

24<sup>th</sup> May 2020 - Last Sunday of Easter  
Sunday after Ascension

**Welcome.** We're happy that you have joined us. Our buildings are closed, our congregations are scattered, but the Church of God is still active.

**Thought for the day**

*Having gone through death and accomplished his work on earth Jesus' risen life will take him out of the world in one sense but only in order to be right in the centre of faithful lives across the world and the centuries.*

**COLLECT** a special prayer set for today  
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.

**A reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Acts 1.6-14**

When the apostles had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.' Then they returned to

Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

How far is "a Sabbath day's journey" (Acts 1:12)? It is about 2/3 of a mile (1 kilometre), the distance that Jewish leaders limited people to journey on the Sabbath. Anything further was deemed to be "work." Acts 1:12 isn't saying that the apostles respected this man-made law, but simply indicating the distance between Jerusalem and the mount called Olivet.

**Psalm 68.1-10, 33-36**

**Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth;**

- 1 Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee before him.
- 2 Let them vanish like smoke when the wind drives it away; as the wax melts at the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.
- 3 But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; let them also be merry and joyful.
- 4 Sing to God, sing praises to his name; exalt him who rides upon the heavens; Yahweh is his name, rejoice before him!
- 5 Father of orphans, defender of widows, God in his holy habitation!
- 6 God gives the solitary a home and brings forth prisoners into freedom; but the rebels shall live in dry places.
- 7 O God, when you went forth before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,

8 The earth shook and the skies poured down rain, at the presence of God, the God of Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

9 You sent a gracious rain, O God, upon your inheritance; you refreshed the land when it was weary.

10 Your people found their home in it; in your goodness, O God, you have made provision for the poor.

33 Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth; sing praises to the Lord.

34 He rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens; he sends forth his voice, his mighty voice.

35 Ascribe power to God; his majesty is over Israel; his strength is in the skies.

36 How wonderful is God in his holy places! the God of Israel giving strength and power to his people! Blessèd be God!

**Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth;**

**A reading from the first letter of Peter**

1 Peter 4.12-14; 5.6-11

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

But rejoice in so far as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed.

If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time.

Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.

To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

**A reading from the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.** 17.1-11

Jesus looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.' This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime. Martin Luther**

**PRAYERS** *please add your own prayers and petitions*

As the church of God let us be still as we pray together:- God of glory we offer you ourselves and the gifts you have given us. Help us to stand firm in our faith. May we live with your life in us

God of glory, we ask that our homes, towns, villages, become places where your glory can be experienced in the ordinary things of everyday life. Help us to be filled with thankfulness for all the little joys of life. May we live with your life in us.

God of glory, may your Kingdom come and your will be done on earth. To the leaders of the nations give your wisdom and a longing for peace. . Bless and guide our own government and the scientists and experts who advise them, lead them into ways that are right and true. May they work with your life in them.

God of glory, we make special prayer for all the essential workers, who often place their own lives at risk, for our safety and wellbeing. Bring support to them and to their families who worry for their safety. May they feel the power of your life in them.

God of glory, we pray for those who are ill, anxious, or fearful. Support them in their troubles, bringing healing and reassurance.

We sorrow for those who have recently died, often suddenly, maybe unprepared. Gather them into your loving arms and shelter their loved ones too. May they live with your life in them.

God of glory, teach us to understand death in the context of your eternity.

We thank you that through your Ascension into heaven the way was opened for us to receive the Holy Spirit. Prepare our hearts each day to welcome you into our lives.

Merciful Father, accept our prayers for the sake of your son our Saviour, Jesus Christ

THOUGHTS

Galileo the Italian astronomer was asked How he could reconcile the vastness of the Universe with the idea of the care of God for every one of his creatures. He replied " The sun which has all those planets revolving around it is able to ripen the smallest bunch of grapes as though it had nothing else to do in the Universe".

Words written by a young, unknown Jew on the walls of a Warsaw ghetto:-

***I believe in the sun, even if it does not shine.  
I believe in love even if I do not feel it.  
I believe in God even if I do not see Him,***

**Kindness has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence or learning  
Frederick W Faber**

NEXT SUNDAY 31<sup>st</sup> May IS PENTECOST

**Church Wardens at Stainton**

**Vernon Clare 01642 592186**

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**Barbara Sowerby 01642 591532**

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**If you need a priest urgently  
please phone the Area Dean,  
Revd Canon John Ford 01642 964664**