



# WELCOME TO ST PETER'S ASH



***THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AT ST PETER'S IS CALLED TO CELEBRATE, LIVE AND REFLECT THE LOVE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST***

**7<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2020**

**TRINITY SUNDAY**

<b><u>READINGS FOR TODAY</u></b>	<b>PARISH OFFICE:</b> Closed until further notice. <b>TEL:</b> 01252 331161; <b>e- mail:</b> <a href="mailto:office@saint-peters-ash.org.uk">office@saint-peters-ash.org.uk</a> <b>BOOKINGS OF WEDDINGS &amp; BAPTISMS –</b> 01252 321517 <b>WEBSITE:</b> <a href="http://www.saint-peters-ash.org.uk">www.saint-peters-ash.org.uk</a>
Isaiah 40 v 12 – 17, 27 - end	
2 Corinthians 13 v 11 - end	
Matthew 28 v 16 - 20	



## **THY KINGDOM COME SERVICE**

Pope Francis took part in an online church service alongside the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and a number of other senior UK church leaders last Sunday. The service can still be watched on the Church of England's website, Facebook page or YouTube channel.

The service marked the finale of this year's 'Thy Kingdom Come', an annual ecumenical global prayer movement for evangelisation between Ascension Day and Pentecost across 172 countries. In his message, the Pope called on all Christians to seek a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a world "experiencing a tragic famine of hope".

For full details visit the 'Thy Kingdom Come' website.

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**COLLECT FOR TRINITY SUNDAY**

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.

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**DON'T FORGET OUR ST PETER'S PRAYER CHAIN**

If you would like emergency prayer for yourself or somebody else please phone: 01252 322292 or 01252 323037 – this is a confidential service.

There is a free national phone line 'Daily Hope' that offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services. Available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044**

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**A MESSAGE FROM OUR TREASURER SHEILA TAYLOR**

I have had many questions about the "envelope" giving, what should you do with it? If you would like to make payment to the PCC, bank details are as follows:

Bank: Natwest Bank Plc. 30 Wellington Street, Aldershot. GU11 1AE  
Account Name: PCC of St Peter's, Ash  
Account Number: 50140256  
Sort Code: 60 01 08

Please make sure you include your name.

Or you could write a cheque and send it to me, enclosing one of the weekly envelopes. Send your cheque to: Father Keith, The Rectory, Ash Church Road, Ash, Surrey. GU12 6LU Thank you on behalf of the PCC and keep safe and keep well.

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**ST PETER'S CENTRE**

In line with government instructions, our Pre-School, Little Fishes, are now welcoming more children back to the group each week. Whilst this is good news, of course, it does mean that, in accordance with Church of England and Diocesan guidelines, our Centre is out of bounds to everyone else (except for cleaning, necessary maintenance etc). No other events can happen there at present. Please keep our pre-school staff, children and parents in your prayers at this challenging time.

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**WHEN WILL OUR CHURCH BUILDING RE-OPEN?**

I have been asked this question by many people recently. Unfortunately, as of today, I can't give you an answer to that – ignore any rumours to the contrary. We are in the hands of the government and the national Church of England who will make the decision to re-open when it is considered safe to do so. Be assured, as soon as I know, you will know! Re-opening will present challenges with regard to social distancing, but, we will receive directions on that issue when the time comes. Myself and the churchwardens will ensure that we put your health and safety first, and that appropriate measures are in place. No services can happen in church at present.

## Morning Prayer to share at 10 am on Sunday

*If there is more than one person present, someone may wish to read the parts marked (L), everyone says the rest together. You can say alternate verses in the Psalm and in the Canticle. Please have a Bible to hand. You may wish to light a candle.*

(L) O Lord, open our lips

All: and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

(L) Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:

All: the whole earth is full of his glory.

(L) Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength;  
ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name.

All: The whole earth is full of his glory.

(L) The Lord shall give strength to his people;  
the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.  
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:

All: the whole earth is full of his glory.

*This hymn is said or sung:*

1. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;  
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!  
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!
2. Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,  
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;  
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,  
Who was, and is, and evermore shall be.
3. Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,  
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;  
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,  
Perfect in pow'r, in love, and purity.
4. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All Thy works shall praise Thy Name, in earth, and sky, and sea;  
Holy, holy, holy; merciful and mighty!  
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

(L) The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;  
let us pray with one heart and mind:

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,  
so may the light of your presence, O God,  
set our hearts on fire with love for you;  
now and for ever. Amen.

