

CLYDE & ALEXANDRA – JUNE 12th 2022- TRINITY

CALL TO WORSHIP:

God of Hope is with us.

Spirit of Hope flows through us.

Jesus reveals hope in us.

Come, let us celebrate this wonder
of three in One and One in three.

Be open to our God of love
and worship as faith-filled people together.

God of Hope, settle into our hearts today.

Open our ears to hearing your word anew.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Spirit of God, come to us today,
for we long to know your healing presence.

When we are uncertain, you are there.

When we are troubled, you are there.

When we are fatigued, you are there.

Come, Holy Spirit, come into our lives.

Warm us with your fiery presence,
as we worship today.

HYMN: WOV 80 Immortal, Invisible

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above,
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

3 To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on a tree,

and wither and perish: but nought changeth thee.

4 Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
of all thy rich graces this grace, Lord, impart
take the veil from our faces, the veil from our heart.

5 All laud we would render: O help us to see,
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee;
and so let thy glory, Almighty, impart
through Christ in the story, thy Christ to the heart.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Comforting Friend, please hear our prayer.
Our days are filled with decisions and thoughts,
that draw our focus away from being your people.
We struggle with impatience and do not listen to your voice,
as we clamour to be efficient in our decisions.

**Spirit of Wisdom,
settle into our minds and calm our thinking.**

Frustration draws our focus away from tolerance,
and irritated reactions replace careful responses.

**Spirit of Wisdom,
settle into our minds and calm our thinking.**

Anger overcomes kindness and gentleness
when our emotions are raw.

**Spirit of Wisdom,
settle into our minds and calm our thinking.**

We seek to be your people of loving care
and are sorry when we are distracted from your way.
Let your warming love flow through us
and reveal to us when we are hurtful and unkind,
when we are impatient and rude,
when we are unjust in our anger.

Silent prayer

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God's love is present in our living,
revealed when we become still,
and heard when we listen in prayerful meditation.
Wisdom touches us with kindness
and gently redirects our thinking.
Jesus' way of being is at the heart of our faithful living.
So, let God's righteousness that is planted in our souls
be our friend and guide.

**Spirit of Wisdom,
settle into our minds and guide us each day.**

PASS THE PEACE

HYMN: WOV 492 Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us

1 Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
o'er the world's tempestuous sea;
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
for we have no help but thee;
yet possessing every blessing
if our God our Father be.

2 Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;
all our weakness thou dost know;
thou didst tread this earth before us,
thou didst feel its keenest woe:
lone and dreary, faint and weary,
through the desert thou didst go.

3 Spirit of our God, descending,
fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
love with every passion blending,
pleasure that can never cloy:
thus provided, pardoned, guided,
nothing can our peace destroy.

READINGS: Psalm 8, John 16: 12–15, Romans 5: 1–5

REFLECTION

Good morning, as Ruth, Linda and I discussed this service, we admitted we were always pleased when Trinity Sunday was rostered as Reverend Andrew's service. We have only presented a Trinity service on three occasions in the past fifteen years. Many religious sites inform their Lay preachers not to try and explain what a triune God is. Before we begin, I would like you all to look at the PowerPoint, what can you see? As you look - the picture will change?



This drawing is a special example of how people see the same thing differently and what is very interesting about it, is that no one can see both things at the same time, you either see the old woman or the young women. I showed you this picture today so you could think about God, God is like this picture, but we see God in three different ways, as Creator and Father, as Jesus the Redeemer and as the Holy Spirit, the breath of God and our Comforter

and Sustainer. God is three parts so speak rolled into only one.

Sometimes when we pray to God, we say Father, or Lord God of Creator, other times we pray, Dear Jesus. Still other times we pray to the Holy Spirit, as in our song, Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. We are always praying to the same God when we do it.

It seems mixed up, but it isn't, just like the picture isn't really mixed up, it is one thing as is God, but we know God in three ways.

