

## THE BRIDE VALLEY CHURCHES:

### Telephone Service for Sunday 12 June 2022 – Trinity Sunday

The service can be accessed by phone on **01308 293062**.

Welcome to this act of worship for the Bride Valley Benefice for Trinity Sunday, which has been put together by Liz Howlett, with prayers composed by Sue Taylor, one of the churchwardens at Holy Trinity, Swyre.

In the beginning, before time, before people, before the world began, **God was.**

Here and now, among us and beside us, clearer than air, closer than breathing, **God is.**

In all that is to come, when we have turned to dust and human knowledge has been completed, **God will be.**

Not despairing of earth, but delighting in it, not condemning the world, but redeeming it through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, **God was, God is, God will be.**

#### *Hymn: Be still, for the presence of the Lord*

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here;

Come bow before Him now with reverence and fear.

In Him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground;

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.

2. Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;

He burns with holy fire, with splendour He is crowned.

How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of light!

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

3 Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place;

He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister His grace.

No work too hard for Him, in faith receive from Him;

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

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#### *Prayer of Confession and Absolution*

In the beauty of the earth, in the silence of our hearts, in the community of your church, in all acts of grace and kindness, in forgiving from the heart and in worship from the soul, your Spirit confirms the truth in which we seek to live.

If knowing this, we have failed to love you, our Maker, been hesitant to follow your Son, and suspected the power of your Spirit, Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**

If we have desired comfort more than devotion and if we have satisfied our wants more than we have served your will, Christ have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**

If we have limited our company to those like us and if we have restricted our conversation to matters of no consequence, Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**

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.**

#### *The Collect*

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.**

## **Proverbs 8: 1 – 4; 22 – 31**

Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: 'To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live.

The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth— when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil. When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world.

*Gospel Reading*

## **John 16: 12 - 15**

Jesus said to his disciples, 'I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

*Reflection*

## **Glimpses of God**

I have come to love Trinity Sunday! It is a day set aside by the church to celebrate God in all God's glory. You may (or may not) be pleased to know that I have given up trying to explain the Trinity on Trinity Sunday! I am truly grateful that Christians are offered ways of experiencing God which defy explanation, which go beyond the inadequacy of our words, which bring us into silent wonder. There is an ancient tradition within the faith (it is known as the apophatic tradition) and it acknowledges how much we don't know about God, how the best response often is silence, rather than yet more words. I am minded to finish this reflection here! If we think we have God all sewn up, that at some point in this life we will know everything there is to know about God, then that in itself is proof that we don't. Often those who are furthest on their journey of faith into the heart of God realise more and more how little they truly know of God.

In our gospel reading for today, Jesus is talking for the last time with his disciples before his arrest and death. There is so much he wants to say, as he knows there isn't much more time, but he also realises they can't bear to hear much more from him then. Also, there are things that they really won't understand until they have gone through the experience of his death and resurrection. Jesus reassures them that the Spirit will have an ongoing relationship with them and the Spirit will continue with their learning. It is heartening to know that the Holy Spirit did not restrict this role of enabling learning with the first disciples – the Spirit is very much here with us now, willing to guide us, to help us discern the next steps to take as individuals, as church communities, and in the whole created world - and to enrich our understandings of God.

As created beings, we are given glimpses of God – sometimes through other humans, sometimes in nature, in reading the bible, in being with others in the faith community. Our brains are such that we have to form images or metaphors of God for ourselves. There may be an element of truth in the image, but we cannot comprehend the whole of God in our tiny brain. And these images sometimes end up less than useful for us and sometimes we need to let them go. I wonder what your image of God might be. I wonder if the image that you have now is different from the one or ones you have had in the past. Let me say a bit more about what I mean, by telling a story of what happened to one person. I know

someone who had a faith in God, she had been to church for as long as she could remember. She was seeking to live her life 'for God'. She reached a crisis point in her adult life – things were very tough – and human relationships were beginning to break down. It was as if they were running into the sand. The old ways of relating weren't working any more. At the same time, she came to realise that the image she had of God was one that had largely been the same from childhood – her image of God was of a stern, judgemental parent figure, 'over her' and unforgiving. This God demanded perfection in everything and she knew very well that she was not perfect! She came to realise that this image was not one she could live with any more – a relationship with this image of God had also to run into the sand.

