

A Liturgy of
AnteCommunion
online or at home

May 24, 2020
The Seventh Sunday of Easter



Trinity
Episcopal Church

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Prelude

Hymns played on Trinity's Deagan Tower Chimes

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Book of Common Prayer, page 355

Celebrant Alleluia! Christ is risen!

People **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Let us pray.

(BCP page 226)

O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

All sing or say together:

S-278; Willam Mathias; BCP page 356

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Throughout the Easter season our worship begins with a shout of praise and declaration of resurrection: Our "Alleluia!" comes from the Hebrew for "Praise God!"

The Book of Common Prayer calls for a "song of praise" to begin our worship.

The traditional *Gloria* quotes the words the angels sang to announce the coming of Jesus, and then expands our praise of God and Jesus with the characteristics of majesty and salvation. The church has been singing some form of this hymn of praise for over sixteen centuries.

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles

1:6-14

When the apostles had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods 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.” When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They 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.”

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 68:1-10, 33-36

Book of Common Prayer, page 676

- 1 Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; *
let those who hate him flee before him.
- 2 **Let them vanish like smoke
when the wind drives it away; *
as the wax melts at the fire,
so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.**
- 3 But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; *
let them also be merry and joyful.
- 4 **Sing to God, sing praises to his Name;
exalt him who rides upon the heavens; *
YAHWEH is his Name, rejoice before him!**
- 5 Father of orphans, defender of widows, *
God in his holy habitation!

The traditional date for Jesus’ ascension to heaven is 40 days after his resurrection – the sixth Thursday after Easter Sunday. The celebration of the Ascension usually carries over into this following Sunday, so today we read the story of how the risen Jesus is lifted into heaven, promising the disciples power to share his story throughout the earth.

We read the psalm **responsively**, which means that the leader reads one verse and the congregation *responds* with the next.

Psalm 68 praises the power and majesty of God – as a victorious King, as liberator, defender of the oppressed, and provider of abundance.

The psalm's survey of all God's majestic work and call to praise is probably why it is associated with the story of Jesus' ascension, completing his work as God-made-flesh and rejoining God's heavenly majesty.

The first letter of Peter was written to comfort and strengthen a community of Christians facing persecution from those around them.

Here, the author gives guidance for times of great suffering – suffering that is a participation in the suffering of Christ, and a preparation for participating in resurrection.

- 6 God gives the solitary a home
and brings forth prisoners into freedom; *
but the rebels shall live in dry places.**
- 7 O God, when you went forth before your people, *
when you marched through the wilderness,
- 8 The earth shook, and the skies poured down rain,
at the presence of God, the God of Sinai, *
at the presence of God, the God of Israel.**
- 9 You sent a gracious rain, O God, upon your inheritance; *
you refreshed the land when it was weary.
- 10 Your people found their home in it; *
in your goodness, O God,
you have made provision for the poor.**
- 33 Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth; *
sing praises to the Lord.
- 34 He rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens; *
he sends forth his voice, his mighty voice.**
- 35 Ascribe power to God; *
his majesty is over Israel;
his strength is in the skies.
- 36 How wonderful is God in his holy places! *
the God of Israel giving strength and power to his people!
Blessed be God!**

A reading from the First Letter of Peter

4:12-14; 5:6-11

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

John 17:1-11

Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.”

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Christians are to trust in God with humility, be watchful against the work of evil looking for weakness in the community, and be committed to the faith that strengthens the whole Christian community

This prayer of Jesus is taken from his final words among his disciples before his death, and looks forward to the completion of his “glorification.” In John’s gospel, the events of Jesus’ crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to heaven are all understood as one event: his glorification or “lifting up”. So Jesus here prays for the disciples to become the presence of God in the world which Jesus himself has been.

The Sermon

Carol Rodgers,
Deacon Intern

As part of our response to the Word of God in our lives, we stand to proclaim the core story of our Christian faith together in **The Nicene Creed**, created in the late 4th century by the councils (gatherings of church leaders) in Nicea.

No matter what story of Jesus we are hearing in scripture, we remember and proclaim the whole outline of his life, death, and resurrection, and anticipate his coming again.

The Nicene Creed

Book of Common Prayer, page 358

**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 People

In joy and hope let us pray to God who has given us the victory through the risen Christ.

