

Jesus Christ, Lord over all things, ascended far above the heavens and filling the universe, pray for us who receive the gifts you give us for work in your service ... Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace, and bring the whole created order to worship at your feet; for you are alive and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Responsory

As we wait in silence, **make us ready for your coming Spirit.**

As we listen to your word, **make us ready for your coming Spirit.**

As we worship you in majesty, **make us ready for your coming Spirit.**

As we long for your refreshing, **make us ready for your coming Spirit.**

As we long for your renewing, **make us ready for your coming Spirit.**

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

As we long for your empowering, **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. **Amen.**

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

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

And the blessing ...

Waiting expectantly for the promised Holy Spirit, go in the peace of Christ.

Alleluia, alleluia. **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

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Wheatthill Priory Benefice

“Jesus Lives: Follow Him”

Worship Sunday 24 May 2020

This week finds us in the 'waiting time' between Ascension and Pentecost. You may feel as if much of the time in recent weeks has been spent waiting, wondering and watching, and now here we are as church remembering the disciples waiting, waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit. Our worship today therefore looks back to the Ascension and forward to Pentecost.

Greeting and opening prayer

Glory to God in the highest. **Glory, glory, glory.**

Glory to God the Father. **Glory, glory, glory.**

Glory to Jesus the Son. **Glory, glory, glory.**

Glory to the Holy Spirit. **Glory to God in the highest.**

Mighty God, we gather in humility to worship you. Caring God, we bring to you our concerns. Glorious God, we exalt your holy name. Unite us – make us one in you, that your love may strengthen and empower us. **Amen.**

Confession

When our actions are not loving, and we think of just ourselves – your name is not glorified. **Forgive us, God of Glory.**

When our words bring hurt to others and we do not even notice – your name is not glorified. **Forgive us, God of Glory.**

When the way we live is selfish and we find no time for you – your name is not glorified. **Forgive us, God of Glory.**

When we do not see you or reveal your love – your name is not glorified. **Forgive us, God of Glory.**

Forgive and renew us, and let your glory be seen in our lives. **Amen.**

Readings

Acts 1:6-14

John 17:1-11

Reflection

I wonder how you feel about waiting for something? In some ways it depends on what we're waiting for. Waiting for a long anticipated pleasurable event may well feel different to something that we're dreading. Sometimes the time spent waiting rushes by, at others it drags.

In our first reading the disciples have their hopes about what is going to happen next. As far as they're concerned the wait is for 'the restoration of the Kingdom' as a physical entity. Their question to Jesus about this demonstrates how in some ways they still have not grasped the breadth of His ministry and the call to his followers. Instead are instructed to spend their time waiting in prayer, preparing for the Holy Spirit to come, and that when He does they will then become witnesses, first locally then beyond their immediate locale, until finally the Gospel reaches the end of the earth.

So they say goodbye, and look to where Jesus has gone (as one often does when saying goodbye). Instead they are called to look to the future, to wait for God's power and commission, a wait that they do in prayer in the upper room, disciples both men and women together. Gathered in prayer, worship gathered to wait.

They of course did not know precisely what they were waiting for. I wonder if some of them remembered Jesus' prayer which we have in John's Gospel from the night before his death, when anticipating the cross he prays that his glory may be seen. He asks God that the glory they have shared from the beginning of time may now be seen. This seems like a strange prayer given that the next day he is going to be crucified! Strange glory this. A glory that is like none other. A glory that suggests to us that the power Jesus promises may not be the standard sort of power, but one that will take the disciples

into strange places and situations. That will lead them to discover life as they have never known it before. A power that leads to the glory of the cross, is not a power that many want I suspect! I don't know about you, but at times I'd rather have a power that didn't take the hard road!

So the disciples wait, for power, for commissioning, for glory. I don't know what they were hoping for, but if you read the Acts of the Apostles you'll discover that the journey was, to use a modern phrase, 'interesting'!

We too are waiting, waiting for the next stage, waiting to feel safe to go out again, waiting for so much. The question is are we also waiting for God's Holy Spirit, ready for His leadership and guidance, ready to be His witnesses, wherever he may send us? Do we desire to see His glory, even if we don't see it in the ways we would choose or like? In short are we ready to pray 'Thy Kingdom Come'?

Prayers of Intercession

Let us join our prayers with those of our Saviour Christ, seeking the Father's blessing and the gifts of the Spirit.

Jesus Christ, great high priest, living for ever to intercede for us, pray for the Church, your broken body in the world ... Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, king of righteousness, enthroned at the right hand of the majesty on high, pray for the world, and make it subject to your gentle rule ...

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, Son of Man, drawing humanity into the life of God, pray for your brothers and sisters in need, distress or sorrow ...

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, pioneer of our salvation, bringing us to glory through your death and resurrection, surround with your saints and angels those who have died trusting your promises ... Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**