



Welcome to  
**All Saints**  
**Kings Heath**  
Your Parish Church  
in the Diocese of Birmingham

# Brothers and Sisters Together

## Holy Communion

Sunday after Ascension, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021

### We gather

*At home, have ready in an honoured place a portion of food and something to drink. It may be bread and wine or something else. You might light a candle.*

*We imagine everyone in their homes around the parish, united in preparing for prayer.*

INTROIT before service      [God has gone up with a shout of rejoicing](#)

*God has gone up with a shout of rejoicing:  
he has ascended in glory!*

*O clap your hands,*

*clap your hands all you people:  
he has ascended in glory!*

1. Great is the Lord  
and how great is his kingdom,  
rooted in heaven and earth.  
Ruler on high over all of the nations,  
Lord over all of the world.

2. All of the nations assemble before him:  
all of the rich and the poor.  
All of his servants rejoice in his justice,  
glory and honour to him.

3. Praise to our Lord,  
O sing praise to our Saviour,  
praise to our God and our King!  
Worthy the Lamb  
who was slain and is risen:  
glory and honour to him.

*(words & music: David Lee, based on Psalm 47)*

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with us all. **Amen.**

HYMN *At home you can sing as loudly as you like, as if no one but God is listening. In church we remain seated to listen, or hum, to the hymn:*

HYMN [Hail the day that sees him rise](#)

1. Hail the day that sees him rise, *Alleluia!*  
to his throne above the skies; *Alleluia!*  
Christ the Lamb, for sinners giv'n, *Alleluia!*  
enters now the highest heav'n! *Alleluia!*
2. There for him high triumph waits; *Alleluia!*  
lift your heads, eternal gates! *Alleluia!*  
He hath conquered death and sin; *Alleluia!*  
take the King of Glory in! *Alleluia!*
3. Lo, the heav'n its Lord receives, *Alleluia!*  
yet he loves the earth he leaves; *Alleluia!*  
though returning to his throne, *Alleluia!*  
calls the human race his own. *Alleluia!*
4. Lord, though parted from our sight, *Alleluia!*  
far above the starry height, *Alleluia!*  
grant our hearts may thither rise, *Alleluia!*  
seeking thee above the skies. *Alleluia!*

*(words: Charles Wesley, Thomas Cotterill & others alt; music: Robert Williams)*

*We pray:*

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## We seek forgiveness

### CONFESSION

World wide illness raises healthcare and distribution imbalance; political eagerness about football and silence about nuclear proliferation raises priority imbalance; tensions old and new, from Myanmar to Ireland to Israel and Palestine, raise religious and cultural imbalance. Our own personal imbalances sit uneasily in the mix. Let us confess and boldly affirm our trust in God.

God be gracious to us and bless us, and make your face shine upon us:  
**Lord, have mercy.**

May your ways be known on the earth, your saving power among the nations:  
**Christ, have mercy.**

You, Lord, have made known your salvation and reveal your justice in the sight of the nations:  
**Lord, have mercy.**

**FORGIVENESS** *is declared:*

*[May]* The God of all healing and forgiveness draw *us* to himself, and cleanse *us* from all *our* sins that *we* may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**THE GLORIA**

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
**Amen.****

*We pray* **THE COLLECT** for the Sunday after Ascension Day

O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**READING** [Acts 1:15-17; 21-end](#) (click [here](#) for text; readings from Adrjan Kozlowski in church, Becky Cuthbert on recording)

**READING** [1 John 5:9-13](#) (click [here](#) for text)

**HYMN** [Majesty, worship his majesty](#)

Majesty, worship his majesty;  
unto Jesus be glory, honour and praise.  
Majesty, kingdom authority  
flow from his throne unto his own:  
his anthem raise.

So exalt, lift up on high the name of Jesus;  
magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus the King.  
Majesty, worship his majesty,  
Jesus who died, now glorified,  
King of all Kings.

