

Sunday Worship on May 25, 2025

(CCLI: License Number #3156883) (Welcoming Elder: Anne Neuman)

Sunday Order of Worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Responsive Call to Worship
- Praise song BOP 267 Rejoice, the Lord is King
- Prayer for Worship and the Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance
- Praise song BOP 476 Amigos de Cristo

We listen

- Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)
- First reading: Luke 24:44-53
- Second reading: Psalm 93 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: Acts 1:1-11
- Sermon: **He went up, but he did not leave**
- Hymn BOP 371 Love divine, all loves excelling
- Prayer for the people

We Respond

- Offering, Doxology (BOP 830) & Dedication
- Song for the Journey BOP 407 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

We Serve

- Benediction
- A Sung Blessing

Responsive Call to Worship

Let the peoples praise you, O God;

let all the peoples praise you!

Let the earth rejoice and be glad,

let the heavens declare your righteousness!

May all people see your glory, O God;

may your ways be known throughout the earth.

Let us worship the God who loves us;

We come to worship with open hearts, to raise our voices with thanks and praise.

Praise song – BOP 267 Rejoice, the Lord is King

Prayer of Adoration

God of promise and purpose, we greet you this day with thankful hearts.

As flowers unfurl and buds open, the beauty of your world lifts our spirits in praise. As children grow and students prepare to graduate, their energy and enthusiasm encourage us toward your future. Your world is full of such variety and detail, we stand in awe of your creative imagination. Draw close to us in this hour of worship and show us the promise and purpose in

our own lives. May we unfurl with your gift of new life, and move into the future, renewed by the energy of your Holy Spirit.

Prayer of confession (Unison) *(Let us come to God with the prayer of confession in unison.)*
God of diversity and detail, the wonders of your creation amaze us. Yet we confess we often fail to honour its beauty and variety in the details of our lives. When voices differ in opinion, we listen to those we agree with. We fail to honour experiences different than our own. We resist calls to honour the earth as if it were ours for the taking. Forgive our narrow perspectives. Open our eyes and our hearts to the pain and perspectives of others, and renew us all with your healing grace.

Heavenly Father, hear us, as we offer the Prayer that Jesus taught us: *(The 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. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Jesus said, **"My peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."** May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Let his forgiveness set you at peace with God and yourself, and make peace with one another.

May the Peace of the Lord be with you. *(Let us bless each other with the peace of the Lord.)*

Praise song – BOP 476 Amigos de Cristo

Prayer for Children

Sung prayer for illumination (BOP 445 Open our eyes, Lord)

- First reading: Luke 24:44-53
- Second reading: Psalm 93 (Refrain 1)
- Third reading: Acts 1:1-11

"This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God."

SERMON: He went up, but he did not leave

Jesus ascended to heaven, but he did not abandon us. He promised his power and presence through the Holy Spirit. We wait not in fear, but in expectation.

Imagine that you are standing on a hillside, outside Jerusalem. You are watching Jesus Christ lift into the sky. The one you had followed for years, the one who had died and risen, is now rising into the clouds. What do you feel? Wonder? Confusion? Sadness? Fear? Or Hope?

This is the moment of Ascension. But Ascension is not about Jesus leaving us behind. It's about Jesus going ahead of us to reign, to intercede, and to fulfill his promise. Jesus said, **"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you."**

This is the core of our message today. He went up, but He did not leave.

Before Jesus ascended, he gave his disciples a command “Do not go anywhere, but wait in Jerusalem.”

"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father... You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now... You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."

Jesus promised power, but not the kind of power the world seeks. Not political dominance. Not personal control. Not something we would think of in worldly perspective. But power to witness, power to endure, power to love, and power to serve.

The early disciples were ordinary people, just like you and me. They were fishermen, tax collectors, men and women with fears and failures. But Jesus told them, **"You will be my witnesses."**

How? Through the power of the Holy Spirit.

How many times have we felt too weak, too tired, or too unworthy to live the life God is calling us to? **You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the world. You are my witness.** ME? Can I? Am I? THIS ME?? Many times, we feel inadequate because we already know that we do not have the qualifications. We don't have power.

But the truth is, **we are not called to do it on our own.** God never asks us to serve him without equipping us. Jesus says, **"Wait. Receive. Then go."** God always fills us first, before sending us.

Let's not rush ahead of the Holy Spirit. Let's not try to work for God in our own strength. Remember, his promise is not making us powerful, but giving us the power of the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus ascended into the sky, the disciples stood gazing upward. Can you imagine the emotion of that moment? Joy turned to silence. Hope mixed with uncertainty.

But suddenly, two men in white robes appeared and said, **v11, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."**

This is not just a comfort. It is an assurance.