That our risen Savior may fill us, and all God's people, with the joy of his glorious and life-giving resurrection, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That the risen Christ may bring peace to the earth, and wisdom and concord to all who lead the nations; that war, famine, and epidemic may cease, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That those isolated, afflicted, persecuted or living in fear may find renewal and strength in the good news of Easter, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That God may provide daily bread and abundant life for those who lack food, work or shelter, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That broken hearts may be made whole, and our communities renewed, in the victory of life over death through the risen Christ, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That the light of the risen Christ may comfort and strengthen the ill, the injured, the dying, and all those who care for the sick and the vulnerable, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That, according to Christ's promises, all who have died in the faith of the resurrection may be raised with him on the last day, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That Christ may send the power of the Holy Spirit upon God's people, so that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection day by day, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

Almighty God, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant that, as his death has recalled us to life, so his continual presence in us may raise us to eternal joy; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

In the Easter season, the Confession is omitted in celebration of our freedom from the bondage of sin brought about through Christ's resurrection.

In response to hearing and reflecting on scripture, we turn to prayer together, asking God's care for our world, the church, for others and for ourselves.

The prayers we are using today are adapted from seasonal prayers used in The Church of England, and follow the pattern outlined on page 383 of *The Book of Common Prayer*, with attention to the church throughout the world, the nation and the world and those in authority, the needs of our local community, those who suffer or experience any trouble, and those who have died

The exchange of peace is rooted in Jesus' call to reconcile with one another as we approach God's altar. In this time of separation, it may be a cue to restore our connections with those we haven't been as close with as we would like to be!

At every service in the Episcopal Church, we pray **the Lord's Prayer**, which we learn in the gospels (Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:1-4) The prayer takes its name from the request of Jesus' disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Exchange of Peace

The Celebrant says to the people

The peace of Christ be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The Ministers and People greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Today, in the spirit of Christ's peace, please reach out to greet someone you might normally see in worship by telephone, internet, or text message.

When gathered in person, we would receive a collection of money for the support of the church at this point in a Sunday service.

If you are able to fulfill your annual pledge, please mail your regular pledge check to the office, use your bank's online payment system, or visit www.trinitymoorestown.org/donate to make your weekly gift or regular pledge offering while we are unable to gather in person.

Anthem
Virtual Trinity Choir

Draw Us In The Spirit's Tether
Harold Friedell

Instead of praying the Great Thanksgiving over bread and wine, in this time when we are physically separated, we join together in an act of spiritual communion, beginning with the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples as the basis of all prayer.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

During this time of worshipping together but physically distant, we depend on the long established teaching of the Church that if a person is prevented from physically receiving the Sacrament for reasons of extreme illness or disability, the desire for Christ's presence alone is enough for all the benefits of the Sacrament to be received. This is often referred to as "spiritual communion."

A Prayer for Spiritual Communion

Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament and, since I cannot at this time receive communion, I pray you to come into my heart. I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart, my soul, and my mind. Let nothing separate me from you; let me serve you in this life, until by your grace, I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace. Amen.

*(From Saint Augustine's Prayer Book, rev 2014.,
based on a prayer by St. Alphonsus de Liguori)*

Post communion prayer *Book of Common Prayer, page 365*

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

God, who through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us the victory, give you joy and peace in your faith; and the blessing of God Almighty, the holy and undivided Trinity, be upon you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

Because we cannot physically receive the bread and wine together today, we name our need for Christ's nourishing presence in our spirits in this prayer for spiritual communion.

We pray the usual **Post-Communion Prayer** thanking God for the blessings received in the spiritual food of this sacrament, even though we have not physically received the bread or wine, and asking that we be prepared by those spiritual riches to go into the world to share in God's ongoing work.

The priest offers God's blessing, in a form adapted for the Easter season.

Hymn 494
Virtual Congregation

Diademata

The dismissal sends us to take our worship into the fullness of our daily lives, living in the name of Christ. Our enthusiastic “Alleluia” in response is the final word of worship throughout the Easter season.

The Dismissal

Deacon Let us go forth in the name of Christ,
Alleluia, alleluia!

People **Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia!**

Postlude

Prelude in C Major, BWV 547

Played on the Fritts organ at Princeton Theological Seminary

J. S. Bach

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Lori Rapuano, *online Lector*
(with Justin, Erin, Brian and David Rapuano)

Lorraine Ryan, *telephone Lector*

Carol Rodgers, Deacon Intern, *Preacher*

The Rev. Leslie G. Mazzacano, *Deacon*

The Rev. Emily A. Mellott, *Celebrant*

Vernon Williams, *Organist and Cinematographer*