



ASCENSION



Grace
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Serving the Portland Area with the Means of Grace and as a family of believers for over 110 years... as a church, school, preschool, mission, and ministry.

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The Seventh Sunday of Easter / Ascension Observed May 12, 2024

Grace ~ “I am not ashamed of the gospel...”



When it comes to the truth of Scripture, there is no room for compromise. The Bible is the book we live by... for life now and for life forever. We accept the Bible as the pure Word of God. We believe that our only Savior is Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, who was crucified, died, and was buried but rose again to open the door to heaven for everyone who believes in him.

Grace ~ “These are written that you may believe...”



Grace Lutheran Church has served the Portland area for over 100 years by faithfully preaching and teaching the timeless truth of God’s Word. We believe that God uses the timeless message of Word and Sacraments to bring souls into his care. This is a message that we share here and around the world through our affiliation with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS).

Grace ~ “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...”



Grace Lutheran Church exists to win souls by joyfully proclaiming the truth of God’s grace through Christ, to nurture believers in growing in faith and lives of Christian service, and to join together in worship and praise. **“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever! Amen.” 2 Pt. 3:18**

ASCENSION

- M: Why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."
- C: **We believe and are sure that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God.**
- M: God raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.
- C: **At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**
- M: Forty days and forty nights, the rain poured down and the flood waters rose. God drowned the ancient world in a breath-taking act of liquid judgment. Forty days and forty nights, the Son of God presented himself to his disciples alive and exceedingly well after drowning sin in a flood of blood and swallowing up death in his resurrected body. Now the forty days were at an end. After promising his disciples a pouring-out of the Spirit and entrusting to them the keys to the Kingdom, Jesus—in one final, saving act of his earthly ministry—ascended into heaven. The clouds that hide Jesus from our sight cannot cast a shadow on our Ascension joy: *“God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets”* (Psalm 47).

THE PSALM OF THE DAY (INSERT)

INVOCATION

- M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C: **Amen.**
- M: Christ is arisen!
- C: **He is risen indeed!**
- M: God has ascended amid shouts of joy!
- C: **Let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.**

HYMN

CW21 #474 (1-2) **Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise**

*Hail the day that sees him rise
To his throne above the skies!
Christ, the Lamb for sinners giv'n,
Reascends his native heav'n.*

*There the glorious triumph waits:
Lift your heads, eternal gates.
He has conquered death and sin;
Take the King of glory in!*

CONFESSION OF SIN

- M: Gracious Lord, through your Word you have revealed to us again and again the unsearchable riches of Christ, but again and again we confess that we have failed to recognize how richly we have been blessed.
- M: We confess that we have often failed to fully appreciate all you have done for us in Christ, and have failed to share the message of your love and grace with others as we should.
- M: We confess that so often we have overlooked the needs of those who live near us and have shown so little concern for those who are far away.

HYMN

CW21 #474 (3-4) **Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise**

*See, the heav'n its Lord receives,
Yet he loves the earth he leaves;
Though returning to his throne,
Still he calls mankind his own.*

*See, he lifts his hands above;
See, he shows the prints of love.
Hark! His gracious lips bestow
Blessings on his Church below.*

ABSOLUTION

M: Jesus said, “Do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God; Trust also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that you may also be where I am. 4 You know where I am going, and you know the way.... I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through me. -John 14:1-4, 6

As a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

HYMN

CW21 #474 (5-6) **Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise**

*Still for us he intercedes;
His prevailing death he pleads.
He, the first of all our race,
Near himself prepares a place.*

*There we shall with you remain
Partners in your endless reign,
There his face unclouded see,
Live with him eternally.*

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus, King of glory, on this day you ascended far above the heavens and at God’s right hand you rule the nations. Leave us not alone, we pray, but grant us the Spirit of truth that at your command and by your power we may be your witnesses in all the world; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

THE WORD

THE LESSON OF THE DAY

The Ascension of Our Lord A harmony based of the Gospels and Matthew, Mark, and Luke and the Acts of the Apostles

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. Soon after the

resurrection, the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

On one occasion, Jesus said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

On another occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. And he sat at the right hand of God.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

HYMN

CW Red #417: I'm but a Stranger Here

*I'm but a stranger here; Heav'n is my home.
Earth is a desert drear; Heav'n is my home.
Danger and sorrow stand Round me on ev'ry hand.
Heav'n is my fatherland; Heav'n is my home.*

*What though the tempest rage, Heav'n is my home.
Short is my pilgrimage; Heav'n is my home.
And time's wild, wintry blast Soon shall be overpast;
I shall reach home at last; Heav'n is my home.*

*There at my Savior's side --Heav'n is my home.
I shall be glorified; Heav'n is my home.
There are the good and blest, Those I love most and best,
And there, I, too, shall rest; Heav'n is my home.*

*Therefore, I murmur not; Heav'n is my home.
Whate'er my earthly lot, Heav'n is my home.
And I shall surely stand, There at my Lord's right hand.
Heav'n is my Fatherland; Heav'n is my home.*

THE SERMON

Joshua 24:1-8; 11-15

Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.² Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods. ³ But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac, ⁴ and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I assigned the hill country of Seir to Esau, but Jacob and his family went down to Egypt.

