

Section News

MAY 12, 2021



Reflection



Notices



Jerusalem

Superintendent's Thoughts

RISEN, ASCENDED, GLORIFIED!



This week's picture is by Peter Rogers. It is reproduced here from the Methodist Modern Art Collection © TMCP and used with permission. (www.methodist.org.uk/artcollection)

'Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking at the sky? Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there'. This translation emphasises the difference between 'sky' and 'heaven' but Jesus was 'lifted up while they looked on', and 'a cloud' did take him from their sight.

What one sees is what one sees, and I see Christ rising up what seems like the neck of an hourglass into the cloud. Was this not the same cloud that covered the tabernacle in the wilderness; that visited the newly consecrated people; that overshadowed Mary and that hung over Our Lord and His disciples at the Transfiguration? There is something holy about the cloud, about the unseeing and the unknowing of faith.

Only the opening words of the Book of Acts tells of a 40-day span of teaching and nurture by the risen Jesus after Easter. If we did not have it, we might assume that the account of the Ascension in Luke 24.50-53 described an event on Easter evening. These twin accounts of the Ascension end Luke's first volume and begin his second volume, so this event is obviously important to 'Luke'. From later references on the lips of Peter (2.32-36) and Stephen (7.55-56) we infer that 'Luke' clearly understands the heavenly purposes and exalted role of the departed Jesus, but it does not show here.

Most of our Ascension Day hymns have a heavenly focus, bursting with triumphant delight at Jesus' elevation to God's right hand, hailing him as exalted Messiah or heavenly High Priest or homecoming Son, as in the last line from one of those hymns which is the title of this piece. But we hear none of that in these passages. The most significant thing about 'Luke's' accounts of the Ascension is their earthly focus. The Ascension is a moment of pastoral crisis. Jesus has gone – what are his shaken, unreliable followers to do now? We overhear the departing Jesus trying to prepare them for life without his bodily presence, twice counselling patient waiting until the pouring out of the promised Spirit of God. They are to continue with faith, trust and patience and God's Spirit will assuredly come to them.

It could be argued that this pragmatic, pastoral focus does not end with the Ascension. A case can be made that the whole of the rest of the Book of Acts should be read as a deliberate pastoral response to this problem – a long, encouraging demonstration that the absent Lord is, in fact, actively present with his people, by his Spirit, come what may. This in turn invites us to reflect on how we have sensed the Spirit's presence during these months of lockdown.

How might we go about sharing these experiences with others?

Notices

Dates for the Diary

Week beginning	16 th May	23 rd May	30 th May	6 th June
Sunday 4.00 pm <i>Reflection – a short 30-minute gathering using images, music and words led by Revd Rachel Borgars.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84235746908	✓	Rachel away	✓	✓
Monday 7:30 pm <i>Discussion Group – originally called the ‘Hot Potatoes’ group, this is an opportunity to discuss current issues with some theology as part of the mix.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84961411119	✓		✓	
Thursday 7:30pm <i>Circuit Bible Study – a more formal Bible study which usually meets monthly on the last Thursday in the month. During June we shall meet weekly following the Bible Month material.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88651459988		✓	✓ Bible Month	✓ Bible Month
Friday 9:15 am <i>Prayer Group – an opportunity to pray together, bringing both joys and concerns in prayer.</i> https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82103846709	✓	✓	✓	✓

If you would like to join in with any of these gatherings via telephone, please do ring me on 01256 895878 and I will give you the details to dial in via any telephone. I do hope you will join us, even if you haven't felt Zoom is for you up until now!!

