

United Parish@Home

Sunday Services



August 2026

**The United Parish of Chinnor, Sydenham,
Aston Rowant and Crowell**

The ministry team offer you these services, particularly if you find you are unable to attend church.

Our prayer is that these services will help you still feel connected to, and loved by, your church family.

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Sunday August 2nd 2026
9th Sunday of Trinity

Opening Prayer

Lord, I offer you this new day in which your heart and mine can share in all that happens. I offer you all my hopes for this day as I worship you in this At Home service. Speak to my heart in its strength and weakness, and, in the day that lies ahead, help me to build your kingdom of love and justice in all I do.

Collect for the 9th Sunday after Trinity

Grant to us, Lord, we beseech you, the spirit to think and do always such things as are right; that we, who cannot do anything that is good without you, may be enabled to live according to your will; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Psalms 17 vs 1-7 A Prayer for Protection against Oppressors

Hear me, LORD, my plea is just; listen to my cry. Hear my prayer it does not rise from deceitful lips. ² Let my vindication come from you; may your eyes see what is right. ³ Though you probe my heart, though you examine me at night and test me, you will find that I have planned no evil; my mouth has not transgressed. ⁴ Though people tried to bribe me, I have kept myself from the ways of the violent through what your lips have commanded. ⁵ My steps have held to your paths; my feet have not stumbled. ⁶ I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer. ⁷ Show me the wonders of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes.

Reading Matthew 14 vs 13-21 Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

¹³ Jesus withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." ¹⁶ Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

¹⁷ “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

¹⁸ “Bring them here to me,” he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Reflection *(by Brian)*

Our gospel for today is Matthew 14 vs 13-21. It recounts the miracle where Jesus feeds over five thousand people with five loaves and two fish, demonstrating compassion, divine provision, and the abundance of God’s blessings.

For many of us, even though we have heard the familiar story many times, there is still a certain ‘WOW’ moment that says “This is some Jesus who can feed so many with so little, who can make the impossible happen”.

Of significance is that this is one of the few instances where a miracle is recorded in all four gospels, which suggests that it held great importance for the early church. So what importance can it have for us, today? It’s a striking reminder that we, like the disciples, are prone to be far too earth-bound in our thoughts and expectations of what Jesus can do. For with God, all things are possible, and nothing is impossible. God in Christ is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think.

We may well be incapable of understanding fully the circumstances under which God may choose to grant, or with-hold, a miracle, but we need never doubt that God can do it.

I still remember the time I first read this passage years ago as a young Christian. It was definitely a wow moment for me. If God can do this then He can do anything, even for me and through me, nothing is out of bounds. So, here I am, years later writing this talk and it takes me back to my first ‘WOW’ moment. It has bought me up with a shock, since I realise that in the meantime, I, like the disciples, have become far too earth-bound in my thoughts and expectations of what Jesus can do. Thus, I need to be recalibrated and hence, preparing this At-Home service has been a nice and a timely reminder of what God can do for all of us.

Personal prayer

Pray for what is on your mind at the moment and for where you want the fruit of the spirit to flow. Why not pray:

- that in all I/we do both individually and corporately, we may not be earth-bound, but open to what God can do.
- for Church leaders, elders, pastors, councils and congregations who seek to minister in the multitude of churches, chapels and fellowships across the world. Especially pray for our United Parish and for Jacky, our Rector, the ministry team and the PCC.
- for your family and friends, your street, for neighbours, for local, national and international leaders and governments.
- for shopkeepers, carers and wardens; for hospitals, doctors and nurses and others in the front line, the NHS.
- for what you have seen on the news lately; the trouble spots of the world and those places and peoples in need.
- for peace and justice to reign in those parts of the world where evil exists in terms of war, oppression and hate.
- for those you know who would love you to pray for them at this time, for the lonely, the ill, the stressed, the bereaved.
- finally, pray for yourself and your situation.

Why not close your prayers by saying the Lord's prayer.

