

ASCENSION

May 21st, 2023



The Ascension of our Lord

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

140 Russell Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 1W1
Church: 905-685-8294
www.christlutheransc.ca

Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday—9 a.m. – 12 noon
Bulletin Announcements: Please send to secretary@christlutheransc.ca.
Deadline for submission is Thursday at 9 a.m.

Pastor: Pastor Todd Hoeffs (289-362-0113) pastortoddhoeffs@gmail.com
Parish Assistant: Louise Gondosch (905-329-8579) parish.assistant@christlutheransc.ca
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Facebook: Lisa Gall www.facebook.com/ChristLutheranChurchSC
Bulletin by email: Judy Mason chairman.outreach@christlutheransc.ca

A recording of Sunday's service will be uploaded to YouTube at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpING_TKT19c_OIBbMqGwLw

Prayer: Grant, we pray, Almighty God, that even as we believe Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to have ascended into heaven, so we may also in heart and mind ascend and continually dwell there with Him; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

Monday: John 14: 15-21 Wednesday: 1 Cor. 2: 12-16 Friday: Heb. 11: 32-40
Tuesday: John 15: 17-21 Thursday: John 7: 37-39 Saturday: Isa. 41: 17-20

Musicians: 10 a.m. – Mayumi Munoz
Reader: 10 a.m. – Chris Mason
Greeters: 10 a.m. –

EVENTS THIS WEEK:

Today: NO Sunday School
NO Confirmation Class until May 28
10:00 a.m. - **WORSHIP** Service - "The Ascension of our Lord"
Monday: VICTORIA DAY HOLIDAY
Tuesday: 9:30 a.m. – Precious Moments
Thursday: 10:00 a.m. – SOUL
Saturday: 4:00 p.m. – Seminary Call Service at Grace Lutheran Church (*see note*)
Next Sunday: 9:10-9:45 a.m. – Confirmation Class

BAPTISM TODAY: We are pleased to welcome into God's family by Holy Baptism today **LUCA JAMES MAMBELLA**, son of Madeline Elizabeth & James Paul Mambella. Grandson of Dave & Debbie Meade. Great-grandson of Erna Mewhinney. Godparents: Samuel David Meade & Sarah Jane Mambella. May God bless Luca with a lifetime of rich blessings and protection.

PRECIOUS MOMENTS: If you or someone you know would benefit from friendly conversation, a time for kids to play & sing; hear a Bible story and make a craft - please join us Tuesdays in the nursery area from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Coffee and tea are always on.

SEMINARY CALL SERVICE: **Saturday, May 27, 4 p.m.** at Grace Lutheran Church. Trey Doak, Jason Gillard, and Nigel Prozenko will be certified to be called into the holy ministry. We heartily invite members of CLC to attend this festive event and also to pray for each of these men as they receive their congregational placements.



CAVE SPRING

VINEYARD

WINE TASTING

Wine and Food Adventure

\$40.00 each + tax

Saturday, May 27th at 1:00 p.m.

Sponsored by the Fellowship Committee

Please see Tim, Marge or Judy Mason for tickets!!



Saturday, June 3

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

In conjunction with the Fitzgerald Neighbourhood Yard sale

WE NEED HELP FROM AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE!

Here are some of the ways to help:

1. **May 31-June 2** – We need people to help sort through, organize, and price items that have been donated. You may also bring in additional items for sale.
2. **Bake** some treats for the sale (cookies, squares, muffins) –anything wrapped individually or in small portions - bring them the morning of June 3 - already priced please!
3. **Plants** If you have any plants that you could pot and add to our plant sale
4. **Set-Up** - Come early on that Saturday morning *Especially men*- we would sure appreciate your help carrying the tables and boxes. **We will likely start setting up about 7:45 a.m.**
5. **Man a Table** - We will need 2 or 3 volunteers at each table.
6. **Clean-Up** - Helpers to pack up and clean up afterwards
7. **HELP US ADVERTISE!!** mark your calendars, save the date --- Tell your friends and neighbours, spread the word as much as you can, put a notice in your apartment building, post about it on your Facebook page, any other way you can think of.



