

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
Ascension Sunday - May 24, 2020

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

Hymn #171 - "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!**

**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!**

**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!**

**"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!**

**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!**

**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!**

Confession of Sins:

P: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!**

P: Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

First Lesson: Acts 1:1-11

I wrote my first book, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began doing and teaching until the day he was taken up, after he had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After he had suffered, he presented himself alive to the apostles with many convincing proofs. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and told them things about the kingdom of God. Once, when he was eating with them, he commanded them, "Do not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for what the Father promised, which you 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 were together with him, they asked, “Lord, is this the time when you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons 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.” After he said these things, he was taken up while they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight. They were looking intently into the sky as he went away. Suddenly, two men in white clothes stood beside them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” (EHV)

Psalm 47:

Refrain: Let the people praise you, O God. Let all the people praise you.

**Clap your hands, all you nations;
Shout to God with cries of joy.**

**How awesome is the LORD Most High,
The great King over all the earth!**

**God reigns over the nations;
God is seated on his holy throne.**

Refrain: Let the people praise you, O God. Let all the people praise you.

**God has ascended amid shouts of joy.
The LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.**

**Sing praises to God, sing praises;
Sing praises to our King, sing praises.**

**For God is the King of all the earth;
Sing to him a psalm of praise.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
And to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning,
Is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Refrain: Let the people praise you, O God. Let all the people praise you.

Second Lesson: Ephesians 1:16-23

I never stop giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep praying that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, will give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in knowing Christ fully. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know the hope to which he has called you, just how rich his glorious inheritance among the saints is, and just how surpassingly great his power is for us who believe. It is as great as the working of his mighty strength, which God worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion, and above every name that is given, not only in this age but also in the one to come. God also placed all things under his feet and made him head over everything for the church. The church is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (EHV)

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. God has gone up with a shout; the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. You have ascended on high; You have led captivity captive. Alleluia.

Gospel: Luke 24:44-53

He said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to 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 to understand the Scriptures. He said to them, "This is what is written and so it must be: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. Look, I am sending you what my Father promised. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." He led them out as far as the vicinity of Bethany. He lifted up his hands and blessed them. And while he was blessing them, he parted from them and was taken up into heaven. So they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. They were continually in the temple courts, praising and blessing God. Amen (EHV)

The 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 #173 - *“On Christ’s Ascension I Now Build”*

On Christ’s ascension I now build
The hope of my ascension.
This hope alone has always stilled
All doubt and apprehension;
For where the head is, there as well
I know his members are to dwell
When Christ shall come and call them.

Since Christ returned to claim his throne
Great gifts for me obtaining,
My heart shall rest in him alone,
No other rest remaining,
For where my treasure went before,
There all my thoughts shall ever soar
To still their deepest yearning.

Oh, grant, dear Lord, this grace to me,
Recalling your ascension,
That I may serve you faithfully,
Adorning your redemption;
And then, when all my days will cease,
Let me depart in joy and peace
In answer to my pleading.

The Sermon: Ephesians 1:16-23
 “Knowing Christ Fully”

Every year - 40 days after Easter - we celebrate the **ascension** of our Lord Jesus into heaven. It was a day of great **sadness** for Jesus’ disciples. But since we have the privilege of looking **back** in time on the event, Ascension Day is a day

which brings **us** great **comfort**. In today's sermon text, the Apostle Paul is really only trying to make **one** point - as much as we already **know** about Jesus, we can always learn a little bit **more**. And so, that point has become the **theme** for our sermon today: **Knowing Christ Fully**. Paul wrote, *"I keep praying that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, will give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in **knowing Christ fully**."* The Ephesians already **knew** Christ, but Paul wanted them to know Him even **better**. That could only happen through the working of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus had promised to **send** to His disciples. But, before **that** could happen, Jesus Himself would have to **leave** the scene. He said, *"Very truly I tell you, it is for your **good** that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, **I will send him to you**."* And that brings us to the **ascension** of our Lord Jesus into heaven - the event which we are celebrating today. Jesus ascended into heaven in order to make it **possible** for us to **Know Him Fully**.

