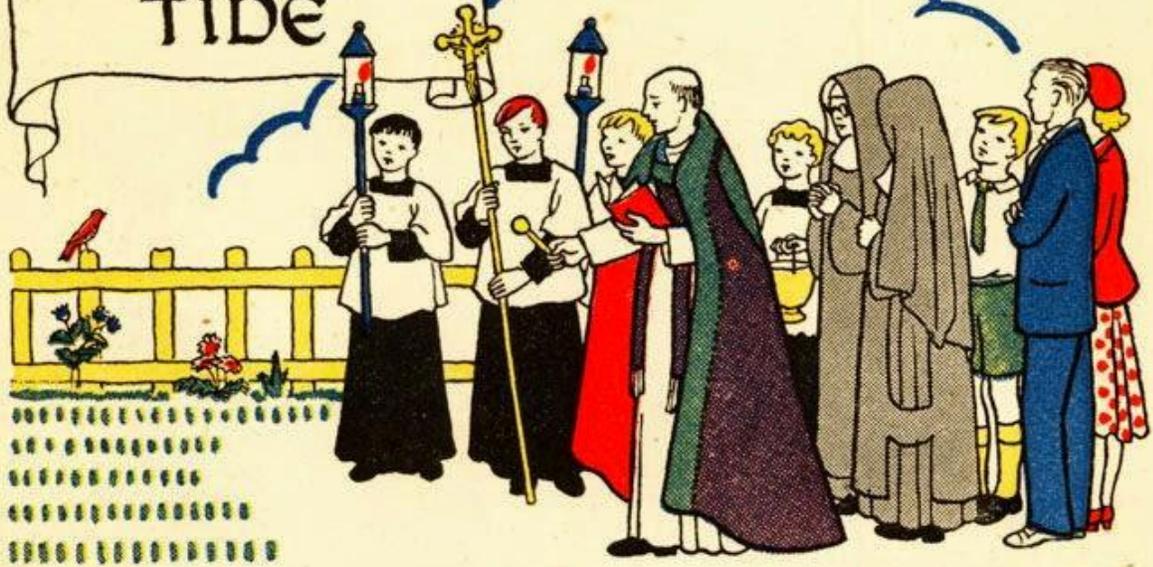


ROGATION-TIDE



ASCENSION DAY

This same Jesus shall so come in like manner



Lo I am with you always



Ascension Day Picnic and Eucharist Celebrating Rogationtide

The Liturgy of the Word begins with The Gathering

As the music begins, everyone is invited to gather at his or her picnic spots.

Song: I'll Fly Away

Some glad morning when this life is over, I'll fly a-way.

To a home on God's celestial shore, I'll fly a-way.

Chorus:

I'll fly away, oh glory, I'll fly a-way.

When I die hallelujah by and by, I'll fly a-way.

When the shadows of this life have grown, I'll fly a-way.

Like a bird from prison bars has flown, I'll fly a-way. <chorus>

Just a few more weary days and then, I'll fly a-way.

To a land where joy shall never end, I'll fly a-way. <chorus>

Song: This is the Day

This is the day, ***(this is the day)***

That the Lord has made ***(that the Lord has made)***

We will rejoice ***(we will rejoice)***

And be glad in it ***(and be glad in it)***

This is the day, that the Lord has made

We will rejoice and be glad in it

This is the day, ***(this is the day)***

That the Lord has made ***(that the Lord has made)***

Deacon: This is the Welcome Table of our Redeemer, and you are invited. Make no excuses, saying you cannot attend; simply come, for around this table you will find your family.

Congregational Volunteers:

-> Come not because you have to, but because you need to.

-> Come not to prove you are saved, but to seek the courage to follow wherever Christ leads.

-> Come not to speak but to listen, not to hear what's expected, but to be open to the ways the Spirit moves among you.

All:

So be joyful, not somber, for this is the feast of the reign of God, where the broken are molded into a Beloved Community, and where the celebration over evil's defeat has already begun.

A Reading

Love all God's creation, the whole of it and every grain of sand. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light! Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. And once you have perceived it, you will begin to comprehend it ceaselessly more and more every day.

The Brothers Karamazov, Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881),

Psalm— Clap Your Hands (Sung) based on Psalm 47

Clap your hands all you people,
Shout unto God with a voice of tri-umph!
Clap your hands all you people,
Shout unto God with a voice of praise!
Ho-san-na! Ho-san-na!
Shout unto God with a voice of tri-umph!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Shout unto God with a voice of praise!

