

# The Feast of the Ascension

## May 12, 2024

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Salvador Dalí, *The Ascension* (1958)



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What is joy? Joy is more than satisfaction. It's more than pleasure or contentment. Even the word "happiness" doesn't really capture it. Joy is the exhilaration we find in being overcome by great beauty, or in the discovery of some great truth or gift, and the passion that drives us to share this exhilaration with others, even if we suffer in the process. In effect, we don't possess joy; joy possesses us. One of the reasons that Pope Francis sometimes seems so frustrated with the state of the Church today may be that, in his experience, too many Christians tend to confuse doctrine and law and rituals and structures with the real experience of faith. Obviously these things are important. Augustine would say that they're very important, because without them our faith is disincarnate and little more than a collection of warm feelings. The Church is harmed by an overly sentimental or anti-intellectual spirit in her work. In an "emotivist" age, the last thing we need is a flight from clear teaching. But Augustine would likely agree with Francis that the structural elements of Church life become empty and dead when they're not animated by love—in other words, if they don't proceed from a living relationship with Jesus Christ and the interior joy it creates. We can too easily use them as a hiding place from the real task of discipleship, which is preaching the joy of the Gospel by our lives and our actions. Did Augustine know joy? Read his Confessions. In his sermons, Augustine called this earth "a smiling place." Portions of his work read like a litany to the goodness and beauty of creation. His biographer Peter Brown describes him as a man immoderately in love with the world. And the reason is simple. Augustine loved the world because he was in love with the Author of the beauty and goodness he found there. What does that mean for us today? Augustine would tell us that the real problem with the world is bigger than abortion or poverty or climate change or family breakdown, and much more stubborn. The real problem with the world is us. As Augustine said in his sermons, it's no use complaining about the times, because we are the times. How we live shapes them. And when we finally learn to fill our hearts with something more than the noise and narcotics of the wounded societies we helped create; when we finally let our hearts rest in God as Augustine did; then—and only then—the world will begin to change, because God will use the witness of our lives to change it.

### **Charles Chaput, *Strangers in a Strange Land* (2017)**

The Ascension did not take Jesus away... It brought heaven near... In the realm in which He now reigns time and space have no meaning... There is no up and down, no near and far, no darkness, and no distance in the world of faith... He is as near as yesterday's prayer, today's joy, tomorrow's sorrow... His homecoming has made heaven a home for us who still walk far from home... Wherefore stand we gazing into heaven?... Our momentary task is here, but through the slow dimming of the years we see the evening lamps of home tended by the pierced hands of Him who has gone to prepare a place for us... Is there a better way to live - or die? ... All that we have to do now is believe and follow.

### **O.P. Kretzman, *The Pilgrim* (1944)**

In order, therefore, that we may be capable of this blessedness, when all things were fulfilled which concerned the Gospel preaching and the mysteries of the New Testament, our Lord, on the fortieth day after the Resurrection in the presence of the disciples, was raised into heaven, and terminated His presence with us in the body, to abide on the Father's right hand until the times Divinely fore-ordained for multiplying the sons of the Church are accomplished, and He comes to judge the living and the dead in the same flesh in which He ascended. And so that which till then was visible of our Redeemer was changed into a sacramental presence, and that faith might be more excellent and stronger, sight gave way to doctrine, the authority of which was to be accepted by believing hearts enlightened with rays from above.

### **St. Leo the Great, *On the Lord's Ascension* (440)**

## **Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church!**

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We are glad that you are with us today! If you are new to our church, you may not be familiar with Lutheran liturgy. No worries. This bulletin is designed to help guide you through the worship service. We encourage you to participate in as much or as little of the service as you feel comfortable. Thank you for being a part of our worship. We hope that the Lord blesses you through our time together!

### **Restrooms, Changing Stations, and Nursing Room**

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Restrooms are located in the lobby (narthex) of the sanctuary. Both the men's and women's rooms have diaper changing tables for the little ones. We also have a nursing room for mothers and babies that is located across the breezeway, straight out of the doors on the east side of the lobby.