⁵ “Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I afflicted the Egyptians by what I did there, and I brought you out. ⁶ When I brought your people out of Egypt, you came to the sea, and the Egyptians pursued them with chariots and horsemen as far as the Red Sea.^[b] ⁷ But they cried to the Lord for help, and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians; he brought the sea over them and covered them. You saw with your own eyes what I did to the Egyptians. Then you lived in the wilderness for a long time.

8 “I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived east of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I gave them into your hands. I destroyed them from before you, and you took possession of their land.

11 “Then you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The citizens of Jericho fought against you, as did also the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites, but I gave them into your hands. 12 I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you—also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow. 13 So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.’

14 “Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. 15 But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

THANKSGIVING

OFFERING

An opportunity to give online can also be used at [Paypal.me/GracePortland](https://www.paypal.com/GracePortland) or by utilizing this QR code:



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Confident of our Lord’s return, let us approach our Father’s throne of mercy on behalf of the Church and of all people.

M: Gracious Lord God, amid shouts of joy we celebrate your Son’s ascension into heaven where he is now seated in majesty at your right hand. Grant your Church steadfastness in these gray and latter days that she may hold to the truth and boldly confess the saving name of Jesus.

C: As the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh seek to silence our witness to the truth, grant us courage to believe in our hearts and confess with our lips that Jesus is Lord.

M: Even as your beloved Son intercedes on behalf of his Church, so has he commanded us, his kingdom of priests, to pray for others.

C: Hear us, O Lord, as we implore you to show mercy to those in need:

M: *Prayers of intercession are offered – Mother’s Day*

C: Teach us to be thankful and content, whether we have plenty or are in need.

M: O Lord, heavenly Father, we here remember the sufferings and death of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Praising his victorious resurrection from the dead, we draw strength from his ascension before you, where he ever stands for us as our own high priest. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in his kingdom, which has no end.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

PREFACE

M: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up unto the Lord.

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: It is good and right so to do

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord who has called us to be his own that we may live under him in his kingdom and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.

HYMN:

CW #472 (1): **A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing**

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!

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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.

HYMN:

CW #472 (2): A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing

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!

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

M: Blessed are you, O Lord of heaven and earth. We praise and thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, and we remember the great acts of love through which he has ransomed us from sin, death, and the devil's power.

C: By his incarnation, he became one with us.

By his perfect life, he fulfilled your holy will.

By his innocent death, he overcame hell.

By his rising from the grave, he opened heaven.

M: Invited by your grace and instructed by your Word, we approach your table with repentant and joyful hearts. Strengthen us through Christ's body and blood, and preserve us in the true faith until we feast with him and all his ransomed people in glory everlasting. Amen.

HYMN:

CW #472 (4): A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing

"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!

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

- M:** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”
- Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”
- M:** The peace of the Lord be with you always. Come now for all has been prepared.

HYMN:

CW #472 (5): **A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing**

**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!**

THE DISTRIBUTION

Thank you for honoring our practice of "close" communion. The Bible teaches that participating in the Lord's Supper is an expression of complete unity of faith (1 Cor. 10:17). We lovingly ask, therefore, that before joining in this, the highest act of fellowship, a unity of faith based on the Bible be established through membership in this congregation or in a sister congregation of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). We are most eager for you to join us in the unity of faith and confession we enjoy. If you would like to discuss "close" communion or any other spiritual matter with the pastor, please indicate this on the Friendship Register.

HYMN

CW21 Blue #747: **Christ High – Ascended**

THE COMMUNION BLESSING

THE BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and † give you peace.

THE RECESSION OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE

The Paschal Candle is the large candle placed on a tall brass candlestick located near the baptismal font in our chancel. "Paschal" is taken from a Hebrew word meaning "Passover". For centuries the Passover pointed to with Jesus' passion as the Lamb of God and his glorious resurrection that assures us that everyone who is covered by the blood of the Lamb will be saved, and though death itself will pass over us it cannot harm us. It was on Good Friday that Paschal Candle entered the sanctuary in the darkness of the Tenebrae reminding us that Jesus would rise again. The candle is lighted for every service during the 40-day period that follows Easter as we celebrate the resurrection, the greatest of God's miracles and mercies. But now our Lord has ascended into heaven and disappeared from our sight. And so we snuff out the Paschal Candle, and as its smoke ascends we are reminded of Christ's ascension.

At the Festival of the Ascension the Paschal Candle is carried from the chancel and replaced with a plain white candle called "The Christ Candle" to symbolize that Jesus did not remain with his Church in bodily form but returned to his heavenly Father's right hand in glory. The recession of the Paschal Candle does not imply that Jesus is no longer present among us, for he promised, "Where two or three come together in my name, there am I among them" (Matthew 18:20). Wherever his Word and Sacraments are, Christ is truly present. The recession of the Paschal Candle and the presence of Christ Candle helps us to remember the great commission that Jesus gave to his disciples to "go and be his witness to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) yet at the same time he promised that he would "never leave them or forsake them" (Hebrews 13:5). Through the Means of Grace, the Gospel in Word and Sacrament Christ is still really present with us. We are indeed witnesses of grace.

RECESSIONAL HYMN

CW #472 (3,6): **A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing**

**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!**

**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**