The Meal begins

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

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

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Celebrant continues

Through your dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord. After his glorious resurrection he openly appeared to his disciples, and in their sight ascended into heaven, to prepare a place for us; that where he is, there we might also be, and reign with him in glory.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

All: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and ourselves, a living sacrifice. Pour out your Spirit upon this bread that it may be the Body and Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.

All: **Amen!**

All: The Lord's Prayer (sung)

Our Father (*echo*)

Who art in Heaven (*echo*)

Hallowed be thy name (*echo*)

Thy kingdom come

Thy will be done

On Earth
As in heaven

Please give us
All that we need
And forgive us
All our sins

As we forgive
Those who harm us
And lead us not
Away from you

But deliver us
From all evil
Hallowed be thy name

For thine is
The kingdom
And the Power
And the Glory

Forever
Alleluia
Hallowed be thy name
Hallowed be thy name

Celebrant: Holy food for Holy people. Share in the meal.

***Tonight we will be serving each other. After you receive the bread,
give your neighbor a piece, saying, "The Body of Christ."***

Song (during the passing of Bread) - *Let Us Break Bread Together*

Let us break bread to-gether on our knees.

Let us break bread to-gether on our knees.

When I fall down on my knees with my face to the rising sun,

Oh, Lord have mercy on me.

Let us drink wine to-gether on our knees.

Let us drink wine to-gether on our knees.

When I fall down on my knees with my face to the rising sun,

Oh, Lord have mercy on me.

Let us praise God together on our knees.

Let us praise God together on our knees.

When I fall down on my knees with my face to the rising sun,

Oh, Lord have mercy on me.

The Peace

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All: And also with you

After you have passed the peace, please feel free to fix your plates. We will spend our meal reflecting on the Gospel.

Liturgy of the Word

Each gathering is asked to read the scripture, reflection, and discussion questions at your table while you eat.

The Word

Luke 24:44-53 The Voice (VOICE)

Jesus: ⁴⁴I've been telling you this all along, that everything written about Me in the Hebrew Scriptures must be fulfilled—everything from the law of Moses to the prophets to the psalms.

⁴⁵ Then He opens their minds so they can comprehend the meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Jesus: ⁴⁶ This is what the Scriptures said: that the promised Anointed One should suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ that in His name a radical change of thought and life should be preached, and that in His name the forgiveness of sins should be preached, beginning in Jerusalem and extending to all nations. ⁴⁸ You have witnessed the fulfillment of these things. ⁴⁹ So I am sending My Father's promise to you. Stay in the city until you receive it—until power from heaven comes upon you.

⁵⁰ Then He leads them out to Bethany. He lifts up His hands and blesses them, ⁵¹ and at that moment, with His hands raised in blessing, He leaves them and is carried up into heaven. ⁵² They worship Him, then they return to Jerusalem, filled with intense joy, ⁵³ and they return again and again to the temple to celebrate God.

Reflection:

The ecological teaching of the Bible is simply inescapable: God made the world because He wanted it made. He thinks the world is good, and He loves it. It is His world; He has never relinquished title to it. And He has never revoked the conditions, bearing on His gift to us of the use of it, that oblige us to take excellent care of it. If God loves the world, then how might any person of faith be excused for not loving it or justified in destroying it? - Wendell Berry

A brief history of Rogation Days: The Rogation Days, the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day, originated in Vienne, France (not Vienna, Austria), in 470 after a series of natural disasters had caused much suffering among the people. Archbishop Mamertus proclaimed a fast and ordered that special litanies and prayers be said as the population processed around their fields, asking God's protection and blessing on the crops that were just beginning to sprout. The Latin word *rogare* means "to ask", thus these were "rogation" processions. In an agricultural society, closely connected with the soil and highly vulnerable to the uncertainties of nature, this was an idea that took root quickly, and the custom spread around Europe and over to Britain. The Sunday before the Rogation Days came to be considered a part of Rogationtide (or "Rogantide") and

was known as Rogation Sunday. The Gospel formerly appointed for that day was from John 16, where Jesus tells his disciples to ask, and ye shall receive.

While technically they were days of fasting, for which they were also known as "Grass Days," for the meatless meals that were enjoined, the Rogation Days developed into a popular festival, celebrating the arrival of spring and serving other purposes, as well. Other names for these days include "Gang Days," from the Anglo-Saxon gangen, "to go," and "Cross Days," both titles signifying the processions with crosses and banners around the countryside. In some parishes, the procession took more than one day and the whole business became an occasion for several days of picnics and revels of all sorts, particularly among those who trooped along at the fringes of the religious aspects of the procession.

