

May 16th, 2021 Ascension of Our Lord – Email/At Home Missal

The ZOOM link for this week's service, which opens at 9.45 am on May 16th 2021, can be found here:

St Peter's Lutheran Cambridge is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Sunday Worship May 16, 2021 on Zoom

Time: May 16, 2021 09:45 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada) **The service begins at 10:00 AM**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88475916842?pwd=Z3MxSVZCUXNnVzh1aWxlaTI1dmhmQT09>

Meeting ID: 884 7591 6842

Passcode: 298402

One tap mobile

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+1 647 374 4685 Canada

Meeting ID: 884 7591 6842

Passcode: 298402

Find your local number: **<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kcSbbmMyi>**

You don't have to have a computer or internet to connect to any of our church Zoom services; you can also just call in on one of these numbers (long distance charges may apply): (All Canadian numbers).

Gathering Hymn: ELW # 657 'Rise, O Sun of Righteousness'

Click here: **<https://youtu.be/uG1ExvTQ5Uc>**

Text: Christian David, et al, tr Frank W. Stoldt; Music Bohemian Brethren1566; Tune: Sonne Der Gerechtigkeit

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Greeting:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all, in your home and in mine.

Prayer of the Day:

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

The First Reading: Acts 1:1-11

Luke writes: In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After 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. While

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 have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But 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.” When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, 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.” (NRSV)

Word of God, Word of Life. C: Thanks be to God.*

Psalm: 47

Clap your hands, all you peoples;
shout to God with loud songs of joy.

**For the LORD, the Most High, is awesome,
a great king over all the earth.**

He subdued peoples under us,
and nations under our feet.

**He chose our heritage for us,
the pride of Jacob whom he loves.**

Selah

God has gone up with a shout,
the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

**Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.**

For God is the king of all the earth;
sing praises with a psalm.

**God is king over the nations;
God sits on his holy throne.**

The princes of the peoples gather
as the people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth belong to God;
he is highly exalted. (NRSV)

The Second Reading: Ephesians 1:15-23

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I 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 him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God 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, far 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. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (NRSV)

Word of God, Word of Life. C: Thanks be to God.*

Gospel Acclamation: ELW 814 - 'Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am'**Click here: <https://youtu.be/mf3QHqQ-004>**

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The Holy Gospel according to Luke 24:44-53***C: Glory to you, O Lord.***

Jesus said to the eleven and those with them, "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." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And 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."

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

The Gospel of the Lord. *C: Praise to you, O Christ.* ***Sermon (Imagine Pastor Chun Zhang's voice here)**

"Why are you standing there looking into the sky?" In today's first reading from the Book of Acts, after Jesus ascended to heaven, when disciples were still looking up into the sky, two men in white appeared from nowhere and asked them this rather odd question.

Why are we standing there looking into the sky? If I were there with Jesus' disciples, I would answer this question by saying: "we are trying to see where Jesus went. And we are trying to see where heaven is. So we can go after him."

At Jesus' time, people believed that the whole earth is flat, above the cloud up in the sky is where God lives, they called heaven, and beneath the deep holes and volcanos and under the sea bed is where Satan lives, they called hell.

These days, few people still hold this three-levelled worldview, since we know scientifically that the earth we are living on is a globe. And as my father always jokes around that they are living underneath our feet and vice versa. And I believe none of us want to live in hell.

But sometimes, don't we still seek God up there somewhere, rather than feeling God's presence among us all the time? Sometimes, as a long-time Christian and regular churchgoer, don't you also feel confused about Church community from church building and Christian doctrines from faith?

"Where is Jesus now?" Once a newcomer to the Chinese church I served before asked me this question. As a pastor who is very familiar with our creeds and doctrines, I answered him with the exact words of Apostles' Creed without any hesitation. "He ascended in heaven, sitting at the right hand of the Father." I answered.

"So, he is not here anymore." That man sounded a little bit disappointed. His comment shocked me. It made me rethink my understanding of heaven, which in the Holy Bible is also called the Kingdom of God. Is heaven really a place higher than earth? Is heaven really up in the sky? Is the hope of Christians is going to that place after we die? Is the calling of being Christians, the followers of Christ really about having a ticket to an everlasting happy place called heaven?

Those questions are not as easy as they seem to be. Jesus once said that the kingdom of God is in this world. Paul told his fellow Christians that church is the body of Christ. Jesus in today's Gospel reading that "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel." And right before his ascension Jesus told his disciples that, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth."

The two men in white garments who were present at Jesus' ascension asked Jesus' disciples: "Why do you stand there looking into the sky?" Can we just simply answer: "we are trying to see where Jesus went. And we are trying to see where heaven is. So we can go after him"?

No, we cannot, because as Jesus' disciples, we all have work to do. We all have a calling to answer. We all have a commission to fulfil. Because from the moment of Jesus' ascension, we became the body of Christ in this world; we must proclaim the good news; we must drive out the demons that hold people in their addicting clutches; we must embrace all people with the merciful love of God. We ourselves now stand as an answer to the question: "where is Jesus now?"

Amen.

Hymn of the Day: ELW # 743 'Now to the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray'

Click here: <https://youtu.be/OXxMoKA-WnQ>

Prayers of Intercession:

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

A brief silence.

You call the whole church on earth to worship and bless you. Empower your church to bear joyful witness to your love made known in Jesus Christ. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You have fashioned a habitat for all your creatures and you fill the earth with your glory. Give rain where it is needed and rescue those inundated by floods. Mend what we have torn in the fabric of creation and replenish and nourish your world. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In the majesty of your love, you rule the world with justice and mercy. Give those in authority the spirit of your love, so that all who are hungry and poor receive food and resources, and all people flourish and live in peace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You heal those who are sick and bind up the brokenhearted. Attend to the cares and needs of the hurting and hopeless in our congregation, community, workplaces, schools, and families, *especially Bill & Don*. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You have gathered us in this congregation, enlightened our hearts, and given us a share of the immeasurable greatness of your power. Help us love one another, be reconciled where we are divided, and share the riches of your grace with our neighbors. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In raising Christ from the dead, you put your great power to work in the world. Raise us and all who have died in the faith with Christ. We remember saints in our lives and in our community. Thank you for their gifts among us. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Share the peace of Christ:

The Peace of Christ be with you always, in your home and in mine, and throughout God's creation.

Meal: Click here for the communion liturgy from worship on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsiaRdyFr50>

I invite you to prepare your table with bread and wine, or crackers and juice, whatever is available to you, so that you may participate in the meal.

Prayer after Communion

Wellspring of joy,
through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts.
Satisfy the hunger still around us,
and send us as joyful witnesses,
that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Blessing:

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom
to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.
The God of life,
Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

Sending Hymn: ELW # 827 'Arise, My Soul, Arise!'

Click here: <https://youtu.be/i1V7AinwJHk>

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Dismissal:

Alleluia! Christ is risen. ***Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!***
Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia ***Thanks be to God. Alleluia!***

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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