

Sunday, 17 May 2026 – Seventh Sunday of Easter – Ascension of the Lord

Today is the seventh Sunday of the season of Easter. The season of Easter lasts seven weeks from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday on May 24.

<https://pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/interim-unified-agency/ministry-areas/theology-worship/worship/christian-year/season-easter>

This past Thursday, May 14, was forty days after the Resurrection of the Lord (Easter Sunday), when we remember and celebrate the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into heaven. To read more about this day:

<https://pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/interim-unified-agency/ministry-areas/theology-worship/worship/christian-year/ascension-lord>

Prelude

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) was a leading English composer whose music was often influenced by folk music and songs. His prelude on the hymn tune *Rhosymedre* is from a set of three preludes for organ on Welsh hymn tunes.

Offertory Anthem

The author of *It Is Well with My Soul*, Horatio G. Spafford (1828-1888), a successful Chicago lawyer and active Presbyterian layman, was about to sail to France for a vacation with his family, but he was detained at the last minute by business matters. His wife and four daughters went ahead as scheduled, with the understanding that he would join them shortly. At 2 a.m. on November 22, 1873, their ship, the *Ville du Havre*, was struck by the British ship *Loch Earn* and (according to newspaper accounts) sank in fifteen minutes, with the loss of 226 lives. Mrs. Spafford was among the eighty-seven survivors, but all four of their daughters were lost. When she finally reached land more than a week later, she sent her husband a telegram that began, "Saved alone." He immediately set off to join her in Paris, where she had gone with a clergyman friend who had also survived the collision. While at sea, somewhere near the site of the fatal accident, he is said by family tradition to have written this hymn. (Daw, Carl P. Jr.. *Glory to God: A Companion* (p. 802). (Function). Kindle Edition.)

The tune VILLE DU HAVRE was composed by Philip P. Bliss (1838-1876) in 1876 to accompany this text.

Postlude

William Mathias (1934-1992) was a renowned Welsh composer of choral, orchestral, and instrumental works. His *Fanfare* for organ was commissioned for the inaugural concert for the new organ at Memorial Hall, Barry, Wales in 1987.