*Pause to call to mind our sins and confess them to God:*

(L) God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us by the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness, all slander and malice, and confess our sins to God our redeemer.

All: Lord God, we have sinned against you;  
we have done evil in your sight.  
We are sorry and repent.  
Have mercy on us according to your love.  
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.  
Renew a right spirit within us  
and restore us to the joy of your salvation,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

All say *The Gloria*:

Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

*We now say the collect (see previous page)*

*Read Isaiah 40 v 12 – 17 & 27 - end followed by Psalm 8 concluding with:*  
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

*Read 2 Corinthians 13 v 11 - end*

All: Alleluia, alleluia. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, one God, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the Almighty. Alleluia.

*Now read Matthew 28 v 16– 20. Here are some thoughts from Fr Keith on today's readings:*

*'Our reading from Isaiah 40 this morning has echoes of God's response to Job, when Job questions God who has allowed so many disasters to befall him. God tells Job in no uncertain terms that, as a human being, he has only very limited knowledge of the workings of the universe. So, what right has he to question God's ways of working, or his judgements? Job is suitably chastened and replies to God: 'I have uttered what I do not understand, things too wonderful for me which I did not know.....I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'* (Job 42 v 3 & 6).

*The words of Isaiah 40 speak, in a similar way, of all that God has done, without the need of help or advice from anyone. The prophet asks 'who taught him knowledge and showed him the way of understanding?' (Isaiah 40 v 14) God is the source of everything, and we, his creatures would do well, always, to remember our limitations and not presume to have more knowledge of how the world works than we actually do. We would do well to trust in God's judgements, and rely on His strength, rather than our own.*

*The current crisis ought to be an object lesson to humanity about the limitations of our knowledge and understanding, and our ability to exercise 'control' over the natural world. Since the dawn of the 'scientific age' we have liked to think that we have, by our own abilities, managed to subdue those things that threatened us in the past. We like to think that our medicine has conquered disease. Covid-19 has proved that to be wrong, and it has come as a tremendous shock to us. Our carefully structured economic system has been brought to its' knees and our sophisticated society, reduced to basic survival strategies. Whereas, in the past, we might have scoffed at our Mediaeval ancestors for their fears and superstitions, we have had first hand experience of such things in the last few months. Years of 'progress' suddenly don't seem so real or impressive! No doubt we will find a way forward, but will we have learned any lessons? Will we come out of this just as boastful of our own abilities, or will we realise that, as human beings, we do have limitations? Will we dare to admit our need for God and look to Him who does have all knowledge? Or, will we just carry on as before, trying to run His world our way, creating yet more environmental and human disasters, not respecting His order of things?*

*Trinity Sunday is always a challenge for Christians. How do we make sense of the seeming contradiction of a God who is at the same time One and yet Three Equal Persons? The short answer is that we can't! At the heart of our faith is a mystery that our human minds can never comprehend. Some people dismiss our faith because of that – they demand logic and certainty and see 'mystery' as merely a cop out. But, going back to the words of Isaiah 40 and the Book of Job, it is clear that the God who we worship has always been a God of 'mystery', never to be fully understood by human beings. What makes our faith so special, is the fact that this God of 'mystery' chose to reveal more of Himself to us by coming to live among us in His Son, and share our humanity. He now knows from the inside all of our joys and sorrows, our frustrations and achievements. In the Holy Spirit he keeps his promise to be always with us, guiding and strengthening us, if we let Him, to do what is right, not only for ourselves, but for the rest of creation. Our Trinitarian God has shown the depth of His love and care for us in a way that a God who is just 'up there', mighty, powerful, and yet remote, never could.*

*Paul speaks of the God of love and peace being with us when we agree with one another and set out to live in peace with one another. We may not be able to greet one another with a holy kiss at the moment, as he suggests (2 Corinthians 13 v 12), but we can do that in a 'socially distanced way' by keeping in close contact with one another and showing our care and concern in prayer and in other practical ways. Something I hope more people will continue to do after lockdown!*

*Jesus has sent us out into the world to baptise and to teach – to invite all who will listen into God's Kingdom. We may not have much confidence to talk too much about the theology of the Trinity, but, how we live our lives, and reflect the love of God in Christ Jesus, will speak much better than words can ever do. God is a community in Himself – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and if we show ourselves to be a genuine community in His service, he will use us to bring renewal and fulfilment to the lives of all we meet.*

