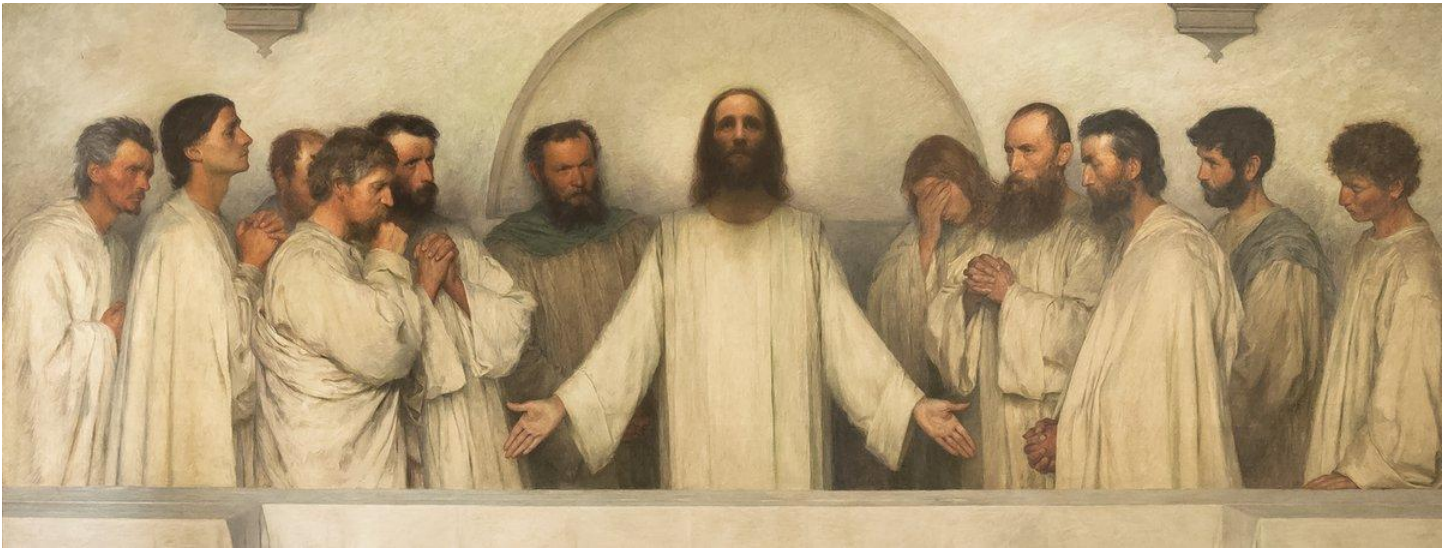


# Trinity Episcopal Church

Cranford, in the Diocese of New Jersey



“La Prière Sacerdotale (The High Priestly Prayer)” – Eugène Burnand

## *The Seventh Sunday of Easter*

Holy Eucharist ~ Rite II ~ May 17, 2026 at 10 AM



The Reverend Andrew David Kruger - Rector & Presider

Anthony J. Rafaniello - Director of Music & Organist

Casey Woodruff - Senior Warden & Kathleen M. Murray - Junior Warden

*The Sanctuary Candle and Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God  
and in honor of the Wedding of Axelle & Adrian Untermeyer*

Prelude

“Processional for Organ” – Warren Martin

At the end of the prelude, the bells are rung and the People stand.

I. Gathering of God’s People

Gathering Hymn

*Hyfrydol*

Hymnal 460

1 Al - le - lu - ia! sing to Je - sus! his the  
 3 Al - le - lu - ia! bread of Hea - ven, Thou on  
 4 Al - le - lu - ia! King e - ter - nal, thee the

1 scep - ter, his the throne; Al - le - lu - ia! his the  
 3 earth our food, our stay! Al - le - lu - ia! here the  
 4 Lord of lords we own: Al - le - lu - ia! born of

1 tri - umph, his the vic - to - ry a - lone; Hark! the  
 3 sin - ful flee to thee from day to day; In - ter -  
 4 Ma - ry, earth thy foot - stool, heaven thy throne: thou with -

1 songs of peace - ful Zi - on thun - der like a  
 3 ces - sor, friend of sin - ners, earth's Re - deem - er,  
 4 in the veil hast en - tered, robed in flesh, our

1 might - y flood; Je - sus out of ev - ery  
 3 plead for me, where the songs of all the  
 4 great High Priest: thou on earth both Priest and

1 na - tion hath re - deemed us by his blood.  
 3 sin - less sweep a - cross the crys - tal sea.  
 4 Vic - tim in the eu - cha - ris - tic feast.

