

Sunday 11 June 2017

Prayer before worship:

Most wonderful God, forever beyond our grasp, yet by love always within our reach. Most wonderful Christ, forever ahead of us in wisdom and love, yet by love always beside us. Most wonderful Spirit, forever larger than the whole universe, yet by love living in our hearts. We approach you with confidence, eagerness and joy. Please enable our worship to rise far higher than our intellect and let our love to go much deeper than our feelings, Amen.

Welcome

Call to Worship

Welcome to worship on Trinity Sunday.

Called by our Lord Jesus Christ,

inspired by the Holy Spirit,

blessed by an incomparable Father,

we come to worship one, holy God.

O God, our own God,

how wonderful is your name in all the earth.

Your majesty is the music of the starry skies.

yet even children of dust can sing your praises.

Songs of Praise: We worship and adore You
Your steadfast love extends to the heavens
Ten thousand reasons

Opening Prayer

Loving God, we are limited in our understanding of you,
but we know that you care for us and for all creation.

Warm our hearts and unite us,

that we might open our lives to you

to accept all your love and to respond to it

by entrusting ourselves to you

with all that you have made us and given us.

Glorious Trinity, Make your presence known in this place

through our worship, our prayer, the reading of your Word

Father, Son, Holy Spirit, within whose unity lies all that is you

perfect love, justice, peace and power

As we gather here today, your body, your church throughout this world

fill our outstretched hearts with your spirit

encircle us with your love

Make yourself known to us in new ways, exciting ways, challenging ways

Empower us, Inspire us

Glorious Trinity, Amen.

Notices

Birthday Basket

Offering and Dedication

As we offer both our treasure and our hearts to you, O God, may they be used to pass on the promise of hope, of peace, of life, of community to all in need of your gifts and presence in their lives. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

God @ Work

Margaret Tooley

Time with the children A new wind blowing

How many of you have ever seen the wind? That was a trick question! No one has seen the wind. We can't see the wind because it is invisible.

I've got a new toy!! Show the airzooka –I got it for messy church tonight 😊 put it away...

So... back to the wind... if we can't see the wind, how do we know that it is there?

1. we can hear it. When I wake up in the morning, I sometimes know that the wind is blowing because I can hear it! We can't see the wind, but we know it is there because we can hear it.
2. we can see it moving things. (Take some bits of paper in your hand and blow them into the air.) We can see it moving the leaves on the trees and blowing bits of paper around. We can't see the wind, but we know it is there because we can see what the wind is doing.
3. we can feel it. Blow onto the back of your hand. Did you see anything? No, but you could feel something, couldn't you? We can't see the wind, but we can feel it blowing against our faces and blowing through our hair.

On the day of Pentecost when God sent his Holy Spirit to the church, the Bible tells us that the apostles were all gathered together when suddenly there was a sound like a mighty, rushing wind. Then, it says, they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

God's Holy Spirit is like the wind, we can't see him, but we can know that he is there, just like we can know that the wind is there. If we make space we can hear the Holy Spirit talking to our hearts –telling us to do that good thing...

And if we take time to look, we can see the Holy Spirit moving people to do God's will. And we can know that the Holy Spirit is there because we can feel the Holy Spirit's presence. The Holy Spirit gives us all those fruits... peace and joy...

Lord's Prayer

Song:

Thank you

Children leave for Young Church programme

Powerpoint Reflection Psalm 8

Bible Reading: 2 Corinthians 13: 11-13

¹¹Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹²Greet one another with a holy kiss. ¹³All God's people here send their greetings.

Prayer of Confession

We come before you Lord, having heard Paul's words to the church –of how we are to be as your people –rejoicing; restored; encouraging; of one mind; at peace; full of warm greetings and welcome...

And we know Lord that is not the most accurate depiction of us...

Our humanity is flawed

And so we gather before you, holy Trinity, and before one another to acknowledge our frailty.

Father of all, loving creator and sustainer of all things,
if we have taken you for granted or turned our backs on you,

Christ Jesus, Child of God and child of humanity,
if we have neglected you or followed you timidly from a long way behind,
please forgive us and restore us to the joy of salvation.