*Post lockdown, if we rely more on His knowledge and strength, rather than our own, we will be able to play a positive role in banishing fear, and rebuilding what has been damaged and broken in the world around us by the Covid - 19 crisis.' We need to continue to use this time to draw closer to God and allow Him to guide our thoughts and actions in true humility, letting His Grace inspire us.*

*Pause for your own reflections, and then we say the Apostles' Creed:*

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.  
*We now say together:*

*All: Splendour and majesty are yours, O God;  
you are exalted as head over all.*

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, ♦  
who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, ♦  
born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old ♦  
to save us from our enemies,  
from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors, ♦  
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear, ♦  
holy and righteous in his sight  
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the  
Most High, ♦  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation ♦  
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
- 9 In the tender compassion of our God ♦  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the  
shadow of death, ♦  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

*All: Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.*

*All: Splendour and majesty are yours, O God;  
you are exalted as head over all.*

*Let us pray:*

We come boldly to the throne of grace,  
praying to the almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit  
for mercy and grace.

We plead before your throne in heaven.

Father of heaven, whose love profound  
a ransom for our souls has found:  
We pray for the world, created by your love,  
for its nations and governments, especially for Elizabeth  
our Queen, our government and all members of  
parliament. Extend to them your peace, pardoning love,  
mercy and grace.

We plead before your throne in heaven.

Almighty Son, incarnate Word,  
our Prophet, Priest, Redeemer, Lord:  
We pray for the Church, created for your glory,  
for its ministry to reflect those works of yours. We pray  
for Andrew and Jo our Bishops, all clergy and lay  
ministers. Extend to us your salvation, growth, mercy  
and grace.

We plead before your throne in heaven.

Eternal Spirit, by whose breath

the soul is raised from sin and death:  
We pray for families and individuals, created in your image, for the lonely, the bereaved, the sick and the dying. Breathe on them the breath of life and bring them to your mercy and grace.

We plead before your throne in heaven.

Thrice holy! Father, Spirit, Son,  
Mysterious Godhead, Three in One:  
We pray for ourselves, for your Church, for all whom we remember before you now ...  
Bring us all to bow before your throne in heaven, to receive life and pardon, mercy and grace for all eternity, as we worship you, saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest. Amen.

As Jesus taught us, so we pray: Our Father in heaven....

*This hymn may be said or sung:*

Holy, holy, holy holy,  
Holy holy, Lord God Almighty  
And we lift our hearts before You  
As a token of our love  
Holy, holy, holy, holy.

Gracious Father, gracious Father,  
We are glad to be Your children  
Gracious Father;  
And we lift our heads before You  
As a token of our love  
Gracious Father, gracious Father

Risen Jesus, Risen Jesus,  
We are glad that You've redeemed us  
Risen Jesus;  
And we lift our hands before You  
As a token of our love  
Risen Jesus, Risen Jesus.

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit  
Come and fill our hearts anew  
Holy Spirit;  
And we lift our voice before You  
As a token of our love  
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit.

Hallelujah, hallelujah  
Hallelujah, hallelujah,  
Hallelujah;  
And we lift our hearts before You  
As a token of our love  
Hallelujah, hallelujah.

*Let us pray:*

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.

May God the Holy Trinity make us strong in faith and love, defend us on every side, and guide us in truth and peace; and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love

of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, today and always. Amen.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace, and rise with Christ in glory. Amen.

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PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF THE RECENTLY DEPARTED, ESPECIALLY:

CALEB PERFECT; JOHNNY JONES; AWAIS ALI;  
TERRY RIGBY

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READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK – TRINITY 1

Exodus 19 v 2 – 8a; Romans 5 v 1 - 8; Matthew 9 v 35 to 10 v 23

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY THIS WEEK TO:

MARIA LUFF (11<sup>TH</sup>); SONIA WILLIAMS & JESSICA POVEY (13<sup>TH</sup>)

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### Curates Corner – Revd. Carol writes:

Since the nation has been in lockdown we have all had many things taken away from us. We've had our freedom to go where we want, when we want, many have been unable to go work, spend time with friends and family and go about doing the things we want to in the way we always have. What this has shown me is that we have perhaps taken our freedom to do these things for granted and we could use this time of restriction to look upon the way we live our lives. However, every situation has a positive and there is most definitely a positive in this one, that is that we have all been given a valuable gift - the gift of time!

