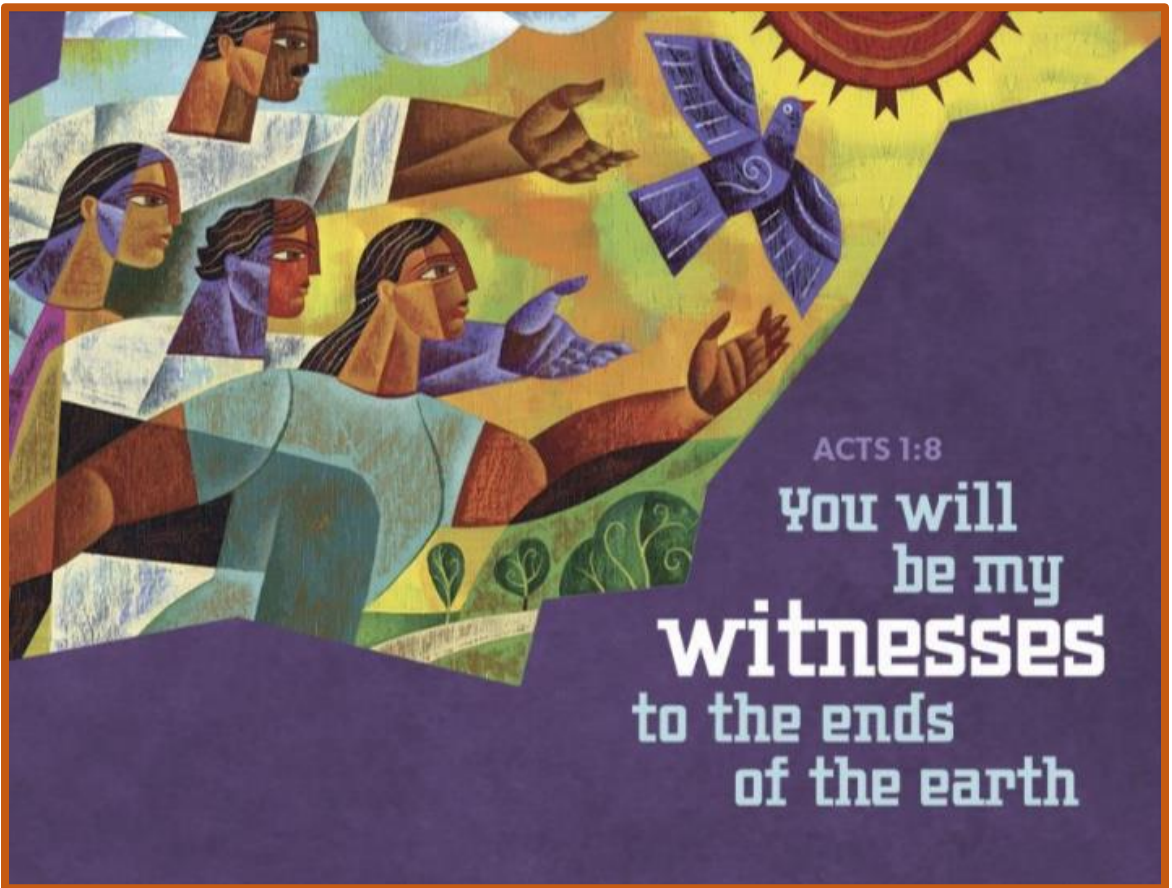


ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

A Service of Word & Sacrament

May 18, 2023



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

85 E. Brandt Boulevard

Landisville, PA

Connecting with God; Connecting with others; Connecting others with God

Ascension of Our Lord

P: Pastor A: Assisting Minister C: Congregation (bolded)

INTRODUCTION

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 were 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 too long for the Spirit to enliven our faith and invigorate our mission.

WELCOME

Please stand if you are able.

GATHERING SONG *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*

1. He's got the whole world in his hands.
He's got the whole world in his hands.
He's got the whole world in his hands.
He's got the whole world in his hands.