Please let Carole (carolepink121@gmail.com) or Lorraine (lk_notl@yahoo.com) or any of our Mary/Martha LWML ladies know if you plan to come and help and what you might be willing to do.



FREE FAMILY DAY BOWLING:

Saturday, June 3, 2 - 4 p.m.

106 Main Street, Port Dalhousie

There is no cost for the bowling and we look forward to a wonderful afternoon together

Please sign up in the Narthex

(or email: secretary@christlutheransc.ca)

by Sunday, May 28th

(Our next event is ****Family Mini Putt**—Saturday, Sept. 9th)



Thank You Lunch

In honour of

Pastor John Makey

Sunday, June 4th

after service in the church basement

Cold Cuts and buns provided.

Please sign up in the Narthex if you are able to attend and whether you can bring a salad or dessert.

Sponsored by the Fellowship Committee.

CONFIRMANDS & YOUTH are gathering together for **LASER TAG** ON Saturday, June 17, 1:00 p.m. Cost is \$20 for 3 games. Friends are welcome to join us! **Sign up by June 7th**. For more information speak with Valerie, Elizabeth or Louise.

FATHER'S DAY COFFEE HOUR: Treat Dad to his favourite pie & coffee on Sunday, **June 18th** following service. *A sign-up sheet is in the narthex if you would like to donate a pie for this event. (Free-will donation for the NYG vehicle repair bill.)*

MARY MARTHA: **Tuesday, June 20, 5:30 p.m. – Potluck Supper**
Please feel free to attend any or all of our Tuesday night events!



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH PICNIC 2023

Sunday, June 25, 11:00 am
Burgoyne Woods, Section "C"

(11:00 am Service at the Church for those unable to attend the Picnic)

Activities: Games, Fun and Action for all

Food: Hamburgers, hotdogs and pop provided.

Necessities to Bring: Lawn Chairs, salads, dessert, plate & utensils

If you plan to attend, please contact: secretary@christlutheransc.ca
with number attending and preferences for hotdogs/hamburgers

Last Sunday Attendance: May 14th, 2023 Attn: 10 a.m. – 148 SOUL:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Need</u>	<u>Last Sunday</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>	<u>+ or – (-)</u>
Current:	297,841.00	5,840.02	41232.00	90,062.81	(24,491.42)
LCC Missions	17,000.00	333.33	90.00	6,066.50	(471.96)
Property Improvement:			104.00	2,449.50	

EFT Donations: Beginning June 1, Christ Lutheran will assume responsibility from Lutheran East District for processing monthly Electronic Fund Transfer donations. If you are a current EFT donor, you will receive paperwork (please check your CLC mailslot). If you have ever considered making your donations via EFT, forms and instructions are available on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Your new contact for EFT service will be Karen McCumber.

A MEMORIAL DONATION has been given to Christ Lutheran Church in memory of Lawrence Peitsch by Steve Duga.

HELP URGENTLY NEEDED – The Worship Committee is urgently seeking four (4) volunteers to assist with the preparation of the weekly PowerPoint. Frequency of PowerPoint preparation would be on a rotating basis and dependent upon the number of helpers. PLEASE give prayerful consideration to serving our Lord in this capacity. For more information, please speak to either Kathy Kuhl, Judy Slingerland or Pastor Todd.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL is only 2 months away. We are looking for volunteers to help "**shine Jesus light**" to children attending our VBS **July 17 - 21 from 9:00 - 12 noon**. Whether you can help out 2 or 5 days, your support might be just what one of these children needs. Registration forms and Volunteer forms are available in the narthex.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF OUR CHILDREN is important to all of us. We are looking for people to help "team teach" our Sunday school children this year; September - December; January - June. If you are excited to share God's Word to inquisitive minds we invite you to speak with our Parish Education Chairman Brandon Kemp or Louise.

