

Good Shepherd Church

Proclaiming the God of sovereign grace

Seventh Sunday in Resurrection Season

Ascension Sunday

May 21, 2023

Jesus Christ has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. 1 Peter 3:22

Gathering of the Congregation

Greeting- People of God, receive the greeting from our God, the King of glory: *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. People: Amen!*

Call to Worship –

Sing to God! Sing praises to His name.

Exalt Him who rides on the clouds—

His name is Yahweh—and rejoice before Him.

God has gone up with a shout,

Yahweh with the sound of a trumpet.

⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises!

Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

⁷ For God is the King of all the earth;

sing praises with a psalm! (Psalm 68)

Hymn- See, the Conqu'ror Mounts in Triumph

See, the conqu'ror mounts in triumph,

see the King in royal state,

riding on the clouds, his chariot,

to his heavenly palace gate!

Hear the choirs of angel voices

joyful hallelujahs sing,

and the gates on high are opened

to receive their heavenly King.

2. Who is this that comes in glory,

trumpets sounding jubilee?

Lord of battles, God of armies,

he has gained the victory;

he who on the cross once suffered,

he who from the grave arose,

he has conquered sin and Satan,

he by death has spoiled his foes.

3. He has raised our human nature

through the clouds to God's right hand;

there we sit in heavenly places;

there with him in glory stand:

Jesus reigns, adored by angels:
 Man with God is on the throne;
 mighty Lord, in your ascension
 we by faith behold our own.

4. Glory be to God the Father;
 glory be to God the Son,
 dying, risen, ascending for us,
 who the heavenly realm has won;
 glory to the Holy Spirit;
 to one God in Persons three,
 glory, both in earth and heaven,
 glory, endless glory, be.

496P Tune- Bethany 87 87D
 Author- Christopher Wordsworth

Invocation-

Pastor Jeff Gregory

Declaration of Faith

All

You are the King of glory, O Christ.
 You are the everlasting Son of the Father.
 When you took it upon yourself to deliver man,
 you did not disdain the virgin's womb.
 When you had overcome the sting of death,
 you opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
 You are seated at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.
 We believe that you will come to be our judge.
 We therefore ask you to help your servants,
 whom you have redeemed with your Most Precious Blood
 To Set our minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth
 To live for your glory and to offer you worthy praise. (based on Te Deum)

Unison Prayers – Collect for Ascension

Eternal and gracious God,
 we believe your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to have ascended
 with triumph into your kingdom in heaven;
 may we also in heart and mind ascend to where he is,
 and with him continually dwell. **Amen.**

Hymn- Lord of Glory, We Adore Thee (You)

Lord of glory, we adore You!
 Christ of God, ascended high!
 Heart and soul we bow before You,
 Glorious now beyond the sky:
 You we worship, You we praise-
 Excellent in all Your ways.

Anointed King, with glory crowned,
 Rightful Heir and Lord of all!
 Once rejected, scorned, disowned,
 E'en by those You came to call:
 You we honor, You we adore—
 Glorious now and evermore.

Lord of life! to death once subject;
 Blessor, yet a curse once made;
 Of Your Father's heart the object,
 Yet in depths of anguish laid;
 You we gaze on, You recall—
 Bearing here our sorrows all.

Royal robes have now adorned You,
 Royal splendors crown Your brow;
 Christ of God, our souls confess You
 King and Sov'reign even now!
 You we rev'rence, You obey—
 Own You Lord and Christ alway.

Text: R Holden

Tune- Ottawa (Evening Prayer).

Title: OTTAWA (Mason)

Meter: 8.7.8.7.7.7

We Acknowledge Our Sins and Seek God's Pardon

Call to Confession

While we believe in the ascension of our Lord,
 And celebrate him as our King and High Priest
 at times the way we think and talk and act demonstrates our lack of faith
 in his power to deal with the world and our troubles.
 Let us confess the inconsistency between our faith and practice.

Let us pray.

Prayer of Confession

*We come, O God, this day in which we remember our Lord's re-entry
 Into the glory he had with the Father, and to confess that with us there is an abundance of sin, but in you
 there is the fullness of righteousness and abundance of mercy. We are spiritually poor, but you are rich and
 in Jesus Christ came to be merciful to the poor. Strengthen our faith and trust in you. We are empty vessels
 that need to be filled; fill us, we pray. We are weak in faith; strengthen us. We are cold in love; warm us and
 make our hearts fervent for you that our love may go out to one another and to our neighbors. Through
 Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news of the gospel:
 If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father,
 Jesus Christ the righteous;
 and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

In Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God.