Under normal circumstances many of us say we don't have enough of time, and for me personally it has been wonderful to have time to do those jobs around the house that I keep saying I'll get around to doing one day, to have the time to spend hours working in the garden, time to walk the dog, time to have long chats with friends, family and many of you on the phone, and yes I have even had time to dip into some of those theological books that have been collecting dust on my shelves. I can honestly say that I have not been bored and whilst reflecting on this the other day, the well-known reading from the book of Ecclesiastes came mind. When I looked and read through it, I was amazed how appropriate it is for the current circumstance we find ourselves in and wrote down a few thoughts of which I share a few with you below:

Ecclesiastes 3:1 - 8 – (my words in italics)

*Coronavirus - Time*

A time to be born, and a time to die;

*Giving birth in lockdown has meant for many women no birthing partner being with them and not having the arrival they had planned for their baby. Death comes to us all, to some it has come quicker than expected. The value of each day we are given has been brought into stark reality.*

A time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

*Many of us have spent time planting seeds in the garden, and many of us has spent time plucking out the weeds and overgrown areas of our gardens.*

A time to kill, and a time to heal;

*Perhaps this has been a time to kill old habits and grievances. It has been a time to heal broken relationships, old wounds of hurt and pains of the past.*

A time to break down, and a time to build up;

*There has been in some cases barriers of isolation broken down, with a reaching out to those around us, building up new friendships.*

A time to weep, and a time to laugh;

*Some have wept over cancelled family gatherings, birthdays, weddings, holidays, not being able to show affection for each other by the touch of a hand or a hug. Whilst there have been times of laughter and fun in the creative ways that people have been entertaining themselves and others.*

A time to mourn, and a time to dance;

*There has been sadness and mourning for those who have died without loved ones around them, and families being apart. Some of us have danced at hearing a favourite song on the radio or at the delight of something we of a family member has achieved.*

A time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

*Lockdown has released us from the usual burdens of life, which can weigh us down like stones. We have perhaps had the opportunity to pick up new stones in the form of spending time with God, reading, reflecting and praying.*

A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

*We have embraced a new vocabulary: 'Lockdown, Social Distancing, PPE, the 'R' Number, Track and Trace, etc.,'. We have all had to learn how not to embrace in a new way living and showing our care for each other.*

A time to seek, and a time to lose;

*We have lost old habits in the way we shop, communicate and worship, but have sought new ways to do these things.*

A time to keep, and a time to throw away;

*There has been time to have a clear out, to throw away those things no longer wanted or needed. We have gathered things and put them in order as we have tidied and sorted.*

A time to tear, and a time to sew;

*As well as the physical tasks that have involved tearing down and sewing things such as PPE, it has been a time perhaps to tear down barriers of broken relationships, to sew patches of love into our lives and the lives those we know.*

A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

*We have time to consider before we decide to speak in response to posts on social media. Keeping silent can sometimes speak louder than words. God hears and speaks to us in the silence, use this time to hear Him.*

A time to love, and a time to hate;

*We have had time to see, give and receive an outpouring of love to people who perhaps we took for granted before. The constraints put on our lives and being reliant on others is perhaps something we hate.*

A time for war, and a time for peace.

*We are at war against an unseen adversary that is with us for while yet. Let this be a time when you ask God to bring peace in your heart.*

The heading for this in my Bible (NRSV) is: 'Everything Has Its Time', this is most certainly true. What I have shared with you is merely a snippet of what came to mind first prompted to look at it. I found that the time spent reading this was in fact time with God, who spoke deeply to me in a very practical and spiritual way. Maybe you might like to spend time doing that as I did, reading through each line, thinking about what it means to you in your current circumstance, especially if you are finding life a challenge. I hope that like me you will be surprised as what God says to you. AMEN.

