



Drawing by Jon Hlafter

The Lutheran Church of the Messiah

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Martin K. Erhardt, *Pastor*
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Paul C. Hofreiter, *Choir Director*
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Ascension of Our Lord

May 17, 2026

Prayer upon entering: Almighty God, your Son was taken up into heaven and in power intercedes for us. May we also come into your presence and live forever in your glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Guests, welcome! We are delighted you are with us for worship this morning. Please introduce yourself to Pastor Erhardt, sign our guest book next to the main doors. Bibles are available on a shelf in the back of the nave. Kneelers and large-print bulletins are available from the ushers upon request. If you are seeking a church home, we invite you to join us here at Messiah.

Front cover art: *Ascension du Christ*, Maniere de Rembrandt, ca. 1650

Worship begins with the prelude and continues through the postlude. Once the prelude begins, please refrain from conversation. We use two hymnals: the green *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW) and the blue paperback *With One Voice* (wov). Hymn numbers below 600 are generally in LBW; above 600, in wov. The pastor's parts (spoken and sung) are designated "P:." Parts spoken or sung by the congregation are italicized, prefaced by "C:." The liturgy text and music are in the LBW on the pages noted in this service folder.

Holy Communion: Lutheran Christians celebrate a divine service of Word and sacrament in which God comes to us both in his proclaimed Word and in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We invite to commune at the Lord's table all baptized Christians who with contrite hearts trust God's word of forgiveness for their sins, acknowledge the presence of Jesus Christ both in the Communion elements and in this gathered body of believers, and seek, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to follow Jesus and walk in newness of life. If this doesn't describe you, we invite you to come to the altar rail to receive a blessing instead of the Communion elements. Indicate this by folding your arms across your chest at the rail. All are invited to bring their children forward for a blessing.

Individual cups are available in addition to the chalice (the common cup). Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are also available upon request from the server at the Communion rail. All are invited to bring their children forward for a blessing.

Families with young children: Welcome! We have children's activity backpacks in the back of the church for use during the service, as well as an unstaffed nursery on the stage downstairs. Feel free to ask an usher for help locating them. The stairs are at the back of the sanctuary.

Prelude Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus (Lasset Uns mit Jesu)
arr. Paul W. Hofreiter

Confession and Forgiveness

P: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: *Amen*

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C: *But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

P: Let us, therefore, confess our sins to God.

Please kneel or sit for silent reflection and confession.

C: *Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen*

P: Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: *Amen*

Order of Holy Communion

Setting II (LBW p. 78)

Opening Hymn A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing! LBW 157

Apostolic Greeting *2 Corinthians 13:14*

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: *And also with you.*

Kyrie *pp. 78-79*

P: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C: *Lord have mercy.*

P: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C: *Lord, have mercy.*

P: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C: *Lord, have mercy.*

P: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: *Lord, have mercy.*

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: *Amen*

Hymn of Praise

pp. 81–82

P: This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia.

C: *Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God. Power and riches and wisdom and strength, and honor and blessing and glory are his. This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia. Sing with all the people of God and join in the hymn of all creation: Blessing and honor and glory and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen*

This is the feast of victory for our God, for the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia. Alleluia.

P: The Lord be with you. C: *And also with you.*

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray.

C: *Father of the risen Christ, your ascended Son Jesus reveals you to us and sends us the Holy Spirit to open our minds to his teaching. As we await Jesus' return, make us a blessing to our neighbors now, confident of our heavenly home with you. Amen*

Please be seated for the scripture readings printed on the last two pages of this service folder.

First Lesson

Acts 1:1-11

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 47

p. 237

Second Lesson

Ephesians 1:15-23

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Choir Anthem

Come Away to the Skies

WOV 669

Verse (please stand):

John 6:68 (p. 83)

C: Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia.

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 24th chapter.