Let us pray,

Dear Lord God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we thank you for the wonder of seeing and knowing you in different ways,

Thank you for giving us the Holy Spirit to fill us with your love so we can talk directly to you, and we give thanks that you are available to

us whenever we need you Keep us in your loving care, In Jesus name, Amen.

For that reason, I will give a brief history of Trinitarian doctrine.

The Trinity does not explicitly appear in the Bible, the interpretations and belief in three in one came out of several councils in the early church that wrested with the question of the divinity of God, The Creator, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Trinity Sunday was instituted in 828 by Pope Gregory 1X and it is the only major Christian festival that honours a doctrine of the church rather than an event in our Christian history.

Trinity Sunday always appears following the previous Pentecostal service which is 50 days after Easter. Trinity Sunday honours the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus, his disciples and follower's. The Holy Trinity tells us, that God is a relationship, and that relationship creates unity. Martin Luther spoke of the Trinity in terms on an internal conversation in God with the Father speaking, the Son as the word and the Spirit as the Listener, this talkative God is wonderfully compassionate, with Father and Son bound so closely together in Luther's view that "we should learn to think of God only as Christ". The meaning of the Trinity is a comforting word, as Luther puts it.

Thomas Jefferson, the President of the United States decided in 1804 to rewrite parts of the New Testament. The parts that did not make sense for him. Jefferson was an enlightenment era intellectual and President of the American Philosophical Society, and to him the Trinity of three in one person did not make sense. In his word, it is "a simple matter of addition, you could be one being or three beings but not at the same time". Strangely this may have only been rewritten in his and a few friends Bible's as he went on to remove other implausible stories as well.

Richard Rohr has written a book called, "The Divine Dance", he has written that God is not static. If we think of the Triune like a dance, three persons holding hands and spinning in a circle, a circle of

strength, wisdom, guidance, love, and peace, moving in unison, in one dance, and we are invited to join that dance, and we are called to invite others to share in the gifts so they may come to know God and dwell in his presence.

Trinity Sunday invites us to consider what we believe – to believe in God who has revealed himself to us in the Trinity, one God in three persons. The idea of God in three person's remains a mystery yet this Triune of God in three persons gives us strength. There is unity in three, God is always with us, he sent himself as tiny piece of flesh, a baby that became his beloved Son. A son who taught not only his many disciples but also thousands of followers. Before Jesus died, he began preparing his disciples, they did not know what the future held at this point. At the last supper, they could only understand a little of what Jesus was saying as in John 16, verses 12-15, "Whatever the Father has is mine, The Spirit of Truth will guide it". Yet the disciples had the reassurance that they would not be left alone, Jesus promised them the Holy Spirit, the voice of Truth would guide them, the Spirit would be in their hearts and souls. At this stage the Disciples could not understand this and were baffled by Jesus's words, Jesus was telling them that their future would be part of Jesus's victory over the world. Disciple or follower means, a word used for a learner or apprentice or a pupil of a teacher, therefore we can understand why they had limited understanding of Jesus's words when he told them he was leaving but he was sending the Holy Spirit to guide them, they knew Jesus came from their Lord God but a Holy Spirit? Something not in human form, how would this guide them?

In John 16, verses 12-15, the last supper is the longest scene of all the gospels contents and the most important part of John's gospel. In the verses we can see how troubled and bewildered the disciples were when Jesus washed their feet. Imagine the Queen, in her younger days, suddenly ordering us to sit down and take off our shoes and socks or hosiery and sandals. We would feel as bewildered as the disciples. The lower order of people performs these tasks for the distinguished not the other way round.

The disciples were stunned and bewildered further, by Jesus's predictions of betrayal and denial. Jesus said, "I have more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them at this present time". Imagine the disciples who had given up their livelihoods and families to follow Jesus, they would have been so overcome and afraid. What would their future be like without Jesus to teach, encourage and reprimand them?

