

## REFLECTIONS

In my ministerial experience, church attendance is often low on Ascension Day. We don't seem to get the Ascension quite like we get Christmas, Easter or Pentecost – how many 'Happy Ascension' cards have you seen in the shops? Perhaps we are uncomfortable with an account that suggests heaven is up in the sky, beyond the clouds, somewhere past Pluto? Or, more likely, we are not sure what the Ascension really means.

Jesus' earthly ministry focussed on teaching and demonstrating the presence of the Kingdom of God, that is, the rule of God, and how it had come near us in him. Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension convinced his disciples of the truth of his teaching, and gave the deepest significance to words in his prayer to the Father: 'you have given [me] authority over all people' (John 17.2). 'Jesus is Lord' became the first credal statement for Christians and launched the Church on its mission. At his ascension Jesus tells his apostles: 'you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth.' (Acts 1.7,8) Their task, and now ours, is to announce the sovereign rule of Jesus in the whole world, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

### Going deeper

Vicars are sometimes accused of being too heavenly minded to be any earthly use! We must all guard against failing to connect our faith with the world around us. The Ascension calls us all to be actively engaged in living out Christ's commands to work for justice; to reject fear, hatred and distortion of the truth; to build loving, supportive communities; and to try to live at peace with all our neighbours – and thus demonstrate the rule of God in our lives.

This immense task should not, and cannot, be attempted alone. For the apostles the sight of their master finally departing for heaven must have been a bereavement, yet on returning to Jerusalem they joined with others in devoting themselves to prayer and awaiting the coming of the promised Holy Spirit. As Augustine (4th century) remarked: *You ascended from before our eyes, and we turned back grieving, only to find you in our hearts.*

### I wonder...

In a week when our churches focus on the 'Thy Kingdom come' project, how shall I demonstrate his Kingdom within me?

## OUR CHURCHES' DIARY

<b>TODAY</b>	<b>24th May</b>	<b>EASTER 7</b>
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### THIS WEEK

**SERVICES ONLINE at [www.camvillages.org.uk](http://www.camvillages.org.uk)**

**This week on YouTube**

**11.30 am HOLY GROUNDS on Zoom**

**Monday - Friday 5.00 pm Evening Prayer on Zoom**

**Wednesday 27th May**

9.30 am Holy Communion Alex Jeewan & Caroline Currer

<b>NEXT SUNDAY</b>	<b>31st May</b>	<b>PENTECOST</b>
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Close Encounters with Jesus John Risby via email

**SERVICES ONLINE at [www.camvillages.org.uk](http://www.camvillages.org.uk)**

**11.30 am HOLY GROUNDS on Zoom**

## CAM VILLAGES MINISTRY TEAM

Team Vicar: Revd Alex Jeewan 01799 531153  
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Revd John Risby  
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## SAFFRON WALDEN & VILLAGES TEAM MINISTRY

# The Grapevine

**COVERING THE CHURCHES OF  
GREAT & LITTLE CHESTERFORD, LITTLEBURY WITH  
LITTLEBURY GREEN, & WENDENS AMBO**

**Welcome to our services today  
Seventh Sunday of Easter**

### Collect

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.

### First Reading Acts 1.6-14

When the apostles had come together, they asked Jesus, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his 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 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.

### Gospel John 17.1-11

Jesus looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. 'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.'

## PLEASE PRAY FOR:

### Those who are unwell:

Margaret Reed (Gt Chesterford)

### Those who need our support:

Betty Dowsett (Littlebury Green)

Lucy Maskell (Great Chesterford)

Kylie Moore-Gilbert (in prison in Iran)

### Friends and families of those who have died:

Colin Curtis (Wendens Ambo)

Those whose anniversaries are this week

### Other topics for your prayers:

- The possibility of children returning to school to reconnect with their friendship groups
- Those with the responsibility for determining the level of lockdown in the coming weeks
- Those ill with Covid19 in hospitals and at home with thanksgiving for those treating them
- Our churches as we explore new ways to worship
- The effect of Covid 19 on refugee camps, other crowded communities, and nations where the
- Those missing loved ones who have died

## VICAR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

As many of you may know I like watching films. I find I can get rather emotional watching a sentimental film, more so than in everyday life sometimes.

An example of this is to be found in the film 'Up' by Pixar. The film centres on an elderly widower named Carl Fredrickson and an earnest boy-scout named Russell. By tying thousands of balloons to his house, Carl sets out to fulfil his dream to see the wilds of South America and complete a promise made to his late wife, Ellie.

