

## Ascension Day & the Sunday after Ascension (Easter 7) 2020

Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> May Ascension Day What we should have had!	Holy Communion	Acts 1 vv 1-11 p1092 Luke 24 vv 44-53 p1062	A&M 87 Hail the Day <i>Gloria in Excelsis Deo</i> 130 Where High the Heavenly 262 Alleluia Sing to Jesus 141 The Head that Once
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### Reasons for Celebrating the Ascension of our Lord

1. Jesus, the Son of God, is in Heaven receiving the worship which is His due because He is the Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity.
2. Jesus is receiving the worship which He has earned because He is obedient to God the Father even unto death and because He loves us so much that He was prepared to die for us.
3. The Risen, Ascended, Glorified Lord Jesus pours out upon us, the Church and the World, the gift of the Holy Spirit. He has not left us comfortless, but is with us to the end of time.
4. He entrusts us with the task of proclaiming the Good News to the whole of creation.
5. He prays for us and with us to the Heavenly Father.
6. Through Him, our prayers reach the Throne of Grace.
7. He has opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers so that, our sins forgiven through His Cross, crucified and risen with Him in Baptism, we shall reign with Him in glory in all eternity.

24 <sup>th</sup> May Sunday after Ascension / Easter 7 What we should have had!	9.30 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 1 vv 6-14 p1092 I Peter 4 v12 – 5 v11 p1220 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085	SoF 9 All Hail the Power <i>Gloria in Excelsis Deo</i> 390 (with SA) Meekness & Majesty Psalm 68 107 Fight the Good Fight 108 (tune?) Fill Thou My 593 What a Friend
24 <sup>th</sup> May Sunday after Ascension / Easter 7 What we should have had!	11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 1 vv 6-14 p1092 I Peter 4 v12 – 5 v11 p1220 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085	EH <b>130</b> Hail the Day <i>Gloria in Excelsis Deo</i> Psalm <b>68</b> <b>132</b> (tune 201 Everton) See the Conqueror <b>129</b> O Christ, our Hope <b>271</b> Alleluya Sing to Jesus <b>134</b> The Head that Once

A sense of anticipation. What do you look forward to? A lot of people are looking forward to an end to lockdown and the return to something like normality, though what that will mean depends on a lot of things that we can't yet predict. Will the virus become less virulent as some other viruses have done in the past (including the Spanish flu a hundred years ago)? Shall we develop a safe and effective vaccine? Might we find a cure for those who suffer the worst manifestations of the disease? We don't know. We just have to trust God for the final outcome.

What do people look forward to in normal times? Going on holiday? A new job? Going to a new school? Leaving school? Meeting someone you love? A trip to the cinema to see a film you've been looking forward to? What do we anticipate and hope for?

Anticipation, looking forward, is very much the theme of today's service. God will bring His people home. He will make them clean. Their sins will be forgiven. He will pour out His Spirit upon them and so transform them that it will become their nature to keep His commandments. Good people do good things. People who know that they are loved by God and love God and other people don't transgress God's commandments. If we love God, we're not good because we fear the consequences of doing wrong. We do what's right simply because it is our nature as the people of God, *changed from glory into glory*, transformed into the likeness of Him Who is love incarnate.

Jesus ascends into Heaven, but His disciples will receive power from on high, the Holy Spirit, so that we can complete His work on earth and proclaim the Good News to the whole world. This same Jesus, Whose Ascension into Heaven we celebrate, will return *in like manner*. He has gone to prepare a place for us and He will come again and receive us to Himself. There will be new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Jesus ascends to the Father and bestows on us the gift of eternal life. We look forward. We anticipate. Our lives are a journey towards the Holy City, the Promised Land. So we ask in the Ascension Day collect *that like as we do believe thy only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell*. We're already there in spirit by God's grace and our spirit draws us on to our eternal home.

And yet we mustn't assume that the journey will always be easy or that we shall always see the way clearly. The apostles are often confused. They often get things wrong and misunderstand Jesus. They disagree among themselves. They get discouraged. In today's reading from St Peter's first letter, the apostle whom Jesus nicknamed the rock, talks about Christians facing problems in this world. We all do. Peter gives a lot of advice for individual Christians and about their role in the Church and our responsibilities towards one another, but one verse stands out to me and has done for years. It is a verse to learn by heart and to cling onto. I Peter 5<sup>7</sup>: *Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you*. On the Sunday after Ascension (bearing in mind our Ascension Day aspiration *that like as we do believe thy only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell*), we pray, *We beseech thee, leave us not comfortless; but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our Saviour Christ is gone before*. We are on a journey and we joyfully anticipate the happiest ending of all, but the journey can be tough and we depend on God as much for our everyday lives as we do for our ultimate destination.

**I Peter 5**<sup>6</sup>: Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:  
<sup>7</sup> Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. <sup>8</sup> Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: <sup>9</sup> Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. <sup>10</sup> But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. <sup>11</sup> To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.