Holy Spirit, Source of birth and rebirth, nurturer of the family of God,
if we have rejected your friendship to curry favour with the gods of contemporary
fashion, please forgive us and restore us to the joy of salvation.

Most loving God, origin and goal of communal love,
please gather all your wandering children back to your side,
restore us to our senses, and forgive our many sins.
Reinforce within us the desire to do your will,
and to participate in both your suffering and your joy as you bring nearer the
fulfilment of your new creation. Through Christ Jesus our Saviour, Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I proclaim to you the forgiveness of sins and the life everlasting! Thanks be to God!

Song: Brother, sister, let me serve you

Bible Reading: Matthew 28: 16-20

The Great Commission

¹⁶Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Sermon Dealing with doubt

Sermon

Dealing with doubt

Having just celebrated Pentecost Sunday last week, the lectionary now takes us straight on to Trinity Sunday.

And so our lectionary readings are all focussed on the Trinity –as you may have noticed.

And the gospel passage we have just heard is there –I assume- because of the reference to baptising in the name of the Trinity.

So generally today, we grapple with our understanding of the Trinity –how God is one God and yet three in one... the three personed God... and we try to unwrap one of the greatest mysteries of our faith...

But as I read the text and sat with it over the week, what actually stood out for me was the first bit of the passage–

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

Now, I don't know about you, but I kind of think of the disciples as having it together –after all, they were the chosen ones... they were the ones that got to see Jesus up front and personal –the ones that were beside him as he healed and taught and prayed and challenged... But here Matthew owns their frail reality –amidst them all was not secure and faith was not certain.

The Bible is very real about doubt –even though we Christians often aren't that good about honestly facing doubt.

Doubting Thomas has somehow been held as the one not to be... and as much as I can preach and teach against that understanding, somehow, to doubt is seen as negative by many in the church.

I was pondering the way we use the word doubt today –turn to your neighbour and put the word doubt in a sentence you might hear during the week..

Hear sentences... –quite a range?

So I went back to the dictionary to check out the background of the term... apparently it goes back via a 13th century French word “doter” which came from the Latin word “dubitare” –which you will then make links to the word dubious. But originally “dubitare” meant to have to choose between two things...

You can see how that would lead to uncertainty... especially for those of you who find decision making more difficult.

It then developed to a term that included aspects of fear and suspicion –*I really doubt that happened...* and sometimes now just straight negativity –will you do that? –*“doubt it!”*

It certainly is used quite widely, beyond simple questioning of truth and lacking confidence in something –*I doubt if I can go.*

And I guess there are aspects of all those parts of doubting that impact us in our faith –we lack confidence –is God really listening, will God really answer

- we question –what really happens when we die, why is there suffering; am I really able to be the person God wants me to be...

- we have to make choices... about our thinking, our speaking, our behaving... how we spend our time, our money, our energy... so many choices that God wants to have a part in.

And here in Matthew's gospel, we see that doubt was part of the first disciples' reality. It's okay –you can breathe again... doubt is not something that is meant to disappear the moment we are called as disciples of Jesus –it is part of our ongoing reality –in a whole range of forms. But as a church –we have too quickly assumed the opposite. That doubt somehow equates with sin... that questions mean a lack of faith... that choices are simple... and so we end up in this weird situation in which people who are honest with their own questions feel lesser... and somehow think there is no place for them in the faith community.

But what stands out to me as I grasp the reality of doubt amongst those first disciples, is that they remained together as a community of faith. And as that gathered community, Jesus returns to them and says –

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

There is no sense of –okay, so you who are sure in your faith, you go out and make disciples... and you others who are doubting –you stay back and get yourselves sorted before you join the others... There is none of that... and yet I think we often assume that is how it should be.

We somehow think that those who are strong in the faith will be the ones out in the community sharing the love and grace of God... but that wasn't the way Jesus wanted it back then with the first disciples, and I don't think it is the way Jesus wants it now.