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#### SAINT OF THE WEEK – COLUMBA OF IONA (9<sup>th</sup> June)

St. Columba 521-597, Born probably in Donegal of royal descent he studied at Moville under St. Finnian then in Leinster at the monastery of Clonard under another St. Finnian. He was ordained before he was twenty-five and spent the next fifteen years preaching and setting up foundations at Derry, Durrow, and Kells. Possibly because of a family feud which resulted in the death of 3000 and for which he considered himself partly responsible he left Ireland at 42 and landed on the island of Iona off the coast of Scotland. There he built the monastery which was to become world famous. With SS Canice and Comgall he spread the gospel to the Picts; he also developed a monastic rule which many followed until the introduction of St. Benedicts. He died on Iona and is also known as Colm, Colum and Columcille.

Almighty God, who filled the heart of Columba with the joy of the Holy Spirit and with deep love for those in his care: may your pilgrim people follow him, strong in faith, sustained by hope, and one in the love that binds us to you; 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.

## Evening Prayer

O lord open our lips,  
and our mouth shall show forth your praise.

O God make speed to save us.  
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, ♦  
you that by night stand in the house of the Lord.  
Lift up your hands towards the sanctuary ♦  
and bless the Lord.  
The Lord who made heaven and earth ♦  
give you blessing out of Zion.

Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.

*This hymn may be said or sung:  
(Tune – All through the night)*

God, that madest earth and heaven,  
darkness and light;  
who the day for toil hast given,  
for rest the night;  
may thine angel guards defend us,  
slumber sweet thy mercy send us;  
holy dreams and hopes attend us,  
all through the night.

Guard us waking, guard us sleeping,  
and when we die,  
may we in thy mighty keeping  
all peaceful lie;  
when the last dread call shall wake us,  
do not thou, our God, forsake us,  
but to reign in glory take us  
with Thee on high.

That this evening may be holy, good and peaceful,  
we pray with one heart and mind:

As our evening prayer rises before you, O God,  
so may your mercy come down upon us  
to cleanse our hearts  
and set us free to sing your praise  
now and for ever Amen.

*A Psalm is said: Mon 4; Tue 9; Wed 11; Thurs (Corpus Christi) 23; Fri (St Barnabas) 147; Sat 24, ending with:*

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.  
Amen.

*Two Scripture Readings now follow (see below). Between the two readings we say:*

- 1 Blessed are you, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ♦ for you have blest us in Christ Jesus with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.
- 2 You chose us to be yours in Christ before the foundation of the world, ♦ that we should be holy and blameless before you.
- 3 In love you destined us for adoption as your children, through Jesus Christ, ♦ according to the purpose of your will,
- 4 To the praise of your glorious grace, ♦ which you freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

5 In you, we have redemption through the blood of Christ, ♦ the forgiveness of our sins,

6 According to the riches of your grace, ♦ which you have lavished upon us.

7 You have made known to us, in all wisdom and insight, ♦ the mystery of your will,

8 According to your purpose which you set forth in Christ, ♦ as a plan for the fullness of time,

9 To unite all things in Christ, ♦ things in heaven and things on earth.

*All* Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

*Readings:*

*Monday: Job 7; Romans 4 v 1 - 12*

*Tuesday: Job 8; Romans 4 v 13 - end*

*Wednesday: Job 9; Romans 5 v 1 - 11*

*Thursday: Proverbs 9 v 1 – 5; Luke 9 v 11 - 17*

*Friday: Ecclesiastes 12 v 9 - end*

*Saturday: Job 12; Romans 6 v 15 - end*

*Gospel Canticle: The Magnificat (The Song of Mary)*

My spirit rejoices in you, O God, my soul proclaims your greatness.

1) My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.

2) From this day all generations will call me blessed; the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his name.

3) He has mercy on those who fear him, from generation to generation.

4) He has shown strength with his arm and has scattered the proud in their conceit.

5) Casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.

6) He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

7) He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, to remember his promise of mercy.

8) The promise made to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

My spirit rejoices in you, O God, my soul proclaims your greatness.

*Prayers of thanksgiving are made for the day that is ending. Intercessions are offered for the church, the world and for individuals, the sick and the departed.*

Our Father, who art in heaven ...

The Collect for Trinity Sunday (see first page)

Kindle in our hearts, O God,  
the flame of love which never ceases,  
that it may burn in us, giving light to others.  
May we shine for ever in your temple,  
set on fire with your eternal light,  
even your Son Jesus Christ,  
our Saviour and our Redeemer.

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray, and in your great  
mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night,  
for the love of your only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all  
evermore. Amen.

May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the  
mercy of God, rest in peace, and rise with Christ in glory.  
Amen.

