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**Service**

**by**

**Mrs Fiona Crouch**

Holy, holy, holy is our wonderful God!  
Creator! Saviour! Sustainer!  
Let us worship our God of infinite mystery,  
yet who is closer to us than our own breath.   
**Amen.**

**Prayer**

Wonderful God,   
as we gaze at the miracle of your world,  
intricate and interconnected,  
huge in scope, microscopic in detail,  
we are amazed.  
We wonder that you love each one of us,  
seeing us, knowing us and filling us with the breath of life.   
Each moment of every day you hold us and sustain us.

We worship you, our God  
Help us to worship you as mystery, to hold you close as a friend,  
and with you, to care for the whole of creation.   
**Amen.**

**Hymn StF 9**

Hail! Holy, holy, holy Lord!

whom One in Three we know;

by all thy heavenly host adored,

by all thy Church below.

One undivided Trinity

with triumph we proclaim;

thy universe is full of thee,

and speaks thy glorious name.

Thee, holy Father, we confess,

thee, holy Son, adore,

thee, Spir't of truth and holiness,

we worship evermore.

Three Persons equally divine

we magnify and love;

and both the choirs ere long shall join

to sing thy praise above:

Hail! Holy, holy, holy Lord,

our heavenly song shall be,

supreme, essential One, adored

in co-eternal Three.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

**Prayer**

Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
We praise you for the might and the mystery of your being.  
We praise you for the uniqueness and the unity of your fellowship.  
We praise you for drawing us together and for setting us apart.  
We praise you in song, in silence, in the mundane and in the mystical.  
We praise you.   
Amen.

God of truth, we bring to you our sorrow for our sins.  
For seeking earthly absolutes and not eternal mysteries:  
For rooting ourselves in the finite and not nurturing the infinite within:  
For saying ‘I’ much more than ‘we’ and for damaging relationships:  
Forgive us and strengthen us, we pray.  
**For we are truly sorry.**

Living God, you choose   
to save, not to judge,  
to forgive, not to condemn,  
to turn towards, not away,  
to show us your nature and not to hide.   
You allow us to know you,   
to love you and to serve you –  
and for all these things, and more, we are truly thankful.

Amen.  
**Let us say the prayer Jesus taught us:**

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.

# Isaiah 6:1-8

# Isaiah’s Commission

**6**In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. **2**Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. **3**And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;  
    the whole earth is full of his glory.”

**4**At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

**5**“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”

**6**Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. **7**With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

**8**Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

# John 3:1-17

# Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

**3**Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. **2**He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

**3**Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A1-17&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26124a)]”

**4**“How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

**5**Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. **6**Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A1-17&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26127b)] gives birth to spirit. **7**You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A1-17&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26128c)]must be born again.’ **8**The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A1-17&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26129d)]

**9**“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

**10**“You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? **11**Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. **12**I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? **13**No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A1-17&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26134e)] **14**Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A1-17&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26135f)] **15**that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A1-17&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26136g)]

**16**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. **17**For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

**Thoughts**

Do you ever wonder how things are made? We live in a world where we crave empirical evidence about everything from how a crayon is made to how a bumble bee can fly, we cannot accept that some things can simply be, we need to see evidence and sometimes that involves taking things apart. TV shows try and quench our thirst for knowledge. Snackmaster is one such programme and it challenges chefs to recreate a widely available, iconic snack. The host also visits the factory to find out exactly how it is done. The lengths some of these culinary masters go to in order to try and win is quite extreme, sometimes spending large amounts of their own money to have a piece of equipment made to try and get the perfect texture, appearance and flavour. Some have come close but none seem to have fully mastered the challenge. Sometimes I end up wondering if I was better off not knowing how but simply enjoying the food. Today is Trinity Sunday and this aspect of God is yet another thing that we feel the need to try and understand. Further on in Isaiah (55: 8-9) it is put simply, our thoughts, our ways are not the same as God’s thoughts and ways. We need to accept that God is beyond our understanding.

John presents us with Nicodemus, a pharisee. Pharisees were very strict in their obedience of the law, both written and traditional and were extremely learned men. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, presumably to avoid attracting attention to his seeking out the One who was causing such a stir. As Jesus spoke with him Nicodemus acknowledged that he could not grasp what Jesus meant and then Jesus explained that although it was beyond the understanding of people eternal life was only there for those who believed. Nicodemus clearly did believe for he later assisted Joseph (of Arimathea) in preparing Jesus body for burial. He acknowledged he did not understand but believed anyway.

Paul, in his letter to the church in Philippi (2:6) explained that Christ Jesus ‘did not consider [his] equality with God something to be grasped’, that can be difficult to accept. There is however something we can do, we can ‘grow in the knowledge of God’, we can live our lives pleasing to him and with the aid of the Holy Spirit who will prompt and guide us.

**StF 34**

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,

bow down before him, his glory proclaim;

with gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,

kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name.

Low at his feet lay your burden of carefulness,

high on his heart he will bear it for you,

comfort your sorrows, and answer your prayerfulness,

showing the pathway your feet should pursue.

Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness

of the poor wealth you would count as your own;

truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness,

these are the offerings to bring to his throne.

These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness,

he will accept for the name that is dear;

mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,

trust for our trembling, and hope for our fear.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,

bow down before him, his glory proclaim;

with gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,

kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name.

John Samuel Bewley Monsell (1811-1875)

**Prayers**

God of the Living Word,  
we praise you for the gift of Scripture –  
for the truths it invites us to embrace;  
for the questions that echo our own;  
for the conversations that puzzle and enlighten us;  
for the encounters that inspire and inform us;  
for the certainty, the mystery, the grace.  
We praise you, today and always.   
Amen.

**Bring these and other items laid upon your heart to God. Have a look at the news and bring to the Lord the troubles that others are facing.**

God the Father, ground me in your being as we pray for those who flounder and struggle with the pressures of life. May they see some shape, some purpose to life and find a way to move forward. May their struggles become less tangled, and may they find calm in the chaos of their living…  
God the Son, enfold me in your love as we pray for those who know little or no love, security or peace; for those who live in fear and loneliness; for those who are shrouded in pain and smothered by death; for those without family support and succour, the friendless and the homeless…  
God the Holy Spirit, embolden us to share as we pray for those who have no hope, no dreams, no visions; for those who have no knowledge of you, who have not seen you, nor felt you, nor encountered you; for those without faith and trust, those seemingly lost to themselves and to you…  
God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, these are all your children;  
for them we pray.  
Amen.

Read or sing the words of this next hymn and keep it with you through the coming days.

**StF 648**

God to enfold you,

Christ to uphold you,

Spirit to keep you in heaven's sight;

so may God grace you,

heal and embrace you,

lead you through darkness

into the light.

John L. Bell (b. 1949)

Words and Music: From Love and Anger (c) 1997, WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow G2 3DH Scotland. <www.wgrg.co.uk>

**Blessing**

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, forevermore. Amen.