GREETERS: A sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board and we would ask that anyone who is interested in assisting for the coming year to please sign up. It is a wonderful opportunity to get to know everyone in the congregation.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP? We are setting up a schedule to take meals to Eduardo and Daniela to help them out during Daniela's very challenging recovery from surgery. (*along with having a new baby*). If you would be interested in helping with a meal, please speak to, or email Carole (carolepink121@gmail.com) Thanks :)

Please Note—Granny Squares needed: Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! The response has been overwhelming and extremely heartwarming that there have been so many Granny squares contributed. We have already completed 3. However, since this is an ongoing project we will gratefully accept more completed 6 inch knitted or crocheted Granny Squares in any pattern or colour. We would also appreciate any yarn that you may have, leftover yarn or full balls of yarn. In the narthex there is a white cube with yarn and hooks that you are welcome to take (or donate). There is another basket for completed squares. Once there are enough, we will make a Caring Squares blanket for whoever may be in need of a hug. On behalf of the Caring Squares, if you have any questions, call Lorraine at 905 964 5837)

Caring Squares Blanket #3 ↗



THE ACSENSION OF OUR LORD
The Last Sunday of the Easter Season
Divine Service Setting 4
May 21, 2023 + 10 AM Worship

BAPTISMAL HYMN: *"This Is The Spirit's Entry Now!"* [Tune: Jerusalem, My Happy Home]



1 This is the Spir - it's en - try now: the wa - ter and the word,
2 This mir - a - cle of life re - born comes from the Lord of breath;
3 Let wa - ter be the sa - cred sign that we must die each day



the cross of Je - sus on your brow, the seal both felt and heard.
the sin - less one from life was torn; our life comes through his death.
to rise a - gain by his de - sign as fol - l'wers of his way.

Words: Thomas E Herbranson, © 1972 North American traditional; arr. hymnal version © 2006 LAND OF REST
<https://dq5pwpq1q8ru0.cloudfront.net/2022/01/07/02/13/28/24bd9dac-9d25-46af-882b-46990809ade3/Worship%20Service%20Jan%209.pdf>

BAPTISM OF LUCA JAMES MAMBELLA

Parents: Madeline Elizabeth & James Paul Mambella

Godparents: Samuel David Meade & Sarah Jane Mambella

SCRIPTURAL COMMAND:

Our Lord Jesus Christ says: All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep everything I have entrusted to you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

ADDRESS: Scripture teaches that we are born sinful and unclean, but that our heavenly Father washes us clean in the waters of baptism. We are re-born as His children as the Holy Spirit renews us and gives us eternal life. Through baptism He graciously forgives us our sins and unites us with our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we share in His death and resurrection.

PRESENTATION:

Who brings this child for holy baptism? *We do.*

How is this child named? *(Name is spoken)*

ADMONITION:

Since you as parents and sponsors have brought (Name) to be baptized, you are responsible for his/her upbringing in the Lutheran Church. Remember him/her in your prayers. Bring him/her to the services in God's House and teach him/her the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments. Remind him/her of her baptism, set him/her a good example, and provide for his/her instruction in the faith that he/she may join you and all believers around the Lord's Table to feast on Jesus' Body and Blood. Do you intend to joyfully do this? Yes, I/we do.

MARKING OF THE CROSS:

(Name), receive the sign of the holy cross †, upon your forehead and upon your heart, to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified.

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION:

Jesus our Lord says: Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth; unless you receive the Kingdom of God like a little child you shall never enter it.

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Let us ask the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ on (Name) and pray together the prayer He has taught us:

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.

PUBLIC CONFESSION OF THE FAITH:

I ask you now to publicly speak your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the Church, the faith in which we baptize.

Do you renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways?

Yes, I do renounce them.

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty?

Yes, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord?

Yes, I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty, from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

Yes, I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the + life everlasting. Amen.

BAPTISM:

(Name), I baptize you in the name of the Father † and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit †. Amen.

