

Ascension Day Eucharist



Thursday 14th May 2026

8.00pm

St Stephen's Church
South Dulwich

THE HOLY CLOUD

St Luke furnishes us with two accounts of the Ascension of Christ: One at the end of his gospel where he simply describes Jesus being taken away from us up into heaven (Luke 24. 50 to 52) and the other one right at the beginning of Acts where he describes Jesus being enveloped in a cloud and taken out of their site (Acts 1. 9). Theologians generally agree that Luke was developing his sense of what the event of the Ascension really meant. Because far from disappearing into heaven never really to be seen again, the cloud in the Bible is a sign of God's presence with us: When Israel walked out of Egypt, 'the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud' (Exodus 13. 21). The cloud was a sign of God being in our midst. When Moses scaled Sinai to stand before God, the Lord descended in a cloud, later he filled the tent of meeting with his cloudy presence. In the book of Numbers and the history books of the Bible the cloud always features in temple worship whenever a stone

building becomes the place of God's real presence: a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for it was the glory of the Lord that had filled the house...' (2 Chronicles 5. 13-14). Understood in this way the message of the Ascension is not that Christ vanishes beyond the earth's orbit, but that he enters into the Father's glory, which is set to fill the earth in preparation for the glory of eternity.



*Bernhard Schunemann &
drawing by Elo Alik-
Schunemann*

Music before the service: *Jesu, joy of man's desiring (J S Bach)*

Processional hymn:

*All hail the power of Jesu's name;
let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem
to crown him Lord of all.*

*Crown him, ye morning stars of light,
who fixed this floating ball;
now hail the strength of Israel's might,
and crown him Lord of all.*

*Crown him, ye martyrs of your God,
who from his altar call;
praise him whose way of pain ye trod,
and crown him Lord of all.*

*Ye seed of Israel's chosen race,
ye ransomed from the fall,
hail him who saves you by his grace,
and crown him Lord of all.*

*Sinners, whose love can ne'er forget
the wormwood and the gall,
go spread your trophies at his feet,
and crown him Lord of all.*

*Let every tribe and every tongue
to him their hearts enthrall,
lift high the universal song
and crown him Lord of all.*

We remain standing for

THE GATHERING

God has gone up with a shout
the Lord with the sound of a trumpet

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

THE ASCENSION READING:

Acts of the Apostles 1. 1-11

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 over the course of 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 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.'

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Gloria - Mass of St Thomas by David Thorne

Moderato ♩ = 116 *ff*

Org. Glo - ry to God, Glo - ry to God, Glo - ry to God in the

5 High - est. Glo - ry to God in the High - est, and peace to his peo - ple on

9 earth. Lord God, Heav'n - ly King, Al - migh - ty God and

13
Fa - ther, we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we_ praise you for your

17
glo - ry. *f* Glo - ry to God, Glo - ry to God, Glo - ry to God in the

21
High - est. *mf* Lord, Je - sus Christ, on - ly son of the

25
Fa - ther. Lord God, Lamb of God, you take_ a - way the

29
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us; You are sea - ted at the right

33
hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer. *f* Glo - ry to God,

37
Glo - ry to God, Glo - ry to God in the High - est. *f* For you a-lone are the

41
Ho - ly one, You a - lone are the Lord, You a-lone

45
are the most high, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spi - rit, in the

49
Glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. *ff* Glo - ry to God,

52
Glo - ry to God, Glo - ry to God in the High - est.

THE COLLECT:

Let us pray that our risen and ascended Lord will lead us to eternal life.
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.

We sit for

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING:

Daniel 7. 9-14

As I watched,
thrones were set in place,
 and an Ancient One took his throne;
his clothing was white as snow,
 and the hair of his head like pure wool;
his throne was fiery flames,
 and its wheels were burning fire.
A stream of fire issued
 and flowed out from his presence.
A thousand thousand served him,
 and ten thousand times ten thousand stood attending him.
The court sat in judgement,
 and the books were opened.
I watched then because of the noise of the arrogant words that the horn
was speaking. And as I watched, the beast was put to death, and its body
destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. As for the rest of the
beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for
a season and a time. As I watched in the night visions,
I saw one like a human being
 coming with the clouds of heaven.
And he came to the Ancient One

and was presented before him.
To him was given dominion
and glory and kingship,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that shall not pass away,
and his kingship is one
that shall never be destroyed.
This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

