

Sunday 9th May 2021

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Rogation Sunday

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

This is a big week! Today is Rogation Sunday, also marking the beginning of Christian Aid Week, and Thursday is Ascension Day.

Celebrating Rogation Sunday – what is it about?

(Adapted from resources written by our Rural Affairs Officer for the Diocese of St Asaph, Reverend Hermione Morris, and using material from the Arthur Rank Centre).

The word 'rogation' comes from a Latin word, 'rogare', meaning 'to ask'. Traditionally, on Rogation Sunday, people have asked for God's blessing on the land and the emerging crops. It was also a day to pray for the communities in which they lived. A lovely medieval practice was 'beating the bounds', when people processed around the parish boundary, praying for different areas and community life.

Both aspects of Rogation Sunday are still very relevant in 2021. During the Covid pandemic, much of our communal life has been affected, with very few opportunities to gather together. Also, over the past year or so, many people have become more aware of the natural world and have appreciated our dependence on it. We have seen that farmers are key workers, producing and supplying food for the nation and further afield and have also acknowledged the increasing threat to God's creation by climate change and global environmental injustice.

Rogation Sunday this year gives us a chance to celebrate God's wonderful creation and all the blessings it gives to us; to reflect on how much we depend on the crops in the field and on animal husbandry for our food; and to repent of the harm we have done, and are doing, to our planet. As Christians, we cannot shrug our shoulders as if nothing is happening. We are responsible for planet earth, which God has placed in our hands. We ask God's help today to help us to change our ways. Christian Aid works for justice across the globe, including environmental issues, so today, at the beginning of Christian Aid Week, we also pray for the work of Christian Aid.



Today's Gospel reading:

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St John (John 15:9-17)

Glory to you, O Lord

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

This reading is absolutely packed with important things that Jesus wants to say to us, as his disciples. It repays reading again and again! He calls his disciples 'friends' and tells us that he has chosen us – he wants us on the team! There are expectations of us though. The main rule is that we love one another, which sounds easy but, in practice, is often very difficult!

🤔 Have a think about the relationship between being on God's team, loving God and one another, and keeping God's commandments. Does this bring you joy?

On this Rogation Sunday, how about spending some time outside, giving thanks to God for all that you can see, hear and smell, wherever you live?

Why not reflect with God on the question, "What can I do today to play a part in helping to renew and restore the earth?" and then act on whatever comes from your reflection, remembering that small changes matter and can make a huge difference.

A prayer for this week: Creator God, whose will it is that the earth and the sea should bear fruit in due season, and that the good news should be proclaimed to all the world: bless those who work on land and sea, granting safety and a good harvest; bless the lives of our communities as we emerge together from the pandemic and reconnect once more; bless all those who work, campaign and strive for environmental justice and work to redress the disastrous effects of climate change. We ask this in Jesus's name. Amen.

The Feast of the Ascension (Ascension Day)

Forty days after Easter Day, the Church celebrates Jesus's Ascension into heaven.



Here is the Gospel reading for this day, which falls this Thursday, 13 May:
(Luke 24:44-53)

Then Jesus 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.

The story of the Ascension is the bridge between the Resurrection and Pentecost. After the miracle of Easter morning, Jesus appeared for 40 days to a variety of people and in a variety of places. However, as he had already told them, there would come a time when he would have to go away, so that he could return to them in a new way. This return would mean that he could be with everyone, everywhere and at anytime. Jesus ascended to the right hand of God and then sent the Holy Spirit to fill and empower his followers. We shall celebrate that event at Pentecost!

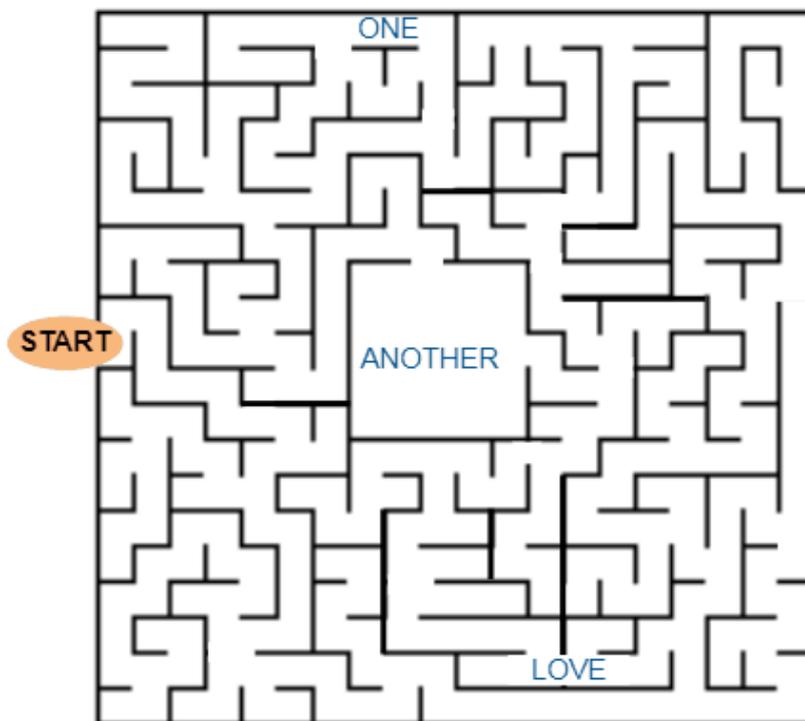


Some puzzles and colouring pages:

Love One Another Word Maze

Find your way from the start of the maze and connect the words from the answer phrase in their correct order.

Love one another. John 15:17b HCSB



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REMAIN JOY COMPLETE FRIENDS
 COMMAND LIFE SERVANTS BUSINESS
 CHOOSE BEAR LAST NAME



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another

BibleWise

Ascension: Paint by Number

Paint the following blocks of numbers using 1. Yellow 2. Orange 3. Blue 4. Tan 5. Purple 6. Green.



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