



The Ascension of Our Lord

May 29, 2022 + 9:00 AM

Welcome to our worship of the Lord Jesus Christ on this Seventh Sunday of Easter! Today we're celebrating the Ascension of Our Lord; in today's readings the risen Christ ascends into heaven and His followers are assured that the Spirit will empower them to be witnesses throughout the earth. The disciples are told to not gaze up into heaven to look for Jesus (Acts 1:11); we find His presence among us as we proclaim the Word and share the Easter feast. We too long for the Spirit to enliven our faith and invigorate our mission.

GATHERING

GATHERING MUSIC

GATHERING HYMN: "A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing" *ELW 393*

You'll find the music for this hymn on the next page.

INVOCATION, CONFESSION, AND FORGIVENESS:

We gather today just as God has gathered us into His family in our Baptism:
in the Name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to You all hearts are open, all desires known; from You no secrets are hid.
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy Name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth's not in us.
But if we confess our sins, God who's faithful and just will forgive us our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
So let's confess our sin against God and one another:

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.
Our prayer continues on page 3 of this bulletin.*

A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing!



1 A hymn of glo - ry let us sing! New hymns through-out the world shall
2 The ho - ly ap - os - tol - ic band up - on the Mount of Ol - ives
3 To whom the shin - ing an - gels cry, "Why stand and gaze up - on the
4 "You see him now, as - cend - ing high up to the por - tals of the
5 O ris - en Christ, as - cend - ed Lord, all praise to you let earth ac -



ring: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Christ, by a road be - fore un -
stand, Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! and with his faith - ful fol - l'wers
sky?" Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! "This is the Sav - ior!" thus they
sky." Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! "Here - af - ter Je - sus you shall
cord: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! You are, while end - less ag - es



trod, as - cends un - to the throne of God.
see their Lord as - cend in maj - es - ty.
say, "this is his glo - rious tri - umph day!" Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -
see re - turn - ing in great maj - es - ty."
run, with Fa - ther and with Spir - it one.



lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Text: Bede, 673–735; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*

Music: LASST UNS ERFREUEN, *Geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Köln, 1623

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INVOCATION, CONFESSION, AND FORGIVENESS (contd.):

Most merciful God,

we confess that we're in bondage to sin and can't free ourselves.

*We've sinned against You in thought, word, and deed,
by what we've done and by what we've left undone.*

*We haven't loved You with our whole heart;
we haven't loved our neighbors as ourselves.*

For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

*Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will
and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your holy Name. Amen.*

Listen to the Good News, brothers and sisters:

In the mercy of Almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you,
and for His sake, + God forgives you all your sins!

To those who believe in Jesus Christ, He gives the power to become the children of God
and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE: "This is the Feast of Victory!"

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb



who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,





al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and



strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of



God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or,

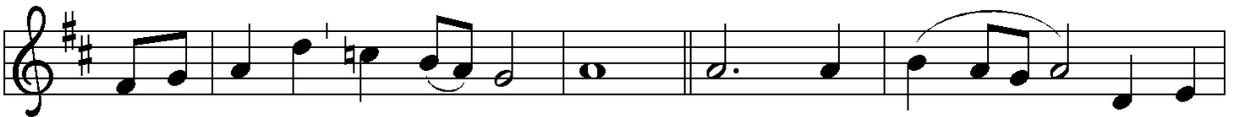


glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 4 For the Lamb who was



slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.



GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

And so the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the + love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit are with you all.

And also with you.

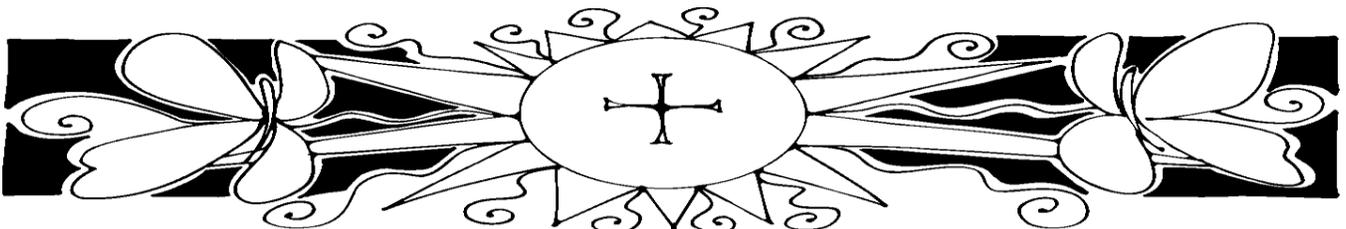
Then let's pray: Almighty God,
Your dear Son ascended far above the heavens that He might fill all things.
Give us faith to trust that, true to His promise,
He abides with us on earth till the end of time;
for He lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD AND PRAYER

PREPARATION FOR THE WORD:

*Pr Dave will introduce this song to us;
then we'll sing it together once or twice to let the tune (and the promise) sink in...*

***Behold, behold—I make all things new, beginning with you and starting from today.
Behold, behold—I make all things new; My promise is true, for I am Christ the Way!***



FIRST READING:**Ephesians 1.15-23**

NRSVUE

The apostle writes: I've heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I don't cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know Him, ¹⁸so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may perceive what's the hope to which He's called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what's the immeasurable greatness of His power for us who believe, according to the working of His great power. ²⁰God put this power to work in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that's named, not only in this age, but also in the age to come. ²²And *God* has put all things under *Christ's* feet and has made Him the head over all things for the Church, ²³which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

This is holy wisdom; this is holy word.

