

***The Lutheran Church of the Covenant***  
***“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”***



*Ascension of Our Lord*  
*May 29, 2022*



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! Here are a few notes to make you feel more at home as we praise this God of new life together!

- Bulletins and Communion (wheat or gluten-free wafers, wine or grape juice options) are available to be picked up at the back of the sanctuary.
- Portions marked with \* are when we invite you to stand as you are able to do so.
- We encourage you to participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print and singing along with the hymns!
- There will not be a separate time for an offering, so a basket is placed in the back for those who wish to support our local ministry as well as the wider church.
- We will commune from our respective seats, where the presiding minister will invite you to open your respective cups with the Communion elements. We believe this meal is for everyone who wishes to partake, regardless of church affiliation or lack thereof. This tangible gift of God's love is meant for the world to enjoy!

### ***Our Worship Leaders & Staff***

Ministers  
Presiding Minister  
Organist  
Lector  
Parish Administrator  
Custodian

All People  
The Rev. Bradley Ross  
Robin Crawford  
Harry Werner  
Jennifer Lasher-Dobush  
Vince Besednjak

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## 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 give thanks that the Holy Spirit enlivens our faith and invigorates our mission.*

Prelude *I've Got Peace Like a River* (Eithun)

Welcome & Greetings

\*Thanksgiving for Baptism

*You may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at our baptism, forever uniting us as one family in our Risen Lord, and calling us to serve as disciples of Jesus Christ for the sake of the world.*

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

In the waters of baptism,  
we have passed over from death to life with Jesus Christ †,  
and we are a new creation.  
For this saving mystery, and for this water, let us bless God,  
who was, who is, and who is to come.

We thank you, God, for your river of life,  
flowing freely from your throne:  
through the earth,  
through the city,  
through every living thing.

You rescued Noah and his family from the flood;  
You opened wide the sea for the Israelites.  
Now in these waters you surround us with mercy,  
and our sin is drowned forever.

You open the gate of everlasting life  
and we pass safely through.  
In Jesus Christ, you calm troubled waters.

You nourish us and enclose us in safety.  
You call us forth and send us out.  
In lush and barren places, you are with us.  
You have become our salvation.

Now, breathe upon this water  
and awaken our Covenant family, and your whole church, once more.  
Claim us again as your beloved and holy people.  
Quench our thirst; cleanse our hearts; wipe away every tear.  
To you, our Beginning and our End,  
our Shepherd and Lamb,  
be honor, glory, praise, and thanksgiving,  
now and forever!  
**Amen!**

\*Gathering Hymn    *Beautiful Savior*

ELW #838

\*Greeting

The grace of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all! **And also with you.**

Canticle of Praise    *This is the Feast*

ELW pg. 140

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, your most wonderful Son, our Risen Savior, ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things for us and the world you still love. Continue to inspire our 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!**

*Before he is lifted into heaven, Jesus promises that the missionary work of the disciples will spread out from Jerusalem to all the world. His words provide an outline of the book of Acts.*

[Luke writes:] <sup>1</sup>In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning <sup>2</sup>until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>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; <sup>5</sup>for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

<sup>6</sup>So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup>He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup>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.” <sup>9</sup>When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup>While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. <sup>11</sup>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.”

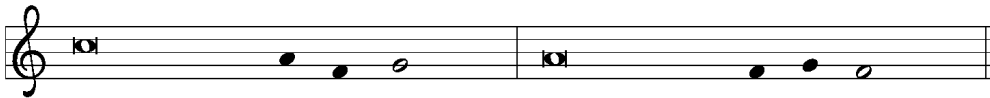
Word of God, word of life!

**Thanks be to God!**

Psalm

Psalm 47

*The bold verses are sung by the congregation using the tone below.*



Antiphon: *God has gone up with a shout.* (Ps. 47:5)

<sup>1</sup>Clap your hands, | all you peoples;  
shout to God with a | joyful sound.

