

Much love and continued prayers from the Rectory at St Mary's Newick.

This week Service <https://vimeo.com/421959139>

For this week you might like to have some bread and wine nearby and a pen and paper for our time of prayer.

On Thursday, we celebrated Ascension Day, albeit with the COVID-19 restrictions in place, and without fireworks (promise they will be back next year) This festival marks Jesus' ascension to heaven and, in Acts 1.10, we read that the disciples 'were gazing up towards heaven' as Jesus was going.

The Gospel reading for today is from John 17.1-11, in the first line, it says that Jesus 'looked up to heaven' and spoke to his father, delivering what was arguably his most extensive and profound prayer. (There is a short reflection attached to the bottom of this from the 8am BCP)

Bible scholars suggest that only a matter of a few weeks between these two instances of 'looking up', yet there are numerous references in the Bible to prophets, priests and kings looking to the heavens for inspiration, guidance and signs. Indeed, some climbed mountains in the hope of getting closer to the one from whom they sought answers.

Unless you're a farmer or meteorologist, the concept of 'looking up to the heavens' tends to be more of a metaphorical one. We speak of 'looking up' the answer to a question or pondering whether things are 'looking up' – showing improvement. For our farmers at this time it means praying for rain, we've had an exceptionally dry Spring and whilst water tables are high, the yield on silage and crop growth is way behind - so as we enjoy a sunny bank holiday please spare a prayer for a farmers and growers at this time.

In both readings, 'looking up' meant focusing on a God who has all the answers. In John 17.1-11, Jesus asks his heavenly father to protect his disciples and all those who seek to follow him. When he said this because it would be a clear indication to us that, as we look to God for guidance, we should also be reaching out to others, especially at this time.

Currently, this is still difficult, despite the easing of the lockdown. Yet, one of the most inspiring developments of this crisis has been the way people have been 'looking out' for one another, and showing a hitherto unknown form of neighbourliness.

Some of you this week have been joining in with the online Prayer Journal of Thy Kingdom Come and I would encourage you to catch up if you've missed it so far. Part of the TKC is to pray for five people to come to know the love of Jesus, and it is yet another good way of reaching out or looking up others during our current restrictions.

As we slowly emerge from lockdown as a country, may we also continue 'looking up' to God for the inspiration and ideas as to how we can better look out for those who will be unable to take advantage of the easing of these restrictions.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this week's service, and there are a few treats again today, Evie's beautiful signed Summary of The Law, Our Gloria whilst exploring our Creation Station in the porch and thanks to Teresa Wenban for our Reading from Acts, our Owls Lord's prayer is so good I thought we would have it this week again.

Before Covid this weekend would have been May Camp and we would have been taking 16 young people from our NYC. Sadly that has been postponed until 2021, but our Diocesan Youth Officer Dan and the team have put and joyful celebration together online and we've been joining in with May Camp Live over the weekend, and our very own Niamh & Ella have prepared a Doodle Prayer for May Camp Main event this morning and they are sharing this form of prayer with us today.

Thank you to Evie, Andy, Teresa Ali & Owls Club, Niamh & Ella and of course a huge bravo to Josh for putting it all together.

If anyone would be interested in recording a reading or intercessions please let me know by emailing church.newick@gmail.com and I will draw up a rota for the coming weeks.

Tune into Ali at 10am this morning with more stories and fun and crafty ideas for this Sunday

Our service this morning is available on the Church website under services <https://newickchurch.org/services-2/> or here by clicking on the Vimeo link below

<https://vimeo.com/421959139>

Facebook Link:

[St. Mary's Church, Newick](#)

Our online service from Newick will be at 10.30 followed by a Zoom Café at 11.15

Paul Mundy is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Cafe Church

Topic: Paul Mundy's Zoom Meeting

Time: May 24, 2020 11:15 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87432442422?pwd=RIIOMkNDcNPympIMXZWQXpBTVIWUT09>

Meeting ID: 874 3244 2422

Password: 595477

Our services have been prepared for you to use at home, as due to the current situation we are unable enter our Church building together, either here in Newick or in our neighbouring parishes, but the life of the church continues in the community, in our homes, in our prayer and pastoral ministry. If you are a joining us from further away, welcome, and if you would like to message us, we would love to be praying for you via church.newick@gmail.com or through our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/saintmarysnewick/>

We will keep everyone up to date, broadcast services and times of prayer, on our Church Facebook page and continue to build a sense of community during this time of isolation through the Newick Community Resource

Page https://www.facebook.com/groups/798875173939553/?ref=group_header

Much love to you all, stay in touch, stay safe, stay well & where possible stay at home.

Paul x