

# St. Michael and All Angels

## Anglican Church

*The Diocese of Saldanha Bay*



### Our Mission

*To honour God by proclaiming His Word in a spirit filled church, nurturing leadership, holistic growth, missions and care groups in a Discipling Environment*

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RECTOR: The Revd Canon David Mills

### **TO THE PARISH FAMILY OF ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, EDGEMOED** **THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2018**

Dear Friends,

The ascension of Christ has at times been rather overlooked, as it may fall into the shadow of the great festival of Pentecost, followed by Trinity Sunday.

As I mentioned in the sermon for Ascension Day Eucharist last night, this festival recognises some amazing things that Jesus did, as He was received with glory, praise and power into Heaven, to be seated at the right-hand of the throne of God.

Jesus takes the fullness of our humanity into the fullness of God – it may be said that the person of God has been forever changed in that Jesus ascended not as a spiritual being but as a 'flesh and blood' man, in His glorified resurrection body. It is this body, the fullness of our humanity, which has been received, through the ascension, into the very heart of God.

Jesus too, as the High Priest of God, in the eternal order of Melchizedek (see Genesis 14) has taken not the blood of goats and bulls, but His very own blood, which was poured out on the altar of the Cross, into the Lord God's presence, as an eternal offering, seal into being a New and everlasting Covenant, of which He alone is the mediator (see Hebrews chapters 6, 7 and 8).

In the Old Testament we read of the Israelites wandering through the wilderness – when they set up camp they erected a portable Temple called a 'Tabernacle' – once this was in place the glory of God, the 'Shikinah' of God, which means a 'bright radiance of glory', entered into the inner sanctum, the 'Holy of Holies'. In the Temple of Jerusalem the same portion of the Temple which was designated the 'Holy of Holies' was separated by a thick and strong curtain – it was only during the Festival of Atonement, once a year, that the High Priest of Israel went into this area to sprinkle the sacrificial blood. In his Gospel, St Matthew states that, when Jesus died on the Cross, the curtain in the Temple was torn from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51) – this is most significant, as it demonstrates that the death of Jesus has opened the way into God's Presence, from that moment onwards and for all eternity.

Jesus enters not an earthly and temporal Tabernacle, but the eternal, 'Temple of God', there offering His own blood, through which this final and propitiating sacrifice secures forgiveness of sins and our participation through faith in the New and eternal Covenant. No longer are sacrifices needed to obtain God's forgiveness (Hebrews 7:26-28 and Hebrews 9: 23-28) – interestingly, following the sacking of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple by the Romans in AD 70, the offering of sacrifices was no longer possible.

Fr Rod, in the Ascension service, drew our attention to an amazing piece of art, by William Blake, entitled the 'Trinity' – it is a pencil sketch, showing the Father seated on His throne and the Son throwing himself on His breast, with the Holy Spirit as a Dove hovering above them. Do Google this picture – it really shows more powerfully, than I have been able to describe above, what Jesus did in His ascension into Heaven – we will insert this picture into our Pew News, duly acknowledged, for Trinity Sunday.

In closing, the concluding comments from a sermon penned by a preacher, George Bourgoise,

“At the Ascension Jesus left the Here for the Everywhere. He left Time for the Eternal. He left the First Century for all Centuries.’

Let's rejoice in the witness of the ascension:

Historically – it assures us of the complete work of Christ.

Spiritually – it teaches of our Lord's triumphant entry into Heaven and his continuing ministry on our behalf.

Practically – it reminds us of the Second Coming of Jesus to judge the world and the need to be ready at all times to give an account of our stewardship.”

I hope that these reflections on the Feast of the Ascension have brought you to a deeper and richer appreciation of this special day in our Church calendar and tradition.

May you and yours know the gracious working of our Lord Jesus Christ who for all time and eternity intercedes for our needs seated in glory at the right hand of the Throne of the King of the Universe, our Lord God Almighty.

God bless,  
**Fr David**

Our Vision

To be a Multi-Generational Church creating a culture of discipleship where all people can Believe, Belong and Become

◆Relevant ◆Effective◆Dynamic

Followers of Jesus Christ.