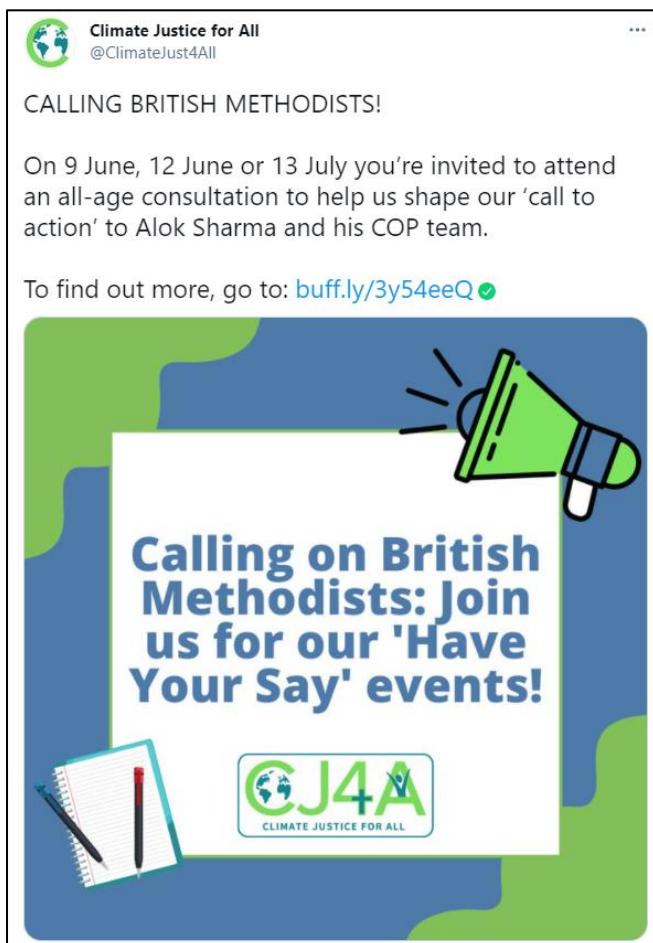
Methodists join other Christians in appealing for peace and an end to provocative actions in Jerusalem

Statement from the World Methodist Council, Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church and the Methodist Church in Britain, which are partners in the Jerusalem Methodist Liaison Office.

We stand together to support the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches of Jerusalem who have expressed their concern about continuing violence in Jerusalem and who have called on those in the international community to put an end to what they describe as ‘provocative actions’.

We have been horrified by the scenes of violence in east Jerusalem which threaten the fragility of the Holy City and call on the Israeli Government to permanently halt the threatened evictions of Palestinians from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah, where clashes have also taken place.

We urge calm on all sides and ask the politicians to enable an environment where justice and healing can be experienced by all and we join with the Heads of Churches to continue to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. We continue to stand in solidarity with our Christian sisters and brothers who live and work in the Holy Land.



Climate Justice for All
@ClimateJust4All

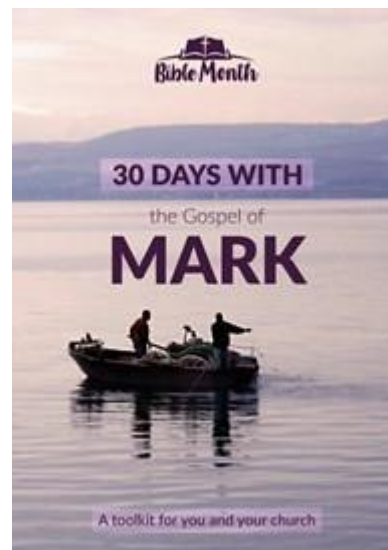
CALLING BRITISH METHODISTS!

On 9 June, 12 June or 13 July you're invited to attend an all-age consultation to help us shape our 'call to action' to Alok Sharma and his COP team.

To find out more, go to: buff.ly/3y54eeQ

Calling on British Methodists: Join us for our 'Have Your Say' events!

CJ4A
CLIMATE JUSTICE FOR ALL



The Bible Month book for 2021 is the Gospel of Mark.

30 Days with Mark has been written by Dr Kent Brower (Bible notes) with Rev Michael Parsons (small group study guides) and Dr Paula Gooder (reflection).

If you would like a copy of the booklet, can you please let Rachel Borgars know by Monday May 24th at the latest.

During June – there will be a discussion group meeting on Thursday evenings to look at the study material for the following Sunday. The first meeting for this Bible Month group will be on June 3rd on Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88651459988>)