**Transcript May 30th: Trinity Sunday**

**Welcome and opening prayer- Rev Mark Poole**

A very warm welcome to this time of worship as we gather from near and far in this way to celebrate the Holy Trinity.

We hope that this service will lead you deeper into God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that it will bless you richly.

**Let us pray:**

Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, we thank you for coming physically to be with us. You became human. A real human with a real body. Who can imagine that you, God, the truth of eternal life, emptied yourself of love and became man? The people who witnessed your life saw you with their physical eyes. They felt you with their actual hands. You weren’t a vision or a dream but the real God that came to bring joy and life to us. Thank You, Jesus!

**Amen.**

**Hymn - At the Name of Jesus**

1 At the name of Jesus

every knee shall bow,

every tongue confess him

king of glory now;

this the Father's pleasure,

that we call him Lord,

who from the beginning w

as the mighty word.

2 At his voice creation

sprang at once to sight,

all the angel faces,

all the hosts of light;

thrones and dominations,

stars upon their way,

all the heavenly orders,

in their great array.

3 Humbled for a season,

to receive a name

from the lips of sinners

unto whom he came;

faithfully he bore it

spotless to the last,

brought it back victorious

when from death he passed.

4 Bore it up triumphant

with its human light,

through all ranks of creatures

to the central height;

to the eternal Godhead,

to the Father's breast,

filled it with the glory

of that perfect rest.

5. In your hearts enthrone him;

there let him subdue

all that is not holy,

all that is not true;

crown him as your captain

in temptation's hour,

let his will enfold you in its light and power.

6. Truly, this Lord Jesus

Shall return again,

With his Father’s glory,

With his angel train;

for all wreaths of empire

meet upon his brow,

and our hearts confess him

King of glory now.

**Confession & Absolution:**

God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us by the Holy Spirit.

Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness,

all slander and malice,

and confess our sins to God our redeemer.

Father, you come to meet us when we return to you:

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Jesus, you died on the cross for our sins:

Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy**.

Spirit, you give us life and peace:

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

May the Father forgive us

by the death of his Son

and strengthen us

to live in the power of the Spirit

all our days.

**Amen.**

### **Old Testament reading - Isaiah 6.1-8**

***A Vision of God in the Temple***

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 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!”

**Prayer of Adoration to God the father**

Almighty God, how wonderful you are. Creation cries out in awe of your power, The universe shines with your glory and greatness. Almighty Lord, how majestic you are. Each atom and molecule carry a tiny part of your plan, Every microbe speaks of your breathtaking beauty. Almighty Father, how awesome you are. The mountain ranges reflect your heights, And the gentle valleys your mercy. Almighty One, how creative you are. Each tree and flower are filled with your wonder and bounty, Each life resounds with intricacy and miracles. I will lift my eyes to you, my wonderful, majestic, awesome God. (a prayer from [www.lords-prayer-words.com](http://www.lords-prayer-words.com))

**Song - I, The Lord Of Sea And Sky**

1 I, the Lord of sea and sky,

I have heard My people cry.

All who dwell in dark and sin,

My hand will save.

I who made the stars of night,

I will make their darkness bright.

Who will bear My light to them?

Whom shall I send

**Refrain**

Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?

I have heard You calling in the night.

I will go Lord, if You lead me.

I will hold Your people in my heart.

2 I, the Lord of snow and rain,

I have borne my people’s pain.

I have wept for love of them.

They turn awayI will break their hearts of stone,

give them hearts for love alone.

I will speak my words to them.

Whom shall I send?

3. I, the Lord of wind and flame,

I will tend the poor and lame.

I will set a feast for them,

My hand will save

Finest bread I will provide,

Till their hearts be satisfied.

I will give My life to them,

Whom shall I send?

**Reading - John 3.1-17**

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’

The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

**Homily - Rev Keith Albans**

Last Monday, Methodists and many others observed what we call Wesley Day – celebrating the occasion in 1738 when, as he wrote in his journal, John Wesley went unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street. Around a Quarter before nine, he said he felt his heart strangely warmed as he realised that he did trust in Christ – and the rest as they say is history. But to me the most remarkable thing about the evening is what Wesley heard that moved him so – it was someone reading the preface to Martin Luther’s commentary on Paul’s letter to the Romans! Now I have read some of Luther’s writings – they’re interesting, often polemical but rarely if ever do they excite me!

Today is Trinity Sunday… I wonder whether that makes your heart feel strangely warmed? Or does it make you worried that the preacher is going to try and make sense of it with a lecture on Church history, some trite analogy about the three phases of water, or pontificate on why the word perichoresis is so important to Christian theology!

