



Together

Holy, Holy, Holy... God in three persons - blessed Trinity!

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

Mars Bar anyone?

Reflecting on the Trinity for Trinity Sunday | by Rev Peter Hibberts

When you hear the word trinity, what comes to mind? How do you understand (or harder still, explain) the trinity? (Answers on a postcard or a stuck down envelope.) Perhaps you think of water. Water is one substance and yet it can be three different states: solid (ice), liquid (water) or gas (steam). In fact, at zero degrees centigrade (the triple point of water) it can be any of those! What about the shamrock? This was St Patrick's favourite (allegedly). Three leaves and yet one plant! What about a woman who can be Mum, sister and daughter - all at the same time? Does that help you?

Personally, particularly when I'm talking with children, I prefer the Mars bar! As well as being the tastiest of explanations it shows that God is not complete without all three 'persons', three distinct parts and yet one whole and without any of the parts, it's not God! A Mars bar also has three parts. Without the caramel, it's not a Mars, it's a Milky Way; without the fluffy stuff it's not a Mars, it's a caramel; with out the chocolate that surrounds it, it's not a Mars, it's a mess!

Of course all of the illustrations of the Holy Spirit are limited. The unique challenge is that each part is fully God and God is fully each part. God doesn't take on these roles for a time, they are always there. They are not separate but always united. Anything one has accomplished, all have accomplished. As an example, when we talk of God the creator, we sometimes think of God the Father when we are in fact talking about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit who are all creator (look at Colossians - chapter one verse 15 - which clearly states that, in Jesus, everything is created; and of course it is the 'Spirit of God' hovering over the surface of the Earth at creation! - Genesis 1:1.) None of our attempts to illustrate this fully capture it - it is the proverbial quart into a pint pot - some of the wonder is lost! That's why we call it the *mystery* of the Trinity (it's what theologians do when they come across something that can't fully be explained).

What's really important is that we experience the fullness of God. Whether our understanding is Father, Son and Spirit; Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer; or the many other trinitarian statements, know that God is everything, all-sufficient. I particular find it helpful to consider God as Powerful, Personal and Present - God was powerful to create and sustain, righteous, indescribable; but he's also personal - coming with skin on, as Jesus to be someone that we can relate to and fathom - in our likeness to reach us; and finally he's present - here with us and wherever we are - we are never alone, never isolated, never abandoned. God the Trinity is complete and completes us.



Feeling sheepish?

Circuit Service Message | Psalm 23 and John 10:1-21 | Rev Peter Hibberts

1. Online Service

This week (12th June) our online circuit service will be led by Rev

Peter Hibberts and will be broadcast on the Newark and Southwell Methodist Circuit YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/NewarkSouthwellMethodistCircuit>)

why not invite a friend to watch it with you and share the link with them on your social media or by email! (Also available to watch back at any time).

2. 'Zoom' Opportunities

If you're feeling isolated, are not ready to be face to face yet, or can't, but are happy to meet on Zoom, there is a weekly coffee time at 3pm on a Monday run by Charles Street but open to all, email Mel Watson for more details: mellwatson42@gmail.com.

There is also a weekly Zoom fellowship called 'The Gathering' which is part of Southwell Methodist Church and run by Philip and Francine Holmes. You'd be most welcome, contact Philip to connect: philipholmes8100@gmail.com.

3. Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 (Also online.)
08:10am - 12th June

Trinity Sunday Service

For Trinity Sunday, Eucharist from St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow. Live with the Very Rev Kelvin Holdsworth. Cathedral Choir directed by Frikki Walker. Organ: John Gormley.

4. Radio Nottingham

Listen every Sunday, at 8am, to a live church service on BBC Radio Nottingham. (Online or on 95.1-103.8 MHz FM for free.)

