

HOLY TRINITY AND ST PETER'S

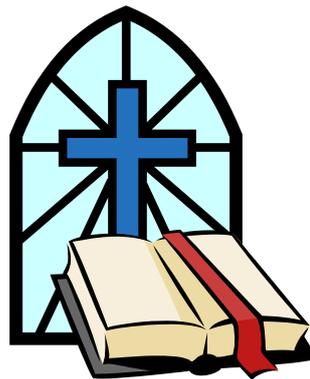


Sunday 14th June 2020

1st Sunday after Trinity

**A very warm welcome to all those joining us in our virtual worship today.
If possible, use this service at 10am so we are worshipping together.**

Try saying the parts in bold aloud.



Introduction

We are thinking of adopting a different theme for each Sunday after Trinity about Christian life. The one for this Sunday is taken from the themes included in the old Alternative Service Book. It is the People of God/The Church's unity and fellowship.

In the Old Testament the Israelites were identified as the People of God but with the coming of Jesus Christ the phrase `People of God` is seen as being available to all those people who believe in God and follow the teaching of Jesus. A person is seen as becoming a Person of God not through their physical birth but by a spiritual birth through faith in Christ and through Baptism with him.

The People of God have a role in sharing the Good News of Jesus through our worship, our prayers, our service to others, and in the way we live our lives obeying Jesus's commandment to love one another. So united in fellowship with God with people in other churches in Hartshill, in this country, and throughout the world we pray that our worship today will be pleasing and fitting to God.

Opening Prayers

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
And also with you

This is the day that the Lord has made

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Lord, you have chosen men and women to be the agents of your purpose in the world. Bind us together, enable us to grow up into Jesus; help us to proclaim to others your saving grace; in the name and by the power of Jesus Christ. Amen

Holy God, faithful and unchanging: enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth, and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love, that we may truly worship you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Confession

We have too often exchanged the worship of the living God for idols of our own imagining. As we gather to offer our praises to the holy and undivided Trinity, and to worship him in spirit and in truth, let us call to mind our sins.

Let us begin by reflecting on the week that has just passed:

Consider the things which we have done, or not done, and our thoughts which we now wish to say sorry to God for:

Let us return to the Lord our God and say to him:

Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you. We are not worthy to be called your children. We turn to you again. Have mercy on us, bring us back to yourself as those who once were dead but now have life through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

May the God of love bring us back to himself, forgive us our sins, and assure us of his eternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collect for today

O God, the strength of all those who put their trust in you, mercifully accept our prayers and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in the keeping of your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; 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

Readings for today

Faithful Creator, whose mercy never fails: deepen our faithfulness to you and to your living Word, who is Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Old Testament reading today is from Psalm 100

A psalm. For giving thanks

¹ Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

² Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

³ Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

⁵ For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Our New Testament Reading is Romans Chapter 5 verses 1 to 8.

Peace and hope.

⁵ Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Talk

Prayer - Heavenly Father may these written words be able to deliver your message of hope, love and salvation. Amen

Romans 5 was written by Paul who in writing to the faithful Christian believers living in Rome, and whom Paul had never met, was exhorting them to try and reach out to all citizens of Rome. Rome at that time was a multicultural city of over one million people of many different religions and beliefs. In writing to the church in Rome Paul was seeking to emphasise how Jesus is for everyone, for all people of all nations. Looking at Paul's letter in the context of today we will see how, although written nearly 2,000 years ago, it continues to resonate its message.

Romans 5 could have been written for current times. We would all recognise the difficulties we have all been living through in the past months and the real need for Christian values to be witnessed and experienced throughout society. As Christians we have all been praying corporately as part of the weekly services or on a personal level asking for God to help us through this crisis. We have even, been blessed enough to witness some of these Christian values in response to our prayers; one example is in the actions of all our health workers who have risked themselves day after day in the face of an unknown and terrible virus.. There have many more great and small acts, some very personal to each of us and some well publicised such as Colonel Tom Moore's efforts. In our prayers seeking relief from this virus, these responses are what we have seen as the outcome of our prayers. And these actions of helping others during the covid pandemic were carried out by people of all faiths and nationalities. I believe that through the Grace of God the people of God's prayers have inspired these people to strive to do something to alleviate the suffering experienced.

Likewise Paul's letter is seeking to encourage the followers of Jesus that those with other beliefs were just as worthy of Christ's acceptance as those in the church in Rome are. And in their actions, whether known or unbeknown they are being the hands and feet of God who is God of everything.

So, by the grace of God he has definitely answered our prayers to help get through and overcome this pandemic and when we recognise God's grace in response to our prayers this helps to bolster our faith. We believe that God continues to watch over us and even though we fail him on a daily basis, his forgiveness and mercy is completely unconditional and he responds to our prayer requests. And we know his hand in these things when we either read of the actions of others or experience them ourselves. In God's love and our knowledge of his authority over all things we gain a sense of inner calm which is only felt when we are assured of his love as his children. Jesus gave his life on the cross to save us from sin and we are now free in the knowledge that our Father in heaven is working through us and through others for our benefit.

