

## Trinity Sunday – Year C

**Sunday 15 June 2025**

The Faith Action Programme would like to thank Rev Trish Archibald, Assistant Minister at Stirling North Parish Church, along with Faith Action staff members, Rev Ruth Kennedy, Digital Ministries Advisor, Dr Murdo Macdonald, Policy Officer, Society, Religion & Technology (SRT), Phill Mellstrom, Worship Development Worker and Rob Rawson, Mission Development Worker, for their thoughts on Trinity Sunday.

Weekly Worship, based on the Revised Common Lectionary, is for everyone – in any capacity – who is involved in creating and leading worship.

It provides liturgical material that can be used for worship in all settings. Our writers are asked to share their approaches to creating and delivering this material to equip leaders with a greater confidence and ability to reflect on their own worship practice and experience and encourage them to consider how this material might be adapted for their own context.

We would encourage continual reflection on the changing patterns of worship and spiritual practice that are emerging from disruption and how this might help identify pathways towards development and worship renewal.

We may not all be gathered in the same building, but at this time, when we need each other so much, we are invited to worship together, from where we are – knowing that God can hear us all and can blend even distant voices into one song of worship.

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## Introduction

The Weekly Worship material for 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> June top and tail what was traditionally, the SRT week of prayer. While this particular week of prayer has been moved to March it will, we hope in 2025, see an 'AI and Faith' conference exploring the influence of AI on faith and worship practice. The writers have used the lens of AI and Faith in reflecting on the passages of scripture, and exploring how this most contemporary of contexts is fertile ground for considering:

- how we understand and live out our faith in a world where AI dominates our online spaces,
- how the wider issues of digital culture impact our belief and our faith,
- how we understand concepts of truth and reality.

On this Trinity Sunday, when we are reminded that God is three in one and it is good to spend time reminding ourselves of our dynamic, relationship-driven God. This week's Davidic psalm reminds us of the importance of relationships, the majesty of God and the willingness to make human beings in God's own image with significance and in relationship with Him.

Although all three 'persons' of the Holy Trinity have been ever-present and ever-one, we read in Proverbs 8:22-31 that wisdom has also been with us since before the earth began. As a key characteristic of the Holy Trinity, God's wisdom has, and is, always available to us through the Holy Spirit's inspiration.

Wisdom. Glory. Grace. Truth. These are some of the words describing the wonder of God which stand out from the lectionary passages. You could choose any of them to explore more fully – indeed, any of them could easily form the basis for a multiplicity of sermons!

Of course, as each of us grow in knowledge and understanding, more of the wonder of God begins to be revealed. And we're conscious that, at Paul famously puts it, "now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." (1 Corinthians 13:12)

There's currently a lot of chatter around the development of artificial intelligence (AI). This is an area of technology which will undoubtedly, have a profound effect on the way we do lots of things, as more and more of the decisions in our lives (or the choices we are offered)

will be automated or handed over to machines. Powerful and helpful though technologies such as these are, we must be careful not to confuse *intelligence* (whether artificial or not) with *wisdom* (or indeed with *knowledge*). These are very different things. Problems arise when we have knowledge, but lack the wisdom to use it correctly. Likewise, as we develop AI, it is essential that we have the wisdom to use it well, for the greatest benefit to the largest number of people.

### [Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31](#)

Sometimes, before a key decision is made, we may often say, “This calls for some careful thought”, or “This calls for some wisdom.” Our decisions in life seem to present themselves first and then there follows a call for wisdom. However, in our first four verses of Proverbs 8, it is wisdom that does the calling and indeed, she shouts it out loud and clear! Why should wisdom shout at us so loudly and crave our attention? A big clue is found in Proverbs 1:7, where we read, ‘Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom’. Wisdom should therefore affect every area of our lives, from beginning to end. We need to be sure to open all corners of our lives to God’s direction and guidance.

Perhaps one of the key differences between real wisdom (from God) and the wisdom of the world, is that of where we put our fear and trust. In this case, by ‘fear’ we mean a form of respect that is borne out of reverence, rather than of alarm and dread. An old, northern English expression, rooted in workplace culture, states, “Always look after number one!” In other words, make sure you look after yourself first. There is wisdom in these words insofar that if someone cannot look after themselves first, how could they effectively look after any loved ones, or fellow colleagues? However, if the expression is taken too much to heart, it can all so easily instil a selfish trait, lacking compassion for anyone else’s needs. It can also focus trust on oneself, rather than on God. It would be fair to assume that God sees such an attitude as ‘artificial’, rather than ‘real’ wisdom.

