

Sunday 1st June 2025: The ascension of Christ

For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or some other suitable time.

Theme for today is "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you"

Opening words from Psalm 47:

God is king over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.

The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham.

For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted.

Hymn StF 331

King of kings, majesty

Opening prayers:

Praise and honour, glory and might, to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, forever.

We worship you as the great creator God, you were there at the beginning of time and spoke the world into existence and spoke to your people through prophets, priests and Kings, and when the time was ready, you sent your son into the world.

We worship you, Jesus Christ, you taught us the way of love, love that took you all the way to the cross where you died as sacrifice for the sins of the world.

We praise you that on the third day you were raised to life, that we might have life and life in all its fullness.

Even after you had ascended to heaven, you did not leave us alone but sent your Holy spirit to dwell within us and around us.

We worship you, Father, son and Holy Spirit

Silence

God of everlasting love, we confess that we have been unfaithful to our covenant with you and with one another.

We have worshiped other gods: money, power, greed, and convenience.

We have served our own self-interest instead of serving only you and your people.

We have not loved our neighbour as you have commanded, nor have we rightly loved ourselves.

Forgive us, gracious God, and bring us back into the fullness of our covenant with you and one another.

Through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn StF 568

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus

Bible readings:

Acts 1: 1-11

Ephesians 1: 15-23

Luke 24: 44-53

Reflection

Our reflection for this Sunday is brought to us by Rev Derek Grimshaw

When my eldest daughter was about seven, I decided that the time had come for me to take the stabilizers off her bike and get her off riding without them. One glorious sunny Saturday morning I ran along the road behind her, holding onto the saddle as she pedalled for all she was worth. But I didn't have the confidence to let go for fear of her falling off and hurting herself, sweating profusely with my heart pounding in my chest, I gave in after two or three runs deciding that maybe today wasn't the day. We shared a caravan with my brother and sister-in-law at the time, and they were staying in it that weekend, so went to spend the afternoon with them. My nephew, a year younger than my daughter saw that the stabilizers had been removed and wanted the ones on his bike taking off. My brother and I had one run around the field in the blazing afternoon sun and decided that was enough. What followed was quite amazing, the two youngsters got on their bike and fell off, they got back on and gave it another go and in the space of ten or fifteen minutes they were off.

Thursday 29th May was Ascension Day, one of the lesser-known Christian festivals and unlike Christmas and Easter, it will have passed most people by, yet it is an important marker on our Christian journey. Jesus has spent three years training his disciples, counselling them in the core values of what we now know as Christianity and preparing them to be the leaders of this new way of being the people of God. We talk about being "Easter People" people who walk in the light of the risen Lord, and the Gospel story doesn't finish with the death of Christ, while that is a definite ending to his chapter of ministry, there is more to come and the Christ who once was dead meets in his risen power with his



disciples, yet this was never meant to be the long term plan, this was for a season and at the ascension we see this phase come to an end and Jesus returns to his father in heaven.

In our reading from the Acts of the Apostles we are reminded that Jesus orders the disciples not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there until the helper (the Holy Spirit) came. The story goes to tell of the time when Jesus was taken back up into heaven and the disciples were now left to go out into the world and do the work that Christ had prepared them for. There is a natural process of learning the principles of whatever we are doing and then comes the time of practical application. This is perhaps the best example of succession planning that the world has ever seen, Jesus has confidence in a job well done and now in the power of the Holy Spirit the disciples set about establishing the most populous world religion that two thousand years later is constantly reshaping to serve the modern age with all its challenges.

The most wonderful thing is that we are called today, to open our hearts and minds to where the Spirit is leading us and on that sunny Saturday afternoon about thirty years ago when my daughter and nephew learned to ride their bikes, I learned that life is about giving it a go, falling off, getting up and trying again until the moment comes when we can take control and make a difference with the Holy Spirit leading us in what we do.

Hymn StF 293 All heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord

Prayers of Intercession:

Let us join our prayers with those of our Saviour Christ, seeking the Father's blessing and the gifts of the Spirit.

Jesus Christ, great high priest, living for ever to intercede for us, pray for the Church, your broken body in the world ... Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, king of righteousness, enthroned at the right hand of the majesty on high, pray for the world, and make it subject to your gentle rule ... Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, Son of Man, drawing humanity into the life of God, pray for your brothers and sisters in need, distress or sorrow ... Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, pioneer of our salvation, bringing us to glory through your death and resurrection, surround with your saints and angels those who have died trusting your promises ... Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, Lord over all things, ascended far above the heavens and filling the universe, pray for us who receive the gifts you give us for work in your service ... Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace, and bring the whole created order to worship at your feet; for you are alive and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

Hymn: StF 364 O for a thousand tongues to sing

Closing blessing –

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen us to walk with him in his risen life; and may almighty God bless us, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.