

# Trinity United Reformed Church Wimbledon



## 13 September 2020: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Creationtide "Reflecting God's glory" - order of service

### **Preparation**

*Our church has now reopened for congregational worship, and so there are four possible ways to participate in Sunday's service:*

1. Attend the service **in person by pre-registration only** via our joint Church Secretaries (you should only attend if you have received confirmation of your place, are not experiencing Covid-19 symptoms, are not required to quarantine after travel abroad, and have not been instructed by NHS Test & Trace to self-isolate at home).
2. Or watch the whole service **live at 11:00am** – either as a Zoom video-call (meeting ID 893 3362 2856, passcode 430413) or as online video via the following address: <https://www.trinitywimbledon.org/index.php/live-stream/>
3. Or listen to the whole service **live at 11:00am via your telephone** by dialing 020 3051 2874, then entering the meeting ID 893 3362 2856 # and the passcode 430413 # (if you're asked for a personal unique ID, enter # to skip).
4. Or use **this text version** only, without accessing audio/video from the church.

*Whether accessing the video or audio of the service, or simply reading through this text version, please aim to begin at 11am on Sunday – so that, even whilst we can't all meet together physically, Trinity folk will be 'gathering' for worship at the same time. Please note that the video of the service will remain available for later viewing, but the telephone audio can only be listened to 'live'.*

*If you're using this service as a family or household together at home without using the video/audio, then it's good if one person can read aloud the parts in normal type and everyone join in the words in bold type (you don't need to recite aloud any of the words in italics, which are for information, instruction, or reflection). But even if you're alone, you might still like to read all the normal and bold-type words aloud. You could even try singing the hymns – but if that makes you feel too self-conscious, then simply read the words!*

### **Gathering in God's presence** *(If you have one, light a candle)*

#### **Call to Worship** *(drawn from Psalm 148.11-14)*

Let the name of the LORD be praised by all people everywhere,  
for God's name alone is exalted,  
with a glory that transcends earth and heaven.

For God's people, a standard of strength has been raised,  
a summons to praise for all God's faithful, and all who walk God's way.  
Praise the Lord!

## **Hymn**

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
consider all the works thy hand hath made,  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
thy power throughout the universe displayed:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:*

*How great thou art, how great thou art!*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:*

*How great thou art, how great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,  
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:

*Then sings my soul...*

But when I think that God, his Son not sparing,  
sent him to die – I scarce can take it in  
that on the cross, our burden gladly bearing,  
he bled and died to take away our sin:

*Then sings my soul...*

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation  
and take me home – what joy shall fill my heart!  
Then shall I bow in humble adoration,  
and there proclaim: My God, how great thou art!

*Then sings my soul...*

*Russian hymn tr. © Stuart K Hine (altd), admin. Thankyou Music. CCLI 11603.*

## **Praying our Praise & Thanksgiving**

Lord God, we bring to you our praise.  
You have created all things, and declared them good.  
You have known us since before our birth,  
and have brought us to this moment in love.  
In the greatness of your glory, we worship you.  
In the richness of your grace, we give you thanks.

Lord God, we bring to you our grief.  
For even as some of us gather,  
we feel the absence of those we cannot meet with:  
some who must remain at home for the time being,  
and some to whom we have had to say goodbye,  
in the most trying of circumstances.  
In the pain of our loss, we cry out to you.  
In the depth of your compassion, we reach for your comfort.

Lord God, we bring to you our guilt.  
You have summoned us to shape our lives  
around the foremost of your commandments:  
to love you wholeheartedly, and to love our neighbours as ourselves.  
But we confess our sins and shortcomings,  
the things we have said or done, or failed to say or do,

which have caused harm to others  
and have tainted your image in us.  
In the acknowledgement of our wrong, we ask your forgiveness.  
In the assurance of your mercy, we grasp your renewal.

Lord God, we bring to you our trust.  
As we offer you this time of worship,  
empower us anew to reflect your glory.  
Speak your word of truth, God our Father,  
afresh into our hearts.  
Purify us by the powerful breath of your Holy Spirit,  
and unite us as disciples of your Son, Jesus Christ,  
who has taught us to pray together...

### ***The Lord's Prayer***

*Use either of these forms, or a different version/language if you prefer:*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive  
those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive  
those who 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.