2. He's got the wind and the rain in his hands. *(Sing three times)*
He's got the whole world in his hands.

3. He's got the little tiny baby in his hands. . . .
He's got the whole world in his hands.

4. He's got you and me, brother, in his hands. . . .
He's got the whole world in his hands.

5. He's got you and me, sister, in his hands. . . .
He's got the whole world in his hands.

6. He's got everybody here in his hands. . . .
He's got the whole world in his hands.



GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, your only Son was taken into the heavens and in your presence intercedes for us. Receive us and our prayers for all the world, and in the end bring everything into your glory, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Please be seated.

FIRST READING: ACTS 1:1-11

Jesus sends the apostles.

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

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, “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.

C: Thanks be to God.



Lord's Prayer spirituality

FROM the absence of Christ
TO the ascendancy of Christ

FROM Jesus "coming back again"
TO Jesus "appearing among us"

FROM Jesus "accompanying us to heaven"
TO our "accompanying Jesus as he brings Heaven to earth among us"

PSALM 47

Please read responsively.

A: ¹Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with a joyful sound.

C: ²**For the Lord Most High is to be feared: a great king over all the earth,**

³who subdues the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet;

⁴**who chooses our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom God loves.**

⁵God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of the ram's horn.

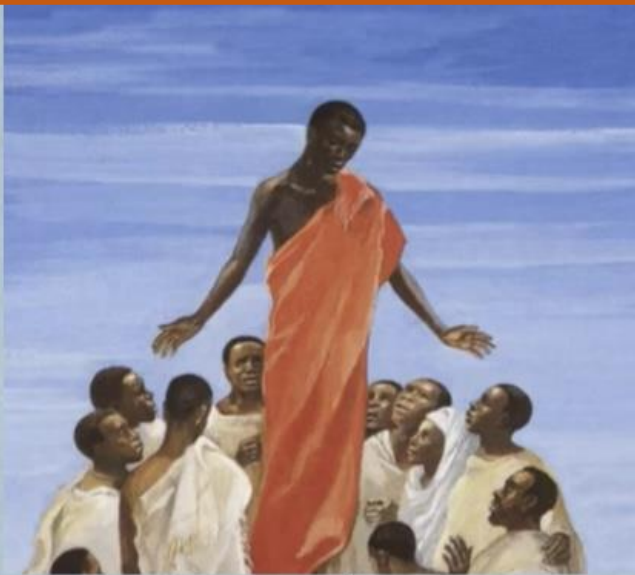
⁶**Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our king, sing praises.**

⁷For God is king of all the earth; sing praises with a song.

⁸**God reigns over the nations; God is enthroned on high.**

⁹The nobles of the peoples have gathered as the people of the God of Abraham.

The rulers of the earth belong to God, who is highly exalted.



The Ascension of Christ is all about the inauguration of Christ!

The transnational Body of Christ moves

FROM "Caesar is Lord"

TO "Christ is Lord"

SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 1:15-23

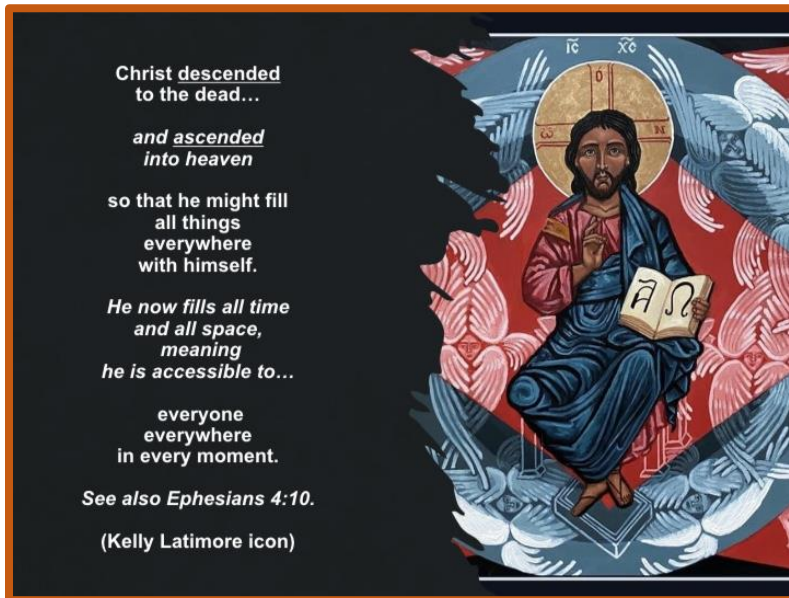
Eyes to see the risen and ascended Christ.

