

**SUNDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020 (Trinity Sunday)**

Call to worship:

Our land is alive with the glory of God;

**Desert sands hum and gum trees dance.**

Brown grasses sing

**And mountains breathe their stillness.**

All created things add their rhythms of delight

**And even stones rap out their praise.**

Let our voices mingle with those of the earth;

**May our hearts join the beat of her joy,**

For our triune God is with us:

**The source of all being surrounds and upholds us.**

**Christ Jesus walks beside and before us.**

**The Spirit moves within and between us.**

**Blessed be God, our wonder and delight.**

(UIW – 2)

Acknowledgement of the first people of the land:

We acknowledge those who were here before us, the first inhabitants of this place.

**We honour them for their custodianship of the land, on which we gather today.** (UIW – 2)

Hymn: 411 (TiS)

1. Filled with the Spirit's power, with one accord the infant church confessed its risen Lord:  
O Holy Spirit, in the church today no less your power of fellowship display.
2. Now with the mind of Christ set us on fire, that unity may be our great desire:  
give joy and peace; give faith to hear your call, and readiness in each to work for all.
3. Widen our love, good Spirit, to embrace in your strong care all those of every race:  
like wind and fire with life among us move till we are known as Christ's, and Christians prove.

Prayer of Adoration and Confession:

We thank you, O God,

that there is always more to you than we have yet seen,

always a new divine colour to your life

which will show forth in its vividness if we will pause to see it.

In the depths of our bodies, hearts, souls and minds

there is a thankfulness for who you are, O God.

***Our words cannot contain you and our thoughts can never hold you,***

***Thanks be to you, O God. Amen.***

(WFW – 2007)

O God, we confess the blindness that is not even aware of sinning;

the pride that dares not admit that it is wrong;

the selfishness that can nothing but its own will;

the righteousness that knows no fault;

the callousness that has ceased to care;

the defiance that does not regret its own sins;

the evasion that always tries to make excuses;

the coldness of heart that is too hardened to repent.

God, we are sinners, be merciful to us. **Amen.**

(UIW – 2)

Declaration of Forgiveness:

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,  
that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.

Hear then Christ's word of grace to us: "Your sins are forgiven".

**Thanks be to God.**

(UIW – 2)

Doxology: 771 (TiS)

Now to him who loved us, gave us every pledge that love could give,  
freely shed his blood to save us, gave his life that we might live,  
be the kingdom and dominion and the glory evermore.

Reading: Mathew 28: 16 – 20

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Message:

Just before Jesus leaves them he says to his disciples "I am with you always".

While I will be with you for a Service of release on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August this will be my last Sunday before going on leave prior to taking up my new placement in Bairnsdale. I look forward to the new work God has for me to do but at the same time I will be sorry to leave you all. Over the last 12 1/2 years we have gone through a lot together. Over that time I have seen a lot achieved that I give thanks to God for but am aware there is still a lot to do. As part of the community of the Baptised in this place you have the ongoing responsibility to care for one another, share the teaching of Christ, nurture each other in the faith and encourage one in following Jesus as those who love and serve those who are most in need.

In this next step in your journey I leave you in good hands. Not just Loni and Joan Fisher and whoever else comes to minister for short or longer periods, and those who exercise leadership within the congregation, but most importantly in the hands of the one who says "I am with you always". The one who is with you always will stir up the gifts in each of you to support and encourage each other and enable you to exercise your own areas of ministry that will not only welcome new people into the life of the congregation but will help to disciple one another in the things of Christ - Jesus the Christ who loved and served the rejected and hurting and calls us to do likewise.

God has been at work in the world from the beginning and will always be at work -bringing to reality the things of God's kingdom here on earth and that includes here in Shepparton and surrounding districts.

Today is Trinity Sunday when we celebrate that threefold expression of the one God.

As Christians we don't believe in some vague idea of God but God as Father, Son, Holy Spirit as outlined in the words of the Apostles Creed.

Trinity is not a Biblical term but one developed later to describe how we have come to experience God in these 3 ways:

Creator of the world and loving Father,

God in flesh as Son,

and as the life giving power flowing from God the Holy Spirit.

It is into this fullness of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit that we are baptized.

Baptism and discipleship are linked. As those who are baptized we learn to see our whole life in the light of our baptism, so that our life will take on the pattern of life "in Christ"

*"Go therefore, 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 observe all my commandments, and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."*

These last words of Jesus' to his disciples in Matthew's Gospel have often been used as a missionary mandate. The motivation to spread the good news of salvation in Christ in order that people might respond and be baptized into the church.