**Easter Acclamation**

Book of Common Prayer 355

*Presider* Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
*People* **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

**Collect for Purity**

Book of Common Prayer 355

*Presider* Let us pray.

**Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Gloria**

*William Mathias*

Hymnal S 278

1. Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and  
 peace to his peo - ple on earth. 2. Lord God, heaven - ly King, al -  
 might - y God and Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we  
 praise you for your glo - ry. 3. Lord Je - sus Christ,  
 on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, 4. you  
 take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;  
 5. you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re -  
 ceive our prayer. 6. For

you a-lone are the Ho - ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,  
 7. you a-lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the  
 Ho - ly Spi - rit, in the glo - ry of  
 God the Fa - ther. A - men.

**Collect of the Day**

BCP 226

*Presider* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Presider* Let us pray.

O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

II. Proclaiming and Receiving the Word of God

**First Reading**

Acts 6:1-14

*Reader* A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

When the apostles had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But 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.” When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward 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.” Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

*Reader* The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**



## Second Reading

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

*Reader* A reading from the first letter of Peter.

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

*Reader* The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

*The People stand and sing.*

## Paschal Troparion

*Christos Anesti*

Greek Orthodox

Chri - stos a - ne - sti ek ne - kron, tha - na - to  
tha - na - ton pa - ti - sas ke tis  
en tis mni - ma - si, zo - in cha - ri sa - me - nos.  
Christ is ris - en from the dead, by death  
tram - pling down up - on death and to  
those in the tombs he has grant - ed life.

## Holy Gospel

John 17:1-11

*Presider* ✠ The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St John.

*People* **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

"I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

*Presider*            The Gospel of the Lord.

*People*             **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

### III. Responding to the Proclaimed Word

**Homily**

Eliza Rivera and Andrew Kruger

**Nicene Creed**

EOW1 53

*Silence is observed and then the People stand.*

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father, \*  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## Prayers of the People

CW alt.

*Presider* In joy and hope let us pray to the Father.

*The Intercessor continues*

That our risen Savior will fill us with the joy of the glorious and life-giving resurrection.

Lord have mercy: **Christ have mercy.**

That isolated and persecuted churches may find fresh strength in the good news of Easter.

Lord have mercy: **Christ have mercy.**

That God will grant us humility to be subject to one another in Christian love.

Lord have mercy: **Christ have mercy.**

That those who lack food, work or shelter will be sustained and fulfilled.

Lord have mercy: **Christ have mercy.**

That, by Christ's power, war and famine will cease through all the world.

Lord have mercy: **Christ have mercy.**

That the light of Christ's presence will be revealed to the sick, the weak and the dying.

Lord have mercy: **Christ have mercy.**

That all who have died in the faith of the resurrection may be raised on the last day.

Lord have mercy: **Christ have mercy.**

That the fire of the Holy Spirit will ignite us to bear faithful witness to the resurrection.

Lord have mercy: **Christ have mercy.**

*Presider* Triune God, Jesus prayed that we might be one: help us to transcend our differences and discover our solidarity in Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## Peace

*Presider* The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*The People greet one another in the Name of the Lord.*

## Announcements

Andrew Kruger

## IV. Celebrating at the Lord's Table

### Offertory Sentence

1 Chronicles 29:11

*The Presider says*

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. For everything in heaven and on earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom, and you are exalted as head over all.

*Representatives of the congregation bring the people's offering of bread and wine to the Holy Table.*

# Children's Anthem

## "Climbin' up the mountain" – African American Spiritual

Arranged by Mark Patterson

Climbin' up the mountain, children, didn't come here for to stay.  
If I nevermore see you again, gonna meet you at the judgement day.

Moses went down into Egypt land; he told ol' Pharoah  
that the good Lord sittin' on his heavenly throne said:  
"Let my people go!" good Lord, "Let my people go."

Daniel looked up from the lion's den; he did begin to pray  
and the angel of the Lord locked the lion's jaw,  
that sure was a mighty day, good Lord, sure was a mighty day.

Climbin' up higher and higher, until the judgement day.