Yet Jesus had more to tell them concerning the Spirit of Truth, who will lead them all in truth, the truth from the Father, that is shared to the Son that the Spirit discloses to not only the disciples but also to us so the union of the three in one is complete. The disciples may have been overwhelmed with so many revelations, but this conversation brought them into union with the mystery that is the Trinity. How could they grasp this thinking, how could God exist in three persons, how could Jesus be fully God and yet fully human.

As the disciples of long ago did, so may we realise, as we learn more of our God, may we accept how little we do not understand. As St Patrick said, this much I know the Clover has three leaves but is one clover so it with God.

How do we picture God? As a Father, a Mother, Son or a Spirit? As obedient son, a shining sun, as a spirit or a guide, a teacher, a friend, as an advocate, a comforter, a wind, a breath of Fire, the Spirit of Truth, a fountain of Wisdom?

All through our Bibles we have seen the Spirit in action so to speak. The Spirit of Wisdom is separate from the Holy Spirit. In the Hebrew language the word Wisdom or Spirit has a feminine meaning. Another word I found for Wisdom was Sophia.

What do you think of the Holy Spirit, not a Star Wars force, but a person who takes up residence in our hearts, his presence offers, living signs of his goodness and love? The living Trinity is difficult to understand, that our God would give up so much to come and live in our hearts, to guide us and to protect us. We do suffer enduring trials, whether health related or family or work issues, but God does not desert us, his Holy Spirit rests within us, guiding and comforting us.

We often confuse knowing and knowing. If I say to you, "Do you know Doctor Ashley Bloomfield"? You would say, "of course, he is the Director of Health" however if I say, "Can you text him and say I cannot make it to dinner on Saturday night". You will realise that I didn't mean, do you know about him, do you have a relationship with him, are you pals? The same applies to you and I, do we have a relationship with God, do we know him?

Father Bertie Pearson, Rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Georgetown Texas, and Dean of Austin Area Convocation of Clergy, points out that understanding the Trinity is not about holding the correct opinion on God's nature, it is the starting place for truly knowing him. To come into relationship with God, the Holy Spirit, is to feel him praying in your heart, to feel him pulling you up into a life of ever-increasing selflessness and joy, this is to build a real friendship with God.

To know the love of Jesus fully, is to accept God into your Life as a Triune God, with the Holy Spirit, the life breath of God, the active love of God. Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit, "He will guide you into the truth". The same spirit of God who hovered over the waters of creation in Genesis with the Spirit of Wisdom. Who transformed followers into prophets and disciples, the Spirit who can be grieved by our actions, who speaks in the hearts of faithful people, teaching us to pray and coming alongside us as our advocate and to guides us? What do you make of our God, who gave up his only son Jesus, sacrificing Jesus on the cross to redeem us and our sins?

In Romans 5, verses 1-5, God created the universe and our planet earth, he existed and loved prior to us and without us, yet our God redeems up and reconciles himself to us even when we rebel. The Spirit of God/Jesus continues in our heart, he helps us through suffering whether it be physical pain or mental anguish, through the loss of our work positions, or depression. Through the experience of suffering, we grow closer to God and in following God our endurance shapes us and produces hope as we become more Jesus like as the Spirit of God's love enters our hearts. I know the anguish I went

through with back pain, the grief associated with redundancy of a position I loved, and I prayed for the release from this pain, eventually this relief came through four surgeries, pain relief, prayer support from my church family and the support of family and friends who have been there for me along every step of the way. Of which I give thanks for. The spirit never leaves our side, it is this grace not earned but bestowed by the Triune God that watches over and blesses us every day with his graciousness.

May we pray continually pray for the people, particularly the parents and families of the children of Uvalde, Texas, whose loved children were gunned down, we will keep you all in our prayers, this small town's school is opposite the funeral home, you can see from the funeral home to the unlocked backdoor of the school, that the gunman used to slip into the school. You can also see the windows that some children escaped through to avoid death. This small town is in mourning, the loss of family members, classmates, teachers, and friends. As the churches conduct funerals, The God we love can only offer hope, love and strength that will carry these families through this tragedy as we also pray for the control of semi – automatic guns that are also being used particularly in South Auckland. May God protect the innocent of America and New Zealand's people from hatred and greed.

