

Trinity 8 ALL-AGE SERVICE

Living well



Welcome

In this month's All Age Service we are exploring how best to enjoy life in all its fullness. What is the best way to live?

Hymn – Through the night of doubt and sorrow

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcZB28QfpVg>

Through the night of doubt and sorrow
onward goes the pilgrim band,
singing songs of expectation,
marching to the promised land.

Clear before us through the darkness
gleams and burns the guiding light:
so we march in hope united
stepping fearless through the night.

One the light of God's own presence,
o'er his ransomed people shed,
chasing far the gloom and terror,
brightening all the path we tread.

One the object of our journey,
one the faith which never tires,
one the earnest looking forward,
one the hope our God inspires.

One the strain that lips of thousands
lift as from the heart of one;
one the conflict, one the peril,
one the march in God begun.

One the gladness of rejoicing
on the far eternal shore,
where the one almighty Father
reigns in love for evermore.

Onward, therefore, fellow pilgrims,
onward with the cross our aid;
bear its shame, and fight its battle,
till we rest beneath its shade.

Opening

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all.**

**Lord, direct our thoughts,
teach us to pray,
lift up our hearts to worship you
in Spirit and in truth,
through Jesus Christ. Amen**

Confession

**Lord God, our maker and our redeemer,
this is your world and we are your people:
come among us and save us.**

**We have wilfully misused your
gifts of creation;**

Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.

**We have seen the ill-treatment of others
and have not gone to their aid;**

Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.

**We have ignored evil and dishonesty
and failed to strive for justice;**

Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.

**We have heard the good news of Christ,
but have failed to share it with others;**

Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.

**We have not loved you with all our heart,
nor our neighbours as ourselves;**

Lord be merciful: forgive us our sin.

Absolution

**God who is both power and love,
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Jubilate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qS-7qh9tz0>

Jubilate, ev'rybody.
Serve the Lord in all your ways,
And come before His presence singing,
Enter now His courts with praise.
For the Lord our God is gracious,
And His mercy's everlasting.
Jubilate, Jubilate,
Jubilate Deo! *(sing through twice)*

Fred Dunn
(1907-1979)
©1977 Kingsway Thankyou Music

Scripture Reading

Luke 12.32-40

'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn – Colours of day

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4Y2kRILyTw>

Colours of day dawn into the mind,
The sun has come up, the night is behind.
Go down in the city, into the street,
And let's give the message to the people we meet.
*So light up the fire and let the flame burn,
Open the door, let Jesus return.
Take seeds of His Spirit, let the fruit grow,
Tell the people of Jesus, let His love show.*

Go through the park, on into the town;
The sun still shines on, it never goes down.
The light of the world is risen again;
The people of darkness are needing a friend.
So light up the fire and let the flame burn,

Open your eyes, look into the sky,
The darkness has come, the Son came to die.
The evening draws on, the sun disappears,
But Jesus is living, His Spirit is near.
So light up the fire and let the flame burn,

Sue McLellan (b1951),
John Paculabo (b1946),
Keith Rycroft (1949)
©1974 Thankyou Music

Talk

One of the things I love about the stories that Jesus tells is that he so often comes with a surprising twist that takes us to a different place!

So, in today's story he's teaching his "little flock" (his treasured disciples whom he is nurturing) how best to live. They probably thought they knew what Jesus was going to say. They expected to be told that life was going to be tough – and that's certainly how Jesus started.

"You must sell your possessions and give the money to the poor."

"But what shall I live on?" they would have thought. Well, clearly not their possessions, you can't eat them!

"You're not selling what you live on," Jesus might have said. "You should carry on working, or receiving donations, and just buy your food as you always have done from your income."

And he possibly explained that the possessions to be sold are the ones that hold back generosity. Not the ones that you delight in sharing with others, or that make your home a real home, but the ostentatious stuff that is just about status rather than practical comfort.

Certainly not to sell all the favourite cuddly toys and teddy bears of childhood – since they are the foundation that help children to learn to care for others, how to look after them.

Certainly sell off of all those old clothes in the cupboard that are never worn and are getting moth-eaten – we've had a few clothes-moths fluttering around upstairs this year!

But Jesus is quite clear that after this we will still have, indeed are encouraged to have “treasure”. We are to treasure the things we love – above all to treasure our relationships. To love and care for our family and friends, our neighbours, especially those in need – those seeking alms.

He’s really saying that the thing that matters is not our possessions, but the quality of our relationships; how much love we are giving, how well we’ve fulfilled the two commandments to love.

I suppose the type of treasure he’s referring to is like the mythical “Brownie Points” (did they ever exist?) which we earn when doing a good deed. (In my case I perhaps earned “Cub Points” since by saying the Cub promise I promised to do a good deed every day!)

