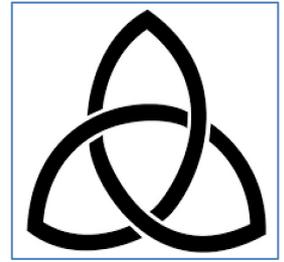




Christ Church News (14)

by and for the Christ Church Family
Trinity Sunday 7th June 2020



Today is marked as Trinity Sunday by Christian churches. It comes hot on the heels of last Sunday's Pentecost when the disciples changed from being reactive to the teachings of Jesus to being proactive apostles for His Cause – a logical progression for the disciples and for us? How can we be proactive in the current lockdown situation?

In John's Gospel Ch 15 v26 we read -

"The Helper will come - the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God and who comes from the Father".

William Barclay describes the Spirit as *"An uninterrupted fellowship for ever"*. He reminds his readers that Jesus, as the person, could only be in one place at one time, with the obvious greetings and goodbyes. He could not reach the minds and hearts of people everywhere. But, with the Spirit, there is no limitation. We can understand God as Creator, Jesus as our Saviour; but how do we understand the Holy Spirit? I recently re-read *"The Shack"* by William P Young, written in 2007. I found it, as with my first reading, an inspirational fictional story of how one man experienced the Trinity. Eugene Peterson, translator of the Bible into the modern version, *"The Message,"* says *"This book has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress did for his. It's that good."*

So, what about our Christian mission during the lockdown? The Holy Spirit prompts us to reach out to others in our daily lives and many are doing just that by phone/email and now by meeting in small numbers in open spaces. I pray with you that we will soon be able to gather for worship in what may be the new normal. For now, we give thanks for the wonder of technology helping us to connect in new ways - another manifestation of the Spirit?

I send a virtual hug to you all.

Doreen

Word for today. John 15 vv12-27

A Disciple's View

I didn't know what he was on about. The advocate? The Son who comes from the Father? What did it all mean? We believed he was sent by God, yes- called to reveal his will, build his kingdom - but was he saying more, pointing to a closer relationship? It seemed so, yet, try as we might, we just couldn't get our heads round it. How could he tell us *"He who has seen me has seen the Father"*? We were baffled; there is no other word for it. And when he went on to talk about the Spirit of truth, the one the Father would send in his name, quite simply, by then, we were reeling - unable to make head or tail of what he was getting at.

"Do you understand now though?" you ask. Well, no we don't actually. Funnily enough, if we try to explain it we still struggle as much as ever. Yet it makes sense despite that. Day after day we taste the truth, the reality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We see the stars in the heavens and God is there, enthroned in splendour and sovereign over all. We look around at the world he has given; its awesome beauty, its endless interest and its bountiful provision and he is there - stretching out his hand in love, inviting us to share in its wonder. We look nearby at family and friends - beyond, to the nameless faces of the multitudes - and he is there, giving and receiving, waiting to feed and to be fed. We look within, at our aching souls, our pleading hearts, and he is there - breathing new life, new purpose within us.

One God! Yes! But a God we meet in different guises, different ways, three in one and one in three. It sounds odd, I know, and, take it from me, you'll never explain it, no matter how you try. Yet don't worry, for what finally matters is this: though words may fail you, the experience never will!

Prayer

Almighty God,
there are no words able to sum up your nature,
to say everything about you that needs to be said.

We do our best to express our faith, but, inevitably, we fall short,
for you are greater than our minds can fathom,
ultimately defying human understanding.

Yet we experience your love, day after day in a multitude of ways:
we glimpse your glory in the wonder of the heavens and the beauty of the earth;
we see everything we believe to be true about you revealed in Jesus Christ,
his life, death and resurrection;
and we feel your power at work deep within us through what we call your Spirit.

Each reveals a different aspect of your character,
yet it is only when we take them together, recognising them as facets of one being, one truth,
that we begin to understand something of your wonder.

Our intellects reel at the mystery of it all,
yet in our heart and soul we know that you are with us, and we rejoice.
Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
receive our praise!

Amen!

“Oh, to be in England” *with apologies to Robert Browning.*

*Oh, it's strange to be in England
Now the pandemic's here
"Seventies plus" must remain at home
Stay safe, keep well and do not roam,
Keep in touch by email and phone
Tend garden and read while all alone.
But it is still Spring and the birds still sing
in joyful tone.*

*And after April, when May comes along,
Learn the distance rule, hear a thrush's song!*

*I watch the blossom fall in the hedge
Scattering petals to the lawn's edge.
At evening it's time to praise NHS!
To compete, the blackbird sings to impress.*

*His - a message of hope for a better new day
Mourning those who have passed away.
And while the dread virus still holds sway
May global research soon find a way
To conquer Corona and curb its power
And offer the people a better dower.*

by an isolating grandma.

News from the Trustees' Meeting (via Zoom) on Thursday, 4 June.

Our new Minister, the Rev'd Helen Higgin-Botham,
will be moving into the manse during the latter part of June.

Her appointment starts on 1st July when –
as she said to us at the meeting – *“I will be all yours!”*

The United Reformed Church has produced a 22 page booklet
‘Ready for the new “Normal”.

A discussion paper for a pandemic recovery and resumption plan.’

Please go to the church website to download it.

www.christchurchchichester.com

Do you have something to
interest, inform, inspire or amuse?
Share it with us!

Send it to the editor at

chichristchurch@googlemail.com