<sup>2</sup>**For the LORD Most High is | to be feared:**  
**a great king over | all the earth,**

<sup>3</sup>who subdues the | peoples under us,  
and the nations un- | der our feet;

<sup>4</sup>**who chooses our inheri- | tance for us,  
the pride of Jacob, | whom God loves. Antiphon**

<sup>5</sup>God has gone up | with a shout,  
the LORD with the sound | of the ram's horn.

<sup>6</sup>**Sing praises to | God, sing praises;  
sing praises to our | king, sing praises. Antiphon**

<sup>7</sup>For God is king of | all the earth;  
sing praises | with a song.

<sup>8</sup>**God reigns o- | ver the nations;  
God is en- | throned on high.**

<sup>9</sup>The 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. Antiphon

Second Lesson

Ephesians 1:15-23

*The risen and exalted Christ reigns over the entire universe. The author of Ephesians prays that we are given the wisdom to know the power of the risen Christ and the empowering hope that the knowledge of this inheritance provides.*

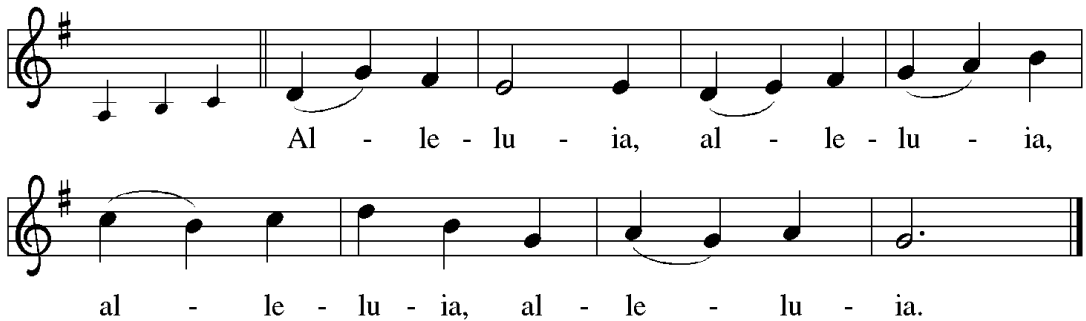
<sup>15</sup>I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason <sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup>I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup>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, <sup>19</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

<sup>20</sup>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, <sup>21</sup>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. <sup>22</sup>And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Word of God, word of life!

**Thanks be to God!**

\*Gospel Acclamation



\*Gospel

Luke 24:44-53

*On the day of his ascension, Jesus leaves his disciples with a commission, a blessing, and a promise of the Holy Spirit.*

The Gospel according to Luke 24<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord!**

<sup>44</sup>[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.”<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup>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, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>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.”

<sup>50</sup>Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them.

<sup>51</sup>While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven.

<sup>52</sup>And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; <sup>53</sup>and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!

**Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon



*¡Cris - to vi - ve, fue - ra el llan - to, los la - men - tos y el pe - sar!*

1 Christ is liv - ing! Gone with sor - row! Tears and ter - ror, be no more.

2 For if Christ is not a - ris - en there is noth - ing to be - lieve.

3 Death is swal - lowed up in vic - t'ry; sin has lost its poi - son sting.



*Ni la muer - te ni el se - pul - cro lo han po - di - do su - je - tar.*

Death and grave, you now are noth - ing; Christ is free of ev - 'ry pow'r.

Je - sus' prom - ise is ac - comp - lished: "Since I live, you too shall live."

Life will blos - som from the grain sown, Christ the first fruits of the spring.



*No bus - quéis en - tre los muer - tos al que siem - pre ha de vi - vir.*

Why then seek the liv - ing Sav - ior in the haunts of death and fear?

Dust we are, to dust re - turn - ing, but in Christ we are re - stored.

For the sure - ness of sal - va - tion let us sing, "Thanks be to God!"



*¡Cris - to vi - ve! es - tas nue - vas por do - quier de - jad o - ir.*

Christ is ris - en! Shout the good news so that all the world may hear.

Doubt dis - pel - ling, claim the tri - umph: Je - sus is the liv - ing Lord!

Christ is ris - en! We are liv - ing! Spread the word of grace a - broad.



