

Welcome

Welcome everyone, regulars, visitors, occasional guests, once again to the worship of Tyndale Baptist Church, in these strange times. But they are also dangerous times – racial tensions explode into protest and oppression, ‘coronavirus anxieties’ rise in the hearts of many as we must be physically distant, alert, and walk a fine line between opening up and closing down.

In such times, many are looking for meaning beneath all the senseless loss of life and the injustice – and Christianity locates that meaning in the personal, and universal, message of a God who is close to us each one, and greater than all things at the same time - the God we have come to know in Jesus Christ.

It is a mystery, never more fully expressed and celebrated, than on this Trinity Sunday. The song:

['O God, You search me and you know me'](#)

Bernadette Farrell.

Call to Worship

The faith that's expressed here begins with the glad realisation that we are known and loved, for who we are and how we are; it's a love that draws us, welcome and warm and endlessly forgiving, but it continues, as well, with the confident assertion that that personal, warm, intimate love is also the love that makes and holds the universe. It is a very great mystery and faced with its power, in the name of Jesus who brings it close to us, we worship

['Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty'](#)

Opening Prayer

Early in the morning, throughout the day, last thing at night, the song rises all around the world – the song of worship – we worship; lifting our hearts, opening our minds, enlivening our spirits – not so much what we do, but what God does – holy Father, we worship you; not so much what we believe, but what God in Christ makes true – holy Son of God we worship you – not so much what we feel but what God the Holy Spirit makes real in the world – Holy Spirit, we worship you- holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty - above, beyond, near and through, soaring, sighing, making, saving, mending – holy God, Father Son and Holy Spirit, we worship you. Amen

['Today I awake'](#)

John Bell

Lord's Prayer:

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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

Readings

[Isaiah 40.12-17.27-31](#)

[1 Corinthians 13.11-13](#)

The Grace is said:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.

Prayer

Lord we give you this time; may what is spoken ring with truth, may what is heard and understood be touched by your Spirit and may what is decided lead us on towards your Kingdom, Amen.

Address

These three remain – faith, hope and love – not much in evidence at the moment, are they? Not in the pain-racked, ripped apart world of the US, where faith in the justice of the state is undermined, hope in the impartiality of the police is all but gone, and signs of love are buried beneath signs of hate and intolerance from political leaders, media outlets, white supremacists - where they have to shout 'Black Lives Matter' because it's obvious to most people that they don't matter much at all..

Not in the grief-ridden, anxiety-laden homes and streets here and elsewhere, where faith in the solid ground on which we have built our lives for so long is shaken, hope in a brighter tomorrow is shrouded in fear of a different, closed-down, isolated world and signs of love are confined to screens and windows because the love we would show if we could – in touches and hugs and closeness – is on hold – where we clap for carers because we hardly stopped to think of them before.

Faith all but gone; hope buried; love restricted and restrained...what a world; filled with unthinking injustice; racked with unblinking disease. It's easy to have faith when things are going well...but now? It's easy to have hope when you can see the future, but now...? It's easy to love when love's returned....but now? Now, they keep saying, is a dangerous time. Too right it is. Dangerous, when violence stalks the streets as frustrations boil over. Dangerous, when restrictions are eased and we're all too well aware of what might happen.

Dangerous to be black, poor, homeless, stateless in such a time. It's obvious that lives matter more when they're white, prosperous, well-housed, surrounded by all the securities of belonging. The George Floyd affair is terrible – just as terrible, to my mind, is the story of the white dog-walker in New York who called the police for help when a black man watching birds asked her to control her dog - what was it she said? 'there's an African American man threatening me'

Just as terrible, surely, was when a C of E curate went into a police station in St Paul's in Bristol during the Bristol riots in the 1980s to see a parishioner who'd been arrested and the desk sergeant rang upstairs and said 'There's a black man down here dressed like a priest'

In such times *faith* is stretched to breaking point; in such times *hope* that anything might change is crushed; in such times *love* for our fellow human beings regardless of the colour of their skin is not much in evidence.

Dangerous to be BAME in the current pandemic, when no one knows quite why you're more susceptible to the disease but if you're in health care chances are your PPE was inadequate; if you're spat on while just doing your job chances are you'll succumb to the disease.

Let's not pretend that this disease affects everyone the same. It's tragic whoever you are and wherever you are but we're comparatively fortunate in the South West; in Barrow-in-Furness; Scunthorpe; Tower Hamlets it hits much harder – poverty stalks, food banks can't cope; open spaces are in short supply.

Let's not pretend that the world is just. It's a challenge being human everywhere but if you're in a Favella in Brazil, a refugee camp in Myanmar, a leaky boat in the English channel, a ghetto in Philadelphia or a crowded tenement block in Washington DC you're more likely to be arrested for not having the right papers; injured by a violent partner or street gang..unemployed, penniless, disease-prone, malnourished..

Dangerous times. Let's not pretend – and let's not pretend, either, that religion can just float over all this as if it's got nothing to do with us. That Bible stunt in front of St John's Episcopal Church in Washington DC revealed more than it showed – some Christian commentators thought it was a sign that God was near the seat of power – balderdash! Others thought it proved that Christianity was winning the day – Franklin Graham, son of Billy, said 'thankyou President Trump. God and His Word are the only hope for our nation.' – please God not like this!

Other Christian leaders thought it showed nothing to help or heal; that it was an insult to the values of the religion whose book the Bible is –

The fact is, religion is mired in the mess of all this in these dangerous times as much as anyone, anything, else – open churches have become hotspots of coronavirus in many places; black people, along with women, the disabled, gays & lesbians and many others, have been hurt and rejected by pseudo-biblical condemnations for *years*...

