

7<sup>th</sup> Week of Easter

And then comes the Sunday after Ascension Day  
and the story of what Jesus' first followers did between  
Jesus' ascension and the coming of God's Spirit.

"When he 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.  
Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

-Luke 24:50-52

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**Psalm 47**

***Refrain:***

**Clap your hands, all ye nations;  
shout to God with a joyful cry.  
The Lord is King over all the earth;  
how great and awesome is the Lord most high.**

God has ascended amidst shouts of joy,  
to the sounding of the trumpet and the horn;  
give him the glory that is due him,  
as you sing with all your heart,  
as you sing with all your heart unto the Lord. ***Refrain***

God rules the nations in majesty,  
he is seated for all time upon his throne;  
princes and rulers will worship him,  
for the kingdoms of the earth,  
for the kingdoms of the earth are his alone. ***Refrain***

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**Prayer:**

King of all creation,  
we wait for the day when, with all the hosts of heaven, we will sing:  
"The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord  
and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever."  
Until that day, receive the praise of our hearts, and direct the pattern  
of our lives so that in word and action we may exhibit your kingdom  
to a watching world. **Amen.**

Blessed are you, Lord God,  
King of all creation;  
You have taught us by your Word.  
Open our hearts to your Spirit  
and lead us on the paths of Christ, your Son.  
All praise and glory be yours forever. **Amen.**

**Scripture  
Reading**

A Reading from the gospel according to Luke:  
Luke 24:44-53

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to You Lord, Christ.**

**Reflection** Joy?

Joy is beyond definitions but it's a virtue of Christian discipleship and a fruit of the Spirit. It is not of our own making; it is God's doing, Christ-initiating, and Spirit-perpetuating. And we can't take this deep mystery of joy and reduce it to a manageable size because if the resurrection tells us anything, it tells us that the risen Lord is unmanageable. We can't explain joy fully but we know it's real, this "great joy" promised and given by Jesus.

The ascending Christ desires for his joy to ascend in you, to Easter up out of the dimness of your soul, so that an inward coronation can take place among sadness, fright, doubt, disbelief, wondering, and even "great joy." People will not only know we are Christians by our love; they will know we are Christians by our joy.

*-from a sermon preached in Duke University Chapel on Ascension Sunday, May 28, 2017, by the Rev. Dr. Luke A. Powery.*

*Silence*

**Hymn of Joy**

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,  
God of glory, Lord of love;  
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before thee,  
Opening to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;  
Drive the gloom of doubt away;  
Giver of immortal gladness,  
Fill us with the light of day!

**Prayers**

Jesus Christ, mediator and high priest,  
we thank you for becoming human and for experiencing  
the joys and sorrows of life, which assures us that you are able  
to sympathise and rejoice with us.  
We praise you for the many joys of life:  
for the beauty of creation . . .  
for your work in this world . . .  
for the growth of your kingdom . . .  
for the greatest source of our happiness, the gift of eternal life . . .

As our mediator, you stand before God, petitioning him on our behalf,  
so we boldly bring before you our prayers for:  
creation that people may be conscientious & diligent of her care . . .  
the leaders of the world that they may promote justice & peace . . .  
our nation and its leaders that they may be united & give us hope . . .  
the church universal as it works on your behalf that they persevere in faith  
all persons affected by COVID 19, the sick, the unemployed,  
the troubled employers, the farmers, the grocers, the caregivers, healthcare  
workers, all who are suffering that they may be comforted by your grace.

May we all, by your mercy be resilient as we continue to understand what is going on and be helpful in ways we can to ease this situation.

We pray this in your strong name, O Christ,  
our mediator and high priest. **Amen.**

### Hymn

All thy works with joy surround thee,  
Earth and heaven reflect thy rays,  
Stars and angels sing around thee,  
Centre of unbroken praise;  
Field and forest, vale and mountain,  
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,  
Chanting bird and flowing fountain  
Call us to rejoice in thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving,  
Ever blessing, ever blest,  
Well-spring of the joy of living,  
Ocean -depth of happy rest!  
Thou our Father, Christ our Brother,  
All who live in love are thine;  
Teach us how to love each other,  
Lift us to the joy divine.

*Words: Henry Van Dyke, 1907; st. 4 alt. 1989*

*Music: HYMN TO JOY, Ludwig Van Beethoven*

### Closing Prayer

Clap your hands.  
Shout for joy.  
Sing out praise.  
Exalt the God of power!  
*- Psalm 47*

Go and make disciples of all nations, says the Lord;  
I am with you always, to the end of time.

**Alleluia!**

*- based on Matthew 28:19-20;*

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Leading in Worship

Rev Benjamin Lee, *Minister*

Pauline Ong, *Worship leader*

Raquel Cardano, *Song leader*

Shanthini Moorthy, *Scripture reader*

Justin Chan, *Reflection reader*

Choir:

Methodist Festival Choir

Musician:

Amelia Leo

## Worship Resources

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Westerhoff, John III. *A Pilgrim People: Learning through the Church Year*. New York, NY: Seabury Classics, 2005.

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