Hymn Sing or say the hymn

1. Beyond Bethsaida's borders, the weary Saviour went to rest, with his disciples, before the day was spent. But eager people hastened, the Son of Man to seek; The poor and heavy-laden desired to hear him speak.
2. With patient love He taught them, till shadows fell apace, and all the people hungered in that far desert place. His heart with pity melted; "How many loaves have ye?" He said to the disciples and bade them go and see.
3. A little lad among them, His loaves and fishes spared. But Jesus blessed and broke them, and all the bounty shared. With only this provision, which Jesus gave away, they fed the hungry thousands, beside the lake that day.

4. So bring your gifts to Jesus, however poor and small; come, hasten now to bring them, don't shy to bring them all. 'Tis not the gifts we offer that help the world today, but Jesus' blessing on them, that sends them on their way.

Closing Prayer & Blessing

Ever-Present God, help me maintain a constant awareness of Your presence and companionship in my daily life so that I am not earth-bound but heavenly minded. May I recognise your guiding hand and feel your comforting presence in moments of joy and challenge. Let the awareness of Your nearness be a source of comfort, strength, and peace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Grace

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

Sunday 9th August 2026

Trinity 10

The Greeting

God in Christ has revealed his glory.

Come let us worship.

From the rising of the sun to its setting
the Lord's name is greatly to be praised.

Give him praise, you servants of the Lord.

O praise the name of the Lord!

Collect

Lord of heaven and earth,
as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer,
give us patience and courage never to lose hope,
but always to bring our prayers before you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

A Psalm set for this Sunday Psalm 86 vs 1-10

- 1 Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and in misery.
- 2 Preserve my soul, for I am faithful; save your servant, for I put my trust in you.
- 3 Be merciful to me, O Lord, for you are my God; I call upon you all the day long.
- 4 Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
- 5 For you, Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.
- 6 Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer and listen to the voice of my supplication.
- 7 In the day of my distress I will call upon you, for you will answer me.
- 8 Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord, nor any works like yours.
- 9 All nations you have made shall come and worship you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name.
- 10 For you are great and do wonderful things; you alone are God.

**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.**

Confession

Lord our God, in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us; deliver us from judgement; bind up our wounds and revive us; in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Absolution

May the God of love bring *us* back to himself, forgive *us our* sins,
and assure *us* of his eternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gospel Reading Matthew 14.22-33. Jesus Walks on the Water

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'

28 Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' ²⁹He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection (By Tony)

I wonder if you have ever felt like the disciples in the boat in our gospel reading, battered by life, far from people or places where you would feel more comfortable and at ease. Then when you think it couldn't get any worse something happens that initially makes it all seem even worse.

What would you do in such a situation? In our psalm today the writer tells us v1 *'I am poor and in misery'* They then go on, not wallowing in this, but asking God to incline his ear to their condition and answer them. In addressing God they remind themselves that God is v5. *'good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love'*. They clearly believe God will hear them and answer them, because *'You are great and do wonderful things'*.

Back in the boat, when the disciples see Jesus, Matthew tells us they were terrified, but once Jesus spoke: *'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'* all becomes calm for a moment. So much so Peter decides to test whether or not these are words from a ghost or the Teacher, their Master, Jesus.

All goes well to begin with as Peter climbs out of the boat, but then the wind picks up again and instead of keeping his eyes on Jesus, Peter feeling the wind on his face looks to the increasingly battering waves and begins to sink. In this moment of crisis Peter cries out *"Lord, save me!"*

'Immediately' Jesus responds – what must Peter have felt and known in that moment when Jesus' hand reached out and caught him? *'You of little faith, why did you doubt?'* That loving rebuke, something of a hallmark of Peter's overall relationship with Jesus.