In verses 22-31, we hear (or in our case, read) the voice of wisdom telling us it has always been with us as part of God’s character. Being ‘appointed from eternity’ (v 23), it has seen the formation of the earth and all created things. It is therefore primary and fundamental. It is not something we, ourselves have created, but something foundational, upon which all life is built. Five chapters earlier, in Proverbs 3:5, we are exhorted to ‘Trust in the Lord’ and doing so with all our heart and not relying on any of our own understanding. To do so, is wisdom itself.

## **Psalm 8**

This psalm starts and ends with praise. It is bookended by the majesty of God. In the intervening verses it paints a picture of creation, of God's goodness, creativity and power. But against that backdrop of the majesty of God, this psalm gives a special place to human beings. We are crowned with glory and honour (v6) and made rulers over creation with everything under our feet (v7). Human beings have responsibility for all of the earth and the seas. It is a huge responsibility, and considering the condition of the environment, an uncomfortable, timely reminder that we have been entrusted with this planet. But this psalm ends by reminding us of who is ultimately on the throne – not human beings, but God. This is a psalm which talks about our relationship to God and to the earth – with God exalted and humans just a little below the angels, but with profound significance and a job to do. This psalm is quoted in Hebrews 2:6-8, showing Jesus as the only one who delivers humanity's role completely. It is also quoted by Jesus in Matthew 21:16 ("from the lips of children and infants...") when Jesus speaks about the praise of children in the temple.

## **Romans 5:1-5**

Paul encourages us to live, knowing the wonderful benefits that God gives to those who believe (peace with God and hope) and how they impact and affect our lives. These blessings are not artificial or superficial, they are deep and enriching to our souls, bringing out authenticity in the way we live out our love of Christ. Furthermore, the hope and peace of God are not false, nor do they disappoint us, and this is poignant, crucial good news for the world in these days. In verse 2b, we read, "we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God" and in verse 5a, "and hope does not disappoint us." These verses encapsulate the main tenet of the wider passage (5:1-11). However, D. Moo states that whilst some theologians will have hope as the main topic, others suggest reconciliation (of peace with God) and others, the blessings of justification.

Verse 1 speaks of peace, referring to the positive meanings of the wellbeing, prosperity, tranquillity and salvation for believers. These could be incorporated into the benediction.

Verse 2 speaks of grace, denoting the 'state' or 'realm' believers are justified into, that have access into, and live under.

In verse 3, The Amplified Bible expands 'boast' to portray rejoicing with confident assurance, which is helpful for our understanding of the text. Paul gives a realistic account of life by including sufferings or afflictions. And even in them, we have hope.

## **John 16:12-15**

*“The Spirit will guide you into the truth.”* Sometimes, when we’re studying a subject at a more advanced level, we are informed by our teachers that what we had been told previously wasn’t *quite* true, but was instead, a simplified model, more suited to our (then) current level of understanding. For example, in National 5 Chemistry, we’re taught about electrons moving in defined ‘shells’ or levels, but then as we study it more deeply at Advanced Higher level, it becomes clear that it’s not quite as straightforward as that. The way in which electrons behave is stranger than you might imagine!

The same is true of course, of many aspects of life: as we grow and mature in our understanding, we begin to perceive a bit more of the complexities of life and more of the picture is revealed to us. In this passage, Jesus has a lesson like this for His disciples. As He effectively tells them in verse 12, “You had previously understood something of what I have been teaching, but soon a bit more of the curtain will be pulled back, to reveal more of the truth.”

In our journey of faith, one of the mistakes that we sometimes make is that we think that we fully grasp some aspect of who God is, and how God works. If we’re in an especially confident frame of mind, we might dare to say that we’ve got a handle on everything. So, in the same way as our Chemistry teachers speak of electrons, when Jesus says in verse 13 that the Holy Spirit “will guide you into all the truth”, it may be in the sense that all that the Spirit teaches will be true and there will be nothing false, rather than that everything will be revealed to us. The fact is, God can never be neatly fitted in a box, but is beyond understanding.

## **Sermon ideas**

### **Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31**

You might want to begin by asking members of the congregation for the definition of ‘wisdom’. It would be interesting to hear of responses, but they may well include statements such as ‘common sense’, ‘good judgement’, or even ‘lots of intelligence’. Whilst all these may be correct, they may well lack any spiritual angle. At this point, it is worth highlighting the book of Proverbs and how King Solomon, famously wise, wrote a good number of them himself. Solomon had asked God for wisdom and the request was granted, thus demonstrating that true wisdom comes from God.