Ephesians chapter 2 verses 8 -9 tell us:

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

Paul expresses "glory in our sufferings" in verse 3 of his letter, which seems strange as none of us enjoy suffering. The glory is not the suffering itself but how we respond to suffering. It is in our praying to God and his response to those prayers in his boundless grace where our suffering becomes glorious. It is perfectly natural to look for something good and an end to suffering, so when something is beyond our control, we need to give our troubles and anxieties to God, even though some days it can feel like an enormous burden on our shoulders. In our doing so this produces perseverance as Paul writes: :

"Not only so, but we^[c] also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope."

What does Paul mean by perseverance? The dictionary term for perseverance is "a persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success."

Paul means this is more about staying with our belief in God no matter what we face and reinforcing this through prayer and praise. We don't always see an immediate answer to our prayer and often we don't know what is happening as we can never see all that God does. If you liken this to gardening (a theme very topical in people's weekly words of encouragement recently,) we may plant seeds and not see anything for weeks. The seeds will need care and attention by constant watering and feeding. It is the same with our prayers;; we need to reaffirm them and keep the relationship with God going despite whatever life places in our way. Our perseverance in prayer sees growth, of if you like, ensures our spiritual top up, as we share in our love for God. Similarly, for the seeds to grow they too will need our constant care and attention.

The book of James chapter 1 verse 12 puts it another way:

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

When we reach out to God to be involved in our lives, he sends his Holy spirit to help us with all that we need; the Holy Spirit comforts and guides us, brings healing and gives us the strength to persevere in our seeking help from God in faith. God is always with us and always helps us. We note how Paul emphasises the words perseverance twice and then character twice. His emphasis is to assure us that our strength is found in God, strength that is freely given to anyone who needs it – we have only to ask. It is the strength of love and compassion that can overcome any problem or just give us the sense of acceptance to help us to go on another day in circumstances where we may feel despondent. In his letter Paul teaches that each step in faith leads to another; in faith we pray and God's response is to support us in perseverance to keep on going. One action leads to another to another.

Paul also talks about the character that God has helped to shape in us. As we open ourselves to him, his promised Holy Spirit works through us and helps us in all things. In turn we gain hope. Hope is a powerful emotion that can drive us on to endure what is troubling us. verse 5 tells us:

"And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

When we help others who are suffering by using our experience and Christian love are we not building spiritual character, thus witnessing and advocating God's love? A Christ-like witness for everyone without discrimination?

God our Father has decreed that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus and not by any action ourselves. The grace of God loves, forgives, and saves all of us because of Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross.

In verses 6-8 Paul is reminding us of the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross. His death assures us that despite all of our sins, God will always forgive us if we go to him in humility and ask to be forgiven. Many people would not want to give their lives for a "just cause" yet Jesus gave all of himself for all of us, despite how unworthy we are. It is only through his sacrifice that we, his children, can be redeemed.

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die" . ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Jesus himself also spoke of this as Mark chapter 10 verse 45 shows:

“ For the Son of man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and gave his life as a ransom for many”

In Paul’s letter we have seen that his intention is to show that salvation through Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection is for everyone. For all citizens of all nations. Paul’s words of exhortation to the Christian believers in Rome sought to encourage and enthuse them in their faith in Christ. As Paul explained perseverance and character are what is gained in our faithfulness to Christ, guiding us on how to maintain our relationship with God through his grace and through the gift of his Holy Spirit.

Final Prayer

Help us Lord to connect with you through the gift of your Holy Spirit. May we obtain comfort and strength in whatever our needs are and enable us to serve you in what you require of each of us as Christians. 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.

Statement of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God:

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

A prayer of thanks for our giving to God

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.

All things come from you, and of your own do we give you.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father we give thanks today for your love, unconditional and everlasting. We thank you for sending your Son to be our saviour and for the sacrifice that he made for all on the cross.

Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer.

We pray for the church throughout the world and ask you to give strength and courage to all those who minister in your name. We give thanks for the hard work of all in the Coventry Diocese as they tackle the ongoing challenges of the Coronavirus pandemic. Be with them at all times and guide and support them when they are in need.

Strengthen Christopher and John our bishops, all who work in your name here in Hartshill and Galley Common, 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 to the world.

Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father we pray for all the people of the world, we pray particularly for those who are in need whether due to war, natural disaster, famine or disease. We pray for all people who are persecuted or mistreated because of their race, colour or creed, be with them and help to restore peace and love where there is division and anger. Bless and guide Elizabeth our Queen, give wisdom to all in authority and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and peace; that people may honour one another and seek the common good.

Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father we pray for the children and young people around the world and here in Hartshill, we pray for Teachers at these strangest of times and for all key workers and those working to restore some kind of normality as lockdown restrictions are gradually lifted. Be with them Lord, help them to understand your love. Protect them from the hazards often found in today's society and show them the joy and riches of living a Christian life. Give grace to us our families and friends and to all our neighbours; that we may serve in Christ in one another and love as he loves us.

Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father we pray for the sick, we ask you to bring them comfort and relief from their pain and suffering. In particular we think of those listed in our notices today and take a moment of silence to pray for them and anyone else known to us who is in need of your help due to ill health, worry, loneliness or other troubles.

<Pause>

Heavenly Father be with all those we have just prayed for, give them courage and faith at this time, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father we remember those who have died in faith and we pray for their families and friends. Grant them comfort and strength as they grieve, shine your light upon them, that they may know your peace, and ease their pain through the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8.38-39)

Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer.

Finally we give thanks for the gift of your grace dear Lord. Thank you for all that you do for us and for all that you provide. Help us to see the wonder of your love and to be forever grateful for the many gifts you rain down on us

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. (Romans 5.3-4)

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

The Diocesan Prayer

Father, pour out Your spirit upon us.

Grant us a new vision of Your glory, a new experience of Your power, a new faithfulness to Your word, and a new consecration to Your service, that Your love may grow among us and Your kingdom come, Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayerful reflections:

Spend some time thanking God for what you have and the blessings you have received.

Pray for those on the front line who are still serving so faithfully.

Pray for those whose livelihoods have been impacted.

Pray for those on your heart.

Pray for yourself – be honest with God about your fears and feelings.

The Lord's Prayer As our Saviour taught us so we pray:

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.**

Closing Prayers

Eternal Father, we thank you for nourishing us with your heavenly gifts: may our communion with you strengthen us in faith, build us up in hope, and make us grow in love; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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 forever. Amen.

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.

The Blessing

The Lord God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the holy and undivided Trinity, guard us, save us, and bring us to that heavenly city, where he lives and reigns for ever and ever; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

The Commission

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ. Amen.

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Messages

We do want to encourage our church members (both Churches) to use this section to give messages of encouragement to others or items of reflection. Thank you to Sharon, Sally and Nick B-B for your messages last week.

Message from Heather

The church is still open even if the buildings remain closed.

As I am sure you will have heard it said (and is proving to be true) coming out of lockdown is more complicated and nuanced than it was going into it. As a church we have the added complication in that we take our laws from the government, our advice from the central Church of England and that we are under the authority of the local Diocese – whose combination of rules don't always completely match up!

By now I am sure you will have heard the government directive that in principle church buildings are allowed to open from this weekend for private prayer. The more detailed reality of that is that we have to undergo risk assessments, thorough opening up and cleaning regimes, ensure the building is reconfigured in a way to enable social distancing and measures will have to be put in place to enable it to be covid secure. **In reality this means that we are not be able to safely open up the building straight away** (or even for a long while yet) which I know may be disappointing for some and, if honest, a relief for others (ie for those shielding or self-isolating).

I know many of you want to 'go back to normal' but with the legislation in force at the moment the church (in terms of the building) will be far from 'normal' for a long time. In the building we still can't worship together, pray together, or share fellowship together – but as the church that is what we have been trying to continue to do by facilitating these services together each week.

We will keep you posted but for now the church buildings remain closed....but the "church" – which is you!!! has always remained open and active in the community. We are the body of Christ...and we have a duty of care to keep people as safe as possible...so please do be patient with us as we navigate together the best way forward.

We may do a more formal questionnaire in the future to look at people's hopes or expectations but in the meantime please feel free to email me with your thoughts on this – to feed into the team looking at the way ahead.

Message from Jan B-B

Nick has persuaded me to write a message – in case anyone was wondering what I was doing with my time! Apart from the day-to day chores, I have found the need to keep my hands busy, so I have been crocheting rainbows for family & neighbours, sewing face masks, cross-stitching a unicorn for our granddaughter and now sewing bunting for 2 grandchildren's birthdays. Also, reading many books – mostly supplied by my good friend Wendy! I have also done more baking than usual, depending on the availability of flour! One other thing which has been keeping me going is regular chats with friends & family. Isn't technology wonderful? To see our grandchildren while we set them challenges, or just sing nursery rhymes with them, has been some comfort (plus sending virtual hugs). I have also enjoyed chatting with the Needles & Natter group via WhatsApp – we send each other photos of our latest creations, along with shots of tea & biscuits, as if we were really meeting on a Friday morning! We were very pleased to welcome Heather into our little group – her cross-stitch is coming on (finished by Christmas?). All this virtual contact is helping to distract from the fact that face-to-face contact is missing. I recommend contact in any way possible!

