

QUEENSFERRY PARISH CHURCH

MIDWEEK SERVICES

MAY 2022 – WEEK 4

This year the fourth Thursday in May is Ascension Day and that is the theme for this Midweek service on 26th May.

Week 4 - Ascension

Leader:

Why do you stand looking up towards heaven?

We look for you, straining our eyes into the far country, but our vision is disrupted by the least, the lost, the littlest, the last among us.

We race after you, trying to catch up, and, turning the corner, and find only a homeless family in our path.

We wander the streets yearning to find you, calling your name, but it is only a single mother who turns and, weary, smiles, or a street person who whispers “Hello”, or a little girl who pirouettes and takes our hand.

Gone

But you are still here, Lord.

Help us to see.

OPENING RESPONSES

What are you doing here?

WE ARE LOOKING FOR JESUS

What are you doing here?

WE HAVE QUESTIONS TO ASK

What are you doing here?

WE SEEK HOPE; WE SEEK HEALING

What are you doing here?

WE HAVE HEARD GOD CALLING OUR NAMES

Hymn or song: Suggested hymns to read are: 441

“Blessing and honour and glory and power” or 448

“Lord, the light of your love is shining”

Read Psalm 47

Prayer

Glory to the King of Kings. Glory to the Lord of Lords.

Glory to him who has ascended.

O risen and ascended Christ, all authority in heaven and earth is yours.

We proclaim you as our Lord.

We offer you our love.

We give you our whole lives.

Lord, may we enter into your kingdom and be with you in glory, where you are with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever.

Lord Jesus Christ, you are greater than we can ever imagine, before all, beyond all, in all, over all.

Forgive us for losing sight of your greatness, for underestimating the breadth of your love and the extent of your purposes for us, and for tying you down

to the things of earth rather than opening our hearts to the kingdom of heaven.

Broaden our vision, enlarge our understanding, deepen our faith, kindle our imagination, that we may glimpse your glory, and work more faithfully for the kingdom.

In your name we ask it and we pray further in the words you taught your disciples, saying:

OUR FATHER

Read: Acts 1 verses 1 – 11

Luke 24 verses 46 - 53

Reflection

Reflect for no more than **5** minutes.

The Ascension raises lots of questions. How do you imagine it? What really happened? You might look at the differences between Luke's 2 accounts of the Ascension in the Gospel and in Acts. What does the ascended Jesus mean for us today?

These are only suggestions. You will have lots of other ideas.

This part of the service might involve music or something visual; it might involve silence.

You might choose to use this reflection:

IN A CLOUD

In a cloud.

A cloud?

A bit dramatic wasn't it, Jesus?

A bit over the top.

Hands raised.

Floating heavenwards

And I'll lay odds that future artists will dress you in shining white, and paint the sky deep blue – "to match your eyes."

OK – so there were some precedents:

Elijah and his chariots and that fiery cloudy pillar thing that moved around the wilderness; but those were the old ways – you aren't like that.

Is this really what you want us to remember about you, Jesus?

That you disappeared in a cloud and that you now live somewhere above the skies, way beyond our reach?

What about your stories, your friendship; your tears, your pain, your laughter?

What about the way you believed in us, trusted us, and sent us out to teach and heal?

I'm not sure that being alive somewhere where we cannot see you, talk with you, laugh and cry with you, is going to be much help to us, Jesus.

Please can't you find a way of living with us, close enough somehow for us to know that you are near?

You said something once about a Spirit, a Holy Spirit from God, who would come to us.

Does that mean you are coming back to us?

And if you are – no dramatics this time please, Jesus.

Just come back to us quietly no more clouds!

Prayer

This is a time for prayers for the world, for the communities in which we live; for the Church and those who minister here in any capacity; for those known to us to be in particular need of our prayers; for ourselves.

CLOSING BLESSING
GOD OF LAUGHTER AND TEARS,
IMMERSE US IN GLORY,
CLOTHE US WITH POWER,
FILL US WITH WISDOM,
BLESS US WITH LOVE.
AMEN.

Some of this material has been adapted from “Fire and Bread” by Ruth Burgess and published by the Iona Community, and has been added to by me.