

Westminster Abbey



The Ascension of Our Lord

Sung Eucharist

13 May 2010

5.00 pm

The Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ has been celebrated on the fortieth day after Easter since early Christian times, some fifth-century authors claiming that even in their day it was of ancient custom. It commemorates the narrative, found in today's readings from The Acts of the Apostles and from the Gospel of Luke, of the risen Christ's ascent into heaven in the sight of his disciples. It is in The Acts of the Apostles that the event is described as being forty days after the Resurrection.

The theological significance of this observance is that, whereas in his risen person before the Ascension, our Lord was present with his disciples only at particular times and places, afterwards he 'ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things' (Ephesians 4: 10).

*Please join in singing the hymns and in saying the words printed in **bold** type.*

Most of the church, with the exception of the North Transept, is served by a hearing loop. Users should turn their hearing aid to the setting marked T.

Members of the congregation are kindly requested to refrain from using private cameras, video, or sound recording equipment. Please ensure that mobile phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are switched off.

The cover illustration, of the Ascension of Christ, is by Garofalo (1481–1559)

The Preacher is The Most Reverend Dr Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, former Primate of South Africa and Metropolitan.

Setting: Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c 1525–94) Missa O Rex gloriae

The Gathering

All stand to sing THE HYMN:



Hail the day that sees him rise Alleluia!
glorious to his native skies; Alleluia!
Christ, awhile to mortals given, Alleluia!
enters now the highest heaven! Alleluia!

There the glorious triumph waits; Alleluia!
lift your head, eternal gates! Alleluia!
Christ hath vanquished death and sin; Alleluia!
take the King of glory in. Alleluia!

See! the heaven its Lord receives, Alleluia!
yet he loves the earth he leaves; Alleluia!
though returning to his throne, Alleluia!
still he calls mankind his own. Alleluia!

Lord, though parted from our sight, Alleluia!
far above yon azure height, Alleluia!
grant our hearts may thither rise, Alleluia!
seeking thee beyond the skies. Alleluia!

There we shall with thee remain, Alleluia!
partners of thine endless reign; Alleluia!
there thy face unclouded see, Alleluia!
find our heaven of heavens in thee. Alleluia!

Llanfair 130i NEH
Robert Williams of Anglesey (1781–1821)

Charles Wesley (1707–88) and
Thomas Cotterill (1779–1823)

The President says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

All remain standing. The President introduces THE PRAYERS OF PENITENCE, after which all say:

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.

The President says THE ABSOLUTION. All respond: Amen.

All sit after the opening phrase GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO sung by the Choir:

Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te, gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam, Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.

Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe; Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis; qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram; qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

All stand for THE COLLECT:

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that as we believe your only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens, so we in heart and mind may also ascend and with him continually dwell; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Word

All sit for A READING from THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES:

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This,' he said, 'is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' 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 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 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.’

Acts 1: 1-11

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

The Choir sings THE PSALM:

Antiphon: God has gone up with a merry noise, the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.
Alleluia!

Clap your hands together, all you peoples: O sing to God with shouts of joy.
For the Lord Most High is to be feared: he is the great King over all the earth.
He subdued the peoples under us: and the nations under our feet.
He has chosen our heritage for us: the pride of Jacob, whom he loves.
God has gone up with a merry noise: the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.
O sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises to our King, sing praises.
For God is the King of all the earth: sing praises with all your skill.
God reigns over the nations: God has taken his seat upon his holy throne.
The nobles of the peoples are gathered together: with the people of the God of Abraham.
For the powers of the earth belong to God: and he is very highly exalted.

Psalm 47

All remain seated for THE EPISTLE:

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1: 15-end

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

All stand for THE PROCESSION OF THE GOSPEL. The Choir sings:

Caelos ascendit hodie *Alleluia!*
Jesus Christus Rex gloriae:
sedet ad Patris dexteram;
gubernat caelum et terram.

Today ascends to heaven Alleluia!
Jesus Christ the King of glory:
he is seated at the right hand of the Father;
he governs heaven and earth.

Iam finem habent omnia
patris Davidis carmina.
Iam Dominus cum Domino
sedet in Dei solio.

Now fulfilled are all
the songs of our forefather David.
Now the Lord with the Lord
is seated on God's throne.

In hoc triumpho maximo
benedicamus Domino:
laudatur Sancta Trinitas.
Deo dicamus gratias. *Alleluia! Amen.*

In this great triumph
let us bless the Lord:
let the Holy Trinity be praised.
Let us give thanks to God. Alleluia! Amen.

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924)

anonymous

When the GOSPEL is announced the reader says:

The Lord be with you;
and also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to the disciples, ‘These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.’ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Luke 24: 44–end

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

THE SERMON *by* The Most Reverend Dr Desmond Tutu

Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, and former Primate of South Africa and Metropolitan.

All stand to say THE NICENE CREED:

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

All kneel or sit for THE INTERCESSIONS.

At the end of each petition there is said:

Lord, in your mercy;
hear our prayer.

The Intercession ends:

Merciful Father,

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

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

All stand for THE PEACE. *The President says:*

Jesus says, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. If you love me, rejoice because I am going to the Father.' Alleluia! The peace of the Lord be always with you;
and also with you.