### **Children in the Liturgy**

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We pray that all children would know that God made them, He loves them, and He goes with them everywhere. We are glad to have little ones with us in the service. We know that they can sometimes squirm and squeal. Please don't sweat it! Kids are always welcome here. We encourage parents and guardians to help them follow along and engage with them in the action of the liturgy – observe closely the intentional movement of the procession, listen to the music, sing the songs, watch the fire of the candles, respond with a loud *Amen*, make the sign of the cross, touch the water in the baptismal font, and wonder at the beautiful images and symbols that are all around. What happens today in this sacred space is designed to engage us all.

### **A Note on Holy Communion**

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In this service we celebrate a sacred ritual of the Christian Church called the Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper. In this rite we recall the last meal that Jesus had with his disciples. In this blessed meal we have our eyes opened and we recognize Him in the breaking of the bread. Though our faith is grounded in history, this liturgy is not merely a nostalgic looking back at the past –it is a celebration and a deep recognition that in this meal our Lord Jesus Christ is truly and really present with us in the bread and the wine. We cling to the hope of resurrection that will be ours when all things will be fully redeemed and restored in Him. Baptized Lutherans who have a sincere sorrow for their sin and see in this holy mystery the true body and blood of Christ are invited to receive Holy Communion.

### **Notes for the Feast of the Ascension**

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On the Thursday that falls forty days after Easter, the Church celebrates the Ascension of Jesus as described in the book of Acts, Luke, and Mark. In many traditions, the Feast of the Ascension is one of the most revered days in the liturgical year and it's also among some of the most ancient of Christian traditions. Today on this Seventh Sunday of Easter, we remember Jesus's ascension even as we continue in season of Eastertide. We rejoice and give thanks to God that by his glorious ascension our Lord Jesus has raised our human nature to the throne of heaven. We praise God, that by his ascending Jesus has made possible our life and resurrection as we become – as St. Peter says – partakers of His divine nature.

## The Greeting and Welcome

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*The congregation stands and faces the back of the sanctuary. We begin with a procession with the crucifix leading the way – representing our life in Christ and our journey from death to life. Some bow as the cross passes, honoring the mystery of salvation.*

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### A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing (493)

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**A hymn of glory let us sing! New hymns throughout the world shall ring:  
Alleluia, alleluia! Christ, by a road before untrod,  
Ascends unto the throne of God. Alleluia, alleluia!  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

**To them the shining angels cry, “Why stand and gaze upon the sky?”  
Alleluia, alleluia! “This is the Savior,” thus they say;  
“This is His glorious triumph day!” Alleluia, alleluia!  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

**“You see Him now, ascending high Up to the portals of the sky.”  
Alleluia, alleluia! “Hereafter Jesus you shall see  
Returning in great majesty.” Alleluia, alleluia!  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

**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, alleluia!**

### Invocation

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En el nombre del Padre, y del ✠ Hijo, y del Espíritu Santo.

**All Amen.**

### Confession and Forgiveness

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If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us  
**All But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our  
sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Señor, ten piedad de nosotros.

**All Señor, ten piedad de nosotros.**

Cristo, ten piedad de nosotros.

**All Cristo, ten piedad de nosotros.**

Señor, ten piedad de nosotros.

**All Señor, ten piedad de nosotros.**

*Silence is Kept*

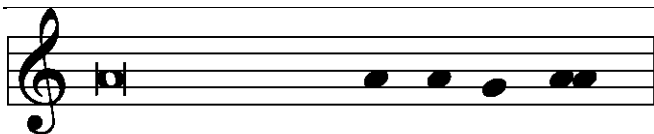
Let us then confess our sins to God our Father:

**All 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.**

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**All Amen.**

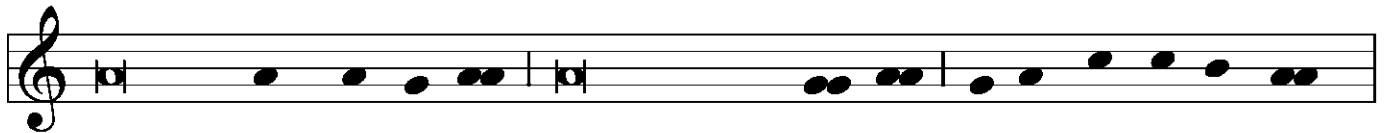
## The Kyrie



**A** In peace let us pray to the Lord.



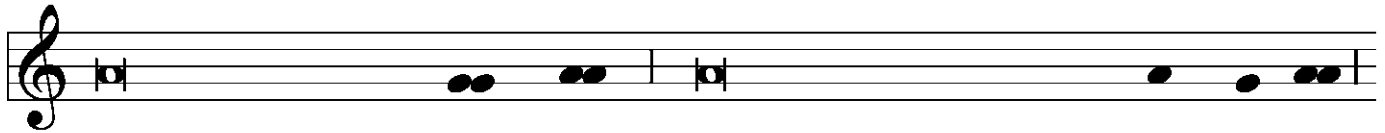
**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** For the peace from a-bove and for our sal-va-tion let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



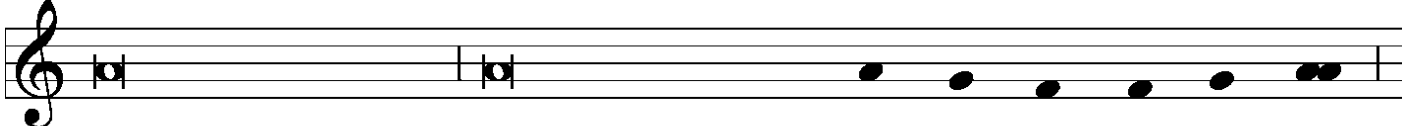
**A** For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



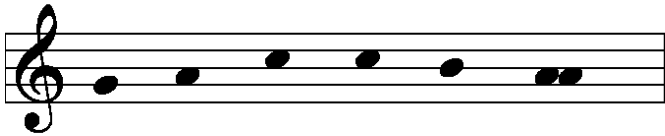
and for the uni - ty of all let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



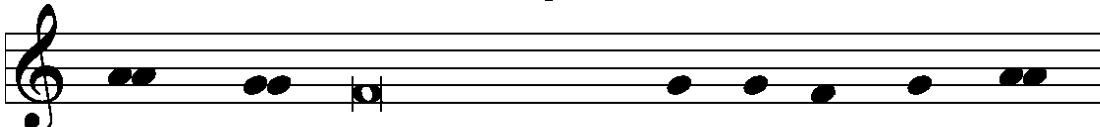
**A** For this holy house and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise



let us pray to the Lord.



**C** Lord, have mer - cy.



**A** Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



**C** A - men.

## The Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.

**All** And also with you.

Let us pray.

**All** Almighty God, as Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ascended into the heavens, so may we also ascend in heart and mind and continually dwell there with Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## The Scripture Readings

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### Acts 1:1-11

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with [b] the Holy Spirit." Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

This is the word of the Lord.

**All Thanks be to God.**

### Ephesians 1:15-23

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

This is the word of the Lord.

**All Thanks be to God.**



## The Gospel Procession

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*The gospel is read in the midst of the people as a sign of God coming to us in Jesus Christ. As the gospel is announced some worshippers make a small cross on their forehead, lips, and chest – a prayer that the Word may dwell in our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts.*

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### Hail Thee, Festival Day (489)

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**Hail thee, festival day! Blest day to be hallowed forever;  
Day when our risen Lord Rose in the heavens to reign.**

**Hail thee, festival day! Blest day to be hallowed forever;  
Day when our risen Lord Rose in the heavens to reign.**

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark.

**All Glory to You, O Lord.**

**Mark 16:15-20**

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Go into the whole world

and proclaim the gospel to every creature.

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved;

whoever does not believe will be condemned.

These signs will accompany those who believe:

in my name they will drive out demons,

they will speak new languages.

They will pick up serpents with their hands,

and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them.

They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them,

was taken up into heaven

and took his seat at the right hand of God.

But they went forth and preached everywhere,

while the Lord worked with them

and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All Praise to you, O Christ.**

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**Hail thee, festival day! Blest day to be hallowed forever;  
Day when our risen Lord Rose in the heavens to reign.**

## The Apostle's Creed

All I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection ☩ of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

### The Churches One Foundation (644)

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The Church's one foundation Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;  
She is His new creation By water and the Word.  
From heav'n He came and sought her To be His holy bride;  
With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died.