*(words & music: Jack W Hayford)*

## SERMON from Margaret Healey-Pollett

This has been a busy week, what with Christian Aid and Ascension Day. Some of us have been delivering envelopes for Christian Aid, now 75 years old, an organisation that has long been in careful dialogue with its partner organisations and over the last 10 years or so has been drawing attention to the climate crisis, with this year no exception. We have been reminded that in many places in the world, populations are already living with climate change. We know that things have got very bad for our partner diocese of Malawi, and, as Christian Aid has been publicising this week, increasingly extreme weather conditions can make sourcing water even more of a struggle for people like Rose in Kenya. It is not too late to make a donation and the envelopes are available by the door. Thanks, Des, for all the hard work you do ensuring we still collect for Christian Aid, despite Covid.

Then with Ascension Day, early in the morning we gathered in the Square for a service to mark that watershed when, according to Luke in Acts, the risen Christ was removed from the sight of the disciples, not to be seen in bodily form among us again. Luke tells us this was 40 days after the resurrection. The era of the Spirit-led Church is about to begin, when the message of Christ will be spread to the ends of the Earth, so Jesus retires from the specific place and time of first century Jerusalem, to become the universal Christ.

Returning to Jerusalem, the disciples, including members of Jesus' family, and other women, gathered together for prayer. Luke doesn't tell us how they were feeling, but we could guess a mixture of loss and anticipation. We might imagine their discussions about what it all means, but they had a sense of organisation, and of being led by The Twelve, who had been chosen by Jesus, except with Judas's betrayal they were now down to eleven. And so, we arrive at our first reading, where we see Matthias selected as the replacement for Judas through a process of prayer and drawing lots. Another event last week was St Matthias's Day on Friday, but this might have passed you by. Whatever Matthias got up to as one of the Twelve, it didn't merit recording anywhere in the New Testament and we hear nothing more about him, so his saint's day is not a major one. He didn't even make it to the list of May saints in the 'Know your Saints' section of our magazine!!

Turning to our other readings, they both come from the Johannine community. In the Gospel reading, we have some verses from a prayer, that, in fact, takes up the whole of chapter 17. It comes at the end of a section of the gospel known as the Farewell Discourses, which start at chapter 14. Although portrayed as Jesus's words in the gospel, it is highly likely that they have been composed by John as he reflected on the relationships between Jesus, the Father, the disciples, the Holy Spirit and the rest of the world. For the last 2 Sundays we heard the image of the vine used to describe these relationships, this week we read a section of the long prayer. It has been suggested that the discourses originated as a small collection of sermons, preached in John's community and edited into the gospel.<sup>1</sup> This makes sense to me as there is quite a lot of repetition across the chapters, suggesting we might be seeing the author interpreting Jesus's words, on different occasions, to reassure his community of the relationship they continue to have with Jesus and the Father. So, we see echoes of the Lord's Prayer as Jesus is shown as looking up to heaven and addressing

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<sup>1</sup> Barrett CK: The Gospel according to St John, second edition, p21.

God as 'Father' (so 'our Father in heaven'), referring to God's name (hallowed be your name); and asking that God keeps his followers from evil ('deliver us from evil'). So, here we seem to have a prayer composed by John, probably drawing on Jesus's words, that reflects the emerging understanding of his church community towards the end of the first century, especially, it seems, his understanding of the relationship between the church and the world. Two themes stand out:

### 1. The Ascension

In our reading, Jesus is seen as reflecting in prayer on his imminent departure from the world to rejoin the Father, and what it would mean for the disciples, when he is no longer in the world. He prays 'And now I am coming to you'. As this is set just before the account of the crucifixion, the implication is that the crucifixion and the ascension are the same event. Then in John 20 the risen Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit onto the disciples on the same day as the resurrection. John merges together the events that Luke separates out.

So, setting Luke and John together we see different timescales, which can be confusing, but I don't think we need to be unduly concerned about the differences, as both accounts convey the deeper truth that at some point the historical Jesus became the universal Christ and so ceased to be among the disciples in bodily form, and returned to the Father, but the relationship with the Father and the Son continues to be experienced by the worldwide Church through the Holy Spirit until the end of time.

