



Dear Friends

This is, as is often the case, a very odd time to be writing a letter for the month ahead. We have sung our glad Alleluias on Easter Day, but sung them in the shadow of mounting tension between North Korea and USA. But on Easter Tuesday pretty much all mention of that fell off the news agenda as we heard the announcement of a General Election on 8th June. The next weeks are likely to be filled with strident political debate with politicians and others from all sides and none seeking to put their three-pennyworth into the mix. Later in the magazine in "Prayer for the Month" is a prayer that may help us move forward and some thoughts on praying in a complex political world,; here I want to share a thought on how the Easter story impinges on our live when all around us seem really hard and frightening.

This is a slightly edited version of the sermon I preached on Easter Day (note, before the election was announced)

In October 1962 the word held its breath as the Cuban missile crisis unfolded. Husbands kissed their wives goodbye in the morning, unsure if they would ever see them again or if, by the evening, the horror of thermo-nuclear war might have been unleashed on the world. This week tension between North Korea and the USA seemed to hit a new pitch. Fears that we might be walking towards a 21st Century version of that crisis are being expressed. We can only hope and pray that that is not the case.

Also this week on the news, the result of a judgement in the European Court of human rights in relation to Russia's culpability over the Beslan massacre where hundreds of children, parents and teachers were killed by a group of terrorists from Chechnya. Those who recall that time in 2004 will remember the terrible grief and pain of that time, the ghastliness of the way in which so many innocents were caught up in a political conflict, not of their own making, but whose lives were taken out of anger and spite and pain. Two vignettes from the past and yet tales which cast a long shadow into the present, reminding us of the depth to which human hatred and division can take us.

I saw this week a picture, very much a work of imagination but reflecting on what might have happened after Jesus had died. The picture is by an artist called Nicholas Mynheer. Nicholas is an artist and sculptor who works mostly with biblical themes. Sister Wendy Becket describes him thus, 'Nicholas Mynheer loves life and makes its holiness visible' – The picture that I saw is called the embrace. In the foreground two women embrace; in the background on one side is Jesus, hanging on the cross, on the other, Judas, hanging from a tree. The two women portrayed are Mary the mother of Jesus and the anonymous mother of Judas. United in their grief, they fall into one another's arm finding what? Comfort, the assuaging of guilt and or anger? What might it be? It's a picture to look at and contemplate.

(Continued over page)

It takes us to very uncomfortable places as, in this world of imagination Mary, Jesus' mother would not automatically feel sorrow for Judas, the man who betrayed her son. But again in this imaginary landscape, she can feel compassion and solidarity, even across a divide of blame with another mother who has lost her son. Two mothers, together in grief, clinging to one another and offering what comfort they can.



After the Beslan massacre, John Humphreys asked the then Archbishop of Canterbury where God was in Beslan. Rowan Williams doesn't trot out easy platitudes, his reply was to the effect that *God is where God always is, and that is with those who are trying to comfort and bring light in any such situation*. And he suggests that where an older child puts arms round a younger child, *you might see God*.

Perhaps, people clinging together in the face of great fear, great sorrow or great anguish offer a picture for us of what it might be to see God in operation, not left comfortless, not left alone, not left without hope but walking together into an unknown future.

Jesus' friends after his death were left feeling that they might now be forever alone. Now that their beloved master and friend had left them, they would have felt that their future was uncertain. And they didn't understand, they had no idea just at that moment where God was.

They had lived with Jesus for perhaps three years. They had come to rely on him as the one who would be there for them, who would lead them to new understanding of God, the world and themselves. Sure he was challenging, it wasn't always easy, but despite his repeated warnings they didn't understand what was coming, they didn't realise he meant it when he talked about his death, they didn't expect what happened. His arrest, his trial and his crucifixion came as a total shock, and with shock came fear and possibly even resentment.

Above all we need to be committed seekers after truth. A good election is one where we don't cling to old political tribalisms, some of which have clearly had their day. On the contrary, we need to take the trouble to think for ourselves as grown-ups who are privileged, in a way not open to everyone in our world, to be able to take part in a democratic election. To listen, to think and to debate in this respectful way is, I want to say, an act of *discernment*. It asks the question, where might the voice of wisdom and truth be detected amid the babble of human voices that clamour for our attention? Where might we even hear the voice of God? Discernment and prayer are close relatives.

