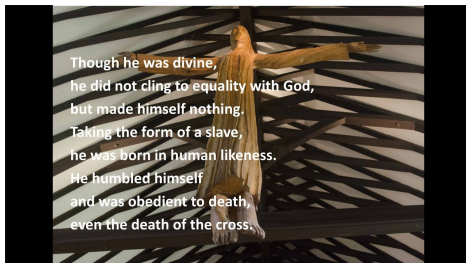


Good morning everyone!

I hope this email finds you well. Once again, we are all offering our prayers and worship at home, and Revd Carole and I have prepared a video which I hope you will find helpful in doing that. The text of both the order of service and the reflection is attached as a Word document if you prefer to read rather than watch. As well as through the link below, the video is on the parish facebook page, where you will also find other services, including one for Ascension day, and also Night Prayer for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

<https://youtu.be/LtPmZhkNXzE>



## Worship and Reflection for the Sunday after Ascension Day

A Short Act of Worship for the  
Sunday after Ascension Day, with a  
reflection on the readings, Acts 1.6-  
14 and John 17.1-11

[youtu.be](https://youtu.be/LtPmZhkNXzE)

I am also including here the link to one of the hymns for this season, as sung by a big crowd (filmed before lockdown of course!) at the Albert Hall. This is one of a number of youtube hymns that Sarah has shared on her weekly 'Keep Singing its Sunday' email to the choir - if you would like to be included in that circulation, let me know and I can either forward you the email or ask Sarah to add you to the regular recipients.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7OCs0d\\_4vM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7OCs0d_4vM)



## CROWN HIM WITH MANY CROWNS

CROWN HIM WITH MANY CROWNS

[www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7OCs0d_4vM)

Many thanks to those of you who braved the world of video conferencing and joined our Coffee and Chat Zoom Meeting on Thursday. It was lovely to see and hear about a dozen folk gathered for that, and I know there are others who are all set for joining in subsequent meetings. If you've not tried it, give it a go! It's not as scary as it might seem. Search for '[zoom.us](https://zoom.us)' on whatever you're most comfortable using (it works on phones as well as computers and tablets), and you can then join a meeting by typing in the code and password. Let me know if you need more help. Our next Zoom chat will be this Tuesday at 10am, and we'll finish by 11am.(Please note the change of time from the original schedule). As well as generally catching up with each other, we'll have a chance for each of us to share briefly just one thing for which you have felt thankful during this period of lockdown - it might be an act of kindness that you have received, or just something you've come to appreciate as a blessing. The meeting ID is 319 891 1457 and the password is Kings1. It should also work by clicking on the link I've copied below.

Topic: Kingsbury/Baxterley Chat and Catch up  
Time: May 26, 2020 10:00 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/3198911457?pwd=UUpCV3dDbG5TTHJ5R3dnL09mMk5RZz09>

Meeting ID: 319 891 1457

Password: Kings1

So love and best wishes, everyone, and I hope to see you all again before too long.

John

Revd Dr John White

Priest in Charge of Kingsbury, Baxterley with Hurley and Wood End and Merevale with Bentley

The Vicarage, Church Lane, Kingsbury, Tamworth B78 2LR

01827 874252

**An Act of Worship for the Sunday after Ascension  
24 May 2020**

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

Almighty God,  
your Son has opened for us  
a new and living way into your presence.  
Give us new hearts and constant wills  
to worship you in spirit and in truth;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

In the letter to the Hebrews, we hear these words of encouragement:

'Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.'

So a moment of quietness, as we then confess our sins to God:

**O King enthroned on high,  
filling the earth with your glory:  
holy is your name,  
Lord God almighty,  
in our sinfulness we cry to you  
to take our guilt away,  
and to cleanse our lips to speak your word,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

Almighty God,  
who in Jesus Christ has given us  
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,  
forgive us our sins,  
open our eyes to God's truth,  
strengthen us to do God's will  
and give us the joy of his kingdom  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Collect**

Risen, ascended Lord,  
as we rejoice at your triumph,  
fill your church on earth with power and compassion,  
that all who are estranged by sin  
may find forgiveness and know your peace,  
to the glory of God the Father.

### ***Reading Acts 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 and periods that the Father has set by 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's 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.

### ***A reading from the Gospel according to John 17.1-11***

#### ***A Reflection from Revd John***

#### ***Affirmation of faith***

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God. ¶

**Though he was divine,  
he did not cling to equality with God,  
but made himself nothing.  
Taking the form of a slave,  
he was born in human likeness.  
He humbled himself  
and was obedient to death,  
even the death of the cross.**

**Therefore God has raised him on high,  
and given him the name above every name:  
that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bow,  
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

***Prayers of intercession (Revd Carole)***

Lord, hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

***Thanksgiving.***

He is the Lord of life and death.

**We worship and adore you.**

He is the Lamb upon the throne.

**We worship and adore you.**

He is crowned, in glory seated.

**We worship and adore you.**

Jesus always pleads for us.

**We worship and adore you.**

Jesus comes again in glory.

**We worship and adore you.**

Jesus claims his kingdom here.

**We worship and adore you.**

***Blessing***

Christ our ascended King pour upon you the abundance of his gifts  
and bring you to reign with him in glory;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

**Reflection for the Sunday after Ascension Day**  
**Acts 1.6-14    John 17.1-11**

This may just be me, as somebody who is not that up on computer science, but I remember getting very confused when I first heard people talking about storing things in "the cloud". I knew in practice what was meant. Instead of (or as well as) storing files on the hard drive of your own computer, you could back those documents up through the internet. But it was the reference to the cloud that threw me. How can you store something in a cloud, something that's made up of water vapour? And even when I twigged that we weren't talking about literal clouds here, the image persisted of data somehow floating around "up there".

Of course, the cloud in computing isn't actually up there in the sky at all. I'm not exactly sure where it is, if anywhere. The advantage of cloud storage is precisely that the data is not kept in a single place, and so you can access it from anywhere, and your precious documents and photos are not going to be lost forever if you accidentally spill coffee on your laptop. The cloud is both everywhere and nowhere; but what it isn't is physically and literally up there in the sky. The image of the cloud is a vivid metaphor, used to help us visualise something that is not in fact visible.

And I wonder if perhaps something similar is going on with the language of clouds and heaven in the story of the Ascension. It is quite natural and common to talk of heaven as a place "up there", and of God as being above us in the sky. In the Gospel reading, when Jesus prays to the Father, we are told that "he looked up to heaven". It is the same word that the Bible uses for heaven as for sky. But is heaven really a physical place "up there"? There are those these days who sneer at religion, making out that believers all hold a naïve and literal view of God as a man with a white beard sitting up on a cloud in the sky, where we'll join him with our harps when we die; and yet most Christians understand that heaven is not a literal, physical place up above our heads, and that God is Spirit and transcends the restrictions of time and space. We use the language of "up there" to express a dimension of reality that goes beyond the capacity of our imaginations to visualise or our words to express.

So when we read the story of the Ascension, and Luke tells us that Jesus "was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight", we don't need to tie ourselves up in knots trying to define exactly where he has gone, or how. In fact, maybe this cloud into which Jesus is taken is not so very different from the cloud where the documents on our computers are safely stored. Through the ascension, Jesus is now fully in the presence of the Father. Physically, he is absent from the disciples and has passed out of their sight; but because he is no longer located in a single place on earth, he can be and is present to us all as our risen and ascended King. So let us not stand looking up into the sky, at the clouds; let us look out to the world around us, and serve that world in the name of the one who has promised to be with us always, even to the ends of the earth.