

# VESPERS FOR THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

*The online service will be served by a priest, so the litanies will be sung as normal. The parts of the service which are read or sung by the priest are shown in red. These are omitted if the service is used without a priest.*

*If you are serving the service at home without a priest, follow the marked sections shown in blue. The 'Reader' may be the most senior person present – e.g. a parent or grandparent, according to the situation – or simply the most confident reader or singer. The parts marked for the 'Choir' can be read or sung by everyone together, or by one person alone.*

*You may prefer to use parts of the service in your own language. If so, please make sure that the prayers are read from an Orthodox prayer book or service book.*

Available music may be found at [www.orthodoxcommunityrugby.com/choir](http://www.orthodoxcommunityrugby.com/choir)

## Before the Service

*Whether you are following the service online, or serving it at home without a priest, you should do so in front of the household icons – e.g. in the family icon corner. If you have charcoal and incense, you may wish to light the charcoal before the service begins; you can then place incense on the lit charcoal during the hymn **Lord, I call** at the words "Let my prayer arise". You may wish to prepare an **unlit** lamp or candle(s) which can be lit when the hymn **O Gladsome Light** is sung.*

**Priest:** Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

**Reader:** Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us, and save us. Amen.

**Reader:** O come, let us worship God our King.  
O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God.  
O come, let us worship and fall down before the Very Christ, our King and our God.

## PSALM 103

**Reader:** Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, Thou hast been magnified exceedingly. Confession and majesty hast Thou put on, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, Who stretchest out the heaven as it were a curtain; Who supporteth His chambers in the waters, Who appointeth the clouds for His ascent, Who walketh upon the wings of the winds, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire, Who establisheth the earth in the sureness thereof; it shall not be turned back for ever and ever. The abyss like a garment is His mantle; upon the mountains shall the waters stand. At Thy rebuke they will flee, at the voice of Thy thunder shall they be afraid. The mountains rise up and the plains sink down, unto the place where Thou hast established them. Thou appointedst a bound that they shall not pass, neither return to cover the earth. He sendeth forth springs in the valleys; between the mountains will the waters run. They shall give drink to all the beasts of the field; the wild asses will wait to quench their thirst. Beside them will the birds of the heaven lodge, from the midst of the rocks will they give voice. He watereth the mountains from His chambers; the earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of Thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men, To bring forth bread out of the earth; and wine maketh glad the heart of man. To make his face cheerful with oil; and bread strengtheneth man's heart. The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon, which Thou hast planted. There will the sparrows make their nests; the house of the heron is chief among them. The high mountains are a refuge for the harts, and so is the rock for the hares. He hath made the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down. Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night, wherein all the beasts of the forest will go abroad. Young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their food from God. The sun ariseth, and they are gathered together, and they lay them down in their dens. But man shall go forth unto his work, and to his labour until the evening. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is filled with Thy creation. So is this great and spacious sea, therein are things creeping innumerable, small living creatures with the great. There go the ships; there this dragon, whom Thou hast made to play therein. All things wait on Thee, to give them their food in due season; when Thou givest it them, they will gather it. When Thou openest Thy hand, all things shall be filled with goodness;

when Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled. Thou wilt take their spirit, and they shall cease; and unto their dust shall they return. Thou wilt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth. Let the glory of the Lord be unto the ages; the Lord will rejoice in His works. Who looketh on the earth and maketh it tremble, Who toucheth the mountains and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord throughout my life, I will chant to my God for as long as I have my being. May my words be sweet unto Him, and I will rejoice in the Lord. O that sinners would cease from the earth, and they that work iniquity, that they should be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The sun knoweth his going down, Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, glory to Thee, O God. *(3 times)*

### **THE LITANY OF PEACE**

*In place of the Litany of Peace, the choir sings:  
Lord, have mercy. (12 times)*

**“LORD I CALL ...”**

**Tone 6**

Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me.  
Hear me, O Lord.  
Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me.  
Receive the voice of my prayer,  
when I call upon Thee.//  
Hear me, O Lord.