A: ¹⁵I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸so 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, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰God 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, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

Please stand if you are able.

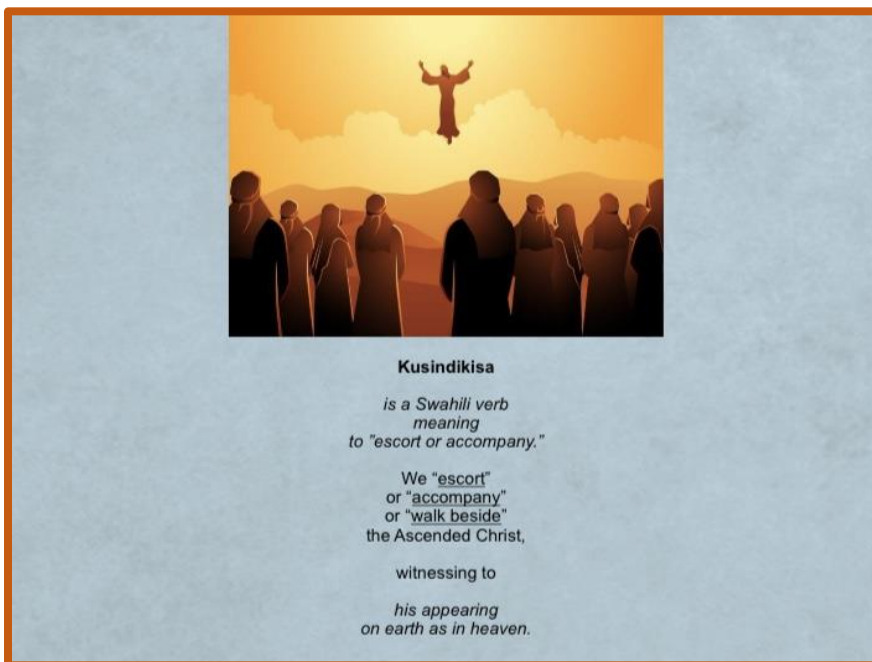


GOSPEL: LUKE 24:44-53

Christ present in all times and places.

P: ⁴⁴[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.”⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

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



Please be seated.

HOMILY

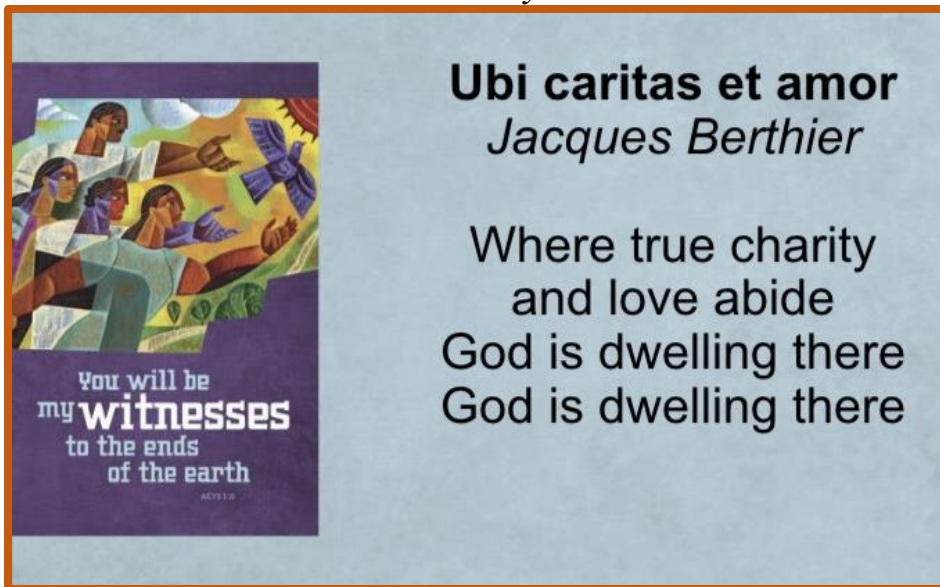
"It's Ascension, NOT Absence!"

