Day of Ascension- May 21, 2020

Let us pray.  
Almighty God, your blessed Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things. Mercifully give us faith to trust that, as he promised, he abides with us on earth to the end of time, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**First Reading: Acts 1:1-11**

[Luke writes:] 1In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning 2until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3After his suffering Jesus presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the dominion of God. 4While staying with them, Jesus ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; 5for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

6So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by divine authority. 8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” 9When he had said this, as they were watching, he 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, “You Galileans, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Word of God, word of life.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm:** Psalm 47 may be sung or spoken in response to the First Reading.

1Clap your hands, | all you peoples;  
shout to God with a | joyful sound.  
2For the LORD Most High is | to be feared:  
a great king over | all the earth,3who subdues the | peoples under us,  
and the nations un- | der our feet;  
4who chooses our inheri- | tance for us,  
the pride of Jacob, | whom God loves.5God has gone up | with a shout,  
the LORD with the sound | of the ram’s horn.  
6Sing praises to | God, sing praises;  
sing praises to our | king, sing praises.7For God is king of| all the earth;  
sing praises | with a song.  
8God reigns o- | ver the nations;  
God is en- | throned on high.9The nobles of the peoples have gathered as the people of the | God of Abraham.  
The rulers of the earth belong to God, who is high- | ly exalted.

**Second Reading: Ephesians 1:15-23**

15I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason 16I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. 17I pray that 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 God, 18so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which God has called you, what are the riches of God’s glorious inheritance among the saints, 19and what is the immeasurable greatness of God’s power for us who believe, according to the working of God’s great power. 20God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at the right hand of Power in the heavenly places, 21far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. 22And he has put all things under the feet of Christ and has made him the head over all things for the church, 23which is his body of Christ, the fullness of the one who fills all in all.

Word of God, word of life.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel: Luke 24:44-53**

The gospel according to Luke.  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

44[Jesus said,] “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.”45Then Jesus opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48You are witnesses of these things. 49And 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.”

50Then Jesus led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. 51While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. 52And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; 53and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

The gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Reflection**

Having read these readings, think of this:

The two men are right. Do not stand looking into the skies as if Jesus has gone away. The crucified and risen one has ascended to the throne of God. And where is that? Everywhere, for God’s power fills all things. Jesus has ascended into the cosmos. But, in a time of sickness and death and loss, that may not be easy to see. Rather, we can see Jesus Christ in the places in which he is there for us: in the scriptures he opens our mind to understand; in the Spirit of wisdom enabling us to hope; in the love of the community. As Martin Luther has said, Jesus has ascended to be with us and for us. Then we need to be with and for other people, at least in our prayer and support.

If you have a hymnal (or using the graphic below), you might now sing or read “Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise.” (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 834)

[Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise](https://blogs.elca.org/worship/files/2020/05/Immortal-Invisible-God-Only-Wise.pdf)

Then pray together these prayers for our church and world:

On this fortieth day of Easter, let us join with Christians around the globe  
asking God to receive our prayers.

A brief silence.

O God, your might upholds the cosmos, and your mercy sustains the universe.  
To you, enthroned on high and enthroned in our hearts, we pray:

That the church be enlivened to be the body of Christ,  
that bishops and pastors lead with visionary wisdom,  
and that all the baptized be witnesses to your mercy and might,  
**we pray to you, good Lord.**

That the earth be preserved from disastrous climate,  
that the animals and their young be safeguarded,  
and that the trees and bushes be protected for their fruit and beauty,  
**we pray to you, good Lord.**

That wars between nations and violence within each population cease,  
that the leaders of nations enact justice for their people,  
and that legislators be granted wisdom for their difficult decisions,  
**we pray to you, good Lord.**

That those with coronavirus be healed,  
that those facing death be comforted,  
that those returning to society remain healthy,  
that physicians and nurses be granted endurance,  
that hospitals be equipped for their work,  
that researchers discover a vaccine,  
and that future waves of illness be averted,  
**we pray to you, good Lord.**

That the poor be fed and clothed and housed,  
that the unemployed find jobs,  
and that those we name before you receive health and wholeness. . . .  
**we pray to you, good Lord.**

That teachers be preserved in their care of our youth,  
That scientists be supported in their exploration of your creation,  
And that theologians assist us in receiving the mysteries of the Ascension,  
**We pray to you, good Lord.**

That our private sorrows and joys be welcomed by you,  
Keep a time of silence.We pray:  
**We pray to you, good Lord.**

That we laud your presence in the word,  
that like Queen Helena, whom we commemorate today, we find our life in the cross of Christ,  
and that at the end we join with all the saints in your everlasting kingdom,  
**we pray to you, good Lord**.

O God, in you we live and move and have our being.  
Receive our prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ, crucified, risen, ascended for us,  
and reigning in your glory now and forever.  
**Amen.**

 Let us pray.

Almighty God, grant that your holy word which has been proclaimed this day may enter into our hearts through your grace, that it may produce in us the fruit of the Spirit for witness and service in the world and to the praise and honor of your name, trough Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil,  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever.  
**Amen.**

The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen**.

The God of all grace  **☩**  bless us now and forever.  
**Amen.**

Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

**Devotional Music Links:** For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: [“God’s Plan”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPsA8jPfR5o&feature=youtu.be); [“Come Away to the Skies”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UW2LxVz4LgE&feature=youtu.be); “[Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQPibsgffIc&feature=youtu.be)”

[Daily Prayer Resources](https://blogs.elca.org/worship/2044/)are now available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Reflection material: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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