Let my prayer arise  
in Thy sight as incense,  
and let the lifting up of my hands  
be an evening sacrifice.//  
Hear me, O Lord.

*Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to Thy name!*

**Tone 6**

[Music on website]

The Lord has ascended to heaven  
that He might send the Comforter into the world.  
The heavens prepared His throne, and clouds His means of ascent.  
Angels marvel to see a Man high above them.  
The Father receives Him Whom He holds, co-eternal, in His bosom.  
The Holy Spirit commands all His Angels:  
“Lift up your gates, you princes!”  
All you nations, clap your hands://  
for Christ has gone up to where He was before!”

*The righteous await me; for Thou wilt deal bountifully with me.*

*Repeat:* The Lord has ascended to heaven...

*Out of the depths I cry to Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!*

The Cherubim were amazed at Thine Ascension, O Lord,  
beholding Thee, the God Who sits enthroned upon them,  
ascending upon the clouds;  
and we glorify Thee, for Thy mercy is good.//  
Glory to Thee!

*Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!*

*Repeat:* The Cherubim were amazed ...

*If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee.*

Beholding Thine Ascension on the holy mountain,  
O Christ, the brightness of the Father’s glory,  
we hymn the radiant appearance of Thy countenance;  
we worship Thy sufferings,  
we honour Thy Resurrection,  
as we glorify Thy glorious Ascension.//  
Have mercy on us!

*For Thy Name’s sake I wait for Thee, O Lord. My soul has waited for Thy Word; my soul has hoped on the Lord.*

*Repeat:* Beholding Thine Ascension on the holy mountain ...

*From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel hope on the Lord!*

Lord, when Thine Apostles saw Thee carried up upon the clouds, they were filled with despondency, O Christ Giver of life: with wailing and tears they lamented and said: "Master, do not leave us orphans, Thy servants whom through pity Thou hast loved, as Thou art compassionate; but, as Thou didst promise, send us Thine all-holy Spirit// to enlighten our souls!"

*For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.*

*Repeat:* Lord, when Thine Apostles saw Thee ...

*Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him, all peoples!*

Lord, when Thou didst fulfil the mystery of Thy dispensation, Thou didst take Thy Disciples with Thee, and were taking them up on to the Mount of Olives; and behold, Thou didst pass through the firmament of heaven. For my sake Thou didst become poor like me, and ascended to the place from where Thou hadst not been parted: // send forth Thine All-holy Spirit to illumine our souls!

*For His mercy is confirmed on us; and the truth of the Lord endureth forever.*

*Repeat:* Lord, when Thou didst fulfil the mystery ...

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

### **Tone 6**

Not parted from the Father's bosom, O sweetest Jesus, and having lived among those on earth as man, today Thou hast been taken up in glory from the Mount of Olives, and exalting in Thy compassion our fallen nature, Thou hast seated it with the Father. Therefore the heavenly ranks of the Bodiless Powers were amazed at the wonder,

and beside themselves with fear; and seized with trembling, they magnified Thy love for mankind. With them, we on earth also give glory for Thy condescension to us and Thine Ascension from us; and we supplicate Thee, saying: "At Thine Ascension Thou didst fill with boundless joy the Disciples and the Theotokos who bore Thee; by their prayers make us also worthy of the joy of Thine elect // through Thy great mercy!"

### **THE ENTRANCE WITH THE CENSER**

**Priest:** Wisdom! Stand upright!

### **O GLADSOME LIGHT**

**Choir:** O Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the Immortal Father, heavenly, holy, blessed, Jesus Christ. Now that we have come to the setting of the sun, and behold the light of evening, we praise God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For meet it is at all times to worship Thee with voices of praise, O Son of God, the Giver of Life; therefore all the world doth glorify Thee.

