

THE PARISH OF DOWLAIS AND PENYDARREN

Sunday after Ascension May 12th



Please remember in your prayers those who are unwell:

Glyndwr Wright, Connie Lewis, Peter Hagerty, Shannon Vincent, Mark Lewis, Deborah Stoddart, Anthony Evans, and Paula Jones.

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.

The funeral of **Carol Davies** took place in St John's Church Cefn Coed on Wednesday 8th May.
May she rest in peace.



Our thoughts and prayers are with Rina and Fred and their family at this sad time.

**ANY ITEMS FOR THE LINK MAGAZINE
JUNE/JULY GRATEFULLY RECEIVED.**

Weekly Service Times

Wednesday 10.30am Christchurch
- Holy Eucharist

Sunday 10am Christchurch -
Holy Eucharist
11am All Saints - Holy Eucharist
11am online Facebook and Youtube Service.

THANK YOU!

... to Cantorion Cyfarthfa for another lovely evening of singing, fun - and wine! We are so grateful for your support. Everyone enjoyed the wonderful variety of music, and the opportunity to sing along. Special thanks to our talented soloist Ryan Crowley - who brought the house down with 'New York, New York' - and to Maureen Prothero for all her hard work - and for bringing the choir!

As ever, it couldn't have been done without the hard work of the church ladies.



Ministry Area Development Workshops

Three workshops have taken place, and the next three will take place in different churches;

All are welcome to any of these meetings:

- ◆ Saturday 25th May 9:30-12:30 (bacon baps) - St Tydfil's
- ◆ Wednesday 29th May 18:00-21:00 (cakes) - Merthyr Vale
- ◆ Monday 3rd June 11—2pm (soup lunch) - All Saints.

Parish Contact Details

Rev Caroline Owen	Home: 01685 558660
Mrs Barbara Edwards (Rector's Warden)	Mrs Dorcas Cox (People's Warden)
Home 01685 387 665	Home 01685 554 995
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Saturday July
13th, 10am
- 12 noon
All Saints Church
Hall.

Free entry. Stalls £5 - tables provided.



Readings for May 12th – Sunday after Ascension

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 and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING Acts 1. 1-11

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning ²until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³After 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. ⁴While 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; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’ ⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, ‘Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?’ ⁷He replied, ‘It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But 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.’ ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They 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.’

Psalms 47

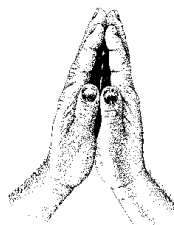
- ¹ Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy.
- ² For the LORD, the Most High, is awesome, a great king over all the earth.
- ³ He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet.
- ⁴ He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves.
- ⁵ God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.
- ⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.
- ⁷ For God is the king of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm.
- ⁸ God is king over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.
- ⁹ The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted.

SECOND READING Ephesians 1. 15-23

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷I 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, ¹⁸so 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, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰God 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, ²¹far 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. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

GOSPEL Luke 24. 44-53

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.’ ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And 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.’ ⁵⁰Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵²And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; ⁵³and they were continually in the temple blessing God.



All About Ascension Day.

Forty days from the day He rose from the grave, Jesus ascended into heaven. Here is how Luke described the event:

Therefore, when they [the disciples and the risen Christ] had come together, they asked Him saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

"Now when he had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight..." (Acts 1:4-9, New King James Version).

Traditions of Ascension Day

Because the date of Easter varies from year to year, the celebration of the Ascension moves with it. It always falls on the fortieth day from Easter and, since Easter always falls on a Sunday, Ascension Day always falls on a Thursday; it's often called "Holy Thursday."

Ascension Day celebrates Christ's exaltation. While on earth, He was a servant. Now in heaven, He is the ruler and Lord of all, sitting at the right hand of God. By entering heaven as the representative of mankind, He completed the work of our salvation and guarantees the eventual glorification of all who love Him.

Just as Jesus went up in the clouds, He will return the same way. Again Luke described the scene:

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'"

The Importance of Jesus' Ascension

The ascended and enthroned Christ pours out his Spirit on the church.

Jesus himself had told his disciples that it was good for him to go away, because only then would he send them another Helper, the Spirit of truth (John 16:7-16).

