



ASCENSION SUNDAY

First United Methodist Church of Riverside (<https://firstchurchriverside.org>)

May 16, 2021: 7th Sunday of Easter; Ascension Sunday

ALL ARE WELCOME TO WORSHIP ONLINE (Livestream): 10:00 AM

<https://facebook.com/firstchurchriverside/live>

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE: *"Prayer from Christ Ascending Towards His Father"* (based on John 17:6, 11) from *L'Ascension* by Olivier Messiaen / Robert Phillips, Organist

TRINITY BELLS / Robert Phillips, Organist

CALL TO WORSHIP: (Adapted from Psalm 47) / Mateo Mamea, Liturgist

(Liturgist) Sing to God with songs of exaltation.

(All) Clap your hands, you people of God.

(Liturgist) Sing praises to the Lord, sing praises.

(All) Shout with joy, you people of promise.

(Liturgist) See the power of the Most High God.

(All) Look to the heavens, you people of Spirit.

(Liturgist) Sing to God with songs of exaltation.

(All) Clap your hands, you people of God. Amen!

OPENING HYMN: #327 *"Crown Him with Many Crowns"* (Verses 1, 2 & 4 only) (Words by Matthew Bridges and Godfrey Thring; Music by George J. Elvey) / All (Led by Valerie Othon, Hymn Leader; Accompanied by Robert Phillips)

Verse 1

Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne.

Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns
all music but its own.

Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless King
through all eternity.

Verse 2

Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save.
His glories now we sing,
who died, and rose on high,
who died, eternal life to bring,
and lives that death may die.

Verse 4

Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side,
those wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
For thou hast died for me;
thy praise and glory shall not fail
throughout eternity.

WELCOME / Rev. J. T. Kim, Pastor

THE CHURCH AT PRAYER / Rev. J. T. Kim

Sharing of Joys & Concerns

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Adapted from Acts 1, Luke 24)

The story of Ascension Day challenges us to seek the presence of the risen Christ in the here and now – in our lives, our community, and our world. Please join me in the Prayer of Confession:

(Pastor) When we “look up to heaven” for our answers, and so fail to seek the Spirit at work in our midst –

(All) Lord, have mercy.

(Pastor) When we forget to repent of our wrongdoing; when we fail to forgive others for mistakes of their own, and so fail to give witness to the risen Christ –

(All) Christ, have mercy.

(Pastor) When we doubt the power of your Spirit, which is at work changing hearts and opening minds, and so fail to embrace relationships of righteousness and peace –

(All) Lord, have mercy.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

(Pastor) Friends, the love of God revealed in Jesus
Forgives us, heals us, and sets us free
to witness to his love in the world.
(All) Amen!

CHILDREN'S TIME / Mateo Mamea

OLD TESTAMENT READING: 2 Kings 2:1-12 (NRSV) / Mateo Mamea, Liturgist
Elijah Ascends to Heaven

¹Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. ²Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. ³The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent."

⁴Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. ⁵The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be silent."

⁶Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. ⁷Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. ⁸Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

⁹When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit." ¹⁰He responded, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not." ¹¹As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. ¹²Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

(Liturgist) This is the Word of God for the people of God!

(All) Thanks be to God! Amen!

GOSPEL READING: Luke 24:44-53 (NRSV) / Mateo Mamea, Liturgist
The Ascension of Jesus

⁴⁴Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and he

said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

⁵⁰Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵²And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; ⁵³and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

(Liturgist) This is the Gospel of Christ!

(All) Glory to You, O Christ! Amen!

INTERLUDE: "*Crown Him with Many Crowns*" (By Wilbur Held) (Video) / Organ Solo by Robert Phillips

NEW TESTAMENT READING: Acts 1:1-11 (NRSV) / Mateo Mamea, Liturgist
The Promise of the Holy Spirit

¹In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning ²until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over the course of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

The Ascension of Jesus

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

(Liturgist) This is the Word of God for the people of God!

(All) Thanks be to God! Amen!

