or a piece of mental gymnastics as we attempt to work out how three goes into one and vice versa. No. At its simplest the Trinity is a way of pointing to the God who is made known in the biblical story. The

God of Israel has a name – Father, Son, Holy Spirit. The one God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Moses and Miriam, has made him/herself known – notice again how inadequate human words are to describe God – in Jesus Christ. God's Word was made flesh, has lived, died, risen and ascended. The God whose Spirit brooded over the waters at creation at the beginning has now been poured out upon that same creation as God shapes the new creation by Word and Spirit. There is much more that could be said – indeed has to be said – about the Trinity. What is important to recognise though is that whilst we cannot fully comprehend God, God has made God's self known in Word and Spirit. If we take this seriously then we are forced to think about God in trinitarian ways.

Here are three ways of thinking about this. All of them are inadequate tools – we will never find tools perfectly fit for purpose – but they are a helpful way into living within the mystery of the Trinity.

- C.S. Lewis once described a simple way of thinking of God as Trinity. God is beyond us; God is beside us; God is within us.
- Some modern theologians speak about the 'dance' of the Trinity. They note that one of the best ways of thinking about God is as a set of relationships, a community. God's life is an invitation to join in, to participate in God's community. This has implications for the ways in which we think about communities. If God is relational then we too need to prioritise relationship in everything we do.
- Another contemporary way of thinking about the Trinity is in terms of the *missio Dei*, a Latin term meaning the mission of God. Matthew 28:16-20, sometimes called the Great Commission, invites us to share in the life of God. The baptismal formula, '...of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,' is a reminder of something universal and inclusive – the whole of God for the whole of the world. Interestingly the work of God is shared with us. We are to go, and as we go, baptise, and as we go and baptise, make disciples. Seemingly this is an invitation for many, not just for us.

What questions are you left asking yourself now?

Take a few moments to reflect on what God is saying to you.