

**Seventh Sunday of Easter
Sunday, 29th May 2022**



Dear Friends in Christ,

'Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am'
(John 17: 24)

Writing this on the day after the Feast of the Ascension, Platinum Jubilee bunting adorns our towns and villages, the weather is gloriously hot and sunny, the perfume from French lavender, peonies and early roses hangs heavy in the air and birdsong is so powerfully melodious that it feels as if all creation has burst into a riot of praise and glory as God the Father receives His Son back home into heaven.



The Ascension by John Singleton Copley

Our Gospel narrative this weekend pulls us back in time a little from Jesus' ascension to a time of intimate prayer with His Father – for himself, for His disciples and for each of us who believe and for those who are yet to know Jesus.

John writes us into Jesus' heart. His fervent desire is that we might all become one, unified in and through His love for us all. His prayer to the Father blesses us and empowers us to follow in His way, and grants many other favours to those who strive to be holy. Jesus isn't asking us to be like the Dickens character, Uriah Heep, whose toadying ways demean the nature of true holiness. Jesus is asking us to be our true selves, made in God's loving image. He knows it isn't going to be easy for us to turn away from the compelling lure of material, earthly values. After all, He has experienced the worst the world could throw at Him first-hand.

No, Jesus longs for us to be unified, as Gregory of Nyssa puts it, 'through the crown of all blessings, that in all the diversity of life's decisions, [we] should never be divided greatly in [our] choice of the good.' In this way, Jesus prays to God that we may all be one, united in and through a single good, so that linked in the bond of peace, we might all become one body and one spirit through the one hope to which we have all been called in Christ Jesus himself.



'Prayer' by Mike Moyers

As we journey together these next 10 days between Ascension and Pentecost, I pray we will all strive hard to live in unity and Godly love. It's what our world needs now more than ever.

Yours in the risen glory of Christ,

Jax

Revd Jax Machin, Rector, The Downs Benefice

Collect Prayer for the Seventh Sunday of Easter

O God the King of glory,
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us
and exalt us to the place
where our Saviour Christ is gone before,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.



John 17: 20-26 - Jesus Prays for All Believers

My prayer is not for [the disciples] alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.'

Schedule of Services

Now that all national Coronavirus restrictions have been lifted, it is no longer necessary to book seats in our parishes for services. Neither is it mandatory for you to wear masks in church. However, Coronavirus is still very much with us. There are a number of people in our villages with it at present, so we are encouraging people to observe social distancing measures.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Ch</i>	<i>Cr</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Sp</i>	<i>Wh</i>
<i>29th May</i>		5 th Sunday Benefice Holy Communion			
<i>5th June Pentecost / Whit Sunday / Platinum Jubilee</i>	Morning Prayer - for Her Majesty The Queen	Holy Communion		9.15am - Prayers for Her Majesty The Queen	
<i>12th June Trinity Sunday</i>	11am - Trinity Sunday Open-Air Benefice Service followed by BYO Benefice Picnic <i>(Northwood Park)</i>				
<i>19th June</i>	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	6pm - Peace & Wholeness	8am - Holy Communion (BCP)	
<i>22nd June</i>			Mid-week Holy Communion		
<i>26th June</i>	Thanksgiving Service for the Fete (<i>in the Fete Marquee</i>)		Morning Prayer	Morning Worship	8am – Holy Communion (BCP) <i>PLUS</i> 6pm – Spring Meditations