### 2. Coping when Jesus has left

In our section of the prayer, Jesus is shown as praying specifically for 'those the Father has given him', and not for the world. Jesus asks for their protection in the face of 'the world that hates them', and from evil. Reading between the lines, I think we might suggest that the Johannine community was experiencing some localised hostility, maybe from the synagogue. In chapter 16:2 it says 'They will ban you from the synagogue; indeed the time is coming when anyone who kills you will suppose that he is performing a religious duty'. Is this what John's community were experiencing? Had some of them been threatened? Were they afraid? After all Jesus had suffered a tortured death, and maybe news of Nero's persecutions in Rome had reached them. When Jesus was in the world, they felt protected by him, now they collectively feel the world's hatred. Our reading from the letter of 1 John, which comes from the same community, if not from the same pen, also expresses a sense of 'us and them': those to whom God has given eternal life and those who do not have that life. This seems inconsistent with other New Testament teaching we have of Jesus breaking down barriers, not creating them – for example John's account of Jesus's conversation with the Samaritan woman.

Last October, Pope Francis issued a new encyclical, about breaking down barriers, called 'Fratelli Tutti', or 'Brothers and Sisters Together' a phrase he has borrowed from St Francis of Assisi, who, met with Sultan Malik-el-Kamil in Egypt and, remarkably, during the era of the Crusades, engaged in barrier-busting, careful dialogue with him. Similarly, Pope Francis met with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, and together they declared:

"God has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and has called them to live together as brothers and sisters".

In both our readings from the Johannine community we see what might be called '*othering*', or perceiving people, across a barrier, as alien, and maybe as we have said, this was a result of their experiencing fear in

the community. Pope Francis talks of fear as depriving 'us of the desire and ability to encounter the other'.

However, teaching on how to deal with fear is also found in 1 John, in the reading we heard a couple of weeks ago - 'there is no room for fear in love; perfect love banishes fear' (1 John 4:18). At the end of the long prayer, John shows Jesus praying that the disciples may be united in love in the way Jesus is with the Father. Growing in love and so becoming less fearful, is part of all our journeys in the Spirit, nourished by our incorporation in the body of Christ. As love grows, boundaries are weakened and the circle of love expands. Christian Aid's work exemplifies the careful dialogue and encounter, that Pope Francis is encouraging, as Christian Aid partners with organisations in deprived areas, and listens to the people's understanding of the needs of the area. Let's finish with a prayer written by Pope Francis:

Father,  
May our hearts be open  
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.  
May we recognize the goodness and beauty  
that you have sown in each of us,  
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,  
and shared dreams. Amen.

## We affirm our faith

### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(from Common Worship)

*We stand and at home, if able, we turn to look in the direction of Church, to affirm our faith in God, revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit:*

**We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### INTERCESSIONS led by David Warbrick

Infection surging in dense populations from Bolton, to London, to Bengal, oddly unifying humanity, and so making deliberately flung missiles seem particularly stupid, Jesus, how we need your intercession. Having deliberately pierced you, how we now need your knowing prayers. Emboldened by your farewell prayer for us, we ask you to take our need to the heart of God and send your healing Spirit.

Taking our need to heart,  
**God, send your Holy Spirit.**

Jesus, you warned us that, if we trust you, we may not always seem to fit in this world. As we remember the Apostles, standing out in the cynical Temple by their effervescent praise, preparing to be sent out into the world with defiant news of reconciliation, friendship and healing, we pray for any who are mocked or brushed aside for speaking of peace. Especially we ask you to call and protect peace makers and truth speakers among Palestinian and Israeli communities, where talk of iron fists and proudly disproportional vengeance poisons the air, jets tear the sky, homes are crushed and mortars terrify, each side's aggression recruiting energetically for their enemy. Silence us as with the futility of a five year old Jewish boy's death; with the dismaying fact of a Muslim baby pulled from the rubble, unaware of the consequences of their family's death around them, and their long, lonely journey of retrospective discovery ahead. Let such tragedies humble the adult world of weaponry and politics; let them germinate a desire for peace stronger than desire for vengeance.

