

Service of Holy Communion for June First
(Ascension)

Invitation:

One: Before you go, before you ascend into all the world with Christ, you are invited to pause and join together at this table. Pause to nourish your soul and find strength in this fellowship. Pause to gather your courage and to feed upon God's abundant grace. Then go follow Christ into all the world.

Confession:

All: You have caught us just standing and watching you go off in a cloud of dust. We have not gone into our Jerusalem, nor our Judea, Samaria, much less into the unknown corners of the world. Forgive us for just standing and watching as you continue to bring salvation to the world without us. We know that the harvest is great, and the laborers are few. Forgive us. Today we will get moving and follow you. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

One: Jesus says: "I am with you always, even to the bitter end, never to leave you, never to forsake you." So go! Knowing that not only are all your sins forgiven but that others are still waiting to hear this good news.

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Thanksgiving:

One: You are called to ascend with Christ.

All: We will follow you, wherever you may go.

One: Know that Christ goes before you.

All: We ascend with Christ, here, there, and to the ends of the earth.

One: Rejoice for you can still follow Christ.

All: We fill our world with our praise and thanksgiving for the one who brings salvation to all the world.

One: We are excited and filled with praise.

Our time with you is not over, it is only beginning.

Jesus says: "Come and follow me!"

The Angels ask: "Why are you just standing around?"

Let us ascend.

Let us arise.

Let us go into all the world,

Christ has some transformation to do

and invites us to join in the recreation of the world.

The whole creation rejoices in our coming

for we bring good news of the greatest joy.
All of heaven rejoices with us as we bring
each new soul into the kingdom of God to share with us in eternal life.
We rejoice and say:

All: We are your witnesses!
The spirit of the Lord is upon us,
we are anointed to bring good news,
to bring release to captives,
recovery of sight to the blind,
freedom to the oppressed,
and to proclaim God's favor. (Based on Luke 4:18-19)

One: We follow the ascended Christ.
Conceived by the Holy Spirit,
Born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
crucified and buried.
On the third day Jesus arose,
and ascended,
And so shall we
for the work of Christ continues
and we will not just stand around.
We have feet to wash
and those who need to hear
that in the name of Jesus Christ they can stand up and walk!

There are those who still need to hear
how Jesus took the bread of the oppressed with gratitude,
prayerfully broke it and shared it with the world, saying:
"Take and eat, this is my body, broken as a gift to you."

There are those who still need to hear
how Jesus took the wine of God's promise with gratitude,
prayerfully filled a cup and shared it with the world, saying:
"Take a sip, this cup is filled with my blood, which I pour out
to proclaim the truth of God eternal covenant made with everyone.
A promise to forgive not just our sins, but the sins of the whole world."

There are those who still need to hear
so we cannot just stand around and do nothing,
So we join with Christ to live out this holy mystery:

All: Christ died for your salvation.
Christ lives to bring you abundant life.
Christ comes again to transform the earth.

One: Urgent Call, Compassionate Heart
Open for us this bread and wine,
that we might experience the body and blood of Christ fully,
our ascended Lord.

Urgent Call, Compassionate Heart
open for the world our lives,
that they may experience your church fully,
the body and bride of Christ, our ascended Lord.

Urgent Call, Compassionate Heart
move in the lives of the United Methodists of the Choptank Charge
so that they are not caught just watching Christ ascend.
Help them ascend with Christ into the world around them.
Use them to serve with Christ as Jesus works to redeem those in their communities.
Use their lives to work with Christ in ways that transform this nation and bring healing.
Use them to further Christ's work around the globe,
transforming lives and bringing God's kingdom upon the earth.

**All: With these prayers we ascend with Christ.
With these prayers we open our lives to the Holy Spirit.
With these prayers our minds are renewed by our Creator.
May our lives fill the world with their glory, honor and praise forever. Amen.**

One: Now in the language of our hearts we pray the prayer Jesus taught us:

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Prayer after communion:

All: With humble gratitude we have joined with you in this holy mystery. We have renewed our devotion to you and heard afresh our calling to follow you to the very ends of the earth. Where you go, we will go; where you live, we will live, your people will be our people. Now send us out once again to be your hands and feet, the incarnation of your love in the world. May everyone see Christ clearly in us. Amen.