I recently listened to a BBC Radio 4 programme which involved Alan Titchmarsh and Amanda Owen, better known as 'The Yorkshire Shepherdess'. They were mainly talking about books (both being authors) and James Herriot books at that (veterinary surgeon and author of the series of books that gave birth to the BBC TV series, 'All Creatures Great and Small'). They are also both (indeed all) from Yorkshire, and shared thoughts about the rugged landscape in which they both grew up and inevitably how difficult it must be to tend sheep there. Do you think you could make it as a shepherd? Amanda's approach to sheep is a very traditional one; tending sheep, cattle, horses and what she describes as 'free-range' children! (I can at least relate to her in that part.) One of the funniest parts of the BBC reality TV show she starred in was when one of the children let a sheep into the kitchen! Her life looks idyllic but as you watch the show, you can also see how hard it must be, to be a good shepherd. Of course, for many of us, it can be an alien concept - not being a regular part of life. Of course for Jesus' original listener, a shepherd was a profound symbol both in their experience and in their understanding of scripture.

The Bible gives us many examples of Shepherding. The two best-known are David (later to be known as the Shepherd King of Israel) who we are told, as a shepherd, used a sling and stones to fend off many wild animals (as well as a rather large man!) and of course Jesus, The Good Shepherd. Interestingly enough the two are connected by Psalm 23 where David writes (as a shepherd) of The LORD as *his* shepherd; a place that our Lord Jesus rightly claims in this week's Gospel reading.

Make no mistake, this was a powerful, messianic (meaning claiming to be the one sent by God and indeed God in human form) thing for Jesus to say. We see, not least from Psalm 23, that the shepherd was a deep spiritual concept bringing to mind leadership of both a political and spiritual nature. But he does need to qualify this by calling himself the '*Good*' Shepherd, there are also examples in scripture of *bad* shepherds. The bad shepherds come not through legitimate means but by climbing in by some other way. They don't come to tend the sheep but for their own gain. In Ezekiel 34 the spiritual leaders of the day were reprimanded by God as leaving the people vulnerable and unprotected. So we see that it is a *Good* Shepherd's role to protect.

Let's take a moment to consider those who have no protection. Those who are vulnerable. Consider those who are isolated, threatened by war, fleeing for refuge, preyed upon by those who would steal and kill, may Christ be their *Good* shepherd as we the shepherds of creation have failed them.

Psalm 23 also gives us a window into the way that the *Good* Shepherd provides. 'He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters.' Here the shepherd provides not only protection but also food, water and rest. '[He] prepares a table for me...my cup overflows.'

Let's take a moment to consider those who have no food, water and rest. Those faced with drought and famine, sometimes at the hands of oppressors, sometimes at the hand of those who, from many miles away, make decisions that damage their environment and make their climate hostile. May Christ be their *Good* shepherd as we the shepherds of creation have failed them.

But perhaps the most powerful one for those in the West, in the modern age (where so many of us have a roof over our heads, protections in law and finance, food in the cupboards and clean water from a running tap) is found in the way the *Good* Shepherd protects our hearts. 'he restores my soul...[his] rod and staff they comfort me.' I'm not sure what the agricultural shepherding equivalent is here, maybe Amanda Owen talks to or sings to her sheep. I know that the farm I grew up visiting for our annual caravan trip had cows that the farmer knew by

name. When I went to see him milk them, he talked to them and addressed them by name. They were certainly loved and for more than just their milk! Farmers who experience the BSE and Foot and Mouth epidemics were heartbroken as well as devastated to lose their herds, many talked of how they had lost family.

Let's take a moment to consider all those who are isolated, lonely, or anxious. May Christ be their *Good* shepherd as we the shepherds of society fail them.

Where do you locate yourself in all of this?

In one sense we are all shepherds. We are called as the priesthood of all believers (all part of the body of Christ, the *Good* Shepherd) to give ourselves in love for our neighbour. Perhaps we are being asked to provide food, shelter, warmth, protection. Perhaps we are being asked to provide encouragement, company or comfort to those around us. It often requires sacrifice; the Gospel reading talks of the way that the *Good* Shepherd lays down his life for his friend. When we have failed in this, join me in repenting and asking forgiveness for the times we have all fallen short, but know that in Psalm 23 verse 3, the Good Shepherd 'restores' us. Let's unite to be better shepherds; the need is our calling.

