

Welcome to
your Parish Church
in the Diocese of Birmingham



ALL SAINTS
KINGS HEATH

Touching Faith Holy Communion

Sunday after Ascension, 12th May 2024

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. Set your Bible alongside. You might light a candle.

Music as we gather: [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,
singing his praise evermore.

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.

When the song finishes we stand in silence.

We sing: [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. Circled round with angel-pow'rs, *Alleluia!*
their triumphant Lord and ours; *Alleluia!*
wide unfold the radiant scene, *Alleluia!*
take the King of Glory in! *Alleluia!*

4. 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!*

5. 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 acclaim:

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

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

WELCOME, BANNS and NOTICES

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

Deacon: As we will hear, before leaving his disciples Jesus prayed specifically for us, knowing our vulnerabilities as we live by faith in him without sight of him. We confess our need.

Silence

God, be understanding when we struggle to understand that you are with us. Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

God, be patient when we are impatient for you to answer our prayers. Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

God, be generous when fear of the world makes us defensive or ungenerous. Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

FORGIVENESS *is declared:*

[May] Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon *us*, pardon and deliver *us* from all *our* sins, confirm and strengthen *us* in all goodness, and keep *us* in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

We stand to give thanks for forgiveness, singing THE GLORIA

1. Glory be to God in heaven,
songs of praise and joy we bring;
thankful hearts and voices raising,
to creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you:
Lord we bless you:
glory be to God our King;
glory be to God our King.

2. Lamb of God who on your shoulders
bore the load of this world's sin:
only Son of God the Father
you have brought us peace within.
Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy,
now your glorious reign begin;
now your glorious reign begin.

3. You O Son of God are holy,
you we praise with one accord:
none in heaven or earth is like you,
only you are Christ the Lord:
with the Father
and the Spirit
ever worshipped and adored;
ever worshipped and adored.

THE COLLECT for the Sunday after Ascension

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.**

READINGS [Acts 1:15-17, 21-end](#)

and [1 John 5:9-13](#)

HYMN [My Jesus, my Saviour](#) (*sing twice*)

My Jesus, my Saviour,
Lord, there is none like you.
All of my days I want to praise
the wonders of your mighty love.

My comfort, my shelter,
tower of refuge and strength,
let ev'ry breath, all that I am,
never cease to worship you.

Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing
power and majesty, praise to the King.
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar
at the sound of your name.

I sing for joy at the work of your hands.
For ever I'll love you, for ever I'll stand.
Nothing compares to the promise I have in you.

(words & music: Darlene Zschech)

We remain standing for the GOSPEL READING [John 17:6-19](#)

All: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John
Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end This is the Gospel of the Lord
All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

SERMON in Church is from David

For those worshipping at home:

What would you pray the night before your execution? It really would focus the mind, wouldn't it? If that's too stark, I wonder what you pray the night before, say, an operation you've been worrying about. Who comes to the fore as you get ready to leave? It may be that some among us are beginning to identify our longings and worries for the people we love as we recognise the end of our life might not be that far away. In a much lesser way, just before the experimental period of dispensability which is holiday, what are your prayers when you are getting ready to go?

John's account of Jesus' farewell meal is very long and deep. It is vividly remembered by the disciple who lived long enough to gather disciples around him, to whom he passed on the intimate details, like his resting his head on Jesus' chest as they reclined at the table; like the intense words Jesus spoke to them, then the even more intense words he said in their hearing to his Heavenly Father...our Heavenly Father. The prayer summarises the discourse preceding it, just as in Matthew's gospel, the Lord's Prayer catches the essence of the whole Sermon on the Mount which it concludes. Prayer can do that. It can be a distillation; a moment when we catch the essence, reach the heart of what concerns us. For those of us who feel sure the heavenly Parent is listening and responding all well and good. For those who may not be sure there's anyone listening, still prayer is that priceless poetic distillation of need and longing.

Privileged as we and the disciples are to overhear Jesus' longings for us, we could summarise them as his wanting us to know that, although he is taken from our sight, still he is with us, in us, and in his return to heaven, we can trust more than ever that the reality of our vulnerable humanity is held in the very heart of God. If that's all too theoretical, we listen to his prayer carefully and hear his acknowledgement of how difficult it can be to live without sight of him and the reassuring feel of his physical touch. The disciples at least could remember it. John's disciples decades later could at least remember the touch of John who had felt the touch of Jesus and heard his heartbeat. Thank God they eagerly gathered John's memories and saved them for us, in the Gospel named after him. He tells us Jesus prays specifically also for those of us more historically distant from the intimacy he was privileged to know. It is for many of us, then, enlivening to receive Jesus' physical touch through Holy Communion and through the touch of others at the peace, emphasising our unity in him.

Jesus then prays that we will know and feel no less a togetherness with him as his disciples feel and that we will experience it as joy: his joy in us, becoming our joy in him. He prays that we "may have [his] joy made complete among [our]selves." It is in fellowship that we will feel his life flowing into ours.