In reality, God is **beyond** our total comprehension, but that **doesn't** mean that we shouldn't try to learn everything we **can** know and understand about our Savior. Such human knowledge has **simple** beginnings. A young child will express his faith and knowledge about God by singing, *"Jesus **loves me**, this I know, for the Bible **tells me so**."* Peter would have called that *"pure spiritual **milk**"* - just a **taste** of the spiritual knowledge which is yet to come - so that even the **newborn** in the faith can **taste**, and **see** that the LORD is **good**.

As time goes on, our spiritual diet **changes**, and we are weaned from **milk** to **semi-solid** foods. In other words, we continue to learn **more** about Jesus. An example of **that** would be the way we confess our faith in the words of the **Apostles' Creed**: *"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."* This confession is much more **complete** and **specific** than the words of the song Jesus Loves Me.

As we approach the age of **confirmation**, we even learn **explanations** for the articles of the Apostles' Creed. The study of those explanations is really our first sampling of strong spiritual **meat**. It's **here** that we acquire an even **more complete** knowledge of our Savior: *"I believe that Jesus Christ, true **God** begotten of the Father from all eternity, and also true **Man** born of the virgin Mary, is my **Lord**. He has **redeemed** me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won*

*me from all **sin**, from **death**, and from the power of the **devil**, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious **blood**, and with His innocent **sufferings** and **death**. All this He did that I should be His own and **live** under Him in His kingdom, and **serve** Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and rules eternally.” This process of moving from Jesus Loves Me to **deeper** and more **complex** theology, is precisely the kind of **growth in faith** which Paul prayed for the **Ephesians** to experience. But **why**? Paul wrote, “*I pray that the eyes of your **heart** may be **enlightened**, so that you may know the **hope** to which he has called you, just how **rich** his glorious inheritance among the saints is, and just how surpassingly great his **power** is for us who believe.*”*

God wants us to **Know Christ Fully**, so that our hearts will be **enlightened**; and we can have **hope**, **riches**, and **power**. But it doesn't **always** work that way. Sometimes we are like little **children** - children who give in to our earthly **fears** - and in the process, we **rob** ourselves of the **joy** which truly belongs to us. We see those **other** Christians who seem to have all the **hope**, and all the **riches**, and all the **power**. We **envy** them, as if somehow God has blessed **them**, and **ignored** us.

At **other** times we are like little children who know a **little** about God, but our knowledge isn't very **complete**. We **all** have at least a **little** knowledge about God. We **know** that Jesus **loves** us - that He loved us enough to **die** for us, and to **forgive** all our sins. So we know **enough** to get us to **heaven**. But what about our lives here on the **earth**? Many times children are **frustrated** by the fact that they don't have **enough** knowledge. They don't know how to do the things their older brothers and sisters are doing - they don't know how to do the things their parents and grand-parents are doing - they aren't **old enough** for those things (which really says, they don't have enough **experience** or **knowledge**). Jesus' **disciples** were like that. They **knew** about His **birth**, and His **childhood**, and His public **ministry**. They **knew** about His miracles and His acts of **kindness**. They even **knew** about His death and resurrection. Yet, at the time of Jesus' **ascension** they asked, “*Lord, is this the time when you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?*” Their **knowledge** was still **incomplete** - and as a result, they were still **frustrated** and **confused**.

So, Jesus promised to send them the **Advocate** - the **Holy Spirit** - in order that they would be able to **Know Christ Fully**. Jesus has made the **same** promise to **us**. He will send us His Holy Spirit every time we make use of God's **Word** and the **Sacraments**. God would **love** to bring **more** hope, and riches, and power into our lives, if only we will **plug in** to that promise - by **reading** and **studying** His

Word in our church and in our homes, in our worship services and in our Bible classes. Get **in** on it. Although we are still limited from **gathering together** the way we normally would, don't hesitate to make use of all the opportunities which the Holy Spirit **still gives** us to **worship** our Lord and Savior - opportunities to **hear** and **study** His Word - opportunities to **receive** His Sacrament - opportunities to learn to **trust** God's guidance in our lives - opportunities to **Know Christ Better** than we know Him right now.

