

**Welcome to this Service of Holy Communion for 10.00am
Sunday 24th May 2020**

In May 2016, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, headed up the first 'Thy Kingdom come' global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to **pray from Ascension Day to Pentecost**, for more people to come to know Jesus.



In this time of uncertainty, many more people are turning to God in prayer. We may be reassured that God is with us and we are all in this together, as his worldwide family. May the light and peace from God our Father be with you.
and bless you

**All: May God fill us with truth and joy.
Lord, direct our thoughts,
teach us to pray,
lift up our hearts to worship you
in Spirit and truth
and hope
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Hymn: 'Immortal invisible'

**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.**

**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.**

**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,
Then wither and perish, but naught changeth thee.**

**Great Father of Glory, pure Father of Light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
All praise we would render: O help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.**

Preparation for Confession

The Spirit of the Lord fills the world
and knows our every word and deed.
As the Spirit of Truth, he convicts us of all that separates us from him.
Let us open ourselves to our Risen Lord and Father,
confessing our sins in sorrow and faith.

All:

**Father we have sinned against heaven and against you.
We are not worthy to be called your children.
We turn to you again.
Have mercy on us,
bring us back to yourself,
as those who once were dead,
but now have life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen**

Absolution

May God who is both power and love,
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Easter Anthems

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us:
so let us celebrate the feast;
not with the old leaven of corruption and wickedness:
But with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
Christ once raised from the dead dies no more:
death has no more dominion over him.
in dying he died to since once for all:
in living he lives to God.

See yourselves therefore as dead to sin:
and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Christ has been raised from the dead:

the first fruits of those who sleep.
for by man has come death:
by man has come also the resurrection of the dead;
for as in Adam all die:
even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be forever. Amen.**

We say together the Collect

**Risen, ascended Lord,
as we rejoice at your triumph,
fill your Church on earth
with power and compassion,
that all who are estranged by sin, sorrow and despair
may find forgiveness, love and peace,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Hymn: 'Jesus, hope of the nations'

**Jesus, hope of the nations, Jesus comfort for all who mourn;
You are the source of heaven's hope on earth.
Jesus, light in the darkness, Jesus, truth in each circumstance.
You are the source of Heaven's light on earth.**

**You are the hope living in us, you are the Rock in whom we trust.
You are the light shining for all the world to see.
You rose from the dead, conquering fear,
Our Prince of Peace, drawing us near
Jesus our hope, living for all who will receive.
Lord we believe.**

**Jesus, hope of the nations, Jesus comfort for all who mourn;
You are the source of heaven's hope on earth.
Jesus, light in the darkness, Jesus, truth in each circumstance.
You are the source of Heaven's light on earth.**

**In history you lived and died
You broke the chains, you rose to life.**

**You are the hope living in us, you are the Rock in whom we trust.
You are the light shining for all the world to see.
You rose from the dead, conquering fear,
Our Prince of Peace, drawing us near
Jesus our hope, living for all who will receive.
Lord we believe.**

**Lord we believe
Lord we believe**

Reading from Acts 1: 6 – 14

When the disciples met together, they asked Jesus, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

Jesus said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.”

After Jesus said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

**The second New Testament reading is taken from
1 Peter 4: 12 – 14; 5: 6 - 11**

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice, inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Hymn: 'Before the throne of God'

**Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea;
a great high priest whose name is love
who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on His hands;
my name is written on His heart.
I know that while in heaven He stands,
no tongue can bid me thence depart;
no tongue can bid me thence depart.**

**When Satan tempts me to despair
and tells me of the guilt within;
upward I look and see Him there
who made an end to all my sin.**

**Because the sinless Saviour died,
my sinful soul is counted free.
For God the just is satisfied,
to look on Him and pardon me;
to look on Him and pardon me.**

**Behold Him there, the risen Lamb,
my perfect, spotless righteousness;
the great unchangeable I am,
the king of glory and of grace.
One with Himself I cannot die.
My soul is purchased by his blood.
My life is hid with Christ on high;
with Christ, my Saviour and my God;
with Christ, my Saviour and my God.**

Alleluia, alleluia

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people
and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to
John 17: 1 - 11

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

“I have revealed you^[a] to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with

certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one”.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Talk for Sunday 24th May

You may have read Revd Canon Susanna Gunner’s (Diocesan Spirituality and Discipleship Adviser) article we put online for Ascension Day. It included the picture of ‘The Ascension’ painted on the walls of Seething Church in South Norfolk. It depicts Jesus’s friends gathering beneath the Lord being taken up to Heaven, but all that is showing, is his feet with the marks of the nails from the crucifixion.