## ***Listening for God's Word***

### ***Bible Reading: Psalm 19***

- 1** The heavens are telling the glory of God;  
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
- 2** Day to day pours forth speech,  
and night to night declares knowledge.
- 3** There is no speech, nor are there words;  
their voice is not heard;
- 4** yet their voice goes out through all the earth,  
and their words to the end of the world.  
In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,
- 5** which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,  
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.
- 6** Its rising is from the end of the heavens,  
and its circuit to the end of them;  
and nothing is hidden from its heat.
- 7** The law of the Lord is perfect,

reviving the soul;  
the decrees of the Lord are sure,  
making wise the simple;  
**8** the precepts of the Lord are right,  
rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the Lord is clear,  
enlightening the eyes;  
**9** the fear of the Lord is pure,  
enduring for ever;  
the ordinances of the Lord are true  
and righteous altogether.  
**10** More to be desired are they than gold,  
even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey,  
and drippings of the honeycomb.  
**11** Moreover by them is your servant warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.  
**12** But who can detect their errors?  
Clear me from hidden faults.  
**13** Keep back your servant also from the insolent;  
do not let them have dominion over me.  
Then I shall be blameless,  
and innocent of great transgression.  
**14** Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable to you,  
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

*In the 'live' service, a **Theme Introduction** will take place at this point.*

### **Hymn**

Think of a world without any flowers,  
think of a wood without any trees,  
think of a sky without any sunshine,  
think of the air without any breeze:  
we thank you, Lord, for flowers and trees and sunshine;  
we thank you, Lord, and praise your holy name.

Think of a world without any people,  
think of a street with no-one living there,  
think of a town without any houses,  
no-one to love and nobody to care:  
we thank you, Lord, for families and friendships;  
we thank you, Lord, and praise your holy name.

Think of a world without any worship,  
think of a God without his only Son,  
think of a cross without a resurrection,  
only a grave and not a vict'ry won:  
we thank you, Lord, for showing us our Saviour;  
we thank you, Lord, and praise your holy name.

Thanks to our Lord for being here among us,  
thanks be to him for sharing all we do,  
thanks for our church and all the love we find here,  
thanks for this place and all its promise true:  
we thank you, Lord, for life in all its richness;  
we thank you, Lord, and praise your holy name.

*Bunty Newport & Emmanuel Junior Church, Cambridge, 1966 © Stainer & Bell Ltd. CCLI 11603.*

### **Bible Reading: Matthew 6.24-33**

**24** [Jesus said:] 'No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

**25** 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? **26** Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? **27** And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? **28** And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, **29** yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. **30** But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? **31** Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" **32** For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **33** But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.'

### **Reflection**

*We live within a world, and indeed within a cosmos, that is constantly reflecting God's glory. That's at the heart of our Bible readings today, and it's a message to reassure us and encourage us. Just as the writer of Psalm 19 urges us to look up and behold the heavens, proclaiming God's handiwork; so likewise Jesus directs us to consider the lilies, inherently clothed in majesty, and recognise God's majesty and God's care.*

*There's a sense, in both these passages, in which the good and beautiful world we inhabit fulfils its purpose simply by being itself. In the same way that the masterpieces in an art gallery point to the genius of their painter with their every brush-stroke; so every star and nebula, every flower and sparrow, testifies by its very existence to God who creates all.*

*And we too, who live within this created world: we are created beings, and our very createdness is a revelation of God in glory and in love. By our being, God is revealed.*

*Of course, the Bible has plenty to say about revealing God's activity and God's presence. That's kind of why it was written. And by and large, the Bible tells us about two broad ways in which we learn of God's presence and activity. **Special revelation** is the term used for God's dealings with humanity through the Law and the Prophets, through Scripture's record of anointed leaders and miraculous interventions, through the person and work of Jesus Christ, and through the testimony of the Holy Spirit within us. Meanwhile, at a more basic level, **general revelation** refers to the idea*

*that even our observation of the natural world can point us to God's presence, and to at least something of God's character.*

*There's a sense in which today's Psalm celebrates both these kinds of revelation. The first six verses declare that the sun and stars above, noiseless as they are, speak eloquently and unmistakably to all the world as they testify to God's handiwork. Then from verse 7 the Psalmist goes on to affirm what God has particularly given to the community of faith, to guide them in their conduct and to show them who God is: the law, statutes, precepts, commands, fear, and standards of the LORD. In Hebrew thought, this isn't really a list of distinct categories; rather it's a choice of complementary terms which together seek to express the fullness of **Torah** – God's instruction, God's pattern for human lives.*

*It seems like a change of tack – and it would be easy to see Psalm 19 as reflecting a movement from general revelation (the universally-available evidence of God) to special revelation (our reliance upon God to take the initiative if we're to learn God's character or will), reinforcing a distinction between the two. But I wonder if that's quite what the writer has in mind?*