You can go on to cite the many occasions we shout at the TV screen when we know an answer in a quiz show. We implore the contestant to say the answer that we already know to be correct. Of course, we are aware they cannot hear us, but we do it anyway! Verses 1 to 4 tell us that in effect, wisdom is doing the same, urging us to listen and respond accordingly and, unlike the quiz contestant, we are able to hear wisdom's voice and hopefully, obey its call to listen. Is wisdom worth listening to? Verses 22-31 offer its credibility, almost like an excellent CV, so it certainly is. It is eternal, having been around long before we came along and therefore, is eternally available to us. Where are we sensing that voice calling out to us?

### Further thoughts

Wisdom was there before the beginning of the earth. As the Spirit hovered and moved, and God breathed life, wisdom was present. We would do well to learn from this. How good are we at ensuring wisdom is present and foundational to all that we create?

As we discern what is worthy of our time, as we 'doom scroll' or search for information, perhaps even truth, are we asking for wisdom to guide us? How are we discerning what true wisdom looks like – a wisdom that can be trusted and is faithful to the life-giving nature of God our maker, redeemer and sustainer?

### **Psalm 8**

Consider the works of God's fingers. There is a short video available of some of the most up to date images we have of the universe. It is a beautiful piece that helps put us and our problems into perspective and consider the heavens, the work of God's fingers (v 3).

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yF\\_\\_bm4QsUQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yF__bm4QsUQ)

This would work well as a quiet reflection played before, or after the sermon. When David wrote this psalm, he had probably spent many nights outdoors, looking at the clear night sky and had been awestruck by the stars. Against this backdrop of the vastness of creation and time, our lives seem so small and insignificant.

What is humankind? But yet, this psalm teaches us that we are of significance to God. It is reminiscent of Genesis, where human beings are made in the image of God and entrusted with looking after what God has made. We see that image of God in the good that is done in the world, in those working for peace and justice for all of creation.



Ultimately, our significance to God becomes clear in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. If we were not significant to God, God would not have come to us in Jesus. The creativity of God the Holy Spirit is seen in all of creation, the goodness of God in the Father and the deep love of God, the significance God gives to His children we see in God the Son.

### Further thoughts

We would do well to ensure our specialness, our place just lower than the angels, doesn't impact how we treat the rest of creation. Lofty notions of the self can become a platform for privilege and we must ensure that we root ourselves in the midst of the wonder of what God made and called "good". We are called, as these wonderful bodies, to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly.

With all of our creativity, gifts and the very breath of God enlivening us, we are all children of God. God is mindful of us. We are made in God's image. As we consider all of the wonder of technology, of the artificial nature of machines, algorithms, systems and intelligence, how are we being mindful of it? How are we understanding its place within an order that holds to our call to be builders of a better kingdom, of a truer way of being?

### **Romans 5:1-5 'Artificial Faith or Authentic Faith?'**

To begin with, we can expound justification by faith. There is a short, three-minute video about justification linked with our digital footprints and data:

<https://youtu.be/kaZ9MollTgc?si=3loKCJ9oXgoedf0>

We then move to 'peace'. The peace we can have with God is not transient, but true in the sense it does not change. It is an entirely different state from not having peace with God, where we can seek out artificial peace to fill the void and longing in our souls. We can delve deeply into what peace with God involves and how it is by grace through faith that we can access this peace. The authentic peace with God in our lives is knowing we are loved by God the Father, rescued by God the Son, and helped by God the Spirit.

We then move to 'hope'. Humans can have hope without God, but this type of hope disappoints, as there is nothing to substantiate the hope, no firm foundation. Perhaps we 'hope' for nice weather this summer, etc. We might 'hope' that artificial intelligence can improve lives, or streamline work. But can AI offer genuine hope? I suggest not. The hope Paul discusses, is in Christ and never puts to shame those who have. It is interwoven with the love of God the Holy Spirit, that pours into us and it is this love which motivates



believers. When love is our motivating power, we have authentic hope, and an authentic faith which is alive. Artificial love, hope and faith all crumble in times of suffering because there is no peace with God. Take a look at this interesting article from the Bible Society:

### [The Quiet Revival: Gen Z leads rise in church attendance](#)

Reports abound of the genuine interest and increase in faith in Generation Z in the UK, as they are seeking an authentic faith, hope and peace that only Jesus can offer. Are we at a point in time where our nation is turning its back on false gods, artificial hope, and 'pretend peace'? How are we opening our arms and doors to genuinely disciple those seeking the authentic peace with God the Father, offered in Christ and poured out by the Spirit? After all, we are those whom God has chosen to embody and share this! What a joy!