May God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has given you the new birth by water and the Spirit and has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with His Spirit, so that you receive eternal life. Amen.

PRESENTATION OF CANDLE:

Receive this burning light. Live always by the Light of Christ and be ever watchful for His coming that you may meet Him with joy and enter with Him to the Marriage Feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom, which has no end. Let your light so shine before others, that they see your good works and glorify Your Father Who is in Heaven.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, we join with (Name's) parents in thanking you for giving them this child and for adopting him/her as Your own child in holy baptism. Strengthen him/her faith by Your Holy Spirit, so that his/her sinful self may die each day and he/she may rise to new life with Christ forever. As You have written his/her name in the book of life and have made him/her a member of the body of Your Son, guide him/her, so that, with all Your saints, he/she may one day abide in Your Heavenly Home; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRESENTATION OF BAPTIZED:

Through Baptism, God has added this new brother/sister a member of the Priesthood we all share in Christ Jesus, that we may proclaim the praise of God and show forth His creative and redeeming Word to all the world:

We welcome you into the Lord's family. We receive you as fellow members of the body of Christ, children of the same Heavenly Father, and workers with us in His Kingdom.

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

EASTER HYMN OF PRAISE "Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts To Heaven"

[Ode to Joy tune]



1 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Hearts to heav'n and voic - es raise:
2 Al - le - lu - ia, Christ is ris - en! Death at last has met de - feat:
△ 3 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Glo - ry be to God on high:



Sing to God a hymn of glad-ness, Sing to God a hymn of praise;
See the an-cient pow'rs of e - vil In con - fu - sion and re - treat;
Al - le - lu - ia to the Sav - ior Who has gained the vic - to - ry;



He who on the cross a vic-tim For the world's sal - va-tion bled—
Once He died, and once was bur-ied: Now He lives for - ev - er - more,
Al - le - lu - ia to the Spir-it, Fount of love and sanc-ti - ty!



Je - sus Christ, the King of Glo - ry, Now is ris - en from the dead.
Je - sus Christ, the world's Re - deem - er, Whom we wor-ship and a - dore.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia To the tri - une Maj - es - ty!

Text (st. 2): © 1982 The Jubilate Group, admin. Hope Publishing Co. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110005782
Text (sts. 1, 3) and tune: Public domain

PRAYER OF THE DAY: We pray: Thanks and praise to You, eternal Father, that Your Son Jesus ascended to Your right hand, to rule over all things as Lord. Keep Your church in the unity that the Spirit gives, and bring all creation in submission to Christ as Saviour and Lord. For he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE WORD

First Reading: *Acts of the Apostles 1: 1-11*

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 over the course of 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 towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards 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.'

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle: *Ephesians 1: 15-23*

[St. Paul writes:] I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards 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. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

ALLELUIA & VERSE



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



These things are writ-ten that you may be-lieve that



Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God. *John 20:31*



Holy Gospel: *St. Luke 24: 44-53*

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Luke, the 24th chapter: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

Then Jesus said to 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 worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

This is the Gospel of the Lord: **Praise to You, O Christ!**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

GOSPEL HYMN: *"Alleluia! Sing To Jesus"*

LSB # 821

All - e - lu - ia! Sing to Jes - us! His the scep - ter
his the throne. All - e - lu - ia! His the triumph, his the
Vic - to - ry a - lone. Hark! the songs of peace - ful
Zi - on thun - der like a mighty flood. Jes - us
Out of ev - ry na - tion has re - deemed us by his blood.

Alleluia! not as orphans are we left in sorrow now;
Alleluia! He is near us, faith believes, nor questions how;
Though the cloud from sight received him
when the forty days were o'er
shall our hearts forget his promise, 'I am with you evermore'?

Alleluia! Bread of Heaven, here on earth our food and stay!
Alleluia! here the sinful flee to You from day to day.
Intercessor, Friend of sinners, earth's Redeemer, hear our plea.
Where the songs of all the sinless sweep across the crystal sea.