So as we discern which mway we will cast our own vote and pray for the wider discernemtn in the nation may we always be those who offer a vision of hope, not of anguish.

Priscilla

Blessings

Lord give me blessings for today,
For on my knees I kneel and pray,
Forgive me for the sins I may have done,
For I am counting them one by one,
I pray that I maybe a better person,
For I am sure I have learnt my lesson,
So I count my blessings one and all,
And so I cannot ask for any more.

Beside Me

The long roads I have travelled,
The long paths I have roamed,
But God has always lead me,
To the little house called home,
I am never far away without Him,
For he is always by my side,
So I have come here to kneel and pray,
And to ask him to always be my guide.

Neville Rohsler (Neville is a member of our Wednesday congregation)

Prayer of the month

Given the news of the General Election and the fact that the campaigning will cover all of May, a prayer posted online by Michael Sadgrove, former Dean of Durham.

Eternal God, the Judge of all, before whom we stand at this point in our history, look with mercy on our nation as we approach the timer of decision. Give us leaders of integrity, of courage, of compassion and of vision. Equip them with the Spirit of understanding and make them wise to serve this people. As we pray for the election and the choices we must make, put into our hearts the love of our neighbour, that the divisions of our nation may be healed, and truth and justice be established among us. We ask this for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

Whatever our politics and our priorities in deciding how to vote as Christian people we need to reflect on how our faith shapes those priorities (and we may come to different conclusions,) and how we believe faith is best lived out in the public square. We need to pray for all involved in politics and campaigning, that campaigns are built on issues and principles and not simply on passing vitriolic comment on those opposed to our particular view. The next weeks may not be easy, Michael writes about his prayer,

We make our prayers too narrow by false limits of our own (apologies to Father Faber for misquoting his famous hymn). We should be more ambitious as we lay the issues of this election before God. It's the outcome that matters, not simply the process that leads up to it. And while we mustn't turn prayer into a kind of spiritual manipulation motivated by party politics, I think we can agree that we should crave leaders who are principled, embody healthy values and who will have the courage to make decisions that will put them into practice. Hence my use of words like integrity, courage, compassion, vision, truth, justice, the love of neighbour and the healing of division in our nation - surely a top priority for everyone in public life right now. The Seven Gifts of the Spirit that are set out in the messianic portrait painted in Isaiah 11 might be a good place to begin exploring what we look for in our leaders: this was the text in my mind when I alluded in the prayer to "the Spirit of understanding".

No doubt we won't all agree about what these values and virtues mean in practice. But I believe that to pray with integrity about the kind of nation we want to be also commits us to debating with integrity during the election campaign. The lack of it was what many of us lamented during the EU referendum campaign. To descend to empty slogans (or, to quote Chesterton again, the "easy speeches that comfort cruel men") is to devalue what we mean by democracy. An election debate means listening carefully, evaluating evidence, discerning good arguments from bad, and not personalising matters of principle. (So please let's stop referring to Theresa May as "the vicar's daughter" - she deserves to be heard in her own right as a responsible adult woman, not someone who is still being defined by her father, however good a priest he no doubt was.)

They had dedicated those years to him, what would happen now; could they pick up the threads of life again? Would the authorities be after his friends now, wishing to stamp out every trace of the movement surrounding him? Disillusioned, fearful and quivering, they were wrecked as were their hopes and dreams.

And so we come at last to that first Easter morning. Another Mary, Magdalene this time, is at the tomb and there she encounters Jesus. From there she is sent to hare the good news with the rest of Jesus' friends. From there she becomes the apostle to the apostles.

