

Opening Sentences

Clap your hands, all you peoples!

**WE BOW BEFORE THE LORD—**

**THE MOST HIGH, WHO REIGNS O’ER ALL CREATION.**

Shout to God with songs of joy!

**WE WORSHIP THE CHRIST—**

**THE EXALTED ONE, WHO SITS ABOVE  
EVERY RULER AND AUTHORITY.**

Sing praises to God, sing praises!

**WE BLESS THE SPIRIT—**

**THE HAND OF GOD,  
WHO LIFTS US INTO HEAVENLY COURTS.**

Prayer of Approach

Lord of all time and space,

who was and is and is to come,

we worship and adore You

for You alone are worthy of our praise.

There is none before you,

none above you.

Your glory is ever before us

and this morning we are glad to take our place

alongside all those who even now,

on earth and in heaven,

are raising their voices to exalt You,

their minds to know You

and their hearts to love You.

May our worship be a fitting offering

– a gift in return to the giver of every good and perfect gift.

In Jesus’ name, we pray; Amen.

HYMN        Rejoice, the Lord is King

Confession

Jesus assures us that in him

we find repentance and forgiveness.

Therefore, let us confess our sins to God,

knowing that new life is given to us

through the power of Christ’s redeeming love.

**YOU CALL US TO BE YOUR WITNESSES**

**TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH**

**AND CLOTHE US WITH POWER FROM ON HIGH.**

**YET WE STAND STILL,**

**OUR EYES FIXED ON THE HEAVENS,**

**AS THOUGH JESUS WILL REAPPEAR IN THE CLOUDS**

**TO POINT THE WAY.**

**WE CLING TO THE PAST,**

**FOR WE FIND COMFORT IN FAMILIAR TRADITIONS,  
EVEN IF THEY NO LONGER SERVE YOUR PURPOSES.**

**WE FEAR THE FUTURE,  
FOR WE ARE UNCERTAIN  
WHAT A NEW SEASON OF MINISTRY MIGHT LOOK LIKE,  
EVEN THOUGH YOU PROMISE TO EMPOWER US.**

**REFOCUS US, O LORD,  
AND FILL US WITH EXPECTANT HOPE  
AS WE STEP INTO THE FUTURE YOU WILL BRING.  
BAPTIZE US AGAIN WITH YOUR SPIRIT  
AND ENLIGHTEN OUR HEARTS TO DISCERN YOUR WILL,  
SO THAT WE MIGHT EMBODY THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST  
AT WORK IN THE WORLD.**

Assurance of Pardon

God has shown to us the immeasurable riches of God's grace  
in kindness toward us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Therefore we can be confident in this:  
that though we were dead through our trespasses  
we have been given new life in Christ  
who raises us up with him  
and seats us with him in the heavenly place.

Rejoice and be glad,  
In Christ our salvation has come.  
Thanks be to God.

Time with the Young and Young at Heart

Ephesians 1:15–23

Psalm 47

Luke 24:44–53

Acts 1:1–11

Sermon      **IS THIS THE TIME?**

For those of us who are parents,  
we have all had the experience  
of being awakened  
in the darkness and deep silence  
of Christmas morning  
by eager eyes  
peering over the edge of the mattress,  
and asking:  
Is it time yet?

The expectancy of some great fulfilment of our hopes and dreams.  
The eager anticipation of finally being able to bring into fruition

that for which we have been waiting so long.  
As we join the story  
of Jesus and his disciples in the Acts of the Apostles;  
Jesus is once more teaching the disciples.  
After 40 days with the resurrected Jesus  
it must have seemed like the new normal  
for Jesus' disciples.

40 days is enough time for new habits and routines  
to be formed and solidified.  
And it seems,  
the post-Easter Jesus had picked up where he had been  
teaching the disciples about the wonder of the Kingdom of God.

But the disciples still clung to the old questions:  
Is this the time?  
When will you restore the Kingdom of Israel?

The long-seeded hope for a Messiah  
who would rule over the nation of Israel  
had been part of the consciousness of the children of God  
for so long  
that they could not imagine God doing a new thing.  
They could not imagine that maybe, just maybe,  
the Kingdom of God had already arrived.  
Even though they were living in the middle of it!

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead  
was the initiation of God's new Kingdom  
of justice and love.  
God defeated the hatred, division and death of this world  
as Jesus was raised from the dead.  
Jesus new life was,  
was not a personal experience;  
it was a complete reordering of Creation.  
Not just Jesus was raised from the dead  
but we too receive new life in Christ  
in that Easter moment.  
It is the reason for our rejoicing;  
that we need no longer fear death,  
or all those things that lead to death  
Jesus has been raised from the dead.  
God has prevailed.  
The Kingdom of God has come.

