



St. Andrews-Covenant

Presbyterian Church | PC (USA)

Welcome to Worship! | May 29, 2022 | Ascension Sunday

It is good you are here! Please silence all electronic devices.

GATHERING

Prelude (8:30) *Kyrie*
(11:00) *Air*

John Leavitt
Giuseppe Tartini

Welcome
Moment for Mission

***Call to Worship**

Leader: Peace be with you. Jesus stands among us.

People: Peace be with you. The risen Lord is here.

Leader: How very good and pleasant it is

People: when the people of God live in unity.

Leader: Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega,

All: the Lord who was and is and is to come.

***Gathering Prayer**

***Hymn No. 265** *Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun*

Prayer of Confession

Almighty God, in raising Jesus from the grave, you shattered the power of sin and death. We confess that we remain captive to doubt and fear, bound by the ways that lead to death. We overlook the poor and the hungry, and pass by those who mourn; we are deaf to the cries of the oppressed, and indifferent to calls for peace; we despise the weak, and abuse the earth you made. We fail to share the good news of the Gospel with those around us who don't know the hope we have in you, the risen Lord. Forgive us, God of mercy. Help us to trust your power to change our lives and make us new, that we may know the joy of life abundant given in Jesus Christ, the risen Lord.

Assurance of Forgiveness

***Sung Response No. 441** *Hear the Good News of Salvation*

***Sharing the Peace of Christ**

Leader: The Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

WORD

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:7-11
Ephesians 1:19-23; 2:4-7

Sermon: "Why is Christ's Ascension Important?"

Rev. Dr. Gary Smith

***Hymn No. 258** *A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing*

***Affirmation of Faith:** Apostle's Creed (hymnal, p. 35)

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

*Please stand as you are able.

THANKSGIVING

Offering

Offertory (8:30) *Minuet No. 1*
(11:00) *Before the Throne of God Above*

W. A. Mozart
Vikki Cook and Charitie Bancroft

***Doxology No. 606**

***Prayer of Dedication**

Communion (8:30 only)

(All are invited to the Table of our Lord. The distribution of the elements will be shared by intinction, the dipping of bread into a common cup. The congregation will receive communion using the center aisle. Please return using the side aisles. Pre-packaged elements and gluten-free bread are available if preferred.)

***Choral Invitation No. 507** *Come to the Table of Grace (verses 1 and 2)*

Invitation to the Table

Prayer over the Table

Words of Institution

Sharing of Bread and Cup Together

Communion Music *Come Let Us Eat*

arr. John Carter

Prayer

SENDING

***Hymn No. 340** *This Is My Song*

***Blessing**

***Dismissal** *We stand while the bell is rung three times, remembering that God, Creator, Redeemer and Renewer of Life goes with us. Go in Peace!*

Postlude *Duke Street*

John Hatton arr. Franklin Ritter

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Worship Leaders

Parish Associate, Rev. Dr. Gary Smith
Liturgist, Bess Hilliard
Director of Music, Cindy Litzinger
Organist/Pianist, Sara Bryant

Soloists, Shannon Playl and Steve Hassmer
Lay Reader, Scott Murray (8:30)
Lay Reader, Ann Danchak (11:00)

Why Is Christ's Ascension Important?

Acts 1:7-11; Eph. 1:19-23; 2:4-7

The ascension is a pivotal part of the redemption story. If we simply collapse the ascension into the resurrection, we miss the tremendous benefits connected with Jesus being taken into heaven.

In the Apostles Creed, Christians throughout the ages have professed, "He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty, from where He will return to judge the living and the dead." Jesus went back into heaven, but He will one day return as our conquering king.

The ascension is God's great mission accomplished event. It indicates that Jesus finished everything He came to earth to do. The Christian story begins with the Son of God descending to earth and being born of a virgin, and it ends with the Son of God being raised from the dead and ascending to heaven.

Luke tells us about Jesus' ascension twice. It's how he ends his gospel, and it's how he begins his history of the early church called the book of Acts.

Luke and John are the two New Testament writers who deal at length with the fundamental crisis of the early church—the departure of Jesus. The disciples asked: Now what do we do? Both Luke and John discuss the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, the Paraclete.

What are the results of Christ's ascension? Why is it important?

1. The ascension is Christ's coronation ceremony. The ascension establishes Jesus as the reigning king over all powers in all ages (Eph. 1:20-21). See also Phil. 2:11; Col. 3:1.

Theologian R. C. Sproul argues that "the ascension of Jesus was the supreme political event of world history. . . . The Ascension catapulted Jesus to the right hand of God, where He was enthroned as King of kings and Lord of lords."

2. In the ascension Jesus left the limitations of the time-space continuum and passed into the presence of the Father. So, we have an Advocate on earth whose presence is limitless.

There is a close connection in Acts between the ascension of Christ and the day of Pentecost and the descent of the Holy Spirit. It is only as Christ ascends that the Holy Spirit descends, and the Holy Spirit descends on Christians to give us power for mission (Acts 1:8; John 14:16-17, 16:7).

3. Because of the ascension, Jesus is now engaged in His mediatorial work for His people around the globe. Because Christ is ascended, we can know that God the Father forgives us, accepts us, and delights in us (Heb. 1:3; 4:14, 16).

4. Christ ascended to prepare our eternal home and for His Second Coming (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9, 11). The first Christian hymn—1 Timothy 3:16—Christ "was taken up in glory."

So how has Jesus' ascension changed the world? It has produced billions of Christians, who, emulating Jesus and driven by the Holy Spirit, have proclaimed and embodied the gospel.

Challenge for this week: reflect on how Jesus' ascension changed human history and benefits us as individuals and a church.

Sermon feedback: gsmith@sacpc.org