

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
A Celebration of Ascension
The Season of Eastertide*

*The Lord's Day
Seventh Sunday of Easter
A Celebration of Ascension
The Season of Eastertide
Nine 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

If the Ascension of Jesus is read as an event, a literal, factual occurrence that took place within the confines of history, it really takes us no place, having nothing to offer us in advancing the spiritual devotionals and disciplines that order all our faith journeys. Scientifically, we know that Jesus would still be in orbit if he had lifted off in the manner the biblical writer tells us, he would still be somewhere in space, traveling the Milky Way. These texts were written when it was believed that the universe consisted of three tiers, with heaven located just beyond the visible sky. If, however, we see the Ascension of Jesus, ascension as metaphor speaking to the empowerment of his followers for all time, then the text provides far richer meanings, a depth and breadth that informs the human creature of the unlimited potential, the unbound possibility, the untapped capacity for creating a world reflecting and revealing the realm of God on earth. No small order! Interpretation is all about, a matter of, perspective. Interpretation is all about the way one looks at the story, intuitively reading what is clearly a nuanced tale of legendary proportions. The Bible, a composition of words wrapped in much mystery and even enigma, always tells us more than meets the eye of the beholder if we will allow it to do so. The word to us today, as our thoughts ascend, is found between the lines of the text!

Gathering Music

The Proclamation

Alleluia! Christ has ascended on high!

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 peoples! Shout unto God with loud songs of joy!

With joyful hearts, we gather to sing the praises of God, to sing praises to the Most High, to bless the One who has blessed us all!

With great joy in our hearts, come and worship God on this high and holy festival day! Rejoice in the One who empowers us from above!

May our songs of praise ascend to the highest heavens! Open our minds, ascending God, that we might understand your word to us this day!

Let us worship God!

The Introit (insert)

Bind Us Together

Bob Gillman

The Collect

Let us pray to the Lord,

God of the Ascension, we have gathered as your people to sing praises to our ascending God, to shout to the highest heavens with loud songs of joy, to worship and bless the One who has blessed us; ascending God, open our minds to you this day, that we might ascend with you, better understanding your word to us that we might know the hope to which we have been called; all this we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the holy and still speaking Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

*The Opening Hymn (insert)

Ascension Day Draws Nigh

DARWALL'S 148TH

*The Litany of Praise

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

All peoples and nations are under the rule of the Holy One, all creation a divine heritage chosen for every child of God!

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

In the midst of a people gathered before God, the Holy One rules over all the earth from a mystical holy throne!

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

For all the earth belongs to God, the One 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

If the people of Galilee spent too much time looking up toward heaven, gazing into the frontier of space, perhaps our problem is that we spend too little. Are we about the business of God? Are we on a spiritual quest in the midst of all our doing? Let us confess the way things are between ourselves and God and between one another. In the awe and mystery of the Ascension, and in the sacred silence and stillness of our moments together, let us confess before the Holy.

The Silent Confession

The Corporate Confession²

Let us pray to the Lord,

Ascending God, how often we fail to be patient. We are an impatient lot, wishing for immediate answers and instant gratification, all designed to meet the limited desires of our hearts. We tend to be much more inquisitive than grateful. We sometimes forget the amazing riches of your gifts to us, only wanting more, our ravenous appetites insatiably out of control, threatening to consume us! In our busyness, we fail to take the time to simply enjoy being in your presence, singing your praises, delighting in your love, rejoicing in you. Forgive us when we are arrogant, and when our selfish pride and neglect of values and relationships makes us less than who you created us to be, threatening to devour us.

The Assurance of Pardon³

Beloved faith community, hear the good news of the Ascension! Forgiveness is ours to receive and to proclaim to all nations. The power of God at work in Christ is offered to us, the power of love to make a difference among us and within us. Let us give thanks that we are restored as sons and daughters of the living God, the One who promises to us the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Thanks be to God!

The Chime Choir

Jesus Loves Me

arr. Michael A. Glasgow

Susan Krivichi, director; Lori Hunter, piano

The Time for the Children

Pat Tucker

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 God's realm 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 RHONDA

*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!*

*Let your hearts be filled with gladness, as the Lord your life 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

JOHN 17:6-19

“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. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth! Your word is truth! As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world! And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth!

The Gospel for today!

Thanks be to God!

The Sermon *Out of This World!* Timothy W. Shirley
The Hymn for Ascension, No. 95 *Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun* DUKE STREET
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 Extinguishing of the Altar Candles

*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, 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.

Lector: Ursula Charaf

Ushers: Mike Mettler and Carlton Schroeder

The color for Easter Day, the Resurrection of the Lord, the Season of Easter, known as Eastertide, and Ascension of the Lord is White, symbolizing purity and victory, and reminding us of Jesus' victory over death on the cross and his glorious resurrection.

*The flowers adorning the Chancel for worship today are given by
Carlton Schroeder in honor of all moms, wishing them a “Happy Mother’s Day”,
with an extra special eightieth birthday wish to Barbara Schroeder.
“Roses are red, violets are blue! If you have furry children, you’re a mom too!”*

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First Congregational UCC - Eagle River, WI

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