

Sunday 7th June 2020

Welcome & Announcements

Call to worship Psalm 93

Praise 'Faithful One'

Prayer

Psalm 8

Children's thought

Hymn Hp 25 He's got the whole world in His hands (Sun 24/6/18)

NT Reading Matthew 28:16-20

Sermon

Prayers for Others

Hymn Hp9 Immortal Invisible (Sun 10/2/19)

Blessing

(Communion Live)

Good morning everyone & welcome to our service of worship for Regent Street Methodist Church in Newtownards. As we continue to meet online it's great to be able to take time in our own homes to praise God & listen for His voice speaking to us.

This morning we arrive in our Church calendar at Trinity Sunday, the day when Christians all over the globe will take time to reflect on our One God who is Father, Son & Spirit.

But firstly some notices Can I remind you that if you are watching this on the morning of Sunday 7th June then there is an opportunity to share in a live Online communion at 12 noon. Just go to our Church Facebook page...that's www.facebook.com/regentstreetmethodistnewtownards & God willing you shall see

me at 12 noon. Do remember to have some bread & juice or wine available for communion.

Secondly next week that's Sunday 14th June we plan to have an online Church picnic through Zoom. This is really just another opportunity for those of us who can't see each other again & you can have your lunch or just a cup of tea & eat later...but do try to come on & say hello to everyone if you can. The Zoom link for this picnic will be going out with the text version of this service.

Not had enough of Zoom...? Will don't worry as we also hope to have a Church quiz through Zoom on Saturday 20th June. 7.30-9.30. It will just be a bit of fun, so don't worry if you are not that into quizzes, just send me a quick email to say that you hope to come along, either in a family unit or by yourself & we can sort out teams etc. Don't be technology shy... just give it a go ...

Finally just to give you an update, the Church council met last Monday & we discussed where we were & what the way forward might look like. As I am sure you are aware, there is still lot's of uncertainty about when Church's will be allowed to open their doors again for services or other gatherings. And the truth is that even when we do open our doors it's likely that many things will have to change in terms of keeping distancing etc. We as leaders really only know what you know but we will be seeking to plan over the summer by assessing what our building can hold & discussing ways to make our return when it comes as safe as possible.

That's our notices, except to say a belated happy birthday to Ernie Mallon & an upcoming happy birthday to Anne

Alderdice! Happy birthday both of you....so let us now still our hearts as we prepare for worship.

Call to worship Psalm 93 vs 1-2 & 5

The LORD is king! He is robed in majesty.
Indeed, the LORD is robed in majesty & armed with strength.

The world stands firm & cannot be shaken. Your throne, O LORD, has stood from time immemorial.

You yourself are from the everlasting past.

Your royal laws cannot be changed.

Your reign, O LORD, is holy forever & ever.

So now let us join with the praise group as they lead us in worship as we sing

Faithful One so unchanging.

Faithful one, so unchanging
Ageless one, you're my rock of peace
Lord of all I depend on you
I call out to you, again and again
I call out to you, again and again
You are my rock in times of trouble
You lift me up when I fall down
All through the storm
Your love is, the anchor
My hope is in You alone. BRIAN DOERKSEN
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Prayer Faithful One, so unchanging...we come humbly to You now in worship... For You are our creator & the source of all life. You are the origin of all beauty & all that is good. You are our Heavenly Father, glorious in splendour & majesty.

Faithful One, so unchanging...we come to You now for You are the God of all compassion & mercy. The One who took our burden our failings our sins willing upon yourself. Our suffering Saviour,

drawing all towards healing & hope through Your resurrection.

Faithful One, so unchanging... we come to you now as the dynamic life giving One. The One who comes to make Your home in our hearts & lives... the One who convicts, corrects & guides...the One who is mysterious & mighty yet also gentle & gracious... Faithful one, who is Father , Son & Holy Spirit we worship You now

Yet even as we declare Your praises we also now take some moments in silence as we confess that, at times, we have focussed on the gifts & forgotten the giver. We have focussed on ourselves & forgotten the Saviour & we have gone our own way & forgotten the guide. Have mercy on us we pray.

Paul tells us in Colossians 1:19-20 that *God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Jesus & through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

In the name of Jesus we are forgiven.

So now let us continue in worship as we hear the words of psalm 8.