The route of the walk was around the boundaries of the parish (the town limits, not just the church property) which was a civil as well as a religious unit. Thus, the processions were useful in teaching people, particularly the young, their parish boundaries. Known as "beating the bounds," the processions customarily stopped at boundary marks and other significant landmarks of the parish, such as a venerable tree, or a great rock, or perhaps a pond. The priest would read the Gospel and perhaps affix a cross to the landmark. Then the boys of the parish would suffer some indignity intended to help them remember the spot. Boys were bumped about against rocks and trees, thrown into the water, held upside-down over fences, thrown into bramble patches, or beaten with willow wands-- and then given a treat in compensation. In later times, the marchers beat the boundary marker with the willow wands, beating the bounds, rather than the boys (thank goodness!)

The reminder of boundaries had another important impact on communal life. In a poem by the 20th century American Robert Frost, the poet's neighbor asserts "good fences make good neighbors." Boundaries are often very important in relationships. As members of parishes beat the bounds (the markers, not the boys,) they would often encounter obstructions and violations of boundaries. The annual beating of the bounds provided an opportunity to resolve boundary issues. **It also led to the tradition of seeking reconciliation in personal relationships** during Rogationtide. The sharing of a specially brewed ale, called Ganging Beer, and a mysterious pastry, called Rammalation Biscuits, at the end of the walk was a good way of sealing the reconciliation (an homage to breaking bread and sharing wine perhaps?)

George Herbert gave the following good reasons to beat the bounds:

- 1) a blessing of God for the fruits of the field;
- 2) Justice in the preservation of the bounds;
- 3) Charity, in living, walking and neighborly accompanying one another, with reconciling of differences at that time, if they be any;
- 4) Mercy, in relieving the poor by a liberal distribution of largess which at that time is or ought be made.*

Today, we are marrying elements of the Rogationtide traditions with a celebration of the Ascension of Christ. In today's scripture we see Christ blessing and exhorting the disciples. Specifically we hear Christ saying about himself *"that in His name a radical change of thought and life should be preached, and that in His name the forgiveness of sins should be preached, beginning in Jerusalem and extending to all nations."*

Next, we read a quote from Wendall Berry, a man who believes strongly that the care of the earth is a Christian responsibility.

And finally we read a bit of the history of the Rogation Day celebrations and traditions.

In each of these selections there is a common theme – the theme of care and reconciliation.

The care for souls, and the reconciliation of those souls with God.

The care for the earth, and the reconciliation between humanity and nature.

The care for community, and the reconciliation between neighbors.

Questions for Discussion:

- ➔ At this juncture in your life, in which of these stories of care and reconciliation do you see yourself most?
- ➔ What *"radical change of thought and life"* is being revealed to you in these readings?
- ➔ What is one action you can take this week to began to care for or reconcile your relationship with God, Nature, or Neighbor?

Deacon: Let us proclaiming these words together

All: We believe in one God, who gave birth to the cosmos and to us, creating, out of nothing but his will, a world of rocks, plants, and human longing; whose eyes will not fail to cry for it all.

We believe in one God, who redeems the waste of all things good, weaving, from the grief's of our freedom, new and unhoped-for things; whose mercy will not fail to heal it all.

We believe in one God, who lives among all people in all places, calling us from our despair and sleep to live out Easter in our generation; whose love will not fail to hold us all.

(written by Sophie Churchill)

The Intercessions

Celebrant: Let us ask the God of creation
to send a blessing upon us.

Worship Leader: Upon the rich earth send a blessing, O Lord. Let the earth
be fruitful and its resources be hallowed. We ask in faith:
we ask you to hear us, good Lord.

Lay Leader: Upon human labor send a blessing, O Lord.
Prosper the work of our hands; may all find dignity and just reward in their
work; free the exploited and oppressed.
We ask in faith:
we ask you to hear us, good Lord.

Farmer: Upon the produce of the earth send a blessing,
O Lord. Guide into a sustainable future,
and give us the will to share the fruits of the world.
We ask in faith:
we ask you to hear us, good Lord.

Congregant: Upon the seas and waters send a blessing,
O Lord. Teach us to cherish the water of the earth,
and to conserve the seas, lakes and rivers.

We ask in faith:

we ask you to hear us, good Lord.

Deacon: Upon aid agencies send a blessing, O Lord.

Where the earth is parched

and the well has run dry;

where war brings want, and children go hungry;

where the poor cry out for bread and for justice,

give hands to care and heal,

and compel us to be generous.

We ask in faith:

we ask you to hear us, good Lord

Congregant: We ask you to hear us, good Lord,

for the sake of your Son,

our Savior Jesus Christ.