*David Lose, a Sermon Blogger, writing in 2010 said: “Do you ever wonder if maybe, just maybe, doctrine is dead? Not dead in the sense of not true, but more in the sense of Paul Tillich's "dead symbols" – a symbol that no longer communicates the revelation it once bore. I have a hunch that may be the case with a number of our cherished doctrines… – we've turned these once lively terms into things to be professed rather than living parts of the Christian story that we confess because they have the capacity to affect us, to make a difference in our lives.”*

How does talk of the Trinity make you feel? And how might it help direct our daily living? If it is to mean anything then it needs to connect

head with heart in both directions…

Today’s Bible readings introduce us to two life-changing encounters with God – one through the head and one through the heart.

Nicodemus – a religious leader and teacher, a Pharisee, comes to Jesus at night and acknowledges his status as a Rabbi and as a teacher from God… And the conversation begins a bit like one between two dons in the Senior Common Room! It reads more like gynaecology than theology… until Jesus begins to take Nicodemus beyond the intellectual realm and into the experiential realm… “what is born of flesh is flesh, what is born of the Spirit is spirit (v6). But Nicodemus is confused and says to Jesus, “How can these things be?” and after rebuking him Jesus goes on to speak of heavenly things, ascending and descending, before declaring God’s loving intention and action through his Son… Nicodemus’ reaction is not recorded by John – but in Chapter 7 it’s clear that he’s been affected by his encounter with Jesus, and in Chapter 19 he is with Joseph of Arimathea, taking Jesus’ body to the garden tomb… He has become ‘one of us’!

Contrast Nicodemus’ slow-burn intellectual encounter with Isaiah’s technicolour full-on emotional experience… On the one hand we’re given the detail of what he saw – which is clearly something out of this world in form, in size, and with all kind of visual effects. But on the other hand, we’re left in no doubt as to how it made him feel and what it made him do… He feels utterly small, imperfect – and yet he knows he’s seen God… and when the experience continues, and he hears a voice of call – he can only respond in one way… Here I am, send me… And while that may be an emotional response, if you read on in Isaiah 6 – the bit we never seem to read – God earths Isaiah’s call into the stuff of everyday as he commissions him to tell the people what God requires…

Head and heart – often pitted against each other? There seems to be a prevailing culture in government speak about education that “if it can’t be measured, it doesn’t matter!” – downgrading of music and the arts… Or we get so hung up on process and measuring that things like common sense and customer experience get overlooked… But head and heart are both part of our humanity, and both work together… Golden Ratio in art and architecture is a prime example! Maths explains why we think one thing looks right and another not quite right!

How does affirming God as Trinity make me feel? It excites me because it emphasises the paradoxical nature of God – because, as Isaiah illustrates, God is both indescribable, yet knowable. That’s what Jesus reveals to Nicodemus’ intellect and rather dry theology. Or as Paul says to the crowd in Athens, referring to statue to the unknown God – what you worship as unknown, I proclaim to you…

Indescribable, yet knowable – God as Trinity is also relational and dynamic, personal and active. For all that Isaiah encounters God as ‘high and lifted up’, it is the invitation and call to serve which makes the experience real and lived… And for Nicodemus, reflecting as he must have done on what Jesus said to him, it is the realisation that God is more than an abstract idea which brings him to the foot of the cross, as it has brought so many of us down the years into a living faithful response to God’s call.

The medieval writer, Meister Ekhart, wrote this: ‘In the heart of the Trinity, the Father laughs and gives birth to the Son. The Son laughs back at the Father and gives birth to the Spirit. The whole Trinity laughs and gives birth to us.’ It’s hard to hear or read that and not smile…

More recently, Richard Rohr entitled his book on the Trinity, “The Divine Dance” – an image suggestive of movement, inter-weaving, energetic – dare I say perichoresis! On page 69 he writes this: “If there is only one God, and if there is one pattern to this God, then the wonderful thing is that we can expect to find that pattern everywhere…” and he continues, “imagine this: the deepest intuitions of our poets and mystcis and Holy Writ are aligning with findings on the leading edges of science and empirical discovery. When inner and outer worlds converge like this, something beautiful is afoot – the reversal of a centuries-long lovers’ quarrel between science and spirituality, mind and heart.”

Words will always let us down when speaking of God… unless our experience of God has become so prosaic and formulaic that it feels as though we have got God defined… We may not ever have the experience Isaiah had – and may be more akin to Nicodemus in our responses… But God… Indescribable yet knowable, personal and active, invites us into relationship… We are his body, and God’s work is ours…