Jesus is physically absent, but he sent us his Holy Spirit. Jesus reigns from heaven, but he works in and through his people on earth through his Holy Spirit. Jesus will return. He has not forgotten us.

Have you ever felt like God is far away? Is he watching you from a distance, disconnected from your struggles? The Ascension reminds us that Jesus is not gone. He is glorified. And from that place of glory, he is still involved in our lives.

Jesus is interceding for us. He is guiding each step of our daily life. He is closer than we think. He went up, but he did not leave us. He did not abandon us.

After Jesus ascended, what did the disciples do? They didn't panic. They didn't scatter. They returned to Jerusalem, just as Jesus told them. And then they waited there.

Acts 1:14, "All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together."

Nothing seemed to happen. They waited patiently. Their wait was not with boredom or anxiety. **They waited with expectation.** They waited together. They waited in prayer.

Waiting is not doing nothing. **Waiting is active trust.** It is preparing your heart. It is staying open. It is holding onto the promise, even before it comes true.

One of my sons, John, went on a field trip last week. He went 1 ½ hours away by bus. The school said they would be back by 6 pm. It was the longest field trip for him.

Around 6 pm, did I just sit in the car and be bored?

No, I was looking at the corner where the school bus would come. I didn't just sit uninterested, but I anticipated. I prepared to welcome him.

If you waited for someone you love at the airport, you know this feeling.

Jesus said, **“Wait for the promise of the Father.”**

How are you waiting on God today? Are you distracted? Discouraged? Disappointed? What takes so long! Are you complaining?

Or do you wait for the promise of the Father with hope and with an expectant heart?

The disciples didn't know exactly what the Holy Spirit would look like. But they trusted Jesus' words. They knew something wonderful was coming. So they waited trusting in the promise.

Are we ready for what God wants to do in our lives, in our church, in our community? Let us wait on the promise of God with an expectant attitude.

Ascension Sunday is a bridge between two promises:

1-“You will receive power...” This is the coming of the Holy Spirit on us.

2-“He will come again...” This is the return of the King, Jesus Christ.

We live in that in-between. But it's not a time of emptiness. It's a time of promise. We are not abandoned. We are empowered by the promised Holy Spirit.

Jesus went up, but he did not leave.

Jesus is present with us through his Holy Spirit.

Jesus is reigning from the throne. Jesus is coming again.

Like the disciples, let us wait with hope, let us wait with unity, let us wait with prayer, and let us wait with joy.

This is the message of the Lord for us today. Amen.

Praise song – BOP 371 Love divine, all love excelling

Prayer for the people:

Gracious and ever-present God, we come before you today with hearts lifted in awe and trust. As we remember the Ascension of our Lord Jesus, we are reminded that though he went up, he did not leave us alone. You did not abandon us. You promised your presence, your power, and your peace.

We thank you for the comfort of your promise. In times when we feel uncertain or weary, when the path ahead is unclear, remind us that you are not far away. You are reigning from heaven, and you are working among us even now through your Holy Spirit.

Lord, we remember and pray for those in our congregation and community who are waiting. Waiting for healing, waiting for guidance, waiting for reconciliation, and waiting for hope. May they wait not in fear but in expectation. Help us trust that your promises are sure and that you are faithful to complete what you have begun in us.

We pray for those who feel forgotten or left behind. Remind them today that Christ is interceding for them. Holy Spirit, surround them, hold them firmly, and tell them that they are never alone. Tell them your love for them.

Teach us to wait well. Unite us in prayer. Fill us with expectation. As we prepare to receive the power of the Holy Spirit, give us hearts ready to serve, to witness, and to love boldly.

Thank you, Lord Jesus. You went up, but you did not leave alone. Hold our hands, and walk with us always. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering:

God has created a world of great diversity, full of wonder and potential. Let us honour God's gifts to us in Christ and in each other. With our offerings, let us participate in God's works and let us support this world God loves. As we give our offerings, let us glorify him.

(BOP #830, Praise God from whom all blessings flow.)

Offering prayer:

Generous God, we thank you for your gift of new life in Christ Jesus. Receive our gifts this day, and bless each gift and each giver. Use each one of us to witness to your purposes through our daily lives and help us display your greatness throughout the world you love. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Song for the Journey – BOP 407 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

Now, it is time for us to be sent to the world where God called us to be.

Jesus Christ came to us, lived with us, and died. On the third day, he rose and stayed for 40 days with us. Then, he ascended to heaven. He promised to send his Holy Spirit to us. The Holy Spirit gives us comfort, power, and wisdom. Let us be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the promise of God.

Benediction: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, our Father, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.