\*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,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
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,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who 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

Set free from captivity to sin and death, we pray to the God of resurrection for the church, people in need, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

God of heaven and earth, continue to surround us with your compassionate embrace and empower us as witnesses to your resurrected life in our Covenant family. Let our collective fellowship be a sign to others of the presence of Christ. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Through thundering, mighty waters, reveal your creative power at work in creation. Cleanse the air, land, and waters with the movement of your care and the participation of all your people. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In faithful and diverse worship, turn all your precious children toward you and your loving will for the entirety of humankind. Bridge differences among traditions and across religions. Unite us all in mission for the sake of a world in need. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

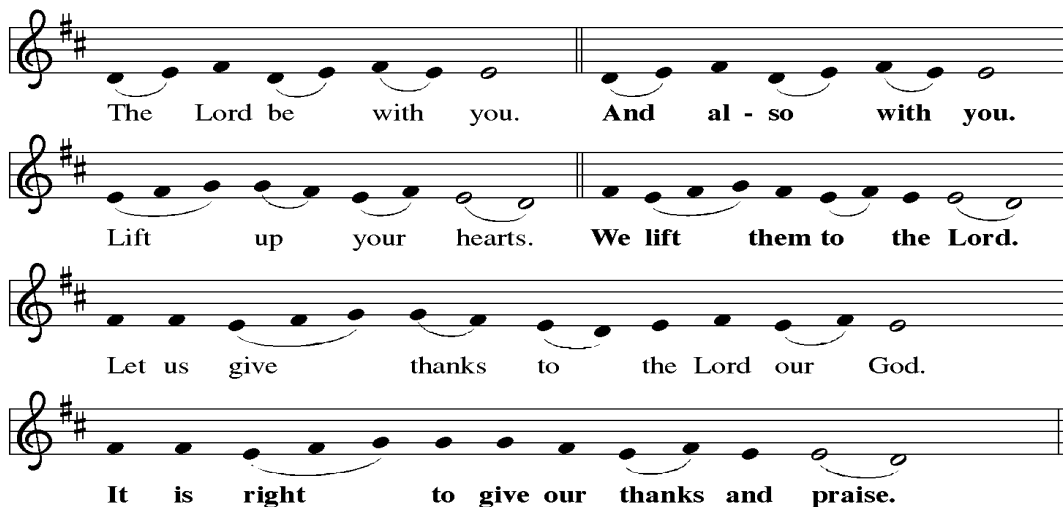
In the suffering and death of Jesus, draw near to those who suffer, including those of Uvalde, Texas. Hold them in the palm of your loving hand and give them rest. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Keep in our minds those who have died in war. May we honor them by seeking peaceful solutions to the conflicts that arise among nations and peoples. Watch over those who continue to serve in the military throughout the world. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Rouse us to remember the faithful witness of the saints who have gone before us. By their lives and the life and death of Jesus, enlighten our hearts, give us hope, and lead us in wisdom. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In your mercy, O God, respond to these prayers, and renew us through Jesus Christ, our Risen Savior and Lord. **Amen!**

\* 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 is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ;  
who, enthroned forever at your right hand,  
intercedes for us as our great high priest.  
And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection,  
with earth and sea and all their creatures,  
and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of  
 pow - er and might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -  
 san - na in the high - est. Blessed is he who comes in the  
 name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

\*Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy, living, and loving God,  
 we praise you for creating the heavens and the earth.  
 We bless you for bringing Noah and his family through the waters of the flood,  
 for freeing your people Israel from the bonds of slavery,  
 and for sending your Son to be our Redeemer.

We give you thanks for Jesus  
 who, living among us,  
 healed the sick, fed the hungry,  
 and with a love stronger than death,  
 gave his life for others.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
 our Lord Jesus took bread, and 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.

Remembering, therefore, his life-giving death and glorious resurrection,  
we await your promised life for all this dying world.

Holy Spirit, breathe on us and on this bread and cup:  
carry us in your arms from death to life,  
and empower us to live as your disciples now,  
clothed with the grace and new life of Christ.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
both now and forever. **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.**

\*Invitation to Communion

The risen Christ dwells with us here!  
Taste and see the goodness of the Lord!