*The Ushers pass the collection plates among the people.  
Another option is to give to Trinity online –  
scan the QR code and go directly to our Breeze link.*

*The People stand. The ushers bring the collection plates and gifts for St. John's to the ministers.*

# Offertory Hymn

Coronation

Hymnal 450

1 All hail the power of Je - sus' Name! Let an - gels pros - trate  
2 Crown him, ye mar - tyrs of our God, who from his al - tar  
3 Hail him, the Heir of Da - vid's line, whom Da - vid Lord did

1 fall; bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem, and  
2 call: praise him whose way of pain ye trod, and  
3 call, the God in - car - nate, Man di - vine, and

1 crown him Lord of all! bring forth the roy - al  
2 crown him Lord of all! praise him whose way of  
3 crown him Lord of all! the God in - car - nate,

1 di - a - dem, and crown him Lord of all!  
2 pain ye trod, and crown him Lord of all!  
3 Man di - vine, and crown him Lord of all!

## St John's Offertory Prayer

*The Presider says*

Let us pray.

**Generous God, we present these gifts for St John's, a symbol of the work you have given us to do; use them, and use us, in the service of your world to the glory of your name. Amen.**

## Presentation of Gifts

An Anglican Prayer Book 1989

*Presider* Source of all life, everything in heaven and on earth is yours:

*People* **All things come from you, and of your own do we give you. Amen.**

## Eucharistic Prayer for Children

Common Worship

*Presider* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Presider* Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them to the Lord.**

*Presider* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*Child* Why is it right to give thanks and praise?

*Parent* Listen to the proper preface.

Lord of all life, you created the universe, where all living things reflect your glory. You give us this great and beautiful earth, to discover and to cherish.

You give us the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, and every plant and tree; the life that sleeps in the winter earth, and awakens again in the spring.

You made us all, each wonderfully different, to join with the angels and sing your praise:

## Sanctus

Hymnal S 128

Ho - ly, ho - ly,  
ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san-na in the

high - est. Bless - ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high-est.

We thank you loving Father, because when we turned away you sent Jesus, your Son. He gave his life for us on the cross and showed us the way to live. Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

*Child* Why do we share this bread and wine?

*Parent* Listen to the words of institution.

On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying: "This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me."

After they had eaten, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying: "This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins."

So Father, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life. As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit, and change us more and more to be like Jesus our Savior.

*Child* How do we follow Jesus Christ?

*Parent* Listen to the Doxology.

Help us, Father, to love one another, as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended, and all creation is gathered in your loving arms. And now with all your saints we give you glory, through Jesus Christ, in the strength of the Spirit, today and for ever.

**Great Amen**

Mathias/Kruger

A men, A men. A men.

**Lord's Prayer**

BCP 364

*Presider* And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

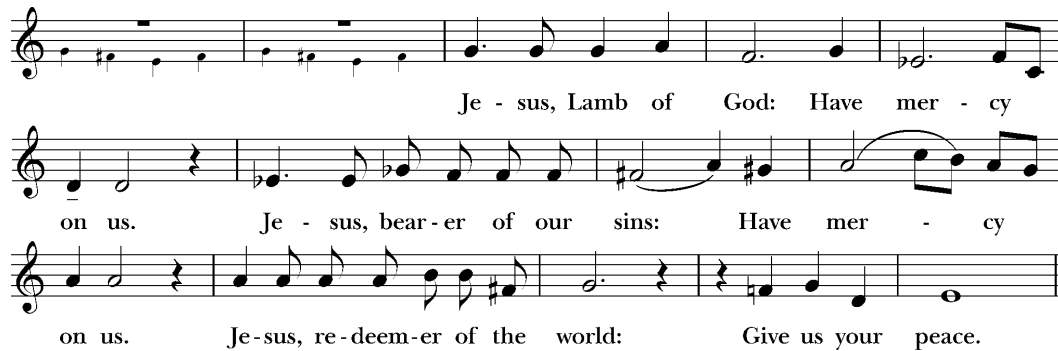
## Breaking of the Bread

BCP 364

*The Presider breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.*

## Agnus Dei

Hymnal S 165



Je - sus, Lamb of God: Have mer - cy  
on us. Je - sus, bear - er of our sins: Have mer - cy  
on us. Je - sus, re - deem - er of the world: Give us your peace.

## Invitation

BCP 364

*Presider* The Gifts of God:  
*People* **for the People of God.**

*The ushers guide the people to receive Holy Communion. All who hunger for God, including children, are cordially invited to share the Gifts of God offered at this table. Whoever you are, wherever you are in your life's journey, you are welcome here.*

*All persons may, but no person must, receive communion in both kinds to receive the full spiritual benefits of communion. Wine is offered by way of a sip from the common cup. You may choose to receive only the host. Gluten-free wafers are available by request to the priest.*

## First Communion Hymn

Slane

Hymnal 488



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;  
2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;  
3 High King of hea - ven, when vic - tory is won,  
all else be nought to me, save that thou art—  
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
may I reach hea - ven's joys, bright hea - ven's Sun!  
thou my best thought, — by day or by night,  
thou my great Fa - ther; thine own may I be;  
Heart of my heart, — what - ev - er be - fall,  
wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.  
thou in me dwell - ing, and I one with thee.  
still be my vis - ion, O Ru - ler of all.

