Dear friend
Many thanks to Judith for preparing this week's service for the Sunday after Ascension.

This week's hymn is 'Hail the day that sees him rise' (with original Charles Wesley words), to the tune Llanfair:
https://youtu.be/7b_ODz_jgTs

A rather smoochy version of Graham Kendrick's 'Such Love' with lyrics:
https://youtu.be/_XRTUk5vbNY

Several composers have been inspired by the theme of the Ascension. These include Stanford's 'Coelos Ascendit Hodie':
https://youtu.be/8maeFdlpyvw

Or there is Owain Park's setting of 'Coelos Ascendit', sung by Trinity College Cambridge, conducted by Stephen Layton; I note the composer singing with the bass line:
https://youtu.be/DnvF7W45IHs

The renaissance composer, Roman Catholic priest and possible spy Peter Philips' joyful setting of 'Ascendit Deus', sung by Bella Voce (Chicago):
https://youtu.be/rMDhzAd7Bv4

or Palestrina's equally fine version of the text, sung by a choir from Mendoza, Argentina:
https://youtu.be/eg-0EkQXpgU

And finally, from Martin, 'Hosanna, Praise is Rising'. Paul Baloche's wonderful worship song given a fresh, movement, treatment by this American children's choir:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSBR-r9B_94

With every blessing
Chris

**Sunday 16th May - Seventh Sunday of Easter:**
***Sunday after Ascension Day***

O God, from whom to turn is to fall, to whom to be turned is to rise, and in whom to stand is to abide for ever; grant us in all our perplexities your guidance, in all our dangers your protection, and in all our sorrows your peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (*Augustine of Hippo;354-430)*

**CONFESSION** O God, bring new life where we are worn and tired, new love where we have turned hard-hearted; forgiveness where we have wounded; and the joy and freedom of your Holy Spirit where we are the prisoners of ourselves. *(John Bell)*

*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us.* (Ephesians 1:7-8)

**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. Amen

**READINGS**

Acts 1:15-17, 21-end; Psalm 1; 1 John 5: 9-13; John 17: 6-19

**REFLECTION** Jesus has ascended into heaven, witnessed by his disciples. Do they sink into gloom and sadness? No; the eleven, accompanied by 'certain women' and Jesus's immediate family, return to the upper room in Jerusalem, where they 'devote themselves to prayer'. Then they get straight down to business. They know for sure that the power promised by Jesus will come upon them. They don't know when, but they must be ready, and the reading from Acts tells of the practical move, to restore the full complement of twelve apostles making sure of the right person through prayer. We see them trusting completely in their Lord. Surely, they must have, deep in their collective memory, the impassioned words of today's gospel. What a breathtaking prayer of love and promise; what a reason for Jesus's followers to go back from witnessing the ascension and to get ready for the proclamation which they have been commissioned to make, beginning in Jerusalem.

**PRAYERS**

*Blessed be the love which chose us before the foundation of the world; blessed be the grace that saved us before the world began; blessed be the glory prepared for us from all eternity – blessed be God for ever, and blessed be his glorious name! Amen.*
*(Charles Spurgeon; 1834-1892)*

**We pray** for the peace of the world, thinking especially of all places where simmering problems burst out in hatred and anger. Pour your love and peace into the hearts of leaders throughout the world.

**We pray** for the sick and all who suffer and for those who mourn; for places where Covid19 is an increasing threat. Help all nations to be generous in sharing vaccines and resources, we pray. Bless all who work tirelessly to relieve pain and suffering.

***THY KINGDOM COME PRAYER*** : Almighty God, your ascended Son has sent us into the world to preach the good news of your kingdom: inspire us with your Spirit and fill our hearts with the fire of your love, that all who hear your word may be drawn to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We say **THE LORD'S PRAYER**
We share **THE GRACE**

**FINAL PRAYER**: Since you know us, O Lord, better than we can ever know ourselves and as you love us more truly than we can ever love ourselves, daily renew us, both in mind and heart, until we are restored in the image and likeness of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen. *(François Fenelon; 1651-1715)*