

SUNDAY WORSHIP AT HOME 24th May 2020 at 10.30
ALDERSGATE SUNDAY and ASCENSION SUNDAY

Opening Prayer

Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds—his name is the LORD—be exultant before him. (Psalm 68)

As I come before you God help me to praise your name. Focus my mind on your presence with me and remind me that I am joined together with people around the world worshipping at home. May your name be glorified in our worship. Amen.

Let us pray together

Everyday God,

We praise you that you are with us in every part of our lives and you never stop loving us.

We praise you for the world you created and the beautiful things we see around us.

We praise you that you came to earth in Jesus to show us in person how much you care about us and the world we live in. As we remember your ascension we thank you that you did not leave us alone but sent your Spirit so that we can always know you are with us.

You invite us to join in your work of loving people and the planet and we pray that you show us how we can share in your mission of love. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

LET'S SING TOGETHER

O thou who camest from above
The pure celestial fire to impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart.

There let it for Thy glory burn
With inextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return,
In humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
To work, and speak, and think for Thee;
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up Thy gift in me.

Ready for all Thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death Thy endless mercies seal,
And make the sacrifice complete.

A thought for Aldersgate Sunday

On 24th May 1738 John Wesley attended a group meeting in Aldersgate where he received an

experience of assurance of salvation in which he felt his heart was strangely warmed. We thank God for igniting the spark of love in John and Charles Wesley and for their calling to share God's love with others. A prayer - Loving God, Warm our hearts that we trust in you. Renew and inspire us to take part in new opportunities to share your love, even in difficulty through the outpouring of your Holy Spirit. AMEN

Acts 1: 6-14 The Ascension of Jesus

So when they 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.'

Matthew 28 vs 20 And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Time to Reflect

They hadn't really had a chance to think about it. Surely it's the most human thing in the world to keep watching the space where someone was, to need some time to adjust to a huge change in the features of your everyday life?

There has started to be talk in the media about a "new normal". Many of us had already beginning to realise that things will not quickly or immediately go back to exactly how they were. Our lives are going to look different for a significant period of time, or for some of us forever if we, like the disciples, have lost people who made up a big part of our lives.

Jesus' disciples have a promise, of the Holy Spirit to help them in this 'new normal', but they don't know when the Spirit will come. Meanwhile they witnessed Jesus going away from them. What did they understand about what we call the Ascension? It says they looked up, towards heaven, what did they think about 'heaven'.

It should help us, if we think of 'heaven' as the presence of God - Heaven is where God is. Of course God is present everywhere in what we call the world,

but God is often unrecognised, denied, opposed and even hated. When I pray the line of the Lord's prayer - "thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" - I think of the areas of the world where God's Kingdom is witnessed and His will is done as heavenly places (and every part of the world have these through people who love through His Spirit) - and as I pray I ask that this wonderful heavenly love will flood all parts of God's earth so that one day heaven will reign on earth.

So let's not think of heaven as somewhere far off, or something that is going to come to us - or we to it - in some mysterious time in the future. Wherever there is a remorseful thought, an act of love, a kind unselfish word or action, however simple, there is the Spirit, there is heaven. We thank God therefore that on this earth we have a foretaste of the Eternal Heavenly Kingdom, waiting for us when this life, in this body, is finished.

We sit and think quietly for a little while

A time of prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before you in prayer for your world, your children and ourselves.

We pray for the world that you have made. We thank you for the renewal of creation springing up as human activity has been restricted. We pray that we will learn to value these gifts and to live more gently in the future.

We pray for the leaders of nations making impossible decisions on our behalf. We pray that they will speak and act with integrity and protect those who are most vulnerable.

We pray for our church communities. We bring you our sadness at not being able to meet together and we thank you for the people finding it easier to explore faith at this time. We pray that we will find new ways to reach out to the world.

We pray for the people we miss. Our friends and families and those we long to see face to face. We pray for safety and protection for our loved ones.

We pray for those who have lost someone they love and haven't been able to say goodbye. We pray that they will know the comfort of your loving presence and that you will show us how to reach out in love and friendship.

We pray for ourselves in these difficult days shared by so many people but also lived in isolation. Help us to know your protecting love and to live in the power of your Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

The Lord's Prayer Our Father

Hymn

LOVE DIVINE, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down!
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then Thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee!
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place;
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.

A prayer of blessing

Holy God,
be with me as I leave this time of worship.
May I know your presence in my every day and live
your message of love and hope. Amen