It always makes me cry because it focus on our mortality and the temporariness of earthly love. However, I do like the idea of ascending into the heavens to explore new places where the sky is the limit.

Last Thursday the Church celebrated Ascension Day. The day that Jesus ascended into heaven with the promise that the Holy Spirit was on its way.

Jesus is lifted up, and the disciples are left gazing into the heavens until an angel admonishes, "Why do you stand looking toward heaven?" The angel promises Jesus' ultimate return, but that's not really the point. The point is that the disciples' mission and our own is right here—in our time and place and on our planet not some far off sphere. It is a lesson that I could learn well and I should try to root myself more in the present, with all its joys and sorrows.

The point of Ascension is perspective. Rising to the clouds gives us a broader perspective on our lives and the planet. Rather than individualistic images of salvation and personal well-being, Ascension challenges us to bring heaven to earth, that is, to live Jesus' values in our world. As the Lord's Prayer proclaims, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." When we live from a higher perspective, we can transcend our own self-interest to embrace the well-being of the whole earth, including strangers, enemies, and the environment.

There is no better time to do this, than in our present circumstances. We have an opportunity to reshape the world around us and change our priorities for the better. Let's all seek to go 'up', to move upwards together and go nowhere else as we come out of lockdown.

With love, Alex

## PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Lord Jesus, be the Ascended One in my heart, where my biggest struggle lies. Be my Lord at home and at work, and in my relationships with your world. May I be able to say with joy: 'Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father'. Amen.

## CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

### WEDNESDAY 9.30 am ZOOM HOLY COMMUNION

with Alex Jeewan and Caroline Currer

For an invitation to Zoom services please contact Alex or Gillian ([website.camvillages@gmail.com](mailto:website.camvillages@gmail.com))

### CLOSE ENCOUNTERS (with Jesus)

John Risby's Brief Bible Study outlines continue every Wednesday: Looking at some of the people who met with Jesus -Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the paralytic, the rich young ruler, the thief on the cross and Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus.

Outlines will be sent by email each Wednesday, open to all, please book in at [john.risby179@btinternet.com](mailto:john.risby179@btinternet.com)

### SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

There is support available in all our 5 communities during the lockdown. Contact details have been circulated. Don't hesitate to get in touch with them or to encourage your neighbours to - whatever the need.

### SUPPORTING THE CHURCH

During the current pandemic. We are still trying to support our communities by providing online services, pastoral care and linking with local support groups.

As the church buildings are not open we are not able to receive donations in the usual way. The church is NOT centrally funded but relies on the generosity of those who use the churches and/or live in the parishes. There are many bills to pay just to keep the church buildings running and, as there are no weekly collections, we need further help to pay the bills.

We know this is a difficult time for everyone but if you can spare something to support your local church then please contact your church treasurer or contact me ([vicar.camvillages@gmail.com](mailto:vicar.camvillages@gmail.com)) if you would like further information or for your treasurer's email address.

If you support your church through a weekly envelope scheme please let your church treasurer have your filled envelopes each month. With love, Alex

### KEEP IN TOUCH

With all that's going on via our churches' website

**[www.camvillages.org.uk](http://www.camvillages.org.uk)**

especially the variety of services available for us on Sundays; don't forget at 11.30 am on Sundays there's

### Holy Grounds

the Cam Villages Churches virtual after service coffee and chat. If you can, watch the service online and then join us with your mug of coffee on Zoom at 11.30 am.

For an invite or if you need help get onto Zoom please email Gillian on [Website.camvillages@gmail.com](mailto:Website.camvillages@gmail.com) and she will get back to you and talk you through.

## NEWS

### STOP PRESS!

**Monday 25th May from 10 am**

**PLANT SALE** outside **32 Jacksons Lane Gt Chesterford** (Ruth Bannington's). If you have plants you can give for sale please leave them outside 32—Ruth will look after them until Monday Proceeds to All Saints, Gt Chesterford

**PARISH OFFICE** The Parish Office is now closed to visitors but we are contactable by telephone and email as usual.

**ALL CHURCHES IN THE TEAM REMAIN CLOSED** until further notice in accordance with national guidelines but from this week the clergy are allowed to stream services from the churches.

### WEEKEND AWAY

There are still places available on the rescheduled weekend away **16th-18th July 2021**. Go to <http://stmaryssafronwalden.org/weekendaway2021> for details and how to book.