Thanks be to God!

SECOND READING:**Revelation 22.12-14,16-17,20-21**

NRSVUE

Jesus proclaims: "See, I'm coming soon; My reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work. ¹³I'm the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End! ¹⁴Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they'll have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. ¹⁶It's I, Jesus, who sent My angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I'm the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

¹⁷The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let everyone who hears say, "Come!" And let everyone who's thirsty come! Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift. ²⁰The One who testifies to these things says, "Surely I'm coming soon." Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

²¹The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.

This is holy wisdom; this is holy word.

Thanks be to God!

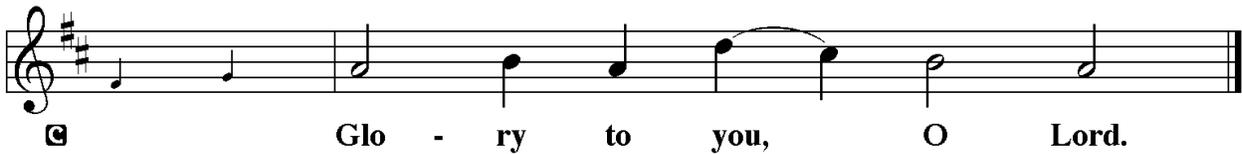


Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

The Holy Gospel according to the Acts of the Apostles, the first chapter.

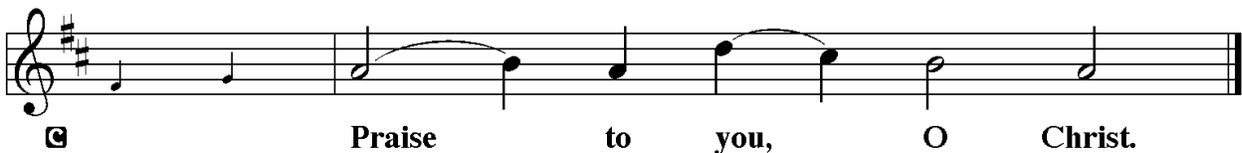


Luke writes: In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach ²until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He'd chosen. ³After His suffering, He presented Himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the Kingdom of God. ⁴While staying with them, He ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," He said, "is what you've heard from Me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you'll be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

⁶So when they'd come together, they asked Him, "Lord, is this the time when You'll restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He replied, "It's not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. ⁸But you'll receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you'll be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹When He'd said this, as they were watching, *Jesus* was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. ¹⁰While He was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who's been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven."

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³When they'd entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as His brothers.

This is the Gospel of our Lord.



HYMN OF THE DAY: "Alleluia! Sing to Jesus!"

ELW 631



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Sing to Je - sus; his the scep - ter,
 2 Al - le - lu - ia! Not as or - phans are we left in
 3 Al - le - lu - ia! Bread of heav - en, here on earth our
 4 Al - le - lu - ia! King e - ter - nal, Lord om - nip - o -
 5 Al - le - lu - ia! Sing to Je - sus; his the scep - ter,



his the throne; Al - le - lu - ia! his the tri - umph, his the
 sor - row now; Al - le - lu - ia! he is near us; faith be -
 food, our stay; Al - le - lu - ia! here the sin - ful flee to
 tent we own; Al - le - lu - ia! born of Mar - y, earth your
 his the throne; Al - le - lu - ia! his the tri - umph, his the



vic - to - ry a - lone. Hark! The songs of peace - ful
 lieves, nor ques - tions how. Though the cloud from sight re -
 you from day to day. In - ter - ces - sor, friend of
 foot - stool, heav'n your throne. As with - in the veil you
 vic - to - ry a - lone. Hark! The songs of peace - ful



Zi - on thun - der like a might - y flood: "Je - sus
 ceived him when the for - ty days were o'er, shall our
 sin - ners, earth's re - deem - er, hear our plea where the
 en - tered, robed in flesh, our great high priest, here on
 Zi - on thun - der like a might - y flood: "Je - sus



out of ev - 'ry na - tion has re - deemed us by his blood."
 hearts for - get his prom - ise: "I am with you ev - er - more?"
 songs of all the sin - less sweep a - cross the crys - tal sea.
 earth both priest and vic - tim in the eu - cha - ris - tic feast.
 out of ev - 'ry na - tion has re - deemed us by his blood."

