

## Worship at Home

### The Second Sunday After Trinity

*Preparation*

O Lord, open our lips

**All** and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

- 1 Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord: ♦  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 2 Bless the Lord you heavens: ♦  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 3 Bless the Lord you angels of the Lord: ♦  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 4 Bless the Lord all people on earth: ♦  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 5 O people of God bless the Lord: ♦  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 6 Bless the Lord you priests of the Lord: ♦  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 7 Bless the Lord you servants of the Lord: ♦  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 8 Bless the Lord all you of upright spirit: ♦  
bless the Lord you that are holy and humble in heart.

*The Song of the Three 35-37, 60-65*

**All** Bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: ♦  
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

*This opening prayer may be said*

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;  
let us pray with one heart and mind.

*Silence is kept.*

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,  
so may the light of your presence, O God,  
set our hearts on fire with love for you;  
now and for ever.

**All Amen.**

*The Word of God*

### **Psalm 86: Supplication for Help against Enemies**

<sup>1</sup> Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me,  
for I am poor and needy.  
<sup>2</sup> Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you;  
save your servant who trusts in you.  
You are my God; <sup>3</sup> be gracious to me, O Lord,  
for to you do I cry all day long.  
<sup>4</sup> Gladden the soul of your servant,  
for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.  
<sup>5</sup> For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,  
abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.  
<sup>6</sup> Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;  
listen to my cry of supplication.  
<sup>7</sup> In the day of my trouble I call on you,  
for you will answer me.  
<sup>16</sup> Turn to me and be gracious to me;  
give your strength to your servant;  
save the child of your serving girl.  
<sup>17</sup> Show me a sign of your favor,  
so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame,  
because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

**All Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

### **Bible Reading : Romans 6 verses 1-11**

**6** What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup>By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been

buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup>For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup>We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup>For whoever has died is freed from sin. <sup>8</sup>But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup>We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup>The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. <sup>11</sup>So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

### **Canticle**

**Splendour and majesty are yours, O God;  
you are exalted as head over all.**

- 1 Blessed are you, God of Israel, for ever and ever, ♦  
for yours is the greatness, the power,  
the glory, the splendour and the majesty.
- 2 Everything in heaven and on earth is yours; ♦  
yours is the kingdom, O Lord,  
and you are exalted as head over all.
- 3 Riches and honour come from you ♦  
and you rule over all.
- 4 In your hand are power and might; ♦  
yours it is to give power and strength to all.
- 5 And now we give you thanks, our God, ♦  
and praise your glorious name.
- 6 For all things come from you, ♦  
and of your own have we given you.

*1 Chronicles 29.10b-13,14b*

**All Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**Splendour and majesty are yours, O God;  
you are exalted as head over all.**

**Matthew 10 verses 24-39**

<sup>24</sup> “A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; <sup>25</sup> it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

<sup>26</sup> “So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. <sup>27</sup> What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. <sup>28</sup> Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.<sup>[e]</sup> <sup>29</sup> Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. <sup>30</sup> And even the hairs of your head are all counted. <sup>31</sup> So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

<sup>32</sup> “Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; <sup>33</sup> but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

<sup>34</sup> “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

<sup>35</sup> For I have come to set a man against his father,  
and a daughter against her mother,  
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

<sup>36</sup> and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.

<sup>37</sup> Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; <sup>38</sup> and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup> Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

**Sermon**

*‘Somewhere, like a fresh spring bubbling from the ground that metamorphoses first into a trickling stream and then into a full-flooding river, the rumour started. Why and how it started was a mystery. Who started it was equally mysterious. For without a shadow of a doubt, someone did. A word. Just one word. That was all that was needed in such febrile times. Egged on by incessant newspaper reports about spies, and admonitions that preyed on everyone’s sense of patriotism that they should report likely suspects to the police.’*

These opening words from the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of the novel, ‘Rumour’ by Angela Lawrence, reveal the risk and damage that idle gossip and hearsay can cause. The story is not set in

some fictional far off land, but right here among us in the Village of Wangford cum Henham at the start of the First World War.

William Smith, the Headteacher of Henham and Wangford School was a greatly respected individual. He was originally from Devon, but having left the county 30 years before he neither had a Devonshire accent or had acquired a Suffolk one in exchange. He also had a swarthy complexion, unlike Suffolk folk. William and his wife Alma had taught generations of poor children in the village and beyond. They were known for their care of the children and the discipline that they imparted to each one of them. The focus on physical fitness and well being was way beyond its time and William diverted part of the River Wang to create a natural swimming pool where generations of children learnt to swim. William was on the Parish Council, and was a lead figure in the Bowls and Athletics Club. They were both Sunday School teachers at the Church. They were greatly admired by the village and also The Third Earl of Stradbroke, and his wife Countess Helena.

On June 28 1914 an assassin's bullet killed the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne Archduke Ferdinand, and his wife whilst they were on a visit to Sarajevo.....

The day after, William Smith received a postcard from German friends who had looked after his son, Alex, when he fell ill whilst he was studying to become a languages teacher in Germany. Alma shared the contents of the postcard with her students and put it on display in her classroom. They even did a piece of classwork based on the different landscape depicted, compared to Suffolk. A few days later Britain declared war on Germany on August 4<sup>th</sup> 1914.

After some terrible losses of Allied shipping in the North Sea by German Submarines there was a view, whipped up by the Chief of Police and the local newspapers that spies must be present in this coastal area and be supplying information to the Germans.