Alleluia! King eternal, You, the Lord of lords we own;
Alleluia! born of Mary, earth Your footstool, Heav'n Your throne.
As within the veil You entered, robed in flesh, our great High Priest.
Here on earth both Priest and Victim in the Eucharistic Feast.

Reprinted from: www.hymnary.org/page/fetch/ELW2006/656/low/392

MESSAGE

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS:

But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith –
praying in the Holy Spirit. *(Jude 20)*

Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that leads to eternal life. *(Jude 21)*

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away; behold, the new has come! *(2 Cor. 5:17)*

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another:

(Brief silence for reflection and self-examination)

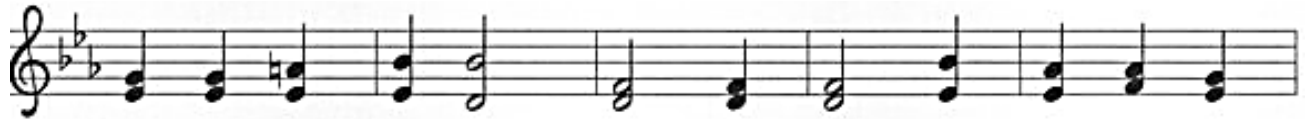
Most Gracious Father, we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in our thoughts, words and deeds. We have committed sins against our neighbour and against You, O Father. Have mercy upon us. In Your compassion forgive us our sins. Those sins which are known to us, and those which are unknown. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that by faith we may be sorry for our sins, repent of them and serve You in newness of life to the honour and glory of Your Holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

OFFERINGS *are gathered.*

OFFERTORY:*"Create In Me A Clean Heart"*www.hymnary.org/ELA

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right



spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your



pres-ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -



store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,



and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Music: J. A. Freylinghausen, 1670-1739

THE PRAYERS

Praise to You, ascended Lord Jesus Christ, for you rule the world in righteousness. Give wisdom and integrity to all who govern, and give mercy and sound judgment to all who administer the law. Send your Spirit of unity and bring us to live in harmony, that we may be your witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Lord, hear our prayers, **as our concerns come to You –**

Praise to You, ascended Lord, for you make known to us the true and living God. Guide the church into your word, and make us one in faith. Keep our Lutheran Church of Australia united in confession and purpose. Send your Spirit of unity and fill us with your truth, that we may be your witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Lord, hear our prayers, **as our concerns come to You –**

Praise to You, ascended Lord, for you water the earth and renew it, providing all we need for daily life. Protect us from fire and flood and every natural disaster, and prosper all rightful employment. Bless all travelers and vacationers, by land, sea and air;

Lord, hear our prayers, **as our concerns come to You –**

Praise to You, ascended Lord, for you gather and sanctify us in this congregation. Guide our leaders, committees and programs so that we may do your will. Send your Spirit of unity and build up our confession and love, that we may be your witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Lord, hear our prayers, **as our concerns come to You –**

Praise to You, ascended Lord, for you heal the sick and have compassion on those who suffer. Give hope to those in despair and heal those who are sick – especially we remember to today...(names given here....) Bless all who care for others, and give them patience and skill. Send your Spirit of unity and fill us with compassion, that we may be your witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Lord, hear our prayers, **as our concerns come to You –**

Since You have given us grace at this time with one faithful voice to make our common concerns to You and have promised that when two or three are gathered in Your name You will give help in Your own time and fulfill the desires and prayers of Your servants, as may be best for them; giving us in this world knowledge of Your truth, and in the world to come, everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray, Who lives and rules with You, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, within our world today. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Lord, remember us in Your Kingdom, and teach 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. 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

ASCENDED LORD PRAYER [we pray together]

