

Swaythling Parish

Sunday 24 May

Sunday after Ascension

(Seventh Sunday of Easter)

Welcome

Below is a service sheet for you to use for this week's Sunday morning service. This is based on a service that is being broadcast as a video on Sunday morning through the YouTube channel. It will be available on YouTube from 10am on Sunday, (and afterwards). Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on YouTube to find and view it.

If do not have access to watch the YouTube video, we hope you will be able to use these words and join us too in spirit.

Greeting

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
And also with you.

Alleluia. Christ is Risen
He is Risen indeed. Alleluia

Words of welcome and introduction from Peter:

Three days ago the church across the world remembered the account of Jesus returning to heaven. A moment when the followers of Jesus were left, in a physical sense at least, to get on with the business of living out Jesus's powerful message. We will think more about that a little later in the service today, but I hope that this whole service provides a helpful marker in this week, as we imagine us joined together, not in one place, but as one family of God.

Prayer of Thanks

In amidst the challenges of this time there is real value in recognising the positives, and we offer a moment now when we recognise the good things.

For kindness we have received:

we thank you, Lord.

For those who have helped others:

we thank you, Lord.

For the chance to play our part in helping people through this time:

we thank you, Lord.

Ann Lewin

Hymn: Immortal, Invisible, God only wise

1 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.

2 Unresting, unchanging, 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.

3 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,
And wither and perish, but nought changeth Thee.

4 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!

J G Whittier (1807-1892)

The Confession

When children come to parents and say I promise never to do it again, the parents normally understand the limits of the promise.

People used to joke that confession is used to get the things we get wrong off our chest so we can go and do them again. Certainly, speaking for myself, I enter confession knowing there are mistakes I have made and in no way naïve about whether I will make them or other different mistakes again, but that doesn't make the commitment to do so any less real or honest. I know that I can say sorry to God, because with all my faults God loves me still. So let us say sorry now.

For the people I have hurt and those I have failed to love.

Lord, have mercy
Lord, have mercy.

For the times I have let myself and others down.

Christ have mercy
Christ, have mercy

For the choices I have made and the things I have done that I regret.

Lord, have mercy
Lord, have mercy.

May the God of love
Bring us back to himself,
Forgive us our sins,
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Gloria

For this special Sunday, following on from the Ascension Day last Thursday, when we remember Jesus returning to Gods glory, we will be using in the video a prayer called the Gloria, a prayer of praise. You are invited to say this (or sing if you know the tune)

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,
Almighty God and Father.
We worship you, we give you thanks
We praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Son of the Father
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

Every week we use a prayer, as do people all over the Church of England, which links to our Sunday theme, called the collect. Do join us in praying it now.

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
may find forgiveness and know your peace,
to the glory of God the Father.

Amen

Readings

Acts 1: 6-14

The apostles are still hoping that Jesus will be the Messiah they were expecting, and restore the authority of the Jewish people. Jesus promises that they will be empowered to witness to him beyond the boundaries of Jewish influence. (Read by Peter in the video).

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.'

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.

For the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

John 17: 1-17

In what is sometimes called The High Priestly Prayer, Jesus prays that his followers will know God, and be kept safe from evil. (Read by Karen in the video).

After Jesus had spoken these words, he 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. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

A Reflection from Rev Peter Dockree

Have you ever travelled on a long journey in a car or something else, and asked the driver, “are we nearly there yet?” It’s that question that has been asked by millions over many years. Perhaps it’s a similar question to the one many of us want to ask now; “are we nearly out of lockdown yet, what day will be able to go back to school, return to work, eat in the local pub, give my friends or family a hug?”

We want answers, dates, times, and definites; but we can’t have them, no one knows. In Jesus’ time they had been waiting for the end of a lockdown of sorts, an occupation of Jerusalem by the Romans, a time of great hardship and suffering; and Jesus was

understood to be offering an end to all of that, even although what was actually on offer wasn’t really that at all, it was more a spiritual promise. People wanted answers, times, dates, certainty, but Jesus directs them away from these questions. *No one will know the time and place*, he says. Rather he points them to getting on with being his witnesses in Jerusalem, and to the end of the earth. In the reading from John’s Gospel too, Jesus says to God *I glorified you on earth*. If we are seeking to follow Jesus then we are called to Glorifying God in the present time, in the place we find ourselves.

I don’t know about you, but even in ordinary times, I spend too much time counting down to something that is coming, the weeks to a holiday, the days to my next day off, the hours till I can stop and sit down, the minutes till something ends. And yet I am called to be a presence in the moment I have before me, to be love in the encounter right now, to find beauty, or purpose, or value, in the meeting, the conversation, or the task before me. When Jesus left to heaven, those who watched him go stood waiting, staring at where he had gone, and they were told to go home, stop waiting for him to come back, he won’t come back in the way he left anyway. We are called not to look constantly onwards for the next things, for the promise ahead, but to live as people of Christ now.

Prayers of Intercession

Written and read by Ruth in the video

Thank you God for helping us through this peculiar time.

We pray for all NHS and keyworkers, as they are working very hard to support and protect us at the moment. We especially pray for those who have

had to live away from their families to protect them. We pray for teachers as they work out how to welcome children back to school in a safe way – please give them wisdom.

We pray that as a world we can work together, with all the skills and knowledge you have given us, to control the coronavirus and make sure it doesn’t overwhelm the different health systems in the world. God help all world leaders to make the right decisions – enlighten those who have not taken action towards this coronavirus and help everyone affected by their decisions.

We pray for people who are struggling with finances at the moment and ask that they would have everything they need at this time. Thank you for all those organisations working to support them.

We pray for those who are on their own and we hope they will not be lonely. We pray for crises that are not related to coronavirus – homelessness, climate change, poverty and wars – these and other world issues are still going on, there’s not a pause button to use while we face this big crisis.

God we pray for all of us because we are all struggling in this time – several major events such as Easter, birthdays and other celebrations have had to be done in a different way. We find it hard to live with uncertainty – please give us your peace.

Thank you Lord for listening to our prayers and loving us. Help us to see where we can be part of the answer to our prayers.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ Amen.
Amen.

Hymn: Brother, sister, let me serve you

1. Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant, too.

2. We are pilgrims on a journey,
Fellow travellers on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

3. I will hold the Christlight for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

4. I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow,
till we've seen this journey through.

5. When we sing to God in heaven,
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

6. Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant, too.

R Gillard (b. 1953) © 1977 Scripture in Song

Closing Blessing

May God,
who comes to us
in the things of this world,
bless your eyes
and be in your seeing.

May Christ,
who looks upon you
with deepest love,
bless your eyes
and widen your gaze.

May the Spirit,
who perceives what is
and what may yet be,
bless your eyes
and sharpen your vision.

May the Sacred Three
bless your eyes
and cause you to see.

In the Sanctuary of Women, © J Richardson.
<http://paintedprayerbook.com/>

And the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and
Holy Spirit, be with you now and always. **Amen.**

*Thank you for joining in with us. If we can support you
in any way, please get in touch. 023 8055 4231
peter.dockree@outlook.com*

*The Sunday Service Video will be on YouTube at 10am
on Sunday. Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on
YouTube to find and view it.*