

First Congregational United Church of Christ

*Empowered by the Holy Spirit and with the help of God,
we open our doors and hearts to all, in service and love as modeled by Jesus Christ.*



*Seventh Sunday of Easter
Ascension of the Lord*

*The Lord's Day
Seventh Sunday of Easter
Ascension of the Lord
Ten o'clock in the Morning*

The Worship of God

Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of the conscience by God's holiness; the nourishment of the mind with God's truth; the purifying of the imagination by God's beauty; the opening of the heart to God's love; the surrender of the will to God's purpose—all of this gathered up in adoration.

~William Temple

The Prologue

Today we are confronted by texts that challenge the scope of our imagination. Ascension is such an unbelievable notion, clearly refuted by the laws of physics and scientific theory known to humanity. Had Jesus really “lifted off” in said fashion he would still be in orbit today, nowhere near the presumed place of his ultimate destination. So, how do we interpret these texts? What word can they speak to twenty-first century Christians? Are these myths even remotely relevant for the postmodern mind? The answer is a resounding “maybe!” Today we consider what it is like to live lives of faith without Jesus in our midst.

Gathering Music

The Proclamation

Alleluia! Christ has ascended!

The Lord has ascended indeed! Alleluia!

The Call to Worship and Welcome

The Spirit of the still speaking God be with you.

And also with you.

The Music for Contemplation

The Lighting of the Altar Candles

The Gathering

Clap your hands, all you people! Shout unto God with loud songs of joy!

Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to the One who rules in all the earth! Come and sing praises to the Most High!

Come into this sacred setting to worship the Lord most high, an awesome God who reigns over all creation!

Sing praises to God, whose Spirit has come near and is blessing us to be a blessing to our God and to one another! Gather in the name of the ascended one!

Let us worship God!

The Introit, No. 42 (*Chalice Praise*) *Lord, Be Glorified* Bob Kilpatrick

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

Ascending God, with great joy and songs of praise, we have come to worship and bless the Holy One, to sing psalms of praise to the One who rules in all the earth; we gather in this sacred time and space before the One who has chosen us all as children of God, as a divine heritage; bless us this day, exalted God, that we might be a blessing to you, the One who has granted us the power of your Holy Spirit; all this we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the holy and still speaking Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

*The Opening Hymn (insert) *Ascension Day Draws Nigh* DARWALL

*The Litany of Praise

Clap your hands, all you people! Shout unto God with loud songs of joy! For the Lord Most High is an awesome God, a great ruler over all the earth!

All peoples and nations are under God's rule, a divine heritage chosen for all the children of the Holy One!

Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to the One who rules! Sing praises, for God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with a sound of a trumpet!

With songs of praise, we sing to the One who rules over all the earth!

Amidst the people gathered before God, the Lord rules from what the Psalmist describes as a holy throne!

For the earth belongs to God, highly exalted above all creation! Praise the Lord!

*The Gloria GREATOREX

*Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Comforter!
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end! Amen! Amen!*

The Call to Confession¹

On this ascending day of mystery and wonder, we reflect on our record as an Easter people. Is there evidence that Christ is alive within us and among us? Is the work of the Holy Spirit obvious to any who observe our words and deeds? Let us acknowledge the way things are with us as we seek God's forgiveness! In the silence and stillness of these moments, let us confess before the Holy.

The Silent Confession

The Corporate Confession²

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of ascension, the One in whom we place our ultimate hope, hear us this day for we have too easily denied our heritage amid the competing claims swirling all around us, a cacophony of dissonant voices vying for our attention. We strive for knowledge and control beyond our capacity, wanting power on our own terms rather than through the unpredictable empowerment of your Holy Spirit. Ascending God, open our eyes and our hearts that we might be forgiven, finding true life in you!

The Assurance of Pardon³

Beloved faith community, hear the good news of Ascension. Repentance and forgiveness of sin are proclaimed to all people in the name of Christ Jesus. Forgiveness is God's gift to us, a blessing we can never earn but are welcome to accept. When we agree to God's freeing offer, we are also agreeing to let God's love change us. We are blessed by this opportunity for newness of life!

Thanks be to God!

The Anthem

Ancient Words
Chancel Choir

Lynn DeShazo; arr. John Purifoy

The Witness from the Christian Scriptures

ACTS 1:1-11

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the realm of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father! "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me! For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now!" So, when they 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!”

Listen to what the Spirit of the still speaking God is saying!

Thanks be to God!

The Response: PSALM 47

CWM RHONDDA

*Clap your hands, O faithful people! Shout to God a song of praise!
From the dust of conquered nations, God a realm of grace shall raise!
In appointed courts of glory faithful to God’s name always,
May we prosper all our days!*

*With a shout, and blast of trumpet, God shall mount a throne on high!
Let our praise, as finest incense, rise to meet God in the sky!
Fill the world with glad rejoicing, Heav’n shall sing, and earth reply,
All God’s works to glorify!*

*May our hearts be filled with gladness, as the Lord our lives shall bless!
Live as heirs of God’s great justice, wear the cloak of righteousness!
God will grant us earth’s dominion, all things good, and nothing less,
For our gift of faithfulness!*

The Witness from the Gospels

LUKE 24:44-53

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled!” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things! And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised! So, stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high!” Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon

He Has Left the Building!

Timothy W. Shirley

The Music for Meditation

Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us

arr. Lura Foster

Lori Hunter, piano; Connie Pellman, flute

The Concerns of the Church
The Pastoral Prayer
The Lord's Prayer

**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 debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever!
Amen.**

The Receiving of Our Gifts
The Offertory
*The Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!
Praise Christ all creatures here below!
Praise Holy Spirit, evermore!
Praise triune God whom we adore!*

*The Prayer of Thanksgiving

*The Closing Hymn, (insert) *Hail the Day That Sees Christ Rise*

LLANFAIR

*The Procession of the Light

*The Benediction and Blessing

To our guests! At your choosing, we invite you to join us in a long-standing tradition at First Congregational United Church of Christ as we form a circle as one, joining hands and singing together our Fellowship Song.

*The Fellowship Song

Let There Be Peace on Earth

WORLD PEACE

*Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.
With every step I take, let this be my joyous creed.
To take each moment and live each moment in peace, eternally!
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.*

The Music for Reflection

*You are invited to stand as you are able.

***The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by
Don and Paula Hendrickson in honor of their grandson Cohen Hendrickson's fifth birthday.***

Lector: Nancy Diepenbrock

Ushers: Susan Krivichi and Mike Mettler

*The color for the Season of Eastertide is white,
symbolizing purity and victory, and reminding us of
Jesus' victory over death on the cross and his glorious resurrection.*

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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