Psalm 8 video

Children's thought- Good morning everyone, now I don't want any of you to turn off but I thought we needed to do something of a maths lesson this morning! Now hold on I can imagine some of you are already trying to switch over to another service... but hear me out this is so easy you will be able to do these maths sums... Here is the first one.... I will write it up on the board... $1 + 1 =$ You see no problem... now here is the the next one... $3 - 2 =$ Yes you see aren't you

glad you didn't switch over now... So let's try another...

$$\begin{array}{r} s - 1 \\ \hline 2 \\ = s - \\ \hline 7 \end{array}$$

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S = what? Yes of course...another easy one... S equals.... well I am not sure... It's hard isn't it? And to be honest trying to understand the Trinity... that is how God is One but 3 persons is very hard as well... Down through history some people have used different examples to try & explain it but none of them are perfect... Some people have used an egg....because an egg has a shell, a while & a yoke... St Patrick supposedly used a shamrock to try & explain it... But the truth is that none of these examples are perfect... because we aren't thinking about a thing... but the living God... One God but 3 persons... & that's really hard to understand...it's a bit of mystery to our human minds... Now back to our other mystery...do you want to know what S equals... maybe not but I am going to show you anyway.. Yes its minus 2

Thanks you computer for helping work that out! Lets pray

Children's Prayer: Dear God. We know that we cannot fully understand how great and wonderful you really are. But we thank you for revealing yourself to us as **Father, Son & Holy Spirit** (a Trinity of persons) even though you are still one. Help us to learn more about you and the great love you have for each one of us. We ask this in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen!

We are now going to sing again He's got the whole world in His hands & following that we will have our bible reading from Matthew's gospel.

He's got the whole world in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got the whole world in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got a-you and me brother in His hands
He's got a-you and me brother in His hands
He's got a-you and me brother in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got a-you and me sister in His hands
He's got a-you and me sister in His hands
He's got a-you and me sister in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got the whole world in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands

Songwriters: Geoffrey Love, Traditional

Matthew 28:16-20

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them & said, "All authority in heaven & on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go & make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ & teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Sermon

Oh how things change... when my daughter was very young she would sometimes come to us with a question... At that stage the question often was 'what's coming on now... as she looked expectantly at the TV... wondering which of her programs would be on next. But now... as she has started Regent House the questions are more likely to be ...so what do you know about the Normans in Ireland? And then I smile & try to look

confident & say.. Oh yes the Normans, why not google it! Yes the older you get, the more you realise that we can't know everything... that there are some things that we could learn about... & that there are some things that are beyond our understanding... maybe like our maths test earlier!

As we reflect upon the doctrine of the Trinity I think the honest place to begin is in humbly accepting that there is a mysterious depth to God that we can't totally comprehend here on earth... God is always more than we can ever imagine... yes there are some things that our brains really struggle with!

So the first thing that I want to say this Trinity Sunday is that the early Christians faltering ideas about Trinity didn't flow out of lectures or people studying in colleges, they weren't just about our brains.. Rather these ideas about God arose as these Jewish people, who fully believed that there was only 1 God, began to experience the authority, power & love of Jesus & later the Holy Spirit. And they just knew they were experiencing God Himself.

Now this wasn't easy for them, just look at our passage from Matthew. Verse 17 tells us even here right at the end just before Jesus was to leave & ascend into heaven... Yes even here after all the miracles & the resurrection, some of Jesus disciples still doubted. They weren't sure what to make of everything... they had been touched powerfully by all that had happened but they were still confused... Yes, even though they were good Jews who believed in only 1 God in heaven, these disciples faced with the risen glorious Jesus couldn't help themselves...they worshipped Him & yet

their minds were still reeling... & some doubted...

Yes experience may not be everything but it is important & the testimony of many Christians down through the centuries has been that they have experienced the touch of God, His forgiveness ..love transforming power, in & through Jesus & through the Holy Spirit... The doctrine of the Trinity isn't just for our heads... it's for our hearts & lives.

