



Heacham Parish Church



Morning Worship
16th January 2022
With the Baptism of Trinity

Welcome and Opening responses

We meet in the name of God:

God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, God the one

Let us worship in Spirit and truth.

Let us praise His name together

God is good **all the time**

All the time **God is good**

Hymn: **O Lord my God! (MP 506)**

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...

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent Him to die – I scarce can take it in
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin:

Then sings my soul...

When Christ shall come with shouts 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...

Prayers of confession

For times when we have ignored you and done our own thing:

Father, forgive us.

For times when we have not listened, or thought we knew best:

Father, forgive us.

For times when we have allowed the noises of the world to
drown out your quiet voice:

Father, forgive us.

For times when we have taken you for granted:

Father, forgive us.

For the times you have sought us out and we have turned away:

Father, forgive us.

We keep a time of silence.

Listen to the Good News: through Christ we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God! **Amen.**

Collect for Epiphany 2

Bible Reading:

1 Corinthians 13, v.1 to end

Sermon: by **Pip Lawrence**

Let's pray.

Thank you Lord for your word, for our ability to read and receive its contents. Help us as we look at it now to see more of you. For we ask in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

Have you ever made space to reflect on things that have endured the test of time? Things that we do today that would be familiar to someone who lived a long time ago. One of the things that is still practised today, albeit by a lesser number, is the business of pilgrimage.

Going on a pilgrimage takes endurance because it often takes the form of travelling a long distance by walking, sometimes in the company of others. I'm reliably informed that often the journey has a bigger impact than the arrival.

Trinity's journey to today has taken endurance. The journey began last summer when Trinity expressed a desire to be baptised. An awakening at a spiritual level led to conversations here in this church. Conversations led to Trinity reading some of the gospels and seeking Christ. Trinity also designed a cross which is given to her as a gift to mark the occasion.

The reading chosen by the family for today is a very familiar one from Paul's letter to the early Corinthian church. It is a response to a letter from the church seeking counsel for problems they were experiencing in the congregation. So, issues in the church are really nothing new.

The majority of the letter is taken up with advice and guidance, with rebuke, encouragement, insight into spiritual gifts and reminders of the way to follow Christ. Chapter 13 is sandwiched between all this advice, and direction on prophecy, tongues, worship, and details of collections.

Chapter 13 stands out because of the beautiful prose on love. Christ the King is the author of love, and its fulfilment is expressed in the being of Christ, who loved the world and died for it. Paul tells the Corinthian church, and us, that without love we are nothing. We can do the right things, say the right things, be the right things, but without love it holds no meaning. While this reading is often used in marriage services, it does not speak only of romantic love. It speaks of a love that is universal. It speaks of how we are called to love one another. We are called to be

kind, patient, without boasting, envy, pride, rudeness, self-seeking, anger, keeping no record of wrongs. Loving all things good, rejoicing in truth, protecting, hoping, and persevering.

Love never fails. It is enduring - unlike many things in life. Even in the life of the church, Paul says that prophecies will cease, tongues will be stilled, knowledge will pass away, but love remains. All these things will disappear when perfection comes. In a sense we are all child-like, reasoning as such. However, one day we will reach the goal of our faith, and we will be like Christ the King. As Paul says in chapter 15 of this letter: "The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power".

So, heaven and perfection wait, but what about the here and now? What can this reading say to us this morning, to us as a congregation and to Trinity as she marks the beginning of her life in Christ? Let's briefly explore some avenues, which hopefully will trigger further thought and reflection. I would like to speak of choice, challenge and, of course, Christ.

Trinity has chosen to acknowledge Christ in her life today, choosing to come here to the morning service, supported by her family. We have also chosen to acknowledge Christ in our life, either by being here or engaging with the service in other forms. We have chosen to gather together, to praise, to worship, to listen to the Word, to share in fellowship and to welcome Trinity into her new church family. The Word tells us of the importance of church. With all its faults and failures, it is Christ's body here on earth. It is the place where we are fed and nurtured and can grow in faith, love, and knowledge of the Word. Church is important to all who are committed to Christ, the book of Hebrews warns us about giving up the habit of meeting together.