(based on 1 John 2:1-2, NRSV)

After Confession

Hymn- Before the Throne of God Above

Before the throne of God above
 I have a strong and perfect plea;
 a great High Priest whose name is Love,
 who ever lives and pleads for me.
 My name is graven on his hands,
 my name is written on his heart.
 I know that while in heav'n he stands
 no tongue can bid me thence depart,
 no tongue can bid me thence depart.

2 When Satan tempts me to despair
 and tells me of the guilt within,
 upward I look and see him there
 who made an end of all my sin.
 Because the sinless Savior died,
 my sinful soul is counted free;
 for God the just is satisfied
 to look on him and pardon me,
 to look on him and pardon me.

3 Behold him there, the risen Lamb,
 my perfect, spotless righteousness,
 the great unchangeable I AM,
 the King of glory and of grace.
 One with himself, I cannot die;
 my soul is purchased by his blood.
 My life is hid with Christ on high,
 with Christ my Savior and my God,
 with Christ my Savior and my God.
 Words- Charitie Brancroft LMD
 Music- Vickie Cook

We Read the Sacred Writings

Search the Scriptures because ... they that bear witness about me. John 5:39

A Prayer for Understanding

*O God most high! Everlasting Lord, mighty and lifted up!
 Grant to us your Holy Spirit, that in these words of Holy Scripture
 our hearts might be lifted up, and our minds set on heavenly realities.
 As we consider the ascension of our Lord, fill us with a longing to be with him,
 and enter into the joy of eternal life. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (Hughes Old)
 (Hughes Old)

First Testament- Daniel 7:9-14
 Psalms 47

New Testament-John 7:25-36
 New Testament- Acts 1:9-11
 The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God!*

A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing

Acts 1:9-11

A hymn of glory let us sing!
 New songs throughout the world shall ring:
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Christ, by a road before untrod,
 ascends unto the throne of God.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

2 The holy apostolic band
 upon the Mount of Olives stand,
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 and with his followers they see
 their Lord ascend in majesty.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

3 To them the shining angels cry,
 "Why stand and gaze upon the sky?"
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 "This is the Savior," thus they say.
 "This is his glorious triumph day."
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

4 "You see him now, ascending high
 up to the portals of the sky."
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 "Hereafter Jesus you shall see
 returning in great majesty."
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

5 Be now our joy on earth, O Lord,
 and be our future great reward.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Then, throned with you forever, we
 shall praise your name eternally.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

6 O risen Christ, ascended Lord,
 all praise to you let earth accord.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 You are, while endless ages run,
 with Father and with Spirit one.
 Alleluia, alleluia!
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
 Text- Venerable Bede Tune-Lasst Uns Erfreuen

We Present Our Prayers to God

All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. Acts 1:14

Prayer concerns, intercessions, petitions, supplications, thanksgivings

We Bring Offerings to God

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

Dedication Prayer

Hymn- All Heaven Declares

All heaven declares
 the glory of the risen Lord,

who can compare
with the beauty of the Lord?
For ever he will be
the Lamb upon the throne.
I gladly bow the knee
and worship him alone.

2. I will proclaim
the glory of the risen Lord
who once was slain
to reconcile man to God.
For ever you will be
the Lamb upon the throne,
I gladly bow the knee
and worship you alone.
477P

We Hear the Word of God Taught

Sermon Text- Hebrews 10 with Philippians 2:5-11

Sermon- “*The Nature and Mystery of Christ Ascension* “ by Wayne Conrad

Response to Sermon

Hymn- – Jesus Christ Ascended

Jesus Christ, ascended priest,
passing through the clouds for me,
entering the Holy Place,
there to be my surety.
Interceding in my name,
he is my security.
Through His blood, shed once for all,
I am cleansed eternally.

2.
Jesus Christ, ascended king,
comes with clouds to heaven’s throne.
Son of Man with glory crowned,
rule belongs to Him alone.
Jesus now empowers His church,
Jesus now protects His own.

He is with us to the end
as we make His gospel known.

3.
Jesus Christ, ascended man,
passing through the clouds for me,
there before the Father’s throne,
our redeemed humanity.
Human flesh is now with God,
Jesus is our guarantee.
He will soon make all things new,
reign in love eternally.

Tim Chester © 2012.
Song Number: 6498209
7777D. Martyn

We Commune with the Ascended Christ

led by Jeff Gregory

Our ascended Lord bids us to come and eat and drink in the holy fellowship of the communion table. By his Spirit he is the host at this table. Let us as his one redeemed people draw near to him in thanksgiving and communion.

