

Apart but Together Worship **14th June – The Church of God**

Welcome to our service. We will be looking at The Church of God – what is it and what does it mean for me?

Later in the service there will be an opportunity to follow a communion service so if you would like to join in please get some grape juice/blackcurrant and some bread ready now.

As we begin, we recognise that the Bible is central to our faith, and we believe it is God inspired to help us to understand more about God, his character, his love and his plan for us all. We begin our service then with our call to Worship from Psalm 100:

Call to worship:

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

² Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

³ Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;

give thanks to him and praise his name.

⁵ For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Our first Hymn reminds us that we come now, together to Worship God, hear his word and draw near to him

Hymn : Click here for [Speak O Lord](#)

Opening Prayer:

Jesus said, *“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them”* (Matthew 18:20)

**As you promise to be with us Lord Jesus,
We welcome you here today.
Help us Lord to worship you,
To hear your Word,
And to pray in faith,
That we might grow in our love for you and for one another.
Amen.**

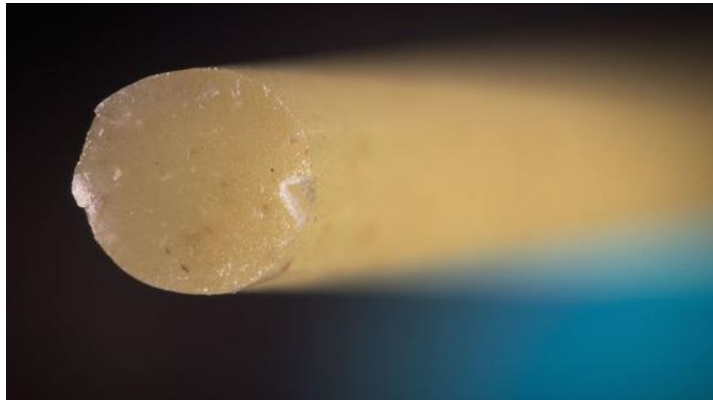
Let us say together the prayer Jesus taught us :

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

What are these?

I am going to show you below some pictures of everyday objects in close up. See if you can guess what they are.

What is this? Any ideas?



It is actually one of the following: a candle stick, a piece of spaghetti, or lip balm. Which of those do you think it is? (Answers at the end of this document)

What is this? Any ideas?



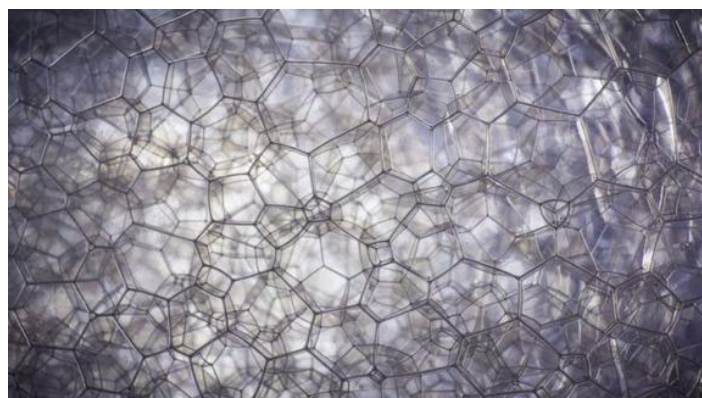
It is actually one of the following: Carpet, a teabag or cotton wool. Which of those do you think it is?

What is this? Any ideas?



It is actually one of the following: An apple stalk or a cigarette end or a twig. Which of those do you think it is?

And finally, what is this? Any ideas?



It is actually one of the following: Bubble wrap, crystal glass or soap foam. Which of those do you think it is?

Sometimes we think we know what something is but we may get it wrong.

Did you get all 4 right?

- If I asked you today the question, "What is the church?" I wonder what you might say.
- We may all think we know what the church is, but we may get it wrong, like we did with some of the pictures we have just looked at.
- Let's hear what the Bible says the church is as we have our first reading from 1 Peter

Bible Reading, 1 Peter 2 vs 4-10

⁴ Come to the Lord, the living stone rejected by people as worthless but chosen by God as valuable. ⁵ Come as living stones, and let yourselves be used in building the spiritual temple, where you will serve as holy priests to offer spiritual and acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.

⁶ For the scripture says,

"I chose a valuable stone,
which I am placing as the cornerstone in Zion;
and whoever believes in him will never be disappointed."

⁷ This stone is of great value for you that believe; but for those who do not believe:

"The stone which the builders rejected as worthless
turned out to be the most important of all."

⁸ And another scripture says,

"This is the stone that will make people stumble,
the rock that will make them fall."