Elect from ev'ry nation, Yet one o'er all the earth;  
Her charter of salvation: One Lord, one faith, one birth.  
One holy name she blesses, Partakes one holy food,  
And to one hope she presses With ev'ry grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder The world sees her oppressed,  
By schisms rent asunder, By heresies distressed,  
Yet saints their watch are keeping; Their cry goes up, "How long?"  
And soon the night of weeping Shall be the morn of song.

Through toil and tribulation And tumult of her war  
She waits the consummation Of peace forevermore  
Till with the vision glorious Her longing eyes are blest,  
And the great Church victorious Shall be the Church at rest.

Sermon

**Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow (805)**

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Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host:  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Silent Prayer Before Reception of Holy Eucharist**

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*O Lord, I believe and profess that you are truly Christ,  
The Son of the living God, who came into the world  
To save sinners of whom I am the first.*

*Accept me as a partaker of your mystical supper, O Lord,  
For I will not reveal your mystery to your enemies,  
Nor will I give you a kiss as did Judas, But like the thief I profess to you:*

*Remember me, O Lord, when you come in your kingdom.  
Remember me, O Master, when you come in your kingdom.  
Remember me, O Holy One, when you come in your kingdom.*

*May the partaking of your Holy mysteries, O Lord,  
Be not for my judgment or condemnation,  
But for the healing of my soul and body.*

*O Lord, I believe and profess, that this,  
Which I am about to receive,  
Is truly your most precious Body, and your life-giving Blood,  
Given for me for remission of all my sins and for life everlasting. Amen*

## Service of the Sacrament

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The Lord be with you.

**All And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord. For after his Resurrection he plainly appeared to all his disciples and was taken up to heaven in their sight, that he might make us sharers in his divinity. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of Sabaoth adored;  
Heaven and earth with full acclaim shout the glory of Your name.  
Sing hosana in the highest, sing hosana to the Lord;  
Truly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!**

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy, we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross. Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us to faithfully eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us to in His own testament. Gather us together 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. Receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone be all glory, honor, and worship, now and forever.

**All Amen.**

### The Consecration

#### The Ringing of Altar Bells

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*The church has always used bells to capture our attention and imagination. From a bell tower's opening call to worship, to ringing bells at a wedding or funeral – bells punctuate special moments in the church. Altar bells are rung after the bread and wine are consecrated today to remind us of this miraculous moment: the body and blood of Christ are now present.*

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## **The Acclamation and Invitation**

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As often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

**All Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Behold the Lamb of God, behold Jesus, who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**All Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

La paz del Señor sea con ustedes.

**All Y Tambien contigo**

## **Sharing of the Peace**

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*Greet each other in the name of Christ by saying 'the Peace of the Lord be with you' as a sign of forgiveness & reconciliation in preparation for reception of the Blessed Sacrament.*

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## **Lamb of God**

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**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.**

**Distribution**

**Eucharistic Dismissal**

## **Thank The Lord**

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**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**

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**We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You, that of Your mercy, You would strengthen us in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

### **Alleluia Sing to Jesus (821)**

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**Alleluia! Sing to Jesus; His the scepter, His the throne;  
Alleluia! His the triumph, His the victory alone.  
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion Thunder like a mighty flood:  
"Jesus out of ev'ry nation Has redeemed us by His blood."**

**Alleluia! Not as orphans Are we left in sorrow now;  
Alleluia! He is near us; Faith believes, nor questions how.  
Though the cloud from sight received Him When the forty days were o'er,  
Shall our hearts forget His promise: "I am with you evermore"?**

**Alleluia! Bread of heaven, Here on earth our food, our stay;  
Alleluia! Here the sinful Flee to You from day to day.  
Intercessor, Friend of sinners, Earth's Redeemer, hear our plea  
Where the songs of all the sinless Sweep across the crystal sea.**

**Alleluia! King eternal, Lord omnipotent we own;  
Alleluia! Born of Mary, Earth Your footstool, heav'n Your throne.  
As within the veil You entered, Robed in flesh, our great High Priest,  
Here on earth both priest and victim In the eucharistic feast.**

**Alleluia! Sing to Jesus; His the scepter, His the throne;  
Alleluia! His the triumph, His the victory alone.  
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion Thunder like a mighty flood:  
"Jesus out of ev'ry nation Has redeemed us by His blood."**