A Communion Liturgy

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Pastor: Holy Lord God, by what we do here in remembrance of Christ we celebrate his perfect sacrifice on the cross and his glorious resurrection and ascension; we declare that he is Lord of all, and we declare his death until his coming in his kingdom.

We pray that through the ministry of your Holy Spirit in us this bread may be for us the body of Christ and this wine the blood of Christ.

Accept our sacrifice of praise; and as we eat and drink at his command, nourish our souls together in him, and give us strength to serve you in the world. And to you, one holy and eternal God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we give praise and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

People: **Come again in glory, risen and ascended Lord!**

People: **Therefore, remembering His death, believing in His rising from the dead and ascending into heaven to sit at the Father's right hand, and longing to recognize His presence in our lives; now in this place – we eat the bread and drink the cup in remembrance of Him.**

Communion Prayer for Ascension

All glory is Yours, Almighty Father, for you chose us to be your people, a royal priesthood and holy nation, called from darkness into light to declare your mighty deeds. And when we turned from your way, you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross, whereon he stretched out his hands between heaven and earth to make atonement for our sin and reconcile us to you. Then, through your power he was gloriously raised from the dead, defeating the powers of darkness, opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and he always lives to make intercession for us his people.

Therefore with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, we praise you, saying **“Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.”**

We thank you that on the night before he endured the cross your Son, our Savior, gave us this holy meal in remembrance of his once for all atoning sacrifice.

Send your Holy Spirit, Almighty Father, to nourish and strengthen us as we receive these emblems of the life of your Son. Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. **Amen.**

Now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we pray together.

Lord's Model Prayer for Disciples:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your presence with us as we gather at this table. And thank you for your gifts, the bread of life and the cup of salvation. Help us to see you at work in our lives, and to be faithful to your covenant with us. Fill us with your peace as we go forth as your family, taking the good news of your love to a world in need. **Amen.**

Words of Institution and Distribution

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you:

The Bread

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

All: *The bread which we break is a communion in the body of Christ.*

Pastor: Take, eat and feed upon Christ, our ascended Lord, by faith in your hearts with thanksgiving. **Amen.**

Communion Hymn - O Sacrifice of Calvary

O sacrifice of calvary,
 O Lamb whose sacred blood was shed,
 O great High Priest on heaven's throne,
 O Victor from the dead!
 Here I recall your agony,
 here see again your bloodstained brow;
 beyond the sign of bread and wine
 I know your presence now.

Your royal presence intercedes
 eternally for me above,
 and here my hungry spirit feeds
 upon these gifts of love;
 before your holy table laid
 I kneel once more in hope and peace,
 your blood and flesh my soul refresh
 with joy that shall not cease.

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 CCLI #819582

The Cup

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and offered it to them...

Pouring of the Cup –

"The cup for which we give thanks is a communion in the blood of Christ."

Pastor: The cup for which we give thanks is a communion in the blood of Christ.
 Take and drink with thanksgiving, being assured that all your sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. **Amen.**

Distribution Song- We Remember You

"Thanks is offered up in this bread and cup; we remember you."

We remember you,
 we remember you;
 by your sacrifice of love

all glory now is due.
 At this table here
 mercy hovers near.
 Thanks is offered up;
 in this bread and cup we remember you.

Precious, risen Lamb,
 Jesus who was slain,
 now enthroned in glory,
 forever you will reign.
 Gladly we embrace
 both these signs of grace.
 Thanks is offered up;
 in this bread and cup we remember you.

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Declaration

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes!

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Great and ascended Lord Jesus Christ, you have conquered our enemies, and risen and ascended, Defeater of sin and death and hell, and you have entered heaven itself, where you now appear in the presence of God for us. We thank you for your great victory which becomes our victory through faith in you. Fill us continually with your resurrection life that we may declare your praises and live for your glory. Amen.

Closing Hymn

Christ High Ascended

Christ high-ascended, now in glory seated,
 throned and exalted, victory completed,
 death's dread dominion finally defeated,
we are his witnesses.

Christ from the Father
 every power possessing,
 who on his chosen lifted hands in blessing,
 sends forth his servants,
 still in faith confessing,
we are his witnesses.

Christ, who in dying won for us salvation,
 lives now the first-born of the new creation;
 to win disciples out of every nation,
we are his witnesses.

Christ in his splendour,
 all dominion gaining,
 Christ with his people evermore remaining,
 Christ to all ages gloriously reigning,
we are his witnesses.

As at his parting, joy shall banish grieving,
 faith in his presence
 strengthen our believing;
 filled with his Spirit,
 love and power receiving,
we are his witnesses.

