

Ascension Day

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

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, for forty days we have been celebrating with joyful hearts the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, his bursting from the tomb and his defeat of the power of sin and death. He appeared to his disciples many times and told them about the kingdom of God.

Today we recall how he left this earth and returned to his Father, ascending into heaven to take his throne over all dominions and powers. Trusting in his reign over all creation, and submitting to his kingly yet loving rule, let us hear the story of his parting.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (1.4-11)

While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This', he said, 'is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 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.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards 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.'

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

God is gone up with a triumphant shout
the Lord with sounding trumpets' melodies.
Sing praise, sing praise, sing praises out,
unto our King sing praise seraphic-wise!
Lift up ye heads, ye lasting doors, they sing,
and let the King of Glory enter in.

(Edward Taylor)

Let us pray that our risen and ascended Lord will lead us to eternal life.

We pause to dwell on those words.

The Ascension Day Collect:

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that as we believe your only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ
to have ascended into the heavens,
so we in heart and mind may also ascend
and with him continually dwell;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Lord God,
In Jesus you came in the body:
flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone,
one with us in searing pain and joyous laughter,
and now risen, ascended in glory,
opening the door of heaven to us.

Make us your hands and feet in our troubled world,
give us your words of love and compassion
through the inspiration of your Holy Spirit.

Gracious God,
hear us as we pray for the Church throughout the world.
Help us to be united by faith in you, and not dwell on our differences. We continue to
remember those who are persecuted for their faith in our world.
We ask for your grace and wisdom for our leaders;
For our Archbishops, Justin and John and for our new bishop of Chester-elect, Mark
Tanner, and his family.
For our Archdeacons, Mike and Ian, and all those who are working to encourage and
support our growth in faith in so many creative ways.
And as we are able to participate in worship through new media sources, we pray for those
who feel cut off from their church family; those who do not have internet access or who are
wary of technology; help us to work with you to keep connected.

Lord God, the almighty creator,
you have given your Son all authority in heaven and on earth:
hear us as we pray for the world he came to redeem.
Thank you for the way that our land, air and oceans have become cleaner as we reduce our
travel and consumption.
Help us to remember this change and to be better stewards of your creation.
As the COVID virus continues to spread,

we remember those who cannot self-isolate, where there is no clean water, and no support for the destitute. We think especially today of those who are affected by the ravages of Cyclone Amphan in India and Bangladesh.

O Lord of all wisdom,

we ask that you would be with those in government today.

Thank you for local and national representatives who are having to make many difficult decisions. Inspire them to work for the good of all humanity and not for political gain. Help our world leaders to collaborate without rancour or ambition.

We pray for those working to discover a way to combat the Coronavirus. Enable them to use their expertise wisely, and with perseverance.

Lord of the great economy of heaven,

please be with those who are anxious about their work today.

Keep those people who are our key workers safe. Be present with those who have been made redundant, and those whose roles appear insecure. We pray particularly for our schools as their leaders plan for a return amidst many uncertainties.

God of healing and wholeness,

come alongside those who are suffering in body or mind today.

Give them your deep peace. We name, silently or aloud, those known to us at this time, knowing that everyone is known to you.

And we pray for the families and friends of those who are mourning, especially those grieving for the loss of Doreen Edwards, Penny Dodd, Don Cooksley and John McIver.

We put our trust in you, knowing you are there in our laments as much as you are with us in our joy.

Looking for the coming of his kingdom,

let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come;

thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

the power and the glory,

for ever and ever.

Amen.

As we wait in silence,

All make us ready for your coming Spirit.

As we listen to your word,

All make us ready for your coming Spirit.

As we worship you in majesty,

All make us ready for your coming Spirit.

As we long for your refreshing,

All make us ready for your coming Spirit.

As we long for your renewing,

All make us ready for your coming Spirit.

As we long for your equipping,

All make us ready for your coming Spirit.

As we long for your empowering,

All make us ready for your coming Spirit.

Waiting expectantly for the promised Holy Spirit,
go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

All Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.