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Ascension Day

Thursday, May 1, 2008, 7:30 p.m.

LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church

Cover art

Life of Christ, Canterbury Christ Church Abbey, 1140 (Psalter leaf)

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Note the Ascension scene is the bottom middle panel.

The Resurrection appears on its left and the Pentecost on its right.

LaGrave Avenue CRC stained glass chancel window

As you enter the sanctuary, you view the chancel window with its five sections depicting Christ's commission to his disciples. At the top of the center section are the ascended Christ and the dove signifying the Holy Spirit, flanked on both sides by angels – one with a trumpet, the other cymbals – attesting to Christ's ascension.

Ascension Day Service

Thursday, May 1, 2008, 7:30 p.m.

A single asterisk () indicates that all who are able are invited to stand.*

Passages in bold print are said or sung by all.

PRELUDE: Partita on "Crown Him with Many Crowns," Charles Callahan

*CALL TO WORSHIP:

Leader: The grace and peace of the Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Christ has ascended amid shouts of joy,
the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets.

People: **Sing praises to our King, sing praises.
Crown him with many crowns!**

*OPENING HYMN: "Crown Him with Many Crowns"
(st. 2 in unison)

PsH 410

*THRESHOLD PRAYER

WORDS OF WELCOME

King at His Birth

BIBLE READING: Luke 1:26-33

read by a liturgist and concluded by:

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

READING: from Soren Kierkegaard,
as retold in Philip Yancey's *Disappointment with God*

UNISON PRAYER:

**Incarnate King, Word become flesh,
you gave up your throne on high,
and made a manger your royal resting place.
You gave up the comforts of heaven for the trials of human life,
and you did it out of an infinite love for your people.
We stand in awe of your incarnation,
and we give you all glory, and honor and praise,
both now and forever. Amen.**

RESPONSE: "Once in Royal David's City"
(st. 2 men, st. 3 women, st. 5 in unison)

PsH 346

King of Daily Life

BIBLE READING: Mark 8:27-35

read by a liturgist and concluded by:

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

READING: from Malcolm Muggeridge's *Something Beautiful for God*

UNISON PRAYER:

**Gentle and loving Savior,
King of compassion and humility,
you did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
rather you took the form of a servant.
You did not seek to be served,
rather you came to minister to a broken world.
Lord Jesus, we take refuge in your mercy,
and we pray that we might daily have the courage
to pick up our crosses and follow you. Amen.**

*RESPONSE: "At the Name of Jesus"

PsH 467:1, 3, 4, 5

King at His Death

BIBLE READING: John 19:1-3, 13b-22

read by a liturgist and concluded by:

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

READING: Athanasius' "On the Incarnation, 54"

UNISON PRAYER:

**Thank you, suffering King.
You chose a cross for your throne and thorns for your crown.
You laid down your life for your people.
You were obedient even to death on a cross.
O crucified King, before you every knee shall bow
for you are worthy to receive all our praise. Amen.**

RESPONSE: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"
(stanza 3 a cappella)

PsH 384

King of Resurrection

BIBLE READING: 1 Peter 1:3-7

read by a liturgist and concluded by:

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

READING: from Neal Plantinga's *Beyond Doubt*

UNISON PRAYER:

O risen Christ,

your resurrection has lifted us up and filled us with rejoicing.

Fill us with your resurrected life.

Strengthen us to love those who hate us.

Help us forgive all those who have wronged us.

**Comfort us in the knowledge that you have trampled down death by death,
and that by your resurrection you have given life to those who have died.**

O risen King, we join all creation in celebrating your resurrection. Amen.

*RESPONSE:

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"

(st. 3, women begin each line, men join on "Alleluia")

PsH 388:1, 3, 4, 5

Christus Rex

BIBLE READING: Hebrews 10:12-23

read by a liturgist and concluded by:

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

MEDITATION: A Way through the Curtain

-led by Rev. Laura Smit

UNISON PRAYER:

To you, O Lord, belong blessing and honor and glory and power!

Our words echo the praise of heaven as you, Jesus Christ,

rise above the limitations of earth,

to sit forever on the right-hand side of God.

Though we cannot now ascend to where you are,

still raise our hopes and hearts, that our discipleship in this world

may be touched with the glory of heaven,

and our lives be signs and promises of the fullness of the life to come. Amen.

*RESPONSE: "Christ Triumphant, Ever Reigning"
(st. 1 & 2, all; st. 3, women; st. 4, men; st. 5, all)

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EVENING PRAYER

*CLOSING HYMN: "Alleluia, Sing to Jesus" **PsH 406 (alt. tune: HYFRYDOL)**
(st. 3 in unison)

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE: Fanfare, William Mathias

Participants

Liturgists: Stan Mast and Michael Abma
Preacher: Laura Smit
Organist: Normā de Waal Malefyt

Our hearty thanks to LaGrave Avenue CRC for hosting this service, and to co-sponsors Woodlawn CRC, the Center for Excellence in Preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary, and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship.

NOTES

Soren Kierkegaard parable in Philip Yancey, *Disappointment with God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, pp. 105-6)
Malcolm Muggeridge, "Whatsoever you do," from *Something Beautiful for God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971, pp. 78-79)
Adaptation of Athanasius' "On the Incarnation, 54"
From Neal Plantinga's *Beyond Doubt* (Grand Rapids: CRC Board of Publications, 1980, p. 101)
Easter Unison Prayer (in section Christus Rex), adapted from Gregory of Nazianzus