

Fleet URC & Beacon Hill URC

You are invited to join in the words in bold type throughout the service

Preparing for worship:

You might like to have a candle beside you to light as we say...

Lord Jesus

We light this candle to remind us that You are the light of the world

As we come together to PRAY and to PRAISE, may your light remove all darkness from our hearts and minds. Amen

Call to worship

Let us praise God the Creator,

who is filled with glory and power—with holiness and splendour;

Let us worship God the Saviour,

who is filled with love and compassion—with justice and peace;

Let us experience God the Spirit,

who fills us with faith and joy—with love and eternal life.

— written by Moira Laidlaw, and posted on **Liturgies Online**. <http://www.liturgiesonline.com.au/>

Prayers of adoration, confession and Lord's prayer

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

Thank you for loving us and remaining with us in our sorrows and joys.

Thank you for the life of Jesus whose life shows us the way to life and happiness and trust.

Thank you for your Spirit who leads us.

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.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Christ. **Amen.**

~ Originally from **Claretian Publications**, but posted on the <http://pilgrimwr.unitingchurch.org.au/> website.

Gather us into Your presence, Lord God. Let Your arms sweep around us that we might experience the warmth of Your love...

And safe there, help us to confess to you our faults... Our failings... The hurts we have felt and those we have inflicted...

We are not proud of all we say or do – but in the light of Your gracious and generous forgiveness, may we find the courage to let You cleanse and renew us in thought, word and deed...

Then turned around,

May we walk with You, our Lord, Into this new day with hope and with the promise of Your eternal presence.

Rev Susan Brown, Moderator Designate of the General Assembly of The Church of Scotland and Minister of Dornoch Cathedral

These things we ask in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who taught us when we pray, to say: Our Father...

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

[Hymn: accompanied singing](#)

Now thank we all our God

Text: Martin Rinkart; Trans. by Catherine Winkworth

Music: Johann Cruger; Harm. by Felix Mendelssohn

Tune: NUN DANKET, Meter: 67.67.66.66

1. Now thank we all our God,
with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices;
who from our mothers' arms
has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

2. O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us;
and keep us still in grace,
and guide us when perplexed;
and free us from all ills,
in this world and the next.

3. All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given;
the Son, and him who reigns
with them in highest heaven;

the one eternal God,
whom earth and heaven adore;
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

Readings

Matthew 28: 16-20

read by Mike Walters

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."

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

read by Kathy Le Fanu

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.

Reflection



The icon of the Trinity was painted around 1410 by Andrei Rublev.

What does the Trinity mean?

When I was at school, I can remember my RE teacher, Revd Haigh, attempting to teach us about the Trinity. He failed miserably.

He used a water metaphor.

'If three individual drops of water are put into a bowl,' he said, 'they become one; but there are still three drops of water in the bowl.' Most of us in the classroom were confused. For a long time, I put his failure to communicate the Trinity down to his shortcomings as a teacher; however now, years later, I realize the problem wasn't him. It was the entire concept.

What makes it more difficult, is that the word Trinity does not appear in the Bible; yet the three parts of the Trinity are mentioned constantly.

Today I would like to attempt to explore the Trinity in three ways.

❖ *The first is the famous picture of Rublev's 'Trinity'*

Three figures with wings are seated at what appears to be a stone table. (see above)

- The figure on the left is the Father, clothed in the creation colours of blue and green.
- The central figure is the Son, the blue, red, and gold of his garment indicate his royalty and sacrifice.
- The figure on the right is the Holy Spirit, whose garment seems to be green and translucent,

Behind each figure is a story:

The Spirit, on the right, touches us and guides us by ways we may not be aware of, up the hill of prayer. It may be steep and rocky, but the journeying Spirit goes before us and with us along the path.

It leads us to Jesus, the Son of God, and to a tree. A great tree in the heat of the day spreads its shade. It is a place of security, a place of peace, a place where we begin to find out the possibilities of who we can be. It is no ordinary tree. It stands above the Son in the picture: the tree of death has been transformed into a tree of life for us.

Lastly, we arrive at God's house, the heavenly place of restoration and healing: a dwelling place with windows and space.

❖ *The second image of the Trinity is the 'Divine Dance'*

The very mystical Cappadocian Fathers of fourth-century eastern Turkey developed some highly sophisticated thinking on what they began to call the Trinity. "The ancient Greek Fathers depict the Trinity as a Round Dance: an event that has continued for six thousand years, and six times six thousand, and beyond the time when humans *first* knew time.

"An infinite current of love streams without ceasing, *to and fro*, the ebb and flow of Love between the Trinity, in one timeless happening. This circular current of Trinitarian love continues night and day".

