

Christ Church New Southgate & Friern Barnet

9 January 2022

Song: Look up to the skies

Prayer

Song: The splendour of a King,

Lord's Prayer

Reading Luke 3.21-22

²¹When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²²and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Song: The Spirit of the Lord

All Age Craft: Trinity spinners

Using strong card, cut around a CD shape. Mark the centre and make two small holes either side.

Draw or write what you know about Father, Son and Spirit on the card circle, you can use the story above.

Cut 40 cm of string and pass through each hole tying a knot at the end.

Hold each end of string and spin the circle like a skipping rope, till the string is twisted. Allow the card circle to spin. You'll see that the activities of Father, Son and Spirit merge

into one another. They work together to form a beautiful pattern.

Sermon : Participating in God

Lately I have taken to swimming at Southgate pool. It's a great swimming pool with a large pool and lunchtime lane swimming for adults available throughout the week. Before Christmas you had plenty of space to swim up and down in a choice of three lanes – slow, medium and fast. I only crashed into one person – twice. Now in the New Year, the pool is packed. I guess everyone is working from home again, wanting to shed some excess weight or perhaps it's a New Year's resolution to get fit? The result is pretty awkward – too many people trying to swim at the same time means swimmers crash into each other. It means you must wait to allow a gap in between each person. There are some swimmers who are kind and allow enough space between each person. There are some swimmers who like to overtake others because they think they are faster than you, and then there is a truly annoying kind of swimmer who likes to create their own lane and swim up and down the middle of the lane – ignoring the very clear signs all around the pool.

This is what an individualistic society is like. Each of us wanting to travel in our direction at our speed and never mind anyone else. This is the kind of society where winner takes all, you look after yourself and succeed. In this society, we buy all the loo rolls we can see in a pandemic, we gazump other house buyers at the final stage, we ignore the pleas of the hurting and expect the government to sort them out.

This is not what God is like. We do not see the Father creating whatever he wants alone. We do not see Jesus turning stone into bread for he is hungry. We do not see the Spirit blessing just the men who are in charge.

When we act in an individualistic way for me, myself and mine we don't reflect God. When Christians keep secrets, gossip about each other and only nurture our own spirituality, we don't reflect God. When churches are only interested in growing their own church, we don't reflect God.

How about seeing the world differently as God does – Father, Son and Spirit. How about instead of a lane swimming society, we seek a synchronised swimming world. Where each person has a part to play, a place to be and is valued for all they offer. For with each person working together, new and wonderful shapes are made and seen and joy is found.

God is three persons – Father, Son and Spirit. Each a person in their own right but each sharing in the substance of God. Each person acting in a different role but all in the same play, each person is in relationship with each other.

Here in Luke's account of Jesus' baptism we see a perfect picture of God at work. The Son is present in the world - Jesus Christ, son of God. The Spirit appears in bodily form, a real comfort and anointing of the Son. The Father speaks from heaven and affirms Jesus. He says that he is loved and he's pleased with him. There is a mutuality and love that shows a relationship that is foundational to the very universe itself.

Wherever we can build relationships with each other, work together and seek God's voice together then we reflecting the glory of God that we see as Jesus begins his ministry.

As a church we are called to gather, to meet together not to stay as individuals but join in with the family of God. God calls us to participate with him in this world, that we might hear him speak, sense the Spirit's anointing and serve like Jesus did.

As a church this means that we are a body that does not reject the foot, or the parts that seem less important but recognise each of us have a part to play.

We do this because we are called by the Lord who shows us how to live by his example. His life is one of love, love to create, to send and to serve. Love to be obedient to the call of God.

The bedrock of this godly life is prayer. Jesus isn't anointed at his baptism in Luke, its after. He prays, he talks to his father and God tears open the heavens for him to assure him that he is not alone in the task he has taken on, that the comforter is here. To the early church who prayed, the Holy Spirit came. And to us likewise. When we pray, God will assure us that he loves us, that we are his beloved and will equip and bless us with the Spirit for the task of serving the world that he created.

Song: Brother, sister, let me serve you;

Dove prayers

Let's remember people and places who need to know God's peace and presence. Write on a paper dove and place it on the stage.

Song: Love Divine

Blessing

May we know God's care as part of his family together

May we be blessed by the Spirit's power and courage to make anew

May we serve as the Son serves the world in love. Amen