

# ST. STEPHEN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FORT WORTH, TEXAS

Service for The Lord's Day

## ASCENSION OF THE LORD

MAY 21, 2023 | 11:00 AM

**Bold text:** All | Regular text: Leader | †: *Please stand in body or spirit.*

### ENTERING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

PRELUDE: *Crown Him with Many Crowns* (2018)

Jason D. Payne (b. 1980)

PEAL OF THE TOWER BELLS

CALL TO WORSHIP

A new day has begun.

**Hope wins!**

A fresh start is granted.

**Faith wins!**

Today you have the opportunity to do something new.

**Hope wins!**

Christ is entering your life in a new way.

**Faith wins!**

Come, let us worship God, who invites us into life in a new way, a way that transcends death, a way of hope and faith.

**Love wins! Let us worship Christ, who poured himself out to give us new life!**

†HYMN: 263 *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!*

CORONATION

OPENING PRAYER

Let us join together in our opening prayer.

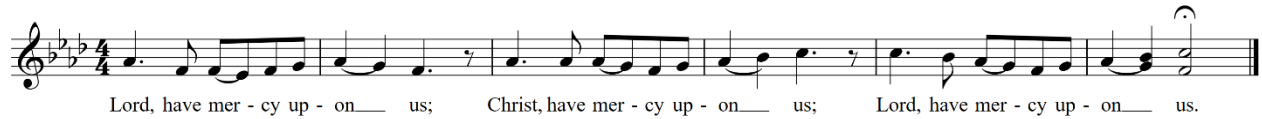
Almighty God, we come today reminded of your greatness and glory visibly expressed in Jesus, who is the Christ, and the Crucified, Risen, and Ascended One. As we worship today, we pray that you stretch our imaginations to sense the majesty and mystery of Jesus' ascension. Aid us to understand what it means about your ultimate plan and humanity's part in it. Through Christ, our Lord we pray, Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*kneeling or bowing down*)

Everlasting God, we confess that we have our eyes set on the clouds instead of on the earth in which we live. We call for restoration of customs and rules according to our understanding and liking, and you tell us this is not for us to know and make manifest. Forgive us for our selfishness and short sightedness. Draw us away from the temptations to seek worldly acceptance and measures of success, and ground us in your love. Empower us through your Spirit to break down dividing walls that the status quo and we build and maintain, so that your people may truly be one, as you and Christ are one. It is in his name we pray. Amen. (*Moment of silent confession*)

## KYRIE



## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Friends, by God's grace and redemption we have been claimed and freed, and this truth is made visible in our baptism.

**We look for God to accomplish things as we see fit. Without shaming us, Jesus redirects our focus, and sends us to be his witnesses.**

We have confessed our sins, and we are forgiven!

**Thanks be to God! Amen.**

## PASSING THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

Please stand and greet your neighbors with a sign of Christ's peace and love.

## †GLORIA PATRI 580

SCOTTISH

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;**

**As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

## HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Rick Bender

### HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON: 2 Kings 2:1-15

Pew Bible, OT, p. 332

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM 47

Setting by John Goss

### NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Acts 1:1-11

Pew Bible, NT, p. 118

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

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*All children 5<sup>th</sup> grade and younger are invited into the center of the sanctuary to surround the Gospeler during the Gospel Processional Hymn. Afterward, the children will be led out of the sanctuary to the Chapel for Godly Play, and will return during the hymn that follows the sermon.*

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### †GOSPEL PROCESSIONAL HYMN: 277 *Hail Thee, Festival Day!*

1 & 2 (Ascension), 3-4 | 5-6  
SALVE FESTA DIES

### †GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 24:44-53

Pew Bible, NT, p. 91

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### SERMON: "Now What?"

The Reverend Angie Mabry, *Interim Pastor*

## SILENT REFLECTION

*Jesus knew that the time had come to leave this world to go to the Father. ... "I've told you these things to prepare you for rough times ahead. ... [The] longer I've talked, the sadder you've become. So let me say it again, this truth: It's better for you that I leave ..."*

(John 13: 1a, 16: 1a, 4a, 7a, The Message.)

†HYMN: 264 *At the Name of Jesus*

KING'S WESTON

†AFFIRMATION OF FAITH – FROM A BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

## INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP

### PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY: *Sing Unto God* (1962)

Gordon Young (1919–1998)

*Sing unto God! Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Christ, our Lord, we sing unto Thee,  
Hallelujah, we sing unto Thee.  
Hallelujah! Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah!  
Sing praise unto God!*

†DOXOLOGY 606

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessing flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

†PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Let us pray together.

Majestic Lord, joyfully, we honor you with these tithes and offerings. You unselfishly hold us within the sanctuary of your love, and calm our fears. As you use these gifts towards your purpose, fill us with your Spirit so that we might participate in your sacred activity. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD (*kneeling or bowing down*)

### 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 debts as we forgive our debtors;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

## DEPARTING IN GOD'S GRACE

†HYMN: 268 *Crown Him with Many Crowns*

DIADEMATA

### †CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Siblings in faith,  
the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead  
and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand—  
is the same power that is at work in the world within each person!  
So go from this place in confidence,  
knowing that God's plan is being accomplished.  
**Thanks be to God! Amen.**

### PEAL OF THE TOWER BELLS

POSTLUDE: *Solemn Procession* (2006)

Thomas Pavlechko (b. 1962)

*The flowers today are given to the Glory of God by Peggy Bender in memory of Craig Bender  
on their 38<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.*



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