

Worship@Home 17.05.26, 7th Sunday of Easter: with Revd Dr Samantha Gillard

Call to Worship

A new day has begun. **Hope wins!**

A fresh start is granted. **Faith wins!**

Today we have the opportunity to do something new. **Hope wins!**

Christ is entering your life in a new way. **Faith wins!**

Come, let us worship God, who is inviting us into life in a new way, a way that transcends death, a way of hope and faith. **Love wins!**

Let us worship Christ, who overcame death to give us new life!

Call to worship written by Rev. Mindi and posted on: Rev-o-lution. <http://rev-o-lution.org/> . <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2018/05/ascension-day-call-to-worship.html>

STF 297 Christ is alive! Let Christians sing

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWfC5uGMLig&list=RDBWfC5uGMLig&start_radio=1

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing. The cross stands empty to the sky.

Let streets and homes with praises ring.

Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound to distant years in Palestine,
but saving, healing, here and now,
and touching every place and time.

In every insult, rift and war, where colour, scorn or wealth divide,
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,
and lives, where even hope has died.

Women and men, in age and youth, can feel the Spirit, hear the call,
and find the way, the life, the truth,
revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

Christ is alive and comes to bring good news to this and every age,
till earth and sky and ocean ring
with joy, with justice, love and praise.

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Bible reading:

Acts 1:6-14 <https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=264135375>

John 17: 1-11 <https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=264135457>

Time to Reflect

Learning to See the Board. Over the last few months, I've been learning how to play chess. And to be honest, it often feels like a puzzle. The pieces move in ways that aren't intuitive, every move has consequences I can't yet see, and the deeper I go the more I realise how much there is still to learn. Chess, I've discovered, is a game of patience, perspective, and long vision.

Ascension Sunday feels a bit like that.

Our reading from Acts Chapter 1 places us with the disciples in a moment of deep uncertainty. Jesus has been raised from the dead. He's appeared among them. He's spoken of the Kingdom of God. And so, they ask the most natural question they can: "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?"

From the disciples perspective, it makes perfect sense. They're looking for the decisive move, the moment when everything finally falls into place. But Jesus gently refuses to play on their terms. "It is not for you to know the times or periods," he says, "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." In other words, you don't see the whole board yet.

Then comes the Ascension itself, Jesus lifted from their sight, and the disciples left staring into the sky. No wonder they're perplexed. The One they had pinned all their hopes on is suddenly beyond reach. The game seems unfinished. The strategy unclear.

And yet, what happens next is crucial. They don't stay frozen, gazing upward. They regroup. They return to the upper room. They pray. This moment of mystery becomes a moment of action.

That movement from confusion to prayer is echoed in Jesus' own prayer in John 17, our gospel reading for today. Jesus prays not only for himself, but for his disciples and for all who will come to believe through them. He doesn't pray for escape. He doesn't ask for clarity on timelines. He prays for protection, unity, and faithfulness.

"Holy Father, protect them in your name... so that they may be one, as we are one." Jesus entrusts the future to God. He releases control.

He commits his followers into the Father's care. He knows the endgame but he also knows the next move is for the disciples to take.

So, what does this mean for us, here in 2026?

We live in a time that craves certainty. We want answers now. We want the Kingdom restored on our schedule, according to our expectations. Yet Ascension Sunday reminds us that faith often means living between moves trusting God while the picture is still incomplete.

Perhaps God is calling us, like the disciples, to stop staring into the sky and return to the work of prayer and presence. Perhaps God is inviting us to be witnesses, not because we have all the answers, but because we trust the One who holds the whole board. The Ascension is not Jesus' absence, it is his expansion. He is no longer limited to one place, but present wherever his people pray, wait, and act in love.

So today we are called to reflect: Where are we longing for certainty instead of trust? Where are we tempted to rush the game rather than learn its rhythms?

And we are called to act: to pray together, to remain open to the Spirit's leading, and to bear witness—patiently, humbly, faithfully—until God's Kingdom is fully revealed.

Ascension Sunday teaches us this: we may not yet see the whole puzzle, but we are still invited to make the next faithful move. Amen.

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:

The needs of the world...

The Church and its calling...

Loved ones going through difficult times...

For peace, justice, and reconciliation...

In Jesus name. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven...

STF 710 Peace, perfect peace, is the gift of Christ our Lord.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwjCDg90q5E&list=RDzwjCDg90q5E&start_radio=1

Peace, perfect peace, is the gift of Christ our Lord. Peace, perfect peace, is the gift of Christ our Lord. Thus, says the Lord, will the world know my friends. Peace, perfect peace, is the gift of Christ our Lord.

Love, perfect love, is the gift of Christ our Lord. Love, perfect love, is the gift of Christ our Lord. Thus, says the Lord, will the world know my friends. Love, perfect love, is the gift of Christ our Lord.

Faith, perfect faith, is the gift of Christ our Lord. Faith, perfect faith, is the gift of Christ our Lord. Thus, says the Lord, will the world know my friends. Faith, perfect faith, is the gift of Christ our Lord.

Hope, perfect hope, is the gift of Christ our Lord. Hope, perfect hope, is the gift of Christ our Lord. Thus, says the Lord, will the world know my friends. Hope perfect hope, is the gift of Christ our Lord.

Joy, perfect joy, is the gift of Christ our Lord. Joy, perfect joy, is the gift of Christ our Lord. Thus, says the Lord, will the world know my friends. Joy perfect joy is the gift of Christ our Lord.

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Blessing (based on Acts 1:1-11, Ephesians 1: 15-23)

Go out into the world. and in your words and in your lives bear witness to the Christ who has ascended to be everywhere present.

And as you come to know him, may God give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation, may Christ Jesus lift up his hands and bless you, and may the Spirit open to you all the riches of Christ's inheritance.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
...In the name of Christ. Amen.

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