One of the many sad things about our present crisis is that many wedding ceremonies have had to be postponed. I always enjoy marrying couples & I wait expectantly for those verses in our service when I say to the newly married couple.. *God so join you that none shall ever part you....I therefore proclaim that they are now husband & wife.* Of course these words flow from scripture which tell us in that *a man leaves father & mother, & in marriage he becomes 1 flesh with a woman, no longer 2 individuals, but forming a new unity.* Mk10:7-9 Msg

Yes, the marriage relationship between a man & a woman is meant to become so deep... so entwined with each other that in a sense the two become one. Now sadly, this doesn't always happen but even so it perhaps gives us a small window, into how we might view the mystery of the Trinity... You see Trinity is about relationship...it's about a depth of relationship & oneness that we as individuals find so difficult to get our heads around & yet the amazing thing is that it's a relationship that we are invited into!

Yes Trinity reminds us of just how relational our God is....for He is Himself in a relationship within His own being,

Father Son & Spirit exist in the deepest communion with each other... That relationship is so deep & perfect that God doesn't need anyone else. So it was not out of any need or loneliness that God created humanity rather it was out of self-giving love & a desire to have others enjoy that same deep intimate loving relationship that God created us... & that God reached out to save us ... & sustain us..

Perhaps if we take anything from our passage this morning it should be that the God who is in a perfect relationship... 3 in one. That God invites us to share that perfect relationship by trusting in Jesus & then He tells us to share that call to Jesus with others... And as we do that... as we walk towards Him... & walk towards each other in love ... we are told... *And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*"

Let us pray

Loving God, Father, Son & Holy Spirit, we are once more humbled & amazed this day that You the Lord of the universe. The God who is perfect in love, power & relationship, that You would long for us to share in that relationship with You. Dear God help us to trust You, help us to love You, help us to follow You. Amen

So we continue in prayer now... God our Creator, we pray for your world & world brought to birth by Your love; we pray for all people everywhere but especially for those who face conflict, disease or oppression. So we bring to God now those who live in extreme poverty & those organisations who are seeking to help them. In particular we pray for the war ravaged country of Yemen asking You Lord to protect these already desperate

people from the worse effects of Cronovirus.

We pray too for justice, peace & equality in our world. For people not to be judged by their skin colour, religion, gender or age but rather for care & love to be shown to all. We pray particularly for the USA at this time asking You Lord to bring calm but also to stir transformation. And we pray for the protection of young life especially those with disabilities.

God our Saviour, we pray for humankind, whose joys & pains You came in love to share... We pray now for all those not in a loving relationship with You. Lord Jesus we pray that You would give us courage & compassion to share Your good news with those who need it most.... We bring to mind people we know who, as yet, remain outside of God's family. Praying for conviction, repentance, forgiveness & assurance.

God the Holy Spirit we ask for Your guidance this day... Lead & sustain us as individuals and lead & sustain us as Church together. Draw us together & as Your people & help us to step out in Your name... knowing that You will be with to the very end of the age....

And so now we bring to God those who have asked for our prayers...

Timothy Harte, Daniel Kidson, baby Rosie, Collette, Christine, Mark Armstrong, Hannah Smyth, Elsbeth White, Ellen Stewart, John & Pat.

We pray too for those who have lost loved ones in these past days... especially for Muriel, Alison & Julie & the wider family. We remember too all others connected to our Church who have experienced loss during these days.... asking You God

father , Son & Spirit to bring Your comfort
& peace.

So we join together in the prayer that
Jesus taught us... *Our Father*....

As we come to our closing Hymn &
blessing just another reminder about
communion at 12 noon. We close our
service by declaring that our God is
immortal & invisible..

HYMN

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of
Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we
praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness
& love.

To all, life thou givest, to both great and
small;
In all life thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the
tree,
And wither and perish, but naught changeth
thee.

Great Father of glory; pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their
sight;
All laud we would render: O help us to see
Tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

Immortal, invisible, God only wise
In light and accessible hid from our eyes
Most blessed, most glorious, ancient of days
Almighty, victorious, Thy name we praise

Closing blessing So we use some
words from the breastplate of St Patrick
as we close our service...

I bind unto myself the name,
The strong name of the Trinity;
By invocation of the same.
The Three in One, and One in Three,
Of whom all nature hath creation,
Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:
Praise to the Lord of my salvation,
salvation is of Christ the Lord.

So now may God the Father, God the Son
& God the Holy Spirit bless & keep us for
this day & for all the days to come. Amen