And yet for the disciples  
the old questions remained.  
"Is this the time?"

“Is this the time?”

In one sense,  
as we have described it,  
the disciples are living in this new time already;  
and yet we acknowledge that these events  
of which we read this morning,  
are an important moment.

“Is this the time?”

As Jesus teaches the disciples  
and the elusiveness of the Kingdom of God,  
"It is not for you to know the times or periods  
that the Father has set by his own authority",  
Jesus is taken up into heaven.

In his ascension,  
Jesus returns to the Father,  
to sit upon the throne  
of new Kingdom he had been sent to initiate.

The ascension of Jesus  
is a powerful sign of the in-breaking of this new Kingdom.  
For you cannot have a Kingdom without the King.  
Jesus' return to the heavenly places  
is a sign  
of the unity that exists  
between earth and heaven  
in this new kingdom.

And yet even as we acknowledge  
the Lordship of Christ,  
as he ascends into heaven,  
we too are left to ponder:  
“Is this the time?”

For while we believe  
that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead,  
defeating the powers of death and hell;  
and while we believe  
that Jesus has ascended into heaven  
to sit upon the throne;  
we are all too aware  
of the brokenness of our world.  
Suffering and worry seem all too real.  
Cruelty and hatred dominate our daily news.  
And we are aware of unjust economic systems  
that see people as commodities

and inputs to production,  
and not as the awe-filled images of God  
they were created to be;  
having intrinsic worth,  
not because of what they do,  
or what they produce,  
but because they have been created in the image of God.

As followers of Jesus,  
we stand in this moment of:  
already – but not yet.  
Already we have seen Christ come.  
Already we have witnessed his power.  
And because we have seen God's love  
manifested in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus  
we know that salvation has come.

And yet,  
we acknowledge the power sin  
which is far too appealing to us,  
and which tries each day to draw us back.

But we know that Christ has prevailed,  
and we know that we will too.  
That in our own lives  
and in the world in which we live  
we can choose life;  
We can choose hope;  
We can choose compassion;  
through the Christ who strengthens us.

That opportunity abounds  
for us to embody Christ's Kingdom now.  
That in small ways we witness the love of God each day;  
and in small ways we can touch the lives of others  
with the love of God and lead them to hope.

When will this work be complete?  
I do not know.  
Like the disciples as they questioned Jesus  
about the coming of the kingdom,  
perhaps the best we can do is the acknowledge  
"It is not for us to know the times or periods  
that the Father has set by his own authority."

But this one thing we know.  
That for the church  
this is the time.

This is our time  
to make Christ known  
in word and deed.

Moment for Mission

Prayers of the People

O God of all glory and majesty,  
we give you thanks for the gift of your Son,  
and his power at work in our lives and our gifts.  
We thank you for all the gifts we receive from you  
and for the benefits they afford us  
in bringing life to others in your name.  
Bless our lives that we may be your witnesses  
to the end of the earth  
as we love and serve you.

We give thanks to you, O God,  
in this and every age,  
for the healing power at work in Christ  
to fill our world with grace.  
Bind up the broken relationships  
that separate us one from another:  
neighbour from neighbour,  
nation from nation

We pray for our world,  
for all leaders, people, and nations,  
that they we may exercise a spirit of wisdom  
as we serve the common good.  
Shield all who suffer from the terrors of violence and war;  
bring them to safety and new life in you.  
Make us one family gathered up in your love  
and clothed in the power of your peace.

We pray for all who long to experience  
the immeasurable power of your love.  
Open our hearts to sing your praises  
and to share the story of your blessing,  
that all may come to know our living and ascended Christ.

Bless your people everywhere with food, shelter, healthcare,  
and employment sufficient for our flourishing,  
that all may thrive together by the riches of your grace,  
and fill us with a joy for justice  
that inspires us to do our part for the prosperity of all.

We pray for all in sickness or in need,  
that they may know your healing love  
and the power of Christ to bring life  
in the most difficult times.  
Keep us mindful of the hope and great power  
that we have in you  
as we offer your healing to others.

We pray for technicians and scientists  
who search for cures for all those conditions and diseases  
that ravage our human bodies.  
May their dedication to research be rewarded  
with discoveries of the wonder and intricacy of your creation.

We pray for all who have died,  
that, together, you will bring us to our glorious inheritance of Christ,  
the one who fills all in all.

Until that day,  
keep us faithful in prayer,  
as we continue to pray as Jesus taught his disciples:  
OUR FATHER >>>>

Hymn Jesus shall reign where're the sun

Charge and Benediction  
May the Lord bless you and keep you.  
May the Lord smile upon you  
and gracious to you.  
May the Lord look with kindness upon you  
and give you peace.

Choral Amen