*There's a Jewish rabbinical tradition that God's **Torah** (the principles of God's instruction) was set out even before the creation of the world, to serve as its blueprint. And so there's a way of reading this Psalm that sees the firmament itself – the created order which we see and experience each day and night, reflecting God's glory – as part-and-parcel of **Torah**, the revelation of God's teaching to shape our lives.*

*That's echoed in the teaching of Jesus which we heard in today's Gospel passage. He directs his hearers to remember the birds, kept and fed each day by God, and the lilies of the field which don't need to strive to clothe themselves. He does so in order to direct them away from a pattern of life that is dominated by worry, by anxiety, by striving after things.*

*And so yes there's an underlying purpose of reassurance and comfort here. But it goes a little further: for this word of encouragement comes within the context of Jesus' warning that "no-one can serve two masters – and you cannot be a servant of both God and material wealth". It's not that he's saying "don't worry about the world, don't worry about the climate, it'll sort itself out under God's good hand". No, rather, he's saying "if you build your lifestyle upon the relentlessness of acquisition and greed that is fuelled by grasping always for more, you – and the world - will pay a dreadful price".*

*Yes, the created order of which we are part is a reflection of God's glory, and this act of reflecting is achieved simply by virtue of creation's being. Even so, humanity's particular place within creation – our capacity to think for ourselves and our mandate to be stewards of the earth – places upon us a higher expectation, a higher calling. To be each of us a reflection of God's glory, not only by our being but also by our doing, by our choices and our actions.*

*So a summons to look around us is not just about finding evidence upon which to build a philosophical argument for the universe having a Creator. More than that: our experience of nature in its awe and fragility summons us together to live reverently and responsibly as recipients of God's gift and God's call. Far from selfishly taking our fill of the earth's resources, we are summoned to know our place – and to rejoice in giving our all for the sake of the world which God so loves.*

## ***Responding to God's grace***

### ***Praying for Needs & Concerns (led by Alan Young)***

Please join me as we pray for our world, for the church and for those in need.

At this Creationtide we pray for the world. You are the source of all good things and on you we depend. May we see that truth and may we be thankful.

And yet we ask you to hear us as we bring to you the wounds and hurts of your world.

We pray for eco systems in peril, for habitats facing destruction, for species driven to extinction and for the loss of nature that we have not even yet discovered.

Create in us a deeper sense of your creation's wonders and our calling to protect and nurture them that all might flourish.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring to you the needs of humanity, the people of your world.

We pray for individuals, communities and nations living amidst coronavirus and its aftermath.

We remember those caring for the sick and dying, those seeking cures.

We pray for those making hard choices and those whose livelihoods have vanished.

We remember those who have lost loved ones and those who are afraid.

Create in us a deeper sense of community and solidarity that, at the end, we might emerge into a better future rather than more of the same.

We pray for the church – the church across the world, the churches of Wimbledon and those near to our homes.

And especially for Trinity at this difficult time - for the members of our church and in particular for those who are housebound, for those who are unwell and for those who are working so hard, especially our Minister and members of the Elders Council, to keep our church alive, active and prepared for whatever the present and future may hold.

And finally we ask you, Lord, to hear us as we pray for those people, places and circumstances most upon our hearts today. In silence we remember them.

Merciful Father accept these our prayers for the sake of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ***Offertory***

*This is an opportunity to set aside your regular financial contribution to Trinity's ongoing work and witness. Call to mind your gift now as you share in this prayer.*

Generous God, your gift to me  
is life, and sustenance, and hope.  
I bring to you my gift, and myself.  
Receive, Lord, and bless:  
so that both gift and giver

may bring blessing to others,  
and glory to your name. Amen.

### **Hymn**

Praise the Lord, ye heavens adore him;  
praise him, angels in the height;  
sun and moon, bow down before him,  
praise him, all ye stars and light.

Praise the Lord, for he hath spoken;  
worlds his mighty voice obeyed;  
laws, that never shall be broken,  
for their guidance he hath made.

Praise the Lord, for he is glorious;  
never shall his promise fail;  
God hath made his saints victorious;  
sin and death shall not prevail.

Praise the God of our salvation;  
hosts on high, his power proclaim;  
heaven and earth, and all creation,  
laud and magnify his name.

*Author unknown, from Foundling Hospital Collection 1796/1801 (altd) and based on Psalm 148.1-6, 14 (public domain text).*

### **Blessing**

Let us go now from this time of worship,  
entrusting to the Lord - our rock and redeemer -  
the words of our mouths and the thoughts of our hearts,  
that they may be acceptable to God.

And may the Blessing of God Almighty,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
be upon us, and among all who are dear to us, whether near or far,  
today and always. Amen.

*Bible passages: New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicised Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*