

Call to worship

Let us worship the Triune God.
Let us worship the One
who spoke in the beginning
and created something out of nothing.

Let us worship the Triune God.
Let us worship the One
who took on the clothing of humanity
to set those who were oppressed free.

Let us worship the Triune God.
Let us worship the One
whose Spirit rests continually upon us,
calling us from sorrow-filled endings
to bright new beginnings.

Hymn Holy, holy, holy R&S 34

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!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the
glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wast and art and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the sinful human eye thy glory may not
see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

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!

Reginald Heber

Tomorrow is the UN World Environment Day which is celebrated every year on June 5th to remind humans that they are not alone on this planet. There is a huge biological ecosystem that exists and humans only survive because of that. The day is observed by United Nations to encourage worldwide awareness and work towards improving the environment. Every year responsibility is given to a different country to host the event. This year's host is Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) in West Africa and this year's theme is beating plastic pollution. The day is celebrated by millions of people and organisations across the globe to share their experiences, challenges and solutions. In today's worship some of our hymns and prayers will be related to the environment.

Children's Time, Sandy – Environment Day

What else are we celebrating today?

Gifts

Holy One, receive our gifts by your grace.
Multiply and use them through the power of the Holy Spirit
to accomplish Christ's work of love in the world. **Amen.**

Say the Grace as children go to Sunday Club

Hymn God is a name my soul adores R&S 31 omit vs 4 & 6

God is a name my soul adores,
The almighty Three, the eternal One;
Nature and grace, with all their powers,
Confess the Infinite Unknown.

Thy voice produced the sea and spheres,
Bade the waves roar, the planets shine;
But nothing like Thyself appears
Through all these spacious works of Thine.

Still restless nature dies and grows,
From change to change the creatures run;
Thy being no succession knows,
And all Thy vast designs are one.

How shall affrighted mortals dare
To sing Thy glory or Thy grace?
Beneath Thy feet we lie afar,
And see but shadows of Thy face.

Isaac Watts

Opening Prayer of Thanksgiving

Creator God, we acknowledge that as your handiwork, we stand alongside all that you have made. Trees and rivers, mountains and valleys, soaring birds and scuttling insects, all are held within your care.

May we grow in our love and appreciation for the fabulous variety around us; and may our awe and wonder draw us closer to the natural world, and through it to you, the God of all things. Amen

by Rev Cate Williams, Diocese of Gloucester, from the Church of England's World Environment Day prayers

Prayer of confession (Tearfund, amended)

Lord God, you made the world and declared it was 'very good'.

And yet, we have not treated the earth and our fellow humans with the care and respect they deserve.

We are sorry and ask for your forgiveness.

Give us the courage to keep raising our voices about the climate emergency, which affects people living in poverty the worst.

And especially this Environment Day help us to highlight the damage caused by plastic use.

Help us to set an example by using as little single-use plastic as possible and by recycling what we can.

And may your Spirit of peace be in the hearts of all people, so that conflicts end in peace, relationships are restored, and we work together to protect your creation. Amen

Hymn God in his love R&S 85

God in his love for us lent us this planet,
gave it a purpose in time and in space:
small as a spark from the fire of creation,
cradle of life and the home of our race.

Long have our human wars ruined its harvest;
long has earth bowed to the terror of force;
long have we wasted what others have need of,
poisoned the fountain of life at its source.

Thanks be to God for its bounty and beauty,
life that sustains us in body and mind:
plenty for all, if we learn how to share it,
riches undreamed of to fathom and find.

Earth is the Lord's: it is ours to enjoy it,
ours, as his stewards, to farm and defend.
From its pollutions, misuse and destruction,
good Lord, deliver us, world without end!

F. Pratt Green

Bible readings: **Genesis 1:1-2**
 2 Corinthians 13:11-13
 Matthew 28:16-20

Today is Trinity Sunday, but apart from the command in the reading from Matthew, there is little related to the Trinity in the set readings for today. This is because the Trinity is not a Biblical concept, apart from what Jesus says in Matthew, and the end of the 2nd letter to the Corinthians it is not something the Bible talks about, it is a doctrine that the church introduced later on. The concept of the Trinity developed significantly during the first four centuries as church leaders sought to defend the faith against heresies that were emerging

such as Adoptionism - the belief that Jesus was an ordinary man, born of Joseph and Mary, who only became the Son of God at his baptism; and other views that taught that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were essentially one and the same, the difference being simply verbal, describing different aspects or roles of a single being. It was not until the 4th century that the First Council of Nicaea adopted the Nicene Creed which described Christ as "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father". After many more years of debate, this being of the same 'substance' became the hallmark of Christian orthodoxy and was further developed into the formula of the Trinity - "three persons, one being". The doctrine of the Trinity was used to oppose alternative views of how the three 'persons' are related and to defend the church against charges of worshipping two or three gods.

In Genesis, we could say we have God and the Holy Spirit, but Jesus, God incarnate is not there. God created the heavens and the earth from a dark void. A wind from God swept over the face of the waters. This wind is God's spirit, but it is not the Holy Spirit, the comforter and companion that was given after Jesus had ascended. The reading from 2 Corinthians, is Paul signing off a letter. It is like an extended version of our saying 'best wishes' at the end of a letter or email. It states what we now know as the Grace, which we say regularly. It is a trinitarian sign-off but doesn't tell us anything about the doctrine of the Trinity or extol the virtues of trinitarian thinking. Then we have Jesus' words to the eleven disciples, 'go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.' These two texts are the only places in the Bible that use a trinitarian formula we would recognise as such, though the Trinity is alluded to in a handful of other places in the New Testament. The Old Testament was determined to show that there was only one God, that the people of Israel should be monotheistic, surrounded as they were by cultures worshipping many gods. And indeed, even in the New Testament, the early Christians were surrounded by Greco-Roman pagans who worshipped numerous gods, so what made Christianity difference was the belief in one God.

Jesus talks often of God the Father, and we heard just last week at Pentecost how Jesus himself gave the disciples the Holy Spirit by breathing on them, so Jesus spoke of all three elements of the Trinity - God, himself, and the Holy Spirit, but he did not indoctrinate his followers in the doctrine of the Trinity because no such thing existed. The Holy Spirit was only given once Jesus had died and gone from the earth. All three elements of the Trinity are never in the same room at the same time as it were. In Genesis we have God and what we could interpret as God's spirit in the wind, but no Jesus. At the beginning of John's

Gospel we have, 'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' We usually interpret the Word as being Jesus from what comes later in the first chapter of John, but we could, I suppose, interpret it as being the Holy Spirit. What it definitely isn't is God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit all together in the beginning. When Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into the disciples there is no explicit mention of God, so again, it is only two of the three. Matthew 28 is the only place that gives the trinitarian formula we are used to, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Yet even there the three elements are not present together, only Jesus. It is a commandment from Jesus to his disciples, like the commandment to love God and love your neighbour.

So why do we hold such store by the Trinity? Why do we say we are Trinitarian, and not for example Unitarian? And is it really important? Does it change any of our lives? Does it make one bit of difference if we think of God as being 3 elements, rather than just one single entity that for a time lived in a human body here on earth?

I suspect in our day to day lives it doesn't make any difference. It was a doctrine formulated to try to understand God, which of course as mortals we can never do, and to protect the early church from heresy. The main time we use the Trinitarian formula, apart from saying the Grace, is in baptism, as commanded by Jesus. Water is necessary, but a person is only baptised, once the words have been spoken: 'I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.'

Where I think the Trinity can be helpful is in thinking about unity, relationship and community. In Trinitarian doctrine, God exists as three persons but is one being, having a single divine nature; a built-in community. God is three in one, completely undivided and inseparable. The members of the Trinity are co-equal and co-eternal, one in essence, nature, power, action, and will. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, and the Holy Spirit is uncreated, and all three are eternal without beginning. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit cannot be separate from one another. Each person is understood as having the identical essence or nature. We are not talking about three gods, but only one God with different aspects. I remember one doctrine lecture at college describing the Trinity as gin and tonic – there are three elements, gin, tonic, and ice. Once the ice has melted, it is one indivisible whole, yet you still have three different elements in it!

