

Parish of Central Exeter

Morning Worship and Spiritual Communion

Trinity Sunday 12 June 2022 and also
commemorating St Barnabas (11 June)



Today is Trinity Sunday, and Saturday was the feast of St Barnabas. The readings and Sheila's reflection will focus our attention on the story of Barnabas, but the liturgical elements within the service will have a theme of the Trinity.

We begin this act of worship today with Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. Words are on the screen.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJC2E_BOToA

Call to worship

The words God speaks
are the life and sustenance
of all that exists.

The life Jesus gives
is the re-creation and renewed birth
of all that is broken and worn.

The Spirit's stirring in our souls
is the inspiration
for creativity, compassion, joy, and community.

Life-giving, life-restoring, life-fulfilling God;
may our whole lives be worship.
In all things, may we seek to connect with
and to reflect your love and your hope.

(posted on The Minor Keys.)

Opening prayer

Father,
You sent your Word to bring us truth
and your Spirit to make us holy.
Through them we come to know the mystery of your life.
Help us to worship you, one God in three persons,
You reveal yourself in the depths of our being,
by proclaiming and living our faith in you.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen

We seek forgiveness

Holy and triune God,
You alone live in perfect relationship,
One God in three persons,
Mutual and loving,
Ever seeking reconciliation and unity.

You have called us to live in your completion, yet
We confess that our relationships are imperfect and
We are incomplete without you.
We are selfish and greedy.
We are anxious and resenting.
We feel the shame of our foolish behaviour and brokenness.
We have allowed sin to drive us apart from one another
And from you.

Forgive us and restore us,
Draw us close and bind us together in your mercy.
May we long for wholeness and peace,
May we strive toward gratitude and grace
In the saving name of your son, Jesus Christ,
By the working power of your Holy Spirit.
Amen.

(written by Katherine Lee Baker, and posted on the Reformed Church in America website)

Assurance of forgiveness

“Remember, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Christ is with us, now and always.

The Holy Spirit is in our midst, now and always.

God the Creator is creating something new, now and always.

We are always loved, always forgiven, always known to God and cannot be forgotten.

Know this, and share the Good News. Amen.

Alternative collect for St Barnabas

Bountiful God, giver of all gifts, who poured your Spirit upon your gracious servant Barnabas and gave him grace to encourage others: help us, by his example, to be generous in our judgements and unselfish in our service; 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. **Amen.**

Worship song

We have a gospel to proclaim. Sung here by the Huddersfield Choral Society. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5wWRYq57EM>

Reading

New Testament Reading Acts11:19-30

¹⁹ Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews. ²⁰ But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Greeks¹ also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord. ²² News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion; ²⁴ for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were brought to the Lord. ²⁵ Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and when he had

found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they associated with the church and taught a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called 'Christians'.

²⁷ At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius. ²⁹ The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers^l living in Judea; ³⁰ this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Gospel John 15:12-17

¹² 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I do not call you servants^[a] any longer, because the servant^[b] does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶ You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷ I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Reflection Barnabas – Son of Encouragement

When I remembered that 11 June is the annual celebration for Barnabas, I thought we could spend time this morning reflecting on his example from the book of Acts rather than focussing on the mysteries of the Trinity. We first meet him in Acts 4:36-37

'There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"). He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.'

He comes from the serving group of Jews, the Levites, but he is not from Jerusalem or Galilee. Perhaps this slightly outsider status enables him to be not only generous with his own possessions but generous in his outlook to others. For the next time we meet him, in Acts 9:27 he is networking. Saul, a native of

Tarsus, a known persecutor of the first believers, has returned to Jerusalem after his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus but the disciples are afraid of him. Barnabas is prepared to do the introductions. He believes Saul's testimony and transformation and so Saul is accepted by the leadership in Jerusalem. However, Saul's powerful preaching leads to opposition and the leadership send him back to his hometown.

A few years later we come to the situation in today's reading with unnamed people spreading the good news of Jesus beyond the confines of Judaea and Samaria. Initially speaking only to Jews, in the cosmopolitan city of Antioch they spoke also to Greeks and the number of believers grew. This prompted the leadership in Jerusalem to send Barnabas who, as a Cypriot, would have cultural links with the area. Now we see his ministry of encouragement and read the wonderful description of him as 'a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith'. We see also his humility and again his networking skills as he realises that here is the place for Saul to minister. Thus, he travels again across the water to Tarsus to find Saul and together they return to Antioch and begin a ministry of teaching and encouragement.