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**Prayers for special days this week:**

**Thursday – Corpus Christi – Thanksgiving for Holy  
Communion:**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
we thank you that in this wonderful sacrament  
you have given us the memorial of your passion:  
grant us so to reverence the sacred mysteries  
of your body and blood  
that we may know within ourselves  
and show forth in our lives  
the fruits of your redemption;  
for you are alive and reign with the Father  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**Friday – St Barnabas the Apostle**

Bountiful God, giver of all gifts,  
who poured your Spirit upon your servant  
Barnabas  
and gave him grace to encourage others:  
help us, by his example,  
to be generous in our judgements  
and unselfish in our service;  
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.

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**Sermon from Bishop Andrew for  
Trinity Sunday**

Isaiah 40:12-17, 27-31, Psalm 8, Matthew 28:16-20

For some people it's the raging sea that does it. For  
others it's that first glimpse of a spectacular mountain  
range. Some discover it in the desert. Others as they  
look up at the night sky. For myself I still remember  
the extraordinary fireworks display I witnessed by the  
Dead Sea, with a whole succession of shooting star  
after shooting star; or that moment on a family holiday  
when we caught our first dazzling sight of Mont Blanc.

So here we are – human beings capable of awe and  
wonder at the sheer majesty of Creation – and here in  
our Old Testament reading this morning is Isaiah the  
prophet seeking to communicate the awe and wonder,  
the sheer majesty of its Creator. So what picture does

Isaiah paint for us? A portrait of a God who cups His  
hand, and holds the sea in its palm; a portrait of a God  
who stretches out His thumb and His little finger, and  
holds the heavens between them; a portrait of a God  
who carries the desert sands in his shopping bag; a  
portrait of a God who gets out His kitchen scales, to  
weigh the Mont Blanc mountain range upon them.

But why was this vision of God's majesty so vital for  
the people of God in Isaiah's day?

Well, just put yourself in the shoes of the Israelites  
after the mighty Babylonian army had destroyed  
Jerusalem, and shipped them off many of its  
inhabitants into exile. Put yourself in the shoes of that  
disillusioned and angry man who wrote Psalm 137:  
*'By the Rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we  
remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our  
harps, for there our captors asked us for songs, our  
tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said 'Sing us  
one of the songs of Zion!' How can we sing the songs  
of the Lord while in a foreign land?'*

The focus of those exiles was on Zion. The city of  
Jerusalem is what they thought about day and night.  
They remembered it in the good old days, when they'd  
go up to the Temple to make sacrifices and sing their  
worship songs. They remembered it too as they last  
saw it: the smouldering ruins of their homes, the  
looted shops, the broken-down walls, the pile of  
rubble where the Temple had once stood.

All around them in Babylon were new temples,  
temples to Marduk, the sun god, and the various other  
astrological gods and goddesses in the Babylonian  
pantheon. All around them were idols, statues made  
of wood or silver or gold. And the worst thing was this:  
that God – the true God – seemed to have deserted  
them. Perhaps Marduk was more powerful than  
Jehovah after all. Or perhaps Jehovah had just  
abandoned His people. Whichever way – whether it  
was a lack of power on God's part, or a lack of love –  
there certainly wasn't a lot to sing about.

We know, don't we, about the power of images? The  
image of those fields of poppies; or of the Berlin Wall  
being unpicked stone by stone; or of the collapse of  
the Twin Towers; or of long queues waiting patiently  
outside the supermarket a statutory two meters apart.  
These iconic images will stay with us forever. And  
here's the image that would never leave the people of  
Isaiah's day: the image of Solomon's Temple in ruins.  
That was where God was meant to live. That was the  
meeting-place between God and Man. And now look at  
it! Could this God still truly help them? And even if He  
could, was He bothered?

And that's why Isaiah's vision of the majesty of God  
was so crucial at this point. That's why the smallness  
of the vision of God's people – their vision of a local  
god whose address was, or at least had been, 'The  
Temple, Temple Street, Jerusalem, Israel, JE1 1AA' –  
needed challenging to the core. Isaiah didn't mention  
the Temple. He wasn't too bothered about Jerusalem.  
Instead he spoke of the sea in God's palm and the  
mountains in his weighing scales.  
Babylon looked so big and impressive, but what were  
the nations to this God? They were just a drop in His  
bucket. Marduk, the sun god, and his astrological

mates looked so invincible, but what were these stars that apparently dominated the lives of men and nations? They were just one of God's bright ideas, one among many. King Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian minions: now, they were powerful all right! Well yes, but from God's perspective they were as small as grasshoppers. And as for the mighty idols in the Babylonian temples, they were just powerless, manmade sculptures, and half the time they toppled over anyway!