Jesus tells her not to cling onto him. At that moment the time for holding desperately on to what she knows is past, she is now to go boldly into a new future. God with us is experienced in a different way

They stood in a whole new place that first Easter. Jesus' resurrection transformed the disaster of crucifixion into triumph. Jesus is no longer victim, carried along on a tide of human machination but becomes victor. As the church reflected on its understanding of the cross and resurrection it saw and understood that the cross and resurrection were inextricably linked, the resurrection transformed Jesus from just another failed Messiah fit only for the junk heap into what he is, the true Messiah, God's anointed one, the saviour. In a world where despair and defeat greet us day by day we need more and more to understand the power of resurrection. This is not about triumphalism but about restoration. It is about Christ moving into the areas of the world that most need him and being there with people. Emmanuel, God with us. Whether it is the shattered lives of those who survived the Beslan attack but who carry the memory with them down the years; whether it is people fearful of the outbreak of further levels of conflict in our politically challenged and complex world; whether it is people suddenly facing personal events that turn their normal lives upside-down. Whatever and wherever it is the Easter message holds out unexpected hope.

The embrace of love, whether in the imagined landscape of Nicholas Mynheer, the love of Mary as she greets Jesus after the resurrection, or Jesus' arms outstretched in love calls us back to our primary function. We are to be those who live love out and remember that perfect love casts out fear.

Words from the Song of Solomon in the Hebrew Scriptures remind us of the place of love and of the all-encompassing power of grace.

⁶ Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire, raging flame.

⁷ Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.

Today is resurrection day, Christ is Risen. Alleluia.

Priscilla

Aspects of life at St Faith and St Laurence

Morning prayer – is normally said Monday to Thursday and Saturday at 8.15 am in the Lady Chapel. We use Common Worship Daily Prayer, all are welcome to come and join in.

Reflections A chance to meet together over a cuppa and reflect on the Gospel reading for the previous Sunday. A group meets on Mondays from 1.45-3pm Venues are listed in the Programme of the month.

Task Groups – The church has a number of task groups enabling areas of church life. These are listed in the magazine with the contact details of the chairs. If you would like to be a part of a groups please contact the relevant chair or Priscilla. All are welcome to join.

Stay and Play meets on Thursday between 9.30 and 11am in the Hall to give a chance for people with young children to meet and the children to play. All are welcome. Cost £1.50 per family.

Sunday Club meets on the first and third Sundays of each month except during the holidays. We hold an extra Sunday Club on days when there is a baptism. All are welcome to join in hearing and experiencing a Bible Story and learning together about what it means for our daily lives.

Messy Church takes place on the first Saturday of each month, most months. A chance for children and parents/ carers to have an informal time of worship, and discovering about a Bible story through song, craft, listening, cooking and so much more. Dates are published in advance and all are welcome to come along.

Planned Giving helps people make giving regular. You decide how much you can afford to give. You can join the envelope scheme weekly or monthly or pay by Standing Order or annually by cheque. Income tax payers are asked to Gift Aid their giving, so the Church can reclaim the tax on their donations at no extra cost to the donors. For details, contact Jackie Taylor or Brenda Stott

Call in for Coffee time together over a cuppa on a Wednesday morning from 10.30 -12.00. if needed we can arrange for someone to collect you and then take you home. Please ring Pauline Sitford (427 7005). If you are passing, do call in, or bring a friend, all are welcome.

We support **Recycling**. We have boxes at the back of the church where you can leave batteries and printer ink cartridges to be recycled. We have a special collection on the first Sunday of every month when we collect ALUMINIUM cans and foil which can be sold and the money raised is donated to our Mission Partners in Chile (through USPG) We also have envelopes for recycling mobile phones again supporting USPG. Pauline Sitford (427 7005).

Bishop David's Bolivian Experience

Seventeen days, twelve flights, five cities, four broadcasts, two sermons and a suitcase full of gifts made up an exhilarating mission tour to some of the highest inhabited places in the world. Wherever we landed we were greeted with banners and hugs by our local Christian hosts and whisked off to a kaleidoscope of church, social and political activities. Anglicans are rooted in four of Bolivia's larger cities, where they focus on church growth amongst the middle classes, enabling significant outreach and church planting in some of the poorest areas. Each place has its own context and spiritual and practical gifting. From La Paz to Santa Cruz and Cochabamba to Tarija common themes include discipleship, clergy and lay leader training and establishing permanent buildings for worship and mission. The range of strategic partners in mission impressed us too, ranging from Al Farero, Christian Aid, Latin Link, and SAM, to CMS and Marcello Vargas' Mission College.