And that's exactly what happened on the Day of Pentecost, ten days after Jesus' ascension. The Spirit descended on the church with power, inaugurating a new age in the history of salvation.



The Chapel of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives.

This is believed to mark the place where Jesus ascended into heaven. The small round church contains a stone with what is thought to be the right footprint of Jesus that he left behind as he ascended into heaven.



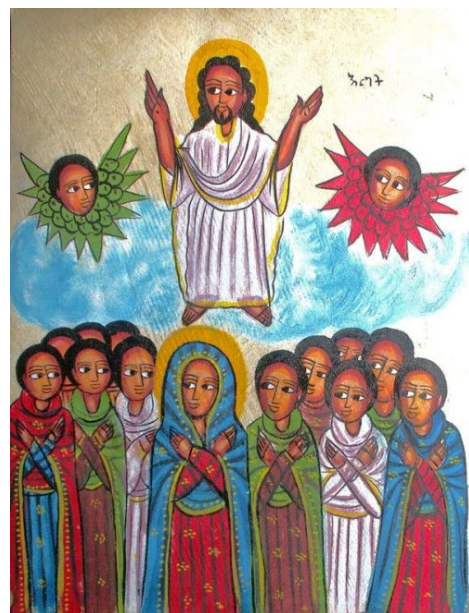
An Ascension Day hot air balloon - only in the USA!

Thought for the Day

- Coming Down the Mountain

When my family decided to do a sponsored walk around Wales to raise money for prostate cancer research, I decided I'd better try and get fit. After a few practice walks on the flat, it was time to spend New Year's Day walking up Penyfan. The others were there to encourage me, carrying the essentials, hot drinks and chocolate. I was so thrilled when many hours later I reached the top, and sat looking at the wonderful view.

But that's when I learned something new—I thought I was through the worst of it. No-one had told me that walking down is just as hard - even harder! - than walking up. You're tensed against the pull of gravity, there's the worry about falling forward, and the knees really start to ache. If I'd known how hard it would be, I might still be up there.



The Mount of Olives - the traditional site of Jesus' Ascension - is about 2500 ft above sea level at its highest peak. So before he was lifted up into the clouds, Jesus led his followers up the mountain. The disciples have had forty days to learn to accept that Jesus has risen from the dead, that he is back with them as he had promised, and that they have work to do. On the mountain, they could look back and think about how far they had come, They find themselves in what Celtic Christians call a "thin place", where the veil between earth and heaven might allow you to see God, and to hear God's voice. That's so often what we look forward to when we're ascending to those places. The mountaintop: the dazzling light: the feeling of satisfaction. But we rarely prepare ourselves to walk back down again.

The disciples resist it. As Jesus rises, they're left gazing up into the clouds. He must have known they wanted to follow him into some cloudy, idyllic existence at the right hand of God away from the confusion and chaos of the city. But as he rises up, Jesus tells them they must go back, go down; 'stay in the city'. Just to reinforce his words, after he's gone from view two men appear and ask, "Why do you stand here looking up?"

The message of Jesus from the manger to the cross, from the tomb to this Mount of Ascension is that this world is changed not from the top, but from the bottom. Instead of a mighty Messiah, he arrived as an infant refugee. Instead of a powerful ruler, he operated as a homeless teacher. He humbled himself to death, even death on the cross; he has borne all of our sorrows. And so as he rises, we hear him tell us to keep our eyes fixed on this earth and head back down the mountain to the places where he made his life. It's so uncomfortable Our muscles ache. We can barely balance. But if we wonder with the disciples why Jesus would send us down from the heights, we find our answer as we read ahead in the Book of Acts. It's down in the city that the Spirit comes, organizing all those followers into a new life where, as Acts describes, "All who believed were together and had things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need."

Maybe we'd prefer to stay where the air is thin and the view of God's glory is so clear, but down the slope, there are people who still need to hear the story of the risen Christ. Luke says that "day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved." And that doesn't happen if the people gathered around the risen Christ stay 2,500 feet in the air.

The disciples descend just as Jesus had taught them, from the mount of ascension to the city, to their new community. And we are called to follow that same way, to be part of that community too.