With the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem came the destruction of the whole sacrificial system which lay at its heart: so how would Israel survive that? Well, said Isaiah rather tongue-in-cheek, the forests of Lebanon, together with all the animals who roamed the land, were not sufficient as a sacrifice for this God. So I'm sure He wouldn't miss the odd lamb or pigeon.

And threaded through this glorious chapter is a series of rhetorical questions, to which any answer seems foolish in the extreme:

- Who has understood the mind of the Lord, or instructed Him as counsellor?
- Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him?
- Who was it that taught him knowledge?
- To whom will you compare God?

And in the midst of all those questions, Isaiah was convinced that God was about to do something extraordinary, something utterly new: to bring the captives back to the Holy City.

There's a particularly nice comparison between the two little verses at the end of this chapter: first, 'God will not faint or grow weary', and then 'He gives power to the weak and strengthens the powerless'. For here we see a God of power, who never grows weary Himself; and here too we see a God of love, who brings strength to His people. 'Get your harps off those poplar trees', Isaiah was saying. 'Walk, run, soar on eagles' wings: because if this God is for us, who can be against us?!

Isaiah's vision was limited of course. He foretold the coming of the Messiah, the so-called suffering servant, but he lived many centuries before Jesus arrived. He foretold the Spirit being poured out on all who thirst – but he lived many centuries before the day of Pentecost. So the idea of Trinity Sunday – of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit – would have been quite new to him. And yet long before the disciples came to the conclusion that, yes, Jesus was a man, but more than a man – he was God incarnate, God getting under our skin; long before they experienced the Spirit of God on that first Pentecost weekend; long before they started using Trinitarian language: the language of *baptism* in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the language of the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ and the *love* of God and the *fellowship* of the Holy Spirit, there were little Trinitarian hints in the Old Testament Scriptures that they might have picked up. Genesis chapter 1, for example, where God mysteriously said 'Let us make man in our own image'; or Genesis chapter 18, where we read 'The Lord appeared to Abraham... and he looked up and saw three men standing near him'. The Lord appeared,

and he saw three...: just a tantalising little glimpse of a truth that would be so wonderfully fleshed out many centuries later.

But back to the God of Isaiah's vision – a God of majesty and a God of love: because both perspectives seem more important now than ever, as we celebrate this Trinity Sunday in the shadow of Covid-19, with both the church building and the eucharist as unavailable to us as the Temple and its sacrifices in Isaiah's day.

There can be times, in my experience, when we think we're really something – when we pride ourselves on what we can achieve, on all that we're capable of. And Covid-19 has challenged that arrogance to the core. As I was reflecting last week, it's hardly an exaggeration to describe these past few months as the 'humbling of the human race'.

But there can be times too when we think we're really nothing – when we feel completely insignificant, unimportant, unloved and unlovable. As we sit in Covid isolation, perhaps we, like the Israelites, have hung up our harps, with no new songs to sing, because songs require hope: at least, worship songs do – and there seems a dearth of hope right now.

And perhaps for some of us, we find ourselves swinging between the two extremes, tempted to big ourselves up one moment, giving way to the deepest insecurities the next.

And Isaiah's vision of the majesty of God is the most wonderful antidote to it all. To those who think they're really something, Isaiah says: 'When God looks at you, you are as insignificant as a grasshopper. Don't get ideas above your station, chum!' While to those who think they're really nothing, Isaiah says: 'You are beloved of God. Take down that harp and sing a new song to the Lord!'

The two messages may seem contradictory, but deep down we know we need them both. There are times when we take God for granted, and require the firmest kick up the backside; and times when we feel so paralysed by a sense of personal inadequacy that what we require is a gentle setting us on our feet once again. God disturbs the comfortable and comforts the disturbed. That's the message of Isaiah 40, and indeed the message of the Bible from beginning to end.

And so on this Trinity Sunday, let's rejoice afresh at the majesty of Creation and the majesty of its Creator; and let's wait in the presence of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, allowing him both to challenge our arrogance and to strengthen us with his power from on high. For *'Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint'*.