C (sung): Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel Lesson

Luke 24:44-53

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C (sung): Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

Children's Sermon

Sermon

Resurrection and Ascension

Hymn of the Day Up through Endless Ranks of Angels LBW 159

Creed (Nicene) Spoken in unison

*C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.*

(continued on the next page)

*We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, light from light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.*

*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen*

The Prayers of the People

P: P: Rejoicing in our Lord's victory over death and the grave, and his ascension into heaven, let us call upon God our Father, for his help and deliverance.

After each prayer or petition,

P: Lord, in your mercy,

C: *hear our prayer.*

P: All this we ask, Father, in the name of Jesus our risen Savior, who has conquered death and the grave and ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us. As we look forward to his return, fill us with your Holy Spirit to spread this good news abroad as ambassadors of your present and coming kingdom.

C: *Amen*

The Sharing of the Peace

p. 86

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: *And also with you.*

Please exchange a greeting of peace with your neighbors, then be seated.

Gathering of Offerings

pp. 86–87

As the offerings are brought forward, please stand and sing:

C: *Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.*

Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life. Gather the hopes and dreams of all; unite them with the prayers we offer. Grace our table with your presence, and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.

P: Let us pray.

Merciful Father,

C: *we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us – our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

The Great Thanksgiving

p. 88

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And also with you.*

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: *We lift them to the Lord.*

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: *It is right to give him thanks and praise.*

P: It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who, after his resurrection, appeared openly to his disciples and, in their sight, was taken up into heaven, that he might make us partakers of his divine nature. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sanctus

p. 89

C: *Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of power and might: Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.*

Eucharistic Prayer

pp. 89–91

P: Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: Endless is your mercy and eternal your reign. You have filled all creation with light and life; heaven and earth are full of your glory. Through Abraham you promised to bless all nations. You rescued Israel, your chosen people. Through the prophets you renewed your promise; and, at this end of all the ages, you sent your Son, who in words and deeds proclaimed your kingdom and was obedient to your will, even to giving his life.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

P: Therefore, gracious Father, with this bread and cup we remember the life our Lord offered for us. And, believing the witness of his resurrection, we await his coming in power to share with us the great and promised feast.

C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P: Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, the spirit of our Lord and of his resurrection, that we who receive the Lord's body and blood may live to the praise of your glory and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

C: Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

P: Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

C (sung, p.91): Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

P: Taught by our Lord and trusting in His promises, we are bold to say:

C: 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

Agnus Dei: Lamb of God

p. 92

*C: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.*

*Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.*

*Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace.*

Once the pastor says, "Welcome to the table of the Lord," please sit.

Because Communion is important, please read and follow our Communion policy, printed on p. 2 of this service folder. Feel free to bring your hymnal and continue to sing. If you are not communing, you are invited to come forward to receive a blessing, but feel no pressure to do so. If you do come forward for a blessing (only), indicate this by folding your arms across your chest when you kneel at the altar rail. When the pastor dismisses you, please return to your seat by the center aisle. If you would like Communion brought to your seat, please raise your hand to alert the pastor.

After all have returned to their places, the pastor says: (please stand)

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you
in his grace. C: *Amen*

Post-Communion Canticle

pp. 92–93

C: *Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell everyone what he has done. Let everyone who seeks the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name. He recalls his promises and leads his people forth in joy with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia. Alleluia.*

Post-Communion Prayer

p. 94

P: Let us pray.

We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. C: *Amen*

Closing Hymn

Jesus Lives!

(inside back cover)

Benediction

p. 94

P: Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: *Amen*

Postlude

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (Hyfrydol)

arr. Wilbur Held

Announcements

P: God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet!

All: Sing praises to God, sing praises!

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Thank you to today's Temple Servants

Acolytes	Charles Loughery and Austin Block
Reader	Charles Loughery
Ushers	Hans and Veronika Henkes
Fellowship Host	Louise Cooper
Chancel	Herb & Carolyn Gishlick
Offering Counter	John Fischer
Livestream	Jeff Frole

This coming week

Today	after worship	Voters Meeting
Wed	7:30 PM	Choir
Sun	9:00 AM	Adult Forum
Sun	10:30 AM	Service of Word and Sacrament

Next Sunday (Pentecost)

Acts 2:1-21 • Psalm 104:24-34 • 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 • John 20:19-23

Opening Hymn: Hail Thee, Festival Day (LBW 142)

Hymn of the Day: Come, Holy Ghost, Our Souls Inspire (LBW 473)

Communion Hymn: In Christ There Is No East or West (LSB 653)

Closing Hymn: O Day Full of Grace (LBW 161)

Adult Forum meets Sundays at 9am in the parish building library.

