

Ascension Day

Music/Hymn Suggestions: *Praise My Soul The King Of Heaven* (Henry Francis Lyte); *This Is The Day* (Isaac Watts)

Sign of the Cross.

Leader: Let us begin with our morning offering:

All: Loving God,
I offer to you this day
all my prayers, thoughts, words and actions.
Be with me throughout this day
and help me to show your compassion to all I meet.
Protect me from any unkind word or act
and help me to remember that nothing is going to happen to me today that you and I together can't handle.
Amen.

Leader: Our prayer time this morning remembers the day that Jesus gloriously ascended into heaven after his work on earth was completed. The following reading from the Acts of the Apostles describes what happened.

Reader 1: *A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (1:9-11)*

When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said: 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward 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.'

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: *Reflection*

After Jesus rose from the dead, he spent forty precious days with his apostles and friends. Eventually, the time came for him to say goodbye. Ascension Day celebrates Jesus returning to his Father in heaven. It marks the end of Jesus' earthly ministry. His mission had been a success and now he entrusted his apostles and friends with the task of continuing the work that he had begun. It also marked the return of Jesus to heavenly glory – a glory only glimpsed by some at his Baptism and Transfiguration.

Jesus is the 'Beloved Son' with whom the Father is 'well pleased'. He is now exalted by the Father and given glory and honour. Jesus' return to glory meant he could now turn his attention to the task of preparing a place for us in the heavenly kingdom. The ascension of Jesus into heaven also points to the way in which Jesus will fulfil his promise to return one day. He will return in bodily form, coming on the clouds of heaven.

Let us spend a few moments this morning reflecting on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. *(Pause)* We thank God for the gift of Jesus, the beloved Son, our Lord and Saviour. *(Pause)* We thank God for his glorious resurrection from the dead and his ascension into heaven. *(Pause)* We look forward to the day that Jesus fulfils his promise and returns to earth to bring us to our heavenly home. *(Pause)* And so we pray. The response to the prayers is: 'Lord, graciously hear us.'

Reader 1: Loving God, thank you for the gift of your son, Jesus. Through his death and resurrection we have been raised to new life. Help us to appreciate all the opportunities that this brings. *Lord, hear us.*

All: Lord, graciously hear us.