

## **DSW Circuit Written Service 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023 Ascensiontide**

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Welcome to this act of worship. Know that although you may be on your own, you are part of God's church, worshipping God together with others at this time.

Call to worship based on verses from Psalm 66

Sing to God, sing praises to his name.

Sing out thankfulness for all he has done through the ages. Amen.

Gathering prayer

Living God, Spirit within us, we worship you in spirit and in truth. Be real and known to us. Help us, for a moment, to put aside all the jobs still to be done, the tasks that await us, and look instead to you for truth, meaning and purpose.

Make yourself known to us in the words and the silence. Amen.

**Hymn** StF 6

Donna Adkins

Father we love you, we worship and adore you: glorify your name in all the earth.

Glorify your name, glorify your name, glorify your name in all the earth.

Jesus we love you, we worship and adore you: glorify your name in all the earth.

Glorify your name, glorify your name, glorify your name in all the earth.

Spirit we love you, we worship and adore you: glorify your name in all the earth.

Glorify your name, glorify your name, glorify your name in all the earth.

Prayer of praise & thanks – *you may like to light a candle as a focus during prayers*

God, you show us how relationships should be – generous, open, caring, supportive, loving.

The Spirit of God moves among us: **Thanks be to God.**

You gave us Jesus to walk this earth and live among the daily living, loving, doing, being.

The Spirit of God moves among us: **Thanks be to God.**

You sent your Spirit to be our constant companion, to stay with us for ever.

The Spirit of God moves among us: **Thanks be to God.**

You gave us a blueprint, commandments to guide us.

You give us dreams and visions of life to come.

The Spirit of God moves among us: **Thanks be to God.**

Prayer of Confession – sit quietly and bring to mind those things for which you know you need to ask God's forgiveness. Tell Jesus you are truly sorry and want to make a fresh start.

Be assured that our prayers are always heard and in thankfulness, claim God's promise of forgiveness in your heart. Amen

Saying goodbye - The places where we say goodbye are many and varied: airports, train stations, school playground, Zoom, on your own driveway. Sometimes when we say goodbye, we feel a bit sad, we look forward to the next time we will see the person/people, even when we don't know when it will be.

After his resurrection, Jesus had to say goodbye to his disciples. He had completed the work that he came to earth for and it was time to pass on God's continuing work to the disciples and go home to God, his Father.

### Readings: Acts 1: 6-14

So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' <sup>7</sup> He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> 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.' <sup>9</sup> When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup> While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. <sup>11</sup> 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.' <sup>12</sup> Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. <sup>13</sup> When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. <sup>14</sup> All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Reflection I wonder what watching Jesus' departure from earth was like? The cloud and the angels in white robes are reminiscent of Jesus' baptism, transfiguration and resurrection.

In the passage there are two things said to the disciples, which would happen: Jesus said that they would receive power from the Holy Spirit and the 'men in white' said that Jesus would return. I'm sure that the disciples didn't understand about this gift of power or what Jesus coming back meant but it gave them re-assurance that Jesus was not lost to them. The disciples were also given a job, to be witnesses to Jesus, in their own city, the surrounding area, to the ends of the earth! No small task. But first they had to wait until they were given the gift that Jesus promised. The Holy Spirit.

So even though the disciples had to say goodbye to their dearest friend, they knew that Jesus would come back one day and that they were going to receive a gift....that somehow, Jesus would always be with them. It was enough for them to want to spend their time waiting, praying together and praising God together in the Temple.

### John 17: 1-11

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup> since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. <sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup> I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup> So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

<sup>6</sup> '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. <sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. <sup>11</sup> 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.

### Reflection

Jesus says, 'Father the hour has come'. What hour?

It's the moment John's gospel has been building up to – the time when God would be glorified. But this glory was to be shown in the crucifixion, what the world would see as shame and failure, Jesus' death on the cross.

The disciples don't really understand what will happen to Jesus, so Jesus prays for them as he says goodbye for the first time. He prays for protection for his disciples. He prays that his disciples may be one, as he is one with God. He prays for the disciples to receive eternal life, which John describes as knowing God through the person of Jesus.

The hour has come, for what in our situation?, as individuals, as a nation, in the world.

Prayer: The hour has come to let go of all that weighs us down, and to praise you for new beginnings.

The hour has come to lay aside differences, and to praise you for new friendships.

The hour has come to let go of all that holds us back, and to praise you for new opportunities.

The hour has come to be confident in our faith, and to praise you for the ministry you entrust to us.

The hour has come to live as we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Praying together really shaped the disciples' lives together. It helped them to be the unified body that Jesus prayed they would be. This a pointer for our lives too.

### **Hymn** StF 315 We sing the praise of Jesus

We sing the praise of Jesus, of our  
ascending Lord;

The triumph of our Saviour, of Christ the  
Son of God.

The forty days are over, earth sees his face  
no more;

But Christ the King of glory we worship  
and adore.

Rejoicing in Christ's promise we wait in  
prayer and praise,

The Spirit sent from heaven to set the  
earth ablaze;

We pray with expectation, we praise with  
one accord,

We wait for living fire, the power of the  
Lord.

Therefore with saints and angels and all  
the hosts above,

We lift our hearts and voices to bless the  
God of love;

To sing of our Redeemer who intercedes  
and prays,

That God the Holy Spirit may guide us all  
our days.

With songs of alleluia let earth and heaven  
ring;

And praises to the Father let all creation  
sing.

All honour be to Jesus, God's own eternal  
Son;

And to the Holy Spirit let endless praise be  
done. Norman Wallwork

## **Prayers for others**

We pray for those who live in places of war and violence,  
and for those whose job it is to keep the peace and help the injured:

We pray for those who perpetrate violence as a way of influencing others, bring change in their hearts Lord, and a desire for peace.

We pray for those feeling sad and unsure of their future,  
for those who have lost their jobs and their purpose in life:

We pray for those who are vulnerable, those with few resources and great needs,  
those reliant on others for their day-to-day necessities:

We pray for leaders in government, and in church,  
those who influence the lives and the thinking of many:

We pray for all those close to us, all whom we carry in our hearts, all who are special to us.  
Give to us O God, a vision of your Kingdom, a glimpse of your glory an openness to your  
rule, and your Spirit to guide us.  
Hear us we pray, through Christ, the risen, ascended one. Amen

You are invited to pray the **Lord's Prayer** in whichever version you prefer.

Earlier, we remembered that Jesus, just before his ascension, told the disciples that they would be his witnesses; they would carry on the work of God after Jesus was gone from them.

The prayer of St Teresa of Avila is one which really helps us to grasp the nature of the task that all disciples are called to take part in.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours, yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion is to look out to the earth, yours are the feet by which he is to go about doing good and yours are the hands by which he is to bless us now.

May the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be ever with you. Amen