

The Christian Story

- ◆ Ascension Day is celebrated on the Thursday 40 days after Easter Day. It marks the end of the resurrection appearances of Jesus and his return to his Father.
- ◆ Jesus is described literally as ascending into the heavens. Before his departure he explains to the disciples how to continue his work without him and commissions them to take his message to the ends of the earth.
- ◆ Ascension is inextricably linked with Pentecost 10 days later, when the gift of the Holy Spirit enables the disciples to fulfil their calling.

The Beliefs

- ◆ Jesus' earthly mission is completed; in his place he sends the gift of the Holy Spirit who is to be present with every individual believer.
- ◆ Christians are commissioned to take the message of Jesus throughout the world.
- ◆ The idea of Jesus literally going straight up to heaven is based on the notion that the world was structured in three tiers, the highest of which is heaven. The meaning of the ascension is that Jesus returned to his pre-existent state.
- ◆ The theme of "Kingship" is an important one at this time as Jesus is acclaimed as King of Heaven – and our lives.

Ascension Day

Matthew chapter 28 verses 16-20, Luke chapter 24 verses 44-52, Acts chapter 1 verses 6-11

The Customs

- ◆ The three days before Ascension Day are known as "Rogation" from the Latin "beseech". This is when villagers processed around the boundaries of their parish blessing the crops and "beating the bounds". (In some cases literally beating young boys!)
- ◆ This is the time for traditional well-dressing.
- ◆ The distinctive flowers of horse chestnut trees are often known as "Ascension candles". The Sunday before Ascension is Chestnut Sunday and traditional parades along avenues of horse chestnut trees sometimes still take place,
- ◆ In some parishes the congregation / choir ascends the church tower to sing praises to God.

The Christian Experience

- ◆ Community
- ◆ Called to spread the Word of God
- ◆ Allegiance to the kingship of Christ
- ◆ Separation

- ◆ Those church schools that celebrate school Eucharists, frequently do so on Ascension Day in the Summer Term.