As we face this day we hold our own battering's before God, or if all seems well, the battering's others are facing. We pray: *'Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me,'* trusting in God: *'For you are great and do wonderful things; you alone are God.'* If need be we cry out: *'Lord, save me!'*

And then we come alongside the disciples on Lake Galilee and join with them:
³³*And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'*

Intercessions

God our Father, we, like the disciples, often feel tossed upon the storm in these strange and uncertain times. Guide us through the towering waves: give us the strength to endure the tempest: and give us the trust to come to you across the turbulent waters, knowing that you will grasp our hands and still the storm.

*Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer***

As we see on the television and read the reports of continuing war and armed conflicts across the world, we pray for those suffering from the consequences and for those having to watch their loved ones suffer.

Bless and prosper the work of peacemakers, and those who volunteer through a variety of charities to bring relief to those affected by war, but also affected by disease, hunger and natural disasters.

*Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer***

In this holiday month, we pray for all who are travelling: all who are seeking rest. Keep them safe and restore them in body and spirit. Be with all young people awaiting exam results: may they know that whatever their achievements, you know and love them through and through. Be with all teachers already preparing for the new school term: give them vision to organise their schools in ways that ensure children feel safe and valued.

*Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer***

We pray for your Church throughout the world, and in this United Parish. Wherever we gather in your name, may you know our needs, grant our requests, and fill us with your love.

*Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer***

We pray for your human family throughout the world: in countries both rich and poor, in places of violence and natural disaster, and large communities or small.

Bless our own community, and our families, friends and neighbours, both near and far. Give comfort to those in need of any kind, especially those known to us whom we name before you in the silence of our hearts

*Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer***

In a moment of silence, offer to God any other needs on your heart.

Merciful Father,

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

Lord's Prayer

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.**

Hymn

1 Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
when the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

Refrain:

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.*

2 It is safely moored; 'twill the storm withstand,
for 'tis well-secured by the Savior's hand.
Though the tempest rage and the wild winds blow,
not an angry wave shall our boat o'erflow.

[Refrain]

3 When our eyes behold through the gath'ring night
the city of gold, our harbour bright,
we shall anchor fast by the heav'nly shore,
with the storms all past forevermore.

[Refrain]

Closing Prayer and Blessing

PRAYER: FAITH (ST BENEDICT)

Gracious and Holy Father, give us the wisdom to discover You, the intelligence to understand You, the diligence to seek after You, the patience to wait for You, eyes to behold You, a heart to meditate upon You, and a life to proclaim You, through the power of the Spirit of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us always. **Amen.**

Sunday 16th August
11th Sunday of Trinity

Opening prayer

Loving Lord, we come to you today with open hands and hearts, minds and ears, to receive all you have for us. We come in love, we come just as we are, we come in anticipation. Meet with us we pray. Amen

Psalm 133 (*The joy of harmonious relationships*)

How good and pleasant it is
when brothers live together in unity
it is like the precious oil poured on the head,
running down on Aaron's beard,
running down on the beard,
down upon the collar of hid robes.
It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.
For there the Lord bestows his blessing,
Even life for evermore.

Prayer of confession

Father God, we have not loved you with our whole heart, we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We are truly sorry and humbly repent for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ. Have mercy on us; that we might delight in your will and walk your ways to the glory of your name. Amen

Collect The 11th Sunday of Trinity

O God you declare your almighty power
most chiefly in showing mercy and pity:
mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace,
that we, running the way of your commandments,
may receive your gracious promises,
and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen

Bible Reading Matthew 15 vs 21-28

Leaving that place Jesus withdrew to the region of tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from the vicinity came to him crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession.” Jesus did not answer a word. So, his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.” He answered, “I was sent only the lost sheep of Israel.” The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said. He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs,” “Yes, Lord,” she said, “But even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Then Jesus answered, “woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed that very hour.

Reflection (by Margaret)

The story of the Canaanite woman’s encounter with Jesus is not comfortable for us to read, and equally not easy to understand. It is difficult to comprehend, Jesus rejecting this distressed woman, as this was not his character. It is unlike him to reject someone and especially in front of others.

So, looking back at the beginning of Chapter 15 we may gather more understanding as to what lead up to Jesus’ response.

