



Heacham Parish Church

Sunday Service 24th May 2020 Ascension Heacham Parish Church at Home

Adrian plays 'Today God's son arose in triumph' by Bach written (almost certainly!) for Ascension

God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you **and also with you**

As we gather in our homes, together yet apart, we pray:

Lord of all glory, we come before you
seeking your wisdom,
that we may glorify you through our thinking;
seeking your love,
that we may glorify you through our emotions;
seeking your strength,
that we may glorify you at all times;
seeking your perseverance,
that we may glorify you in all places.

Show us how to live,
that our lives shine with your glory,
and those who encounter us may know you
and that you are at work in your world.

Amen.

Prayers of confession

The Spirit of the Lord fills the world and knows our every word and deed. Let us then open ourselves to the Lord and confess our sins in penitence and faith.

When our actions are not loving,
and we think of just ourselves –
your name is not glorified.

Forgive us, God of Glory.

When our words bring hurt to others
and we do not even notice –
your name is not glorified.

Forgive us, God of Glory.

When the way we live is selfish
and we find no time for you –
your name is not glorified.

Forgive us, God of Glory.

When we do not see you or reveal your love –
your name is not glorified.

Forgive us, God of Glory.

Forgive and renew us,
and let your glory be seen in our lives.

Amen.

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

Song: 10,000 reasons sung by Karen and Terry Brown

Bible Reading: Acts 1: 6-14 read by Lynn Shannon

A Reflection from Peter Murray

“He was taken up before our very eyes” that’s what we’re told in our reading with reference to Jesus’ departure from earth as his disciples look upwards.

I believe I have some idea what you may be thinking at this point. Doesn’t this remind us of Star Trek’s captain Kirk saying “beam me up, Scotty!” Are we really required to believe that the Ascension of Christ is somewhat similar? Isn’t the whole thing incredible in a scientific age? And anyway, as this event is something we hear very little about, isn’t it non-essential and, perhaps, irrelevant?

Leaving aside the cosmology, it’s been said that the Ascension is the most neglected of the Christian festivals which is unfortunate because it highlights some important things about Jesus and ourselves as his followers. Much of what we know about it comes mainly from the Acts of the Apostles, and there we discover that the ascension took place forty days after the Resurrection and marks the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry. It is the completion of all that Jesus came to do and the beginning of his reign as Lord and King over all creation, exalted and glorified. It means that the power of the Holy Spirit becomes available to equip every believer to fulfil his mission in the world and to extend his kingdom. As ascended Lord he now intercedes for us in heaven, so we are assured that as we bring our concerns before him he will hear and answer. And he is now no longer confined to one age or place, but lives among us in the lives of all who follow him as Lord and Saviour.

The ascension reminds us that our destiny does not lie on this earth, but with the ascended Christ who has gone to prepare a place for us. But before Jesus departs from this earth, he gives his followers a promise that they would receive the power of the

Holy Spirit for the purpose of equipping them to be his witnesses where they are and ultimately to “the ends of the earth”. Just as everything changed forever on that first Easter morning, the Ascension is the beginning of a new and exciting chapter in the story of salvation. Jesus’ followers are to be active participants in the expansion of God’s kingdom. The same is true for us today. Notice that the disciples are not immediately called to action. There is a waiting period which is very significant. The Holy Spirit did not come upon them right after the Ascension. The waiting is active: they are “constantly devoting themselves to prayer”. We see them during this time expectant and attentive to God, so that they are able to respond at the appropriate time and follow where he leads. They have the privilege, as do we, of sharing in Jesus’ ministry, strengthened and sustained by His continuing presence. It was – and is – an exciting adventure. But the space between the Ascension and the outpouring of the spirit is necessary. Perhaps there is an important message for us here in the circumstances in which we now find ourselves.

There is a purpose in waiting. So let’s wait and see!

**Song: David and Kath Burkett play and sing their song
The Father’s care.**

Nothing can sever the Father’s care
From all His children: it’s ours to share.
For He has promised His presence shall be
Our ever unbroken security.
“Nowhere on earth can you wander without Me;
I call you by name, you are Mine, do not doubt Me.
Trust all My promises, lasting for ever:
This is My word to you”.

He whispers softly: “My child, understand,
You are engraved on the palm of My hand.

Look at Jesus, in Him you will see
How costly, how precious My own are to Me".
God is changeless; His word will not alter:
Fierce flames cannot harm us, nor deep flowing water;
Sure of His mercy, sustained by His power,
We're in His loving hands.

(based on Isaiah 49, 16 and Isaiah 43, 2)

Prayers of intercession by Gordon Taylor

In the power of the Spirit let us pray to the Father, through Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Heavenly Father

As people around the world get involved with Thy Kingdom Come we ask that you would help us develop our relationship with Christ and empower us by Your Spirit to be effective witnesses
Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We pray for all who are part of the Church
and for the unity of all Christian people;
break down that which separates us from one another and from you, that knowing your forgiveness we may share your love
with a needy world.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We pray for those who hold positions of responsibility and power
both internationally and within our local community
may your Holy Spirit guide them in their decision-making,
so that paths of truth and justice may be open to everyone.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We give you thanks and pray
for all who support and care for us as we follow Christ,
our families and friends,
and our fellow pilgrims along the way;
nourish us all with the words of life and the bread of heaven,
that we may worship you joyfully,
listen to you willingly and serve you gladly.
Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We pray for our world,
for those without food, water, or shelter
for those in countries ravaged by war or civil war
in mercy, look with compassion Loving God
on all those who turn to you for help
Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We pray for those who,
through sickness, misfortune or abuse,
feel that their lives are without meaning or direction;
surround them with your love,
and give wisdom and patience to all who support and guide
them.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We thank you for the fullness of life you give us in Jesus Christ,
and for all whose lives have been an example of your truth
and life for us;
may our communion with them, and with all the saints,
nourish and support us on our earthly pilgrimage.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear

Lord God, we entrust to you the families and communities affected by Coronavirus, wherever they may be.

We pray especially for health care workers, that you may guide and protect them.

We pray that your Spirit might inspire those researching new medicines and treatments.

And in the midst of this, keep us strong in faith, hope and love. Grant us the courage and perseverance to be good neighbours.

May the words of your Son Jesus Christ in the Our Father, be our prayer as we entrust ourselves and all of us who are affected to your infinite power and love.

Amen.

Let us all now join in the Lord 's Prayer.

Blessing

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you, wherever He may send you.

May He guide you through the wilderness, protect you through the storm.

May He bring you home rejoicing at the wonders He has shown you.

May He bring you home rejoicing once again into our doors. Amen

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

For those without access to the internet:

A new telephone worship service: **Daily Hope**, offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind. This is a freephone service.

Also The Diocesan weekly podcast **Sunday Hope** can be listened to via your phone by calling **01603 537577**- calls for this are charged at a local rate.