**Second Communion Hymn**

*Holy Manna*

Wonder, Love & Praise 761

1. All who hun - ger gath - er glad - ly; ho - ly man - na  
 2. All who hun - ger, nev - er stran - gers, seek - er, be a  
 3. All who hun - ger, sing to - geth - er, Je - sus Christ is

is our bread. Come from wil - der - ness and wan - d'ring.  
 wel - come guest. Come from rest - less - ness and roam - ing.  
 liv - ing bread. Come from lone - li - ness and long - ing.

Here in truth we will be fed. You that yearn for  
 Here, in joy we keep the feast. We that once were  
 Here, in peace, we have been fed. Blest are those who

days of full - ness, all a - round us is our food.  
 lost and scat - tered in com - mun - ion's love have stood.  
 from this ta - ble live their days in grat - i - tude.

Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal.  
 Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal.  
 Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal.

Taste and see that God is good.  
 Taste and see that God is good.  
 Taste and see that God is good.

**Communion Anthem**

“Be known to us in breaking bread” – Kenneth Kelley  
 Words: James Montgomery

Be known to us in breaking bread,  
 But do not then depart;  
 Savior, abide with us, and spread  
 Thy table in our heart.

There sup with us in love divine,  
 Thy body and Thy blood,  
 That living bread, that heavenly wine  
 Be our immortal food. Amen.

**Post Communion Prayer**

CW

*Presider* Let us pray.

*The People stand.*

**Lord God our Father, through our Savior Jesus Christ  
 you have assured us of eternal life and in baptism have made us one with him:  
 deliver us from the death of sin and raise us to new life in your love,  
 in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

## Blessing

CW

*The Presider blesses the people*

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

## Sending Hymn

*Cwm Rhondda*

Hymnal 594

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on thy peo - ple pour thy power;  
2 Lo! the hosts of e - vil round us scorn thy Christ, as - sail his ways!  
3 Cure thy chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness, bend our pride to thy con - trol;  
4 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils we de - plore;

crown thine an - cient Church's sto - ry; bring her bud to glo - rious flower.  
From the fears that long have bound us free our hearts to faith and praise:  
shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness, rich in things and poor in soul.  
let the gift of thy sal - va - tion be our glo - ry ev - er - more.

Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age, for the fac - ing of this  
grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age, for the liv - ing of these  
Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age, lest we miss thy king - dom's  
Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age, serv - ing thee whom we a -

hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.  
days, for the liv - ing of these days.  
goal, lest we miss thy king - dom's goal.  
dore, serv - ing thee whom we a - dore.

*Presider* Alleluia. Alleluia. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

**Postlude**Improvisation on *Cum Rhondda*

## For Friends, Visitors and Newcomers

Welcome to Trinity Episcopal Church in Cranford, New Jersey. Thank you for joining us in worship. The bulletin is designed to make you feel at home and includes everything you need for the service (liturgy, hymns, rubrics, etc.). Please connect with us; introduce yourself to the ushers so they can make you feel more comfortable. Father Andy is in the narthex (entrance) at the end of the service; it is an opportunity to connect on a more personal level. All are invited to Fellowship Hour in Sherlock Hall immediately after the service. An email blast is sent every Thursday by 2 PM with hyperlinks to sign-up sheets, methods to contribute to the parish or other charitable organizations, ways to contact individuals or receive information on events, etc. Please contact the parish office to receive it or alternative methods of communication.

### What you need to know today...

**Sandwich Sunday** Today; contact Marion Nechuta ([marionnechuta@yahoo.com](mailto:marionnechuta@yahoo.com) or 908-451-4498) for more information. There are several ways to participate in this ministry (links to sign up are in the email blast).

**Fellowship Hour** Today, in Sherlock Hall, immediately after this service; coffee, tea and snacks are provided.

**“Care for Moms & Newborns”** The Outreach Committee is collecting donations until May 31 for this project, through Episcopal Relief & Development (ERD), which connects expectant mothers with local health care providers and critical education programming about food and nutrition to keep both mother and baby healthy.