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898, alt.
 Music: HYFRYDOL, Rowland H. Prichard, 1811-1887

NICENE CREED:

*We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth— of all that is, seen and unseen.*

*We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father:
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through Him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation, He came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
He became incarnate from the virgin Mary and was made man.
For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and His Kingdom will have no end.*

*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND SHARING OF THE PEACE:

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit,
let's bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love:

Good and gracious God, we praise You for Your Son Jesus, whom You carried up into heaven and seated at Your right hand so that even beyond our sight He might be everywhere present, not only in this age but also in the age to come. Enliven Your church to live authentically as the body of Christ alive in the world; guide our bishops and pastors to lead with visionary wisdom; and make all Your baptized people active witnesses to Your mercy and might. Merciful God, *receive our prayer.*

We thank You for the springtime greening of the good earth around us, and for the promise of rich harvests that drives and sustains our planting. Preserve Your good creation from disastrous climate; safeguard animals and their young, and protect trees and bushes around us, that all may enjoy their fruit and beauty. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We acclaim You as sovereign over the heavens, the earth, and time itself. Let Your peace triumph in every land where oppression, terror, and chaos hold sway, especially Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Ethiopia, Mali, Israel, Palestine, the DRC, Central America, in every community and every heart. Stir up Your Spirit among us, that our leaders may govern with wisdom, compassion, and mercy for the most vulnerable. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We know that even though we can't see You now in a form that we'd consider glorious, You still come to meet us in our vulnerable neighbors and call us together to the bounty of Your table of grace. Let Your Holy Spirit flow through us in grace and mercy, that the poor among us may be fed and clothed and housed, the unemployed may find jobs, the grieving may be comforted, the despairing may find new hope, and those we name before You may receive Your healing and newness of life ... Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We give You thanks for all those who've gone before us testifying to Your work in their lives. As You gather us with all the saints by the power of Your Spirit, grant that our hearts may live forever in Your keeping, and that through us future generations may proclaim and embody Your saving Good News. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

We especially give You thanks and praise for all those who've died in service to our nation, both in battlefields of war and labors of peace and diplomacy, especially those we remember before You now... As we treasure the memory of their lives and their sacrifice, inspire us to walk in Your light and to live and work for the sake of freedom and justice for all Your children. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

For into Your hands, O God, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

And so the peace of the Lord is with you always.

And also with you.

Reconciled to God and one another, let's share with one another a sign of God's peace.

MEAL

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS AND OURSELVES, WITH ANTHEM:

“See, What a Morning”

-- Keith Getty, Stuart Townend

Featuring St Paul's Choir and the St Paul's Players. Arr. by Todd Silvius

OFFERTORY HYMN: “Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful”



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles-sing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be



fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u -



nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your



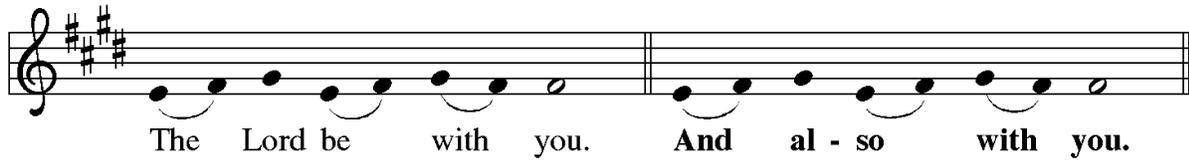
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

Living God, You gather the wolf and the lamb to feed together in Your peaceable Reign, and You welcome us all at Your table.

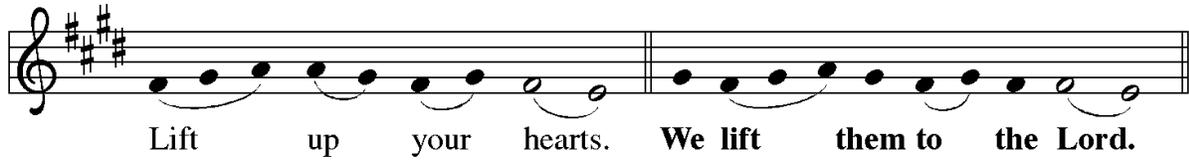
Reach out to us through this meal, and show us Your wounded and risen body, that we may be nourished and believe in Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

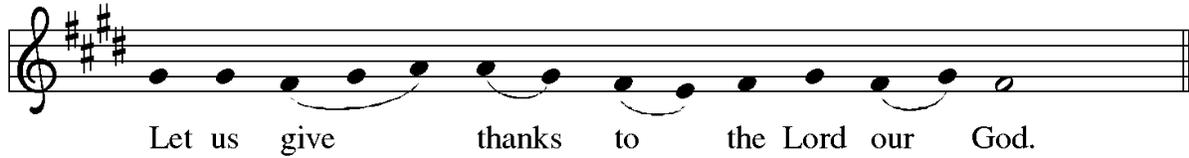
THE GREAT THANKSGIVING:



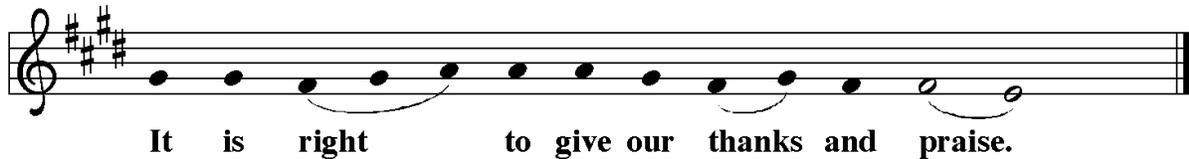
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.



Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.



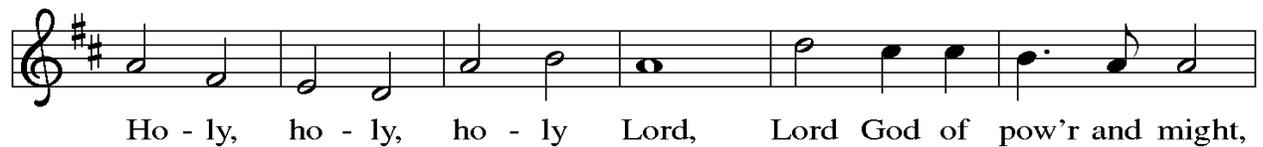
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



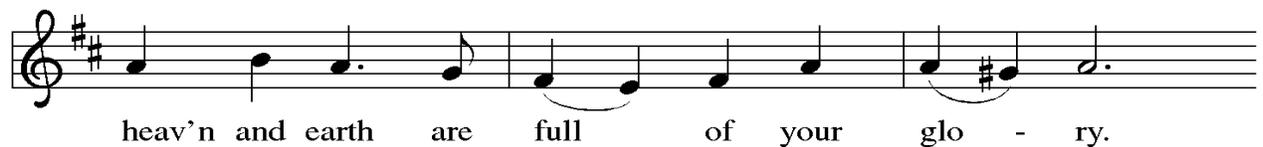
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It's indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should always and everywhere give thanks and praise to You, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ Jesus our Lord, who overcame death and the grave, and now, enthroned at the right hand of the Father, intercedes for us as our great high priest.

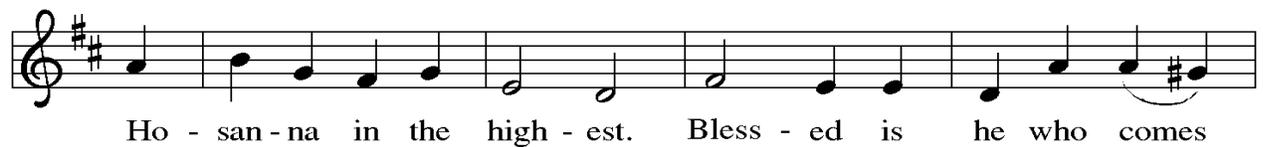
And so, with all the choirs of angels, with all the faithful of every time and every place, we praise your Name and join their unending hymn:



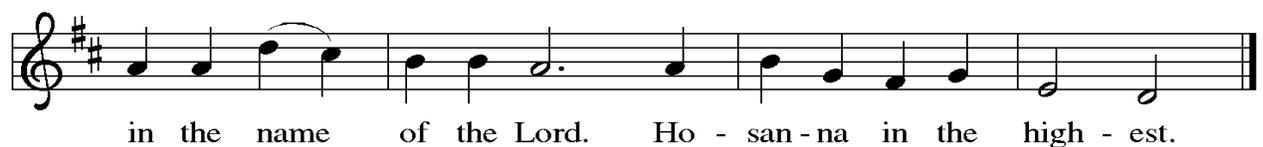
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes



in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take and eat.

This is My body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of Me."

Again after supper He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of Me."

And so, remembering all that our Lord has done for us, believing the witness of His resurrection, awaiting His final appearing in glory, we share this foretaste of the feast to come.

Now send Your Holy Spirit upon us, that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as He comes to us in His holy Supper.

Empower us by that same Spirit to love and forgive, that our lives may anticipate that day when You'll make all things new.

All this we pray with joy through our Lord Jesus Christ, who's taught us to pray:

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name!
Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.*



THE HOLY COMMUNION

Now we share God's consecrated gifts among God's consecrated people, knowing that our living Lord Jesus is fully present with us in His Supper, giving Himself to us in bread and wine and forgiving love. Today, we'll share the Lord's Supper by receiving the body and blood of Christ at communion "stations" at the altar rail. Come forward a pew at a time; take an empty glass from the tray, or a glass already filled with grape juice if necessary. Receive "**the body of Christ, given for you**" from the Pastor; receive "**the blood of Christ, shed for you**" from our communion assistant. We'll pause for silent prayer after we've all communed...

If you're joining us from your home, we invite you to share the bread and cup with one another. When giving the bread to your neighbor, say "**The body of Christ, given for you.**" When giving the wine/grape juice say, "**The blood of Christ, shed for you.**" Whatever's left over may be reverently eaten and drunk by everyone after our worship is over. Once we've all shared in the body and blood of Christ, we continue in blessing and prayer:

SENDING

THANKSGIVING, PRAYER, AND BENEDICTION:

May the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us and keep us in His grace.