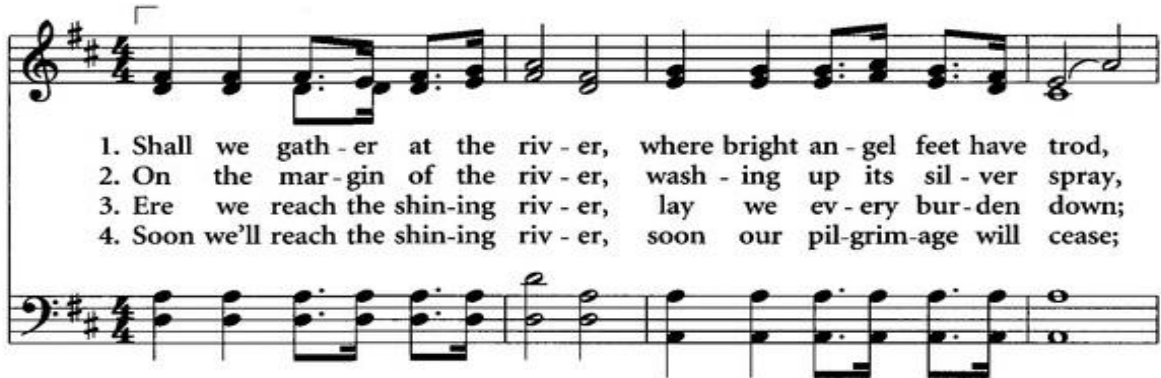
Dear Lord Jesus Christ, right before Your Ascension into Heaven you told your apostles to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth upon receiving the Holy Spirit. May I be so also inspired to spread your Gospel message in word and deed, according to Your will for me. And may I do so wisely, kindly and joyfully, with your help, your guidance, and your grace, until we all rest with You in Your Heavenly Kingdom. Amen.

BENEDICTION:

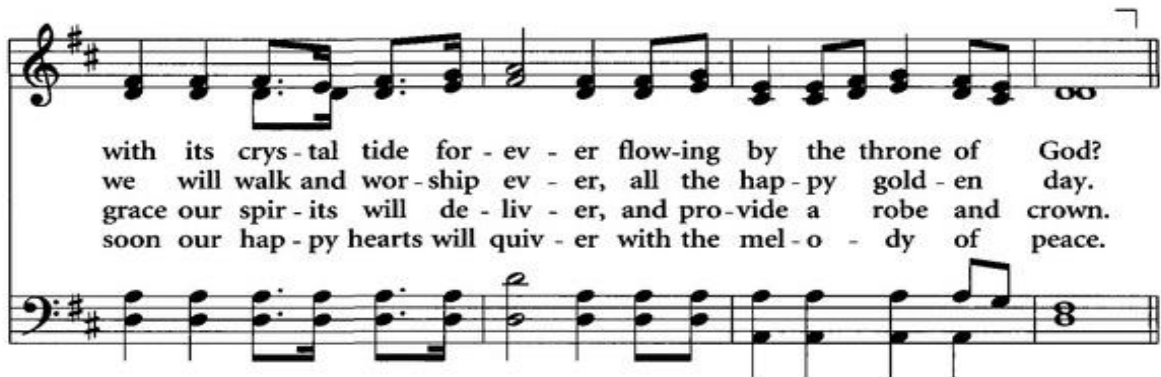
The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord upon you with favour, + and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMM:

"Shall We Gather At The River"



1. Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,
2. On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,
3. Ere we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - ery bur - den down;
4. Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er, soon our pil - grim - age will cease;



with its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow - ing by the throne of God?
we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.
grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro - vide a robe and crown.
soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.



Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful riv - er;



gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.

WORDS: Robert Lowry, 1864 (Rev. 22:1)
MUSIC: Robert Lowry, 1864

HANSON PLACE
8.7.8.7 with refrain

https://hymnary.org/text/shall_we_gather_at_the_river

REV. TODD HOEFFS

ASCENSION DAY

Luke 24

“Here today, gone tomorrow, but not forever”

May 21, 2023

William Shakespeare wrote “parting is such sweet sorrow.”