Current Topic: *Hymns for Ascension, Pentecost, and Trinity*

Messiah's May Voters Meeting will be after worship today, May 17.

Pastor Erhardt leads a monthly community book discussion:

June 25: *Colonialism: A Moral Reckoning*, by Nigel Biggar

July 23: *Bud, Not Buddy*, by Christopher Paul Curtis

August 27: *Korean Messiah*, by Jonathan Cheng (Prologue – Chapter 21)

Discussions begin at 7:30 PM via Zoom. Please obtain and read the book before each discussion, and email Pastor Erhardt for a Zoom invitation.

Available on the back pew:

- (1) May/June 2026 edition of the *Messiah Messenger*
- (2) Portals of Prayer devotion booklets (April-June)
- (3) February – May 2026 Temple Servant schedule

Prayer Corner

We remember in our prayers:

- The family of Abraham Abed (classmate of Veronika Henkes and Elizabeth Majsztrik, mourning his death in a bike/car collision on April 26), the Wendel family (grieving Ed's recent death), the family of Don Meyer (grieving the recent death of his mother), Lynne Olszewski (sister of Patty Hlafter, recently diagnosed with macular degeneration), Lou and Mary Romolo (following Mary's move into hospice care), Sharon Wilchar (friend of Patricia Wolf who is very ill), Karin Bergesen (in rehab, recovering from a bone broken by a fall), Joan Colliflower (recovering from knee surgery), Fred Dignon (Greg's father, recovering from surgery after a stroke and fall), Peter Hempel (brother of Miranda Hempel, recovering from surgery), Micha Livne (friend of the Gishlicks who is ill), Ted Alslev (son of Elda Alslev, to overcome his addiction to smoking), Mary Pickens (friend of Jon and Pat Hlafter, undergoing an experimental medical treatment), Sue Parisi (friend of Pat Hlafter, being treated for breast cancer), Peter Schulze (son of Lydia and Carl Schulze, friends of Miranda Hempel), and Jenny Mills – for comfort, strength, and healing

Prayer requests are generally printed in the Prayer Corner and included in the Sunday intercessory prayers for 4 weeks. If you would like us to keep someone there longer, we are happy to do that. Please call the church office or email lcmprinceton@gmail.com to let Pastor Erhardt know.



PROF INSIGHTS

FACULTY-LED WORKSHOP SERIES

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

The Apostolic Fathers

June 1-3 at St. Peter Lutheran Church
Hopewell Township, NJ

Our presenter is Rev. Dr. Joel Elowsky, Professor of Historical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

This event is designed for pastors, other church workers and interested laypeople.



Workshop Description

A study of the primary literature of the Apostolic Fathers with application to the life of the church today. Study will be primarily focused on the texts themselves with attention also given to issues of authorship, dating, the integrity of the text and the occasion for the writing, as well to major theological, ecclesiological and social issues that the writings address such as martyrdom, church order, orthodoxy and heresy, early Christian ritual, etc.

COST UPDATE: The fee for this workshop is \$160. Registration is now open at www.csl.edu/workshop-series, and should be made no later than 14 days before the beginning of each workshop.

Please register by May 18 to ensure adequate enrollment in the course (so that it isn't canceled).

To register contact Concordia Seminary Continuing Education at 314-505-7286 or ce@csl.edu
For local information about this event contact Pastor Jon Dunbar at pastor@stpeternj.org

First Lesson: Acts 1:1-11

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "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."

Second Lesson: Ephesians 1:15-23

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may perceive what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Gospel Lesson: Luke 24:44-53

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple blessing God.