**Thanks be to God!**

Communion

Music Interlude *Fairest Lord Jesus* (Vogt)

Prayer after Communion

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

**Amen!**

\*Blessing

God, creator of all things, speaking reformation into being;  
Jesus Christ, savior of the world, raising the dead;  
Holy Spirit, living voice, calling and enlightening the church:  
Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever. **Amen!**

\*Sending Hymn *Rise, Shine, You People*

ELW #665

\*Dismissal

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Go in peace. Go and tell what God has done!

**Thanks be to God!**

Postlude *Postlude on "National Hymn"* (Schulz)

Praying Together

**... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating:** Gayle Agg, Annie Brown, Bob Buettner, Joan Clarke, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Donna Franz, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Clare Hanusz, Alex Hohenstein, Judy Jones, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Sara Mendes, Debbie Morris, Phyllis Nemeth, Sam Reddig, Steve Senderak, Gary Smith, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tom Susaneck, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Linda Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family, the Peypo family.

### ***Luther's Quote Got it Right***

The account of the Ascension in Acts has two great questions. The disciples ask Jesus, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" (1:6). Then, as the disciples watch the Lord ascending to heaven, the angels ask the disciples, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven?" (1:11).

The disciples had walked with Jesus, they had experienced the crushing defeat of his crucifixion, they had seen the risen Christ, and yet they seem to be afflicted by nearsightedness and farsightedness at the same time. They are looking for a restored kingdom and a vanishing Messiah.

I wonder what we as the church want to have restored. Do we get a little nearsighted or shortsighted about the church and about the earth-shattering, life-changing power of the death and resurrection of Christ? When we long for some remembered golden age are we blind to this new thing that God is doing in the church?

We are in the middle of a seismic shift in the church. In her book *The Great Emergence* (Baker Books, 2012), author and lecturer Phyllis Tickle points out that every 500 years or so the church goes through a major upheaval.

I think that's where we are now. And while it is interesting to read of church upheavals in the past, living through one can be pretty uncomfortable. What is emerging? What is falling away? When will we know that the new thing has come into being? What is going to happen to us?

But hey, take heart, I don't think anyone woke up on June 7, 1518, and said, "How's the Reformation going today?"

When we ask that the kingdom be restored to the church, we are really asking for the kind of certainty that arises from human need. We want clear, measurable, tangible signs that our world will be ordered to our specifications. That certainty will never be achieved this side of heaven. That is not the certainty we really need and it is not the certainty God has given us in our new life in Christ.

Which leads to the second question, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven?” Or more to the point, “People of God, why do we stand looking up toward heaven?” Maybe because a vision of glory is a lot more appealing than what we have facing us right now. But that is not what we are called to do.

We are not called to be the church of the past nor the church of some distant future, but to be the church right now. For whatever reason, we are the ones God is using at this time, in this messiness. We are not going to get it right all of the time. We are broken and sinful creatures, but we are also redeemed creatures. In baptism we have already died the only death that really matters. Can we start to live like we believe that?

Martin Luther is often quoted as saying “sin boldly.” He actually said, “Be a sinner and sin boldly, *but believe and rejoice in Christ even more boldly.*” It’s an honest acknowledgement that we have fallen, but is an even more joyful acknowledgement that we have been raised up. It’s a prescription against paralysis. It is not up to us to fix the church or the world—that has already been done in Christ.

And since the victory has been won we are free in this in-between time to live into the new life God has brought about in this world.

So here we are dear church. Living in the absolute certainty that we and all of creation have been redeemed, we don’t have to fret about getting it right. We don’t have to chart a perfectly accurate course. We don’t have to conserve our assets, physical or financial. We don’t have to worry about saving our lives.

What a powerful freedom the certainty of God has given us in this uncertain time. Let’s not waste this gift.

- The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding  
Bishop of the ELCA

*Originally published May 19, 2015, on LivingLutheran.org, where you can find other writings of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, and other resources for the journey of faith.*