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IF... THEN...
HE EMPOWERS HIS CHURCH
May 24, 2020

BELLS

READING

The Ascension of Our Lord

*A harmony based on the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke
and the Acts of the Apostles*

In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Soon after the resurrection, the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

On one occasion, Jesus said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

On another occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. And he sat at the right hand of God.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN 171, vv. 1, 5

A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing

**A hymn of glory let us sing!
New songs throughout the world shall ring:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Christ, by a road before untrod,
Ascends unto the throne of God.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Be now our joy on earth, O Lord,
And be our future great reward.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Then, throned with you forever, we
Shall praise your name eternally.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

READING 1

Reassuring Us of His Victory; Acts 1:1-3

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

*Christ high-ascended, now in glory seated,
Throned and exalted, victory completed,
Death's dread dominion finally defeated
We are his witnesses.*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- M Let us pray . Lord Jesus, our risen and ascended Savior , you were taken up in glory and now you graciously rule in the hearts of your people through the power of your Word and sacraments.
- C **At your Father's right hand you intercede for us guaranteeing us a place in the heavenly family.**
- M Through your almighty power and through your Word of truth you protect us from every enemy, physical and spiritual, that seeks to rob us of our faith and remove us once again from your family.
- C **Today we celebrate the glorious and comforting truth of your ascension!**
- M Truly you live and reign with your Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever!
- C **Amen.**

READING 2

Calling Us to Join His Mission; Matthew 28:16-20

Soon after the resurrection, the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

*Christ, from the Father ev'ry pow'r possessing,
Who on his chosen lifted hands in blessing,
Sends forth his servants, still in faith confessing
We are his witnesses.*

READING 3

Luke 24:44-48 Opening Our Minds to the Truth

On one occasion, Jesus said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

*Christ, our great Prophet, through his Word is speaking,
To those sincerely honest truth are seeking,
Opens our minds, that we, may believe his teaching.
We are his witnesses.*

PRAYER

M Lord, Jesus, oh, the freedom and joy I have in knowing you've spoken and have not stuttered.

C **Everything I need to know about God, about the world, about me, about the past, the present, and the future — about all things — I find in you.**

M For all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in you and revealed by you

C **Therefore, I will listen. I will not refuse you, for you speak only words of grace and truth Amen.**

READING 4

Acts 1:4-5 Sharing His Saving Power

*⁴ On one occasion, **while he was eating** with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, **but wait for the gift** my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

*Christ, seated on the throne, gracious power possessing.
Comes to his people in baptismal blessing.
Feeds us the Bread of Life, thus his love confessing,
We are his witnesses.*

READING 5

Acts 1:6-8
Course Correcting with Love

6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

*Christ, who in dying won for us salvation,
Lives now the firstborn of the new creation;
To win disciples out of ev'ry nation,
We are his witnesses.*

READING 6

Luke 24:50-51, Mark 16:19
Determined Only to Bless Us!

When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. When he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. And he sat at the right hand of God.

*Christ in his splendor, all dominion gaining,
Christ with his people evermore remaining,
Christ to all ages, gloriously reigning
We are his witnesses.*

PRAYER

M Lord Jesus, King of glory, on this day you ascended far above the heavens and at God's right hand you rule the nations.

C **As you have promised, never leave or forsake us.**

M Instead defend us from the fear of our enemies

C **and bring us safely to our heavenly home.**

M We pray, Jesus, in your name.

C **Amen.**

READING 7

Luke 24:52-53, Acts 1:12 Pouring Out His Peace and Joy

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

¹² Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

*As at his parting, joy shall banish grieving,
Faith in his presence strengthen our believing;
Filled with his Spirit, love and pow'r receiving,
We are his witnesses.*

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M Confident of our Lord's return, let us approach our Father's throne of mercy on behalf of the Church and of all people.

Gracious Lord God, amid shouts of joy we celebrate your Son's ascension into heaven where he is now seated in majesty at your right hand. Grant your Church steadfastness in these gray and latter days that she may hold to the truth and boldly confess the saving name of Jesus.

C **As the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh seek to silence our witness to the truth, grant us courage to believe in our hearts and confess with our lips that Jesus is Lord.**

M Even as your beloved Son intercedes on behalf of his Church, so has he commanded us, his kingdom of priests, to pray for others.

C **Hear us, O Lord, as we implore you to show mercy to those in need:**

M to the sick, the lonely, and the depressed grant relief;
to the dying and those who mourn bring comfort;
to the hungry, the homeless, and the unemployed send your help;
to the elderly, give joy for living life to the full;
to the young send patience to wait for the fuller life to come;
to husbands and wives and their families, to single parents who raise their children alone grant wisdom and strength.

C Pour out your blessings to all who depend on your power and grace.

M Almighty Father, you are the good Giver of all that we have. In your mercy continue to grant us daily bread, supplying us with what we need before we even ask.

C Teach us to be thankful and content, whether we have plenty or are in need.

M To you alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

HYMN 169

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus

**Alleluia! Sing to Jesus; His the scepter, his the throne;
Alleluia! His the triumph, His the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion Thunder like a mighty flood:
"Jesus out of ev'ry nation Has redeemed us by his blood."**

**Alleluia! Bread of heaven, Here on earth our food, our stay;
Alleluia! Here the sinful Flee to you from day to day.
Intercessor, Friend of sinners, Earth's Redeemer, hear our plea
Where the songs of all the sinless Sweep across the crystal sea.**

BLESSING

M The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.



