



Circuit Contact

Issue 10

June 3rd, 2020

Welcome everyone to issue 10. Rev Eleanor has prepared worship for this Trinity Sunday and there are details further down of how to listen to weekly circuit reflections on your phone, as well as this week's online circuit service with Rev Helen Kirk and next week's Love Feast. June is Bible Month so don't forget there are online groups studying the book of Ruth on Tuesdays & Fridays. When I got married we had a quote on the place name cards which I only found out years later was from Ruth. Wonder if you can guess which one it was?.

WORSHIP



Today is Trinity Sunday.

Rev Eleanor has prepared worship for today

CALL TO WORSHIP

The word of the eternal Father created us.

The love of the gracious Son redeemed us.

The presence of the Holy Spirit unites and empowers us.

Come and worship the glorious Trinity, our God of power, love and peace.

HYMN Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty (STF 11) <https://youtu.be/in-km29p7lo>

PRAYER OF ADORATION (based on Psalm 8)

O Lord, our sovereign, **how majestic is your name in all the earth**

Your glory reaches beyond the highest heavens,

O Lord, our sovereign, **how majestic is your name in all the earth**

By the youngest to the eldest your praise is spoken forth

O Lord, our sovereign, **how majestic is your name in all the earth**

In sky, on land and in water your creativity is seen,

O Lord, our sovereign, **how majestic is your name in all the earth. Amen**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

When our actions are not loving, and your name is not glorified, **Forgive us, God of Glory**

When our words bring hurt to others, and your name is not glorified, **Forgive us, God of Glory**

When we do not see you or reveal your love, and your name is not glorified, **Forgive us, God of Glory**

Forgive and renew us, and let your glory be seen in our lives. **Amen**

HYMN God forgave my sin in Jesus' name (STF 424) <https://youtu.be/mo3MGpcBC5M>

A REFLECTION A REFLECTION

"Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4). In Hebrew, the religious language of the Jews, and the national language of Israel, this is called *Shema Yisrael* "Hear, O Israel" or simply shortened to Shema. It is the title of the most important prayer in the morning and evening Jewish services.

The Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament tells us that the Lord God is One – the Jews believe that; do we as Christians? Well yes, of course; our creed begins '*We believe in One God*', but how does that fit with our belief that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit – the Trinity - that we celebrate today in our Christian calendar? Am I being naïve when I say that it is straight forward - one God revealed in different ways? as the Father Almighty, Creator, as the Son who lived in human form and as the Spirit, being God's power in the world and in our lives

Think of yourself in relationships: you may be – husband/wife, mother/father, son/daughter, friend. You are you, but you are in relationship with family and friends in different ways. Through speaking of God as Trinity we are trying to make sense of the mystery of God



The description of God as Trinity is not very explicit in the New Testament, but the final words of Jesus as recorded by St Matthew are clear, baptise in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

The reading from the Epistles (Letters) for today, reminds us of how Paul ended his letter to the Corinthians with the 3-fold grace that we are so familiar with:

¹¹ Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss. ¹³ All God's people here send their greetings. ¹⁴ May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:11-14)

When I was on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, we had an interesting conversation with our secular Jewish guide, Jan, who came from Barnsley. She moved to Israel 30 years previously to work on a Kibbutz and stayed. She suggested that the concept of the trinity is not found in pre-Christian times to which we disagreed.

Jews and Christians can agree on the concept of God the Father, the almighty who created the world; the book of Genesis that describes creation in a theological rather than scientific way, is in both the Hebrew Bible (Torah) and in the Old Testament: ¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. ³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. (Genesis 1:1-5)



So far so good. We agree. We then reminded Jan that God's Spirit was at work in the creation. In the opening words of Genesis – the spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

I remember clearly the time when as part of my Local Preacher studies (many years ago), I read about the Spirit. It was the first time that I realised that the Spirit was at work in pre-Christian history. For example, do you remember the story from Ezekiel about dry bones?

Image used CCO Wikimedia Commons

The prophet was in a valley of dry bones and they came alive through the Spirit, sometimes described as breath (Ezekiel 37:1-14). God also promised that Ezekiel will be filled with his spirit. The Hebrew Bible mentions the Spirit in many places, and so we reminded Jan about that.

But how about Jesus being involved even before he was born? This was harder for a Jew like Jan to accept because it needs an understanding of the revelation in St John's Gospel chapter 1. The opening words of the Gospel – *In the beginning was the Word (Jesus) and the Word was with God and the Word was God. Through him all things were made.*

So there you have it – at the time of creation not only was God the Father/Creator present, and the Spirit, but also the Word, that is Jesus. I think that there is enough evidence throughout the Bible to say that the Lord God is One, but is also the Three in one God, the Trinity.

Does it matter? Well yes. The Trinity is one of the things that marks out Christianity as being different to other faiths. As well as God being Father whom we worship and adore, he is Jesus, the Son of God who is both human and divine – now that might be a difficult concept to get to grips with.

How about the Spirit? Last week was Pentecost (a Jewish festival) when we celebrated the coming of God's Spirit on the disciples. Importantly, it is the same Spirit that came on Jesus at his baptism. The same Spirit that empowered Peter and the disciples to eloquently and powerfully proclaim the good news about Jesus. The same Spirit of God, his power, that is promised to us, Christ's followers.

The Jews proclaim the Shema "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one

For us as Christians we believe that the one God has chosen to reveal himself to the world as Father/Creator, as Jesus the Son, and as the Holy Spirit of Power. Thanks be to God.

HYMN The splendour of the King, clothed in majesty (STF 15) <https://youtu.be/tVedvvlXcwk>

PRAYERS

From Day 10 of Thy Kingdom Come prayer journal: *Silence.*

'The Lord was not in the fire, and after the fire came the sound of sheer silence'

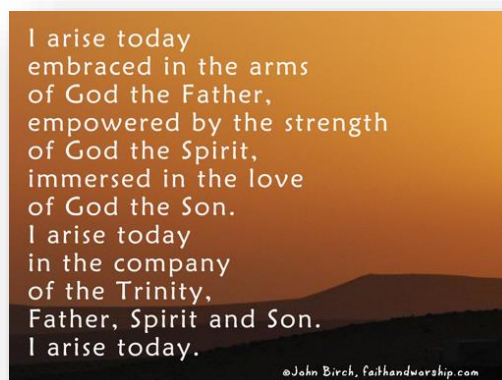
(1 Kings 19:12)

We spend time in silent prayer followed by saying The Lord's Prayer.



BLESSING

May the grace of the Father be with you, may the love of the Son enfold you,
and may the peace of the Spirit comfort you, today and always. Amen





Circuit Reflections available on your phone



01782 980 180

If you haven't been able to access the circuit reflections written by our ministers and local preachers that have been posted online, it is now possible to listen to them on your phone. No computer necessary.

Each week a recording of one of the reflections can be listened to by calling 01782 980 180. This is a Stoke on Trent number and will cost the same as ringing any 01782 number. The reflections are normally 10-12 minutes long. This week Rev Eleanor is reflecting on Sacred Spaces.

A new reflection will be available every Thursday and be available until the following Tuesday (Debbie will be updating the recording each Wednesday and as she's very new to doing this, she's not sure how long it will take).



CIRCUIT 'WORSHIP AT HOME' SUNDAY 7TH JUNE AT 6PM

A reminder that we are holding a live service by 'zoom' with Rev Helen Kirk as the speaker. Please email a minister for the joining details and they will be happy to send them to you.



CIRCUIT SERVICE SUNDAY 14TH JUNE AT 10.30AM

We will be holding a 'Love Feast Service' which you will find on the Sarah Best YouTube channel.

Direct link here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCT4Mt9OpnC739ipQZqcAAhA>



If you wish to be part of the service which we will film next week, please let Rev Richard or Rev Eleanor know: r.pope090@btinternet.com or eleanor.smith@methodist.org.uk

For the service you will need something to eat like cake or a biscuit and a drink, hot or cold.

The Big Story: Hopefully many of you managed to catch the family Pentecost service prepared by Jonny Newbould last Sunday. Jonny and a colleague have a YouTube channel called the Big Story which includes a range of craft activities and stories for children. Please pass details on to anyone you think would appreciate it. If you have are reading an email copy of this, a direct link is here

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCN9duNM4ZWpd0LKDYlgpiYg>

We send this bulletin with our love to members and friends of the Staffordshire Moorlands Methodist Circuit hoping that you will find it helpful and enjoyable while our church buildings are closed. If you do not wish to continue receiving it, either let the person who delivers it to you know, contact one of the ministers or email staffmoorlandscircuit@gmail.com