Worship@Home 1st June 2025
7th Sunday in Easter
Sunday of Ascensiontide

Opening Prayer:

Risen and ascended Lord, as we worship You today in our home, we remember Your prayer for unity, Your heart for the world, and the call You place on every disciple. Fill our hearts with Your Spirit. Help us to listen to Your Word and be shaped by Your love. Make us one, as You are one with the Father, and send us into the world to bear witness to Your glory. **Amen.**

StF 676 – Christ who from all blessings flow

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2zUlPs1MoE

Christ, from whom all blessings flow,
perfecting the saints below,
hear us, who thy nature share,
who thy mystic body are.

Join us, in one spirit join,
let us still receive of thine;
still for more on thee we call,
thou who fillest all in all.

Closer knit to thee, our Head,
nourished, Lord, by thee, and fed,
let us daily growth receive,
more in Jesus Christ believe,

Never from thy service move,
needful to each other prove,
use the grace on each bestowed,
tempered by the art of God.

Love, like death, has all destroyed,
rendered all distinctions void;
names, and sects, and parties fall:
thou, O Christ, art all in all.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Please read:

John 17:20-26

https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=233266766

Time to Reflect

As we journey through Ascensiontide, we occupy the sacred space that exists between Jesus' ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

In recent years this season has been marked by the "Thy Kingdom Come" initiative; a global movement inviting Christians across different denominations and traditions to join in prayer between Ascension and Pentecost. Churches Together in Northampton is encouraging its participating churches to recognise this time as an opportunity to encourage ecumenical unity. At the heart of the 'Thy Kingdom Come' movement is Jesus' prayer in John 17, especially Jesus' longing for his followers to be one, and his desire for the world to come to believe through their unity and love.

Jesus' final prayer is centred on unity amongst the disciples. This does not mean uniformity but rather a deep spiritual oneness in that diversity that is rooted in God's love in Christ and the Holy Spirit. This spiritual unity reflects the relationship between the Father and the Son: intimate, loving, purposeful. When we live in loving unity, between neighbours, churches, and traditions we see something of the nature of God in us.

For Methodists the idea of unity is expressed through 'connexonalism' which is at the heart of our ecclesiology; believing that no worshipping community exists in isolation but that every church and every believer is connected together as we support one another and share in our resources, ministry, and mission. Connexionalism is experienced by the Church as a way of life, which assumes that all contribute to and receive from the life and mission of the whole Church by belonging, mutuality and interdependence in Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

We see examples of unity and interconnectedness on many levels. On the evening 20th March 2025 a fire that started at an electricity substation Nestles Avenue, in Hayes Hillingdon, shut down Heathrow Airport; one of the busiest international airports in the world. The fire led to over 1000 flights being cancelled and disruption to over 200,000 airline passengers. Something that started as a small spark in a substation went on to have a huge impact on people across the globe as connecting flights were missed and other flights across the world had to be delayed, cancelled, or rerouted.

The unity of the Church is similar. Our words and actions, even as one person, can have a huge impact both positive and negative. This is because God's people are interconnected and what we say and do has an impact. The more we are one in love and unity, the more we will be in sharing that love as the effective Church that Jesus prayed for.

The unity that we find in Christ forms a central part of our calling and mission. Jesus links the unity of His people with the credibility of the Gospel. When the Church is united in love and purpose, then the world takes notice. Our loving unity can become a powerful witness in a divided world. In this unity we are called to embody the grace and reconciliation that we have received in Christ, to demonstrate to the world how community should be

In the passage, Jesus longs for His people to be with him, to see His glory, and to live in the love shared within the triune God. This is not just about our eschatological future; it is also about the present experience of knowing and being known by God in Christ and the Holy Spirit. In Ascensiontide, we are reminded that Christ reigns in the here and now, and that we are already caught up in his eternal life, as his Kingdom establishes itself amongst us.

During this season I invite you to reflect on the ways that we might experience unity with Christ. What are the divisions that we see, in church and society, that we might help seek to heal? How might we be a visible sign of God's unity every day? Who might we pray for to come to know the love of God in Christ Jesus? In this Ascensiontide season, let us commit ourselves to being open to God's Kingdom being made known amongst us in love and unity.

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 we pray. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven…

StF 684 – Here on the threshold of a new beginning

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9s_PJuzO2aA

Here on the threshold of a new beginning,
by grace forgiven, now we leave behind
our long-repented selfishness and sinning,
and all our blessings call again to mind:
Christ to redeem us, ransom and restore us,
the love that holds us in a Saviour's care,
faith strong to welcome all that lies before us,
our unknown future, knowing God is there.

May we, your children, feel with Christ's compassion an earth disordered, hungry and in pain; then, at your calling, find the will to fashion new ways where freedom, truth and justice reign; where wars are ended, ancient wrongs are righted, and nations value human life and worth; where in the darkness lamps of hope are lighted and Christ is honoured over all the earth.

So may your wisdom shine from Scripture's pages to mould and make us stones with which to build God's holy temple, through eternal ages, one Church united, strong and Spirit-filled; heirs to the fullness of your new creation in faith we follow, pledged to be your own; yours is the future, ours the celebration, for Christ is risen! God is on the throne!

By Timothy Dudley-Smith. © 1997 Dudley-Smith, Timothy. Oxford University Press. CCLI Song Number: 2949226

Final Prayer

Lord Jesus, you prayed for us before we even knew you. You longed for us to be one, to share in the life and love of the Father, and to bear witness to the world. In this time between Ascension and Pentecost, stir in us a renewed desire to pray, to unite, and to share Your gospel. Help us to pray for others with faith and love, trusting that Your Spirit is already at work. May Your kingdom come, and Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. **Amen.**