In another sense we are all sheep and need to turn to Christ, our *Good* Shepherd. Do you feel lost? Jesus also tells the story of the Lost Sheep (Matthew 18). Psalm 118 says that, 'I have strayed like a lost sheep.' But the *Good* Shepherd goes out to look for the one that has 'wandered off'.

We, as a family, recently had a trip to Wembley to see the mighty Port Vale step up to the league above (I promise I won't mention it too much!) and we wrote our telephone numbers on the children's arms in case they wandered off. I regaled the children with the time in 1993 when I was taken to Wembley (also to see Vale win!) and did indeed wander off. The panic! The worry! Then the jubilation as we were reunited. I was searched for and they would not have stopped looking until I was found!

I've often been puzzled by the leaving of the ninety-nine, have you? If one of my older children had become separated from us, I wouldn't have left the younger ones behind! But this week we celebrate Trinity Sunday and we recognise that God is gloriously three-in-one. So don't worry about the 99, whilst God the Son came to seek and save the lost, God the father continued to sustain all creation and was present with all through God the Holy Spirit! God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Let me tell you, if you are feeling lost, alone, isolated or anxious right now, Jesus is, at this very moment looking for you. He is looking for you, and he will not stop until he has found you. You will be found. 'your Father in heaven is not willing that any of [you] should be lost' (Matthew 18:14). Just stop for a moment, listen. You'll hear his voice. Listen to it, daily, and learn to recognise it. He loves you. He wants to lift you up onto his shoulders and carry you back to the fold.

God has got you!

Jesus Christ was true to his word in our Gospel reading. The *Good* Shepherd did indeed lay down his life for his sheep. When Jesus chose to die on the cross it was to give you all you needed. In doing so he took the nails in his hands to protect you, his body was broken as bread to feed you, his blood shed to seal you as his, his spirit released to well up inside you as a spring of living water that you may never thirst again, his arms stretched out like an eternal cosmic hug, to restore your soul, that you may know you are not alone and whatever you are anxious about (even in the valley of the shadow of death), his rod and staff are there to comfort you. Like a *Good* Shepherd, **God has got you!**

Prayers

Three-in-one God, what an exciting mystery we celebrate today, that you, our God, are three persons in one being. Your essence is so awesome, it is beyond our understanding. O Father, you adopted us as your children through the death and resurrection of your Son. O Holy Spirit, you gave us faith in Jesus through explosive power of the gospel. You testify that we are God's children, and you guarantee our inheritance of eternal glory with Jesus. O holy Trinity, your saving love overwhelms us. Keep us as your own, and each day move us to declare: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty! We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy spirit, one God, through all eternity. Amen.

written by Arnold Ruddat <http://www.arnold.theruddats.com/>

O God, Shepherd of all your people, deliver us from all troubles, worries and cares that assail us, that we may always do what is pleasing in your sight, and remain safe in the care of our Good Shepherd; Jesus Christ our Lord.

We are sorry for the times we have failed to co-shepherd your people and your world, allow those around us to be hungry, vulnerable, isolated and anxious. When you call us to co-shepherd with you as members of your body, may we step-up, and in the power of your spirit drive a wedge into the spokes of the wheel of injustice, reaching out to the lost sheep as your agents in this world. May we join you in your mission to seek and save the lost.

Amen.

Adapted from Paul C. Straman, based on a prayer from the Roman Breviary.

EMAIL PRAYER CHAIN

If you would like to join a prayer chain and receive prayer requests or to submit a prayer request (with permission of the recipient) please get in touch with Colin Beckett colin1244@gmail.com. It is for those of any church or none!

