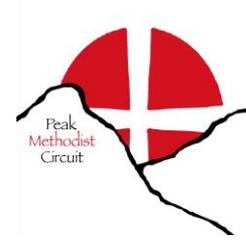


'Staying Connected'
Worship Resources
For Week Beginning
Sunday 24th May 2020
(Wesley/Aldersgate day)
(21st of May 2020 Ascension Day)



The peace of the Lord be always with you. I greet you in his name.

This year, Thursday 21 May is Ascension Day, so this Sunday we hear the readings from the time Jesus took his disciples to the Mount of Olives to witness the highly significant event of his ascension to the father. The day falls 40 days after Easter, and it is one week before we celebrate Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Ascension Day, was traditionally one of the great feast days of the church along with Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, but it's significance appears to have been forgotten in the present day. (Although I should acknowledge that here in Derbyshire, Ascension Day is always celebrated in Tissington as it is also the day well dressing begins.)

In preparation

My God I pray, stop me, steady me, still me,
Empty my mind, Open my heart
And prepare me to come before you.

In praise and adoration

Eternal God,
You are the source of all life, the fount of all wisdom, the wellspring of all grace.
Your days are without end, your loving mercies without number.
We depend on you: and we remember your goodness to us and to those who have gone before.

Your story has been told in every generation:
The Lord Jesus Christ lived amongst us, full of grace and truth,
Revealing your tender mercy, he healed the sick, comforted to the broken and lost.
In humility he washed the feet of his disciples, calling us to follow his example as one who serves.
You are our God, ahead of us, leading us, guiding us and calling us;
You are the Lord God, the all-wise, the all compassionate.

And we lift up our hearts in worship today and for ever. Amen

In humility

Lord Jesus Christ, in you we see awesome power.
You triumph over death and bring forth new life.
You stand over all earthly powers.
You are the head of the church.
Yet, we often fail to acknowledge this power in our lives.
We see violence in the world.
We see injustice in our communities.

We see hunger and need among our neighbours
 We see longing for something more.
 We see failures and faults in our lives.
 In all these things, we feel powerless.
 Forgive our hesitance to call upon you.
 Forgive our propensity to rely upon ourselves.
 Forgive our reluctance to acknowledge your power.
 Speak your words of power again.
 May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 Amen.

In Assurance

May God give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation,
 that the power of Jesus Christ may be visible in our lives.
 By the grace of Jesus Christ we are forgiven
 and empowered to serve.

(In humility and in Assurance from www.MinistryMatters.com. Ascension Day 2020)

In Unity – Pray The Lord’s Prayer

Hymn Of Praise (See hymn sheet)

Lord I lift your name on high

Biblical accounts of the Ascension.

The account of the Ascension is mentioned quite briefly in each of the Gospels. Matthew omits the Ascension altogether, but ends his gospel in chapter 28 with the great commission. *“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* (Matthew 28: 16 - 20)

Mark briefly records ¹⁹ *So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.* (Mark 16:19-20)

Luke ends his gospel with ⁵⁰ *Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy;* (Luke 24:50-53)

John offers a slightly different approach in that he doesn’t give a direct account but alludes to the Ascension three times. Firstly, when teaching Nicodemus ¹³ *No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever*

believes in him may have eternal life. (John 3:13-15) again in chapter 6 when Jesus was teaching the disciples that he was the bread of life whilst in the synagogue in Capernaum and some of the disciples were grumbling, he asks ⁶² *Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?* (John 6:62) and the third time was when he appeared to Mary Magdalene on Easter morning. As she recognises who he is ¹⁷ *Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"* (John 20:17)

It is the book of Acts that opens with a full account of the Ascension of Jesus ⁶ *So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?"* ⁷ *He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.* ⁸ *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* ⁹ *When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.* ¹⁰ *While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.* ¹¹ *They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."*

The hymn Hail the day that sees him rise, reflects the whole story of the Ascension so very well. These wonderful words written so long ago by Charles Wesley are very relevant here

Hymn: Hail the day that sees him rise (See hymn sheet)

It would be wrong not to mention 24th May is also Wesley day, as it falls on a Sunday this year. Today is Aldersgate Sunday: We remember this is the date on which John Wesley experienced his conversion and in his own words felt his 'heart strangely warmed'. His fiery passion to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ just kept growing, and because of this passion the Methodist Church was born. John Wesley preached All need to be saved, All can be saved, All can know they are saved, All can be saved completely. In order to ensure he would reach All possible, he was to take the gospel to the poorest and most uneducated in the land. His legacy included a strong fight for social justice, A fight that is still needed today. Let us remember the gift of John Wesley's discipleship and his legacy as we pray for the world today.

We Pray

Heavenly God, we give thanks that we know your story as revealed through Holy Scripture. We too can be followers of Jesus Christ and be blessed with the joy and the peace you bring.

We pray for your church here on Earth, and remembering the rock on which it is built, we ask for strength for your disciples everywhere, that we may continue to build your Kingdom. We remember today your servant John Wesley and his example of commitment and passion to bring the good news and uphold justice for the poor. Send your Holy Spirit on all who seek to do your will throughout the world, that we too may work tirelessly to spread the gospel and bring peace and justice for the world.

We pray for the leaders in the world. We ask that they work to better their own gain but always seek justice for all those they are appointed leader for. We pray their eyes, minds and hearts will be opened to fair trading, to the sharing of wealth and resources, and with compassion for the earth. We pray that hunger, thirst and poverty become things of the past and that your Kingdom will come.

Jesus, as you came to heal, we bring to you those who are sick and in need of prayer. (pray for those known to us)

We are grateful for the scientists and researchers who are able to advise us in these exceptional times and pray they continue to make progress and breakthroughs in medicine and healing therapies. We give thanks for all health and care professionals, who continue to work with passion and dedication to support those with Covid 19, and all diseases that threaten lives and communities. We remember the mental well-being of people in the world who have been challenged by this pandemic. We pray your healing hands will rest upon them. We remember many people still live in fear of, and suffer with, other illnesses throughout the world and there is a need for us all to love and care beyond the society and community we know.

We ask that you specifically be with parents and teachers this week as they prepare for students and pupils to return to education. We ask that appropriate care and consideration is given to their concerns and fears so they may be confident of delivering a safe and appropriate service to those in their care.

Holy Spirit we pray to you, asking that you will stir us up, lead each one of us into being an active part of the answers to the concerns we bring to you. In the name of Christ, Amen.

Blessing

May God the Father, who has given to his Son the name above every name, strengthen us in our proclamation of Christ Jesus as Lord

May God the Son, who is our great high priest passed into the heavens, plead for us at the right hand of the Father.

May God the Holy Spirit, who pours out his abundant gifts upon the Church, make us faithful servants of Christ our King.

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.

Ministerial Contacts:

Rev Adrian Perry 01629 812195 / 07479968472

Rev Julie Letts 01433 650305

Deacon David Hunt 07375 304760

Rev Fran Johnson 07502448019