C: A - men. A - men. A - men.

We desire to serve you in any way that we can. Please do not hesitate to contact us.

ST. PAUL'S PASTORS *Office (414) 422-0320*

Pastor Jeffrey Bonack	Ext. 119	jbonack@stpaulmuskego.org	(414) 303-1241
Pastor David Kuehl	Ext. 121	dkuehl@stpaulmuskego.org	(414) 861-0635
Pastor Peter Panitzke	Ext. 122	ppanitzke@stpaulmuskego.org	(414) 350-1436
Pastor Nate Strobel	Ext. 293	nstrobel@stpaulmuskego.org	(414) 426-8236

Or you may contact us anytime via our website [here](#).

PENTECOST POTENTIAL

The Holy Spirit who was active at creation is also active in our lives. As we begin the Pentecost season, we will study the origins of the world and celebrate the power of God that is at work in us.



- **Created with Potential – Genesis 1 – May 31**
- **Potential for Perfect Love – Genesis 1:26-28 – June 7**
- **Potential for Perfect Relationship – Genesis 2 – June 14**
- **Potential for Restoration – Genesis 3 – June 21**
- **Potential for Great Good and Great Evil -Genesis 4 – June 28**

ONLINE WORSHIP

All online worship resources are available on our [website](#). The worship folders for all services are available for download on our website for you to follow along.

The Bridge, our modern/casual worship experience, is shown live on Sundays at 10:15 am on The Bridge [website](#), Facebook at The Bridge at St. Paul's, and on our [You Tube channel](#). The service is also available for viewing later at any time on each platform.

Bible Reading Plan Follow along with Pastor Panitzke in his daily Bible reading plan found [here](#).

Daily Devotion and Discussion about the Bible readings are available [here](#).

Video devotions are available [here](#) – three minutes talking about the Bible readings.

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you have a prayer request, please don't hesitate to contact one of our pastors or use the contact form at the bottom of our [website](#). We have a team of dedicated prayer warriors ready to pray for you. If you would like to keep your prayer requests confidential among the pastors, check the applicable box.

REOPENING PLANS

Dear sister/brother in Christ,

Family members love and care for each other. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

The weekend of May 17, we saw that love in action as members of the St. Paul's family gathered for the first time to receive communion in groups of 10.

- Old friends talked while waiting for the Lord's Supper.
- New acquaintances were made.
- We respected social distancing and were careful to touch as little possible to keep the facility clean and safe for the next group.

The Next Steps in Love

As we begin the next steps of reopening St. Paul's, we want to consider how to show love to different groups of people.

- **Love for those in "at risk" groups and those who do not wish to gather in large groups.**
 - We will continue our online worship of both the Traditional and Bridge services.
 - We will continue to offer communion in groups of 10 for as long as needed.
 - If the need becomes evident, we will begin an "at risk" service with very limited attendance and face mask requirements.
- **Love for those who desire in-person worship as soon as possible.**
 - We will begin in-person worship of the **Traditional Worship the weekend of May 31st**, limiting attendance to 25% of capacity. The services will be Saturday @ 5 pm; Sunday @ 7:45, 9:15 and 10:45 am; Wednesday @ 7 pm. Note that we will not be offering the contemporary service at this time of transition. **Registration may be required** to keep our services at 25% capacity. More information will be emailed next week.
 - We will begin in-person worship of **The Bridge on June 7th** @ 10:15 am, limiting attendance to 25% of capacity. Registration may be required.
 - Additional services will be added the following weeks as necessary to serve all who want to worship in-person.
 - We will begin to celebrate the Lord's Supper during the in-person worship late in June.

- **Love for our staff and our congregation's reputation.** Interaction with a large number of people on a weekly basis dramatically increases the risk for our staff members. Christian churches have had their reputations marred because a cluster of COVID-19 cases could be traced back to a church setting. Therefore, not only for your own health, but the health of your staff and everyone present we ask the following:
 - Maintain social distance. Do not sit in areas closed for social distancing purposes.
 - Refrain from hugs or handshakes.
 - Wear a mask as much as possible.
 - Touch as little as possible to minimize risk for the next groups.
 - Wash your hands often and regularly, especially after returning home.
 - Stay at home if you are sick.

Other Uses of Our Facilities

- Our Child Care Center and our Summer Care program reopen on Tuesday, May 26th.
- Congregational groups can begin to use our buildings. Please inform Tammy in our church office (tmiller@stpaulmuskego.org) that your group is resuming scheduled activities so that we can ensure staff is available for cleaning. We ask that all groups respect social distancing guidelines and wear masks as much as possible.
- We will reopen our buildings for rental to non-member groups later in the summer.

These reopening plans are subject to change. If you have questions, use the contact form (www.StPaulMuskego.org/contact-us/), or call the church office (414-422-0320) and press zero to leave a message.

Recap

In Christian love we will seek to serve God's people:

- **Continued online broadcast of Traditional and Bridge services.**
- **Continued weekly offering of communion in small, short devotional services.**
- **In-person worship beginning on May 31st for Traditional services and June 7th for The Bridge.**

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Peter Panitzke
For the Ministerial Team