This is Trinity Sunday – a day for holding on to and proclaiming the very great mystery at the heart of our religion – a mystery that somehow manages to hold together the soaring vision of Isaiah - God who is greater than the nations and the waters and the heavens and the dust of the earth, and the beautiful hymn of Paul – a hymn to love.

The point about today, then, is three. Just when you think things can't get any worse after the latest injustice is exposed; just when news of another virus outbreak hits; just when a business goes to the wall or a job is made redundant; God the Father – greater than the direst circumstance; God the Son, going to the worst place of all; God the Spirit, closer than your very next breath.

But there's another three – Paul's hymn proclaims it – the three that remain – faith, hope and love – the very three that are in such short supply in these dangerous times shine out from the very heart of God the Three in One – faith, made possible because God is faithful; hope – always new because God is eternal – and love, because God *is* love..

And if we can't pretend that racism doesn't exist; and if we can't pretend that virus-borne suffering is not real; neither can we pretend, on this of all days, that our lives and our world are not held and healed and reconciled and renewed by God and the trinity of faith, hope and love.

IN such dangerous times, little remains, but these remain, faith hope, and love – and the greatest of these? It is for us as much as Paul, to be patient; kind; not envious, boastful, arrogant or rude. Not insisting on our own way; to not be irritable or resentful; not to rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoice in the truth, to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things.

Thanks be to the God of love, shining in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Offering & words of peace

In these and all our gifts we give back to God that which comes from him – and in this bread and wine we offer the things of this tired, divided, dangerous earth – with grateful hearts for all we have received – and look to the transformation of all things into the things of heaven.

'Bread for the world'

Bernadette Farrell

Communion

So we come to communion, the very symbol of wholeness but paradoxical – *brokenness* makes whole, *suffering* heals. It's difficult to do this while we're apart from each other – with our own bits of bread and glasses or mugs of wine or juice or whatever. But in truth it's difficult to do this anyway – one piece of bread is broken, but always in a broken world; one cup of wine is poured and shared, but always in a suffering world..and it's *always* been difficult – it was difficult in apartheid South Africa; difficult in Nazi Germany; difficult in El Salvador during the Civil War; difficult for nonconformists in England in the 17th century...

But though it's difficult, I would encourage you to join in with it – get your own slice, or roll of bread, whatever (I think the one I'm using is from a packet of 'beefburger buns'..) and your own glass of juice, or wine, if you prefer (I've got some wine, from a wine box as it happens- saves opening a whole carton of juice..), settle back into your favourite chair – and rejoice – though it's difficult it's all of a piece with the difficult, but joyful, celebration of the Lord's Supper down all the centuries.

Invitation & Confession

The table of the Lord is spread, it is for those who will come and see in broken bread and poured out wine – not mere symbols, but the very substance of his life shed for us on the Cross and raised again the third day. Here we gather in a barren world; here we acknowledge the bitter truths of brokenness and pain; and here also we join the rebellion of faith – broken flesh for wholeness, poured out blood for healing The invitation is for all those who are seeking Christ and believe themselves called to follow his costly way to come and share the feast.

Confession

Lord our God, we make our confession.

We have preferred the easy way to the way of suffering love.

Father forgive us

And lead us in Jesus' way

We have not readily confessed our sins to ourselves, let alone one another.

Father forgive us

And lead us in Jesus' way

We have kept our Christian fellowship within the limits of our comfort zones.

Father forgive us

And lead us in Jesus' way

We have lost sight of the grand vision of the Trinity – a God of faith, hope and love

Father forgive us

And lead us in Jesus' way

We wait in quiet for a word of healing..The words of Scripture ring in our ears:

Now these three remain – faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.

Thank you our Father, for your love, shining in the face of Jesus Christ.

Institution

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you; the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and said, take, eat, this is my body which is for you, do this in remembrance of me. In the same way after supper he took the cup saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it in memory of me – for whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Thanksgiving

We offer bread and give our thanks, for the bread that sustains us from the good of the earth and the bread that inspires us from the storehouse of heaven.

We offer wine and give our thanks, for the drink that sustains us from the fruit of the earth and the new wine that flows to us from the life of heaven

Bread & Wine

The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had broken it he said, take, eat, this is my body which is for you....

'We have broken bread in a broken world, and in the eating together entered into the mystery of the body of Christ, by which we are made whole – thanks be to God, amen.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, do this whenever you drink it, in memory of me

'we have poured out wine in a suffering world and in the drinking together entered into the mystery of the blood of Christ, be which we are healed- thanks be to God, Amen

Prayer after communion

Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands that have touched holy things:

Our ears have heard your word – now make us deaf to the loud sounds of clamour and dispute, and ready to listen for every small voice raised for peace and reconciliation in the world of US cities, here and elsewhere.

Our tongues have sung your praise. Now make them free from deceit, and ready to speak only the truth in love – especially so that they will speak words such as breathing, and mattering..

Our eyes have witnessed the drama of salvation in broken bread and poured out wine. Now make them shine with hope and look for signs of your Kingdom amongst the powerless and voiceless – and away from signs of division among the powerful and false signs of religion-

Our bodies have been fed with your body. Now refresh them by your Spirit and make us ready to work for your Kingdom in the world – alongside all those who work to rebuild communities, to re-establish trust and to bring healing in health and social care.

Our lives this day have been filled with the risen life of Christ; now make us live by faith in the coming of your Kingdom in the divided, hurting communities of the world. Amen

['Lord of all hopefulness'](#)

Blessing – the blessing continues as Ian Holyer reads words written by Revd Dr Sam Wells, vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields, as Sarah Dodds plays..

'I cannot tell'

Thank you for being a part of this service; thanks to Ians Holyer & Waddington, Rachels Haig & Molyneux, Sarah Dodds, Mike and Mavis Whitfield

A 'coffee together though apart' time follows, at 11.30 am