

St David's and St Michael's and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter

Newsletter & Service for Sunday 7 June 2020

Dear Friends

A warm welcome to this weekly update for Trinity Sunday.

Sunday Worship

Today we will have a Youtube recorded service which is available through this link:

<https://youtu.be/zvAKAAQDXvA>

The preacher today is Howard Friend. Amy Down is reading the lesson and Maggie Draper is leading the prayers for us. Thank you to them and to Nigel Walsh for putting this together for us, including the rather spectacular canon at the end – wait for it!

Next week we will have a Youtube service for the first Sunday after Trinity and I will be giving an address.

This coming Thursday is the feast of Corpus Christi which is usually celebrated with a sung evening Sung Mass at St Michael's. I am planning to record a special outdoor service of Benediction with Richard Parker including plainsong propers and hymns for the occasion and prayers for God's blessing on our parish and city. This should be available through the "Friends of St Michael's" Facebook page on Thursday.

You may like to know that I am also sharing a video 'thought for the week' with St David's School at the moment and leading some assemblies by Zoom for St Wilfred's School.

Live Prayers

Please join us, if you can, for our streamed short prayer services during the week on our Facebook pages:

On 'St David's Church Exeter' page: Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 9am.

On 'Friends of St Michael's' page: Wednesday Angelus and Mattins (BCP) at 9am

Zoom Coffee

Following a successful pilot last week we will hold another 'Zoom' coffee meeting at 10.30am for half an hour. This will be open to anyone in the parish. You don't need to have a Zoom account to join in – just click on this link:

Nigel Guthrie is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?>

[pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6602261392?pwd=VzdOaU1XUFBjWk9jV0xvMDZWajZBQT09)

Meeting ID: 660 226 1392

Password: 196651

We will break into virtual rooms so that we can chat more easily and then come back at the end to round up and say the Grace together. When you first 'arrive' you will have to wait for me to let you in. We need to do that as there have been some unfortunate incidents of 'Zoom bombing' in which people arrive and disrupt such meetings. You can leave at any time, of course. I hope to see many of you there!

Phone Networks

I know that many of you have appreciated phone calls from members of the church community. If you would like to be phoned by someone and haven't yet had any contact please let me know at nigel.guthrie1@gmail.com

or by ringing me on 01392 660226. Thank you to everyone who is helping to keep our church communities together by your care and concern.

Fairtrade update

The Fairtrade Foundation have published this inspiring short video which you might like to watch. It gives an excellent account of the work of Fairtrade cocoa farmers in Sierra Leone from the perspective of one farming family.

<https://bit.ly/3790R9W>

Magazine

Our June magazine is now available on our websites. It is another fabulous edition with some thought provoking articles. I still have a few printed copies which I would be happy to post if you are finding it hard to access the online magazine. If you would like one please let me know by phone or e-mail.

If you would like to contribute to future editions please send all articles as Word documents to newleavesnews@gmail.com or billpattinson136@gmail.com

Your Prayers are asked for...

Charles Argall, Roger Beer, Janine, Charles Speed-Andrews and Nick & Karen Speed-Andrews, Nicky Jarman and her husband Tim and their family, Jacqueline and her family, Joy and her family, Claude and Gillian Harbord, Elizabeth Hewitt, Grace Tointon, Pam Smith and her family, James and Katy Tyler, Andrew Wakley, Rosemary Willcox and Maurice Wright, Raymond (recovering after an operation).

Please remember Raymond Ravenscroft, Fred Wright, and Jack Fey, Joan Cheesman and Joy who have died, and their families.

In the Parish Cycle of Prayer we pray for the Dinosaur Cafe, Boston Tea Party, and all who work in hospitality in the parish.

Please also pray for:

those suffering from the symptoms of Covid-19, and those who are feeling lonely or isolated; those working on testing, tracking and tracing;

those who are concerned about the future of their jobs;

school staff managing teaching for pupils at home and at school and pupils returning to school, and those at home; Amy Down and Nigel Guthrie foundation governors representing the Parish at St David's School;

Exeter Food Bank;

Simon Harrison and the whole chaplaincy team at RDE;

all those working in the NHS, Social Care and in our emergency services.

May God keep you in peace and good health, Nigel Guthrie

Order of Service for Trinity Sunday (service on Youtube)

<https://youtu.be/zvAKAAQDXvA>

Greeting

Welcome to worship in the parish of St David and St Michael, Exeter on this Trinity Sunday.

Today we come to worship the God who, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit knows us by name and loves us. We cannot fully understand God and yet we can love and enjoy God, indeed that is what, as Christians, we believe that we have been created for, and how we will spend eternity.

We offer our worship in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening Prayers

We come in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world, and to seek forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Confession and Absolution

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith

Father, you come to meet us when we return to you: Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you died on the cross for our sins: Christ, have mercy.

All Christ, have mercy.

Holy Spirit, you bring us life and peace: Lord, have mercy.

All 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.

All Amen.

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace,
by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal
Trinity
and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity:
keep us steadfast in this faith, that we may evermore be defended from all
adversities;
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

First Reading – Genesis 18: 1-8

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, ‘My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.’ So they said, ‘Do as you have said.’ And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, ‘Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.’ Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

Gospel Reading – Matthew 28: 16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’

An Address for Trinity Sunday – June 7th 2020 by Howard Friend

May I speak to you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

I've adopted a sort of Jackanory style presentation mode this morning, partly I have to admit because I reckon you'll be comfortable in your armchair, perhaps even enjoying a cup of coffee (one of the benefits surely of Lockdown) partly because it seems more fitting to be conversational about a subject like the Trinity about which it is impossible to be stand upishly dogmatic - but mostly because I want to use an Icon to help us appreciate the subject and that has required a rather Heath Robinson set up with my smart phone and Nigel's chunky Icon - perched precariously on a small table - here in our drawing room. I shall at a critical moment turn from Selfie mode to looking-out mode (not - in parenthesis - a bad move for preachers - or any of us for that matter). I just hope that at that turning point - the whole lot doesn't come crashing to the floor and send you into vertiginous confusion.

