

No.4: Holy Trinity – a worshipping church

**All people that on earth do dwell,
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
him serve with fear, his praise forth tell,
come ye before him and rejoice!**

This hymn, a paraphrase of Psalm 100 is the earliest hymn written in the English language that is still in general use today.

It dates back to the early days of the Reformation of the church, this year celebrating its half-millennium. The hymn was written by the Scottish Protestant reformer William Kethe, who left Britain for Geneva during Mary Tudor's reign and helped translate the Bible into English. He also compiled a book of metrical psalms to be sung in English and 'All people that on earth do dwell' was written in 1561, based on the words of Psalm 100. The tune the hymn is sung to is even older, also written in Geneva by a Frenchman, Louis Bourgeois, who was commissioned to write new music for worship in 'reformed' churches.

The text is of course much older still.

Psalm 100 was written by an unknown author but someone with a proper understanding of the person of God. This Psalm is a call to praise and thanksgiving and was probably used by worshippers approaching the temple in Jerusalem. It was possibly written after the temple's restoration after being destroyed by the Babylonians over 500 years before Christ's time.



So what's the link with Holy Trinity? Firstly, the hymn version 'All people that on earth do dwell' was sung at the laying of the foundation stones of Holy Trinity in December 1816 and was chosen as part of the Bicentennial celebrations held last year.

In addition, Psalm 100 (also known as the Jubilate) is a 'canticle' used regularly in the service of Matins, which was for many years the main worship service held at Holy Trinity.

The words of the hymn remind us that whilst life on earth changes over time, our calling as the people of God remains constant – that of offering our worship to an ever-living, merciful and unchanging God. The history of Holy Trinity Huddersfield is but a small snap-shot in the history of the worship of God, which dates back way beyond our church's roots, the reformation of the English church, and even Christ's life to the beginnings of time!

Our methods of worship have changed. When Holy Trinity church first opened, it was unusual in including the singing of hymns in its services, alongside the Psalms and 'canticles', although the services still closely followed the pattern laid out in the Book of Common

Prayer, as revised and authorised in 1662. Hymn-singing in England at that time was largely restricted to non-conformist churches.

Holy Trinity was built with a 'singers loft' high up above the west gallery, which also housed an organ. Over time the musicians were brought first into the gallery, then the chancel and now into the main body of the church. Musical worship has evolved and has become increasingly congregational. For many years the church boasted a fine choir which broadcast regularly on the wireless and won the Festival of Britain Competition in London, in 1951. Today, our service pattern aims to provide a broad balance of more contemporary and traditional musical worship.

In 1825 the first minister of Holy Trinity, Henry Maddock wrote *'I would urge it* [the congregation] *to take their part in the divine and lively work of praise, to let their heart and their voices join in sacred melody, and endeavour to swell the chorus of grateful joy and praise their God lustily and with good courage.'*

Verse 4 of the hymn elaborates the reason ...

**For why? The Lord our God is good:
his mercy is for ever sure:
his truth at all times firmly stood,
and shall from age to age endure.**

**Andy Barber
March '17**