His prayer then anticipates that for many onlookers his people will look perhaps oddly different, set apart, almost as though living in another world; or seeing this world in a very different way. That will sometimes lead to hostility, just as it was leading him towards the cross.

We need to be careful here, because we could allow a sectarian superiority to develop. Tragically, at times, the togetherness of the church has been exactly that. But that is not the togetherness Jesus prays for. He makes this prayer for a vulnerable community in danger, hence all the reassuring images of sheepfolds, of vines, of profound togetherness. But this is not exclusive or superior. In the vine image, remember, he challenged the strong fellowship to bear fruit – that’s goodness for other people’s benefit outside the vineyard. He also challenged them to see that if anyone bears the fruit of the Spirit in their life, avowed Christian or not, we must assume the Spirit is working in them. Any us and them is blurred, not exaggerated by John.

If it is in fellowship that we discover Christ’s joy, we might feel disheartened when we are forced to be alone. Before I go away, I have the privilege of taking communion to some who are compelled to stay at home. It is very much intended to underline your part in the fellowship, your belonging, your abiding in the vine. The Ascension last Thursday also affirms us when we are alone. Christ returned not to created distance, but to be with us intimately, everywhere. Rest assured he is with you and in being so binds you into the fellowship of the whole church.

If you feel ready this morning, give yourself space to allow such longings to emerge for you and find who it is, deep down, you want to pray for today.

We affirm our faith

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:

APOSTLES’ CREED

**All: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

INTERCESSIONS In church are written and led by Becky and Chris

At home: Having given time for precious people to emerge in your heart, now is the time to pray your hopes for them, for the kinds of protection you think they need and for them to find joy in fellowship of whatever kind.

Following the Ascension, the disciples were rejoicing, yet waiting for the Holy Spirit to empower and guide them. They drew strength from being together (Luke 24 and Acts 1). We pray for any waiting not in joy but in fear: waiting for humanitarian aid to arrive; waiting for bombing to stop; waiting for justice. We pray especially for any who feel they are waiting alone.

Among those who have asked for our prayers we remember Wendy Turner, Helen Fenton, Roger Tyrrell, Richard Sharif, Kathy Farbrother, Tricia Howard and Adrien Koslowski.

Trusting Jesus ascended in order to be with us all wherever we are, we remember those who receive communion at home, including Bill Myring, Gill Parkin, Jenny Watling, Sheilagh Prain, Colin and Margaret Guy. By your Spirit may they know they are bound into the fellowship and receive your gift of joy.

THE PEACE

Deacon: Jesus said "I have come in order that you might have life. Life in all its fullness." The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All: And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

HYMN [Immortal, invisible, God only wise](#)

1. Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,

almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

2. Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

3. To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.

4. Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all laud we would render, O help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

(words: Walter Chalmers Smith, based on 1 Timothy 1:17; music: Adapted from a traditional Welsh hymn melody in John Roberts' 'Caniadu y Cyssegr' [1839]; descant: Barry Rose)

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.

We tell the story of salvation

Priest: The Lord is here.

All: God's Spirit is with us.

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:

Repeat each line after cantor

Holy, holy, holy Lord!

**God of power and God of might.
Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord most high.
Hosanna.
Hosanna.
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

Deacon: 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.

Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you. Eat in remembrance that he died and now lives for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

We sing: **Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.**

Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.

Jesus, Redeemer of the world, give us your peace. (x2)

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

SONG during Communion

1. Holy forever and ever is God,
over all creatures the sovereign Lord,
who was, and is, and who is yet to come. *Alleluia!*

2. Praise to our Maker and Mover we sing,
glory and honour and blessing we bring;
all our existence depends on the Lord. *Alleluia!*

3. Worthy are you, who by shedding your blood,
brought from all nations a people for God.
Folk of all races you call to be priests. *Alleluia!*

4. Worthy the Lamb who was sentenced and slain!
Worthy the Lamb in his rising again!
Worthy of power and wisdom and wealth, *alleluia!*

5. Blessing an honour and glory and might
be to the Lamb on the throne, as is right.
Let earth and heaven unite to exclaim *alleluia! Amen.*

(words: John L Bell & Graham Maule, based on Revelation 5, 7; music: John L Bell)

We are sent out

We pray

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.

THE BLESSING

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

HYMN

[Give us the wings of faith](#)

1. Give us the wings of faith to rise
within the veil, and see
the saints above, how great their joys,
how bright their glories be.
2. Once they were mourning here below,
their couch was wet with tears;
they wrestled hard, as we do now,
with sins and doubts and fears.
3. We ask them whence their vict'ry came:
they, with united breath,
ascribe the conquest to the Lamb,
their triumph to his death.
4. They marked the footsteps that he trod,
his zeal inspired their breast,
and, foll'wing their incarnate God,
they reached the promised rest.
5. Our glorious Leader claims our praise
for his own pattern giv'n;
while the great cloud of witnesses
show the same path to heav'n.

(words: Isaac Watts alt; music: John Joubert)

Deacon: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ, Amen.



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