TV and Radio broadcasters took an interest in our visit and gave us airtime to tell our story, in refreshing contrast to much of agenda-driven UK media. We encountered politicians and learned of their ambition to integrate the majority indigenous population under the leadership of the current President. Lack of access to the sea and world markets via Chile is a major issue. Recognition of the small Anglican Church by the Governor and Department MPs in La Paz, and by the Mayor and Ex-President Jaime Paz in Tarija was remarkable. Discussions included the reliance on natural gas, environmental challenges of water quality, droughts, floods and climate change and the agricultural dependence on Coca with its narcotic drug connections balanced by delicious wine. Bishop Raphael Samuel accompanied Bishop Maurice Sinclair, Archdeacon Simon Heathfield, Communications Director Steve Squires and I for many of our visits. To follow up my interest in Mining Justice, the three bishops made an expedition to Potosi, city of the silver that boosted the Spanish empire from 1525 onwards. We had a dignified official welcome from the Cooperative and then went underground to meet the zinc miners working in risky conditions. I am now the proud owner of a hard hat, which might be considered to be of more use for a bishop than a mitre!

We have returned encouraged by Christian fellowship across the world and a renewed commitment to share in prayer, disciple making , social justice and church growth.

+David Birmingham

Julian of Norwich (1342-c.1416)



She is remembered on May 8th, the day in 1373 when she had a series of sixteen visions. She is known to us almost only through her book, *The Revelations of Divine Love*, which is based on these visions, and is widely acknowledged as

one of the great classics of the spiritual life. She is thought to have been the first woman to write a book in English which has survived.

We do not know Julian's actual name but her name is taken from St. Julian's Church in Norwich where she lived as an anchoress for most of her life. We know from the medieval literary work, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, that Julian was known as a spiritual counsellor. People would come to her cell in Norwich to seek advice. Considering that, at the time, the citizens of Norwich suffered from plague and poverty, as well as a famine, she must have counselled a lot of people in pain. Yet, her writings are suffused with hope and trust in God's goodness.

On the 8th of May 1373. Julian was lying on, what was thought at the time, to be her deathbed when suddenly she saw Christ bleeding in front of her. She received insight into his sufferings and his love for us. Julian's message remains one of hope and trust in God, whose compassionate love is always given to us. In this all-gracious God there can be no element of wrath. The wrath — 'all that is contrary to peace and love — is in us and not in God. God's saving work in Jesus of Nazareth and in the gift of God's spirit, is to slake our wrath in the power of his merciful and compassionate love'. Julian did not perceive God as blaming or judging us, but as enfolding us in love. Famously, Julian used women's experience of motherhood to explore how God loves us, referring to Jesus as our Mother.

The Revelations of Divine Love comes to us in two versions; the first (the short text) written shortly after the revelation given to Julian, the second (the long text) written twenty years later. The long text is greatly expanded to include her meditations on what she had been shown. Today, only seventeenth century copies of earlier manuscripts of the long text, and fragments from the fifteenth century survive.

Interest in Julian's writings has grown over recent decades. This has been as more and more people have discovered the significance of her book. Her lyrical language and positive image of God speak to the modern reader. Her work is well-respected by theologians, historians and literary scholars, and there are now dozens of translations of her *Revelations*, together with countless commentaries. Modern poets and writers as diverse as T.S. Eliot, Denise Levertov, and Iris Murdoch reference Julian in their writing.

Julian's Shrine, off Rouen Rd. in Norwich, is visited by pilgrims from all over the world.

(The Julian Centre, Norwich)

ALL SHALL
AND BE WELL,
AND ALL
SHALL
BE WELL,
AND ALL
MATTER
OF THINGS
SHALL
BE WELL.

Home Communion We have a team of lay people trained and able to bring Home Communion usually on a monthly basis. This is for those who are unable to come to church long term. If the situation is more temporary for example after an operation you can also receive communion, usually from Priscilla. In either case please contact Priscilla.

Traidcraft

Traidcraft sells a range of fairly traded food, cards, clothes and accessories. We use Traidcraft tea and coffee and everything we buy helps fight poverty and supports our church. You can order seasonal gifts through the church at Christmas time when catalogues will be available. Any questions, please ask Ruth Jeavons or Bronwen Jones.