### [Further thoughts](#)

The dramatic pace of advancement in digital and information technology is evident throughout every aspect of society, including the way we engage in acts of worship. How does this understanding of technological revolution map with the historical and ongoing nature of impact on spiritual and worship practice by emerging technologies? In 2018, during an event named 'Technodoxology', the Church of Scotland explored the advances in technology and its impact on spiritual and worship practice, and began to explore how engagement with social media was a new frontier for many in missional activity and connection. What does this mean now? We have moved leaps and bounds since then and technology – and AI in particular – is so prevalent in our everyday experience, that we are often completely unaware of it. We have access to anything, at any time, and almost a guarantee of instant gratification. How does this map with Romans 5:1-5, when we consider how Jesus gives us access to grace? How are we doing that? How are we living this? How are we inviting others to this same source of truth, hope and life?

## **Prayers**

### **Call to worship**

Trinity of love,  
Father, Son and Spirit,  
Holy God, Three Yet One,

**WE WORSHIP YOU IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH.**

God our maker,

Jesus our redeemer,  
Spirit our comforter,  
**WE WORSHIP YOU IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH.**

Way of all being  
Truth of all knowing  
Life of all things  
**WE WORSHIP YOU IN SPRIT AND IN TRUTH.**

### **Opening Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Loving God,  
Your glory fills the whole earth.  
When we look at the skies, the stars, the moon,  
we see Your power and beauty.  
And yet, You care about us.  
You care about the things that trouble us.  
You care about our families and our situations.  
You welcome us into Your presence,  
and we are thankful to be here to worship You today.  
Help us to lay aside anything that hinders us from knowing You,  
and focus our minds on Jesus.  
Forgive us Lord where we have failed to love You,  
where we have failed to love others as You love them.  
Thank You that through the death of Jesus on the cross  
You have paid the price for our sins.  
Thank You, Lord,  
for the gift of life and this world You created.  
You made us with love and gave each one of us a special place in Your world.  
You never leave us alone and You are so very close to us.  
We thank You Lord.  
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

### **Prayer of confession**

Almighty God,  
We thank You for Your wisdom, a wisdom that the world cannot give,  
but a wisdom You offer to us so freely.

Forgive us when we have ignored Your wisdom and followed an artificial wisdom of our own – one that has led us to be self-centred, uncaring, ignorant of You and even to be downright foolhardy.

Your real wisdom helps us to make right decisions – ones that bring glory to You.

May we shun worldly wisdom and always look to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for guiding us along a more noble path – one that will help to grow Your kingdom and to see the increase of Your glory.

We ask this in the Name of Jesus, Amen.

### **Prayers for others**

“What are humans that You are mindful of them, mortals that You care for them?” (Psalm 8:4)

Loving God,

You are our maker, our redeemer and our sustainer.

You care for all living things,

and Your wisdom surpasses anything that we can understand or create ourselves.

In our making and creating,

may we be inspired by Your Spirit –

that all we make may be filled with grace and mercy,

that everything we build may be life-giving and just,

that all we offer to others, may be good and true.

God of love,

You have poured Your love into our hearts.

May we be filled to overflowing and in compassion and generosity, share Your love with all.

Lord God, in our afflictions will You tend us, Your children,

that we may not only endure, but know life in all its fulness.

We hold before You now,

all who are hurting,

all who are afraid,

all who have had their dignity torn and infringed,

all who have no access to the means they need to live safely and without persecution.

God in Your grace and mercy, hear our prayers for all Your children –

[Hold silence]

Lord in Your mercy  
**HEAR OUR PRAYERS.**

God of peace,  
You have poured Your peace into our hearts.  
May we be filled to overflowing and in compassion and generosity,  
share Your peace with all.  
Lord God, in our conflicts and clashes, will You reconcile us,  
that we may not only know peace, but be peace makers.

We hold before You now,  
all of our struggles and opposition,  
all of the violence in this world,  
all who are oppressed or victims to war or exploitation,  
all who have had any agency ripped from them and need Your protection.

God in Your grace and mercy, hear our prayers for all Your children –

[Hold silence]

Lord in Your mercy  
**HEAR OUR PRAYERS.**

God of hope,  
You have poured Your hope into our hearts.  
May we be filled to overflowing  
and in compassion and generosity, share Your hope with all.  
Lord God, in all that we long for,  
may we know Your Spirit guiding us –  
that we may work for Your kingdom come and Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

God in Your grace and mercy, hear our prayers for all Your children –

[Hold silence]

Lord in Your mercy

## HEAR OUR PRAYERS.

Trinity of love,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
may You be glorified in all that we say and do.

