



Pews News

United Benefice of Shenstone & Stonnall



Trinity Sunday – 7th June 2020

**The Lord be with you
And also with you**

I pray you are all safe and well. Don't forget if you need help in any way please call me and I'll do my very best to find the right sort of help for you.

On Trinity Sunday we think about Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Trinity is often thought of a hard concept to grasp. Today we look at believing by faith and faith alone.

With all Blessings
Rev Liz

Collect Prayer – Trinity Sunday

Holy God,
faithful and unchanging:
enlarge our minds with the
knowledge of your truth,
and draw us more deeply into the
mystery of your love,
that we may truly worship you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen





News from the Church of England – current as at 5th June 2020

- All public acts of church activities, worship and private prayer opportunities within church are suspended until further notice.
- Clergy are however now allowed into church buildings for private prayer and to film morning prayer and services.
- Guidance and ruling on conducting weddings and funerals is available on the websites of Lichfield Diocese and The Church of England.
- <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>
- <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/latest-coronavirus-information>

Our Prayers

- We pray for all our Government, our Bishops and Clergy. We pray especially for the Prime Minister and our Government as decisions continue to be made.
- We pray for our country as we cope with the lifting of some restrictions. Protect us and help us to make the right choices.
- We pray for peace across the world. As protests and demonstrations take place we pray for safety, calm and good order.
- Lord you command us to love one another, help us to do this. To love regardless of race, colour, religion or gender. We are all wonderfully and fearfully made; loved by you.
- Many known to us have had much needed surgery and treatment postponed, be with them all.
- We hold before you those in our Community affected by Covid-19, and those who need to isolate
- We give thanks for those who have been healed
- We hold before the Lord our schools, teachers, support workers and those pupils who have returned to school. We ask for patience and strength for all families where children have not been able to return to school.
- We thank you for all key and frontline workers. Protect them Lord
- We pray for the ordinands (vicars in training) as they leave their colleges, move homes and prepare to take up their Curacy posts. We especially pray for Graham Wigley who will be joining us here in our United Benefice.

Update – Graham Wigley

Graham will be joining us from 28th June and will initially be licensed as a Lay Curate. His ordination date has now been provisionally rearranged as 26th September. At this stage we're not sure how many guests, if any will be allowed in the Cathedral.

Due to the current situation the purchase of the house in Stonnall has stalled. A date for exchange and completion of contracts couldn't be agreed before Graham needs to move into his new home, so Graham will live in the Streetley parish curate's house. Graham is moving into his new home 8th June. This house is 3 miles away from Stonnall church, so not too inconvenient. His new address will be;

11 Icknield Close
Streetley
West Midlands
B74 3NN

Please feel free to send a 'welcome to your new home' card if you would like to. A phone number and email address will follow shortly when these have been set up.

Help and Assistance

We want to make sure everyone in our church and our communities stay safe. If you have any need whatever please contact one of our care co-ordinators who will their best to find someone to help you.

Graham & Margaret Birt 01543 483138

Di Proctor 01543 480442

Val Neale 01543 374430

Contributions for our local foodbanks.

If you would like to make contribution to our food banks the following collection points are available;

For the Lichfield Food Bank (Shenstone Church) –

The Vicarage, St Johns Hill, a container is in the porchway

7 Church Close, Shenstone, a container is outside the door.

For the Thomas Project (Stonnall Church) –

1 Lazy Hill, a box is inside the porch

Thank you for your generous contributions. Both foodbank projects can only take gifts of non perishable items, so please no fresh goods.

Social Media

If you don't use social media and would prefer not to, the Archbishop of Canterbury has set up a free phone line of a service you can listen to. If you know someone who would like this, please pass this number on to them.



Morning Prayer times on FaceBook

During the week, Monday to Friday, there is a short time of Morning Prayer on both FaceBook pages. This time of prayer is based on the set liturgy for Morning Prayer for the day. You can access an app for this at <https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/apps/time-to-pray>. It's a free app and includes Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer for each day.

Church Finances

Although both our churches are closed for public worship and private prayer time our bills still need to be paid. Thank you to those of you who continue to give by standing order and those who have posted donations through the Vicarage door. If you do usually give by envelope on the plate you will have received a letter with a supply of envelopes in to enable you to continue your donations during our shut down time. You can either save these up till we're able to reopen or contact one of the wardens and they'll arrange for it to be collected from you.

Our readings for this Sunday are;

2 Corinthians 13:11 - end

Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and

peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Matthew 28: 16 – 20

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Songs for today

The Splendour of the King, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Thoughts for today

(from sermon posted on FaceBook 7th June)

Today is Trinity Sunday another important day in the church's calendar, the day when we mark and acknowledge 'The Trinity'. Often thought of as the hardest part of the Christian faith to understand and often the sermon subject preachers shy away from. Also our bible readings set for today at first glance don't really explain much about the Trinity. Our gospel is talking about the great commission and the letter to the Corinthians is talking about rejoicing, restoring and encouraging and finishes with the words that we know as 'The Grace'. When in doubt its always good I find to go back to scripture and start from the beginning, so rather than trying to explain the Trinity, which honestly friends, people with more academic knowledge than me have attempted to do on many occasions. Books and whole sermon series have been written about this subject. So let's look in detail at this part of Matthew's gospel. If you've got your bibles or PEWS NEWS to hand you may want to find this text, Matthew 28:16-20 as we briefly look at each verse.