Anyway - Talking of Confusion. Do you remember Donald Rumsfeld's statement during the Iraq War:

There are Known Knowns

Things we know that we know

There are Known Unknowns

Things we know that we don't know

And then there are Unknown Unknowns

Things we don't know that we don't know

He was talking about Weapons of Mass destruction, which rather dangerously for a talk on God – it turned out - didn't exist – but putting that delicately aside for one moment.

Here's what I want to suggest to you about the Trinity this morning – It is a fourth Rumsfeld category – the Unknowable Known

That is to say we can experience the Trinitarian God in our lives without fully understanding the Mathematical conundrum . Is it Three in One or One in Three.

Richard Rohr in his very refreshing book on the Trinity, The Divine Dance, quotes St John of God who said God refuses to be known but can only be loved and enjoyed. X2

Confused - still?

Well Scripture is unlikely to help you. The word Trinity is not found there. The concept is as our Gospel reading attests - but - as we all know - the Doctrine developed over the first few centuries AD and was formulated in the Creeds of Nicea and Constantinople and refined by the Cappadocian Fathers in the 4th and 5th Centuries respectively.

Paradoxically - for an idea which tries to bring unity to the threefold expression of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Christians have been falling out about it ever since.

Most notably with the so called Filioque controversy. Does the Holy Spirit derive from the Father and the Son or the Father only. You see how esoteric and - many would argue - meaningless these arguments became. That particular argument led to a split between the East and Western Church in 1054.

But enough of all that. The history doesn't bring clarity, which is what I really want to achieve this morning. Somehow I want to leave you with a picture of the Trinity that will inspire and help you understand God's love for you.

Now this is where Rublev's Trinity Icon will make it's appearance. As I'm reversing the view, let me say there's a delicious irony here, which won't be lost on some of you. That is a staunch Evangelical like me is promoting Icons. Who says God hasn't got a sense of humour.

Remember the take home message this morning is:

To know God is to allow him / her to love you.

It's all about relationship, embodied in the relationships in the Trinity, not objective science or theological contortions. God loves you – and this Icon helps us understand this supremely important fact in a Trinitarian way.

This is how I read Rublev's Icon and look I'm a beginner at this. It's been one of the spin offs of Lockdown for me.

This Icon based on the Genesis story we had read to us. The Lord appeared to Abraham and Sarah in the form of three visitors angels / men, depending on the translation. Abraham and Sarah prepare a meal, which the three of them eat under the Tree of Mamre before giving the ageing couple the news that Sarah is going to have a baby.



Now there's a load of Iconic significance to the figures and objects and colours that would have been obvious to Rublev's 15 C Russian readers. I'm going to mention a few. Remember an Icon is a window onto our understanding of the mystery of God. It's a means to an end. It's something to be pondered over and prayed with.

This loving, mutually complimentary relationship is written, one writes not paints an Icon so I'm told, here with The Father on the Left, the Son in the Middle and the Holy Spirit on the Right. They are all smiling and look very much alike. There are differences in their clothing but all share blue. God has additional Gold, Christ, - a reddish brown and the Spirit – Green.

God sits under a building – in my Father's House are many mansions. Above Christ is the Tree – of Life possibly but also a reminder of the Cross. Over the Spirit is a Mountain or Rock, perhaps signifying the Rock that Moses struck to produce Life-giving water.

Their wings are separate but touching and each holds a sceptre.

The Father seems to be giving a blessing with his hand, the Son is pointing to the meal on the table with two fingers to denote his dual nature. Fully man and Fully God and the Spirit points down to a rectangle on the front of the table.

Now it's Rohr's interpretation of that rectangle which I find the most interesting. This isn't mentioned in all commentaries but his theory is that this once had a mirror attached.

What's the point here – well the observer would see him or herself as part of the party. The space opposite the Son almost demands it.

The inference is that God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, loves us and wants us in relationship with him. And by the way these figures could just as easily be female.

At the heart of what we call God is relationship and we are invited to be part of that. What a thought, what a privilege, what an opportunity.

Rohr goes on to say that this Icon is an invitation not only to sit at table with God herself but also to join in a Divine Dance. In fact God is the Dance.

Now remember the take home point.

To know God is to let her love you. To put it another way when we come to know God we have in one sense to drop the 18" or so from Brain to Heart and let God love us, instead of trying to work it all out.

Then the Unknowable will become known.

One final thought along this subject of God is Love, God is Relationship as depicted in the Trinity.

Lockdown has, for many of us, extended our relationships: on our streets, within our church, within our families all with the aid of Zoom.

How do we propose to go on living this Trinitarian truth of love in relationship as Lockdown eases?

In particular how are we going to do Church?

How do we include those of you listening in now who live nowhere near Exeter. You are welcome by the way.

We don't have the answers to this conundrum yet. First and foremost were going to pray about it. We do want your suggestions too please. Do get in touch.

May I suggest, if you haven't got one already that you get a copy of Rublev's Trinity Icon and allow it to draw you into the circle of God's love. God the Father loves you. God the Son died for you. God the Holy Spirit wants to flow through you. Amen.

Closing Prayers

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 for ever. Amen.

God the Holy trinity make you strong in faith and love,
defend you on every side,
and guide you in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God almighty...