SAFFRON WALDEN AND VILLAGES TEAM MINISTRY
PRAYERS FOR ASCENSION DAY (21 MAY 2020)

*Today we remember Jesus ascending into heaven 40 days after his resurrection, and his disciples waiting with great joy for the promise of the Holy Spirit. That sense of **waiting** may feel very real to us in our current circumstances. May we too trust God to bring us all that we need in his good time.*
You might like to light a candle at home while you use this leaflet, symbolising Jesus as the Light of the World: and to say the prayers and readings out loud.

Introduction

We gather together, united in purpose though separate in place, in the name of God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

*We say together (or why not **sing**!) an opening hymn:*

1. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess him King of glory now.
'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

2. At his voice creation sprang at once to sight,
all the angel faces, all the hosts of light,
thrones and dominations, stars upon their way,
all the heavenly orders in their great array.

3. Humbled for a season to receive a name
from the lips of sinners unto whom he came,
faithfully he bore it, spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious when from death he passed.

4. Bore it up triumphant with its human light,
through all ranks of creatures to the central height,
to the throne of Godhead, to the Father's breast,
filled it with the glory of that perfect rest.

5. In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue
all that is not holy, all that is not true:
crown him as your captain in temptation's hour;
let his will enfold you in its light and power.

6. Truly, this Lord Jesus shall return again,
with his Father's glory, with his angel train;
for all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,
and our hearts confess him King of glory now.

The Lord is here: Alleluia! **His Spirit is with us. Alleluia!**

We have come together as the family of God in this community. And especially we thank you, Heavenly Father, for your Son Jesus and his wonderful ascension to heaven to prepare a place for us and reign with you in glory. Help us to pray to you in faith, to sing your praise with gratitude, and to listen to your word with eagerness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

Prayers of Penitence

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.
We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.
Lord, have mercy. ***Lord, have mercy.***
We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.
Christ, have mercy. ***Christ, have mercy.***
We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven.
Lord, have mercy. ***Lord, have mercy.***

Hearing God's forgiveness

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

Readings

We now follow the readings on the sheet:
Collect (the special prayer for today)
First Reading: Acts Chapter 1, verses 1-11
Gospel reading: St Luke's Gospel, Chapter 24, verses 44-end

Reflection

If you are using this prayer sheet privately, you may wish to read the Reflection on the Grapevine. In a moment of quiet, think what message this may have for you, and ask God to help you live it out in your life this week.

We declare our faith together

We believe and trust in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.
We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.
This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us join our prayers with those of our Saviour Christ, seeking the Father's blessing and the fruits of the Spirit.
Jesus Christ, king of righteousness, enthroned at the right hand of the majesty on high, pray for the world and bring it to be subject to your gentle rule. Be with all leaders and governments as they bear the burden of responsibility, and fill them with your strength.
Lord, in your mercy ***Hear our prayer***

Jesus Christ, Son of Man who draws humanity into the life of God, pray for your brothers and sisters in need, distress and sorrow. We hold before you especially….. *do name those on your own heart.* Comfort and strengthen the weak, the sick and the dying, especially facing death alone. Be with all who fear for their future, and all who miss our normal ways of life. In their loneliness, be their consolation; in their anxiety, be their hope; in their darkness, be their light.
Lord, in your mercy ***Hear our prayer***

Jesus Christ, who healed the sick and went about doing good, give strength and energy to all hospital staff and carers combating the virus, and all key workers and volunteers determined to keep society running. Inspire with your Spirit all who seek a cure.
Lord, in your mercy ***Hear our prayer***

Jesus Christ, Lord of all, keep your Church in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, and give us the gifts we need to work in your service now and always.
Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sharing Christ's Peace

Jesus says: 'Peace I give you, my peace I leave with you. If you love me, rejoice because I am going to the Father.' Alleluia!
The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you**. **Alleluia!**
As you say this, hold in your mind all who are joining in these prayers today.

If you are joining the Eucharist celebrated live via Zoom, do follow the priest saying the Eucharistic prayer, with the standard responses. While only the priest can physically receive the consecrated bread and wine, all will be invited to say this prayer of Spiritual Communion, inviting Jesus to enter your deepest being.

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer *Let us pray together as Jesus has taught us*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

We ask God's grace for the week ahead

Heavenly Father, sustain us in our joys and in our anxieties. Enfold us in your peace in our waking and in our sleeping, and may we know your presence with us now and always: in the name of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**.

We say (or sing!) a final hymn:

Hail the day that sees him rise, Alleluia!
to his throne above the skies; Alleluia!
Christ, the Lamb for sinners given,
Alleluia!
enters now the highest heaven! Alleluia!

There for him high triumph waits;
Alleluia!
lift your heads, eternal gates! Alleluia!
he hath conquered death and sin; Alleluia!
take the King of glory in! Alleluia!

Lo! the heaven its Lord receives, Alleluia!
yet he loves the earth he leaves; Alleluia!
though returning to his throne, Alleluia!
calls the human race his own. Alleluia!

See! he lifts his hands above; Alleluia!
See! he shows the prints of love: Alleluia!
Hark! his gracious lips bestow, Alleluia!
blessings on his Church below. Alleluia!

Still for us he intercedes, Alleluia!
his prevailing death he pleads, Alleluia!
near himself prepares our place, Alleluia!
he the first fruits of our race. Alleluia!

Lord, though parted from our sight,
Alleluia!
far above the starry height, Alleluia!
grant our hearts may thither rise, Alleluia!
seeking thee above the skies. Alleluia!

May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, be with us all now and evermore: and may we go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Alleluia! Amen.

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