Members of the Congregation may greet each other with a sign of peace, most commonly a handshake.

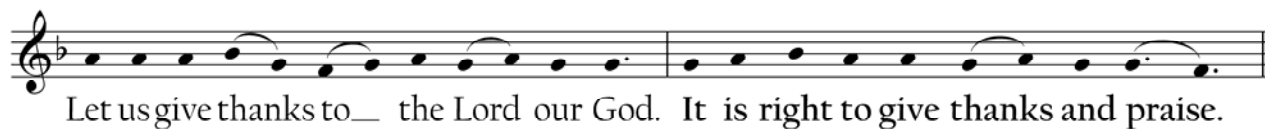
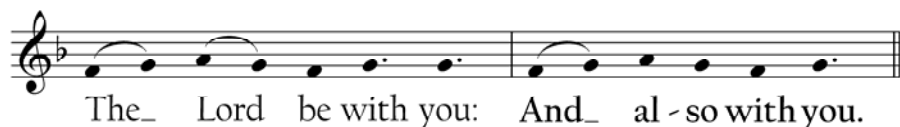
All sit. *The choir sings* THE MOTET *during* THE PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS.

O clap your hands, all ye people: shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
For the Lord most high is terrible: he is a great King over all the earth.
God is gone up with a shout: the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
Sing praises to God: sing praises unto our King.
For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises every one that hath understanding.
God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.
Sing praises unto our King; sing praises.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

Psalm 47: 1–2, 5–8

All stand for THE TAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP, and THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER:



The President continues the Eucharistic Prayer.

The Choir sings SANCTUS:

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth, pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

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.

All remain standing. *The President continues the Eucharistic Prayer.*

Great is the mystery of faith:
Christ has died: Christ is risen: Christ will come again.

The President continues the Eucharistic Prayer, at the end of which all say: Amen.

All kneel or sit. The President says:

As we join our prayers with those of the Church Universal, so we say, each in our own language, the prayer that Jesus Christ has taught us,

Notre père, qui es aux cieux...

Vater Unser im Himmel...

Padre nostro che sei nei cieli...

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.

All remain kneeling or seated for THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD. The President breaks the consecrated bread, saying:

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.

The President says:

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

The President and other ministers begin THE DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION. Those wishing to receive Communion come forward as directed by the Stewards. If you receive Communion in your own church you are welcome to do so here. Those who do not wish to receive Communion are invited to come for a blessing. Please carry this booklet with you to indicate to the priest that you are asking for a blessing.

The minister says to each communicant:

The Body of Christ. Amen.

The Blood of Christ. Amen.

During Communion, the Choir sings:

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.

O Rex gloriae Domine virtutum, qui triumphator hodie super omnes coelos ascendisti, ne derelinquas nos orphanos, sed mitte promissum Patris in nos, Spiritum veritatis. Alleluia!

O King of glory, Lord of Hosts, who today ascended in triumph above all heavens, do not leave us as orphans: but send to us that promised by the Father, the Spirit of truth. Alleluia!

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

Magnificat antiphon, Second Vespers of the Ascension
after Ephesians 4: 10, John 14: 18, and Luke 24: 49

After Communion

All stand to sing THE HYMN:



O King most high of earth and sky
on prostrate death thou treadest,
and with thy blood dost mark the road
whereby to heaven thou leadest.

O Christ, behold thine orphaned fold,
which thou hast borne with anguish,
steeped in the tide from thy rent side;
O leave us not to languish!

The glorious gain of all thy pain
henceforth dost thou inherit;
now comes the hour—then gently shower
on us thy promised Spirit!

Ach Gott und Herr 131 NEH
Neu-Leipziger Gesangbuch 1682

Supreme Rector coelitem
anonymous Cluniac breviary 1686
translated by William Blew (1808–94)

All remain standing to say THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER:

God our Father,
you have raised our humanity in Christ
and have fed us with the bread of heaven:
mercifully grant that, nourished with such spiritual blessings,
we may set our hearts in the heavenly places;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The President pronounces THE BLESSING, to which all respond: Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia!
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Music after the service:

Transports de joie d'une âme devant la gloire du Christ qui est la sienne
Ecstasies of a soul before the glory of Christ, which is its own glory
from *L'Ascension*

Olivier Messiaen (1908–92)

Give thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light,
and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1: 12, Ephesians 2: 6

Next Sunday:

16 May Seventh Sunday of Easter

8.00 am **Holy Communion (BCP)**

10.00 am **Matins***
The Reverend Robert Reiss
Canon in Residence

11.15 am **Sung Eucharist***
The Reverend Robert Wright
Canon of Westminster

3.00 pm **Evensong***
The Reverend Nicholas Aiken
Rector, Wisley with Pyrford, Diocese of Guildford

5.45 pm **Organ Recital** *part of the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music*
James McVinnie
Assistant Organist

6.30 pm **Evening Service**
The Reverend Philip Chester
Priest Vicar

*Services marked * are sung by The Choir of Westminster Abbey.*

Details of all the Abbey's services and events can be found on our website:

www.westminster-abbey.org

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CHORISTERSHIPS AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Enquiries are welcomed at any time. If you have a son who enjoys singing, and would like further details of the world-renowned Abbey Choir and its unique choir school, please contact:

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