Baptism can never be an end in itself. The goal of Baptism is the making of disciples of Christ. People who will live out in their life the life of Christ. To this end the church is called not only to Baptize but to instruct and teach. Stress is on teaching and obeying Jesus' words. We all have a role in that as parents of those whom we bring for baptism and as part of the church that welcomes the baptized into our midst. Baptism is not just a nice traditional ceremony that one goes through or an expression of private individual belief. Nor an insurance policy against the gates of hell. Baptism is for the life we are called to live here and now as followers of Jesus - Those who know what it is to be part of the Kingdom of God and live out the love and grace, goodness and forgiveness that we see in the life and teaching of Jesus.

Being a disciple of Jesus does not mean that we will always live out our baptized life perfectly. Nor does it mean that we will never struggle with questions and doubts. What is startling about this event which marks the end of Jesus' earthly ministry and life is what Matthew says about the disciples. "When they ( disciples) saw him ( Jesus), they worshipped him; but some doubted." (20:18) Worship mingled with doubt. Some who worshipped also had doubts. The sight of Jesus does not remove all the uncertainties and questions. Those first disciples often wavered between adoration and indecision, between prayer and puzzlement. Perhaps not unlike us at times.

As those who are baptized we confess that we now belong to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Even as we make promises to be faithful in our own response to God we know that God will be faithful to us. Indeed we cannot live out our baptismal promises without God's help. "I will with the help of God". It's the promise of Christ's ongoing presence with us that sustains us in times of puzzlement and confusion, hardship and struggle.

The disciples are not excluded because of their questions and doubt. In fact, it is precisely to these followers, who are worshipping and doubting that the commission is given. Even when we doubt, even when we have questions, God is with us and we as disciples of Christ are called to witness in word and deed to the things of Christ such that others too will become faithful followers of Jesus. We don't have to go to some other part of the world to do this. The original wording has the sense of "As you go". As you go, to work, to school, to your daily activities, you are to be instrumental in others coming to know who Jesus is and wanting to follow him in their lives. Sometimes our witness is among people of the same ethnic, cultural, language group as ourselves and sometimes among people from a very different background. The important thing is that the love of God seen in the life of Jesus and the good news of the Gospel message is there for all people. Sometimes our witness will be through words, sometimes it's through the choices we make in life or the way we face the challenges and troubles that come our way with trust in the one who says to us "Surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

May you know God's loving, empowering presence with you as you live out your Baptism and bring that same loving presence into the lives of others wherever you go.

Hymn: 491 (TiS)

*Refrain*

*Father welcomes all his children to his family through his Son;  
Father giving his salvation, life for ever has been won.*

1. Little children, come to me, for my kingdom is of these;  
life and love I have to give, mercy for your sin. *Refrain*
2. In the water, in the word in his promise, be assured:  
those who are baptized and believe shall be born again. *Refrain*
3. Let us daily die to sin, let us daily rise with him,  
walk in the love of Christ our Lord, live in the peace of God. *Refrain*

Service of Baptism:

Please pray for Ben and Bec Ladson and their baby son Jonathon who is being baptised today.  
Remember your own Baptism, what it means for you and your role in encouraging and nurturing those whom we as a congregation baptise.

Offering: Your ongoing offerings for God's work are greatly appreciated.

Prayers of Intercession:

Into the centre of the pain of the world, pour your gracious blessing, Jesus Christ.

Where people are crushed by the domination of others;

***may they know their infinite worth to you.***

Where they are starved for all that life should bring;

***fill them with your abundant life.***

If they are bowed down under injustice;

***lift up their heads in their everyday struggle.***

When they are torn apart by war, violence or abuse;

***make them whole and bless them with peace in our time.***

When the future is filled with fear and confusion;

***surround them with the assurance of your faithfulness, O God.***

Be with those whom we name before you in silence...

We believe, even though our faith sometimes falters,

that you will never leave us alone or condemn our small efforts to be your people.

***Receive our prayers this day, O God.***

***Amen.***

Hymn: 574 (TiS)

1. Captain of Israel's host and Guide of all who seek the land above,  
beneath your shadow we abide, the cloud of your protecting love;  
our strength, your grace; our rule, your word: our end, the glory of the Lord.
2. By your unerring Spirit led, we shall not in the desert stray;  
we shall not full direction need, nor miss our providential way;  
as far from danger as far from fear, while love, almighty love, is near.

Commissioning and Blessing:

*"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...."*

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you"*

2 Corinthians 13: 11 – 13