

In the name of God the Creator, ☩ God the Sustainer, God who Sanctifies. Amen.

CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor:

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

May Almighty God in mercy receive our confession of sorrow and of faith,
strengthen us in all goodness, ☩ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep us in
eternal life. Amen.

Join with me, as you are able, in offering God praise in The Gloria.

CANTICLE -

Glory to God

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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.

COLLECT

The Book of Common Prayer, 1979, p. 226

Let us pray:

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.*

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 1: 1-11

St. Luke begins his second book - writing to an unknown friend, Theophilus, literally meaning "Friend of God." What begins the "rest of the story" is Jesus ascending to heaven, promising the gift of the Holy Spirit. "Surely, this is the Son of God," must be on their minds as they watch in wonder as Jesus rises into the heavens.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.
Hear what God is saying to the Church.

St. Luke writes: Dear Theophilus: In my first book I wrote about all the things that Jesus did and taught from the time he began his work until the day he was taken up to heaven. Before he was taken up, he gave instructions by the power of the Holy Spirit to the men he had chosen as his apostles. For forty days after his death he appeared to them many times in ways that proved beyond doubt that he was alive. They saw him, and he talked with them about the Kingdom of God. And when they came together, he gave them this order: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift I told you about the gift my Father promised. John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

When the apostles met together with Jesus, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time give the Kingdom back to Israel?" Jesus said to them, "The times and occasions are set by my Father's own authority, and it is not for you to know when they will be. But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

After saying this, he was taken up to heaven as they watched him, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They still had their eyes fixed on the

sky as he went away, when two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them and said, "Galileans, why are you standing there looking up at the sky? This Jesus, who was taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way that you saw him go to heaven."

The Word of God.

PSALM 47: 1, 5-8

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Clap your hands, all you peoples; *
 shout to God with a cry of joy.
God has gone up with a shout, *
 the Lord with the sound of the ram's-horn.
Sing praises to God, sing praises; *
 sing praises to our King, sing praises.
For God is King of all the earth; *
 sing praises with all your skill.
God reigns over the nations; *
 God sits upon his holy throne.

MEDITATION

Sammy wasn't sure about this new thing.

Coming out of the womb, a nice warm cozy place to grow.

Now thrust into a new reality, cold life of being hungry, dirty diapers.

She wasn't sure about this new birth thing.

But she had no choice.

Neither did the Disciples;

 neither do we.

"Dudes. Why you just standing there?"

One of my favorite lines in the Bible.

Can you imagine the scene?

The fireworks are over.

Smoke's gone.

The Heavenly musicians have packed up their instruments
and walked off stage.

The Star has left the theatre:

Jesus rolled down the avenue in the stretch limo.

Flashes of cameras,

cheering crowds,

Flash-point, "Like"-me on Facebook, let me shoot a Selfie!

Pete turns to the gang around him.

Then looks back up to the sky,

then back around him to the earthly surroundings;

"Umm...

Guys?

What do we do now?"

The Apostles are still stunned.

An angel says to them,

“Why are you standing there? There’s work to do.”

Don’t be afraid.

(Yeah. Those famous last words when all heaven breaks loose!)

Don’t be afraid,

and don’t worry.

After all, Jesus' last words - his final decree is that

“When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power,
and you will be witnesses for me to the ends of the earth.” *Acts 1:8*

The power of the Holy Spirit has already be given to us:

as we will proclaim next week as we celebrate the feast of Pentecost.

Last week I recalled us to Rogationtide - when the fields are blessed for a good harvest.

I quoted the old hymn,

“We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand.” *Hymnal 1982 #291*

I encouraged each of us not to sit back and say, “Well, God will take care of it.”

No.

It's was a good message last week and good for us to hear again:

We have to place our shoulder to the plow and struggle along the furrows.

We work side by side, with God's providing “all good things around us.”

But many of us shrink back.

I wonder how many standing on that hillside at Christ's Ascension,

how many like little Sammy want to go back to the comfort

of the old days in the womb

where all was provided for her

and she didn't have to struggle with new things -

a new reality of existence -

a New Birth in God's creative Spirit.

It's only 40 days after Jesus' Resurrection:

there are no Gospels written yet for our instruction,
no encouraging letters from St. Paul.

We have no manual as to how to go about spreading the Good News.

What we have is Jesus' command,
and his promise of the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are given a new reality -

even this week as Wayne County moves into "Yellow."

What that means, none of us really know.

But it will not be the same -

in our households and workplaces, in our communities,
even here at Grace Church.

Your Vestry and I are working on that new reality,

we pray a transitional reality,

perhaps not as we were before,

but a newer, better reality in this part of God's kingdom.

With God's Spirit working within us,

and through us, it can and will be better.

And God will provide.

The Spirit comes to our aid.

And we all are empowered to do the work God calls us to do

in new and wondrous, ever unforeseen ways
of God's Spirit of creativity.

Take heart;
have faith;
receive the Holy Spirit;
and go forth to proclaim the love of Christ
and the powers of God to the world around us.

AMEN!

The CREED

Let us now profess our communal faith in the words of our Baptismal Covenant with the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection ☩ of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS

BCP Form II, adapted

Let us, on this Memorial Day weekend remember those who continue to work for justice, freedom and peace:

Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and

temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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I ask your prayers for God's people throughout the world; for Justin the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael our Presiding Bishop and Kevin our Bishop; for the Diocesan staff; and for all ministers and people. I ask your prayers for this parish family, and for all who are isolated from their community of faith.

I ask your prayers for those who govern and hold authority in the nations; that they may be led to govern with equity and justice to benefit the entire human family. Inspire them to discover new ways of overcoming divisions and mistrust. We pray for Donald, the President of the United States, the Congress, Thomas our Governor, and Sarah, mayor of our Borough.

I ask your prayers for those who rejoice this week; for those who celebrate birthdays and anniversaries: especially John Sullivan, Sebastian Kiraly, Jane Cable and Martha Wilson; for those who have graduated from college and university these past weeks, especially Rachel and Taber.

I ask your prayers for the poor, for those who are on furlough or have lost their jobs; for the sick; the hungry; the oppressed, and anxious; and those in prison, especially Justin and Mitchell. I ask your prayers for those anticipating death.

I ask your prayers for the departed; those who have died by violent acts, and those who have succumbed to the complications of COVID-19.

I ask your thanksgiving for families with whom we live and love; thanksgivings for first responders, health-care workers and all who offer of themselves for the betterment of others.

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Risen Lord. Amen.

from the Archbishop of Canterbury

Let us now pray together in the words which Christ himself taught us, saying:

Our Father...

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.

Organ Postlude -

“O Clap your hands”

E. K. Erb

Postlude on an anthem of Ralph Vaughan Williams

24 May 2020

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