**Song - This I believe (Creed)**

 **This I Believe (The Creed)**

1. Our Father everlasting

The all creating One

God Almighty

Through Your Holy Spirit

Conceiving Christ the Son

Jesus our Saviour

2. I believe in God our Father

I believe in Christ the Son

I believe in the Holy Spirit

Our God is three in one

I believe in the resurrection

That we will rise again

For I believe in the name of Jesus

3 Our Judge and our Defender

Suffered and crucified

Forgiveness is in You

Descended into darkness

You rose in glorious life

Forever seated high

4. I believe in God our Father

I believe in Christ the Son

I believe in the Holy Spirit

Our God is three in one

I believe in the resurrection

That we will rise again

For I believe in the name of Jesus

 5. I believe in life eternal

I believe in the virgin birth

I believe in the saints' communion

And in Your holy Church

I believe in the resurrection

When Jesus comes again

For I believe, in the name of Jesus

6. I believe in God our Father

I believe in Christ the Son

I believe in the Holy Spirit

Our God is three in one

I believe in the resurrection

That we will rise again

For I believe in the name of Jesus

For I believe in the name of Jesus

**Intercessions**

Gracious Father. Loving Son and Living Spirit, thank you that we can we bring to you the things that we are concerned about. Thank you that you hear the whisper of our hearts as well as the sound of our words.

We praise you for the splendour, wonder and beauty of your creation. Help us to love and respect all that you have made; to share your gifts with our brothers and sisters in need and to protect and nurture all that is fragile and vulnerable on this earth.

Lord, hear us. **Lord graciously hear us**

We pray for a renewed spirit of longing for peace and reconciliation wherever there is conflict, injustice and oppression.

Calling to mind all who bear the responsibility of leadership, fill all who govern with your integrity especially in the those areas of conflict and struggles. Father as we long for a world where peace, love and justice reign, transform, revive and heal society.

Lord, hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

We give thanks that we are part of the family of your world-wide Church. At this season of Pentecost, rekindle in us all a fire of JOY as we seek to build your Kingdom of Love and Freedom.

Loving Spirit of God, we thank you for moving among us over this last year and inspiring us with HOPE and energy. Thank you for all those who have given their time and gifts to provide imaginative and inspiring patterns of worship. We pray that we, like those first disciples, may find the courage to learn from our experiences, to respond to the guiding of your Spirit, to change, to move on, and to take your message of LOVE into our wounded world and neighbourhoods. May LOVE and JOY spill out naturally from our faith and the way we live our lives.

Lord, hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

Let us remember all those who are sick, sad or lonely and those who are being brave and patient when things are going wrong. As we think of all those who have suffered so much over the last year, we pray that they may be aware of your comforting presence and know that in your hands they are safe and loved.

Loving Father, we remember all those who care for loved ones who are ill or troubled: For NHS workers and family members bearing the often lonely responsibility of care for a loved one.

For those who feel tired and discouraged. For those who struggle with the worry of unemployment and diminished finances. Thank you for the way so many churches have responded to the many social problems that have become more evident during the pandemic. Today we pray particularly for the work of **Christians against Poverty** responding to a need that is so often hidden away. Transform, revive and heal society.

Lord, hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

Thank you Father that you walk alongside us in our path of life, praising you that your Son gave his life that we might have eternal life.

Be with all who are close to the end of their earthly life and those who are saddened and bereaved today, enfold them all in your tender loving care.

In a moment of quiet, let us name before our Loving Father, those known personally to us in any kind of need today……………………………………..

Lord, hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

**Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Give us the courage to be part of your answer to prayer and when you ask “*whom shall I send*?” free us from fear and empower us with your Spirit that we may answer: “*Here am I, send me*.”**

1.Breathe on me, Breath of God,

Fill me with life anew,

That I may love what Thou dost love,

And do what Thou wouldst do.

2.Breathe on me, Breath of God,

Until my heart is pure,

Until with Thee I will one will,

To do and to endure.

3.Breathe on me, Breath of God,

Till I am wholly Thine,

Until this earthly part of me

Glows with Thy fire divine.

4.Breathe on me, Breath of God,

So shall I never die,

But live with Thee the perfect life

Of Thine eternity.

**Amen**

**Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours

now and for ever.

Amen.

**Song - Dance in your Spirit**

**Refrain** Dance in your spirit,

We dance in your Spirit,

We dance in your Spirit

Of joy!

Dance in your Spirit,

We dance in your Spirit,

We dance in your Spirit

Of joy!

1. Jesus you showed us the way to live,

And your Spirit sets us free,

Free now to sing,

Free to dance and shout,

Glory, glory to your name.

1. Jesus, you opened your arms for us,

But we nailed them to a cross;

But you are risen and now we live,

Free from, free from every fear.

1. Your Spirit brings peace and gentleness,

Kindness, self-control and love,

Patience and goodness and faith and joy,

Spirit, Spirit fill us now.

**Dismissal and blessing - Revd Canon Nick Bird**

May the love of the Father enfold you,

the wisdom of the Son enlighten you,

the fire of the Spirit inflame you;

and may the blessing of the triune God,

Creator, Redeemer and Comforter,

rest on you

and abide with you,

now and evermore.

Amen