Looking back at the end of a day, we may see that satisfaction comes from reflecting on how helpful we were – maybe listening to someone’s story, sympathising with their hardship, visiting someone who is sick or in hospital.

Such satisfaction rightly gives us a bit of a glow, a little like what a miser hopes for when counting their gold coins – but never receives. Looking back on the day and counting our blessings.

So far, so good. The disciples had heard this from Jesus many times before. And I expect that when Jesus starting talking about a wedding feast and having lamps ready, they said to themselves “We’ve heard this one before too – it’s about running out of oil, being ready.” But they were wrong – Jesus goes in a completely different direction.

We need to be dressed ready for action, lamps lit, and ready to welcome the master home from the wedding he’s been at. He didn’t know when he’d be back, so we’ll just sit around and wait, and then be ready to help him to bed. Perhaps he’ll be rather the worse for the wine he’s been drinking?

That’s what dutiful servants are expected to do – another late night, and then up first thing in the morning to serve breakfast to the master.

But that’s not how the story went – far from it. What did happen?

The master came back eventually – late at night or just at dawn. And was he off to bed? Not a bit of it.

The master tightens his belt, and then gets all his servants and workers to sit down and he serves them a feast! He is warm and generous, friendly and relaxed.

It turns out that he really cares for them, he's putting their needs ahead of his own needs, he's affirming their importance. It's as if they are cashing-in their brownie points.

Sometimes it may feel that being a Christian is all about giving and not receiving, that it's a hard and thankless task. In a famous prayer of St Ignatius, we are told not to count the cost, not to seek any reward:

Teach us, good Lord,
to serve you as you deserve,
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labour and not to ask for any reward,
save that of knowing that we do your will.
Amen.

And yet Jesus is saying something more, far more.

We **will** be rewarded, with the pearl of great price, the water of life, the food of God. And not just in heaven, but now, here on earth.

The whole driving force of Jesus' gospel is about bringing in his wonderful Kingdom on earth. To enable everyone to live life to the full, to live life abundantly. To enjoy life!

Freed from sin, building loving relationships, putting material possessions firmly in their place, enjoying good company, bringing peace and joy to those around.

This is not just a reward that balances out the cost – this is the real thing – this is what it is to be fully human. To trust God and relax in his love. Enjoying our teddy bears, our friends, the people we meet, God's beautiful creation – to live as God always intended.

May we experience this too.

Amen.

Affirmation of faith

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

The Peace

Jesus says to his disciples,
'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.
Not as the world gives do I give to you.
Let not your hearts be troubled or afraid.'

The peace of the Lord be always with us.

Hymn – God is love, his the care

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjjU_BKA1PE

God is love: his the care,
tending each, everywhere,
God is love, all is there!
Jesus came to show him,
that we all might know him!

Sing aloud, loud, loud!

sing aloud, loud, loud!

God is good! God is truth!

God is beauty! Praise him!

None can see God above;
we can share life and love;
thus may we Godward move,
finding him in creation,
holding ev'ry nation.

Sing aloud, loud, loud!

Jesus lived on the earth,
hope and life brought to birth
and affirmed human worth,
for he came to save us
by the truth he gave us.

Sing aloud, loud, loud!

To our Lord praise we sing,
light and life, friend and King,
coming down, love to bring,
pattern for our duty,
showing God in beauty.

Sing aloud, loud, loud!

Percy Dearmer
(1867-1936)
© Oxford University Press

Prayers

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father.

You sent your Son to bring
good news to the poor,
sight to the blind,
freedom to captives
and salvation to your people:
anoint us with your Spirit;
rouse us to work in his name.

Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us out to encounter those in need,
and work with them

Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to tell the world
the good news of your healing love.

Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to comfort
the sick, the lonely, the depressed.

Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to those who mourn,
to bring sympathy and understanding where there is grief.
Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

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

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
as our Saviour has taught us, so we pray:

**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.**

Collect

Almighty Lord and everlasting God,
we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies
in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments;
that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever,
we may be preserved in body and soul;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Hymn – Guide me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lCi6lMoatc>

Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand:
bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore,
feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through:
strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield;
be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side:
songs and praises, songs and praises,
I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee.

William Williams
(1717 - 1791)

Closing Responses

The Lord God almighty is our Father:
he loves us and tenderly cares for us.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour:
he has redeemed us and will defend us to the end

The Lord, the Holy Spirit is among us:
he will lead us in God's holy way.

To God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be praise and glory today and for ever. Amen.

Almighty God,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law:
grant that we may love you with our whole heart
and our neighbours as ourselves;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Blessing

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep our hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.