**Morning Worship for 24th May 2020 at 10.30am**

**Easter 7**

Good morning everyone and welcome to worship in these extraordinary times when we are the church but are not in church.

Find a comfy place to worship in your home.

Remember that God is present with us as we gather in his name, and that wherever we are, we are the body of Christ.

**Opening Prayer:-**  *from Roots)*

Mighty God, we gather in humility to worship you. Caring God, we bring to you our concerns. Glorious God, we exalt your holy name. Unite us and make us one with you, that your love may strengthen and empower us. Amen

**Hymn STF 300**

Hail the day that sees him rise, Alleluia! Ravished from our wistful eyes! Alleluia!

Christ awhile to mortals given, Alleluia! re-ascends his native heaven: Alleluia!

Him though highest heaven receives, Alleluia! still he loves the earth he leaves, Alleluia!

Though returning to his throne, Alleluia! still he calls the world his own: Alleluia!

Cast ourselves before your throne, Alleluia! here our heaven of heavens to own, Alleluia!

There we shall with you remain, Alleluia! partners in your endless reign. Alleluia! *(Charles Wesley 1707 – 1788)*

**Prayer:** God of majesty and might, your glory shines throughout the universe: from highest heaven to the deepest sea; in all the creatures you have made; in the seasons that shape our living. To you we offer our worship; to you we offer our praise; before you we come in adoration.

Forgive us for what is past and protect us from all that is to come. Amen

**We say the Lord’s Prayer together…..**

**Bible Reading for today: Acts 1 v.1-11** if you do not have Bible to hand this is the story of Jesus’ ascension into heaven, as he says his final, final goodbye to the disciples. Here, Jesus promises them the gift of the Holy Spirit which will empower them in their next task – to spread the Gospel of Christ. Just as in his Gospel account of Jesus’ resurrection, Luke also has two angels who ask the disciples why they are looking up to the sky, after Jesus disappears from their view.

**Reflection:** Luke’s opening to his book The Acts of the Apostles mirrors both the end of his Gospel and the first resurrection accounts as throughout his narrative Luke has used angels to convey God’s messages of surprise. Here Jesus says goodbye to his most special friends for the very last time before ascending into heaven to sit at God’s right hand in glory and to intercede for us. It’s a powerful and amazing episode in the story of faith. At the end of one of our great family favourite films, before he returns home, the alien ET points to his dear friend Elliott’s heart and says “I’ll be right here” assuring him that even though Elliott can no longer see him, he will not be left alone. Here Jesus tells the disciples that they must wait in Jerusalem for God’s Holy Spirit which will be their power to help them spread the Gospel and to glorify God in their words and actions. Today, as we mark Aldersgate Sunday, when the founder of Methodism John Wesley had his heart “strangely warmed” during worship and was fired up by the power of the Holy Spirit within him to begin his evangelistic quest; and as we approach the celebration of Pentecost next Sunday, we thank God for the gift of the Spirit which is for all believers. And so we pray: - Unite us, in your glory, loving Lord, that you may be seen more clearly in your world. Amen.

**Prayers of Intercession:** (adapted from Roots)We bring before God our concerns for the world: where there is war, bring peace, where there is sickness we pray for health; where there is despair, we pray for hope. Where there is grief, bring comfort.

We pray that you, loving God would be with all on the frontline fighting this virus and for those providing our essential needs.

We pray for our families and our dearest friends, whom we miss profoundly and for our church family with whom we are joined in worship and prayer. Give us all strength Lord, and courage for the days ahead. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

**Hymn: STF 312**

The head that once was crowned in thorns is crowned with glory now;

A royal diadem adorns the mighty Victor’s brow.

The highest place that heaven afford is his, is his by right,

The King of kings and Lord of lords, and heaven’s eternal light.

The cross he bore is life and health, though shame and death to him;

His people’s hope, his people’s wealth, their everlasting theme.

*(Thomas Kelly 1769-1855)*

**Blessing:** The Blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be with us now and always. Amen

**Please consider this my “virtual” handshake and please stay safe and well.**

**If you are in need of anything, please call me on 01765 698288.**

*Next week morning worship to celebrate the day of Pentecost. You will need* ***one*** *of the following if you can manage it – a candle; pieces of yellow, red or orange paper; a balloon or a bowl of water (although not next to the candle please.) Oh, and a piece of plain paper!!*