



praise. There is none before you, none above you. Your glory is ever before us and this morning we are glad to take our place alongside all those who even now, on earth and in heaven, are raising their voices to exalt You, their minds to know You and their hearts to love You. May our worship be a fitting offering – a gift in return to the giver of every good and perfect gift. In Jesus' name, we pray; Amen.

Join others in our parish and beyond on Sundays, from 10:30am (or at any other time that suits you) to worship God, in the comfort of your home.

JOINT ONLINE PENTECOST SUNDAY SERVICE

Please note that 31 May 2020 is Pentecost Sunday. Our new Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair invites us, congregations of the Church of Scotland and other people of God in Scotland and beyond to join together, from 10:00am, in a joint online worship service. Special efforts are being made to help all members without computers, iPads, tablets or internet connection to access this service using their mobile phones. I encourage all members and friends of our church to join this service. **Please note we'll not send out written worship services on 31st May.** Zoom and written worship services resume on Sunday, 7 June 2020.

JOINT PENTECOST SERVICE TRAILER

<https://youtu.be/YhPcwDdXe3o>



God is good... all the time

Opening prayer

Lord of all time and space, who was and is and is to come, we worship and adore You for You alone are worthy of our

Ascension Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus Christ, right before your Ascension into heaven you told your apostles to be your witnesses to the ends of the earth upon receiving the Holy Spirit. May we be similarly inspired to spread your Gospel message in word and deed, according to your will for us. And may we do so prudently, joyfully, respectfully and with your help, guidance and grace! And remembering this glorious event, help us to seek what is above, Heaven, where you are seated at the right hand of God the Father!

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

Tribute to
Ravi
Zacharia



https://youtu.be/68_XNJ6zXWw

Bible Reading: Acts 1:6-11 The Ascension of Jesus

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' 7 He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 8 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.'

9 When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. 11 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.'

**As we gaze on your kingly brightness,
so our faces display your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory;
mirrored here may our lives
tell your story,
Shine on me, shine on me.**

'Shine Jesus Shine' by Graham Kendrick

Brief Reflection

In our Gospel reading last Sunday (John 14:15-21), we heard Jesus' promise to give His followers another Advocate, the Spirit of truth. Today (three days after Ascension Day), we hear Jesus repeat this promise, shortly before His ascension. His followers who, hardly 50 days ago feared they had lost Him on Good Friday, now have to face the reality of life without Him. Jesus is leaving them, but He is not leaving them alone. **In fact, He is not leaving them at all.** He will be with them, closely and through the Holy Spirit (John 14:18-19).

In addition to His promise to send the Holy Spirit, we hear (in our reading today) Jesus entrusting His followers with the responsibility of carrying on His mission to establish the Kingdom of God here on earth. He says, '**... you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth**' (vs. 8). Notably, it is to this ordinary group of men and women (and, I should add, to others like you and me who have followed Jesus) that Jesus entrusts the Kingdom business of sharing the Good News of Jesus, in word and through deeds.

As Jesus' time on earth, in a human body, ends, the mission of His followers begins and involves the call and privileges to join the missionary God in His work here on earth. As Pope Francis rightly reminds us all, '**every follower of Christ** (*emphasis is mine*) is a missionary to the extent that **we** have experienced the love of God in Jesus'. We all have a message to share namely, that Jesus saves and heals and that, "at His ascension, Jesus Christ the son God 'entered Heaven and He keeps the door open for humanity to enter" (*Oswald Chambers*). Notably, and especially at this time, there is in the account of the ascension of Christ a message of comfort

for all in church who worry about the future of our Church. Tim Keller (who I quoted last week) uses the following words to present this message very well to us, "Jesus controls all things for the church, and therefore we can face the world with peace in our hearts . . . He's at the right hand of God as the executive director of history, directing everything for the benefit of His Church..." To these and other words of comfort and hope, I say, Amen.

Prayer for Others during this (Mental Health Awareness) Week

Calls to the support sites for Mental health have increased by 30% during this time. We are aware there are people in our Parish and beyond who are struggling. Please join me to say the prayer below, written by Evelyn Robertson from Bishopbriggs.

Loving God, this is Mental Health Awareness Week with a theme of kindness. We give You thanks for all the acts of random kindness people have bestowed on us not just over the last few weeks but over time. Help us to continue to show kindness to others as we go about our daily lives.

The statistic for mental health was once 1 in 4 but it is probably more like 1 in 2, if not 1 in 1 at the moment. Everyone is feeling the stress of lockdown. We give thanks for initiatives like Clear Your Head and the government hub where folk can access, when they need advice about their mental health and wellbeing. Help us all to keep our minds as well as our bodies healthy at this time and bring us closer to You to keep our spiritual health intact as well.

We give thanks for our governments' blueprint of the plans to release lockdown. May those plans bear fruit, continue to be built on justice, compassion and Your will. Loving Father, You are our hope, our strength and our shield. You are our Miracle Worker, our Promise Keeper and our Light in the Darkness. Draw close to us all in this pandemic crisis and let us feel your healing, loving and gracious presence. In Jesus, name we pray. Amen

Closing Hymn: Before the Throne of God Above (Grace Community Church)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAJyGZlbeTg&list=RD-14EuD3Y3nQ&index=11>

Before the throne of God above, I have a strong and perfect plea, a great High Priest whose name is Love, whoever lives and pleads for me. My name is graven on his hands, my name is written on his heart; I know that while in heaven he stands, no tongue can bid me thence depart, no tongue can bid me thence depart.

Final blessings - Men of Galilee, why are you standing here staring at the sky? (Acts 1:11)

People of God, let's not just stand gazing into heaven. Instead, let's take up the mission Jesus left us: to bring justice to the oppressed, and food to the hungry; to care for the widow and orphan; to share the abundant life Jesus offers with the world around us until He comes again.

God is good all the time