**“Well and Water Systems”** \$1,624 was collected for this project through ERD. Outreach thanks the congregation for their donations.

### What you need to know this week...

**The Daily Offices** Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer are offered online from Monday-Thursday at 8:30 AM and 5 PM.

**Parish Office Hours** Office Manager Marion Nechuta is available Tuesday through Thursday from 12 noon to 3:30 PM.

**Handbells and Choir Rehearsals** This Wednesday, May 20; rehearsal for Handbells is 7 to 7:50 PM; Adult Choir is 8-9 PM.

**Fellowship Luncheon** Thursday, May 21, 12:30 to 2 PM in Witherington Hall. The guest speakers are from the Union County Office of Health Management. The topic is “Osteoporosis, Arthritis & Fall Prevention” as well as details about their Chronic Disease Prevention Program sponsored by the NJ Department of Health. The theme is Cinco de Mayo with fajitas and other treats.

## What you need to know in the future...

**Annual Trinity Sunday Barbeque** Sunday, May 31 after the 10 AM Eucharist. Click on the QR code or see this week's email blast.



**Cranford High School Madrigal Choir** Sunday, May 31 at 1:30 PM in the church. The choir presents its annual spring concert; the performance is free and open to the public. A free-will offering will be taken to benefit the Cranford High School choral program.

**Trinity Men's Group** Saturday, June 6 at 8 AM in Witherington Hall.

**Trinity Forum** Sunday, June 7 in Witherington Hall after both services. An informational forum, including intercultural communication awareness, will be held in preparation for the Taizé service and Potluck dinner with our brothers and sisters from St. John's in Elizabeth.

**Taizé Service and Potluck Dinner** Thursday, June 11 starting at 7 PM hosted at Trinity. Connect with our neighbors from St John's in Elizabeth. Contact Fr. Andy if you are willing to champion the Taizé set up, or hall set up, or potluck planning and organization.

**ECW Trinity Book Scholarship** Applications are being collected until July 21. Application is on the email blast.

## Choral Scholarship

The 2026 James Lenney Memorial Choral Scholarship will be awarded to two Cranford High School students this year. Sofia Monroy will attend Ithaca College to study Theatre Production and Design, and Christopher Uglialoro, Valedictorian of the Class of 2026, will attend Princeton University to study Neuroscience with a Minor in Music Performance. Both are members of the Cranford High School Concert Choir and Madrigal Choir.

Established in 2013 by friends and loved ones of Jim Lenney, longtime Music Director at Trinity Church and Choral Director at Cranford High School, the scholarship honors his legacy by supporting graduating choral students.

The scholarship continues through the generosity of parishioners and Trinity's stewardship of the fund. Those interested in contributing may speak with Anthony Rafaniello.

## Ascension Day Sermon

*Preached by Fr Andy Kruger on Thursday, May 15 at 12 noon.*

*The readings for the day were Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47; Ephesians 1:15-23; and Luke 24:44-53:*

May it be the Gospel of Christ that is preached and the very word of God that is heard. Amen.

The Collect appointed for Ascension Day begins with a paradox,

“Almighty God, whose blessed Son our Savior Jesus Christ ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things...” Jesus ascends “far above all heavens” so that he “might fill all things.” Christ departs in order to become more fully present. Jesus goes away in order to be nearer than before.

Even Luke, the author of both the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, seems to emphasize this strange mystery. He tells the story of the Ascension twice. At the end of Luke’s Gospel, the Ascension is a conclusion. Jesus blesses the disciples, withdraws from them, and they return to Jerusalem with joy. But at the beginning of Acts, the Ascension becomes a beginning. Jesus commissions the disciples, promises the Holy Spirit, and sends them into the world as witnesses.

The same event is both ending and beginning. That repetition is not accidental. Luke is teaching us something essential about the life of faith: in God’s kingdom, endings and beginnings often arrive together. Loss and promise can occupy the same holy moment. Departure can become the condition for a new kind of presence.

This is where Episcopal theologian Kathryn Tanner\* offers a profound insight into the mystery of the Ascension. Tanner argues that the Ascension should not be understood as Jesus simply leaving the world behind, as though Christ has relocated to some distant spiritual geography. The Ascension is not divine absence in the ordinary sense of the word. Instead, Tanner suggests that Christ’s ascended life intensifies Christ’s presence to the world.

