



ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, SUTTON

24 MAY 2020 7TH SUNDAY OF EASTER
SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY

Please join me for our

Service on the 7th Sunday of Easter at 10.30am

(or at another convenient time) by following the Order of Service and singing in your own home.

I will be thinking of you all and praying for you at The Rectory at the same time and longing for our future reunion in Church.



Christ is risen
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Frances

Duty Warden: Geoff Rendall

Server: Lily Shambare

Musician: Pam Affleck

Sidespersons: Don Bonser, Rebecca Phillips

Welcomers: Julie Barbour, Mary Meldrum

Sound desk: Jennifer Emptage

Refreshments: Marian Bonser, Sylvia Cowling

Here is a view of St Nic's from The Rectory garden at 10.28am on Easter Day



St. Nicholas, Sutton
Worship on the 7th Sunday of Easter
at 10.30am on 24 May 2020
led by Revd Frances Arnold, Priest-in-Charge

The Gathering

The Greeting

President

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

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

Hymn Alleluia, sing to Jesus

Prayer of Preparation

We sit or kneel

**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.**

Prayers of Penitence

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.

Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil
and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

1 Corinthians 5.7,8

**Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy
forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly,
love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

President

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

Glory to God is said or sung

**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 sin 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.**

The Collect

President says 'Let us pray'.

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.**

The Liturgy of the Word

Readings

First reading Ezekiel 36.24-28

The renewal of Israel

read by Kaushalya Jeyaraj

Second reading Acts 1.6-14

The Ascension of Jesus

read by Kaushalya

At the end the reader says

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn O worship the King

Gospel Reading John 17.1-11

Jesus Prays for his Disciples

read by Glynis Osborne

The reader says

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.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon *The Revd Frances Arnold*

While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven (Luke 24.51)
...as they were watching, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight (Acts 1.9)

St Luke, in the final chapter of his gospel, tells how Jesus, while he was giving his blessing, withdrew from the disciples and was carried *up* into heaven (Lk 24.51). It is not so helpful for us in the days of space travel and research into the universe to think about heaven as 'up there' – above the sky. But the symbolism of Jesus' ascension remains, and in some places services are held out of doors on hill-tops with this in mind. (I have happy memories of battling against the elements, trying in vain to keep the cloth on the altar and the right page in the hymn book while taking part in Ascension Day services in the ruins of Finchale Priory near Durham.) The message that Luke wants to convey in his account of the ascension is that Jesus is exalted, glorified.

Earlier in the day, at dawn, the women and the apostles who visited Jesus' tomb found it empty. Jesus appeared to the disciples on the Emmaus road 'on that same day'. The ascension too, takes place on the evening of the same day. All these things, the first

encounters with the risen Lord, Emmaus, the ascension, take place on the very first Easter Day.

Luke has also given us an account of the ascension in the *Acts of the Apostles*. But this time, *forty* days have gone by since the resurrection. The same author gives two accounts of the *same* event and he places this event at a different point in *time*. What are we to make of this?

Well Luke is not primarily concerned with the order in which things happen and with history. He is concerned with what they *mean*. There are two ways of expressing the Easter message. We can say that Jesus is risen. And we can say that Jesus has returned to God in triumph: he is 'King of Kings'.

If you look at a coin, it has two sides. It is difficult to see both of them at once. To do that, you'd have to cut the coin in half. What Luke has done by giving two accounts of the ascension (40 days apart) is to show the two essential aspects of the Easter message together: Jesus is risen *and* he is exalted. These are two inseparable sides of the same mystery. Luke put the accounts one after the other because that is the only way he could tell the story.

If we see Christ's resurrection and his ascension as two entirely separate events that happened one after the other, it is like believing that there are two coins – when there is really one coin with two faces. Luke is telling us that resurrection and ascension are two aspects of the same mystery.

That may explain why Luke has written two, apparently contradictory, accounts of the ascension. But what is the significance for us – in a practical sense – of seeing the resurrection and the ascension as one?

We find the answer in the reading from the letter to the Ephesians (1.20-21), which speaks of the 'immeasurable greatness of (the) power (of the Lord Jesus) for us who believe'

God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.

Jesus has returned to God as King. His subjects are here on earth. It is his followers who must carry on his work. The only way forward towards new hope and new possibilities is under the Lordship of the risen Jesus. And although Jesus' earthly life is over, he has promised his followers and he promises us, that we will be equipped with power from God to engage in our tasks. The book of *Acts* is the story of what begins to happen as a result. That story still goes on today. **Amen**

The Creed

We stand

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

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

Prayers of Intercession

led by Clive Orton

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
you promised through your Son Jesus Christ
to hear us when we pray in faith.

As the church of God, let us be still and pray together.

God of glory, may your light shine in our church community as you work among us
and bless us with your presence. We offer you ourselves, in the areas you have
placed us.

Holy God...

hear our prayer.

God of glory, may the whole world come to know and praise you. We ask you to
guide and direct the rulers of the nations with your wisdom at this time of danger
and uncertainty.

Holy God...

God of glory, may our homes and communities become places where your glory is
seen and experienced in the ordinary things of life. Fill us with thankfulness in both
the sunlight and the storm.

Holy God...

We hold in prayer all those affected by the Coronavirus and especially our chaplains, volunteers and NHS health worker, nursing and medical staff, and those working in care homes...

God of glory, we pray for all those who find life an exhausting struggle, or who long for respite from pain or depression. Support them in their troubles, bring healing and reassurance, and touch them with the gentleness of your peace.

Holy God...

Holy God, welcome with merciful love those who have recently died, and shelter their loved ones, too, in the shadow of your wings.

Holy God...

God of glory, we thank you that your ascension into heaven opened the way for us to receive the Holy Spirit. Prepare our hearts each day to welcome you.

(Based on this Sunday's prayers in Living Stones, year A)

Merciful Father,

**accept these prayers,
For the sake of your Son,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

The Peace

President

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples
and said, 'Peace be with you.'

Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

John 20.19,20

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

Let us 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.**

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants, give you most humble and hearty thanks
for all your goodness and loving kindness.
We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And give us, we pray, such a sense of all your mercies
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful,
and that we show forth your praise,
not only with our lips but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.**

Blessing

The God of peace,
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of the eternal covenant,
make you perfect in every good work to do his will,
working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**