To end, I thought I would give you a small history of Saint Patrick whom I mentioned earlier. Saint Patrick was born in Scotland in the year 390. He was caught by a raiding party and taken as a slave to Ireland where he learnt the language and customs, eventually thanks to the kindness of a ship's crew he was able to return home to Scotland to his family and pursued his education, then returning to Ireland as a missionary, he took the gospel to the people, converting thousands, including Chieftains and Baird's to the Christian faith. He built monasteries, schools, and churches, living in humble poverty he continued to travel over all of Ireland for the next forty years, dying in 461. As I said he used the Shamrock, a three leafed clover to explain the Trinity and as we know his birth is celebrated every year on St Patrick's day March 17th. Hence, I learnt something special as I am of

Irish/Scottish ancestry and never knew he was a Scotsman. We will now say the Nicene Creed together.

PRAYER FOR OTHERS:

Let us pray

Across the world, Spirit of Truth, human lies and deceit destroy trust. Wealthy countries protect themselves and lose sight of those who need our care. We bring before you countries struggling in war, where innocent lives are trapped between opposing forces.

Community prayers

May we always be peacemakers.

We pray for the countries whose arable land is ravaged by greed and misuse by those who create their wealth at the expense of others.

Community prayers

May we be people who create sustainable food crops that enable everyone to eat.

We pray for seas that are overfished, or contaminated, where ecosystems are damaged and unable to replenish themselves.

Community prayers

May we be bearers of your wisdom, act with truth, and be good custodians of your wonderful Creation.

Spirit of Truth, hear our prayers. Amen.

HYMN: WOV 61 Lord your almighty word

1 Lord, your almighty word
chaos and darkness heard,
and took their flight:
hear us, we humbly pray,
and where the gospel day
sheds not its glorious ray,
let there be light.

2 Saviour, who came to give
those who in darkness live

healing and sight,
health to the sick in mind,
sight to the inly blind,
O now to all mankind
let there be light.

3 Spirit of truth and love,
life-giving holy dove,
speed forth your flight;
move on the waters' face,
bearing the lamp of grace,
and in earth's darkest place
let there be light.

4 Holy and blessed Three,
glorious Trinity,
wisdom, Love, might,
boundless as ocean's tide
rolling in fullest pride,
through the earth far and wide,
let there be light.

OFFERING

Come, friends, let us share generously for the ministry of our gracious God.

OFFERING PRAYER

Generous God, we offer our gifts for your mission of justice and care. Reveal to us where our community should minister. Refresh our faith to be your people in this area so your wisdom and truth bring peace and love to all whom we meet.

HYMN: FFS 6 Blow through the valleys

*REFRAIN: Blow through the valleys and sing in the rimu;
O Spirit of God fill the earth:
guide us to truth that you give in your power,
O Spirit of God our new birth.*

1 The world sets its heart on the value of money,
and thinks it can buy all the treasures we need;
but God measures worth by a new kind of poverty,
founded on Jesus, the servant we heed.

2. Let mercy enfold us and justice be real,
Our races in partnership live in this land.
The God of the whenua binds us together,
by leading us on to hold each other's hand.

3. O Spirit of God take our love, take our aroha,
stir us to faith and to courage for you;
That Jesus the prophet will guide us in leadership,
Bringing the Spirit of hope to renew.

COMMISSIONING

People of faith, step forward in hope.

Open your eyes to the revelations in God's Creation.

Open your ears to the whisperings of the Spirit of Wisdom.

Open your hearts to the word of Jesus.

Before us, behind us, above and below us,
our Trinitarian God surrounds and sustains us
on our journey as faith-filled friends.

Go with peace, work for justice, live in love with God of all

BENEDICTION

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and
the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, now and forever.

Amen

Sheryll Hanning, Linda Armstrong, and Ruth McNamara

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