

Order of Service BPUC 24.5.20

Welcome

John

Good morning Banora Point UC family! Welcome to online church, esp if you are visiting us through the webpage. Today is Ascension Sunday and the last day of Easter in the church calendar. Also today we will recognise the work of local Chaplains – who play a vital role in hospitals, aged care facilities and schools. Next Sunday is Pentecost – the coming of the Holy Spirit and birthday of the Church. These two are brilliant Christian themes worth celebrating. Please stay with me.

NB. The [blue Youtube](#) links below are some worship songs for you to open and sing along with. Just click on the link

As a way into our celebrating today, here are two songs.

To God be the Glory –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CeBoSQsBR0>

Majesty ('Worship His Majesty')

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWSy18_Jv7Y

For a **call to worship – read Psalm 93**: New Living Translation

¹ The LORD is king! He is robed in majesty. Indeed, the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength. The world stands firm and cannot be shaken.

² Your throne, O LORD, has stood from time immemorial. You yourself are from the everlasting past. ³ The floods have risen up, O LORD. The floods have roared like thunder; the floods have lifted their pounding waves.

⁴ But mightier than the violent raging of the seas, mightier than the breakers on the shore—the LORD above is mightier than these!

⁵ Your royal laws cannot be changed. Your reign, O LORD, is holy forever and ever.

Prayer Adoration & Confession

Dear heavenly Father, God of love, we come before you this Ascension morning to express our adoration and love to you. You are worthy of our deepest gratitude and honour. We rejoice that Jesus rose in Majesty to be with you as our Lord and Saviour. May this service reflect our love for you and our delight to be your people.

Merciful God, we confess our sins, conscious and unconscious; in word and in deed we have not always been loving or kind or humble. Lord forgive us. And we thank you for the forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus Christ. Lead us by your Holy Spirit to live godly, upright and compassionate lives – to the glory of your holy name. Amen

Song Thine be the glory Risen conquering Son

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbBOOmKMLmI> Traditional

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmJgbpJQHYU> More modern

Announcements see the Pointer for this week

OFFERING please continue to put aside your offering or follow the suggestions listed in the Pointer over recent weeks.

PRAYER: Loving Father, we praise you for linking our lives with yours through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord & Saviour. We offer these gifts as signs of our gratitude and our commitment to make your good news known through our worship, witness and service. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Thanksgiving & Intercession (for Chaplains)

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/7143675> (St Morton Presbytery - see the message on Chaplaincy)

There are many Chaplains ministering in various settings in places where COVID 19 has created restrictions. They have been there in Hospitals, Aged Care Facilities, Schools and other places when general access is very limited. Australia is seeing a sharp rise in the number of Chaplains, and the diversity of contexts in which they minister. Isn't it amazing that as less people (as a percentage) go to church, God is raising up more Christians to minister as Chaplains in the places they do go!

Keep praying for our local Chaplains, and for the ones you know personally: (as listed by Rev Michael Boyd):

- Rachel Thompson: Murwillumbah High School
- Marty Thompson: Developing Chaplaincy presence in clubs and pubs
- Gavin Irvine: Bilambil Public School
- Allyson Stuttle: Tweed Heads Public School
- Brenda Stuttle: Tumbulgum Public School
- Eilla Appo: Pacific Coast Christian School
- Chad Rynehart: Lindisfarne Anglican Grammar
- Kate Morris: Southern Cross University Gold Coast
- Alan Pillay: Pastor of Living Well Church in Pottsville is also the Corporate Chaplain for Hutchinsons
- John Hopping: as well as his supply ministry at Banora Uniting he continues chaplaincy at Cedarbrook Aged Care Mudgeeraba
- Ganggalah Church training Indigenous chaplains
- Police: Tweed Byron Police District as they appoint a local minister as Honorary Chaplain
- Pray also for the local SRE teachers

Songs

Abide with me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTQoPg856Ow>

Open the eyes of my heart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9F4hP2AZAw>

The Servant Song

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsBCCz3Y7_w

Bible Reading Luke 24:44-53 NLT

44 Then Jesus said, "When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. 46 And he said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. 47 It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.' 48 You are witnesses of all these things.

49 "And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven."