### **THE EVENING PROKEIMENON**

**Priest:** Let us attend! Peace be to all!

**Choir:** And to thy spirit.

**Priest:** The Evening Prokeimenon

**Reader:** Save me, O God, by Thy Name and judge me by Thy strength.

**Choir:** Save me, O God, by Thy Name and judge me by Thy strength.

**Reader:** Hear my prayer, O God, give ear to the words of my mouth.

**Choir:** Save me, O God, by Thy Name and judge me by Thy strength.

**Reader:** Save me, O God, by Thy Name

**Choir:** and judge me by Thy strength.

### **READINGS**

**Priest:** Wisdom!

**Reader:** The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah. (2:2-3)

**Priest:** Let us attend!

**Reader:** Thus saith the Lord: In the last days the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, and the house of God shall be on the summits of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall

come to it. And many peoples shall go and say: Come, let us ascend to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will tell us His way, and we will walk in it.

**Priest:** Wisdom!

**Reader:** The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah. (62:10-63:3, 7-9)

**Priest:** Let us attend!

**Reader:** Thus saith the Lord: Go ye, pass through My gates, make ready My pathway and make a way for My people, and cast the stones out of the way; lift up a standard for the nations. For behold, the Lord hath proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say ye to the daughter of Zion: Behold, thy Saviour is come, having His reward with Him and His work before His countenance. And He shall call them a holy people, redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called a city sought out, and not forsaken. Who is this that is come from Edam, with red garments from Bosor, so fair in His apparel? He crieth with mighty strength: I speak of righteousness and saving judgment. Wherefore are Thy garments red, and Thy raiment as if fresh from a trodden winepress? I am full of trodden grape, I have trodden the winepress utterly alone, and of the nations there is not a man with Me. I remembered the mercy of the Lord, I shall recall the virtues of the Lord, the praises of the Lord in all things wherein He recompenseth us. The Lord is a good judge to the house of Israel; He dealeth with us according to His mercy, and according to the multitude of His righteousness. And He said: Are ye not My people? They are My children, and they shall not set Me at nought; and He became for them salvation out of all their affliction. Not an ambassador, nor an Angel, but the Lord Himself saved them, because He loved them and spared them; He Himself redeemed them, and took them up, and lifted them up for all the days of eternity.

**Priest:** Wisdom!

**Reader:** The Reading from the Prophecy of Zachariah. (14:1, 4, 8-11)

**Priest:** Let us attend!

**Reader:** Thus saith the Lord: Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives, which lieth opposite Jerusalem on the side whence is the dawning of the sun. And in that day living water shall come forth out of Jerusalem; half of it toward the former sea, and half of it toward the latter sea; and so shall it be in summer and spring. And the Lord shall be king over all the

earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and His Name one, compassing all the earth, and the wilderness from Gabaah unto Remmon, to the south of Jerusalem. And He shall be exalted and shall remain in that place, from the gate of Benjamin to the place of the first gate, to the gate of Gomor, and to the tower of Anameel, and to the gate of the corners, as far as the king's winepresses. They shall dwell therein; and there shall be no more anything accursed, and Jerusalem shall dwell securely.

### THE EVENING LITANY

*In place of the Evening Litany, the choir sings:  
Lord, have mercy. (12 times)*

### VOUCHSAFE, O LORD

**Reader:** Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name forever. Amen. Let Thy mercy be upon us, O Lord, even as we have set our hope on Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Master, make me to understand Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me with Thy statutes. Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever. O despise not the works of Thy hands. To Thee belongeth worship, to Thee belongeth praise, to Thee belongeth glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

### THE LITANY OF SUPPLICATION

*In place of the Litany of Supplication the choir sings:  
Lord, have mercy. (12 times)*