I’ve known people who really hate saying the word “goodbye”. It’s too final, too drastic, too lasting. “See you later” is preferred. But saying goodbye is healthy. It acknowledges that a person is going away and we may not see them for a while.

But Easter and its time of joy and celebration isn’t just about leaving earth and going to heaven. We don’t follow Jesus for the sole purpose of avoiding hell. That’s a faith like having fire insurance. Cheap faith. A faith that only cares about me.

We must not be so heavenly minded that we are of no earthly value. Faith is to help us here and now. To have purpose, mission, love, mercy, to help others along the way as we ourselves are helped.

Observing Ascension Day is important for this reason. To celebrate how God never leaves us alone. Earthly, glorified, resurrected Jesus leaves us in one way and remains with us in another way. Exactly 40 days after His resurrection. 40 days marking the 40 days of life given to Noah and his family in the ark. They are saved, Jesus lives and we are all saved, washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Forty days ago, Mary Magdalene stood weeping outside the tomb, when, all of a sudden, she found herself flanked by two angels dressed in white. “Woman,” they asked, “why are you weeping?” And then their job was done.

Jesus came to her Himself. And she hugged him so intensely and fervently – with a hug that only parents and children seem to have the instinct for. It was an embrace that had no regard for His scourged back or pierced side; though certainly that wasn’t an issue anymore.

But then there was a troubling correction: Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, “I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.” *John 20:17*

It’s difficult to imagine letting go of someone you just got back. This is magnified all the more when that person is Jesus. But she did. Despite the gravity of the situation, John records it so matter-of-factly:

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord” – and that He had said these things to her. *John 20:18*

Mary had everything she wanted wrapped up firmly between her right and left arms. And yet, Jesus says that this is not the time for her to cling to Him. Of course, there would be more opportunities to grab on to Jesus over the next forty days. He would appear many

times to His disciples and others: Jesus would eat with them, laugh with them, and comfort them. He would even let them poke around a bit.

But now the forty days are up. Now the ascension Jesus had been speaking about is actually happening. Now He is taken from their sight once more. Now the disciples begin to wonder how they could ever cling to Jesus again. Enter those two familiar angels dressed in white.

Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven. *verse 11*

They were looking into the sky because this was strange for them. During the last forty days, Jesus appeared and disappeared in the blink of an eye. Always with the expectation that He would be right back. But this sort of an exit was different. It left them wondering with Mary Magdalene...If we weren't to keep on clinging to Him these last forty days...How will we cling to Him now?

The happy answer for them and for you is this: Christ's ascension into heaven does not mark His divine absence. Just the opposite. Christ's ascension into heaven marks His divine presence.

Jesus' state of suffering is complete. No more will He allow Himself to be limited in the ways you and I are limited. No more laying aside those divine attributes which properly belong to Him as God. No more will Jesus be held onto in one room in one city in one country. Now, Jesus can be clung to everywhere and by everyone.

Jesus' being seated at the right hand of the Father is pure comfort. It's the best thing in the world for us. It means all the hard work of saving us from our sins is all over.

"The right hand of God," means that Jesus is here and not some undisclosed "there." It's God's omnipresence – His "everywhereness." I He who fills heaven and earth completely, has still chosen to be somewhere for you specifically.

You can grasp Jesus and cling to Him more fully than Mary Magdalene; more deeply than Thomas; and more frequently than the disciples in those forty days.

In your Baptism, Christ has bonded Himself to you. He has promised that where He is you also will be. There is nowhere you can go that He will not go with you.

In His Holy Forgiveness and in the sharing of the Gospel, Jesus touches your ears with His living voice. As He said: He who hears you, hears Me. *Luke 10:16*

In His Holy Communion, He offers Himself – His Body and Blood – not merely to be grasped – but to be consumed, to be eaten and drunk, lived out and shared in new ways of serving and loving.

Now you may cling to Him, even as He clings to you, because He has ascended to the Father. Jesus gives Himself to you here and now in this place at this time. To Him be all the glory, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen