



St John's, Stoneleigh Weekly Newsletter

Sunday 7th June

Collect

Holy God, faithful and unchanging: enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth, and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love, that we may truly worship you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

A MESSAGE FROM REV. KEN HOBBS

Welcome to our newsletter this week. As we begin to see the easing of the lockdown restrictions our minds turn to the future at St Johns and what shape that will take. Later this month I will send out a special newsletter, prayer card and a 30 day devotional booklet "Daily Strength" to every member of the electoral roll. If you are not on the electoral roll do get in touch with the office (office@stjohnsstoneleigh.org.uk) so that we can include you in the mailing. In the meantime, as we begin to revel in some new found freedom, do keep safe and may you know God's blessing in everything you do.

Ken

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Don't forget you can keep in touch by joining the WhatsApp group, visiting our website and following us on Facebook. All your contributions to these groups during this time provide great encouragement to us all. For details of the website and where to find us on Facebook, please see the bottom of this page. To join the WhatsApp group, you will need a smartphone and to have installed WhatsApp. Please contact the office if you have any questions.

Rev. Ken Hobbs

KEEPING IN TOUCH AND PRAYERS

Please don't forget to call if you need some help during this time or if you would like to add something to the prayer board.

Jean Tutton 020 8393 3687

SUNDAY SERVICES

Don't forget you can join us live on Sunday at 10am using this link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86852818063>

For those of you who do not have access to the internet you can now join our Sunday Worship by phone.

Dial this phone number: 0203 051 2874

You will be asked to enter the meeting ID followed by # (hash).

Key in: 868 5281 8063#

You will be asked for a personal ID, just press # again and you will be connected to the Service.

If you want help with this speak to John Simon (phone 0775 187 4807).

John Simon

THURSDAY COFFEE MORNING

Each Thursday, St John's will be hosting a coffee morning via Zoom. Please join us at 10:30am using this link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83134817320>

The link will be the same each week.

Rev. Ken Hobbs

DAILY HOPE

There is a free phone line 0800 804 8044, for hymns, reflections and prayers, provided by Guildford diocese, especially for people without access to the internet. It is called Daily Hope.

Janis Forder

FOODBANK

I don't know how you all feel when seeing the news reports of people queuing for food support both here and in other parts of the world. I try not to let it make me feel that the situation is just going to be too desperate for me to be able to do much but then I remember that if those of us who can, spare a little and donate to the organisations which are set up to help that will result in a huge tide of support which will enable them to assist those who find themselves in dire straits at this time. There is no doubt that the St Johns family is contributing to this and the Foodbank is extremely grateful. Thank you one and all. Please take care though not to give more than you can afford, it is appreciated that there are many who are stretched at this time and I wouldn't want to make anyone feel awkward. We do ask for prayers though as the volunteers are feeling tired and slightly overwhelmed.

These are the items they need **urgently** this week: Male deodorant, Washing powder/tablets/capsules/liquid.

They also have **low stocks** of: Tinned potatoes, Custard, Hot chocolate, Fruit squash, Tins of pasta/beans with sausages, Packets of dried pasta in sauce, Washing up liquid, Single adult toothbrushes (we have lots of multi packs), Sugar, Shaving Gel, Bar soap, Cat food, Packet soup, Powdered milk, Chocolate/treats - we have hardly any and whilst not essential it is nice to be able to include such items in our food parcel.

Thank you.

Polly Elder

DEREK PAVEY

Please remember his family in your prayers. A Family funeral will be held on Friday June 19th with a memorial service at St John's later in the year.

Rev. Ken Hobbs

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Worship at Home for Trinity Sunday

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity: keep us steadfast in this faith, that we may evermore be defended from all adversities; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Reading together (Psalm 121)

I lift up my eyes to the hills- where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of Heaven and earth

He will not let your foot slip-he who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord watches over you-the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all harm-he will watch over your life. The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and for evermore. Amen

Hymn Holy Holy Holy Lord God Almighty

Confession

Lord Jesus Christ, crucified, risen and ascended for us. We have not loved you as our Redeemer nor obeyed you as our Lord. We have not brought our prayers to you nor heeded your tears shed over the world. Forgive us we pray and breathe into us a new spirit of service and make us joyfully obedient to your will. For your glory's sake. Amen.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. *1 John 1 v8-9*

1st Reading Acts 2. 37-47- Tim Rogers

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, 'Brothers, what should we do?' Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.' And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with

glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Song from Sarah

2nd Reading Hebrews 1. 1-4 – Tim Rogers

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Reflection

It is Trinity Sunday today and it was Pentecost last week What do we make of these fundamental Christian doctrines?

My Albury church treasurer used to amusingly talk about the Holy Trinity (The Treasurer; God and the Inland Revenue!)

Things come in threes! Buses; funerals; for the superstitious Bad luck! The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is one which is both central to the Christian Gospel and yet the hardest and most mysterious thing to try and fathom. Lewis Carroll's The White Queen in Alice through the looking glass made a habit of believing 6 impossible things before breakfast.

Some have suggested that Christians do this with the Trinity because it appears quaint, obscure, irrelevant and Incomprehensible ? And yet the whole notion of the Trinity underlies the Christian Gospel and is unique to the Faith. Here are three perspectives

1. CLARITY

The truth sometimes confuses. There is the story of Nathan a US High school student who wrote a paper on a universal liquid solvent with various characteristics called dihydrogen monoxide. He submitted it to a scientific body who take ages to work out what is was- WATER! .