Amen.



☞ Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let ev-'ry-one who seeks the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-calls his prom-is-es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks-giv-ing. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

We give You thanks, generous God, for in this bread and cup we've tasted the new heaven and earth where hunger and thirst are no more. Send us from this table as witnesses to Christ's resurrection, that through our lives, all may know life in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Now may the God of life, who raised Christ Jesus from death, empower you by the Holy Spirit to walk in newness of life; and Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN: "Christ is Alive—Let Christians Sing!"
ELW 389

See the following page for the words and music to this hymn.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DISMISSAL:

God has a plan.

We're it!

What's our part in God's plan?

Sharing God's love in joyful service!

Then let's go in peace, serve in joy, and live out the new life of our risen Lord!

Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!

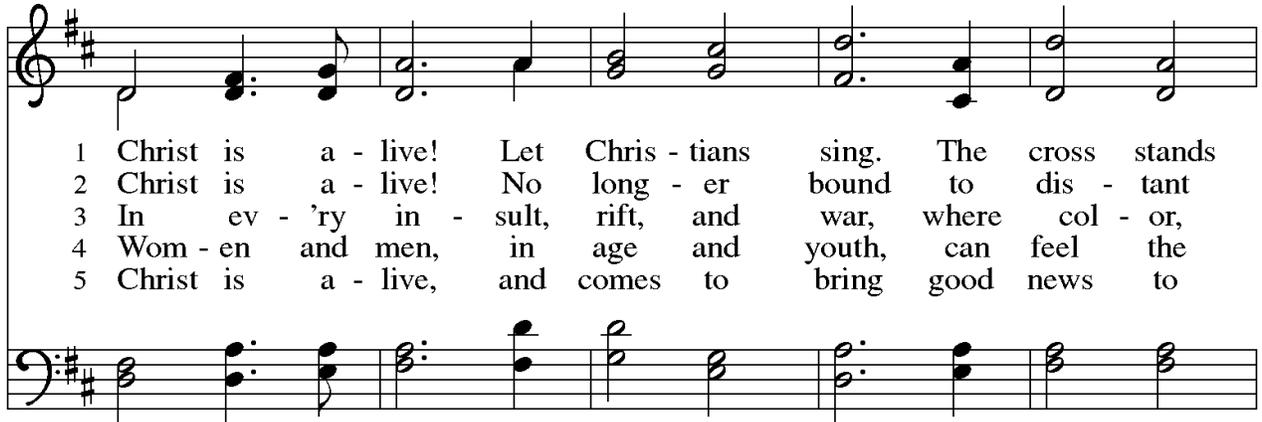


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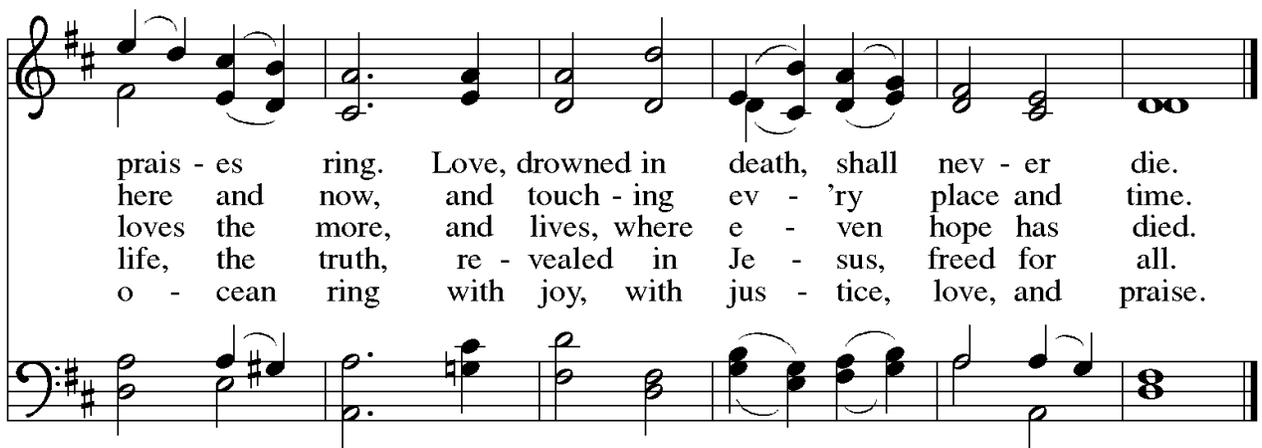
Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing



1 Christ is a - live! Let Chris - tians sing. The cross stands
 2 Christ is a - live! No long - er bound to dis - tant
 3 In ev - 'ry in - sult, rift, and war, where col - or,
 4 Wom - en and men, in age and youth, can feel the
 5 Christ is a - live, and comes to bring good news to



emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with
 years in Pal - es - tine, but sav - ing, heal - ing,
 scorn, or wealth di - vide, Christ suf - fers still, yet
 Spir - it, hear the call, and find the way, the
 this and ev - 'ry age, till earth and sky and



prais - es ring. Love, drowned in death, shall nev - er die.
 here and now, and touch - ing ev - 'ry place and time.
 loves the more, and lives, where e - ven hope has died.
 life, the truth, re - vealed in Je - sus, freed for all.
 o - cean ring with joy, with jus - tice, love, and praise.