Matthew tells us that the Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem to question Jesus. We can be assured that they didn’t come to gain understanding and deepen their faith.

Rather it was to discredit and condemn him. They ask why Jesus’ disciples don’t follow the traditional Jewish rituals of hand washing.

Jesus did not answer their question. Instead, he launched into a ferocious attack on the way they themselves use tradition to undermine the spirit of God’s law.

He called them hypocrites- for being people who gave the appearance of worshipping and honouring God, but really were more concerned about themselves, regardless of their actions harming others in the process. They accuse Jesus of breaking tradition, but Jesus insists that he is calling people to live according to God's laws, not human distortions of it.

Jesus leaves that place and before long he is approached by a Canaanite woman, who is considered to be unclean. She acknowledges Jesus' Jewish identity by calling him the 'Son of David' but also asks him to heal her distressed daughter. Strangely, Jesus says nothing at first, perhaps waiting to see how the disciples will respond. Have they begun to understand that his compassion is limitless?

We learn that they still have more to learn because they suggested that she should be sent away.

Yet by contrast the woman does understand the true extent of Jesus' ministry- she presses her case even when Jesus initially feigns indifference.

Her faith not only satisfies Jesus, but it impresses him! Her daughter is instantly healed.

The whole Chapter presents us with challenges about how we live out our faith in our homes, congregations, communities and places of work.

We're powerfully reminded that we can say and do all the right things but it's what is in our heart that matters and what is going on in our hearts will always somehow be shown in our own lives and relationships.

We're reminded that God looks to the very core of our being but does so with love and compassion, always wanting to forgive and heal so that we can live lives free from guilt and able to love others as we have been loved.

Finally, we are reminded that we too, are called to love beyond all boundaries, ignoring social niceties and prejudices because no one is ever outside the reach of God's love- which is for all people everywhere and always. Amen

Prayer

God of purity, cleanse our thoughts of all that would affect the way in which we treat others. Forgive us when we fail to think and act in the way that does not reflect our faith in you.

With heart and mind and voice let us always sing your praises.

God of compassion, your Son was touched by the persistence of the Canaanite woman. Challenge our boundaries that can so often restrict the charity and concern that we show to others.

God of healing, at your word the girl was released from her distress. Announce your freedom to all weighed down with sickness and infirmity, especially those known personally to ourselves at this time. Lord, have mercy on all in distress.

God of hope, you bring life to all who call upon your name. May all who have died be drawn into your eternal kingdom, and those who mourn know of your love through the comfort that they receive.

Restore the fortunes of all your people, O Lord. Amen

A time for personal prayer

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 today 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

Hymn

The kingdom of God is justice and joy
for Jesus restores what sin would destroy;
God's power and glory in Jesus we know,
and here and hereafter the kingdom shall grow.

The kingdom of God is mercy and grace,
the captives are freed, the sinners find place,
the outcast are welcomed God's banquet to share,
and hope is awakened in place of despair.

The kingdom of God is challenge and choice,
believe the good news, repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners brought Christ to the cross,
our crisis of judgement for gain or for loss.

God's kingdom is come, the gift and the goal,
In Jesus begun, in heaven made whole;
the heirs of the kingdom shall answer his call,
and all things cry 'Glory!' to God all in all.

Final Prayer and Blessing

O God, open your arms wide to all of us. Help us to trust that you really do love us, warts and all. Nothing we can do can stop you loving us. If like the Canaanite woman, we dare to believe, may your healing love flow through us to the hurt that we struggle with from time to time, so we may hear singing in heaven.

Amen

Rejoicing that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are with us wherever we are.

Amen

Sunday 23rd August
12th Sunday after Trinity

“He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, visible and invisible ----- He is before all things, and in him all things hold together -----For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. (Colossians 1v15-20)

A Call to worship

Psalm 95 v 6-7

“O come, let us kneel and fall down,
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker!
For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.”