Notices for the week ahead

We have deleted and edited a number of regular notices and combined them for both Holy Trinity and St Peter's:

Coronavirus Guidance

Following Church of England advice, there are no services of public worship at Holy Trinity or St Peter's Church for the foreseeable future. This sadly includes all baptisms and weddings. The situation with funerals is also extremely difficult for those mourning the loss of a loved one.

Now the law has changed to allow the possibility of the church to be opened for supervised, socially distanced and Covid secure private prayer our wardens and some PCC members are discussing the possible ways forward in line with government legalities and Church of England guidelines. Please pray for us as we seek a safe and legally compliant way forward. (See Heather's email and message for more information.)

Please hold in your prayers all our wedding couples, funeral families and Christening families who are affected by this.

At the moment the Churches' Premises are closed to everyone- please do not attempt to access them with any keys that you may have.

Daily Hope

Daily Hope is a free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers launched by the Church of England. It has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind. So, if you know someone in this situation, please phone them and tell them about free-phone **0800 804 8044**, and why not try it for yourselves.

Food Bank

Obviously due the measures taken to deal with the coronavirus we are not able to continue with the bringing of items to Church or deliveries to the warehouse.

This is at a time when the Food Bank is under huge pressure, especially with not all children being able to attend school.

Can we urge everyone to consider if they can give a donation of money?

Please visit their website- www.nuneaton.foodbank.org.uk and click on the Donate button at the top right of the page.

This is a really valuable way we can collectively as Churches show our love to the vulnerable people in our society.

Scams - Be careful

Please be aware there are an increased number of scams doing the rounds trying to take advantage of these difficult times. Before clicking on links, giving out bank details etc... do check they are genuine as there are some very plausible and convincing scammers.

Gift Days

Holy Trinity's Gift Day was last Sunday (but it is definitely not too late to respond) and St Peter's Gift Day is on Sunday June 28th. Both Gift Days give us a specific opportunity to review the use and giving of our gifts to God and the church.

We should also specifically look at our financial giving to the church.

Usually, there would be Gift Day envelopes available at the back of church, of course, during lockdown this is not possible. Therefore, if you feel called to give an extra amount to the church for its service and mission to the community please consider making a payment online (bank details available from Wendy, Nick Miles or Heather for Holy Trinity and Heather or Sharon for St Peter's) or, if you usually give cash, please set an amount aside at home ready for when we are able to worship together again (as hopefully you are doing with your envelopes).

Although this notice is specifically about Gift Day we are also very concerned about covering ongoing expenses of the churches especially for those who give regularly on the plate during Church Services which of course cannot currently take place. Can we urge you to consider a regular monthly bank payment (we appreciate this is not possible for everyone)

For Holy Trinity this can be done through the Parish Giving Scheme. If you have not joined this scheme and would like to find out more about this please speak to Nick Miles (76394339) or Wendy (76397183).

For St Peter's, if you do not already give through standing order or bank transfer but would like to do so please contact Heather (76392266) as she can forward to you the appropriate bank details.

The other biblical principle is that giving in itself is a gift as it is indeed "more blessed to give than to receive".

May you know God's blessing to you during and after our Gift Days.

Any items on messages: prayers; prayers answered; birthdays or anniversaries to be included on the weekly service and notice sheet please email Nick Blamire-Brown at njbb@hotmail.co.uk

If you want to be added to the email prayer chain/group or have any prayers you want to put on the prayer chain please email:- prayers.holytrinity@gmail.com

Please be aware that all documents are now going to be much more in the public domain (emailed out and they have been posted too on Facebook and possibly church websites in the future.) Please be careful to get permission from any person you wish to mention.

Please pray for the following in the coming week:

You may wish to print this section off for use during week

Coronavirus Crisis

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support,
be with those who care for the sick, the anxious
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Leaders and Clergy

Heather and Sharon in their ministries in Hartshill and Galley Common;
Kate and Debbie our St Peter's churchwardens, Nick and Sally our lay readers and
Holy Trinity's churchwardens; Ruth & Rob Kinderman in their youth work; Michael
Brandsma in his ministry in Atherstone; and Bill Walton in his curacy.

Pray too for our Archbishops, Bishops and Bishops' Staff team as they lead the
nation and diocese.

Pray for the government and local/national/international leaders as they make life
changing and potentially life-saving decisions.

Those on our hearts at Holy Trinity

Rachel M and Family; Mark J; Maureen; Olive; Julie; Jan & Tony; Mark P; Rebecca;
Jane, Charlotte M.

Also for care firms who are under severe pressure to protect both staff and
residents.

Those on our hearts at St Peter's

Lucy W, Lucy and Michael B, Mark, Brian V and others known to us.

Family and Friends of those recently deceased

xxx