They stumbled because they did not believe in the word; such was God's will for them.

⁹ But you are the chosen race, the King's priests, the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvellous light. ¹⁰ At one time you were not God's people, but now you are his people; at one time you did not know God's mercy, but now you have received his mercy.

HYMN : Click here for [Crown Him with Many Crowns](#)

Building the church:

- Our reading says that our church begins with Jesus, the living stone, the most important stone of all.
- Because we can't see Jesus, although He is alive, here is a picture of a cross which reminds us of Jesus and what He has done for us, as the cross and resurrection are actually the foundation of the church – the Cornerstone.



The reading then says that as people come to Jesus, they too become like living stones that God puts together to build His church.

God calls us all to him, to be part of his family. No matter what our age, background, understanding. No matter what our sex, ethnic group or nationality. All are welcome in God's family and we gather around the cross



Great – we have our church.....a group of people made up of different ages and backgrounds, with different life experiences and gifts, who have all come to Jesus to receive forgiveness of their sins and his gift of life.

So if I asked you to draw a picture of the church now.....I wonder what you would draw.

Would you draw a building like this?



or would you draw a group of people like this?



The church **is the people** of God isn't it.....not the building we meet in?

Now if you are observant, you will notice that there are gaps in our circles of people...

That is because the church is not a closed group of people, like a club, but it is welcoming to all.

So, if the church is the people of God, what is God's purpose for us - His church?

I think there are 3 purposes for the church:

1. To worship God
2. Grow a God like community
3. To share the Good News of Jesus

Purpose 1: To worship God

Look at these pictures – what are the people doing?



They are worshipping God.....

Now we all can worship in different ways, at different times. We may express it differently, depending on what we feel comfortable with. However, even when we are physically apart, like now, we come together in spirit as one in Christ – and we worship together.

1 Peter 2:9 says this: *“But you are the chosen race, the King's priests, the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvellous light.”*

So the 1st purpose of the church is that we WORSHIP GOD....to declare His praises.....to lift up His name.....to focus on God, to listen to God. All of this helps us to build our relationship with him and with one another. We don't have to be in a building to worship – we can do it anywhere, at anytime.

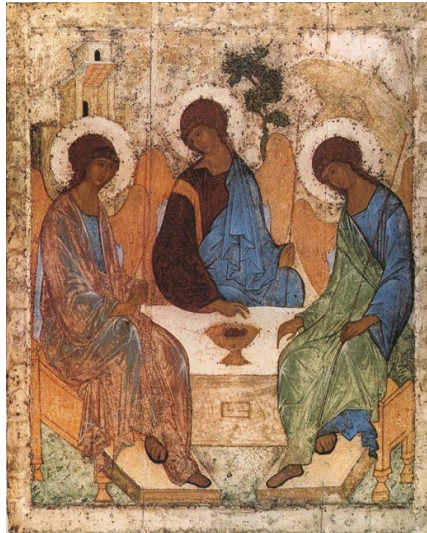
Our worship is **not** just about what we do on a Sunday morning or on a special occasion – it is about how we conduct our lives throughout the week, every day, hour by hour. How do we share the love of God? How do we express our praise and thanks? How do we encourage one another?

Purpose 2: Grow a God like community

The 2nd purpose is to GROW a GOD LIKE COMMUNITY.

What do I mean by that? Well, growing a community on earth that looks rather like the community of God in heaven.

A painter called Rublev tried to show us something about what God is like by painting this iconic picture of the Trinity. (Mark mentioned this painting in his service last week)



- We see God the Father on the left hand side; next to Him is God the Son, and next to Him is God the Holy Spirit.
- This picture helps us to see that God himself, the Holy Trinity, is a community of relationships.
- For example, at Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit was present in the form of the dove, and the Father spoke from heaven. (Matthew 3:16-17) They were in relationship with one another.

So, what sort of relationship do you think exists within the Godhead?

- Well we only have to look at Jesus' life and his relationship with His Father to see that the relationship in the community of the Godhead is one of love, unity, and self-giving.

The church is to be a community on earth that looks rather like the community of God in heaven.

- So it is a community where people love each other, accept one another, serve one another, encourage one another, live in harmony with one another and submit to one another.

Can you imagine how attractive this sort of community is to people outside the church?

- When the church looks like the community of the Holy Trinity, it will bring glory to God and it will grow as people are drawn to it.
- And notice, in Rublev's icon, although the Trinity are in close relationship, there is this space at the front....room for others to join in and be welcome.