[The Lord's prayer can be said here as per your local custom.]

Amen.

## Benediction Prayer:

Father of Glory,  
as we go, may we rejoice in the peace and hope found in You.

Jesus, King of Glory,  
may the abundance of Your blessings become fully alive in us and through us.

Spirit of Glory,  
flood authentic and hopeful love into us, so that it overflows to all whom we meet.

The Blessing and joy of the Lord;  
Father, Son, Holy Spirit, pour into you and all those you encounter, now and always, Amen.

## Musical suggestions

*God Welcomes All* (GWA) is the new supplement to Church Hymnary Fourth Edition. This exciting new collection features over 200 hymns and songs in a wide range of styles by writers from Scotland and around the world.

The full music version and words-only versions are now available; and digital resources, including the expansion of the existing Church of Scotland music website, will be published in due course, with streaming functions and further information on each song; backing tracks; and lyric videos. *God Welcomes All* is available to order from <https://chbookshop.hymnsam.co.uk/books/9781786225573/god-welcomes-all>

Our [online music resource](#) is on the Church of Scotland website; you can listen to samples of every song in the Church Hymnary 4th edition (CH4) and download a selection of

recordings for use in worship. You will also find playlists for this week and liturgical seasons and themes on the *Weekly Worship* and *Inspire Me* tabs.

You can find further musical suggestions for this week in a range of styles on the [Songs for Sunday blog](#) from Trinity College Glasgow.

#### **God Welcomes All (GWA):**

- GWA 28 – “Wisdom cries out in the streets”
- GWA 131 – “Jesus, lead us to the Father by your Spirit”
- GWA 132 – “As a mother comforts her child”

#### **CH4:**

- CH4 111 – “Holy, holy, holy”
- CH4 154 – “O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder”
- CH4 356 – “Meekness and majesty”
- CH4 392 – “When I survey the wondrous cross”

#### **Further song suggestions:**

- “Who You say I am” (Hillsong Worship)
- “Above all” (Michael W Smith/Lenny LeBlanc)
- “Name above names” (Tim Hughes)
- A suggested playlist of songs from CH4 throughout Pentecost can be found on the Church of Scotland website (<https://music.churchofscotland.org.uk/inspire-me/playlist/pentecost>)

## Reflecting on our worship practice

Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, the way we worship has changed and we need to reflect on the changing or newly established patterns that emerged and continue to emerge as a result of the disruption.

We can facilitate worship for all by exploring imaginative approaches to inclusion, participation and our use of technologies in ways that suit our contexts. This is not an exhaustive list, but some things we could consider are:

- Framing various parts of the worship service in accessible language to help worshippers understand the character and purpose of each part. This is essential for creating worship for all (intergenerational worship) that reflects your community of faith.
- Holding spaces for reflection and encouraging prayer to be articulated in verbal and non-verbal ways, individually and in online breakout rooms.
- In online formats the effective use of the chat function and microphone settings encourages active participation in prayer, e.g. saying the Lord's Prayer together unmuted, in a moment of 'holy chaos'.
- If singing in our congregations is restricted, we can worship corporately by using antiphonal psalm readings, creeds and participative prayers.
- Using music and the arts as part of the worship encourages the use of imagination in place of sung or spoken words.
- Use of silence, sensory and kinaesthetic practices allow for experience and expression beyond regular audio and visual mediums.

The following questions might help you develop a habit of reflecting on how we create and deliver content and its effectiveness and impact, and then applying what we learn to develop our practice.

- How inclusive was the worship?  
Could the worship delivery and content be described as worship for all/intergenerational? Was it sensitive to different "Spiritual Styles"?
- How was the balance between passive and active participation?
- How were people empowered to connect with or encounter God?  
What helped this? What hindered this?
- How cohesive was the worship?



Did it function well as a whole?

How effective was each of the individual elements in fulfilling its purpose?

- How balanced was the worship?  
What themes/topics/doctrines/areas of Christian life were included?
- How did the worship connect with your context/contemporary issues?  
Was it relevant in the everyday lives of those attending and in the wider parish/  
community?  
How well did the worship connect with local and national issues?  
How well did the worship connect with world events/issues?
- What have I learned that can help me next time I plan and deliver worship?

## Useful links

*God Welcomes All* can be ordered from [Hymns Ancient & Modern](#)

You can listen to samples of every song in the Church Hymnary 4th edition (CH4) and download a selection of recordings for use in worship [here](#)

You can find an introduction to spiritual styles online [here](#)

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