

**Arusha Community Church – Morning Worship Service 7th Sunday of Easter
24th May 2020**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit



Our Lord is the lord who serve. Jesus Christ came into the flesh not to be served but to serve and to give his life as ransom for many. On the cross he offered himself as a spotless sacrifice for the sin of the whole world. Through his perfect life and death.

He accomplished forgiveness and salvation for all before the father in heaven. By his empty tomb and ascension into heaven he declared his victory over sin and death to all the world seated now at the father's right hand he graciously serves his church with the gift of salvation on the last day he will come again to gather his elect from every nation to celebrate the feast that will have no end.

Let's pray,

Heavenly father our provider our maker and our protector, through your goodness we are alive and healthy enough to gather and worship you. We praise and thank you for all that you have given us in Jesus name, Holy Lord we commit all of our good deeds to you and ask that everything we do be done for your glory forever and ever. Amen.

[Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35](#)

¹ May God arise, may his enemies be scattered;
may his foes flee before him.
² May you blow them away like smoke—
as wax melts before the fire,
may the wicked perish before God.
³ But may the righteous be glad
and rejoice before God;
may they be happy and joyful.
⁴ Sing to God, sing in praise of his name,
extol him who rides on the clouds^[a];
rejoice before him—his name is the LORD.
⁵ A father to the fatherless, a defender of
widows,
is God in his holy dwelling.
⁶ God sets the lonely in families,^[a]
he leads out the prisoners with singing;
but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched
land.
⁷ When you, God, went out before your
people,
when you marched through the
wilderness,^[a]

⁸ the earth shook, the heavens poured down
rain,
before God, the One of Sinai,
before God, the God of Israel.
⁹ You gave abundant showers, O God;
you refreshed your weary inheritance.
¹⁰ Your people settled in it,
and from your bounty, God, you
provided for the poor.

³² Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth,
sing praise to the Lord,
³³ to him who rides across the highest
heavens, the ancient heavens,
who thunders with mighty voice.
³⁴ Proclaim the power of God,
whose majesty is over Israel,
whose power is in the heavens.
³⁵ You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary;
the God of Israel gives power and
strength to his people.
Praise be to God!

Gathering hymn: # 506, How great Thou Art <https://youtu.be/mHqgQjJrxl8>

1. O Lord my God,
When I in awesome wonder
Consider all
The works Thy Hand hath made,
I see the stars,
I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy power throughout, he universe
displayed,

*Then sings my soul,
My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art!
How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul,
My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art!
How great Thou art!*

2. When through the woods
And forest glades I wander
I hear the birds
Sing sweetly in the trees,
When I look down
From lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook
And feel the gentle breeze,

Then sings my soul,.....

3. And when I think
That god his son not sparing,
Sent him to die
I scarce can take it in,
That on the cross
My burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin:

Then sings my soul,.....

4. When Christ shall come,
With shouts of acclamation,
And take me home,
What joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration
And there proclaim,
"My God, how great Thou art!"

Then sings my soul,.....

Confession of sin.

Most merciful God, we confess that we can't free ourselves from sins power. 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 neighbor 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 want to do your will. Help us to walk in your ways that people may see our good works and glorify your name. Amen.

God is merciful, and has given his son Jesus Christ to die for us. For his sake God forgives us all our sins. To all who believe in Jesus Christ he gives power to become the children of God, and gives them his Holy Spirit

Acclamation Hymn #25 All to Jesus I surrender. <https://youtu.be/SW8EA7DEQ2M>

All to Jesus I surrender
All to Thee I freely give
I will ever love and trust You
In Your presence daily live

*I surrender all
I surrender all
All to Thee my blessed Saviour
I surrender all*

All to Jesus I surrender
Lord I give myself to Thee
Fill me with Your love and power
Let Your blessings fall on me
I surrender all.....

All to Jesus I surrender
Now I feel the sacred flame
Oh the joy of full salvation
Glory, Glory to Your name
I surrender all.....

Acts 1:6-14

⁶ Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

⁷ He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ 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.”

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ “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.”

¹² Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk^(a) from the city. ¹³ When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴ They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

¹² Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

1Peter 5:6-11

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. ¹⁰ And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. ¹¹ To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymnal #793, You are my hiding place. <https://youtu.be/EIVC6rfX3Z8>

You are my hiding place
You always fill my heart
With songs of deliverance
Whenever I am afraid,
I will trust in You
I will trust in You
Let the weak say
'I am strong, In the strength of the Lord.'