Text: Brian A. Wren, b. 1936

Music: TRURO, T. Williams, *Psalmody Evangelica*, 1789

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We're now some forty days after Easter. Next Sunday is Pentecost. This week, between those liturgical milestones, we celebrate the Ascension of Jesus. Just as Jesus “came down” to earth in the incarnation, He now “goes up” to heaven in the Ascension. And after Jesus “goes up” in the Ascension, the Spirit of God will “come down” on the believers at Pentecost. (I use quotation marks because the Biblical writers might’ve intended for us to understand their language of “ascent” and “descent” as metaphorical rather than literal.) Matthew and John don’t include the story of the Ascension, nor does Mark (except in the spurious longer ending). Luke mentions the Ascension in his gospel and in Acts. He writes that forty days after His resurrection, Jesus “was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight,” and so He was “taken from them into heaven.” In addition to Luke, there are another twenty or so references that allude to the Ascension. By the late second century, Christians confessed the Ascension in the Apostles’ Creed: “He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.” St Augustine writes that the Feast of the Ascension was widely observed long before his time. Art and architecture also honored the Ascension. By 384, an exact place on the Mount of Olives was venerated. In 390, a wealthy Roman woman named Poimonia financed the construction of the Chapel of the Ascension.

In our creeds and confessions, art and architecture, from Syrian illuminated manuscripts to Danish wall paintings, Christians have professed their belief in the Ascension. But what does it mean? The painting of the Ascension by the Italian Andrea Mantegna, and hundreds of others like it, begs this question. It contrasts heaven “above” and earth “below,” with Jesus hovering in between, surrounded by winged angels. Is that what really happened? Is that what it looked like?

The Jesus Seminar rejects the Ascension as a literary fiction. Skeptics dismiss it as an embarrassing example of a pre-critical cosmology. Literalist interpretations make the sacred story absurd. In *The Big Questions in Science and Religion* (2008), the Oxford theologian and ordained Anglican priest Keith Ward captures the clash of cosmologies that we experience with the Ascension story. He writes: “We now know that, if [Jesus] began ascending two thousand years ago, He wouldn’t yet have left the Milky Way (unless He attained warp speed).” Our ideas today about space and time are different from those in Luke’s day. Paul described a three-tier universe in Philippians 2:10: “in heaven and on earth and under the earth.” It’s tempting to contrast the outmoded cosmology of Luke with the updated cosmology of contemporary physics. But this isn’t as easy as it seems, nor does it help much.

I don’t expect Luke to have known modern cosmology. He believed the best cosmology of his day— Ptolemy’s geocentric view of the world, which reigned for a thousand years as the most authoritative view until Copernicus demonstrated that it was badly wrong in 1543. And similarly, today’s cosmologies will look crude two thousand years from now (if not much sooner). I recently read an article by Freeman Dyson of Princeton about a new book by the astrophysicist Mario Livio called *Brilliant Blunders: From Darwin to Einstein— Colossal Mistakes by Great Scientists That Changed Our Understanding of Life and the Universe* (2013). It’s misleading to privilege any cosmology, whether ancient or modern, as a final picture of the world for all time.

Today we think about space in three dimensions— latitude or length, longitude or width, and altitude or height. To these we add the fourth dimension of time. This view of the world might turn out to be rudimentary at best if string theorists are correct. So-called “M-Theory” proposes 11 dimensions. Stephen Hawking thinks that M-theory is “the only candidate for a complete theory of the universe.” But these are cosmological theories and not empirical conclusions, so other prominent physicists like Richard Feynman and Roger Penrose think string theory fails as a “theory of everything.”

Luke described the Ascension within the context of an imperfect cosmology, which has since been supplanted by our own imperfect cosmology. I don’t believe that Jesus ascended “up” in the sense of Mantegna’s painting or Keith Ward’s quotation, although it might’ve looked something like that. I for one believe that Jesus literally exists in another dimension that’s best described symbolically or metaphorically.

Stephen Davis of Claremont University puts it this way: “The Ascension of Jesus was primarily a change of state rather than a change of location. Jesus changed in the Ascension from being present in the realm of space and time to being present in the realm of eternity, in the transcendent heavenly realm.”

In the symbolic language of the early creeds, with the Ascension, Jesus is now “exalted at the right hand of the Father.” And with Pentecost next week, the Spirit of God, “who with the Father and Son is worshipped and glorified,” descends like a violent wind and burning fire...

Which is to say that our Christian story is deeply Trinitarian...

