

Praying the Ascension of the Lord & Pentecost

Here are some ways to ponder and pray at Ascension and Pentecost. Our celebrations of these feasts feel quite different this year, so we start with prayers related to the Covid-19 pandemic, as this is the context we are all in at the moment. These prayers may be helpful now and for some time into the future.

Next we offer the scriptures and prayers given by our tradition for Ascension and Pentecost. We offer other resources that relate to the texts—prayers, songs, and imaginative and sensory ways to engage them. These extensions, or helps to prayer, let the stories and images flow around and in and through us. We can imagine what God may be inviting us to in this unprecedented time.

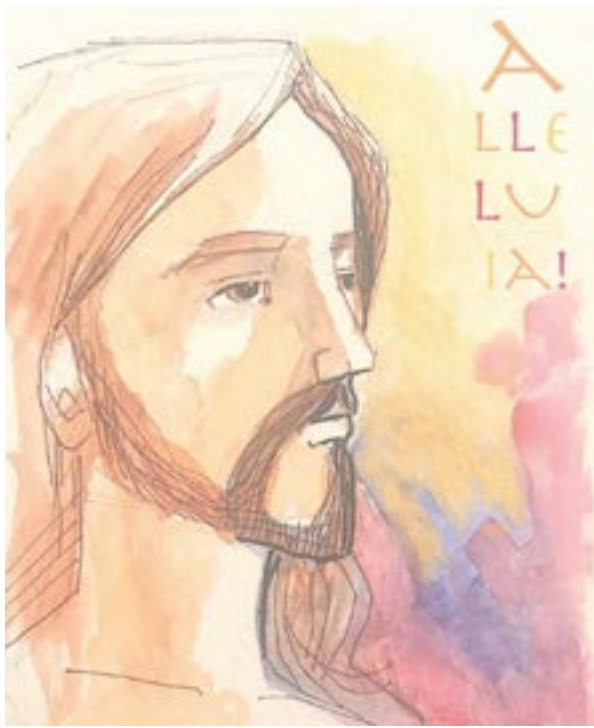
May our prayer nourish our life with God and each other and all our neighbors. We need such nurture, and Northeast Pennsylvania, with all its current illness, loss, injustice, and possibility, surely needs our witness, as Jerusalem needed the witness of the disciples at Pentecost.

We're glad to hear feedback about this resource—tell us how you used it, what is helpful, what is less helpful. You can be in touch with us at pfpbilltown@gmail.com and elizabeth.hoffmanreed@gmail.com.

In solidarity,
Rev. Beth Hoffman Reed and Rev. Peter Pearson

PRAYERS DURING PANDEMIC

- [This prayer](#) has shown up in many places as a heartfelt response to this moment.
- Here is a [“litany for the coronavirus”](#) by Anne and Jeffrey Rowthorn.
- This blog post by a chaplain contains [prayers, a poem, and a litany for this time](#).



The Feast of the Ascension of the Lord



Thursday, 21 May 2020

Two sources for the Scriptures and prayers of the day are [here](#) and [here](#).

Collects/Prayers of the Day

Almighty God, whose blessed Son our Savior Jesus Christ ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things: Mercifully give us faith to perceive that, according to his promise, he abides with his Church on earth, even to the end of the ages; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

or this

Grant, we pray, Almighty God, that as we believe your only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into heaven, so we may also in heart and mind there ascend, and with him continually dwell; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

or this

Holy One, fill us with joy on this happy day. May we follow your Christ into the new creation, for his ascension is our glory and our hope as well. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Pray

You might want to use one or more of the services provided in the Book of Common Prayer (pages and options listed below) or you can create your own forms of prayer to keep this day holy. Nothing is written in stone. Take bits and pieces, try some alternative ways to connect with God if you like. Prayer is more than words and it's more than thinking. So, we're offering some options that might be helpful in terms of music, art, writing exercises, poetry, and even getting outside a bit. You can create ways to allow all of your senses to get engaged.

We've inserted the readings from the Eucharist of the Day, as well as Psalms suggested in various prayer books, into these times for prayer.

Morning Prayer- BCP, page 80

Psalms 15 and/or 24

Lesson- [Acts 1:1-11](#)

Noon Prayer- BCP, page 103

Psalms 121 and 122

Lesson- [Ephesians 1:15-23](#)

Evening Prayer- BCP, page 117

Psalms 47 and/or 93

Lesson- [Luke 24:44-53](#)

Compline/Night Prayer- BCP, page 127

Psalm 91

Lesson- 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Alternative Aids to Prayer

Get Outside

On the day of Christ's Ascension, "He was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight." Get outside and spend some time looking up. Just look up. Maybe you can listen to ["The Lark Ascending"](#) by Vaughan Williams or the ["Ascension Waves."](#) See what rises up within you.