Come, let us stand before God who empowers us to challenge injustice.
Come let us choose to worship,
choose to seek his wisdom, justice and strength.
Come, let us be empowered by his presence and inspired by his love.

The Gospel Reading – St. Matthew 16 v 13 - 20

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

And they said,” Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets “. He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God “. And Jesus answered him.

“Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”
Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone he was the Messiah.

A Reflection – (by Joan)

Henri Nouwen suggests that “the word became flesh “so that we are confronted by what can be seen, heard and touched. Jesus becomes, the way of life. We have all probably played the popular children’s game “Guess who?” In today’s reading the disciples are challenged to work out Jesus’ identity. His birth and death were the same, yet different from ours. He was born a baby and grew up to feel hunger, tiredness, happiness, sadness, heat, cold and pain, as we do. He slept, walked, ate, drank, laughed, and cried like us. He was tempted to do wrong just as we are, though he never gave in to it. He cured diseases, made dead people live, changed the weather, forgave sins, destroyed evil power and came back from the dead. He came to show us what God is like. He enabled man and God to be together again by dying for us. We believe God is able and ready to forgive anyone who wants to be forgiven. Jesus said “I am the way, the truth and the life “. He promises us His Spirit who will live in us and keep us in touch with God, enabling us to do what God wants. He asks us the same question. “Who do you say that I am?”

Take time to pray

Lord God, we come before you just as we are -
some of us broken,
some, tired and weary
others energised and full of joy.
Receive us as we are,
strengthen and inspire us to become all you want us to be.

You in each of us, your touch display:
sometimes known, sometimes hidden
you have met us on our way.
Though we may have failed or faltered
doubted love, resisted grace,
yet, persistent, you walked with us
as we travelled to this place,

God, whose love pervades each moment
meet us in this present hour
as we open thought and action
to your life's transforming power.
Startle, challenge and confront us,
touch our hearts and free our hands,
so that we may see and serve you,
yield to all your love demands. Amen.

In your mind, lift to God news you have read, people you have met this week.

A Hymn to sing or say as a prayer.

Jesus, stand among us
in thy risen power;
let this time of worship
be a hallowed hour.

Breathe the Holy Spirit
into every heart;
bid the fears and sorrows
from each soul depart.

Thus with quickened footsteps
we'll pursue our way,
watching for the dawning
of eternal day.

A Blessing

The blessing of God our Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you all now
and always. Amen

Morning Prayer @home service
Sunday 30th August 2026
Trinity 13

Opening Prayer

May Christ, the true, the only light, banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

Blessed are you, creator of all,
to you be praise and glory for ever.
As your dawn renews the face of the earth,
bringing light and life to all creation,
may we rejoice in this day you have made;
as we wake refreshed from the depths of sleep,
open our eyes to behold your presence
and strengthen our hands to do your will,
that the world may rejoice and give you praise.
Blessed be God for ever.

O Lord, open our lips: And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Silent prayer/reflection on the coming day.

Early in the morning my prayer comes before you: Lord, have mercy.
You speak in my heart and say 'Seek my face'; your face, Lord, will I seek:
Christ, have mercy.
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer:
Lord, have mercy.

THE PSALM for the Day,

Psalm 105 vs 1-6

O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.

² Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wonderful works.

³ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Seek the Lord and his strength;
seek his presence continually.

⁵ Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles, and the judgements he has uttered,

⁶ O offspring of his servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

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.

A READING FROM THE GOSPELS Matthew 16 vs 21-28

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.' ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

²⁷ 'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸ Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'

REFLECTION *(by Jacky)*

The Gospel reading begins with Jesus speaking about his coming suffering and death. And Peter immediately reacts in a very human way and voices his objection "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you."

Peter's words come from love. He cannot bear the thought of losing his friend, his teacher, the one in whom he has placed all his hope. There is nothing false or hypocritical about his reaction. It is sincere, compassionate and very relatable.

Yet Jesus' response is startling and appears shockingly harsh "Get behind me, Satan... you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

However what we are really hearing is Jesus realigning Peter's very human reaction with God's divine will.