Our finite language about the Ascension, limited by every cosmology of every age, is necessarily symbolic and metaphorical. It points to literal realities that are infinite and therefore indescribable. Consider the poem “Ascension” by Denise Levertov, from her book *The Stream and the Sapphire* (1997).

*Stretching Himself as if again,
through downpress of dust
upward, soil giving way
to thread of white, that
reaches
for daylight, to open as green
leaf that it is...
Can Ascension
not have been
arduous, almost,
as the return
from Sheol, and
back through the tomb
into breath?*

*Matter reanimate
now must relinquish
itself, its
human cells,
molecules, five
senses, linear
vision endured
as Man—
the sole
all-encompassing gaze
resumed now,
Eye of Eternity.
Relinquished, earth’s
broken Eden.*

*Expulsion,
liberation,
last
self-enjoined task
of Incarnation.
He again
Fathering Himself.
Seed-case
splitting.
He again
Mothering His birth:
torture and bliss.*

• Dan Clendenin

Beginning at Jerusalem

Begin in the brightly painted kitchens.
At the table set for supper and on the wide couches
where we watch TV. Begin while we are sorting
the laundry, writing out the shopping list.
And in front of our bathroom mirrors.

Begin in the barns among the warmth of animals
and the smells of grain and manure.
Begin in the growing fields, and in the flooded
pastures, and where the rains have not come
and the soil is cracked and hard.

Begin in the gleaming office towers, the shiny
shopping malls, the sweaty factory floors.
Begin on crumbling sidewalks and amid
the rumble of subways. At machines, at our desks,
by the coffee makers and computers.

Begin with the rich, the comfortable.
Begin with the poor, the desperate.
Among the successful, the self-assured.
Among the failed and the floundering.
In the glitter of the halls of power,
and in the cold and shadowed corners
of tragedy and defeat.

Begin on a day when the sun is brilliant;
on a day when the sky is gray.
In a time when economies are favorable;
in a time when all is rust;
at the moment when leaders are caring;
or amid indifference, hostility, despair.

Let us begin beginning again. And whether
we have begun and triumphed, or begun
and struggled and faltered, we will continue
our beginning, as we have from our beginning, at Jerusalem,
which is wherever and whoever we are.

• *Andrew King*

This Week at St Paul's

P = Parish House, F = Fellowship Hall

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Sun. 5/29 Easter 7 Ascension Sunday	9:00 AM	Holy Communion in person and online: www.facebook.com/StPaulsQtown/live
	10:30 AM	Fellowship Hour in person and via Zoom: [use meeting ID 839 381 0896, passcode 90e8Dm]
	6:00 PM	Confirmation Class via Zoom *
Mon. 5/30		Memorial Day
Thur. 6/2	10:00 AM	Bible Study via Zoom *
	7:00 PM	Scouts Troop 007 [F]
Fri. 6/3	1:00 PM	Al-Anon [F]
	7:00 PM	AA [F]
Sun. 6/4 Day of Pentecost	9:00 AM	Holy Communion in person and online: www.facebook.com/StPaulsQtown/live The Rev. Stephanie Steele, guest Pastor
	10:30 AM	Fellowship Hour in person and via Zoom: [use meeting ID 839 381 0896, passcode 90e8Dm]

- * If you'd like to participate in these **activities taking place over Pr Dave's Zoom platform**, go to zoom.us, click "Join a Meeting" at the top right of the page, use meeting ID 3700147169, and if it asks for a password, use 119805 and you should be in. If you're using your phone, these dial-in numbers will work: 929.205.6099 or 312.626.6799. After you dial, you'll be asked for the host's code, and you'll type in 3700147169#, then 119805# and you're in. (What's more, with your smart phone or computer, you can engage video as well as audio, so we can see and hear you—something that's precious right now!) You can also use **Free Conference Call [FCC]**: Dial 857.232.0157, enter conference code 144261, and you're in.

REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK:

- The Armed Forces, President Biden and his cabinet, Crossroads Pregnancy Care, David & Mary Johnson Sr., Morgan, Ally, Dontay, & Emily Hassler, Andrew Edmonds, Don & Karen Ludovici, Derek & Matt Ludovici, Barbara Graser, Bob Knapp, Bob & Charyl Westervelt, Ray Constable, Bob & Charyl Westervelt, Carol Marks, Connie Slotter, Norm Diehl Sr., Amy Miller, Karen Capella, Tammy Zepiora, Melissa Manhart, Ruth Ziedonis, Chrissy Cousins, Bob Shimalla, Robert & Cheryl Ball, Kamryn Jenkins, Aaron Hamlin, Gary Hertzog, David & Carol Marks, Kristin & Brady King, Katie, Cassidy Owens, David Gullett, Kelly & Jim, Madison Apple; the people of Haiti, Afghanistan, and Ukraine; victims of natural disasters; everyone struggling with COVID-19 and its containment.
- Families and friends of Jordan Scholl, Phyllis Boyer, Lisa Kearns, Fay Barndt, Kenneth Horn, Joseph Ricca, Christopher Young, Eric King, Liam King, Patrick King, Russell Stier, Mary Ziegenfuss, Dawn Gilbert, Paul Stepanoff, Steve, Karen Capella, Jon Swartz, Amy Blizard, JoAnn Spaits, Karin Silvius, Mark Bilger.