Deacon: Let us now name before God those for whom we offer our
personal prayers, either silently or aloud.

Celebrant:

Almighty God, the Giver of all that is good, you promise to hear the prayers of
those who ask in your Son's Name. We pray that in your mercy you will supply all
our needs and answer our petitions, as we daily offer our lives to your praise and
glory. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing the Cup

*We bless our cup at the end of our meal, just as Jesus did when he was at table
with the disciples.*

Celebrant: As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

All: **Glory to you forever and ever.**

Celebrant: Pour out your Spirit upon this wine that it may be the Blood of Christ. In the fullness of time bring us, with all your saints, from every tribe and language and people and nation, to feast at the banquet prepared from the foundation of the world. Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever.

All: **Amen!**

After you receive the cup, wipe the side, and pass it to your neighbor, saying, "The Blood of Christ."

Song as the Cup is passed: Please Break this Bread (Pour out your wine, Lord)

Chorus:

Please break this bread, Lord, please break this bread.

Bread of your body risen in us.

Pour out your wine, Lord, pour out your wine.

Let it flow through us to a thirsty world.

We've come to eat your bread, make us one.

We've come to drink your wine, make us one.

We've come in mem'ry of your death to give you thanks.

We've come to celebrate your life and give your praise.

Let us be broken, O Lord, to feed your sheep.

Let us be poured out, O Lord, that all may see

That you are Spirit and life that satisfy,

That you are risen in us to set us free.

After last chorus:

Please break this bread, Lord, please break this bread.

Pour out your wine, Lord, pour out your wine.

After everyone has passed the cup we will begin the Blessing of the Bounty

Blessing of the Bounty

At this time you are invited to bring any seeds, produce, or canned items forward to be blessed as we are lead in song. Children are welcome to sit at the foot of the table so they can see the blessings up close.

Prayers of Blessing

Celebrant: If you have gathered or brought any soil, seeds, eggs, or other items from the earth, please bring them forward now.

Prayer for Seeds

Celebrant (holding the seeds up)

Creating God, you have given seed for the sower and bread to the people.

Nourish, protect, and bless the seeds which your people have sown in hope. By your loving and bountiful giving, may they bring forth their fruit in due season, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Prayer for the Soil

Celebrant (holding soil up)

Giver of life, we give you thanks that in the richness of the soil, nature awakens your call to spring. We praise you for the smell of freshly tilled earth, the beauty of a cleanly cut furrow, and a well-plowed field. We ask that you help us to be good stewards of the land. In the name of the one who gives us new life, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen,

Prayer for Water and Rain

Celebrant: (Holding the water up)

Sustaining God, we receive the fruits of the earth from you. We give you thanks for the smell of the earth after rain, for its welcome cooling, and its necessary

hydration for the land. We ask that the rain come as often as it is needed so that crops may flourish and the coming harvest be indeed bountiful.

Prayer for the Harvest

Celebrant: (Holding the eggs up)

Almighty and everlasting God, Creator of all things and giver of all life, let your blessing be upon this harvest and grant that its bounty may serve your glory and nourish your people; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Song of Thanksgiving– Allelu, Alleluia - Praise Ye the Lord

Allelu, allelu, allelu, alleluia. Praise Ye the Lord. (repeat)

Praise ye the Lord, Alleluia. (x3) Praise Ye the Lord.

Celebrant: Erase all the lines, O God, that we have drawn in our minds to separate the life that is “not-me” from the life that is “me.” Enlarge the boundaries of our hearts to include soil and water, air and animals, friend and stranger – all that, in Christ, you’ve called us to love and nourish with thankful praise.

All: Amen.

Doxology (sung)

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Deacon: May the spirit and grace of our Creator God, guide you every coming and your every going, that you may act justly, love kindly and walk humbly as God’s friend and companion on this lovely, lively planet.

All: Amen.

Everyone is welcome to take a small sample of the blessed soil or seeds home.

Thank you to the following people:

Celebrant: Marna Franson, St. Nicholas, Maumelle Arkansas
Deacons: Peggy Cromwell, Linda Brown, St. Peter's, Conway, Arkansas
Worship Leader: Jeannie McCabe, St. John's Fort Smith, Arkansas
Liturgist: Jerusalem Greer, St. Peter's, Conway, Arkansas
Hospitality: Xandra Sharpe, St. Peter's Conway, Arkansas

This celebration is dedicated to the memory of Richard Boosey who loved the land and shared it's fruits with gladness and generosity of heart.