Jesus isn't rejecting Peter's love. He is realigning it with God's purposes. Even genuine love can lose its way when it is guided only by our own instincts rather than by God's wisdom.

The other reading set for today is Romans 12: 9 -21 and here the apostle Paul, offers a picture of what mature Christian love looks like. "Let love be genuine." Genuine love is not simply warm feelings or good intentions. It hates what is evil. It clings to what is good. It blesses those who persecute. It refuses revenge. It overcomes evil with good.

In other words, love is not merely an emotion or a fuzzy warm feeling. It is a way of seeing the world through God's eyes.

We often assume that if something feels loving, it must be right. But the Gospel invites us to ask a deeper question: Is my love being shaped by a discerning search for God's will and purpose? And this is what Peter got wrong and caused Jesus to rebuke him. Peter's reaction was a loving one but it was not guided by discernment.

Sometimes the greatest obstacle to God's work isn't hatred; it's well-meaning love that cannot imagine God working through suffering.

How often do we want to rescue those we love from every disappointment, every failure or every painful experience? Love naturally wants to protect. Yet there are moments when growth, healing and transformation can only come by walking through difficulty rather than avoiding it.

A powerful example of this is when, as parents, we let our children take a small tumble; sort out an argument themselves; go through the experience (and consequences) of forgetting their homework. As parents we could remove all these discomforts, but would our children really become the people they are called to be?

Love without discernment can become controlling. We may begin to impose our own will, believing that we know what is best.

A love that acts with discernment isn't cold. or indifferent. It is love that has been shaped by prayer, humility and trust. It is the kind of love that truly wants the very best for another. Its love that asks not "What do I want?" but, what is the best for this person in the purposes of God.

Love indeed often begins as affection and attachment. Think of the romantic love displayed on a wedding day. It is joyful, exciting and full of hope. But over the years that love is tested, deepened and purified.

It becomes the quieter, stronger love of a long marriage. Both matter. But it is the second that has learned to love with discernment as well as affection.

In the uncomfortable exchange between Peter and Jesus, we see two very different visions of love.

Peter's love wants to protect Jesus from suffering. Jesus' love is willing to embrace suffering because he has discerned that through his death and resurrection God will bring healing, forgiveness and new life to the world.

Paul tells us that transformation begins with the renewing of our minds, so that we may discern God's will. Perhaps that is the invitation for us today. Not to love less, but to love more deeply. Not to abandon our compassion, but to allow it to be shaped by God's wisdom. Not simply to protect what we treasure, but to become people whose love participates in God's transforming work in the world.

THE BENEDICTUS

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

AN AFFIRMATION OF THE FAITH

I believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist.
I believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature, died for us and rose again.

I believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world.
This is the faith of the Church. This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYERS *may be offered for the day and its tasks, for the world and its needs
and for the Church and its life or this short litany may be used:*

Be exalted, Lord, above the heavens: **may your glory cover the earth.**
Renew your Church in holiness: **and give your people the blessing of peace.**
Keep our nation under your care: **and guide us in justice and truth.**
Let your way be known on earth: **your saving power among all nations.**
Do not let the needy, O God, be forgotten: **nor the hope of the poor be taken
away.**
Lord, hear our prayer: **for we put our trust in you. Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 COLLECT for 13th Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, who called your Church to bear witness
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;

through him who was lifted up on the cross,
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

THE CONCLUSION

To the holy and glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be blessing and honour, thanksgiving and praise, now and for ever. **Amen.**
Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN *to sing or to imagine Jesus speaking to you*

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown?
Will you let my name be known?
Will you let my life be grown in you
And you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
Should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you
And you in me?

Will you let the blinded man see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
And do such as this unseen?
And admit to what I mean in you
And you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell that fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
To reshape the world around
Through my sight and touch and sound in you
And you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same
In your company I'll go
Where your love and footsteps show
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you
And you in me