People were encouraged to inform the police of anyone they suspected of being a German spy. No-one knows how the rumour started but due to the palour of his skin, his association with a German family, his lack of a Suffolk accent, and the questions he raised publically about Britain's lack of preparedness for war someone notified the police that William was a spy. Instead of disregarding this information or investigating it thoroughly the Chief Constable of Police, Jasper Mayne issued an order demanding that William and Alma left the County and their livelihood within a few days. William went to meet with the Chief Constable to defend his honour and reputation where he was accused of being German himself, that his son was serving in the German army and that he was a spy. Jasper Mayne also produced the postcard that somehow he had acquired as a key piece of evidence of William's treachery.

When William provided evidence to the contrary, as well as support from the Stradbrokes, all that happened was that William was told that his expulsion was deferred. Broken by these accusations and rumours William tragically took his own life on November 4 1914 and shortly after in the following January his wife Alma also took her own life. Both were laid to rest in Wangford Churchyard. The tragedy of these events is shocking in the extreme and the subsequent inquests exonerated both William and Alma, though the Chief Constable never admitted to the Coroner that a mistake had been made.

Today's readings fit well with the tragic story I have just retold.

In today's Gospel, Jesus prepares his twelve closest followers for their first mission apart from him. They are to demonstrate what God's Kingdom looks like, interrupting life-as-they-knew-it with new possibilities for healing, wholeness, truth-telling, and repaired relationships. It is a small miracle that Jesus trusts them with such spiritual authority so early in their understanding of who he really is. This miracle of Jesus' confidence in his twelve stumbling disciples offers us hope.

We, too, struggle to comprehend Jesus' power and "keep the faith," yet we are sent out anyway, in spite of ourselves, to proclaim the Good News amid daily life.

In the face of resistance they will face, Jesus reminds the disciples that theirs and our Heavenly Father is both incredibly powerful –pronouncing judgements that yield life or death – and incredibly tender – noticing every sparrow that falls and counting every hair on our heads. By remembering the character and faithfulness of God, the disciples have what they need in order to endure beyond their fear of rejection and violence. If God himself shows such compassion to us, that even the hairs on our head are counted, should we not also tread lightly on others, as essentially we are all as vulnerable as William Smith to rumour and false accusation.

It took years of hanging out with Jesus, eating with him, watching him heal others, speaking truth to power, listening to his teachings, and overhearing his prayers for them to become the kind of men – and women,– who were willing to lose their lives as martyrs, testifying to God's shalom, God's peace, in a world still enraptured by powers and principalities. It is important to remember that Christian identity and character formation are lifelong processes.

And it should have been this capacity that would have stopped the person spreading the rumour about William Smith, or the person who took the postcard and handed it over to the police.

In Paul's letter to the Christian Community in Rome, he asks them a question. Should we continue to sin so that God's underserved favour or forgiveness may be more bountiful? Paul's answer is 'Absolutely NOT'.

He reminds us that through Christ's death, we should be dead to sin and live in the new light that the risen Christ has given us. We must neither be enslaved to sin, whether personal or collective.

This is a powerful message for us, trying step by step to live the Christian life. We will fail and fall back to ways that hurt and diminish others, (just look at the history of the Christian church for evidence of that) but we need to constantly scrutinise our behaviour so that it is fit as a disciple of Christ.

We have a choice for our old self to dominate or for us to take on the new life Christ brings and learn to become agents of mercy and kindness to others and especially in relation to the true story I have retold in part today, to never spread rumour and gossip that can lead only to despair and ruin for others.

It was Madeleine L'Engle, the American Christian writer who said,  
*'We do not draw people to Christ by loudly discrediting what they believe, by telling them how wrong they are and how right we are, but by showing them alight that is so lovely that they want with all their hearts to know the source of it'.*

Amen

Reverend Alan Perry

*A time of silence.*

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.

**All And Christ shall give you light.**

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.

**All Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.**

Set your minds on things that are above,

not on things that are on the earth.

**All And Christ shall give you light.**

When Christ our life appears

you will appear with him in glory.

**All Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,  
and Christ shall give you light.**

*from Colossians 3*

### **Gospel Canticle**

**You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour,  
born of the house of your servant David.**

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, ♦  
who has come to his people and set them free. ♦
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, ♦  
born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old ♦  
to save us from our enemies,  
from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors, ♦  
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: ♦  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear, ♦  
holy and righteous in his sight  
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, ♦  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation ♦  
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
- 9 In the tender compassion of our God ♦  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, ♦  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

*Luke 1.68–79*

**All Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now**



and shall be for ever. Amen.

**All**

You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour,  
born of the house of your servant David.

*Prayers*

That this day may be holy, good and joyful:

**All we pray to you, O Lord.**

That we may offer to you our worship and our work:

**All we pray to you, O Lord.**

That we may strive for the well-being of all creation:

**All we pray to you, O Lord.**

That in the pleasures and pains of life,  
we may know the love of Christ and be thankful:

**All we pray to you, O Lord.**

That we may be bound together by your Holy Spirit,  
in communion with [N and with] all your saints,  
entrusting one another and all our life to Christ:

**All we pray to you, O Lord.**

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,  
to the mercy and protection of God.

*Silence may be kept.*

*The Collect of the day*

Lord, you have taught us  
that all our doings without love are nothing worth:  
send your Holy Spirit  
and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,  
the true bond of peace and of all virtues,  
without which whoever lives is counted dead before you.  
Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**All Amen.**

*The Lord's Prayer is said*

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has 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.**

*The Conclusion*

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,  
and keep us in eternal life.

**All Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

**All Thanks be to God.**

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