



# Connection

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021**  
**Seventh Sunday of Easter**  
**Sunday after Ascension Day**



## **Collect**

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.

**Amen**

## **Reading:** Acts 1: 15-17, 21-26

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred and twenty people). He said, 'Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus – for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry. So one of the men who have accompanied us throughout the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us – one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.' So they proposed two, Joseph called Barabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.' And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

## **Reading:** John 17: 6-19

Jesus looked up to heaven and prayed: 'Father, 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. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.'

### **Post Communion Prayer**

Eternal God, giver of love and power,  
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world  
to preach the gospel of his kingdom:  
confirm us in this mission,  
and help us to live the good news we proclaim;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

## **Reflection**



This week's reflection is by Reverend Alison Maddocks, Dean of Smaller Churches. You can listen to the podcast at:

<https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/your-faith/prayer-worship/sermon-podcasts>

Back in the days of my grandparents, a couple who were just beginning a romantic journey together might have been described as 'walking out together'.

That phrase has come back to me recently as I have very tentatively begun to leave the house to do things elsewhere. It feels like I am 'stepping out', going out to re-discover a face-to-face relationship with the world. Meeting up with people who for months I have only seen on screen. 'Walking out' to experience in three dimensions and with five senses, a world that had become flat screen and odourless, with no tactile engagement. And stepping out of what has been my uncomfortable comfort zone, to rediscover what awaits me back in the 'real' world, and it feels wonderful!

When will it end we still cry. When can we be properly back to 'normal'; like it was before? I think we know that the answer is, never. From now on, our life journey is punctuated by the time of pandemic, like a colon in the middle of a sentence.

Because we have been learning. Because we are changed. Because we have had to examine so much that we previously took for granted. We have reassessed our priorities and counted our blessings, often in the midst of great sadness and suffering. However bad it's been we know it could have been so much worse; we see others in far off lands and know how fortunate we are.

So as we step back out into the world, I hope that we will be 'walking out' to fall in love, anew, with all that is around us. To rediscover our relationship with the planet, with people who we love and chose to share our lives and with the gospel we're called to share, and live out, and bring to the hearts of those who need to hear it.



This week we celebrate Ascension Day. Jesus rose up into the heavens fading from the sight of the disciples and yet, in Luke's account, we are told that after he had gone, they 'returned to Jerusalem with great joy and they were continually in the temple blessing God.' Jesus had gone from them and yet they were full of joy and praise. We might have expected them to be quite sad, bereaved even. Jesus' ascension brings to an end his presence with them. Yet, despite this they go from the place rejoicing. The promise of what is beginning is greater, more powerful, than what is coming to an end.

Jesus has promised that the Holy Spirit will come to them but it doesn't happen immediately. They spend ten days back in Jerusalem reflecting on what has happened, and preparing themselves for what is to come. No doubt, the words that we have heard this morning as our gospel reading from John would have been very much on their minds.

These words come from Jesus' final words to the disciples at the last supper and they are words of prayer. Dense and intricate, they are not easy to understand but we must seek to do so as these are Jesus' final prayer for his disciples. He prays two things. He prays for them to know unity that he has always known with His Father and he prays that this unity will protect them in a world that doesn't understand. This unity and protection come from knowing the word and the truth and joy and the very name of the Father. This unity and protection come from knowing the Holy Spirit about to come upon them at Pentecost.

So, as we now prepare again for the coming of the Holy Spirit, praying for the Spirit to be with us as we 'step out' again, to 'walk out' freely in the world, we pray that we may experience the fullness of unity with God and one another, and be enabled to walk confidently in the world, sharing the love of God with people who, more than ever, need the Word and truth and joy that love brings.

## Requests for Prayers

**We pray for all those who are sick everywhere and for those who have asked for our prayers and for their carers:** Roy and Margaret Putnam, Edward Bunn, Brian Bolam, Wendy Dufty, Yvonne Seward, Andy Caddell and Pat Farey.

**We continue to pray for:** Percy and Sharon Blizzard, Jackie Pickford, Clive Hunt.

**We pray for those who are in residential care:** Sheila Bigland-Gibbons, Barbara Milton and Rita Sheppy.

**We pray for those who have died everywhere:** For those who we know and for those whose anniversary of death falls at this time. For Margaret Sutton, Pat Hiden, Don Dufty and David Finch.

## Church Services

The church services this week will be at:



St James', Defford	10.30am	Rev Allison Davies
St Peter's, Lt Comberton	10.30am	Canon Roger Spiller

### May Services

Date	Church	Time	Minister
23 <sup>rd</sup> May Pentecost	United Group Service, St Mary's, Elmley Castle	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies
30 <sup>th</sup> May	Chapel of Ease, Bredon's Norton	9.00am	Reverend Catherine Lack
	St John the Baptist, Beckford	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies

### June Services 2021

Date	Church	Time	Minister
6 <sup>th</sup> June	St Mary's Elmley Castle	10.30am	Canon Roger Spiller
	Holy Trinity, Eckington	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies
13 <sup>th</sup> June	St Barbara's, Ashton Under Hill	10.30am	Bishop Martin Gorick
	St Giles, Bredon	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies
20 <sup>th</sup> June	St Peter's Chapelry, Besford	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies
	St Michael's, Great Comberton	10.30am	Reverend Nancy Murray Peters
27 <sup>th</sup> June	Chapel of Ease, Bredon's Norton	9.00am	Reverend Catherine Lack
	St Margaret's, Alstone	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies





## Thy Kingdom Come Prayer Movement

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. Christians from more than 170 countries and 65 denominations have taken part.

Thy Kingdom Come runs between Ascension and Pentecost and **in 2021 will take place from 13-23 May.**

During the 11 days of Thy Kingdom Come, it is hoped that everyone who takes part will:

- Deepen their own relationship with Jesus Christ
- Pray for 5 friends or family to come to faith in Jesus
- Pray for the empowerment of the Spirit that we would be effective in our witness

What started in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer.

If you have not already joined us, please consider praying each day during this time, and let us wait with expectation, for the Holy Spirit to move across the world and for more people come to experience the love of God.



## News from the Diocese

Prayers and diocesan news can be found at [www.cofe-worcester.org.uk](http://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk)



**Reverend Allison Davies**

Vicar of Eckington, Defford with Besford and Associate Priest for the churches of the Bredon Hill Group