It can be scary, when the old ways are finished and new ways are still in the future. She kept going to church – she felt she had nothing to say to God, and she wasn't at all sure about her own faith, but at least she could be held, upheld by the faith of those gathered together week by week. She found it helpful to meet with someone who listened to her story – they met regularly over a couple of years. The listener didn't try to give advice or make it all better – they listened, they sat with her whilst she acknowledged the pain of the situation she found herself in. It was through this experience that she eventually came to a fresh image of God. She thought to herself, 'If x (the listener), an imperfect human being, can sit with me in the pain, then how much more can God sit with me, alongside me, in this way.' Not above in judgement, but alongside with compassion. This image contained much more of the forgiving, compassionate nature of God. The God who forgave frightened followers who ran away in the hour of need. The God who took the weight of the world's pain and evil upon their shoulders on the cross out of love for the world.

This story is just one small part of one person's journey of faith. We are all invited on a journey by God and it may well be a journey with differences for each one of us, for we are all uniquely created in God's image.

Finally, I wonder what kind of image of God our first reading from Proverbs offers to you today. Here we see God as creator, bringing the world into being – bringing order out of chaos – setting the boundaries for the waters and so on. All this rings bells with the creation stories in Genesis. But this passage is a bit different because we see that God has a female companion called Wisdom. Some of the Hebrew words that describe Wisdom here can be translated different ways, so it is possible for us to imagine God joined by a little child who is taking great delight in playing with God's creation, as if she were a toddler playing with new toys! Or playing in the new created mud with a stick. A wonderful, playful picture of God and God's wisdom, rejoicing together in the goodness and freshness of creation. Amen.

*Song: Clap your hands all you nations*

1 Clap your hands all you nations,  
Amen, Hallelujah!  
shout for joy all you people  
Amen, Hallelujah!  
Holy is the most high;  
Amen, Hallelujah!  
mighty over the earth  
Amen, Hallelujah!

2 To the shouting in triumph,  
Amen, Hallelujah!  
to the blasting of trumpets,  
Amen, Hallelujah!  
God has gone up, Amen, Hallelujah!  
God ascends over all. Amen, Hallelujah!

3 Those on earth who are mighty  
Amen, Hallelujah!  
still belong to our Maker,  
Amen, Hallelujah!  
God exalted on high,  
Amen, Hallelujah!  
God forever our Lord.  
Amen, Hallelujah!

*John Bell (born 1949) after Psalm 47) from Psalms of  
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*Prayers*

As we quiet our minds and still our thoughts in the bustle of the world about us; we pray with confidence, and thank God for His goodness.

Praise God who made us, **Praise God's Son who redeemed us,**

Praise the Holy Spirit who abides with us, **Praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Blessed Trinity.**

Father of all, you have built up your church through the love and dedication of all who have committed their life to you. We ask a blessing on all clergy especially those who have inspired us and walk at our side on our journey of faith. Lord in your Mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

In the world we pray for all people caught up in the conflicts in Ukraine, Palestine, Myanmar. We ask a blessing on politicians worldwide; that they may have the understanding to know and the courage to do what is right. Lord in your Mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

On this Trinity Sunday, we pray for all churches dedicated to the Holy Trinity; remembering especially our little church in Swyre. Grant O Lord that all those who enter these holy places may find inspiration, peace and joy. Lord in your Mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Living Lord we remember all those who are sick in body or anguish of mind. Grant them peace and courage today in the knowledge of your presence. Lord in your Mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who mourn the death of friend or family member. We give thanks for the lives of those who have gone; and entrust them to Gods loving care and keeping.

Lord in your Mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Rejoicing in the fellowship of the Blessed virgin Mary, and all the Saints and Angels, we commend ourselves and all people to God's unfailing love.

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

*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**

*The Peace*

Peace to you from God our heavenly Father. Peace to you 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.**

As our worship draws to a close, let us pray for God's blessing on each other for the coming week and for always.

*Blessing*

It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always. Amen.

*Song: The Spirit lives to set us free*

1 The Spirit lives to set us free,  
walk, walk in the light.  
He binds us all in unity,  
walk, walk in the light.  
*Walk in the light, walk in the light,  
walk in the light, walk in the light of the Lord*

2 Jesus promised life to all,  
walk, walk in the light.  
The dead were awakened by his call,  
walk, walk in the light.

*Chorus*

3 By Jesus' love our wounds are healed,  
walk, walk in the light.  
The Father's kindness is revealed,  
walk, walk in the light.

*Chorus*

4 The Spirit lives in you and me,  
walk, walk in the light.  
His light will shine for all to see,  
walk, walk in the light.

*Chorus*

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