Taking our need to heart,  
**God, send your Holy Spirit.**

Jesus, you said that ragged little group of disciples were your glory and you promised to protect them. We pray for anyone who needs to hear someone is proud of them, and for all who have not been protected by those whom they should have been able to trust. Hearing your farewell that last supper, we ask you to be palpably close to those who prepare for the end of a life. We pray for any who have been denied the final conversation they needed with someone before death. By your Spirit, bring reconciliation and reassurance.

Remembering your friends and apostles waiting in Jerusalem, we pray for all who are waiting for some sign of how on earth to move forwards, because they are dismayed by grief, or surrounded by threats. We pray for those who are living with inhibiting or frightening illness or feel helpless beside someone they love who is suffering.

Taking our need to heart,  
**God, send your Holy Spirit.**

Jesus, you promised to send your Holy Spirit upon us, to equip your church for life in a world where need sometimes presents in hostile reflexes. We wonder at the Apostles' perhaps flawed ministerial selection process, yet marvel that, in confinement and confusion, still they generously prepared for the service they might be called to offer. As we emerge from strange confinement, banish self pity, and equip your church anew for ministry and service in this era.

St Peter reminded the fellowship of Judas' failure and yet helped them to look forwards. Affirm especially those who have a right to feel disappointed or hurt, yet still give you and the Church their attention and care. Bless all who step out in new ministries: Margaret as her Reader training progresses and Tariro as she prepares to be ordained and join us here next month.

Taking our need to heart,  
**God, send your Holy Spirit.**

Jesus, you promised to be with us to the end of the age. As a nation oscillates between hope and disappointment, warm our troubled hearts with the assurance of your company. Give us all we don't know we need for what we don't know is coming. Keep alive our gratitude. If you did it for the Apostles after you left them, surely you can do it for us.  
**Amen.**

## THE PEACE

*We pause to remember each other: those worshipping at home, and those worshipping in Church, and those we care for who are far away.*

Jesus says: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. If you love me, rejoice because I am going to the Father." Alleluia. (John 14:27-8)

*We say together:*

**The Peace of the Lord be always with you.**

MUSIC (in church)      Ten Measures of Beauty (Pray for the Peace)

*Margaret Healey-Pollett has asked for this song to be included in today's service – click [here](#) for a YouTube video of an introduction to and performance of the song by the composer, Garth Hewitt*

HYMN (recording)      [Crown him with many crowns](#)

1. Crown him with many crowns,  
the Lamb upon his throne;  
hark, how the heav'nly anthem drowns  
all music but its own:

awake, my soul, and sing  
of him who died for thee,  
and hail him as thy matchless King  
for all eternity.



2. Crown him the Virgin's Son,  
the God incarnate born,  
whose arm those crimson trophies won  
which now his brow adorn;  
fruit of the mystic Rose,  
as of that Rose the Stem,  
the Root, whence mercy ever flows,  
the Babe of Bethlehem.
3. Crown him the Lord of love;  
behold his hands and side,  
rich wounds, yet visible above,  
in beauty glorified:  
no angel in the sky  
can fully bear that sight,  
but downward bends each burning eye  
at mysteries so bright.
4. Crown him the Lord of peace,  
whose pow'r a sceptre sways  
from pole to pole, that wars may cease,  
absorbed in prayer and praise:  
his reign shall know no end,  
and round his pierced feet  
fair flow'rs of paradise extend  
their fragrance ever sweet.
5. Crown him the Lord of years,  
the Potentate of time,  
Creator of the rolling spheres,  
ineffably sublime.  
All hail, Redeemer, hail!  
for thou hast died for me;  
thy praise shall never, never fail  
throughout eternity.