While Jesus walked the roads of Galilee, his embodied life was necessarily particular and localized. He could be in Capernaum or Jerusalem, but not both at once. He could speak to one crowd while another waited elsewhere. But in the Ascension, Christ’s risen humanity is no longer confined by ordinary limits of time and space. The ascended Christ is not less available to the world, but more available. Not in some vague or symbolic way only. Not merely “in our hearts.” Rather, Christ is actually present through the Holy Spirit in every place and every age.

This is why Jesus can say in John’s Gospel, “It is to your advantage that I go away.” A bewildering statement, unless his departure somehow opens the possibility of deeper communion rather than diminished communion. And this helps explain one of the most surprising details in Luke’s account. The disciples do not respond to the Ascension with despair. They return to Jerusalem “with great joy.” Not because they have stopped loving Jesus. Not because absence no longer hurts. But because they are beginning to understand that Christ’s presence has not ended; it has changed. The Ascension of Christ teaches us to recognize a form of presence that is deeper than physical proximity.

And that has profound implications for the Eucharist. Week after week, we gather around bread and wine, ordinary gifts of creation and human labor. And we proclaim that Christ is truly present among us. The ascended Christ fills all things. There is nowhere Christ cannot be present. No table too humble. No community too broken. No life too wounded. At the Eucharist, heaven and earth are not collapsed into one another, but joined in communion. The ascended Christ draws us into the life of God while remaining intimately near to us.

And perhaps this mystery also speaks tenderly to those who grieve. Because many of us know what it is to live with absence. Some carry the ache of parents whose voices they can no longer hear. Some grieve spouses, siblings, children, or friends whose absence reshapes every room they once inhabited. Some mourn relationships broken by distance, illness, or estrangement. And grief can make us feel as though love itself has become unreachable.

But Ascension Day dares to proclaim something astonishing: absence is not always abandonment. Love can remain real even when presence changes form. The disciples no longer walk beside Jesus on dusty roads. Yet Christ remains closer to them than before. The relationship is transformed, not destroyed. And while human grief is never erased by easy religious answers, the Ascension offers hope that love is stronger and more enduring than physical separation alone. The Christian promise is not that loss stops hurting. Rather, Christian hope proclaims that the risen and ascended Christ continues to hold together heaven and earth, presence and absence, grief and joy, endings and beginnings. Amen.

*\* Kathryn Tanner, Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001)*

## The Paschal Troparion – *Christos Anesti*

As we finish the Easter season, this is a recap of the music we have been using before the Gospel each Sunday. The Paschal Troparion – often sung in Greek as *Christos Anesti* – is among the most beloved and enduring hymns of the Christian tradition. Its words are simple, ancient, and profound:

This brief hymn, chanted repeatedly throughout the Easter season in the Eastern Church, serves as both proclamation and praise. It is not merely a song about the resurrection; it is an announcement that resounds with the very victory it declares.

The origins of the Paschal Troparion lie deep within the early centuries of Christian worship in the Eastern Mediterranean. Though its precise authorship is unknown, it likely took shape within the vibrant liturgical life of the Byzantine Church, where theology and worship were woven together in poetic and musical form. The troparion became the central hymn of Pascha (Easter), sung at the midnight vigil when the resurrection is first proclaimed, and then echoed again and again throughout the fifty days that follow. In this way, it forms the heartbeat of the Easter season – a refrain that carries the Church’s joy beyond a single day into an entire way of being.

The theology contained within these few lines is remarkably rich. The phrase “trampling down death by death” expresses what the early Church Fathers often called the “harrowing of hell.” In Christ’s death, death itself is overthrown from within. By entering fully into the depths of human mortality, Christ breaks its power, transforming the grave from a place of finality into a gateway to life. This is not resurrection as mere resuscitation, nor as a private miracle for Jesus alone. Rather, it is cosmic in scope: “upon those in the tombs bestowing life.” The resurrection is for all, reaching backward and forward across time, extending even to those who had long awaited redemption.

Spiritually, the Paschal Troparion invites us into a posture of joyful defiance. It teaches us to sing in the face of death – not because suffering is denied, but because it has been transformed. The repetition of the hymn, so characteristic of Eastern worship, is itself formative. As it is sung again and again, it begins to take root within the heart, shaping our imagination and our hope. It becomes less something we say, and more something we inhabit.

For us, in the Episcopal Church, hearing and chanting *Christos Anesti* opens a window into this ancient stream of Christian faith. It reminds us that the resurrection is not only to be proclaimed in words or preached from the pulpit, but sung, felt, and experienced as a living reality. The melody, the cadence, and even the unfamiliarity of the Greek language can draw us out of our usual patterns of worship and into a deeper attentiveness to the mystery we celebrate.