We are disciples –and whether we are frail and full of doubts or confident and secure in our faith, Jesus calls us out. There is no room for excuses. However we are feeling about our faith, we are still called to go out with the good news that we are loved and that God wants to use us to build the kingdom of God.

I have times when I doubt –but that is the very time I need to be assured of my place in the faith community. The place where others will carry me when I can't take my

own weight... and perhaps where at another time, I will be able to carry someone else.

I have loads of questions still –and the community of faith is the very best place for me –and for us- to be able to grapple with them honestly. We just need to work on being the community that can handle one another’s honest questions without running for the hills. That is part of our responsibility as church.

So when I read this passage today, I don’t want to get into a big explanation of the Trinity –I only want to say that in the Trinity is found the vital importance on community – and that the community is also of vital importance to us who are made in God’s image.

Our gathering here is important –the effort you make in being here is important –for it reminds each of us that it is together we are called out into the community –together we can be the good news –together we can carry the doubts with us.

So I don’t have to be strong all the time... because when I am weak, there will be the strength of others gathered around me. And you don’t have to be strong all the time either... that is at least part of the reason why God made us for community. When you are weak, you too will be carried by the strength of the gathered community.

And you are welcome here with all your questions. –but also knowing that Jesus calls us to action –to going out and sharing the good news, doubts and all. There is no special space for those who doubt and so think they don’t need to go out and serve our community and share God’s love.

So as we gather, and as we are sent out, we recognise it is for the task of invitation and welcome –to invite others to also be part of this gathered and sent out community that in some amazing way represents our Trinitarian God of grace in the world.

And as Jesus said, in the gathering and in the sending out, he will be with us always, to the very end of the age. Always and forever. Jesus is with us –whether we are doubting and full of questions or whether we are convinced... always and forever, Jesus is with us. So be it, Amen.

Song: Make me a channel of your peace

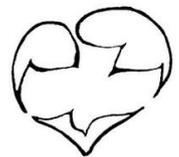
Prayers of Intercession

Holy Friend, for that small community we call our family, with its strengths that nurture or its faults that hurt and inhibit its unity, we ask for a special blessing. Three-person'd God, join together your separated children.

Holy Friend, for that community we call the church universal, with its many loves and its numerous failures and even its scandals, we ask for a special blessing. And for that community we call the church local –our family of faith here at Kohimarama presbyterian –we ask for a special blessing on those who are waling difficult roads –we pray especially for Bruce as he faces life without his beloved Kathleen... Three-person'd God, join together your separated children.

Holy Friend, for that community we call our circle of friends, with its times of harmony and mutual joy and its incidents of misunderstanding or neglect, we ask a special blessing. Three-person'd God, join together your separated children.

Holy Friend, for those communities we call health centres, and hospitals and hospices, with their skill and compassion yet also their pride and folly, we ask a special blessing. Three-person'd God, join together your separated children.



Holy Friend, for those communities we call schools and universities, where much knowledge is imparted but love is not on the syllabus, we ask your special blessing. Three-person'd God, join together your separated children.

Holy Friend, for that multi-ethnic community called our nation, with virtues that make us proud to be New Zealanders, yet also with its prejudices and hurtful ways, we ask a special blessing. Three-person'd God, join together your separated children.

Holy Friend, for that teeming community we call the world, rich with achievements for the good of all yet riven by greed, hatred, intolerance, injustice, arrogance, and war, we ask a special blessing.

Three-person'd God, join together your separated children.

Holy Father, thank you for sending your Son Jesus to reconcile all things. By your Holy Spirit incite all people to strive untiringly for that communal harmony where the value of no one is denigrated, and where the gifts and successes of each person are celebrated with unstinted gratitude and joy. For your name's sake, Amen.

Song: God gives us a future

Benediction and sung Amen

May the rich provisions of the Creator be gratefully accepted and shared,

May the uncalculated love of the Redeemer be fully trusted and shared,
and may the undiluted fellowship of the Counsellor be enjoyed and shared,
Go out from this church in peace and travel with humility and confidence. Amen!