Serving in Worship Today:

Usher:	Gary Hertzog	Altar Guild	Aundie Hamlin, Joyce Kober, <i>Volunteer needed</i>
Communion:	Rich Baringer	Bulletin	Philip and Doris Diehl
Acolyte:	Stefanie Bauman	Reader	Tracy Hallman
Counter:	Patty Schumacher		

Today's bulletins are sponsored by the Bauman family in honor of Ethan's 20th birthday and prayers for his safe travels while he studies in Europe. **Today's flowers** are sponsored by Larry and Sue Young in loving memory of their son Christopher Robin Young.

We encourage you to keep observing the **COVID safety protocols** of safe distancing, face masking, and limited physical contact as we worship together. We'll continue to make the pre-packaged wafer-and-grape juice Communion sets available for those who desire them— but we've also resumed **sharing Holy Communion at the altar via "continuous Communion/'stations'"**, encouraging folks to come forward a pew at a time to ensure safer distancing. We'll keep on **"livestreaming" our worship services** via Facebook Live **AND streaming the audio of our services via our Free Conference Call line** (857.232.0157, conference code 144261).

Lutheran Disaster Response for the people of Ukraine: LDR is working with companions in Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, providing refugees with immediate support and supplies as well as pastoral and psychological support to address the trauma they've endured. You can donate to Ukraine Relief by going to community.elca.org/eastern-europe-crisis-response or by sending donations to Lutheran Disaster Response, PO Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009. Your gifts designated for "Eastern Europe Crisis Response" will be used entirely (100%) to provide support for people impacted by conflict in the region.

Our **Monthly Special** recipient for May is the **Quakertown Food Pantry**. We've been an integral part of this community-wide ministry through the years, but as springtime blooms in all its fullness, we have a special opportunity to support this life-giving ministry. Please give as you're able!

Stewardship Note: As of April 30, our congregation's expenses for 2022 have exceeded our income by \$11,500. We know that right now, funds are tight for everyone; but we encourage you to prayerfully consider how you might be able to support our ministry together. If you'd like to give electronically (via Simply Giving, our church website, or some other electronic means) and would like some information on how to do that, please contact the church office.

Next Sunday, **June 5, the Day of Pentecost**, we'll have as our special **guest pastor** the Rev. Stephanie Steele, Sascha Baringer's sister and Stefanie Bauman's aunt! Pr Stephanie grew up in this church and was married here as well— let's joyfully welcome her home as we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit together!

And speaking of Pentecost, we're decorating our chancel and cross with 20 beautiful red **geraniums** for this festal Sunday. If you'd like to sponsor a geranium plant, please contact our church office (or turn in your red geranium order form in your bulletin) with your name,

envelope number, dedication (“in honor of...” or “in memory of...”), and contribution (\$7.00 per plant) by May 26. Plants may be taken home after worship on June 5, or if you wish, we can plant them in our church garden.

Come join us on Friday evening, **June 17 @ 7:05 PM** for **Faith Night with the Iron Pigs** at Coca-Cola Park in Allentown! The Iron Pigs will be taking on the Buffalo Bisons, and there’ll be fireworks following the game. Tickets are \$11 each; if you’re planning on coming to the game, get your tickets through Kelly Shaak (kbkshaak@msn.com or 215.630.3737). You can pay with cash, a check made out to Kelly Shaak, Venmo (@Kelly-Shaak), or PayPal (@KellyLShaak). Deadline for ordering your tickets is May 23.

Updated Office Hours: In order for her to participate in her counseling internship, our church administrator Alicia Byelich will be changing her office hours to **Tuesdays and Fridays from 9:00 AM-3:10 PM.**

Property Notes: [1] **Many thanks** to Linda Hertzog, who’s been doing so much planting and gardening around the church as spring has sprung; and [2] We could use a **lawn tractor** to help Linda and others with some of our ongoing lawn and gardening tasks. If you know anyone who’s selling a used lawn tractor in good condition, please see Bill Shaeffer. Thanks!

After a two-year pandemic hiatus, we’re hoping we can actually hold an in-person **Vacation Bible School** by early August of this year. We could have our traditional VBS here at St Paul’s; but we could also do a Vacation Bible School week with our neighbors in Richlandtown or even throughout our entire Quakertown Lutheran Cluster. The possibilities are myriad— but nothing can happen if we can’t plan things beforehand. If you’re interested in planning, leading, or helping with Vacation Bible School this summer, please get in touch with Rose Sutkins at 215.262.4782 or rsutkins@gmail.com as soon as possible so we can get moving with our planning.

For the latest announcement updates, go to:

docs.google.com/document/d/1aZi_IL0SHaQ1BOGFS_s3bt0oHoTQ4fCy9t0372PZioE/edit#

For more information on our ministries, please contact:

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