'easyfundraising'

Next time you shop online, think of St Faith and St Laurence and raise free donations with 3,000+ retailers:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stfaithandstlaurence>

Women's Fellowship meets on the first Monday of the month from March to December. Meetings are held in the Committee Room 7.30 for 8pm. We have talks on a variety of subjects. See Programme of the Month for details.

Prayer Ministry Team

Prayer ministry is offered during the 10am Communion on Sundays. People can receive prayer for themselves or for any situation that is important to them. It takes place in the Lady Chapel during the distribution of communion.

Service with no name

This takes place on the first Thursday in the month in church at 7.30pm.

Foodbank

We collect food for the Quinton and Oldbury Foodbank. There is a box in church and food can be placed there at any time. The list of things that are needed is in church and in the hall. Food is distributed from St Boniface Church on Wednesdays and Paul and Barney's place on Fridays. Vouchers are required to receive food.

Choir and Music.

Choir Practice takes place weekly, normally on Thursdays 6-7pm. Anyone interested in singing in the choir should contact Simon Palmer, Organist & Choirmaster. (Contact details on page cover) We also like to encourage instrumentalists to perform in church, either in services or in concerts.

An invitation

John and Priscilla are holding a garden Party at **Kingsbury Vicarage** to celebrate the bank holiday on 1st May from roughly 2pm-6pm. All are welcome, you can always combine it with a visit to Kingsbury Water Park too. The Vicarage address is Church Lane, Kingsbury, Tamworth **B78 2LR**. The Vicarage is next door to the rather larger Old Vicarage. There is a church car park at the end of Church Lane and there is plenty of space there. Cars can also be left there if you are going to the Water Park.

There is no need to bring anything other than yourselves, but if you wish, donations to Christian Aid will be very welcome. We don't need to know specific numbers, we'd rather see you than not, but if you know you are coming an indication would make catering a bit easier.

Baptism and Confirmation

The confirmation for our cluster this year is on June 25th at 6.30pm at Edgbaston Old Church.

This year we are trying something a little new for confirmation preparation and I am planning to do a day on Saturday May 13th for any adults interested. There will be lunch provided and we will have the chance to explore together the issues and questions around Christian faith. Anyone interested in coming to the day is welcome. Please have a word with me. You can come even if you aren't yet sure that confirmation is the right step for you. Adults who haven't been baptised would also be baptised at this service.

Young people, year 6 and above will have preparation sessions on Wednesdays at 6pm at St Peter's. Please, will anyone interested in either of these have a word with me as soon as possible.

Priscilla

Ascension Day 7.30pm

This year the cluster service will be at St Faith and St Laurence. As we will be hosting the churches of our cluster it would be really good to have a good number of people from St Faith and St Laurence attending. There will be some refreshments on the day so we will be looking for help with these in due course. Ascension Day often get overlooked but it is part of our Easter celebrations and prepares us for Pentecost. Do come.

Service with no name

Each month, on the first Thursday, this service is devised and led by a different member of the congregation. The Service lasts between 30 – 60 minutes, and each month is entirely different – usually nothing like the sort of thing that's done on a Sunday !!

If you've not been before, why not give it a try?

And if you (or you and someone else) think you might like to lead your own "Service with No Name", please talk to Priscilla.

Thursday 4th May at 7.30 pm

A prayerful walk around the church

This month's service will be led by Christine Terry and will take the form of us walking together around our church, using various areas to inspire meditations / prayers.

(If you are of limited mobility, please still come, it won't be absolutely necessary to walk round)

Chris Terry

COVER STORY

This month's cover is of the Ascension painting on the ceiling of St Michael and All Angels, Great Witley. The ceiling paintings are oil on canvas by the Italian artist Antonio Bellucci (1654 -1726). The three large ones depict the Descent from the Cross, The Ascension and The Nativity. Around the three main paintings are ten small paintings of groups of cherubs. In the lunettes above the windows are oval paintings of ten cherubs holding objects associated with the Passion.

The church was consecrated in 1735, and is the only one of its kind in the country; its late baroque style is more usually found in southern Germany and Italy. It is believed to be to a design by James Gibbs. The exterior was originally plain brick but was later clad with limestone ashlar and Italianate balustrades and finials were added. It has a clock tower surmounted by a cupola with a gilded dome, topped off with an orb and a golden cross. There are two bells, to chime out the time and to ring for weddings and funerals. It has a crypt with vaults, still occupied by lead coffins, and has a coffin chute accessed from the inner porch.