Purpose 3: To share the good news of Jesus

- Jesus told his disciples to *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.* (Mark 16:15)

The church's third purpose is to go into the world and **SHARE THE GOOD NEWS** about Jesus with those who haven't heard it yet.

Look at this picture of Deb:



Deb knew some good news that the rest of you didn't know! She knew where to find these biscuits because I had told her where they were hidden.

Now imagine that Deb chose to keep the good news of the biscuits to herself and not share them? That wouldn't be right would it?

The church isn't to be like that.

We have good news to share that is much better than the good news about a tub of biscuits.

We have the good news to share that God loves us and has sent Jesus to die for our sins so that we can become His children, both now and for all eternity.

That news is to be spread to our families, our friends, our neighbours, the people of this town, the nation and all over the world.

To remind us of that, when we are back physically together and we are able, I promise to share these biscuits with you.

So today we have discovered that the church is the people of God with the three purposes:

- WORSHIPPING GOD
- GROWING A GOD-LIKE COMMUNITY
- SHARING THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS

What does this mean for us?

I believe there are two main things it means for us

1. Individually – are we part of the church? By that I don't mean are we a member of the church, or are we attending regularly? God invites us, through his son the Lord Jesus Christ, to be part of his family. He invites us into a personal relationship with him, now and forever. Have you accepted his call to you? Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal saviour for forgiveness of your sins? Now is the time to accept that call.
2. As a church – we have had a period of time where we have not been able to meet together physically in our building. Yet, the church continues through His people. Through our acts of love, of care, of sharing and giving. Through sharing the gospel, reading and praying. We build the church individually by our acts but gloriously together in Christ.

May God bless his Church here in Hornsea, and the wider community. May we be a church that fulfils the purposes of God.

We now prepare to share together, as God's church, Holy communion. We prepare by listening to this hymn by Stuart Townend which helps to bring us together round his table.

Communion Hymn: Click here for [Behold the Lamb](#)

Communion

As it is the second Sunday of the month, we share together in the sacrament of Communion. You can watch this by clicking the link below. If you want to take part, please make sure you have your bread and grape juice/blackcurrant ready.

Click here for [COMMUNION](#)

Prayer

Dear Lord God,

Whilst we are separated physically, we praise you that we are one in Christ.

Thank you for the power of communion to remind us of your love and sacrifice of your son and his victory over death.

Thank you for your church and for the love, companionship and community we share together, with each other, and with you

Help us to fulfil your purpose as your church, for your glory.

Draw near to us all now, In Jesus name, Amen.

Intercessory Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father

We pray now for your church, here in Hornsea and across the world. Help us to be a church that WORSHIPS GOD....to declare your praise.....to lift up the name of Jesus.....to focus on you Lord God, and to listen to what you have to say.

Help us to worship not just on a Sunday, or in a church building, but enable us to worship in all that we do, in every aspect of our lives, for your glory.

Heavenly Father

We, your church, seek to be a community of people loving each other, accepting one another, serving one another, and encouraging one another. Help us to live in harmony with one another and submit to one another.

Help us to be the church that looks like the community of the Holy Trinity, as it will bring glory to God and it will grow as people are drawn to it.

Thank you for your church, and that we can share together, fellowship together, worship together and pray together. We pause now, to bring before you those in our congregation or in our hearts – asking for your grace, love and comfort in each situation.

And finally, Lord God, help us to be a church eager to share the Good news of Jesus. We have the good news to share you love us and sent Jesus to die for our sins so that we can become your children, both now and for all eternity.

Help us to be bold, confident and joyful as with that news as we spread it to our families, our friends, our neighbours, the people of this town, the nation and all over the world.

Lord God, we do this not for ourselves, but for you and for your glory

In Jesus name, Amen

As we close, we have been reminded that Jesus was the greatest gift we could ever receive, not because we deserve it but because of the grace and love of God. His death and resurrection that we have remembered brings us into the family of God. How thankful we can be. How amazing that as the church of God, we should share and encourage others in knowing him too. We sing now the hymn Amazing Grace – this version was produced by Matt Redman and friends for a Church of England campaign called Thy Kingdom Come

Closing Hymn: Click here for [Amazing Grace](#)

Blessing

We have gathered here today, Lord God as your people to offer you our sacrifice of prayer and worship.

We have fed on your Word, been refreshed through your living water, and felt the encircling of your Spirit around our church and around our individual lives.

May we continue to know your presence and power in all our activities, meetings and conversations, as we seek to worship you, grow a God like community and share the good news of Jesus.

For your praise and glory

Now and evermore, Amen

Close up pictures were :

1. A piece of spaghetti
2. Apple stalk
3. Teabag
4. Soap Foam