Experience

If it won't set off your smoke alarms, how about lighting a bit of incense and just watching the smoke rise and move in the air currents in your home? You don't have to think about anything, just watch as you inhale the sweetness of the incense. Sights and smells can lift our hearts to God as much as words. Combine this with some music and your heart can soar.

Listen

["Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise"](#) by Charles Wesley

["Alleluia! Sing to Jesus"](#) by William Chatterton Dix

["See the Conqueror Mounts in Triumph"](#) by Christopher Wordsworth

[“A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing”](#) by The Venerable Bede
[“The Lord Ascendeth up on High”](#) by Praetorius
[“O Lord Most High, Eternal King”](#) --medieval Latin text
[“Rejoice, the Lord of Life Ascends”](#) by Albert Bayly
[“Lord, You Give the Great Commission”](#) by Jeffrey Rowthorn
[“Go to the World”](#) by Sylvia Dunstan
[“What We Need Is Here”](#) by Amy McCreath
[“I Believe in Being Ready”](#) --Appalachian spiritual
[“I Wanna Be Ready for Change to Come”](#) adapted by Charon Hribar
[“Dwelling Place”](#) by John Foley, SJ

Write

In the Book of Acts, after Jesus is taken from the sight of the Apostles, angels appear and speak to those gathered: “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven?” Then the angel instructs them to get busy. Spend some time writing about the ways in which you might “get busy” in your own life of faith. What are your talents and abilities and what is the need around you? Find the places where those intersect and you will find your deepest vocation. How can you get busy for the Kingdom?

Savor

“An eagle often steals its prey from another.
Our Savior did something like that in the Ascension.
The Savior snatched humanity from the jaws of death.
The Savior soared into the heavens
with the human race held fast in his talons.” Maximus of Turin (5th Century)

[“A Sonnet for Ascension Day”](#) by Malcom Guite

[“Ascension”](#) by Dave Pass

[“Ascension”](#) by John Donne

[“The Ascension”](#) by Cynewulf

Create

It seems like lots of people today are rediscovering how relaxing it can be to color. This is something we all did as kids and then forgot about when we got older. Here is a link to lots of [images of the Ascension of the Lord](#) for your coloring enjoyment. Pick one you like, print it, and color away! Joy and fun can be prayerful too.

The Feast of Pentecost



Sunday, 31 May 2020



Two sources for the Scriptures and prayers of the day are [here](#) and [here](#).

Engage images in scripture:
meditate, journal, converse with a friend

Ponder the symbol of fire. Light candles during a meal, or build a fire in your fire pit or grill if you have one. What does fire do? Where else does it appear in the scriptures? What can it evoke? How do we use fire at church? What do you make of the tongues of flame in the description of Pentecost in Acts 2?

Consider the symbol of wind. Take a walk outside today or this week and be aware of the breeze or wind. When have you experienced a mighty wind—as part of a hurricane or tornado or thunderstorm? Where else does wind appear in the scriptures? What does it do? What do you make of the image of wind in the description of Pentecost in Acts?

Explore the image of speaking and hearing unknown languages. What could that have been like, for the disciples as speakers in Jerusalem and the hearers from all over the Mediterranean? Have you ever felt inspired by the Holy Spirit to say something in a strange new setting? Have you heard the voice of God speaking to you from an unlikely source? What is it like to be in a room with people who don't speak your native language? What could this experience of speaking and hearing be telling us about our calls as disciples of Jesus?

Recall this phrase: “I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.” The prophet Joel puts those words on God’s lips, and Paul quotes them in the Acts 2 passage. What could this be telling us about God’s dreams for humanity? Is anyone outside God’s care? What implications does this have for how we treat each other and all our neighbors?

Let this sentence from the 1 Corinthians 12 passage sink in: “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” What does “the common good” look like in Northeast Pennsylvania right now? What manifestations of the Spirit do we have to contribute to the common good? How do we welcome the diversity of manifestations of the Spirit? What next steps could we take?

Try this approach of exploration with any other scripture texts of the day or season.

Listen

Here is some music, some with video, some without. Enjoy the words and tunes and see what they evoke in you.

[“Come Holy Spirit”](#) by John Bell

[“Every Time I Feel the Spirit”](#) sung by Jessye Norman

[“We Will Take What You Offer”](#) by John Bell and Wild Goose Collective

[“From This House”](#) by Ben Allaway

[“Veni Sancte Spiritus”](#) (Gregorian chant)

[“Veni Sancte Spiritus”](#) by Jacques Berthier (sung in many languages)

[“Rise Up”](#) by Charon Hribar

[“We Rise”](#) by Peace Poets and Thrive Choir

Gaze

Here are [some images](#) artists made—see what attracts you. What do the images illuminate for you about God and our life with God?

Create

Here is a link to [other Pentecost images](#)--peruse them and if one or more attract you, print it out and color it.

