



25 May 2022

Dear Friends,

The Director howled in anguish and frustration. We were rehearsing at school for a production of Macbeth. The director had plotted a marvellous ending for Macbeth: a frantic sword fight, with Macbeth eventually falling dead, in cruciform shape, in the middle of the stage. This is the penultimate scene of the play. The director had also plotted the final scene, which he wanted to happen immediately after Macbeth's death – without a pause (thereby showing that the death is not the final crux of the play; rather 'what happens next?' is). But the director was so frustrated because he could not move from one scene to the next with Macbeth still lying dead, centre stage. How to get Macbeth off the stage?!

God had the same problem. Indeed, the Gospel writers also struggled with this, in telling the final stories about Jesus. How to get Jesus off stage? The solution Matthew and Luke tell us is conveyed in an image that would have made sense to their contemporaries. Yet it is one that appears rather ridiculous to us, since we live in an age that is familiar with space travel (and does not locate Heaven as 'up above', with the earth 'down below'). Just look at the stained-glass window near the organ in Holy Trinity Church: Jesus appears to be blasting off the earth, smoke billowing from his feet, as the disciples look upwards at the moment of "Ascension". This image may not work for us now, but the truths that Matthew and Luke knew about Jesus remain clear.

They knew that Jesus had died – not just appeared to die, but actually fully dead. He was buried – and they waited. Later, they met with Jesus – really, fully, completely alive. No one witnessed the actual moment of Resurrection (according to the Gospels – though, if you now go to the northeast corner of Holy Trinity, you will see another stained glass window depicting the moment Jesus climbs out of the tomb). Yes, Jesus was alive – really, but in a new way. Then, though no one quite knows when, the resurrection appearances stopped. They did not just fade away; they did not happen less frequently. The Risen Jesus stopped appearing – so, how do you tell that story? If it happened, then God must have planned it. So, their way of telling the story is that Jesus returns to God in heaven – by going upwards, and a cloud covered his eventual disappearance (the cloud being a well-known symbol of meeting with God). The practical details of this story jar with our modern sensibilities. But, how do you get Jesus off stage?

Well, go and look at the wonderful tapestry designed by Elaine Thompson in the St Luke's Chapel (in the northwest corner of Holy Trinity). Stand quietly there – and you will see Ascension. The colours are perfect: there is the bright yellow of resurrection; there is an orange after-glow (as the resurrection is not a one-off event, its effects lasted for days as the first disciples were transformed in their understanding and belief). Around the outside of the tapestry, there is a serene blue – whatever happened on earth is now absorbed into the overall universal plan of God. In the centre of the tapestry, Elaine has stitched a silhouette of the risen Jesus – as with all Easter stories, Jesus appears and disappears. As your eye travels outwards, you will see ripples of this silhouette spreading out. What a brilliant way to convey the reality and the closure of the resurrection! One pebble dropped into the pond of human history – no more is needed, yet the effects are still being felt "until the end of time".

Yet, Elaine has captured one more truth (which is associated with Pentecost, in 10 days' time, and is the final aspect of Ascension). The ever-expanding silhouettes seem to fade outwards – AND also to move towards you, the viewer. Ascension/Pentecost is both a moment of departure and arrival. The risen Jesus leaves the earth finally; God's spirit comes to us, through the experience of knowing the living, dying, rising Lord.

At last, Jesus is taken off stage. But God is with us always, even to the end of time.

Robert

HALF TERM

Please note that the parish office will be opening at reduced hours next week and closed for the Platinum Jubilee bank holiday (Thursday & Friday).

If you need to visit the office, please email comms@holytrinityguildford.org.uk to arrange a convenient time to pop in.

Thank you.

Sunday Worship • 29th May 2022

HOLY TRINITY

[10am Sung Eucharist](#)

[Sermon by Tom Pote](#)

Ephesians 1.15-23;

Acts 1.1-11; Luke 24.44-53

[6pm Evening Prayer](#)

Preacher Jonathan Hedgecock

[CLICK ON THE TITLE OF THE SERVICE FOR LINKS TO ZOOM AND YOUTUBE](#)

[INSTRUCTIONS CAN BE FOUND HERE](#)

ST MARY'S

[8am BCP Holy Communion](#)

[Led by Tom Pote](#)

[10:30am Morning Worship](#)

[Led by Ben Cahill-Nicolls](#)

Ephesians 1.15-23;

Acts 1.1-11; Luke 24.44-53

[Midweek Holy Communion •](#)

[Wednesdays • 12 noon](#)

[\(except the 2nd Wednesday of the month\)](#)

[SERVICE SHEETS FOR ALL](#)

[SERVICES CAN BE FOUND](#)

[ONLINE HERE](#)

[Daily Morning Prayer on Zoom 8.30am \(9.30 Saturday\)](#)

Notices, Events and Reminders!

6th Pewley Meadows habitat talk Saturday 28th May @ 10am

Join Jonathan Mitchell, to find out about our local nesting Skylarks and find out more about plans and progress with the Meadows.

At 10:30 the group will walk up to Pewley Down in search of wildlife we hope to attract to the Meadows, particularly the recently emerged Small Blue butterflies and our very special Man Orchids.

Feel free to join and leave at any point. And do bring coffee, tea or refreshments if you wish. Meet on the path from Warren Road to Pewley Down by the "tin shed paddock gate" at 10am

Practical Aspects of Spirituality St Mary's Church, Quarry Street, Guildford from 09.20 to 12.30 on Saturday 11 June.

These stand-alone Saturday morning sessions are open to all who want to take their spiritual lives deeper.

On 11 June the Revd Camilla White has chosen 'Love bade me welcome' as the title of her session. In this workshop we will consider the nature and meaning of hospitality in the Bible and Christian tradition. We will then reflect on the many practical ways how we might both offer and receive hospitality today.

The emphasis is on the word 'practical' with the aim that participants leave each session with some tips and tools that they can put into practice straight away.

To reserve a place, email – rjfox@btinternet.com

REMINDERS!!

Tomorrow evening - join together with congregations from across Guildford at St. Nicolas' Church for an Ascension Day service starting at 8pm.

The Orthodox Christian Community will be coming together on Sunday **29th May** at St Mary's Church at 1pm.

Trinity Club will be held on the **31 May 2022** from 10.30am - 12 noon at St Mary's Church. Fr. Constantine Litvinenko will present a Brief history and Modern Practice of the Orthodox Church with discussion afterwards.

Don't forget to sign up for our Come and Sing Platinum Jubilee Evensong taking place on the **5th June**.

The Grafham Art Group have an Art Exhibition at Guildford Cathedral, running from **17th May - 19th June** at Guildford Cathedral.

Volunteers are still needed for Chit Chat! Please do click here for more information and contact Jane or Susan if you can volunteer some time.



Over 660 people have expressed their concern for Ukraine's people by visiting the weekly **Vigil for Ukraine** at St. Mary's, Quarry Street, Guildford GU1 3UP. Drop in on Friday evenings between 21.00 and 23.00 to light a candle, pray and reflect.



**Coffee
&
Cake
at
St Mary's**

Another opportunity to support the work of **Christian Aid.** Please come along on **Thursday 26 May** **10.30 – 12 noon**

Contact us:

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Please make sure we have your current contact details.

Sign up to
our
newsletter!!

