

2026 05 17 WORSHIP AT HOME

Dear friends,

This week we explore the turning point of the Ascension. The Ascension can be seen as both great news and sad news. The great news is that Jesus' mission is accomplished – he reigns as King. For the disciples, the sadness is that Jesus is no longer with them physically. It is a turning point.

I hope that the coming of Spring and the prospect of better weather is cheering for all. Wishing you every blessing, Margaret

Call to worship

Come – for the risen Lord invites you.

Come – for the Holy Spirit seeks you.

Come – for the Creator calls you. Come to worship. Amen.

Lord Jesus, by your ascension you left our world, but you did not abandon us.

You promised the Spirit – who comes to us and makes a home within us,

who reminds us of you,

who guides and protects us

and surrounds us with God's love.

Help us to be aware of your presence today. Amen.

Almighty God – we watch and wait – we come to share, to know, to learn.

Almighty God – we look and see – and fail to see.

Almighty God – we shield our eyes – dare we see?

Almighty God – you were, you are, you always will be, forever and eternity. Amen.

The words to 'Alleluia! Sing to Jesus' by William Chatterton Dix [1837-1898] Singing the Faith 568

1 Alleluia! Sing to Jesus, his the sceptre, his the throne.

Alleluia! His the triumph, his the victory alone.

Hark! the songs of peaceful Zion thunder like a mighty flood;

Jesus, out of every nation, has redeemed us by his blood.

2 Alleluia! Not as orphans are we left in sorrow now.

Alleluia! He is near us, faith believes, nor questions how.

Though the cloud from sight received him when the forty days were o'er,

Shall our hearts forget his promise, 'I am with you evermore'?

3 Alleluia! Bread of angels, thou on earth our food, our stay.

Alleluia! Here the sinful flee to thee from day to day.

Intercessor, friend of sinners, earth's Redeemer, plead for me,

Where the songs of all the sinless sweep across the crystal sea.

4 Alleluia! King eternal, thee the Lord of lords we own.

Alleluia! Born of Mary, earth thy footstool, heaven thy throne.

Thou within the veil hast entered, robed in flesh, our great High Priest;

thou on earth both priest and victim in the eucharistic feast.

Prayer.

Holy God, above and beyond, and yet within us – how can we not adore you?

Holy God, ready to receive us, to embrace and enfold us – how can we not adore you?

Holy God, we do not always understand you, your being, your power, your love, your guidance – and yet something within us melds with you. Our belief is there, our faith is there, because of what we feel and know and understand of you.

Our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven to the confusion of the disciples – yet you did not leave them, you do not leave us – you are forever within us, before us and behind us. You are forever urging us on to see the bigger picture – the wider vision – a greater vista.

Holy God, above and beyond and yet within us – we adore you and worship you. Amen.

You listen, O God, to our sorrows and our sadness, to our faltering words and our half-formed understanding of your way, your truth and your life. You listen to our confessions, our yearnings and our pleadings when we acknowledge that we have failed you, failed others and failed ourselves. O God – in this moment – in sorrow and in shame, we offer you our failings and our faults, knowing that you hear and lift the burden from us. Amen.

Almighty God, you hear our confessions – you feel our pain – you sense the way we are disturbed – and you assure us that we are forgiven. As in the blink of an eye you wash away our sins and lift the burdens from us.

Thank you, Lord. Amen.

Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come and 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.

Acts 1: 6-14 taken from Holy Bible, New living Translation Copyright 1996 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

When the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him: ‘Lord, are you going to free Israel now and restore our kingdom?’

‘The Father sets those dates,’ he replied, ‘and they are not for you to know. But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere – in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’

It was not long after he said this that he was taken up into the sky while they were watching, and he disappeared into a cloud. As they were straining their eyes to see him, two white-robed men suddenly stood there among them. They said: ‘Men of Galilee, why are you standing here staring at the sky? Jesus has been taken away from you into heaven. And someday, just as you saw him go, he will return.’ The apostles were at the Mount of Olives when this happened, so they walked the kilometre back to Jerusalem. Then they went to the upstairs room of the house where they were staying. Here is the list of those who were present:

Peter – John – James – Andrew – Philip – Thomas – Bartholomew – Matthew – James [son of Alphaeus] – Simon [the zealot] – and Judas [son of James].

They all met together continually for prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus.

Comment: Only Luke tells of an Ascension Day. The cloud and the men in white robes are a sign of heavenly revelation. Luke sees Jesus' ascension as a turning point.

To fulfil their commission as his worldwide witnesses, Jesus' disciples will need a power that lifts them beyond their own resources. So, they wait prayerfully. The community that refuses to forget Jesus is now enlarged to include members of Jesus' family alongside the 11 disciples and the Galilean women witnesses.

The dynamic of prayer keeps Jesus' memory alive, as they come to understand the meaning of what has happened around them.

Prayer

Thank you, O God, that your wisdom is way beyond our imagining, for we humans can make such a mess of things. We yearn so often for the here and now, for the easy ways – but we thank you, Lord, that you see beyond the here and now and are not tempted by our easy options.

Thank you that when we set our eyes on the wrong things, you gently divert our vision to see what you would have us see.

Thank you that when we hear something that sounds more pleasing to us, your Word remains strong, steadfast and secure no matter what we do and seek to do.

Thank you for Scriptures which tell your story through the ages – for the prophets and teachers who bring you to life for us, who reveal your being to us.

Thank goodness, O God, that today and every day you are there – you are here for us. Amen.

We remember Jesus, the Glorious One, and we pray:

for those who live drab and grey lives;

for those just beginning to sense a more glorious way;

for those who find it difficult to believe that life could be glorious;

for those who want to see God's glory but don't know where to look;

for ourselves that we might respond to Jesus as the Glorious One

and be ready to point to God's glory so that others might know him. Amen.

Close

Send us on into the week ahead, Lord, waiting expectantly for your Spirit,

looking for signs of your presence within us,

looking for signs of your work in action.

Support us, strengthen us, establish us,

now and in all the weeks to come,

that we may show your glory and know your blessing and peace. Amen.

May God's blessing – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – be with each one of us, and with those whom we love, and with all for who we pray, this day and for ever more. Amen.

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