Timothy Dudley-Smith
 Words © 1984 Hope Publishing Company

Benediction- Priestly Numbers 6:24-26

*Yahweh bless you and protect you;
Yahweh make His face shine on you and be gracious to you;
Yahweh look with favor on you and give you peace. Amen*

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Catechism Questions and Answers on Christ Ascension

Q. 53. How was Christ exalted in his ascension?

A. Christ was exalted in his ascension in that, having often appeared to and conversed with his apostles after his resurrection, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God and giving them commission to preach the gospel to all nations, he visibly went up into the highest heavens forty days after his resurrection, in our nature and as our head, triumphing over his enemies. He went there to receive gifts for men, to raise up our affections to heaven, and to prepare a place for us, where he himself is and will continue until his second coming at the end of the world.

46. Q. What do you confess when you say, He ascended into heaven?

A. That Christ, before the eyes of His disciples, was taken up from the earth into heaven, and that He is there for our benefit until He comes again to judge the living and the dead.

49. Q. How does Christ's ascension into heaven benefit us?

A. **First, He is our Advocate in heaven before His Father.**[1] **Second, we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that He, our Head, will also take us, His members, up to Himself.**[2] Third, He sends us His Spirit as a counter-pledge,[3] by whose power we seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, and not the things that are on earth.[4]

From Westminster and Heilberg

Jesus visibly went up into the highest heavens forty days after his resurrection, in our nature and as our head, triumphing over his enemies. He went there to receive gifts for men, to raise up our affections to heaven, and to prepare a place for us, where he himself is and will continue until his second coming at the end of the world.

We Read the Sacred Writings

Search the Scriptures because ... they that bear witness about me. John 5:39

A Prayer for Understanding

O God most high! Everlasting Lord, mighty and lifted up! Grant to us your Holy Spirit, that in these words of Holy Scripture our hearts might be lifted up, and our minds set on heavenly realities.

As we consider the ascension of our Lord, fill us with a longing to be with him, and enter into the joy of eternal life. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Hughes Old)

First Testament- Daniel 7:9-14

⁹ "As I looked,
 thrones were placed,
 and the Ancient of Days took his seat;
 his clothing was white as snow,
 and the hair of his head like pure wool;
 his throne was fiery flames;
 its wheels were burning fire.

¹⁰ A stream of fire issued
 and came out from before him;
 a thousand thousands served him,
 and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;
 the court sat in judgment,
 and the books were opened.

¹¹ "I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

¹³ "I saw in the night visions,
 and behold, with the clouds of heaven
 there came one like a son of man,
 and he came to the Ancient of Days
 and was presented before him.

¹⁴ And to him was given dominion
 and glory and a kingdom,
 that all peoples, nations, and languages
 should serve him;
 his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
 which shall not pass away,
 and his kingdom one
 that shall not be destroyed.

Psalm 47

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

Clap your hands, all peoples!
 Shout to God with loud songs of joy!
² For Yahweh the Most High, is to be feared,
 a great king over all the earth.
³ He subdued peoples under us,
 and nations under our feet.
⁴ He chose our heritage for us,
 the pride of Jacob whom he loves. *Selah*
⁵ God has gone up with a shout,
 Yahweh with the sound of a trumpet.
⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises!
 Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
⁷ For God is the King of all the earth;
 sing praises with a psalm!
⁸ God reigns over the nations;
 God sits on his holy throne.
⁹ 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!

New Testament-John 7:25-36

²⁵ Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, "Is not this the man whom they seek to kill?" ²⁶ And here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? ²⁷ But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from." ²⁸ So Jesus proclaimed, as he taught in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. ²⁹ I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me." ³⁰ So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. ³¹ Yet many of the people believed in him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?"

³² The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. ³³ Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. ³⁴ You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come." ³⁵ The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?" ³⁶ What does he mean by saying, 'You will seek me and you will not find me,' and, 'Where I am you cannot come'?"

New Testament- Acts 1:9-11

⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, "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."

The Word of the Lord. ***Thanks be to God!***

Sermon Texts

Hebrews 10:5-18 with Philippians 2:5-11

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body have you prepared for me;

⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

⁷ Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,
as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'"

Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

⁸ When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), ⁹ then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And by that will **we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

¹¹ And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴ **For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.**

⁹ *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

John 17:4-5

⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, **Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.**

Hebrews 1:3

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. **After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,**

Hebrews 10:15-18

¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

¹⁶ “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord:

I will put my laws on their hearts,
and write them on their minds,”

¹⁷ then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

¹⁸ Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Hebrews 9:11-12

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² **he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.**