In describing the Trinity we have to resort to images. There are several.

For example the image of candles in a room (3 "lights" and one "light") and the three states of water- ice,liquid and vapour

What is God like? We can use all kinds of images Spaceman; Fireman; Sportsman; Salesman; Policeman. – all half truths The Bible's answer to the question is in the words of Jesus" he who has seen me has seen the Father!"

Difficulties remain

There is an **Intellectual difficulty**. How can three persons be one and the same

God is often misrepresented as having three heads for example..

There is a **Theological Difficulty**. How do the three persons of the Godhead relate to each other and aren't we Christians part of a wider monotheistic tradition?

There is a **Historical difficulty** – The Bible has many allusions and inferences to a Trinitarian position but is not always explicit. The early church fathers wrestled for years with the problem and the outcome of their deliberations is in the Nicene

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Creed where it says of Jesus "being of one substance with the Father" and of the Holy Spirit "who proceeds from the Father and the Son"

There is a **Philosophical Difficulty** about the nature and belief in God anyway.

The Trinity is a stumbling block and bone of contention with other faiths-

neither Judaism or Islam will accept the divinity of Jesus Christ and his incarnation.

They give him the status of a great prophet and modern Christian sects like the Jehovah's Witnesses deny the eternal pre-existent deity of Jesus and follow

ancient heresies of the 2nd and 3rd centuries claiming that Jesus assumed divinity

at some stage.

To give some clarity here are two important statements

(a) **"Just because it is incomprehensible does not mean that it is unbelievable"**

(b) **"Christian teaching on the Trinity is not an explanation of God. It is a description of what we know about God- however mysterious and even contrary to logic that may be."**

2. CREATIVITY

We see the witness of God in Creation. He is the creator and sustainer of all that we see around us. It is his designer label. The scriptures teach that God was there at the beginning and that his Spirit was also present. They also teach that through Jesus everything was made.

The Christmas Reading of John 1 that begins "In the beginning was the word" speaks of Jesus as being both "with God" and that he "was God" It goes on to say that through Him all things were made and without Him nothing was made that has been made.

Imagine three men standing outside a newly built house in Stoneleigh.

They can all say "This is my house" The Architect who designed it; the builder who constructed it and the owner who lives in it!

The Trinity is involved in our world. God the Father is the architect; God the Son is the builder and the God the Spirit lives within it.

We once stayed in Corfu in a house which was ablaze with creativity- right down to the use of drift wood from the beach and an 8 foot crocodile constructed of palm leaves!

Where does this and a billion other creative things come from? We are made in the image of God and God is a working God and we are working models of His. John 1 could be rewritten as "We worship a talking God and we worship a working God" Such a view should transform our relationship with the Creator and the created world he has made.

3. COMMUNITY

Theological college studies include questions on "the social trinity"! The Godhead functions as a unity and as a diversity

and the different persons of the Godhead are in relationship to one another. Jesus speaks to God as his Father for example!

Because God is a community and you and I are made in his image we are called to belong in a community of his people. When people came to faith in the Acts of the Apostles from the time of Pentecost till the end of time they are not called as isolated individuals with a privatised faith- they are called to belong

Our fellowship our belonging are an expression of the Trinitarian God we worship- our private western individualism that says "I believe but I don't need to belong" is a cultural denial of what the NT is about

The strength of any growing Christian church is its strength of community We see exhibited in Acts the strength of that first century Christian community. They did so many things together

How does the church in the UK shape up against the principles in in the book of Acts- a different time in history; a different culture but fundamental principles of community remain.

We all need to belong- there is a lostness and a loneliness in our culture We will be remembered as a society that has presided over the destruction of innocence and the destruction of community. The latter may be less of an issue in a suburb like Stoneleigh and the current pandemic has actually resurrected and recovered a sense of community

But we still see patterns of community disintegration in or society

Remember the Beatles "All the lonely people where do they come from; all the lonely people where do they belong?"

The New Testament word for "fellowship" is KOINONIA- having things in common. See Acts 2.v44 **"All the believers were together and had everything in common"**

There are many features of belonging in the book of Acts. They met together; they learned together; they worshipped together; they ate together; they shared together and they served together.

It is a challenge for St Johns and every church to translate the Trinity into everyday discipleship. In the village of Albury there are the remnants of an 19th century pietistic movement known as the Catholic Apostolic Tradition. They sought as others have done over history to recover first century Christianity. It has always been difficult if not impossible!

What is important however is that we take from the New Testament the **principles** of the first century rather than the **patterns**. The timeless Gospel encourages us to apply 1st century Faith to 21st Century living

Prayers Joan Simon

Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in 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.

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For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

The Peace

Hymn Just as I am without one plea

Thanksgiving Prayer

The Lord is here

His spirit is with us,

Lift up your hearts

We lift them up to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give thanks and praise.

On the night when He was betrayed, at supper with his friends, Jesus took bread and thanked you. He broke it and gave it to them saying "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me"

At the end of supper, taking a cup of wine, Jesus thanked you and said "Drink this all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins; do this in remembrance of me."

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory, send your Holy Spirit that the bread and wine we share may be for us by faith the body and blood of your dear son

(do share some bread and wine if you feel that is appropriate)

Hymn There is a Redeemer

Blessing "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, ever more Amen.

Book of Remembrance: Doreen Simon

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