The Trinity is complicated, and trying to explain it is complicated, if not impossible, but that may be the point. One thing I do understand about the Trinity though is that it is about community and relationships – three different aspects reflected and expressed in one whole. It is the model of how our human communities and interactions should be – harmonious, undivided, caring, yet celebrating the different gifts we all bring to that one

whole. God is a community, within God's own being. God is not individualistic and selfish as we are. God has a built-in expansiveness, a uniqueness, an undivided sharing between God, Redeemer and Spirit – immortal, invisible, God only wise as the hymn says.

We are trying to reach out more to the community we live in. We are also trying to set an example in the way we care for the planet by being an Eco Church and hopefully improving our building to make it more sustainable and so we use less resources. There are also lots of ways we, as individuals, can help to reduce plastic use – take refillable water bottles when we are out and about rather than buying plastic bottles. Try to take re-usable bags when we do our shopping. Repair clothes and buy from charity shops rather than buying new clothes, use soaps and shampoos which are plastic free.

Let us live a Trinitarian life. Even if we don't understand the Trinity – we can praise God our creator, we can follow the example of Jesus and work for justice, and we can be inspired by the Holy Spirit to make small changes in our lives and community, so that those small things can grow into a bigger, indivisible whole working for the good of all.

Hymn Touch the earth lightly (243 Church Hymnary)

Touch the earth lightly,
use the earth gently,
nourish the life of the world in our care:
gift of great wonder,
ours to surrender,
trust for the children tomorrow will bear.

Let there be greening,
birth from the burning,
water that blesses and air that is sweet,
health in God's garden,
hope in God's children,
regeneration that peace will complete.

We who endanger,
who create hunger,
agents of death for all creatures that live,
we who would foster
clouds of disaster,
God of our planet, forestall and forgive!

God of all living,
God of all loving,
God of the seedling, the snow, and the sun,
teach us, deflect us,
Christ re-connect us,
using us gently and making us one.

Shirley Erena Murray © Hope Publishing Company

Prayers of intercession

Eternal God, whose Spirit moved over the face of the deep bringing forth light and life; by that same Spirit, renew your creation, and restore your image in your people.

Turn us from careless tenants to faithful stewards,
that your threefold blessing of clean air, pure water and rich earth
may be the inheritance of everything that has the breath of life
and one generation may proclaim to another the wonder of your works;
Creator of our common home, You fill the earth and sea and sky with life
Forgive us our neglect of your creation, the choking waste of our pollution,
the damage done by careless habits and our indifference to future generations.
Help us to amend our lives, to refuse more plastic if we can't reuse it
To lift our voice for lasting change and to live well and gently on the earth.

Prayers from the week

God of life, we praise you for the beauty of creation, its richness and variety;
yet, through greed and ignorance, we scar your world with plastic waste
and throw so much away.

Make us more like Jesus, treading gently on our common home,
and breathe your Spirit on us, that we may care more deeply for your Earth.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us when we pray to say:

Lord's Prayer

Hymn Thou whose almighty word R&S 38

Thou, whose almighty Word
Chaos and darkness heard,
And took their flight;
Hear us, we humbly pray,
And, where the gospel day
Sheds not its glorious ray,
Let there be light!

Spirit of truth and love,
Life giving, holy Dove,
Speed forth Thy flight;
Move o'er the water's face
Bearing the lamp of grace,
And, in earth's darkest place,
Let there be light!

Thou, who didst come to bring
On Thy redeeming wing
Healing and sight,
Health to the sick in mind,
Sight to the inly blind,
now to all humankind,
Let there be light!

Holy and blessed Three,
Glorious Trinity,
Wisdom, love, might!
Boundless as ocean's tide,
Rolling in fullest pride,
Through the world far and wide,
Let there be light!

John Marriott

Blessing

Go forth into this week remembering that the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it.
Touch the world lightly, nourish and cherish the planet and all that is in it.
Go in peace to love and serve God;
the holy and undivided trinity.
And the blessing of God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us today and every day. Amen

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