Please stand if you are able.

SONG

Where True Charity and Love Abide

Taize



NICENE CREED

P: Let us profess our faith together.

C: 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: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. 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. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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 THE FAITHFUL

A: United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need. Ever-present God, root your church firmly in you. Let us neither become entranced staring up into the heavens, nor distraught by the suffering of the world. Teach us to see you in every face, every place, and every moment. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

God of the cosmos, you cradle creation in your loving arms and anoint it with signs of your presence. In the budding of flowers, the birth of a baby, and the formations of the land and sky, reveal your abundant life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Eternal God, your reign is above us, around us, beneath us, and beside us. As you rule the cosmos with justice and mercy, pour out your Spirit upon those in authority, that they serve humbly and justly. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of companionship, provide clarity and direction for those experiencing life transitions—in births and deaths, new employment and new relationships, divorces and departures. We pray for those receiving new diagnoses or undergoing treatment for illness or injury. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Immanent God, in you we live, move, and have our being. Draw us closer to you and clothe us in your power. Encourage those preparing for baptism, those affirming their baptism, and all who are assuming new roles in this congregation's ministries. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of welcome, you call us to feast at your eternal banquet. We give thanks for those who came before us, whose lives witnessed to your love. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Additional prayers may be lifted up by the congregation and/or pastor.

P: Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

C: **Amen.**

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER & WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: 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.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

C: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P: O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

C: **Come, Holy Spirit.**

P: Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

C: **Come, Holy Spirit.**

P: With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: We pray together.

C: **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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Come and know Christ, broken and poured out for you.

C: **Amen.**

Please be seated.

PARTAKING IN THE BREAD AND CUP OF SALVATION

All baptized Christians are welcome to partake of the Holy Sacrament. You may commune by coming forward to receive the elements in continuous fashion. Those who do not or choose not to partake of the sacrament may come forward and receive a blessing. If you are unable to come forward, please let one of the ushers know and the pastor will come to you.

For those not able to have red wine, there is grape juice in the outer circle of every tray. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. When given the bread and cup, the communion ministers will say: "The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you," to which you may respond: "Amen."

Please use this time for quiet reflection until all worshippers have communed and have returned to their seats.

Please stand if you are able.

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

P: The body and blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A: Gracious God, in you we live and move and have our being. With your word and this meal of grace, you have nourished our life together. Strengthen us to show your love and serve the world in Jesus' name.

C: **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you.

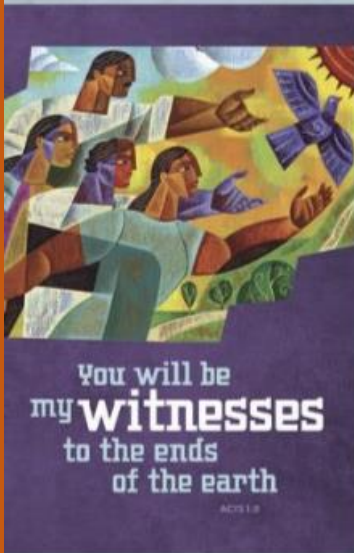
C: **And also with you.**

BLESSING

P: The God of all, who raised † Jesus from the dead, bless you by the power of the Holy Spirit to live in the new creation.

C: **Amen.**

SENDING SONG



**Guide my feet, Lord, while I run this race,
guide my feet while I run this race,
guide my feet while I run this race,
for I don't want to run this race in vain!**

Hold my hand, Lord, while I run this race...

Stand by me, Lord, while I run this race...

I'm your child, Lord, while I run this race...

Search my heart, Lord, while I run this race...

DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Serve the Risen One.

P: **Thanks be to God.**