

A Service of the Word for Ascensiontide

Ascension Day marks the first day of *Thy Kingdom Come* - an annual invitation to prayer called by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

Lasting for eleven days, the focus is specific prayer in churches, households and as individuals for friends, families, communities and countries to come to know the saving love of God in Jesus Christ, and for ourselves that empowered by God's Spirit we would grow in confidence to show and tell of God's love.

There is a wide range of resources, including daily videos, to support churches on the dedicated Thy Kingdom Come app (available on iOS and Android) or at www.thykingdomcome.global



Please join in all the words in bold.

God has gone up with a shout.

All **the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.** *Psalm 47:5*

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

All **Amen.**

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and
the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

All **and also with you.**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, for forty days we have been celebrating with joyful hearts the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, his bursting from the tomb and his defeat of the power of sin and death. He appeared to his disciples many times and told them about the kingdom of God.

Today we recall how he left this earth and returned to his Father, ascending into heaven to take his throne over all dominions and powers. Trusting in his reign over all creation, and submitting to his kingly yet loving rule, let us hear the story of his parting.

Collect for Thy Kingdom Come

Almighty God, your ascended Son has sent us into the world to preach the good news of your kingdom: inspire us with your Spirit and fill our hearts with the fire of your love, that all who hear your Word may be drawn to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

A reading from Luke 24: 36-53

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.' Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

At the end the reader says:

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

A canticle from Revelation

All All nations shall come and worship You, O Christ, and share in the feast of Your kingdom.

1 Great and wonderful are Your deeds,
 Lord God the Almighty.

2 Just and true are Your ways, O
 ruler of the nations.

3 Who shall not revere and praise Your name, O Lord?
 for You alone are holy.

4 All nations shall come and worship in Your presence:
 for Your just dealings have been revealed.

Revelation 15.3,4

All To the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might, for ever and ever. Amen.

All All nations shall come and worship You, O Christ, and share in the feast of Your kingdom.

The Ascension Reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 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?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 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.’ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. 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.’

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. 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. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

This is the word of the Lord

All **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

We renew our commitment to our reigning Lord

Let us affirm the faith of the Church which Christ commissions us to share with the world

Do you believe and trust in God the Father source of all being and life, the One for whom we exist?

All **I believe and trust in Him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

All **I believe and trust in Him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

All **I believe and trust in Him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

All **This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

Intercessions

A Key feature of Thy Kingdom Come is the commitment to pray for five people to come to know Jesus. The intercessions include space for people to pray silently for their five people, or to consider who the five we are praying for might be. The intercessions might also use the first day of the Thy Kingdom Come prayer journal, or other related resource available from Thy Kingdom Come,

The following response may be used :

Lord, bless Your world

All **And fill us with Your Spirit**

Merciful Father,

All **accept these prayers for the sake of Your Son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

Sharing Stories: Thy Kingdom Come testimonies are available on the web site

The Lord is here
All **His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.
All **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right and good, our duty and
our joy, always and everywhere to give
You thanks, holy Father, almighty and
eternal God, through Jesus Christ the King
of glory.

Born of a woman,
He came to the rescue of our human race.
Dying for us,
He trampled death and conquered sin.

By the glory of His resurrection
He opened the way to life eternal
and by His ascension, gave us the
sure hope that where He is we
may also be.

Therefore the universe resounds with Easter joy and
with choirs of angels we sing for ever to your praise:

The Lord's Prayer

Being made one by the power of the Spirit, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

All **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and for ever. Amen.**

Responses

As we wait in silence,
All **make us ready for Your coming Spirit.**
As we listen to Your word,

All **make us ready for Your coming Spirit.**
As we worship You in majesty,

All **make us ready for Your coming Spirit.**

As we long for Your refreshing,
All **make us ready for Your coming Spirit.**
As we long for Your renewing,

All **make us ready for Your coming Spirit.**
As we long for Your equipping,

All **make us ready for Your coming Spirit.**
As we long for Your empowering,

All **make us ready for Your coming Spirit.**

The Blessing

God the Father, who has given to His Son the name above every name, strengthen you to proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord.

All **Amen.**

God the Son, who is our great high priest passed into the heavens, plead for you at the right hand of the Father.

All **Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit, who pours out His abundant gifts upon the Church, make you faithful servants of Christ our King.

All **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

Thy Kingdom Come Hymn

Thy Kingdom Come Lord teach us how to pray
For all to know your joy your peace and love
And know your friendship each and every day
The breath of Christ the Father's gentle dove

Thy Kingdom Come Christ's prayer to make us one
That all may know the Father sent the Son
To celebrate the victory He has won
In love and grace we pray thy will be done

Thy Kingdom Come we pray for those we know
To turn and follow you for all their days
And in your love find peace and service grow
Our one desire and hope your highest praise

Thy Kingdom Come transform our human ways
Our lives laid down in mercy truth and care
Nations renewed in giving thanks and praise
To see God's Kingdom come this is our prayer

Thy Kingdom Come we praise your Holy name
Your sacrifice and rising sets us free
That by our words and lives we may proclaim
By Jesus' risen life God's victory

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A little more about Thy Kingdom Come...

During the 11 days of Thy Kingdom Come, it is hoped that everyone who takes part will:

- Deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ
- Pray for God's spirit to work in the lives of those they know
- Come to realise that every aspect of their life is the stuff of prayer

After the very first Ascension Day the disciples gathered with Mary, constantly devoting themselves to prayer while they waited for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Like them, our reliance on the gift of the Holy Spirit is total – on our own we can do nothing.

Through the centuries Christians have gathered at that time to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. 'Thy Kingdom Come' picks up this tradition. Over the past three years more and more worshipping communities have dedicated the days between Ascension and Pentecost to pray 'Come Holy Spirit'.

We are praying that the Spirit will inspire and equip us to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with our friends and families, our communities and networks. It has been amazing how many varied ways there have been in which people from every tradition have taken up this challenge. The effects have been remarkable.

It is our prayer that those who have not yet heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and his love for the world will hear it for themselves, and respond and follow Him. Specifically, we again invite each and every Christian across the country to pray that God's Spirit might work in the lives of 5 friends who have not responded with their 'Yes' to God's call.

Whether you have joined in 'Thy Kingdom Come 'before or not, we invite you to take part – along with churches from over 65 different denominations in over 170 countries around the world.