We stand to sing the Gradual hymn

*The Lord ascendeth up on high,
loud anthems round him swelling;
the Lord hath triumphed gloriously,
in power and might excelling:
hell and the grave are captive led;
lo, he returns, our glorious Head,
to his eternal dwelling.*

*The heavens with joy receive their Lord;
O day of exultation!
By saints, by angel-hosts, adored
For his so great salvation:
O earth, adore thy glorious King,
his rising, his ascension sing
with grateful adoration.*

*By saints in earth and saints in heaven,
with songs for ever blended,
all praise to Christ our King be given,
who hath to heaven ascended:
To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
the God of heaven's resplendent host,
in bright array extended.*

We remain standing for the Gospel Acclamation.

Alleluia.

Go and make disciples of all nations, says the Lord: Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

THE GOSPEL READING:

Luke 24. 44-end

Then he said to them, '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 worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

We sit for

THE SERMON

We sit or kneel for

THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

At the end

Merciful Father,

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

Amen.

We stand for

THE PEACE

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.

All may exchange a sign of peace

Offertory Hymn

*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 Virgin's Son,
the God incarnate born,
whose arm those crimson trophies won
which now his brow adorn;
fruit of the mystic Rose,
as of that Rose the stem;
the root whence mercy ever flows,
the Babe of Bethlehem.*

*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 pierced 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.*

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

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.

The priest continues the Eucharistic Prayer, celebrating the work of God in Christ...

The choir sings the Sanctus and Benedictus from the Mass of St Thomas by David Thorne

We kneel or sit, as the Priest recalls Jesus' institution of the Eucharist...

Christ is the bread of life:

When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.

The priest recalls the work of Christ, and prays for the gift of the Holy Spirit to work in the life and mission of the Church...

At the end of the Eucharistic Prayer we all respond 'Amen'.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

At the breaking of the bread we use the following response:

Lord, we died with you and the cross.

Now we are raised to new life.

We were buried in your tomb.

Now we share in your resurrection.

Live in us, that we may live in you.

The choir sings the Agnus Dei from the Mass of St Thomas by David Thorne

I heard the voice of a great multitude crying, Alleluia.

The Lord our God has entered into his kingdom

Blessed are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb.

Alleluia.

At St Stephen's those who are confirmed or regular communicants in their own church are welcome to receive Holy Communion. Those who wish to receive a blessing, please bow your head when kneeling at the altar rail.

If you wish to receive a gluten-free wafer please pick up one of the small cards from the sides people at the back of Church and hold this in your hand when you receive Communion.

During Communion the choir will sing the anthem If ye love me by Thomas Tallis

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**We thank you, Lord,
that you have fed us in this sacrament,
united us with Christ,
and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet
prepared for all peoples.
Amen.**

READING:

Acts of the Apostles 1.12, 13a, 14

Then the disciples 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. They were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Silence is kept

THE BLESSING

God the Father, who has given to his Son the name above every name, strengthen you to proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord.

Amen.

God the Son, who is our great high priest passed into the heavens, plead for you at the right hand of the Father.

Amen.

God the Holy Spirit, who pours out his abundant gifts upon the Church, make you faithful servants of Christ our King.

Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Recessional Hymn

*Hail the day that sees him rise, Alleluia!
to his throne above the skies; Alleluia!
Christ, the Lamb for sinners given, Alleluia!
enters now the highest heaven. Alleluia!*

*There for him high triumph waits; Alleluia!
lift your heads, eternal gates. Alleluia!
He has conquered death and sin; Alleluia!
take the King of glory in. Alleluia!*

*Lo, 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!*

*See, he lifts his hands above; Alleluia!
see, he shews the prints of love; Alleluia!
hark, his gracious lips bestow; Alleluia!
blessings on his church below. Alleluia!*

*Still for us he intercedes, Alleluia!
his prevailing death he pleads; Alleluia!
near himself prepares our place, Alleluia!
he the first-fruits of our race. Alleluia!*

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

THE DISMISSAL

Waiting expectantly for the promised Holy Spirit,
Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Final voluntary: *Sortie* (César Franck)

*After this service please stay for some refreshments provided by the vicarage!
(location to be disclosed at the end of the service)*



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