John 17:1-11

17 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

⁶ “I have revealed you^{to} to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of^{thy} your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.

Sermon and Reflection.

The Ascension of Jesus is about God going away from us. And that is not bad. Our lives are filled with experiences of going away.

We wouldn't be here if we never left our mother's womb. Nor would our mother if she insisted on keeping us inside.

The Ascension of Jesus is a celebration of NOT staying inside. It is a celebration and a reminder to us to go out into the world, and to not be afraid. And the reason we are not afraid is because we believe – or try to believe -- that God is with us. That's God's promise: to be with us till the end of our days, to give us life to the full.

But that can't happen with Jesus still staying with his disciples then, or staying with us now. He has to go.

A child leaves home with some uncertainty and maybe even fear on the first day going to school. But when the child is successful, the child grows. If their parents are always with them, children have a hard time growing up.

We leave the certainty of self when we enter into the uncertainty of opening ourselves up to friendship. And when we are successful, we grow. This is true of all of life's stages.

When I was in primary school, I had a classmate whose parents wouldn't let him or his brother or sister play with the other kids on the way home from school. His parents wouldn't let him learn to ride a *bicycle* until he was 16, while the rest of us had already gotten our learners' license to drive a *car* at 15. His parents were overly protective. They were fearful for their children. But the results were disastrous: His younger brother was learning to ride a bicycle at 16. He put on the front brakes too hard. He had a bad fall over the handlebars and lost many of his front teeth. My classmate himself had a horrible car accident when he was 21. That was the first year his parents allowed him to drive. His younger sister was pregnant before she was 18. The rest of us, given the ordinary freedom and responsibility to grow up, did – mostly with little traumas, not major ones. Our parents let us go. God lets us go.

The Ascension is God saying: you can't hold on. Even God doesn't do that. You have to let go.

It's about Jesus saying to us: I'm leaving. I don't want you to be born again. I want you to grow up. And remember, like a good parent, in my own hands-off way I will be with you forever.

Perhaps we could ask ourselves as individuals, as families, as friends, a few questions:

How comfortable are we in trusting ourselves, in trusting others, in trusting God?

Do we take responsibility appropriate for our age? Can we let go?

*Do we give our children the freedom to learn by their mistakes while they are young, or are we over-protective? Do we young people give our parents reason to trust us, and to let us go, and to let us grow? Are they afraid **for** us? Are they afraid **of** us? Are we afraid **for** them? Are we afraid **of** them? Why?*

Do we believe and try to live Jesus' words and prayer for us in the Gospel reading: I will remain with them no longer, but they are still here. God, protect them so that they may be one as we are one.

Apostle creed

I believe in God, the father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ his only son our lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate was crucified and died and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the father. He will come again 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.

Offertory Hymn #1013. / This is my desire <https://youtu.be/obi5ZGujiuU>

This is my desire, to honor You
Lord, with all my heart, I worship You
All I have within me, I give You praise
All that I adore, is in You

*Lord, I give You my heart
I give You my soul
I live for you alone
And every breath that I take
Every moment I'm awake
Lord, have Your ways in me
(.....x 2 times)*

This is my desire, to honor You
Lord, with all my heart, I worship You
All I have within me, I give You praise
All that I adore, is in You

*Lord, I give You my heart
I give You my soul
I live for you alone
And every breath that I take
Every moment I'm awake
Lord, have Your ways in me
(.....3 times)*

Offertory prayer.

Lord you have blessed us with such love and goodness, we wonder at the beauty of your creation, we thank you for the sustenance of food and drinks and we cherish the love of family and friends. Lord we offer this gift too you with thankful heart and in joyous praise as we give of our money and resources, we surrender our whole being to you in worship and adoration. Lord may this offering extend the work of your kingdom in your church your community and into the beautiful world which you have made. Amen.

Corporate prayer.

Our Father and our God, we pray that in this period of crisis in our world that the Holy Spirit will use it to remind us of our need of You and our relationship with You and we pray that today if our relationship is not right that we'll make it right through Jesus Christ our Lord who came to die on the cross because You loved us. For we ask it in Your Name. Amen.

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.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Your's
now and for ever.
Amen.

Singing hymn 51. Be Thou my vision https://youtu.be/6CMclLT_Hjg

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one

Be thou my battle-shield, Sword for the fight
Be thou my dignity, though my delight.
Thou my soul's shelter Thou my high tower:
Raise thou me heavenward, O power of my
power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art

High King of Heaven, after victory won
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heav'n's
Sun
Heart of my own heart, whate'er befall
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all