At the moment gathering together does bring its own challenge but living as Christ has called us to live is in fact a constant challenge. This reading alone is a challenge to us all in how we love one another. None of us can say with total honesty that we have loved the way these verses call us to love. In fact the only way we can love as Christ loved is in His strength, with the help of the Holy Spirit. Learning to be Christ-like is far from an

instant process. It takes time and commitment and discipline to live as Christ calls us to do. We are all 'a work in progress', each challenge helping us to grow in faith and love. Even our failures can teach us that the Lord is a forgiving God who is willing to give us chance after chance, always drawing us with love. Our challenge, and goal, as Christians is to walk always in the light of Christ.

The Word tells us that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Christ our King and cornerstone is our loving lord, who, if we ask Him, will guide us in all our choices and challenges.

If we allow Christ to be king of our lives He will enable us, He will help us, and He will be our shepherd in all the ups and downs of life. He will always be with us, He will never turn away, He will never leave us. He will forgive us and restore us, He will lead us in the right paths, and will welcome us into His heavenly kingdom when He calls us to our forever home.

So whatever choices we are making or will be making, whatever challenges we are facing or will be facing; we can do no better than make certain we make them and face them in the knowledge of the light of Christ, and in the assurance of His welcome and love.

Let's close by recalling the time that Christ called us from darkness into his glorious light. Let's give thanks and rejoice that Christ calls us His own. Let's remember that Christ the King will come again. Amen.

Musical Offering

Prayers of Intercession, led by Gordon

Heavenly Father, thank you that you know our prayers before we even speak them out loud, and that you answer all of them in ways that bring glory to your name. We give thanks for those prayers that you have answered in the past. Help us, Father, to be more open to your leading in our lives and give us open ears to hear you through your Word. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we pray for Trinity who is being baptised this morning. Help her at the beginning of this journey, as she walks with you, that you would guide her in every aspect of her life. We pray for her family and friends, that they will support and encourage her in her faith, and that through Trinity's witness, they may themselves be aware of you in their lives.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Comforter God, we ask you to be close to those suffering in the world; for refugees, those who are suffering from hunger or violence. We ask you to provide peace in places where there would not be peace, for food where little is available, and for all those agencies working to provide aid to those most in need. Particularly we think of the ongoing situation in Afghanistan, where a significant part of the population is struggling to find sufficient food to survive.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Healing God, we pray for those we know personally who are suffering from all kinds of illness in body, mind, or spirit. Pour your healing balm on those who are struggling at this time. We pray too for those who care for the sick at home, in care homes, hospitals, and hospices. Lord, give them strength and resilience at this time.

We continue to pray for our doctors, nurses, and for all those who work within our NHS; and particularly for those who work at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Staff have been working for nearly two years with, at times, unbearable pressure and stress caused by the pandemic; and it is not yet over. We ask that you will give to those in Government, wisdom with any future decisions that they take, and that they will listen to the scientific advice when it comes to the health and wellbeing of all the population.

With a decision due any day now regarding funding for a new hospital in Kings Lynn, we pray that the QEH plan will be shortlisted, so that money will be made available in order to replace the current building which is in such a poor condition.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father we pray for those who are bereaved both recently, and those who still miss loved ones. Bring them your peace and comfort at this time. We pause for a few moments and bring to mind those who we know.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of Your Son, our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Hymn: The Lord's my shepherd (MP 1008)

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in You alone,
And I will trust in You alone,
For Your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,
And He anoints my head with oil,

And my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on His pure delights.

And I will trust in You alone...

And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff
Are the comfort I need to know.

And I will trust in You alone...

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Baptism of Trinity – Using the yellow baptism sheets

Hymn: Lord, the light of your love (MP445)

Lord, the light of your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth you now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze
Set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word
Lord, and let there be light*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence
From the shadows into your radiance
By the blood I may enter your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness
Shine on me, shine on me.

Shine, Jesus, shine...

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
So our faces display your likeness
Ever changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story
Shine on me, shine on me
Shine, Jesus, shine...

Blessing and dismissal

The Lord bless you and keep you:
The Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you:
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace:
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy
Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Go in the light and peace of God
Thanks be to God.

Church Contact:

Rev. Veronica Wilson tel. 01485 570697
or email: heacham.vicar@gmail.com
Church Office tel. 01485 572539 (answerphone)
or email: heacham.church@gmail.com