*(words: Matthew Bridges; music: George Job Elvey; descant: James Lancelot)*

*The Table is prepared in Church. At home, now is the time to say the Lord's Prayer (below) and consume the food and drink you have prepared, first praying:*

God, we long for Communion. With this symbolic meal stir my hope for the fellowship meal we cannot yet see, and help me wait for it with patience. **Amen.** (cf Romans 8:2)

## We give thanks for God's grace for all

Priest: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Glorious God, in Moses, the prophets and the psalms you showed your purpose for your people and your love for the world. In Jesus you fulfilled your promises and opened to us your heart. In his passion and death we saw the consequences of our rejection and the depth of your yearning. Yet you raised Jesus from the tomb. In his resurrection you invite us into the company of your eternal joy, and in his ascension on high you seal as complete his work among us. So with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven we praise you for ever, singing:

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord.  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Gracious God, your Son at his ascension promised the disciples they would be clothed with power from on high. Send now your Holy Spirit, that we may know the presence of your Son among us and that bread broken and wine outpoured may be for us his body and blood. Who, at supper with his disciples, took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to them saying, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

*A bell is rung*

After supper he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

*A bell is rung*

**All: Great the mystery of faith:  
Christ has died,  
Christ is risen  
Christ will come again.**

Generous God, your Son told his disciples to stay in the city until they were clothed by the Spirit. Give courage to those whom you call to stay in places of danger and confusion when their hearts are full of doubt and disillusion. Your Son withdrew from the disciples when they did not know what the future would hold. Be close to all who face an uncertain future and deeply know their need of you. Your Son's disciples were continually in the temple praising you, Give your Church a fresh outpouring of your Spirit and make it a blessing to all the children of your earth; until the completion of your whole creation, and you are all in all, one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

Priest: We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All: Though we are many, we are one body.  
For we all share in one bread.**

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,  
But only say the word and I shall be healed.**

*We pause to remember all who pray at home, then share the bread and wine, now for us the body and blood of Christ.*

ANTHEM *during Communion*      [I know that my Redeemer liveth](#) *(sung by Clare Noakes)*

I know that my Redeemer liveth,  
and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;  
and though worms destroy this body,  
yet in my flesh shall I see God.

For now is Christ risen from the dead,  
the first-fruits of them that sleep.

*(words: from Job 19:25, 26 & 1 Corinthians 15:20;  
music: George Frideric Handel)*

## Inside or outside, we are called to serve

Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with your Word [*and with the body and blood of Christ*]. Strengthen us in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. **Amen.**

*We imagine our scattered fellowship, family, colleagues and neighbours, praying for blessing on all:*

The Spirit of truth lead you into all truth, give you grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and strengthen you to proclaim the word and works of God, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

HYMN      [Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour](#)

1. Lord, enthroned in heav'nly splendour, first begotten from the dead, thou alone, our strong defender, liftest up thy people's head.  
Alleluia, alleluia, Jesu, true and living bread.
2. Here our humblest homage pay we, here in loving rev'ence bow;  
here for faith's discernment pray we, lest we fail to know thee now.  
Alleluia, alleluia, thou art here, we ask not how.

3. Paschal Lamb, thine off'ring, finished once for all when thou wast slain,  
in its fullness undiminished shall for evermore remain.  
Alleluia, alleluia, cleansing souls from ev'ry stain.
4. Life-imparting heav'nly manna, stricken rock with streaming side,  
heav'n and earth with loud hosanna worship thee, the Lamb who died.  
Alleluia, alleluia, ris'n, ascended, glorified!

*(words: George Hugh Bourne; music: George Clement Martin)*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ, Amen.**

VOLUNTARY      [Concluding Voluntary](#) *(Cuthbert Harris; played by Benjamin Noakes)*



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Miki Takahashi (violin) and Adam Romer (viola) present a  
Live local string duo concert here in Church next Friday  
21<sup>st</sup> May 6-7pm (doors open 5.30pm) See the poster in  
Church and follow this link for tickets.

<https://www.wegottickets.com/event/515748>