

Christ, Not Cyrus—Thank God!

Co-missioners,

Today is the Feast of the Ascension. With that in mind we send you to our library for another splendid item that's been collecting cobwebs for a while. Our editor, Jerry Burce, ran across it by accident last week. A reference to Cyrus the Persian caught his eye. If you've been following the efforts of American evangelical leaders to explain their full-throated support of the amoral Mr. Trump, you'll have noticed that Cyrus pops up fairly often in the conversation. If God can save God's people with *that* man as anointed junior messiah—see [Isaiah 45:1-17](#)—then why not Donald? So goes the reasoning.

You'll find a lot of thoughtful, nuanced rebuttal of such thinking in today's selection. This may well surprise you. The piece was written in 1982, when the idea of a man like Mr. Trump serving as U.S. president was beyond conceiving. The author is Bob Bertram. The prompt for his writing was not Jesus' ascension, but his baptism, that moment when Jesus is identified as God's Messiah, the Chosen One. Bob is working here from a passage in Isaiah 42, prescribed in the older lectionary of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* as the Old Testament text for the Baptism of our Lord in all three years of the cycle. The link between the anointing in Jesus' baptism and the enthronement of his ascension will be obvious as you read. So will the eerie pertinence of the matters Bob discusses to the political mess that Americans are in today. Suffice it to say that, when it is all read and done, you'll have tasted good news.

Christ is Lord. The pretenders are not. Thanks be to God!

Peace and Joy,

The Crossing Community

A Baptismal Crossing

Thursday Theology: that the benefits of Christ be put to use
A publication of the Crossings Community