

Ascension Sunday 2008

GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Greeting and call to worship

People of St., listen to the word of the Lord:
'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

Acts 1.8

When Christ ascended to the Father, he blessed the church and left us with this mission. Today we are called to receive this blessing anew, and to go from this place to bless others in Christ's name.

Hymn of Praise 375 *Come let us with our Lord arise*

Prayer of Invocation

Loving Father, this morning we bless you for the gift of Christ our Lord, who opened our minds to understand the Scriptures, who died and rose to set us free, who blessed and sent us forth to declare your love in all the world. We praise you that Christ ascended, and now stands at your right hand in heaven, interceding for the saints amidst the dangers and discouragements of their mission. We praise you, also, that Christ has not left us as orphans, but has come to us anew in the companionship of the Holy Spirit.

As we worship you this morning, God our Father, come to us anew in the power of the Holy Spirit, that we might be a people close to your hearts, listening for your word of comfort, and going forth with confidence to repeat, again, the life and love of Jesus in our community. Come, Holy Spirit, renew your people in faith, hope and love. Amen.

News of the community

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Scripture Acts 1.1-11
 Psalm 47 – from 29 in hymnbook
 Ephesians 1.15-23
 Luke 24.44-53

Choir Anthem *The Lord ascendeth up on high* by J. Schicht

Homily

Hymn 376 *I know that my Redeemer lives*

Prayers of the People

LITURGY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Offertory hymn 543 *God's paschal lamb is sacrificed for us*

The gifts of bread and wine are brought to the table, along with the offerings of money for the ministry of the church.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have this bread to offer,
which earth has given and human hands have made.
It will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
From you flows the river of the water of life,
and through your goodness we have this wine to offer,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands.
It will become for us our spiritual drink.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have this money to share,
an offering of love that your love might be shared more widely.
It will become, for this community, a sign of your care.

Invitation

This is the feast of the baptised. When Christ ascended, he blessed us all and called us to bless others. Each time we share this feast, Christ calls us anew to bless and to be blessed. In baptism we were blessed and sent forth to bless others. In the supper we renew that vocation. So come, everyone, share the bread and the blesses and the wine that saves the world.

Prayer of Confession

In a moment of quiet, let us confess to God our fear, our sin, our brokenness . . .

A moment of quiet is observed. The kyrie from 757 is then sung:

Lord have mercy (x3)
Christ have mercy (x3)
Lord have mercy (x3)

The peace

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The congregation stands. The sung responses in the following prayer are from 757 in the hymnbook.

Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed!

Lift up our 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.

Blessed are you, O God, and worthy of praise for ever and ever. In your great mercy you sent us a saviour who could know our griefs and carry our sorrows, even to the point of death on a cross. We praise you that by his resurrection he did away with sin and with the word that condemns, leaving them forever in the world of the dead. We praise you that by Christ's ascension you vindicated his cause, and now receive to yourself everyone who, through baptism, dies to sin with Christ that they may also share his risen joy at the great feast in your kingdom of peace.

Therefore with angels and saints who envelop us,
with earth sea and sky, and the whole creation,
we sing the hymn of unending praise:

Holy holy holy Lord
God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed are you, O God, and blessed is the communion into which you gather us. When Christ ascended to your side to intercede for us, he also came to us anew in the care and companionship of the Holy Spirit. In the Spirit, we are made one with your people in heaven and on earth, and sent forth to share the gospel of your love with all creation.

So, as we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim anew the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Therefore, here in this place, we celebrate the life that evil and death could not overcome, the life that Jesus has shared with us through the centuries and shares again with us now.

Come Holy Spirit, make of this bread and this wine the very body and blood of Christ so that, by our eating and drinking, we may be transformed anew into your blessed people. As we share the meal together, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in the ministry we share, that the blessing we are may become the blessing that others may receive also, as if from Christ himself.

And now let pray as our saviour taught us:

***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 for ever. Amen.***

The Breaking of the Bread

Look, Christ is risen to feed his hungry people.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Look, Christ is risen, new wine for thirsty hearts.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Holy things for holy people.
Alleluia! Let us keep the feast!

The Communion

Let us receive what we are.
Let us become what we receive.

The body of Christ.

All the baptised are welcome to share in the bread and the wine. Please eat and drink as you receive it from the servers.

During the distribution, the following is sung:

1. Jesus is risen from the grave
Jesus is risen from the grave,
Jesus is risen from the grave.
Alleluia.
2. Jesus was seen by Mary . . .
3. Thomas will stop his doubting . . .
4. Jesus is here in bread and wine . . .
5. Jesus our Shepherd guides us home . . .
6. Jesus in Spirit gives us life . . .

by John Bell

Prayer after communion

THE SENDING FORTH OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Easter covenant

The Lord says:
“People of St., do you love me?”
Yes, Lord, you know that we love you.
“Then show me that you mean it:
feed your children with the story of my love.”

“People of St., do you love me?”

Yes, Lord, you know that we love you.

“Then show me that you mean it:

care for the lost and the broken.”

“People of St., do you love me?”

Lord, you know everything; you know that we love you.

“Then show me that you mean it:

share your Easter faith with anyone who will listen.”

“When you are young in faith, the world is your oyster. You believe that you can do whatever you choose. When you are grown up, you will recognise that the blessing of God comes only to those who know how to become a blessing for others. If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

“People of St., take up your cross and follow me.”

Lord, you know that we love you.

We will follow you

all the way to the banqueting room of heaven.

Hymn 387 *Christ is alive!*

Word of mission and blessing

In the word and the meal you have received Christ’s blessing: the forgiveness of sins and the freedom of the children of God. Go now, as a blessed people, to become a blessing for others. And know that you are not alone in this mission. It is first and foremost the mission of God. In the Spirit, by her presence and patience, you will find everything you need to take your part in all that God is doing in the world.

The blessing of God is always with you—that of the Father, the Son & the Holy Spirit.

Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

This liturgy was written by Garry J. Deverell. If you wish to use it in some way, please ask permission at E: gjdweb@gmail.com. Web: www.deverell.net