Songs included in this week's online worship

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! (StF 11) [LINK](#)

As the deer pants for the water (StF 544) [LINK](#)

The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want (StF 481) [LINK](#)

Be thou my vision (StF 545) [LINK](#)

For YouTube songs click the [LINK](#)

Discussion Questions

Church is best done together but we know that this isn't always possible - particularly if you're housebound, isolated or even shielding. But why contact a friend and arrange to watch the church service online or read the newsletter simultaneously and get in touch by telephone afterwards to talk about it. Below are some questions that might help you to reflect together!

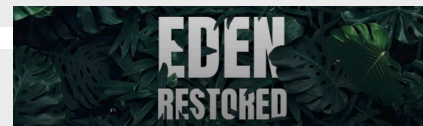
1. Who are some of the people you have 'followed' in the past?
2. How would you feel if someone who was supposed to protect you ran away when physical or spiritual trouble came?
3. How would you feel if someone stepped to protect you and laid down their life for you?
4. Make a list of all the characteristics of the shepherd that this passage referenced. What stands out? What are you drawn to?
5. Recall times you have experienced these characteristics in your life. Which of the characteristics you listed are most important to you at this point in your life? Why?
6. Take a moment to listen for God's voice, hear Jesus, the Good Shepherd calling you.

In-person worship across the circuit for the next five weeks...

June-August 2022		12th June Trinity Sunday	19th June Sanctuary Sunday	26th June Conference Sunday	3rd July	10th July Action for Children	Ru
Balderton	10.30am	Ward T	N Falla HC	Dalby	Hart	Morley HC	V
	Other				LA 4pm		
Charles Street	10.30am	N Falla HC	Winnington	Mathews	N Falla HC	LA	
	6pm	Gibson	N Falla HC	West	Hart	N Falla HC	
Collingham	10.45am	Gibson	Dalby T	Hall HC	L Blatherwick	LA	
Elston	10.45am	LA		Hibberts CA / HC		Breakfast at Hope Hawton- ville 9am	
Hope Community	10.30am	Winnington Breakfast at H'ville / 9am	Ward at B'gate	LA at H'ville	Beech at B'gate	N Falla Breakfast at H'ville / 9am	H
Long Bennington	10.30am	United Service at Parish Church	LA	Morley HC	Ward T	A Trowbridge	
North End	6pm	Hibberts	Mathews	Morley	Hardy	Beech	
North Muskham	10.30am	Hucknall HC / T		Pearce		Dalby	
	2pm		N Falla Café		Hibberts Café / HC		
Southwell	10am	Hardy	Hibberts HC	L Blatherwick	Hibberts	Pearce	
	Other		Hucknall 4pm	Hibberts Fringe	N Falla 4pm		
Sutton-on-Trent	10.30am	Hibberts Breakfast / HC / 9am	Hibberts at Old England 4pm	United Service at Parish Church HC / 10am	Hibberts SoP / 6.30pm	LA Breakfast / 9am	H

The new Circuit Preaching Plan is now available from the circuit website (where you will find all service details): www.newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk or contact your local church.

Cliff College Festival Weekend - #CliffFest



The bank holiday weekend 2022 wasn't just Jubilee Weekend but was also Festival Weekend at Cliff College. Many of you may have been involved in the Festival Weekend at Cliff College (the Methodist Mission and Evangelism College in Hope Valley, in the heart of the Derbyshire Peaks). For those of you who are not familiar, it's usually the late May bank holiday weekend and is open to anyone to take part in Bible Studies, Seminars and Celebrations. This year the theme was Rule and Reign (for the Jubilee!) but the Festival also included a challenging address by the President of the Methodist Conference, Sonia Hicks. It was a wonderful long weekend with many blessings.

Bookings are now open for Cliff Festival 2023 at <https://www.cliffcollege.ac.uk/news-events/festival-2023> - the theme next year will be 'Eden Restored' and will explore significant garden encounters in Scripture - from the garden of Eden at the very start of the Bible to the tree of life and the restoration of all things in the book of Revelation. Save the date (26-29/5/23) and book now! (More details from Rev Peter Hibberts.)