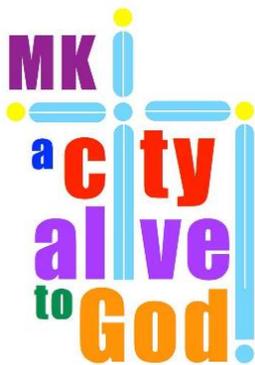




Mission Partnership Newsletter
June 2019

Dear Friends,

Stuck for an idea to make your Ascension Day service go with a bang? Try tracking down a large rocket and setting it off at the end of the service (no, not inside the building). Ascension is one of those underrated festivals that easily gets missed in the rush from Easter Sunday to Pentecost, so it might need a bit of pizzazz. That's a shame because there's a lot going on in the Ascension story which we miss out on to our loss. This is the moment when we declare that Jesus is Lord in contrast to all other claimants to that title; this is the moment when our humanity is taken into the life of God; this is the moment when Jesus is acknowledged to be seated at the right hand of God and to be praying for us. It also marks the beginning of a ten day period which has always struck me as odd: the ten day gap before the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Surely the sensible thing would be to follow the Ascension of Jesus with the descent of the Holy Spirit immediately so that there is a seamless transfer from one to the other. But no, there is this strange ten day hiatus. Why? In the story at the end of Luke's gospel, Jesus tells the disciples to "stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high." He tells them to wait. The question then is, what are they to do while they are waiting? It seems to me that this is a time of preparation for them. They spend the time "continually in the temple blessing God", getting themselves ready spiritually for what is to come as they are called to be witnesses to everything they have seen of Jesus.



We, too, need to spend our waiting times in preparation; not just between Ascension and Pentecost, but continually making ourselves ready for the witness to which we, too, are called. That is why spending time learning our faith, practising our discipleship, exploring our vocations, immersing ourselves in prayer is so important. It is not an optional extra, but core to being a Christian. Over the years the Mission Partnership has encouraged just that kind of preparation as we have intentionally built capacity for mission through our coMPass courses, Leading for a Change, prayer initiatives, facilitations and the way we have used Assemblies. I think we are at a point where we need to offer more such support, precisely because I think that the mission opportunities that we are being called to are increasing and so we are beginning to make plans to develop a Learning Hub which will expand and build on the work we have been doing in this area.

At this year's **AGM Assembly** I hope to be able to explore the possibilities for a Learning Hub with you and get your ideas for what you feel would be most effective. So please join us at **Whaddon Way Church, 7.30pm Wednesday July 10th**. As this is our AGM, there will be a (very small) amount of business to conduct, including the election of Trustees. Please contact us if you think that you could contribute to the Trustee body at this important time for the Mission Partnership.

Every Blessing,
John