50 Then Jesus led them to Bethany, and lifting his hands to heaven, he blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up to heaven. 52 So they worshiped him and then returned to Jerusalem filled with great joy. 53 And they spent all of their time in the Temple, praising God.

Sermon Jesus, Sends and Ascends Luke 24:44-53

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GII108jJ9S4>

A written version of the sermon is at the end

Songs

There is a redeemer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUqfdaCLm0Y>

'Take My Life and Let it be'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQ93HVuYd5Y> Traditional

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPzSBuN7xww> More modern

Prayer Take a few minutes to pray for those in our Synod, Presbytery, Church Council, and for your families, friends and neighbours.... Pray for the filling of God's Spirit, for health and the dedication to godliness....

Response to God's Grace and our calling

May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. Go out into the coming week in peace to love and serve God and others. *In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Benediction **Rev 5: 12ff** *I heard the voices of thousands of angels... singing out: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain— to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing."*
13 And then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. They sang: "Blessing and honour and glory and power belong to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb forever & ever." And all God's people said 'Amen'.

Jesus: Ascends and Sends Luke 24:45-53

'**See Detroit like we do**' was a major urban development slogan in the US city of Detroit in 2017. The developers used the slogan to launch its vision for the city's future. They urged everyone '**See our city like we do**'. But the project came to an abrupt halt when members of the community noticed that a large segment of Detroit's people were unrepresented in all the advertising and signs.

African Americans are the majority of Detroit's population and workforce yet were absent from the white-faced project supporters and signs

The problem was a **blind-spot** in the slogan '**See Detroit like we do**'. The '**we**' didn't include a whole swag of black people and totally missed the mark. It failed.

The Jewish followers of Jesus had a **blind-spot** in their vision for the future. As children of Abraham and holders of the Hebrew Scriptures they were immersed and focused in their own national identity as '**Israelites**'. They didn't really get Jesus' concern for Samaritans, Roman soldiers, and Greeks. They missed the promise God gave to Abraham in Gen 12:3 that through him and his offspring '*all the peoples on earth will be blessed*'

So again, in this final passage of Luke Gospel Jesus takes a moment to briefly explain why he, as the crucified yet risen Messiah, has only completed the start of his fuller mission – to take the **good news** to *all the nations*. **Guys 'See the world the way I do'** My message is for everyone – not just Jews v.47. Praise God for that (we are included)

Prayer: *Father thank you for Jesus, the living word and thank you for the Bible, the written word which points to Jesus, and thank you for your Spirit who brings together the living word and the written for our edification, instruction and inspiration. Open our minds and hearts now to receive all that you desire for us. In your great name we pray. Amen*

As we come to the end of Luke's Gospel, it is important to recall that Luke is only half finished with his story of Jesus' mission. The sequel comes in **the book of Acts**. The ascension of Jesus is the link between the two volumes. I've divided up the passage into 2 sections.

1. Jesus' Commission 'to all nations' Vv.45-49 Because his Jewish followers had the huge blind-spot I just mentioned it's important Jesus explains the Scriptures to them. Like a prophet-teacher, *he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures v.45*. They were so steeped in a blind-spot reading of the OT that Jesus has to re-orientate their understanding to see his mission includes non-Jews, vv.46-47

2 parts: i. The Message to share vv.46-48 *'This is what is written: the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*

Note Jesus explains that his death and resurrection are part of the OT predictions and that the good news that arises from this is the preaching of repentance and forgiveness *'to all nations starting in Jerusalem.*

The authority for this mission all resides in **Jesus' name v.47**. As the Risen Lord and Messiah, Jesus himself carries out these things through his people's sharing of the gospel **for all nations**.

With the mission set forth, Jesus calls all present his **witnesses v.48**. They have seen with their eyes and held in their hands the truth that Jesus is alive. So he calls them to this witnessing task.

John 1:7 *John (the Baptist) came as a **witness** to testify concerning that light (Jesus), so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a **witness** to the light.*

John 20:21 (Jesus said) *As the Father has sent me (into the world) so I am sending you.*

So today – we all have a part to play in the mission of Jesus. We are his witnesses (like it or not) in Banora Point and beyond. The good news is that Jesus promises to be with us, empower and help us.

