

In the overall arrangement of John's Gospel, Jesus' public ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing; His prophetic office, reaches a climax of sorts at the end of chapter 16. Chapter 17, then, marks the beginning of an intensification of Jesus' High Priestly office. The High Priest will suffer and die for us. His prayer anticipates His unceasing intercession at the right hand of the Father. He prays first for Himself, then for the disciples, and finally for the whole church, for all who will believe in Him through the Word spread by the Apostles, and then through the church. Being one in Christ, means being one in faith for eternal life.

© Almighty God, You are our Light and our Salvation. We adore and praise You for Your manifold works of Love and mercy toward all the people of the world. We especially praise You for the gift of Your Only-Begotten Son. He has ascended into Heaven with the name which is above every name, to assume His position of power at Your Right Hand.

We thank You that You have crowned Him with glory for His perfect life, His loving obedience, His innocent sufferings, and His redeeming death. You have raised Him as king over all the Earth and head over all the church. Now we are able to confess that He is the true Lord of our hearts and the only Savior of mankind.

Endow all who serve in Your Church with a full measure of the mind of Your Holy Spirit. Allow the name of Christ to be confessed with all faithfulness, His cross uplifted, and His Gospel declared as the only power unto salvation. Grant Your Ministers and Missionaries grace and power, and grant Your people a true longing to come to Your house to praise Your Holy name.

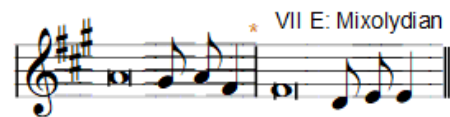
Pour out Your Spirit on our nation. Let our people dwell in peaceful homes and serve You in all godliness and honor. Bless all who labor with mind or hand. Ensure that they work with diligence and honesty and receive the just reward for their work. Give a sanctified intelligence to all in government, that they may perform their duties in such a manner as to receive Your favor.

Hear the prayers of all who are afflicted with any adversity. In the quiet hours of the night when there is no one to lighten the weight of pain, loneliness, and anxiety, grant them strength and the assurance of Your Love, Your power, Your presence and Your willingness to see them through their affliction.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. **(Time of silent prayer.)**
In all this we give glory to Jesus, Who has assumed His place on the eternal throne and is to be praised for ever and ever.

© Amen.

Chant Tone



Hear, my | cry, O God,*
listen | to my prayer;

You have been my —refuge;
a strong tower against the enemy.

For You, O God, have | heard my vows;*

You have given me the heritage of
those who fear Your name.

Prolong the life | of the king;*

may His years endure to all
generations!

May He be enthroned forever
be — fore God,*
appoint steadfast love and
faithfulness to watch | over Him!
So will I ever sing praises | to Your name.*
as I perform my vows day | after day.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy — Spirit;
as it was in the be — ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

Hear, my | cry, O God,*
listen | to my prayer;

(Antiphon, Psalm 61:1;
Psalm 61:3, 5-8)

O king of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not without consolation but send us the Spirit of truth whom You promised from the Father; for You live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Christ has risen | from the dead*

[God the Father] has crowned Him with glory and — honor,
You have given Him dominion over the works | of Your hands;*
You have put all things un | der His feet.

(Adapted from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: O Lord Jesus Christ, You are exalted far above all principalities, power, might and dominion. At Your name every knee should bow, not only in this world but also in the world to come. Please, accept our praise and adoration. As the Ascended Head of the Church, O Lord, You are aware of the many problems confronting the Church today. We do not ask that our work be made easier, but only for Your power to help us cope with the problems we have. Help us be your hands, doing deeds of kindness. Help us be Your mouth, witnessing to Your Love and salvation. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

THE GOSPEL LESSON FOR TODAY IS KNOWN AS, "THE HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER." Between the time of the institution of the Lord's Supper and the time Jesus and the remaining Apostles went out to the garden where Judas betrayed Him, Jesus took time to pray. The words of the prayer are recorded in John 17. In the High Priestly Prayer Jesus prayed for His immediate followers (those who had been with Him from the beginning of His three years of ministry) and those who will be given the faith to believe in Him and through that faith have eternal life (we who call ourselves Christians.) We welcome all who have come out to worship today. It is a wonder to blend our voices into one song as we present ourselves before God.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Christ Our High Priest

SPECIAL NOTES FOR THE DAY:

My friend and fellow Pastor, Jame Kramer, once complained that our first revision to the readings had eliminated the Sunday After the Ascension. He refused to give up the title. I didn't really think much of his complaint until I realized that (as a church) we almost never gather for Ascension Day so we miss out on the wonder and confusion of that day. Add to that the fact that the lessons and prayer for this day clearly allude to the Ascension of Christ, and we have a curious problem; this Sunday isn't really about the Resurrection but the Ascension of Christ. Thus I have chosen to call it "Ascension One" to honor my friend (who now resides in Heaven!)

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 61:1;) Psalm 61:3, 5-8

Our Gospel Lesson is a part of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. Psalm 61 was written by David. It is also a prayer (as evidenced by verse 1.) Verses 5-8 are a recollection of the blessings he received as king, and of course can also be applied to the office of Jesus as king. We are therefore praying that the kingdom of Jesus be enthroned before God, and by extension enthroned in our hearts, forever.

COLLECT

This prayer is especially profound. Jesus has Ascended to Heaven. He left us, and we praise Him for His exalted position. He did not leave us alone. We pray that He would keep us in His comfort by remembering His promise to send us the Holy Spirit.

FIRST LESSON—Acts 1:12-26

Judas' death (and his betrayal of Christ) struck hard. Peter was explaining that Judas' death was no accident but actually fulfilled the Old Testament. Peter referred to Psalm 69:25, which through his inspiration we have come to understand was prophecy of Judas. Peter quoted to Psalm 109:8 to explain that another would need to be appointed to take his place. This is an interesting "need." He was speaking before the Pentecost, and as such it was still necessary for the Word to belong to the Old Covenant, which required the 12 (the representatives of the 12 tribes.) At Pentecost the New Testament church was established. The importance of the 12 changed and the Apostles were not replaced as they were martyred or died. It has become the work of the Church to possess the Word of God and the office of the Ministry of the Church to proclaim the Word.

GRADUAL—(adapted from) Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7, Psalm 8:6

This is our last Sunday to use this collection of verses. We proclaim the Resurrection, and marvel that God the Father exalted Jesus to a place of power. Satan is crushed by His heel. We are saved.

EPISTLE LESSON—Revelation 22:1-6 (7-11) 12-20

Jesus promises that He is coming soon. John's response is a simple prayer: "Amen, Come, Lord Jesus." This is the climax to the book of Revelation and gives us the opportunity to consider the significance of Easter for the end of time and our Lord's Spirit. Christ's Resurrection finishes in His triumphant return. Jesus issued an invitation. Through the church's proclamation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the people of the world are invited to drink of the water of life, to wash robes in Christ's blood, to join the marriage feast. In response to the announcement of Jesus' speedy return, John prayed, "Amen, Come, Lord Jesus.", and we join the song.