SERMON: "FAR ABOVE, FAR BEYOND" / Rev. J. T. Kim, Pastor

HYMN OF DEDICATION: #312 *“Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise”* (Words by Charles Wesley; Music by Robert Williams, harm. by David Evans) / All (Led by Valerie Othon; Accompanied by Robert Phillips)

Verse 1

Hail the day that sees him rise, Alleluia!
To his throne above the skies, Alleluia!
Christ, awhile to mortals given, Alleluia!
Reascends his native heaven, Alleluia!

Verse 2

There the glorious triumph waits, Alleluia!
Lift your heads, eternal gates, Alleluia!
Christ hath conquered death and sin, Alleluia!
Take the King of glory in, Alleluia!

Verse 3

See! the heaven its Lord receives, Alleluia!
Yet he loves the earth he leaves, Alleluia!
Though returning to his throne, Alleluia!
Still he calls the world his own, Alleluia!

Verse 4

See! he lifts his hands above, Alleluia!
See! he shows the prints of love, Alleluia!
Hark! his gracious lips bestow, Alleluia!
Blessings on his church below, Alleluia!

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING / Mateo Mamea, Liturgist

(Liturgist) Christ calls us to participate in a mission of reconciliation throughout the world – inviting us to participate in the building up of the body of Christ, where justice and peace prevail. Let us give generously of our time, talents, and treasure to foster this mission.
(All) Amen!

HOW TO GIVE:

- Online: Please click www.firstchurchriverside.org/giving
- Scan: This QR code (shown below) will lead you to our church website’s eGiving page (it’s handy if you use your smart phone).



- Mail: To First UMC of Riverside, 4845 Brockton Ave., Riverside, CA 92506.
- Drop Off: Please use the church's mail slot.
- Automatic Draft: Please set it up through your bank, if you have not done so yet.

Thank you so much for being faithful to God through our Church!

DOXOLOGY: #95 *"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"* / All (Led by Valerie Othon, Accompanied by Robert Phillips)

**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.
Amen.**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (UNISON) / All (Led by Mateo Mamea, Liturgist)
(All) O God, we bring to you this offering, and ask you to bless it and use it to make your reign known in our world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

SENDING HYMN: #3186 *"Days of Elijah"* (By Robin Mark) / All (Led by Valerie Othon; Accompanied by Robert Phillips)

Verse 1

**These are the days of Elijah, declaring the Word of the Lord.
And these are the days of your servant, Moses; righteousness being restored.
And though these are days of great trials, of famine and darkness and sword,
Still we are the voice in the desert crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."**

Refrain

**Behold he comes riding on the clouds,
Shining like the sun at the trumpet call.
So lift your voice, it's the year of Jubilee.
And out of Zion's hill salvation comes.**

Verse 2

**These are days of Ezekiel, the dry bones becoming as flesh.
And these are the days of your servant, David, rebuilding the temple of praise.**

**And these are the days of the harvest; the fields are as white in the world.
And we are your laborers in your vineyard declaring the Word of the Lord.
[Refrain]**

RESPONSIVE BENEDICTION (Adapted from Luke 24) / Led by Pastor J. T. Kim
(Pastor) Lift up your eyes to the heavens.

(All) Christ ascended to show us the way.

(Pastor) Trust in the power of the Spirit.

(All) Christ ascended to clothe us with power.

(Pastor) Go as witnesses of the risen Lord.

(All) Christ ascended to bring us eternal life. Amen!

POSTLUDE: *“Hail the Day that Sees Him Rise”* (By Wilbur Held) / Robert Phillips, Organist

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God Bless You! Stay in Love with God!



(Our Big Thanks to the Worship/Media Team members who have faithfully served today:

Liturgist & Children's Time: Mateo Mamea

Organist: Robert Phillips

Hymn Leader: Valerie Othon

Media/Livestream Team: Dan Lonsbery, Cassie Lonsbery, and Gayla Lonsbery

Online Greeter: Kris Lovekin

Altar Décor: Rev. Beverly Devine and the Décor Team)

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