Point ii. The Power to witness v.49 ⁴⁹ *I am going to send you what my Father has promised (the Holy Spirit); but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.'*

The task of witnessing for Jesus is vast in scope and difficulty to achieve. To effectively achieve their witnessing task they will need to be *clothed with power from on high v.49* (we looked at this last week- the Paraclete)

The church's mission task will be difficult and face many challenges. Special ability will be needed to accomplish it. It is not to be carried out in mere human strength or ability. The Spirit's intimate, indwelling presence and power is necessary to make it work.

Here is a beautiful idea: Jesus knows our fears and weaknesses about witnessing. He knows we will face inner fears that tell us we aren't good enough, or don't know enough, or will be rejected if we share our faith. He knows we need inner strength and confidence so he promises us his Spirit will clothe you with power. How might that work?

Imagine yourself as a car. The average car runs around going from A to B using normal petrol in its motor. What Jesus says will happen is that when the Holy Spirit comes to – you will be powered by rocket fuel, you'll have a new turbo and oil change for your motor. A super charger.

You'll be more able to start up, go long distances in better time, use less energy and enjoy the ride. Amen to that Aye?

That's what the Holy Spirit will do in us: start us up each day with enthusiasm and love for others, keep us on track for the long-haul with non-believers (through prayer and friendship) and help us enjoy the ride.

2. The Ascension of Jesus vv.50-53. Luke describes Jesus' departure to his Father very briefly. It is concise here because Luke will also spend more time describing Jesus' ascension in Acts 1.

The final scene closes with a note of blessing, hope and worship. Such an ending is perfectly appropriate, for Jesus came to offer hope. From the opening words of the birth story to the end of the Gospel, Luke has sounded the trumpet that Jesus brings God's promise and blessing in fulfillment of God's design.

What Jesus did was necessary. What he did brought a new era, as God joined earth and heaven together in Jesus' resurrection. He now goes to his father in anticipation of coming again with the new creation of many rooms. Till then we are his witnesses – his hands and feet and mouth.

So the Gospel's closing note of Jesus' blessing is very appropriate. *he lifted up his hands and blessed them v.50* **Boy! would I have loved to be there and hear that blessing?** The last thing he said to them was to ask God to bless them. WOW

It is no wonder then that, having heard and experienced a magnificent blessing, they watch Jesus leave – with rejoicing on their hearts. They are beginning to get it why he is leaving and what their mission is. They head to back to Jerusalem - hearts filled with joy, gratitude and worship--attitudes that we too should experience as we learn to appreciate God's grace.

The disciples' response is to await the coming of the Holy Spirit. They journey to Jerusalem, obeying the Lord's command to wait for the Spirit there. But more than their obedience is the attitude that accompanies it. They are filled with *great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.*

If you were to do a study in each of the disciples' life - their sense of privilege at being involved in God's plan did not waver even years later, when persecution and rejection of their message became strong.

They loved their enemy and took the message of the living and ascended Messiah Jesus to the world. They challenged the people everywhere to receive the good news about Jesus and, without shrillness, pride or neglect. And their mission was not a task or a mere duty to them. It was a joy, an act of worship to experience Jesus' presence and do his will.

Jesus departed into the heaven from which he came. He did so not to leave us, but to guide us, not to disappoint us but to intercede for us. He departed with a blessing, the Holy Spirit. He departed to equip us.

For those who know him by personal experience, his blessing is always with us. So we worship him with joy and serve him with enthusiasm and integrity, continually praising God for the gift of his Son.

Thus, the Gospel of Luke has an open-ended conclusion. In a real sense it ends at a beginning. Now it is the ongoing story of what Jesus continued to do through his followers, whom he equipped to perform a task and carry a message by his Spirit.

Great is God's faithfulness. That is the understanding, desire and assurance Luke longed to leave in the heart of his readers. That is the precious legacy Luke left to the church and for us today. Great is God's faithfulness in Jesus - to us and to the needy world around us.

The good news message is not one of words alone but of life, love and light. The message is to be both proclaimed and lived out in our lives before a world in great need to hear and experience it.

Are you willing to be Jesus' brave witness?

Are you ready to be used by Jesus?

Great is God's faithfulness.