At the heart of Christian love, God is not seen as a distant, static monarch but a *divine circle of dance*, as the early Fathers of the Church dared to call it. Yet, returning to the Rublev's Trinity image for a moment, the Spirit is pointing to a vacant space: the participants in the dance of Love are

incomplete, the Spirit is inviting us to join the dance, to breathe and flow with the Divine circle of love.

❖ **The third image is Relationship.**

So what can the Trinity teach us today?

The Trinity is an invitation for us to participate in the circle of Love for all humanity. Yet there is a journey we must take to experience the Trinity. It starts on the hill of prayer, leads onwards to the tree of sacrifice and healing, then arrives at the house in which we will flourish. During this journey, we will learn how to be in relationship with each other and with the Trinity. Relationship means communion - not just the taking the Eucharistic food that will sustain us on our journey, but communion with the Trinity. In doing so we participate in the dance of Love, playing our part in developing the Kingdom of God here on earth.

The Trinity is source of wonder, harmony, challenge and mystery.

Yet for me the concept of the Trinity, though mysterious, remains helpful. For:

- I do believe in the mysterious God, who remains hidden for the greater part, yet glimpses of whom restore my faith.
- I do believe in the Human and divine nature of Jesus, who points to God as the creator, the source of wisdom and strength.
- I do believe in the Spirit who breathes through creation, encouraging us to speak in truth and love, and with integrity.

For me, the Trinity is a helpful metaphor. It is a metaphor through which human beings can understand a little of the infinite mystery called God.

- It is a metaphor that directs us toward each other, rather than away.
- It is a metaphor that keeps us from remaining too long on the mountaintop where it is safe, and brings us to dwell in reality.
- It is a beautiful, profound metaphor whose power extends beyond whether the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are actually dancing around heaven and earth in perfect harmony, whether they are sprouting leaves from the same shamrock stem, or whether they are droplets of water that exist together and separately...
- More importantly, it is a metaphor that points to something beyond itself, to something which, although it fails to grasp completely, it at least tries to grapple with.

The metaphor of the Trinity isn't meant to explain God, but to guide us toward what it means to be more fully human.

Prayers of Intercession

Almighty and All-loving God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

we pray to you through Christ the Healer

for those who suffer from the Covid-19 virus.

We pray too for all who reach out to those who mourn the loss of each and every person who has died as a result of contracting the disease.

Give wisdom to policymakers,
skill to healthcare professionals and researchers,
comfort to everyone in distress
and a sense of calm to us all in these days of uncertainty and distress.

This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord
who showed compassion to the outcast,
acceptance to the rejected
and love to those to whom no love was shown. Amen

Ever One, Sacred Three,
Holy God, the Trinity.

O God beyond us, lead us forward to pray.

O God beside us, teach us gently to pray.

O God within us, still our hearts to pray..... *pause*

Holy God beyond us,

You create and sustain all things, but only by the power of self - giving love.

We celebrate your creativity this morning, the risk and imagination you demonstrated in making such wild diversity in the world: the rhinoceros and the dragonfly, the Himalayas and the spider's web, the earthworm and the human brain. There is mystery and joy at the heart of creation. Holy God beyond us, we celebrate the mystery and the joy which is found even in us..... *Pause*

Son of God beside us,

You never leave us comfortless.

Always you walk with us, neither too far ahead nor a step behind.

And you teach us the love songs of the Kingdom.

Bless, we pray, those who have not noticed that you are there beside them, or who have chosen to ignore you.

Bless those who are dying of loneliness and those who need you so desperately.

In the quiet, we name people before you, and pray that they will raise their eyes to see you. Son of God, beside us.....*pause*

Holy Spirit within us,

Always you are seeking to infiltrate our lives with peace and strength;

Always you are trying to give us more of yourself.

And yet we often feel empty and afraid, and so does the community of nations.

Fill, we pray, all those dark, dank places of this world with your warm life:

Where violence terrorises people;

Haiti, Zambia, Yemen, Ethiopia, Chad, Sudan, Comoros, Timor-Leste, Eritrea, Burundi (only the 10 worst hunger indices from UNICEF) where hunger stalks the land.

And where there are people we know in whom hope is running low, be for them a summer breeze and a spring of fresh water. Holy Spirit with in us..... *pause*

O God beyond us, give us faith.

O God beside us, give us peace.

O God within us, give us life.

Ever one, Sacred Three,

Holy God, the Trinity.

(Written by John Pritchard in the Intercessions Handbook 1997)

Closing Prayer & Blessing

Three in one God,

three things we ask of you this day.

That our prayers

may enable us to see you more clearly.

That the journey we take

may enable us to follow you more nearly.

That the dwelling place of love

may enable us to love you more dearly.

Strengthen us, sustain us Lord, and fill us with faith,

that we may always worship and serve you all our days. Amen