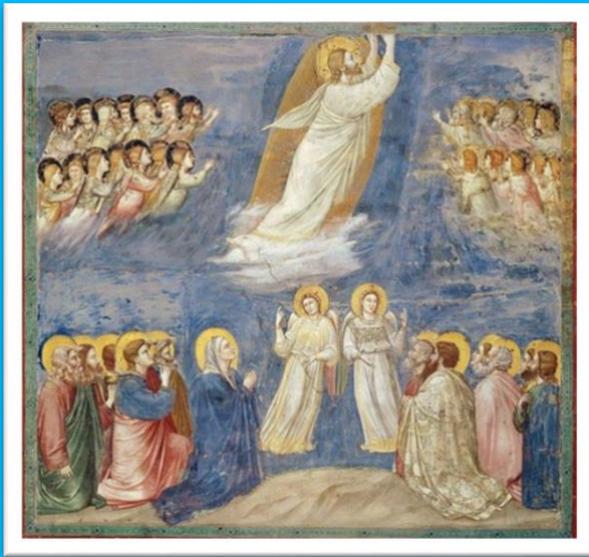




# Parish Communion Ascension to Pentecost





**The Ascension of Christ**  
Giotto di Bondone, 1304-06  
Scrovegni Chapel, Padua

Ascension falls 40 days after Easter and commemorates Jesus' return to heaven (traditionally seen as the ultimate confirmation of his divinity) after a series of post-resurrection appearances to followers and friends. As the final line of Mark's Gospel states concisely, 'So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.'

This image is one of 37 frescoes that form Giotto's masterwork, telling the story of the life of Christ through scenes covering the walls and ceiling of an intimate family chapel in the Veneto region. The frescoes are compressed in focus and use forced perspective to adjust the scale of subjects, such that they often appear like stage sets. Giotto departed from established stylistic conventions of his time in not depicting idealised figures adorned in elaborate clothing, but rather flesh and blood ones with real gestures and emotions drawn from close observation and often clothed in ordinary garments.

This scene captures Christ's rise from the earth, with his hands extending beyond the frame of the image to convey his entry into another realm, watched closely by his eleven remaining disciples and his mother Mary (painted generously with then costly blue pigment, perhaps to convey her special status). Small armies of angels escort his flight in what could be a pre-imagined space capsule, as the two angels of Acts 1:11 nearer ground level provide commentary and interpretation - as reported there, they ask 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.'

We can observe this image in the knowledge that the summit of human achievement in causing an object to ascend from Earth was the Saturn V rocket, which launched NASA's Apollo missions to the moon. Yet transporting a tiny capsule beyond the earth's gravitational pull required the thrust of a rocket, when fully fuelled, weighing 6.5 million pounds. As we claim the promise of Romans 6:4 that '...just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life,' perhaps we can pause as well to ponder that it is only through God's exclusive authority and matchless power that, as the following verse confirms, 'we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.'

## The Greeting

The Lord be with you  
**and also with you.**

## Hymn – Soul of my Saviour

Soul of my Saviour, sanctify my breast,  
Body of Christ, be thou my saving guest,  
Blood of my Saviour, bathe me in thy tide,  
Wash me with water flowing from thy side.

Strength and protection may thy passion be,  
O blessed Jesu, hear and answer me;  
Deep in thy wounds, Lord, hide and shelter me,  
So shall I never, never part from thee.

Guard and defend me from the foe malign,  
In death's dread moments make me only thine:  
Call me and bid me come to thee on high  
Where I may praise thee with thy saints for ay.

## Prayers of Penitence

What God has prepared for those who love him,  
he has revealed to us through the Spirit;  
for the Spirit searches everything.  
Therefore, let us in penitence open our hearts to the Lord,  
Who has prepared good things for those who love him.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry  
and repent of all our sins.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past  
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life  
to the glory of your name.  
Amen.**

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **The Collect**

God, who as at this time  
taught the hearts of your faithful people  
by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit:  
grant us by the same Spirit  
to have a right judgement in all things  
and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort;  
through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. one God, now and for ever.