Adjoining the Church are the ruins of Witley Court owned by English Heritage, who together with the Jerwood Foundation, have created a sculpture park in the gardens famous for their magnificent fountains.



FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals at the Crematorium

March 29th Peggy Goodger
 April 28th Nevil Peatfield

FACTS AND FIGURES

Week Beginning	Communicants	Loose Plate £	Planned Giving £	Gift Aid £
March 19	70	43.60	298.42	5.00
March 26	80	42.74	196.25	30.00
April 2	73	29.60	400.36	20.00
April 9	38	26.17	434.44	35.00
April 16	142	157.30	396.60	50.00
Standing Orders			2703.00	

Christian Aid Week Collection (14-20th May)



Timetable for Collection:

7th May Material for collectors available in church.
 28th May All collection rounds to be returned by this date.
 30th May Tuesday. Counting of Collection and Banking.

We would welcome anyone who has not previously been involved to help with the house to house collection. Please talk to Judith or Geoff or contact them on email: juditheileen.bennett@sky.com

Judith and Geoff Bennett

Thy Kingdom Come



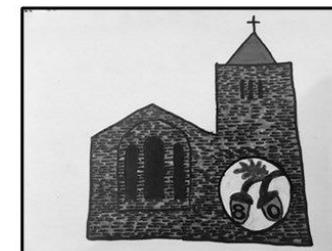
The Archbishop of Canterbury is inviting Christians all around the world to join in prayer from Ascension to Pentecost. We will be taking part in this by

- a) reflecting the theme in our public worship
- b) Service with no name on June 1st will be on this theme
- c) producing prayer cards for personal use during the period

Please do take part in this and remember that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves in our small corner of Harborne and Quinton

Forum on issues of Peace and War

As part of our anniversary celebrations we are holding a Forum on Issues of Peace and War on Tuesday 23rd May at 7.30pm. There will be four speakers from a variety of perspectives who will each share their understanding of the issues for 10 minutes each. Then, after refreshments, there will be a chance to ask questions and hear the speakers talking with one another. As the church was built as a war memorial, and as we are in the 100 years since the First World War, let alone the current political situation in the world, this should be an interesting and absorbing evening. All are welcome, Free entry, retiring collection for the Hall Roof Fund.



"Working Party Thank You"

To all who helped out on Saturday 15th April:

A huge "thank you" to the people who painted and mended, weeded and cleared, tidied and sorted, swept and cleaned. Also thanks to the providers of tea, coffee and biscuits to keep us all going. **Bronwen Jones and Malcolm Adey.**

A parting well made

“Always read something that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.” This is a quote from the American satirist and commentator, PJ O’Rourke.

I’m sure like me, some three years ago you were struck by the phenomenal response to Stephen Sutton’s fund raising for Teenage Cancer Research. At his memorial service in Lichfield Cathedral, people spoke so warmly of his attitude in life. I’m not sure if he died reading, but he certainly died looking good because of the example of his attitude to life in his remaining days which had inspired so many people to give generously and to look at the way they live. How we live and how we die are connected.

Ascension Day this year is on May 25th. St. Augustine considered the Feast of the Ascension the crown of all Christian festivals. Today we may give it an obligatory nod as we make our way liturgically from Easter to Pentecost, but we’re often not quite sure what to do with it.

Whatever historical event lies behind the Luke-Acts narratives of Jesus’ ascension into heaven—and the fact that the two accounts differ in important ways, might be a clue that a surface-literal reading is not what the author had in mind. Tom Wright points out that Luke’s gospel ends, as it began, in the Temple at Jerusalem. “Worship of the living God,” He says, “is at the heart of Luke’s vision of the Christian life.” Jesus’ ascension into heaven, then, is not “beam me up, Scotty” science fiction, but rather that which makes possible the church’s existence. Because Jesus is not here, the Church can be, must be—the Church empowered to be his worshipping, witnessing body here and now. Ascension was a time of departure as well as arrival, and departures involve last words.