As the Paschal Troparion is woven into our Easter liturgy, it offers us a gift: the chance to join our voices with Christians across centuries and continents in proclaiming the same good news. Christ is risen. Death is defeated. Life is given. And so we sing – not as spectators of a past event, but as participants in a present reality – allowing this ancient hymn to become our own Easter song.

## Lectionary & Liturgy

Today begins the final week of Easter. Last Thursday we celebrated Jesus' ascension to the Father and his glorification. The Gospel reading today is a portion of the prayer he prayed on the night before his death, in which he consecrated his offering of himself to God, and prayed for us that we might be made part of his offering. In baptism we have, in fact, received the benefits of that prayer. The reading from the Acts of the Apostles is the beginning of that book. Luke describes Jesus' ascension and the promise that he would shortly empower his friends with the Holy Spirit. We are told that the disciples, including Jesus' mother, then spent the remaining days together in prayer waiting for that gift of the Spirit, which would come upon them on the Day of Pentecost. In the passage from 1 Peter, we are exhorted to live lives in keeping with our vocation given in baptism. If we are to suffer, let it be for doing good, not because of wrongdoing. Such righteous suffering deepens our union with Christ. We are already assured by Jesus' Resurrection that no suffering can destroy the eternal life we have been given. We gather week by week to celebrate the Eucharist. The Ascension reminds us that in the Eucharist Jesus is not made present by being brought down to us; he is present because in the Eucharist we are taken up to where he is. For a moment, we are not only in the world but we become citizens of the eternal kingdom.

From *The Rite Light: Reflections on the Sunday Readings and Seasons of the Church Year*. © 2007 Michael W. Merriman. Church Publishing, NYC

- † **Cover Art** – “The High Priestly Prayer” is a 1900–1901 oil painting by Swiss artist Eugène Burnand (1850–1921), depicting Jesus praying with his apostles; the artwork illustrates the scene from John 17, where Jesus prays for his disciples before the Passion. Known for his realistic and naturalistic religious paintings, the painting is part of Burnand’s major religious works and is associated with his focus on depicting biblical scenes with intense spiritual and human emotion. The work is currently in the public domain.
- † **Prelude** – In celebration of Westminster Choir College’s 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, which was celebrated this weekend in Princeton, our music director, Anthony Rafaniello, Class of 2005, plays this piece which has been used as the processional at Westminster’s commencement ceremony since the 1960s. Composer Warren Martin (1916-1982), an alumnus of the Choir College, served on the faculty for 31 years in a variety of capacities, including as director of the Westminster and Symphonic Choirs.
- † **Gathering Hymn** – Words: William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898), supplying a then-acknowledged lack of Eucharistic hymns in Church of England hymnals; written while lying bedridden with a near fatal illness in 1866 and inspired by Revelation 5:9. Music: Rowland Hugh Prichard (1811-1887), trained in the business world, he became the manager of a marine insurance company in Scotland; composed when he was only 19, the Welsh title translates as “pleasant” or “tuneful.”
- † **In Excelsis Gloria** – Words: Anonymous, 15<sup>th</sup> cent. medieval. Music: William James Mathias (1934-1992) –[©1976 Oxford University Press]. Written while a student at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth for the Elizabethan Madrigal Singers. “Music was an ever-present force for my father. I was aware from a very early age that the creative process was something always present for him – even when he was doing something else – and that it was a force which he could turn in any desired direction or channel at a given time. Hence his ability to compose a wide variety of orchestral, choral, instrumental or chamber music, as well as music for the church and for young people.” –[daughter Rhiannon Mathias]
- † **Collect of the Day** – Based on an antiphon sung on Ascension Day, composed for the 1549 Book. For the English people the antiphon had particular significance because it had been sung by the Venerable Bede as he died on Ascension Day in 735. –[Notes on the American Prayer Book by Marion Hatchett]
- † **Paschal Troparion** – At the funeral of Pope Francis, the patriarchs, archbishops, and metropolitans of the Eastern Catholic Churches stood beside his coffin. After thrice chanting the Paschal troparion and chanting prayers, one of the patriarchs censed the coffin. This ritual was also performed at the funeral of Pope John Paul II.
- † **Nicene Creed** – Contains “all the expansive language texts currently authorized.” It is almost identical to the BCP version. The omission of the words ‘and the Son’ (*filioque*) restores the text of the Creed to the original wording agreed upon at the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381 CE). The addition was a later development implemented in the Western Church and without approval of a General Council.
- † **Offertory Anthem** – “Climbin’ Up the Mountain” is an African American Spiritual arr. by Mark Patterson (b. 1969); he currently serves as the Director of Music at Salisbury Presbyterian Church in Midlothian, Virginia, where he leads a comprehensive music program for adults, youth and children. –[© 2023 Choristers Guild]
- † **Offertory Hymn** – Words: Edward Perronet (1726-1792); all accounts show him to be a sharp-tongued, difficult personality, who would rather pick a fight over theology than display brotherly love. He split with the Wesleys over administering the Sacraments