Today's passage ends with the generosity of the Antioch Christians sending money to the believers in Jerusalem via Barnabas and Saul. Acts 13 will begin with them back in Antioch, praying with other leaders of the community, before they are set apart for the first missionary journey beginning in Cyprus. Later there is a strong disagreement between Barnabas and Paul in Acts 15 over Barnabas' cousin John Mark. This is unpleasant and we know little more of Barnabas's ministry as Luke follows Paul. Yet Barnabas obviously continued to preach and minister but in other areas. Differences of opinion may not always be a bad thing and later Paul can write that Barnabas is a co-worker with him (1 Cor 9:6) and that he accepts Mark again (Col 4:10).

What can we learn from Barnabas? I consider his willingness to take risks, to see possibilities, to be open to new ideas, to stand up for his younger cousin and so leave the ministry with Paul to follow a different route, possibly a less exciting one. Above all his faithfulness to God, generosity of spirit and ministry of encouragement is, I think, an example, to us. Long before the internet I bought a book of quotations for Christians, and I will conclude with one from there.

'The church should be a community of encouragement' Sir Fred Catherwood (1925-2014)

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in a loving God
whose Word sustains our lives
and the work of our hands in the universe.

God is life.

We believe in God's son among us
who brought the seed of life's renewal.
He lived with the poor to show the meaning of love.

Jesus Christ is Lord.

We believe in the Spirit of Life
who makes us one with God,
whose strength and energy renews our own.

The Spirit is Love.

Camillo Torres, Colombia, from 'Creed'.

Intercessions

We are a world that is desperate for you, God.

When powers struggle for dominance,
and war, oppression and abuse result;
When groups of people oppose one another
because of ideology, religion or culture;
We need a God who is bigger than ourselves,
and our personal interests.

(You may wish to remember before God the various areas of conflict in the world.)

When people are disregarded and devalued
because of poverty, geography or disease;
When compassion and justice is withheld to some
because of sexuality, race or gender;
We need a Saviour who is more compassionate than we are
who includes even those we would exclude.

(You may wish to remember before God specific people and places of suffering in the world.)

When resources are mismanaged and abused,
and the world and its creatures are destroyed;
When motivation is scarce and creativity is in short supply
to address the challenges that we face;
We need a Spirit who is more powerful and more creative
than we could ever be.

(You may wish to remember before God the specific challenges and issues that we struggle with in the world.)

Lord God, Loving Saviour, Empowering Spirit,
we offer you these prayers
because we need you so desperately.
Captivate us, call us and fill us,
that we may be carriers of your eternal life
to this world that you love so dearly. Amen.

(written by John van de Laar © 2008 Sacredise.com)

A short Spiritual Communion

The Book of Common Prayer reminds us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', even when we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.



Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

O God,
help me to trust you,
help me to know that you are with me,
help me to believe that nothing

can separate me from your love
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

You might like to access 'Bread of the World, in mercy broken', sung here by an Australian Choir: Cantus Choro. Words are below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8382PrTBOVY>

Bread of the world, in mercy broken,
Wine of the soul, in mercy shed,
By Whom the words of life were spoken,
And in Whose death our sins are dead.
Look on the heart by sorrow broken,
Look on the tears by sinners shed;
And be Thy feast to us the token,
That by Thy grace our souls are fed.

Reginald Heber 1783-1826

Giving thanks for Christ's death and resurrection you may wish to say

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen. *(after the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester)*

Post-Communion Prayer

Lord God, the source of truth and love, keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, united in prayer and the breaking of bread, and one in joy and simplicity of heart, in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Worship Music

'Now let us from this table rise.' Words are on screen.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewC6vndZv_M

Closing Prayers

God, whose word spoke life and creativity into a formless universe,
and order to a nation of escaped slaves,
whose strong and compassionate voice challenged injustice through frail
prophets,
we praise you.

Jesus, whose touch smoothed the broken skin of lepers,
and brought a bleeding woman back to health and belonging,
whose hand raised dead girls, and refused to throw stones at prostitutes,
we praise you.

Spirit, whose breath restores souls and bodies,
and whose presence comforts the grieving,
whose fire ignites compassion within us for the healing of the nations,
we praise you.

God of wholeness,
we celebrate the healing you bring to us and our world,
and we celebrate the promised wholeness
that awaits all of creation
in your eternal reign.

Amen.

(From www.sacredise.com)

Benediction

May the holy wisdom of God
Guard your ways and guide your paths
May the living truth of God
Enlighten your hearts and open your minds

And may the living Spirit of God
Give you life, and life to the full!
Amen!

(posted on Literature & Liturgy.)



Jyoti Sahi (Indian, 1944–), *Holding the Flame of Fire*, 2005. Painted as a design for a stained glass window for the entrance of Paripurnata Halfway Home in Kolkata, India. This shows a pair of hands cradling a flame that fans out in bright oranges and yellows, forming a mandala (Sanskrit “circle”).