Susanna commented that perhaps the artist had in mind the wounded feet were symbolising the wounded condition of the world being carried into heaven. In the artist’s day, maybe that condition meant **the plague**, amongst other traumas. In our present day, the wounded feet could represent the global grief brought by **Covid 19** being gathered into God.

This week we’re focussing daily on ‘Thy Kingdom Come’, the ecumenical Global Prayer initiative, which has covered the period from Ascension Day to Pentecost, since it was launched in 2016. But, what do we mean by ‘**Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven**’... those words which readily roll off the tongue, forming part of the Lord’s Prayer?

Do we really want God’s Kingdom to come here on earth as it is in heaven? That suggests, according to God’s holy will, that we must be prepared to wholly adhere to the changes required of us, to become as near as humanly possible to God’s family in heaven. We must also be ready as change agents for good in the world, where, now, we are part of His family

Kingdom on earth. Actually, we have all recently experienced that this is quite powerfully possible.

The lockdown has brought tragedies and traumas and huge anxieties, which still roll out ahead of us into the unknown. However, there has also been a revival of community spirit and compassion and selfless giving in the face of it all.

The releasing of a degree of lockdown has brought concerns for the lack of social distancing. It has also reminded us of all that we take for granted. We have realised how we appreciate the possibility of going when and where we choose, within our circumstances, to meet up with whoever we like. How many of us may have said in past times of exhaustion “I want the world to stop, so I can get off?” Well, to some extent, it has. Or we’ve fretted over the ecological and global warming issues that surround our lives and challenge our world...God’s world? Suddenly, the air is unbelievably clearer, to hear the beautiful birdsong.

These times are totally beyond our control and brought about by something we didn’t know existed, couldn’t see and cannot yet cure. However, God can inspire and guide us through all our unknowns, through the power of the Holy Spirit. That same Spirit helps us to understand and see. It reveals to us truth way beyond what we now know. Despite what many sceptics say, believing is not all about seeing. We live our lives far more by faith, not sight, than we may think.

So, like the friends of Jesus, we mustn’t just wait standing still, looking up into the sky, but continue putting our thoughts and prayers together, as we, like them, go forwards in hope. The Apostle Paul writing to the Romans described hope as **“not a disappointing fantasy, because we can now experience the endless love of God cascading into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who lives in us!”**

The Lord ascended, but he gave the Holy Spirit to descend on the disciples and to inhabit them. That same power of the Holy Spirit, is amongst and inhabiting us, inspiring us to believe in what is far beyond anything we know or see or understand. The Apostle Peter described as a fiery ordeal the suffering which the disciples may experience. But he prompted them to consider that, as participating in Jesus’s own suffering....the wounded

state, which would be taken away completely, when we are fully in the kingdom of God, which has arrived here on earth as it is in heaven.

Paul continues: **“But that’s not all! Even in times of trouble we have a joyful confidence, knowing that our pressures will develop in us patient endurance. And patient endurance will refine our character, and proven character leads us back to hope”.**

Sometimes we may flounder and feel overwhelmed, yet we’re reminded by the Apostle Peter, that the Holy Spirit will make us strong and steadfast to persevere, if we trust in our God. There are many in our communities who have lost their jobs and incomes and it’s so hard to put food on the table. Many are worried about contracting the Virus and anxious, amongst many other things, concerning when is the right time for children to return to school. Our ‘Families Matter Keyworker’, Marianne Starling, along with others, has been at the heart of serving the vulnerable in Watton and thinking how to reach out in care, with tried and tested and new ways, both online and otherwise. Many are experiencing setbacks. The disciples knew what that was like, losing Jesus physically from amongst them. But when he ascended to the Father, the truth of Jesus’s promises to them must suddenly have rung true which he prophesied in that Gospel reading:

“Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you and they believed that you sent me.” Jesus had to leave earth, for the disciples to fully receive the power of Heaven working in and through them, wherever they would go on as we, like them, go forward to serve him, with confidence and trust. Jesus’s final words in the Gospel today were **“Holy Father, protect them by the power of your Name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one”.**

We are part of the wounded, the people and the created world itself. Yet, through God’s Holy Spirit, we are transformed into something wonderful, the supernaturally empowered people of God, forming His kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven, until heaven and earth and God and his people are fully one. As we say in hope: **“For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory. For ever and ever. Amen”.**

Musical Reflection: ‘Thy Kingdom Come’

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
who made all things?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ,
who redeemed the world?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God?

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

Intercessions led by Revd Kyla

Risen Lord

You have brought us your peace.

The sure and certain promise
of your continued presence with us.

May we use this time during “Thy Kingdom Come” prayer initiative leading up to Pentecost, to devote ourselves to prayer, praying for an outpouring of your Holy Spirit upon this, our community of faith, that in turn, we may be reflections of your love both in our homes and in the wider community around us.

Teach us to listen to you Lord,

to hear clearly,

to recognise that you speak in many different ways
and through many different people.