In Acts, Jesus had gathered his apostles for one last conversation and their last words to him were a question. I wonder, had they known this was the final moment, if they would have ended things this way or said something else. But asked this question: was this when he would restore the kingdom to Israel? They had not previously bothered about this; Luke records many sayings of Jesus about the kingdom of God, but not about it being restored to Israel.

So just as the disciples try to narrow the saving work of God to one nation, Jesus blows it all open by responding in effect, “Never mind that. Get on with being my witnesses all over the world. Not only where you are relatively comfortable – Jerusalem (although that was not a safe place, they were so afraid of the religious leaders that they locked themselves in) and Judea (familiar territory), but also Samaria (despised territory avoided by faithful Jews) and to the ends of the earth (way beyond anywhere any of them had previously gone).”

THE FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

are holding a

COFFEE MORNING

Saturday, 13th May 10.30-12noon

St. Faith & St. Laurence Church Hall

Coffee/Tea and Toasted Teacake - £2.50
Tombola, Bring and Buy and Book stalls

Proceeds to West Midlands Air Ambulance



FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

This group was formed following the closure of Quinton Manor Moose and Ladies Circle. The remaining members didn't want to lose touch with the friends they had made over the years so the Friendship Circle was born. We meet every 3rd Monday at 7.30pm in the Committee Room of St. Faith's and have a variety of speakers, organise some meetings amongst ourselves and go out for a meal twice a year.

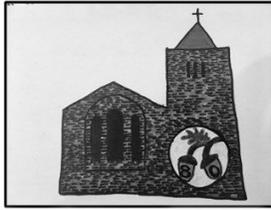
As well as the friendship aspect of the group we raise monies for a different charity each year by holding Coffee Mornings and an open event once a year in the summer, which has included a Skittles Evening, different entertainers and a Fun Quiz. Needless to say, we always have food at these events.

We pay £2 each time we attend a monthly meeting and have coffee/tea and biscuits. We currently have a membership of 24 which includes 2 from the RNLI for whom we raised just over £1,000 last year.

If you are interested and want to know more about us please contact me, you will always be welcome to come to a meeting as a guest.

Helen Hayward. 422 5724.

To celebrate our 80th Anniversary



FAMILY FUN DAY

SATURDAY, 10TH JUNE - 11AM - 4PM

BOUNCY CASTLE OBSTACLE COURSE

STOCKS GAMES TREASURE HUNT

PLANT, CAKE, CRAFT AND BOOK STALLS TOMBOLAS

FLOWER AND ANNIVERSARY DISPLAYS IN CHURCH

BARBEQUE STRAWBERRIES AND CREAM



COFFEES AND TEAS, ETC.



Do come along and help to make it a wonderful day and please pray for lovely weather!

Admission is free

Jesus did not send them back home to preach the gospel, and Acts suggests they never did go home, at least permanently. The ascension is disruptive of comfortable life.

Since Ascension Day always falls on a Thursday it is too easily overlooked. What would the Christian gospel look like without the ascension of Jesus? Without the ascension of Christ we would be without our hope of heaven. Why? Isn't the resurrection enough? It is vital, but on its own it is not enough. There are fifty days of Easter and the 40th is Ascension Day. Easter isn't over with the resurrection. The resurrection was evidence that death is conquered, that God has destroyed its power to have the last word. But to what end? That we should hang around on earth for ever? Given the state of our world today, that is a pretty dreadful prospect.

Without the ascension, the resurrection is the conquering of death but leaves us here on earth. The ascension of Jesus Christ, fully divine and with a place by right with God the Father, is also the ascension of one who was fully human, who took his humanity – our humanity – into heaven and opened the door for all humanity to follow. The world-changing significance of the ascension of Jesus Christ is that there is a human in heaven, previously inhabited only by the heavenly hosts. In the words of the Te Deum, the ancient song of the church, 'He has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers'. As the creed affirms, our hope is in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. The ascension, an integral part of the fifty days of Easter, assures us that, in Christ, there is a place in heaven for us. In the ascension, Jesus Christ opened heaven to all believers.

