



### Call to Worship

Jesus is the Christ, the one who died in the name of love.  
Jesus is the Christ, the one who rose because death could not hold him.  
Jesus is the Christ, the one who ascended into heaven,  
that the message of love could go into all the world.  
We are gathered to worship God in his name. Amen

### Hymn - STF 743 – Come let us join our cheerful songs

(Watch on YouTube : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZBhsqMCDiM>)

- 1 Come, let us join our cheerful songs  
with angels round the throne ;  
ten thousand thousand are their tongues,  
but all their joys are one.
- 2 'Worthy the Lamb that died,' they cry,  
'to be exalted thus !'  
'Worthy the Lamb !' our lips reply,  
'for he was slain for us.'
- 3 Jesus is worthy to receive  
honour and power divine ;  
and blessings, more than we can give,  
be, Lord, for ever thine.
- 4 Let all creation join in one  
to bless the sacred name  
of him that sits upon the throne,  
and to adore the Lamb.

Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

### Prayer

God, we do not yet see the glory that you plan for all humankind:

But we do see Jesus, & we thank you for the openness & patience, the humility & wholeness, in which Jesus lived and died for us, and for that sympathy, that sharing with us which makes our feelings and struggles heard, and gives us boldness to follow in faith.

So let the earth break out in glory & let the people shout for joy.

Cry, all creation, 'Holy', 'Holy', 'Holy is the Lord'!  
Ascending Christ returning to your beginning,  
you take the joy and the anguish of human struggle into the presence of God.

Intercede for us this day, that the Breath of God may fill the emptiness you leave amongst us and that we may sense the glory that is now yours.

Risen, ascending Christ, you are the song of God leaping through the universe;  
you are our lark ascending, drawing our praises up and beyond this passing day.

You are the sailor back from the sea returning to your beginning with earth's human treasure.

You are the first-born claiming your heritage, promising a home for pilgrims who travel the Way. We celebrate with joy a journey over, a task accomplished, a promise fulfilled.

### Confession

The kingdom of God is at hand, says the Lord. Repent; and believe the Good News. Humbly we offer God our penitence. Father, through your law and through our conscience, through the life and words of Jesus, you have taught us how far we are astray, how much your children need your pardon and your discipline. In Jesus' Name we come to you and ask to be forgiven for our small faith, for our failure in Christian caring and witness, for being so slow to obey Christ, so timid in learning new tasks of love.

Give us new hope in your Son, new courage in your Spirit, new life in your service; for Christ's sake.

The Lord Jesus says to us:

The words I have spoken to you, they are spirit and they are life.

Hear then his word of grace to us: We who truly repent of all our sin, our sins are forgiven.

**Amen. Thanks be to God**

**Scripture:** Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 1 verses 6 - 14

### Reflection

I can't forget my experience of being taught to camp, then going out for the first time on an expedition. When I went out I found that it was totally different out in the real field than in a church hall, so when things went wrong I tried to do what the leader had taught us - "what would he do?". So, when the rain & winds were heavy in the middle of the night I found that, even though our leader wasn't present with us, we were helped by what he had taught us.

Jesus also prepared his disciples for that time when he was no longer physically with them so that when he ascended into heaven they would know what they had to do. And it is that which we read of in Acts of the Apostles Chapter 1 verses 6 – 14.

But what did our Lord's Ascension mean?

Our Creed says "He ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead". Or, as it says in The Acts of The Apostles: He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. 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."

This record of the bodily ascension of Jesus into heaven after his death and resurrection is a strange story to those who do not believe, one that is hard to understand, but for all who believe - it is a story of tremendous comfort - for it points to who Jesus is - namely the Son of The Living God, the one who came from heaven and took upon himself our flesh and who, having died for us - takes the essential part of our nature back with him into heaven - where he is made holy. Christ Jesus, is at the right hand of the Father - even as he shares completely in the nature of the Father. He is there - with the saints - to intercede for us and to care for us until he returns again - in the manner he left us - upon the clouds.

The Ascension is that part of the story of Christ Jesus that allows us to say that where two or more are gathered in his name, there he is. The Ascension is that part of the gospel that allows us to say that unto Jesus - every knee shall bow - in heaven and on earth and under the earth. The Ascension preserves - and indeed helps to create - what we call the Trinitarian mystery - namely that God is both three and one. He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

Our Jesus - our Saviour - did not simply fade away like some breath on the wind after the resurrection. His form, his substance, his identity, are instead made one with the Father's - and yet remain unique - much as we believe our form, our substance, our identity, will also, in a similar manner become one with the Father - and yet remain unique. It is a marvellous narrative because it assures us of the integrity of the story - and of our own future within it. Amen

### Prayers of Intercession

We pray with confidence in Jesus,  
who calls us to walk alongside him,  
we bring our heartfelt needs before God.

We pray for all areas of our world where there is  
warfare. We continue to pray for the people of  
Ukraine, and Russia. We pray that peace may  
prevail so that everyone can live their lives in peace,

We pray for all in this world who struggle against  
violence and fear, and for all places where the rule  
of gun exceeds the rule of peace.

We pray for all in this community, near and far.  
May we reach out to them in gentle solidarity as  
Jesus reached out to us.

We pray that the knowledge of God's love  
will grow strong in our hearts,  
leading us to use our lives, body and soul,  
for the glory of God.

We pray for those who struggle to see God's  
presence in the world and their own lives. May our  
faith and generosity help them to recognize his  
loving touch.

We pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.**

*Our Father, who art in heaven .....*

### Hymn – STF 361 – Man of sorrows! What a name

Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lj2-iXKdtFw>)

1 Man of Sorrows! What a name  
for the Son of God, who came  
ruined sinners to reclaim!  
Alleluia! What a Saviour!

2 Bearing shame and scoffing rude,  
in my place condemned he stood;  
sealed my pardon with his blood:  
Alleluia! What a Saviour!

3 Guilty, vile, and helpless we;  
spotless Lamb of God was he:  
full atonement, can it be?  
Alleluia! What a Saviour!

4 Lifted up was he to die;  
'It is finished!' was his cry;  
now in heaven exalted high:  
Alleluia! What a Saviour!

5 When he comes, our glorious King,  
all his ransomed home to bring,  
then anew this song we'll sing:  
Alleluia! What a Saviour!

Philipp Paul Bliss (1838–1876)

### Blessing

Go in peace, love and care for one another in the name of Christ;  
and may the tender and nurturing hands of God, embrace you, the far-seeing eyes of God watch over you,  
the breath of God sustain you, and the prayers of the Risen Christ protect you,  
both now and for evermore. Amen