In the end, we won't **earn** anything by our actions. It won't change our standing with **God** at all - it won't make God **love** us any more than He already does - because we already **know** that **Jesus** has done **everything** which was required to bring us into eternal life in heaven. But learning to **Know Christ Fully** will still bring us **lots** of good things. We can have the **joy of growing** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ - we can have the **joy of sharing** our generous **offerings** for His work here on the earth - we can have the **comfort of knowing** that our sins are all **forgiven** as we receive the Lord's Supper - we can experience the **power of encouraging** our fellow believers as we **sing**, and **pray**, and **worship** our Savior and our God. No matter how much we **already** know about Jesus, we can still learn to **Know Christ Better**.

Have the recent events in our world made us **afraid**, or **confused**, or **frustrated** with life? **God's Word** has the answers for us. As we continue to worship our God in a **virtual gathering** each week to hear His **Word**, and as we come together as **individuals** and in **small groups** to receive His **Sacrament**, the Holy Spirit will show us how Jesus has already **overcome** all our problems, setting us **free** to **Know Christ Fully**, and to gladly, willingly, and gratefully **serve** Him with our lives. Amen.

Prayers:

Lord Jesus, Savior of the world, we thank You for Your victory over sin, death, and the grave; and for Your triumphant **ascension** into heaven where You have gone to prepare a place for us. When we **sin**, continue to **plead** for us with Your heavenly Father. When we **stray**, bring us **back** into Your fold. Lay upon our hearts Your command to **go** into all the world and **preach** the Gospel to every creature. Help each of us to become **personal** missionaries for You. Move us to speak to our unchurched **friends** and **neighbors** about their **sins**, and about Your **salvation**. Make us **bold** to be workers for You. Fill us with a glowing **love** for the souls of others, and help us by our **lives**, our **words**, our **offerings**, and our **prayers** to win as many souls as possible for You.

When we become weary, **renew** our zeal, and **comfort** and **strengthen** us with the assurance that You are **with** us, even to the end of the world. And when You **return** on the Last Day to judge the world in righteousness, take us all to Your glorious mansions in **heaven**, where we will live in eternal **bliss** with all those You have redeemed.

Lord, on this Memorial Day weekend we also **thank** You for all those who have sacrificed their **lives** in service to our country. Be with the **families** who grieve over the loss of their sons and daughters, who went to **war** and did not return. **Comfort** them with the knowledge that in **Jesus** we have **victory** over death, and the promise of a future **reunion** in heaven. Make us always **thankful** for the **freedoms** we enjoy in our country - freedoms which were purchased at such a great a **price**. Amen.

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.**

Hymn #174 - *"See, the Conqueror Mounts in Triumph"*

**See, the conqu'ror mounts in triumph;
See the King in royal state,
Riding on the clouds, his chariot,
To his heav'nly palace gate.
Hark! The choirs of angel voices
Joyful alleluias sing,
And the portals high are lifted
To receive their heav'nly King.**

**Who is this that comes in glory
With the trump of jubilee?
Lord of battles, God of armies,
He has gained the victory.
He who on the cross did suffer,
He who from the grave arose,
He has vanquished sin and Satan;
He by death has crushed his foes.**

**While he lifts his hands in blessing,
He is parted from his friends;
While their eager eyes behold him,
He upon the clouds ascends.
He who walked with God and pleased him,
Preaching truth and doom to come,
He, our Enoch, is translated
To his everlasting home.**

**He has raised our human nature
On the clouds to God's right hand;
There we sit in heav'nly places,
There with him in glory stand.
Jesus reigns, adored by angels;
Man with God is on the throne.
By our mighty Lord's ascension
We by faith behold our own.**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

The Blessing:

P: 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.

C: Amen.

Hymn #175 - *“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!**

**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.**

**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 your face unclouded view,
Find our heav’n of heav’ns in you.**