Are we ready for heaven? I hope the answer is yes. Ready to leave the earth? That takes me back to where I started. It is not just that we should look good because of what we are reading when we die, but that our lives should be good, all the time, so that whenever death comes, we are found to be living well in the joyful knowledge that by his ascension Jesus Christ has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

What a blessing to be able to say our partings are well made. Jesus' prayerful parting on earth from his heavenly Father was well made. His ascension was a parting well made from the disciples. For the disciples, their parting conversation with Jesus was a question that propelled them into mission. In the light of the ascension they were sent to be his witnesses. That is, in fact, a parting well made. After all, it is the parting we make each week at the end of the Eucharist. 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.'

Peter Stokes

PROGRAMME FOR MAY

Mon 1	2.00 pm	Garden Party at Kingsbury Vicarage	
Wed 3	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Acts 8.1b-8; John 6.35-40</i>	Lady Chapel
Thu 4	7.00 am	Election	Hall
	6.00 pm	Choir Practice	Church
	7.30 pm	Service with no name	Church
Sat 6	10.30 am	Messy Church Midland Early Music Forum	Church and Hall

SUN 7 FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

	8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Acts 2.42-end; 1 Peter 2.19-end; John 10.1-10</i>	
	10.00 am	Family Communion with Baptism <i>Acts 2.42-end; John 10.1-10</i>	
	11.15 am (approx)	Finance and General Purposes Walkabout	
	6.30 pm	Evensong <i>Psalm 29.1-10</i> <i>Ezra 3.1-13; Ephesians 2.11-end</i>	
Mon 8	1.45 pm	Reflections	143, Balden Road
	6.30 pm	Archdeacon's Visitation	Church
Tue 9	10.30 am	Queen Mother Gardens Service	
	7.00 pm	PCC Meeting beginning with short Eucharist	
Wed 10	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Acts 12.24-13.5; John 12.44-end</i>	Lady Chapel
Thu 11	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall
	6.00 pm	Choir Practice	Church
Sat 13	9.30 am	Confirmation Preparation Day	Committee Room
	10.30 am	Marriage Preparation Morning	St George's

SUN 14 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

	8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Acts 7.55-end;</i> <i>1 Peter 2.2-10; John 14.1-14</i>	
	10.00 am	Morning Praise with Baptism TBA	
	6.30 pm	Sung Eucharist <i>Readings as at 8am</i>	
Mon 15	1.45 pm	Reflections	143, Balden Road

Wed 17	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Acts 15.1-6; John 15.1-8</i>	Lady Chapel
	7.30 pm	3D Course	Lady Chapel
Thu 18	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall
	6.00 pm	Choir Practice	
	7.30 pm	Edgborne Cluster Meeting	Edgbaston Old Church

SUN 21 SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

	8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Acts 17.22-31; 1 Peter 3.13-end</i> <i>John 14.15-21</i>	
	10.00 am	Family Communion <i>Readings as at 8am</i>	
	6.30 pm	Evensong <i>Psalm 87</i> <i>Zechariah 8.1-13; Revelation 21.22-22.5</i>	
Mon 22	1.45 pm	Reflections	143, Balden Road
	7.30 pm	Finance and General Purposes Meeting	Committee Room
Tue 23	2.00 pm	William Lench Court Service	
	7.30 pm	Anniversary Event Forum on Issues of Peace and War	Church
Wed 24	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Acts 17.15, 22-18.1; John 16.12-15</i>	Lady Chapel
	7.30 pm	3D Course	Committee Room
Thu 25	Ascension Day	10 days of prayer for Thy Kingdom Come begins	
	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall
	7.30 pm	Edgborne Ascension Day Eucharist <i>Daniel 7.9-14</i> <i>Acts 1.1-11; Luke 24.44-end</i>	

SUN 28 SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION

	8.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Acts 1.6-14;</i> <i>1 Peter 4.12-14& 5.6-11; John 17.1-11</i>	
	10.00 am	Family Communion <i>Readings as at 8am</i>	
	6.30 pm	Evensong <i>Psalm 47</i> <i>2 Samuel 23.1-5; Ephesians 1.15-end</i>	
Wed 31	10.30 am	Call in for Coffee	Committee Room
	11.00 am	Holy Communion <i>Zephaniah 3.14-18; Luke 1.39-49</i>	Lady Chapel
Thu 1	9.30 am	Stay and Play	Hall
	7.30 pm	Service with no name 'Thy Kingdom Come'	Church