Teach us that through our listening
we may grow your church,
empower your church
as the people within it,
to bring your love and light to others.
Loving God, give us courage
to step into the Spirit-filled mystery.
Bring us guidance
and prayerful patience.
In our discernment
help us to follow Jesus' example and look up to heaven,
Knowing that you are with us.

All: Amen

We pray for leaders around the world,
but particularly for our government and leaders
here in the UK
as they try to find the safest and most practical way
out of lockdown.
We remember all those who are in isolation,
separated from their families and friends.
We pray for those who are lonely
and who have no one to help them.
We pray for the confused and unsure.
We pray for all those who are sick
and for those who care for them.
We lift before you all our keyworkers,
particularly our NHS employees,
our police and fire services,
our teachers preparing to bring children back to school.
We pray for everyone returning to work,
for those who cannot return yet
and for all those whose future remains uncertain.
We pray for the poor, the neglected,
for all who are struggling in any way.
For all those who are down at this time
we pray that
they may know the power of your ascension,
finding in your love true hope
and the courage to look forward.

Risen and Ascended Lord

All: Bring us your peace

We pray for Your worldwide church
as we seek to find new ways to connect
with our wider communities.

Closer to home

we pray for our Bishops Graham, Alan and Jonathan
here in the Norwich Diocese.

We pray for everyone who is working tirelessly behind the scenes
to bring continuity and facilitate prayerful presence
across the county.

We give thanks for everyone at St. Mary's
who is praying, working, singing, shopping, phoning
writing, recording, emailing at this time to keep us
all connected to each other, and to you.

In particular, we pray for continued strength
for Gerry and Dave

and give thanks for their loving care for us and for this parish of Watton and for
Thrextton

Risen and Ascended Lord

All: Bring us your peace

We give our heartfelt thanks that you are always with us,
that we can rest in your peace.

We lift before you our families,
our friends and our neighbours
praying for their needs and wellbeing.

In a few moments of quiet

we pray for all those who have asked for our prayers
knowing that you hear our petitions
and trusting in your abundant goodness

...

Risen and Ascended Lord

All: Bring us your peace

Risen and Ascended Jesus

We rejoice with you this day and every day
that your peace and your pardon was so freely given to us
in love.

We join our prayers with yours
that your kingdom may come here on earth.
And we pray that our loved ones departed may rejoice with you in heaven
Risen and Ascended Lord
All: Bring us your peace

Merciful Father
**All: Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen**

The Peace

Jesus says: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
If you love me, rejoice because I am going to the Father".

Alleluia!

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

The Lord is here.

All: His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is right to praise you, Father, Lord of all creation;
in your love you made us for yourself.
When we turned away
you did not reject us,

but came to meet us in your Son.

**All: You embraced us as your children
and welcomed us to sit and eat with you.**

In Christ you shared our life
that we might live in him and he in us.

**All: He opened his arms of love upon the cross
and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin.**

On the night he was betrayed,
at supper with his friends
he took bread, and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to them, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

**All: Father, we do this in remembrance of him:
his body is the bread of life.**

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,
he gave you thanks, and said:
Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins;
do this in remembrance of me.

**All: Father, we do this in remembrance of him:
his blood is shed for all.**

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory,
send your Holy Spirit that this bread and this wine
may be to us the body and blood of your dear Son.

**All: As we eat and drink these holy gifts
make us one in Christ, our risen Lord.**

With your whole Church throughout the world
we offer you this sacrifice of praise
and lift our voice to join the eternal song of heaven:

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We say together The Lord's Prayer:

**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.**

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**Though we are many,
we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

The body of Christ given for us. **Amen.**

The blood of Christ shed for us. **Amen.**

God of truth,
thank you for feeding us with the body
and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Strengthen our faith,
that we may grow in love for you
and for each other;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord.
Amen.

Song: 'Hosanna, Praise is rising'

**Praise is rising, eyes are turning to You.
We turn to you.
Hope is stirring, hearts are yearning for You.
We long for You.**

**'Cause when we see You,
we find strength to face the day.
and in Your presence
all our fears are washed away,
washed away.**

**Hosanna, hosanna,
You are the God who saves us,
worthy of all our praises.**

Hear the sound of hearts returning to You
we turn to you.
In your Kingdom, broken lives are made new.
You make all things new.

'Cause when we see You,
we find strength to face the day.
and in Your presence
all our fears are washed away,
washed away.

Hosanna, hosanna,
You are the God who saves us,
worthy of all our praises.
Hosanna, hosanna,
come have your way among us.
We welcome you here, Lord Jesus.

Notices:

Blessing:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
through the power of the Holy Spirit;
and may the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you
and all those you care for now and for always. **Amen.**

Amen.

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