### **Readings**

**Reading - Acts 2. 1-21  
Read by David Anderson**

This is the word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

**Reading - John 15.26–27; 16.4b–15  
Read by Jane Anderson**

Alleluia, alleluia  
Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people  
And kindle in them the fire of your love.

## **Alleluia**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John  
**Glory to you. O Lord**

*At the end*

This is the Gospel of the Lord  
**Praise to you O Christ**

**Sermon**

**The Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.**

**Prayers of Intercession  
Nick Owen**

*At the end we say*

Merciful Father,

**Accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

## **The Peace**

God has made us one in Christ.  
He has set his seal upon us and, as a pledge of what is to come,  
has given the Spirit to dwell in our hearts. Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**And also with you.**

## **Preparation of the Table**

The Lord be with you  
**and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For he is our great high priest  
who has entered once for all  
into the heavenly sanctuary,  
evermore to pour upon your Church  
the grace and comfort of your Holy Spirit.

He is the one who has gone before us,  
who calls us to be united in prayer  
as were his disciples in the upper room  
while they awaited his promised gift,

the life-giving Spirit of Pentecost.

Therefore all creation yearns with eager longing  
as angels and archangels sing the endless hymn of praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

How wonderful the work of your hands, O Lord.  
As a mother tenderly gathers her children,  
you embraced a people as your own.  
When they turned away and rebelled  
your love remained steadfast.  
From them you raised up Jesus our Saviour, born of  
Mary, to be the living bread,  
in whom all our hungers are satisfied.  
He offered his life for sinners,  
and with a love stronger than death  
he opened wide his arms on the cross.

On the night before he died,  
he came to supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he gave you thanks.  
He broke it and gave it to them, saying:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,  
he gave you thanks, and said:  
Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new  
covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the  
forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died:  
Christ is risen:  
Christ will come again.**

Father, we plead with confidence  
his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross;  
we remember his dying and rising in glory,  
and we rejoice that he intercedes for us at your  
right hand.

Pour out your Holy Spirit as we bring before you  
these gifts of your creation;  
may they be for us  
the body and blood of your dear Son.

As we eat and drink these holy things in your presence,  
form us in the likeness of Christ,  
and build us into a living temple to your glory.

Bring us at the last with all the saints  
to the vision of that eternal splendour  
for which you have created us;  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
by whom, with whom, and in whom,  
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,  
we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of  
everlasting praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power  
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer**

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;**

**on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

### **Breaking of the Bread**

We break this bread  
to share in the body of Christ.  
**Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

### **Giving of Communion**

God's holy gifts  
For God's holy people  
**Jesus Christ is holy  
Jesus Christ is Lord  
To the glory of God the Father**

### **Prayer after Communion**

**Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.**

**Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work to your praise and glory.  
Amen.**

### **The Notices**

#### **Hymn – Crown him with many crowns**

Crown him with many crowns,  
the Lamb upon his throne;  
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns  
all music but its own:

Awake, my soul, and sing  
of him who died for thee,  
and hail him as thy matchless King  
through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of Love!  
Behold his hands and side,  
those wounds yet visible above  
in beauty glorified:  
no angel in the sky  
can fully bear that sight,  
but downward bends his burning eye  
at mysteries so bright.

Crown him the Lord of peace,  
whose power a sceptre sways  
from pole to pole, that wars may cease,  
and all be prayer and praise:  
his reign shall know no end,  
and round his piercèd feet  
fair flowers of Paradise extend  
their fragrance ever sweet.

Crown him the Lord of years,  
the Potentate of time,  
Creator of the rolling spheres,  
ineffably sublime.  
all hail, Redeemer, hail!  
for thou hast died for me;  
thy praise shall never, never fail  
throughout eternity.

## **Blessing**

The Spirit of truth lead you into all truth  
Give you grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord  
And strengthen you to proclaim the work and works of God  
And the blessing of God almighty,  
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
Be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

## Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia! Alleluia!  
**In the name of Christ. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**The hymns for this service were recorded remotely by the Choral Scholars of St Martin-in-the-Fields in their homes, and edited together.**

*This booklet is for use in the Parish of Itchen Valley, which comprises the churches of St Mary's Avington, St John the Baptist, Itchen Abbas, St Mary's Easton and St Swithun's Martyr Worthy*

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