

race be - friend - ed! To us no harm shall
 thanks for - ev - er, O Fa - ther, that your
 heav'n - ly Fa - ther, You did for all our
 er from heav - en, Our wea - ry hearts and

now come nigh; The strife at last is end - ed. The
 rule is just And wise and chang - es nev - er. In
 sins a - tone, And your lost sheep you gath - er. O
 souls up - lift; For this our praise is giv - en. De -

Fa - ther's love, the Sav - ior's birth, Bring peace, good will, to
 bound - less pow'r, with might - y reign, Done is what - ev - er
 Lamb of God, to you on high From depths of woe we
 liv - er us from doubt and fear; When Sa - tan trou - bles

all the earth; Oh, thank him for his good - ness!
 you or - dain; Your rule brings count - less bless - ings!
 sin - ners cry, Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus!
 us, be near; We trust your love and pow - er.

Text: Nikolaus Decius, c. 1485–after 1546, abr., st. 1-3; Mark A. Jeske, b. 1952, st. 4; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, st. 1-3, alt.
 St. 4 © 1993 Mark A. Jeske. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
 Tune: ALLEIN GOTT IN DER HÖH SEI EHR (87 87 887) attr. Nikolaus Decius, c. 1485–after 1546, alt.

Prayer of the Day

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. Leave us not alone, we pray, but grant us the Spirit of truth that at your command and by your power we may be your witnesses in all the world; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Be seated

THE WORD

First Lesson

Esther 6

Esther is unique among Biblical books: it makes no mention of God at all. Yet the book clearly shows the sovereignty of God throughout. The account of Haman and Mordecai shows that our Lord rules all things for his

Church—often in ways unseen. History does not happen by coincidence or accident, but the book of Esther shows the hand of God ruling over the nations with quiet acts of providence. No matter the evil plans and purposes of men, God’s providential care for his Church cannot be thwarted.

6 That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. **2** It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king’s officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.

3 “What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?” the king asked.

“Nothing has been done for him,” his attendants answered.

4 The king said, “Who is in the court?” Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about impaling Mordecai on the pole he had set up for him.

5 His attendants answered, “Haman is standing in the court.”

“Bring him in,” the king ordered.

6 When Haman entered, the king asked him, “What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?”

Now Haman thought to himself, “Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?”**7** So he answered the king, “For the man the king delights to honor, **8** have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. **9** Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king’s most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, ‘This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!’”

10 “Go at once,” the king commanded Haman. “Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king’s gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended.”

11 So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, “This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!”

12 Afterward Mordecai returned to the king’s gate. But Haman rushed home, with his head covered in grief, **13** and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him.

His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, “Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin!”**14** While they were still talking with him, the king’s eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 110 CWS

Refrain

Al - le-lu - ia, al - le-lu - ia! Praise and glo-ry to

Christ the King! Al - le - lu - ia!

Psalm Tone



The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”
The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion;
you will rule in the midst of your enemies.

The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind:
“You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”
The LORD is at your right hand;
he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.

Refrain

He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead
and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.
He will drink from a brook beside the way;
therefore he will lift up his head.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Refrain

Second Lesson

Colossians 3:1-4

On the mount of Ascension the angels asked, “Why do you stand here looking into the sky?” The Church must be about its appointed work in the post-ascension world; we cannot merely stare after our ascended Lord. Yet while our eyes turn back to this world and the work in front of us, our hearts never cease their upward gaze, longing to see him come again, just as he went. With hearts and minds set on things above, and with eyes and hands and mouths busy with the work he has given us, the Church journeys on in confidence and hope that cannot be shaken, no matter what befalls us here on earth. Our Gospel is not one of health and wealth, but of a life hidden from this world—hidden with Christ in God...for now, but not forever.

³ Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Junior Choir

Surely I Will Be With You

Stand

Gospel

Luke 24:44-53

The Scriptures had been fulfilled. Humankind had been redeemed. Death had been conquered and the King was going home. Now, begins the work of carrying the message of Christ’s victory to the ends of the earth. We are witnesses, clothed with the Spirit and filled with resurrection joy.

⁴⁴ He 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. ⁴⁹ 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."

⁵⁰ When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

⁵² Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God. (NIV)

Recession of the Paschal Candle

M: At the Festival of the Ascension the Paschal Candle is carried from the chancel to symbolize that Jesus did not remain with his Church in bodily form but returned to his heavenly Father's right hand in glory. The recession of the Paschal Candle does not imply that Jesus is no longer present among us, for he promised, "Where two or three come together in my name, there am I among them" (Mt 18:20). Wherever his Word and Sacraments are, there Jesus is truly present. The recession of the Paschal candle helps us to remember that Jesus does not himself carry the gospel in Word and Sacraments to the world, but has appointed us to "go and make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:20). With Jesus' power and presence, we are indeed witnesses of grace.

Be Seated

Hymn

On Christ's Ascension I Now Build CW 173



1 On Christ's as - cen - sion I now build The hope of
2 Since Christ re - turned to claim his throne, Great gifts for
3 Oh, grant, dear Lord, this grace to me, Re - call - ing



my as - cen - sion. This hope a - lone has al - ways stilled
me ob - tain - ing, My heart shall rest in him a - lone,
your as - cen - sion, That I may serve you faith - ful - ly,



All doubt and ap - pre - hen - sion; For where the
No oth - er rest re - main - ing, For where my
A - dorn - ing your re - demp - tion; And then, when

head is, there as well I know his mem - bers
 trea - sure went be - fore, There all my thoughts shall
 all my days will cease, Let me de - part in

are to dwell When Christ shall come and call them.
 ev - er soar To still their deep - est yearn - ing.
 joy and peace In an - swer to my plead - ing.

Text: Josua Wegelin, 1604–40; tr. William M. Czamanske, 1873–1964, alt.
 Tune: NUN FREUT EUCH, LIEBEN CHRISTEN (87 87 887) *Etlich Cristlich liden*, Wittenberg, 1524.

Sermon

Luke 24:44-53

Offering

Stand

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 nature 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: O Lord, heavenly Father, we here remember the sufferings and death of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Praising his victorious resurrection from the dead, we draw strength from his ascension before you, where he ever stands for us as our own high priest. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in his kingdom, which has no end.

C: Graciously receive our prayers, deliver and preserve us.

M: As we contemplate the difficult days in the life of the church, hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

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, 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 forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

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 and give your peace.

C: Amen.

Be Seated

Hymn

A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing (by the Venerable Bede) CW 171:5-6

5. 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!

6. O risen Christ, ascended Lord,
All praise to you let earth accord.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
You are while endless ages run,
With Father and with Spirit one.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Text: The Venerable Bede, 673–735, abr.; tr. composite.

Tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN (888 888 with Alleluias) *Ausserlesene, Catholische, Geistliche Kirchengesäng*, Köln, 1623, alt.

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