and his violent attacks on the established church, saying, “I was born and I am like to die in the tottering communion of the Church of England; but I despise her nonsense.” –[Greg Scheer, 1997] Music: Oliver Holden (1765-1844) wrote the tune specifically for the text. Reared in a small rural community with a minimal formal education, he worked as a carpenter and was involved in community service in Charlestown, holding posts in the Anti-Slavery Society and in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

- † **Proper Preface** – A specific, variable sentence added to the Eucharistic Prayer in Christian liturgy, of the Western Church, that changes according to the church season or feast day. It highlights the theological significance of the current season (e.g., incarnation at Christmas, resurrection at Easter). The Preface as a whole bridges the opening dialogue and the Sanctus, it should contain thanksgiving to God for creating, redeeming and sustaining us.
- † **Words of Institution** – This section used to be called the prayer of consecration because during the middle ages it was believed that the substance of the bread and wine was changed at this particular point in the liturgy. In recent decades, as liturgists have discovered more about the theology of ancient Eucharistic Prayers, the church has come to view the whole Eucharistic prayer as consecratory. The institution narratives used to form part of the catechism of the early church. The use of these narratives in the Eucharist only became standard practice in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.
- † **Doxology** – Typically the Eucharistic Doxology follows a trinitarian formula, which differs only slightly from rite to rite; this became the conclusion for most Eucharistic prayers and reinforced one of the most basic Christian doctrines. The Doxology for the Children’s Eucharistic Prayer, used at Trinity’s intergenerational services, articulates the Trinitarian formula in an unusual manner in that the Father is implied as the one being addressed, but is not named.
- † **First Communion Hymn** – Words: Irish, ca. 700; versified Mary Elizabeth Byrne (1880-1931), tr. Eleanor H. Hull (1860 -1935); alt. © perm.Estate of Eleanor Hull and Chatto, Windus Ltd. Music: Irish ballad melody, adapt. The Church Hymnary, 1927 permission of Oxford University Press.
- † **Second Communion Hymn** – Words: Sylvia G. Dunstan (1955-1993) died after a brief, arduous battle with liver cancer; she served the United Church of Canada as a parish minister, prison chaplain, and editor of a worship journal. –[Sing! A New Creation © 1991, GIA Publications.] “She left behind a ministry that combined a compassionate concern for the needy, her gift of writing, and a consuming love of liturgy.” Written “on a commuter bus after a particularly bad day at the jail” as a prison chaplain. Music: from William Moore’s *Columbian Harmony*, 1825.
- † **Communion Anthem** – Words: James Montgomery (1771-1854). “The secrets of his power as a writer of hymns were manifold. His poetic genius was of a high order, higher than most who stand with him in the front rank of Christian poets. His ear for rhythm was exceedingly accurate and refined. His knowledge of Holy Scripture was most extensive. His religious views were broad and charitable. His devotional spirit was of the holiest type. With the faith of a strong man, he united the beauty and simplicity of a child. Richly poetic without exuberance, dogmatic without uncharitableness, tender without sentimentality, elaborate without diffusiveness, richly musical without apparent effort, he has bequeathed to the Church of Christ wealth which could only have come from a true genius and a sanctified heart. –[John Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1907)]. Music: Kenneth Kelley.
- † **Sending Hymn** – Words: Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969) was a well-known and controversial preacher in the early twentieth century. After Fosdick left his position at one church, John D. Rockefeller asked him to become pastor of Park Avenue Baptist Church in NYC, but Fosdick thought the church was too wealthy, and agreed only on condition that a new church would be built in a less fashionable place. The site selected for Riverside Church was on the banks of the Hudson, not far from Harlem. Music: John Hughes (1873-1932), a Welshman who spent most of his life as a railway worker. This tune was at first circulated in leaflet form because hymnal editors considered it too vigorous to be a proper hymn tune. They eventually succumbed to popular pressure.
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