### THE PRAYER AT THE BOWING OF THE HEADS

**Priest:** Peace be to all!

**Choir:** And to thy spirit.

**Priest:** Bow your heads unto the Lord.

**Choir:** To Thee, O Lord.

*The Priest reads the Prayer at the Bowing of the Heads:*

**Priest:** ... now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

**Choir:** Amen.

## APOSTICHA

### Tone 2

[Music on website]

Thou wast born, as Thou Thyself didst will,  
Thou didst appear as Thou Thyself desired;  
Thou didst suffer in the flesh, O our God;  
Thou didst rise from the dead, having trampled on death.  
Thou wast taken up in glory, Thou Who dost fill the universe,  
and Thou didst send us the Divine Spirit, //  
that we may praise and glorify Thy Godhead.

*v: All you nations, clap your hands; shout to God with a voice of gladness!*

As Thou wast taken up, O Christ, from the Mount of Olives,  
the Powers saw it and cried to one another: "Who is this?"  
And they were told: "This is the Strong and Powerful One,  
this is He Who is mighty in war,  
this is truly the King of Glory."  
"And why are His garments crimson?"  
"He has come from Bosor, that is, from the flesh."  
But as God Thou didst sit down at the right hand of Majesty  
and hast sent us the Holy Spirit //  
to guide and save our souls.

*v: God has gone up with a shout; the Lord with the sound of a trumpet!*

Thou didst ascend in glory from the Mount of Olives, O Christ our God,  
in the presence of Thy Disciples,  
and sat down at the right hand of the Father,  
Thou Who in Thy Godhead didst fill the universe;  
and Thou didst send them the Holy Spirit, //  
Who enlightens and strengthens and sanctifies our souls.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

### Tone 6 (*Aposticha Doxastikon*)

[Music on website]

God has gone up with a shout;  
the Lord with the sound of a trumpet,  
to raise up Adam's fallen image,  
and send the Comforter Spirit, //  
to sanctify our souls.

## THE PRAYER OF SAINT SIMEON, THE GOD-RECEIVER

**Priest/Reader:** Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace,  
according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which  
Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; to be a light to lighten  
the Gentiles, and to be the glory of Thy people Israel.

**Reader:** Holy God, Holy Mighty Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (x 3)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and  
ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins.  
Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, look upon and heal our  
infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and  
ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

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 the evil one.

**Priest:** For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the  
Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the  
ages of ages. Amen.

**Reader:** Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our  
God, have mercy upon us, and save us. Amen.

## TROPARION

### Tone 4

[Music on website]

O Christ God Thou hast ascended in glory,  
granting joy to Thy disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit.  
Through the blessing, they were assured  
that Thou art the Son of God, //  
the Redeemer of the world!

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;*

*Repeat:* O Christ God Thou hast ascended in glory ...

*Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

*Repeat:* O Christ God Thou hast ascended in glory ...

### **THE DISMISSAL**

**Priest:** Wisdom!

**Choir:** Father, bless.

**Priest:** Christ our God, He Who is, is blessed, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

**Choir:** Amen.

**Reader:** Establish, O God, the holy Orthodox Faith and all Orthodox Christians, unto ages of ages. Amen.

**Priest:** Most Holy Theotokos, save us.

**Choir:** More honourable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, thou who without defilement gavest birth to God the Word, and art truly Theotokos, we magnify thee.

**Priest:** Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our Hope, glory to Thee!

**Choir:** Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

*Father, give the blessing.*

*The Priest gives the blessing.*

Bless, O Lord.

Reader: Lord Jesus Christ, Who for our salvation ascended from us in glory into Heaven and sat at the right hand of God the Father; through the intercessions of Thy most pure Mother; by the might of the precious and life-giving Cross; by the protection of the honourable bodiless powers of heaven; at the supplications of the Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist, John; of our Holy, Venerable and God-bearing Fathers; of our Father among the Saints, Chad, Bishop of Lichfield,

Patron and Protector of this Community; of the Holy and Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and of all the saints, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

**Priest/Reader:** Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us, and save us. Amen.