The first verse, 16 But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had sent them.

How many of you are shouting at your screen, 'surely there were twelve disciples', you're correct but at the time of this gospel Judas had betrayed

Jesus and killed himself. He hasn't yet been replaced by Matthias, at comes later in the book of Acts. So the disciples went to Galilee, why Galilee? Why not Jerusalem? Jesus grew up in Galilee he had his roots in a region and he returns there after his resurrection to commission his disciples.

The disciples go **"to the mountain where Jesus had sent them"** (v. 16b). In this Gospel, important things happen on mountains: The Sermon on the Mount—the last temptation—the Transfiguration. Something to note here, just before our reading starts, Jesus told Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, "Go tell my brothers that they should go into Galilee, and there they will see me" (28:10). While women are not permitted to serve as witnesses in court, Jesus chose them to bear witness to his resurrection. While the usual custom is that men give orders and women obey, Jesus has these women order the men to go to Galilee. The men must be tempted to doubt the women's testimony. First, they are (only) women. Second, how difficult it must be to believe that a dead man has come to life again! The order is to go to Galilee, a long walk. Just as the women deserve commendation for carrying out their orders, so do the men. It is a leap of faith to set out on the journey to Galilee.

17When they saw him, they bowed down to him, but some doubted

We can only guess at the disciples' state of mind as they proceed toward the mountain, but we know what happens when they finally see Jesus—**"they bowed down to him, but some doubted"**

We should not be surprised at either reaction—worship (bowing down) or doubt/hesitation. It is certainly fitting that the disciples should worship Jesus. They know that he was executed and buried. They know that Good Friday appeared to be the end. But now they see Jesus alive again, confirming beyond doubt that he is the Messiah. They see with their own eyes that their teacher is Lord of life, exercising power even over death.

But we can also understand why some would doubt/hesitate. Nothing in their experience has prepared them for what they are seeing. We could be tempted to criticize the disciples for doubting, but would we have done anything differently? Jesus does not rebuke the disciples. He understands their doubt, but speaks to their faith

18 Jesus came to them and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth."

At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, "the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." (But) Jesus said to him, "Get behind me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only'" . The devil could not be trusted to honour his promise, even if Jesus did fall down and worship him. God has given Jesus authority, and Jesus exercises authority now as well as in the final judgment. His authority spans heaven and earth. There is no time or place where it does not apply.

19 "Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"

"Go, and make disciples The mission is to "make disciples." To accomplish that mission, the disciples must go, baptize, and teach to make disciples. A disciple is a learner—a student—a follower—a person committed to learning what a teacher has to teach. It is interesting to see what Jesus includes and does not include in this commissioning. He doesn't command the disciples to preach—to evangelize—to win the world. He charges them with the responsibility of replicating their own kind by making new disciples—new people of faith.

"baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (v. 19b). This Gospel tells of Jesus baptism (3:13-17), but he has not commanded the disciples to be baptized—and there is no record of them being baptized. In this Great Commission, however, he commands them to baptize as if this is a standard rite with which they are familiar. Of course, by the time this Gospel was written, baptism had become an established practice within the church.

Being baptized *in the name of* indicates a new relationship, a rebirth, an adoption. Being baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit indicates that the new relationship involves all three faces of the Trinity. Jesus wants them to affirm their faith in this way

20 "teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

“teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you” (v. 20a).

This is a very important phrase “all things that I commanded you.” Jesus does not permit us to pick and choose what we will believe or obey.

Jesus’ Great Commission must have sounded like an impossible dream to the disciples. How could eleven very ordinary disciples take the Gospel to the whole world? How could they convey the love of Jesus to people whose languages they could not understand? How could they take the word to continents whose existence they could not even imagine? And yet, by the grace of God, it happened! They had faith.

“Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (v. 20b). This Gospel opened with the words of the prophet, “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son. They shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us” (1:23). It closes with Jesus’ promise to be with us always. From beginning to end, therefore, the promise is that we will live under the umbrella of the presence of God/Jesus.

When Jesus promises to be with us “even to the end of the age,” he is promising to be with us now—and in the future—We need to have faith in that promise.

Sometimes understanding something complex needs us just to have faith, that although we don’t understand it completely we have faith in its merits. Trying to take each part of the trinity and separate one from the other is an impossible task. As the early disciples did we need to have faith. Often in services and prayer meetings we finish with the words of the grace, these words round of the other reading we had today. This grace, this faith is all encompassing, and can’t be separated out one from the other. Faith then is the key to the trinity, faith in God, faith in Jesus and faith in the Holy Spirit.

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