**Sunday 30th May 2021 – Bulwell United Reformed Church**

*Today is Trinity Sunday and we focus on* ***John 3: 1-17 -*** *Speaking to Nicodemus late at night, Jesus says that to see the kingdom of God, one must be born of water and the Spirit, and to receive eternal life one must believe in God’s only Son. A short service for personal communion focusing on the Trinity is included. Please have your bread & wine/juice ready.*

**Trinity Sunday** - **Call to worship**

Holy, holy, holy is our wonderful God!
Creator! Saviour! Sustainer!
Let us worship our God of infinite mystery,
yet who is closer to us than our own breath.
**Amen.**

### **A prayer of confession**

God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to you we pray and before you we seek forgiveness.
How dare we limit you to our experiences alone, to what we understand, to what we know,
to what we want to be the truth.
How dare we try to mould you into an image of comfort and convenience that suits us.
How dare we?
Our immaturity and self-righteousness so often obscures our view of you.
***God, forgive us,
and help us to hear your voice: ‘Whom shall I send?’*Amen.**

***Our Father ………***

**Song Jesus is the Name we Honour Lyrics and Music Video**

[(535) 481 Jesus is the Name we Honour - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9S89deoJDww)

**John 3:1-17 - Jesus teaches Nicodemus**

**3**Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. **2**He came to Jesus at night and said, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.’

**3**Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.

**4**‘How can someone be born when they are old?’ Nicodemus asked. ‘Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!’

**5**Jesus answered, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. **6**Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. **7**You should not be surprised at my saying, “You must be born again.” **8**The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.’

**9**‘How can this be?’ Nicodemus asked.

**10**‘You are Israel’s teacher,’ said Jesus, ‘and do you not understand these things? **11**Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. **12**I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? **13**No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven – the Son of Man. **14**Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, **15**that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.’

**16**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. **17**For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.  *(NIVUK)*

**Message – What is the Trinity all about?**

The Desert Fathers first compared the members of the Trinity to the source of light (the Father), the light itself that illumines (the Son), and the warmth when you feel the light (the Spirit)

And why did those Church Fathers in the fourth century who put together the Nicene Creed conceive of this doctrine?  Several good reasons.  First, this doctrine tells us we cannot dismiss Jesus as one good teacher among many, for He is God incarnate – The Son of God who takes away the sin of the world. And, second, this doctrine of the Trinity gives us confidence that we will progress in growing in our Christian lives because it teaches us the Holy Spirit who dwells within us is God Himself, working to conform us to Christ. The Trinity is more of an experience than anything else - our faith in and faithfulness to Jesus Christ, made real by the gift of God’s Spirit.

Whilst our reading for today does not specifically use the word Trinity - that was a later construct of the Church - it does importantly point us to the experience of the Trinity. So read against the backdrop of Nicodemus’ night-time visit, today’s reading from John’s Gospel again draws us into a mystery that is beyond our understanding and our wisdom. Jesus makes it clear to Nicodemus that being holy, being part of the kingdom of God is about being a child of God - “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12)

No one can see anything clearly about God and God’s kingdom, Jesus tells him, without being born again. Jesus picks up on words and concepts introduced by Nicodemus and turns the conversation toward deeper truths again and again with each repetition of the words God, enter, and being born Jesus shifts the conversation from the smallness of Nicodemus’ view to the largeness of life in community with God.

'You must be born again' can also be translated 'you must be born from above'. A re-birth then of water and of Spirit, of being born as God’s child, into a life in which God’s kingdom is visible and accessible and which places the whole person in a new light, which Nicodemus, who has not experienced it, cannot yet see or understand.

Then we reach the verse that shines like a beacon over the whole Gospel. John 3:16 brings together the Gospel’s first references to eternal life and to love which, perhaps surprisingly, don’t just refer to the followers of Jesus but is for the whole world. Jesus tells Nicodemus 'God so loved the world he sent his only son...' God in Trinity reaches out to embrace and love the whole world. Our job is only to accept it and to become part of the community of love. It is a gift of life from the heart of the Father, breathing the Spirit wind over us and through us, and opening our eyes to the Son who must be lifted up to draw all people to himself to learn his lesson of love. But this is not merely an invitation.

There is no distance, no boundaries between the Spirit who is sent into the hearts and minds of the disciples at Pentecost, Jesus who promises that Spirit, and God the Father who sends the Spirit. At the heart of God is perfect relationship, perfect communion, perfect love and that love reaches out, in three persons, to the world God has made. The Trinity is not something that needs to be explained but is something that needs to be experienced and something that needs to be lived. Because the Trinity is dynamic and loving and relating – and it is on the move. God in Trinity wants to bring new lives into this relationship. God in Trinity wants to give us the chance to be born from above like Nicodemus to become part of God’s love reaching out into the life and lives of the world to build the kingdom of love joy and peace.

### **Prayers of intercession**

God the Father, ground me in your being as we pray for those who flounder and struggle with the pressures of life. May they see some shape, some purpose to life and find a way to move forward. May their struggles become less tangled, and may they find calm in the chaos of their living…
God the Son, enfold me in your love as we pray for those who know little or no love, security or peace; for those who live in fear and loneliness; for those who are shrouded in pain and smothered by death; for those without family support and succour, the friendless and the homeless…
God the Holy Spirit, embolden us to share as we pray for those who have no hope, no dreams, no visions; for those who have no knowledge of you, who have not seen you, nor felt you, nor encountered you; for those without faith and trust, those seemingly lost to themselves and to you…
God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, these are all your children;
for them we pray.
**Amen.**

### *Please add your prayers for others you wish to pray for today . . .*

# **Song In Christ Alone (Official Lyric Video) - Keith & Kristyn Getty, Alison Krauss**

[(535) In Christ Alone (Official Lyric Video) - Keith & Kristyn Getty, Alison Krauss - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16KYvfIc2bE)

**HOLY COMMUNION – TRINITY** - **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

We give you all thanks and praise, O God,
and to join with the whole world
in declaring the greatness of your name.

From our midst you brought forth your own child,
Jesus the Christ
— one with you, and the embodiment of your Spirit —
and through him you invited all people
to be baptised into your triune dance of love.
When he was killed, you raised him to life
and gave him all authority in heaven and on earth,
and in him, through the Holy Spirit,
you are with us always, even to the end of the age.

**The Breaking of the Bread and Pouring of the Wine**

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast. *I Corinthians 5:7*

**The Sharing of the Bread and the Wine**

*Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Blessed are those who are called to the wedding feast of the Lamb. Alleluia.*

Take, eat; this is the body of Christ, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of him.

This cup is the new covenant in the blood of Christ, shed for you and for all, for the forgiveness of sin. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of him.

**Prayer after communion**

Most gracious God, we praise you for what you have given and for what you have promised us here. You have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. You have fed us with the bread of life and renewed us for your service.

Now we give ourselves to you; and we ask that our daily living may be part of the life of your kingdom, and that our love may be your love reaching out into the life of the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**A prayer of sending out**



Holy Trinity, one God, empower us by your presence,
and fill us with your love.
Take us and form us as people of good news
to praise, love and serve you that the world may believe.
Glory to you, now and for ever!
**Amen.**