

**Peace United Church of Christ
May 5th, 2024**

**Sixth Sunday of Easter
10:30am**



Ascension, Joanna Vaughan

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Prelude *Suite in F for two horns and orchestra, G.F. Telemann*

Welcome and Announcements

Ringing of the Bells

*Call to Worship *from Psalm 47*

Clap your hands, people of God,
Shout to God with songs of joy!
We worship an awesome God,
A God who leads us with strength and compassion.
God has gone up with a shout,
We sing praises to our risen God!

*Song *This is a Day of New Beginnings* #417 NCH

***This is a day of new beginnings, time to remember and move on,
time to believe what love is bringing, laying to rest the pain that's gone.
For by the life and death of Jesus, God's mighty Spirit, now as then,
can make for us a world of difference, as faith and hope are born again.
Then let us, with the Spirit's daring, step from the past and leave behind
our disappointment, guilt, and grieving, seeking new paths, and sure to find.
Christ is alive, and goes before us to show and share what love can do.
This is a day of new beginnings our God is making all things new.
In faith we'll gather 'round the table to taste and share what love can do.
This is a day of new beginnings our God is making all things new.***

*Prayer of Confession

**Gracious God, you are near to us as our breath. As we inhale the power of your Spirit,
help us to exhale all that separates us from you. Forgive us for what we have done or left
undone. Embrace us in your love. Amen.**

*Assurance of God's Love

*Passing of the Peace

Story for All Ages

Amanda McElray Hunter

Sending the Children

***Goodbye sweet children, it's time to leave this place,
May our love hold you all with grace.
Our hearts go with you 'til you come back to this place.
So we bid you goodbye, goodbye, goodbye.***

Contemporary Reading

Blessing the Distance, Jan Richardson

Joan Peterson

It is a mystery to me
how as the distance
between us grows,
the larger this blessing
becomes,
as if the shape of it
depends on absence,
as if it finds its form
not by what
it can cling to
but by the space
that arcs
between us.
As this blessing

makes its way,
first it will cease
to measure itself
by time.
Then it will release
how attached it has be-
come
to this place
where we have lived,
where we have learned
to know one another
in proximity and
presence.
Next this blessing

will abandon
the patterns
in which it moved,
the habits that helped it
recognize itself,
the familiar pathways
it traced.
Finally this blessing
will touch its fingers
to your brow,
your eyes,
your mouth;
it will hold
your beloved face

in both its hands,
and then
it will let you go;
it will loose you
into your life;
it will leave
each hindering thing
until all that breathes
between us
is blessing
and all that beats
between us
is grace.

Special Music

Byron Klimek, cello

Scripture Reading

Acts 1:1-11

Joan Peterson

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning 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 kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of God. "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 God has set by God's 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."

May these words be to us our light and our life. **Thanks be to God.**

Anthem

Hear My Prayer, Moses Hogan

Sermon

Rev. Kevin Brown

Song

You Are Called to Tell the Story

#357 NCH

***You are called to tell the story, passing words of life along,
Then to blend your voice with others as you sing the sacred song.
Christ be known in all our singing, filling all with songs of love.***

***You are called to teach the rhythm of the dance that never ends,
Then to move within the circle, hand in hand with strangers, friends.
Christ be known in all our dancing, touching all with hands of love.***

***You are called to set the table, blessing bread as Jesus blessed,
Then to come with thirst and hunger, needing care like all the rest.
Christ be known in all our sharing, feeding all with signs of love.***

***May the One whose love is broader than the measure of all space
Give us words to sing the story, move among us in this place.
Christ be known in all our living, filling all with gifts of love.***

Community Prayers and Pastoral Prayer

The Prayer of Jesus

written by Parker Palmer

Heavenly Father, Heavenly Mother. Holy and blessed is your true name. We pray for your reign of peace to come, we pray that your good will be done, let heaven and earth become one. Give us this day the bread we need, give it to those that have none. Let forgiveness flow like a river between us, from each one to each one. Lead us to holy innocence beyond the evil of our days—Come swiftly Mother, Father, come. For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy: forever your name is All in One. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

Duet for cello and bass, Boccherini

*Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God above ye heavenly host,
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost! Amen**

*Prayer of Dedication

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Prayer Song, Ron Deters

P&W #27

***Merciful God soften our hearts
Open us up to your Will
Wash us in Your Love, show us the Way
Humbly to serve You still.***

***Mother, Daughter, Sister God
Please help us follow Your Way
Give us direction, vision to see
In Your Holy Name we pray.***

Prayer of Consecration

Sharing the Bread and Cup

(In the United Church of Christ all are welcome to participate in Communion. Gluten free crackers are on the tray and we use non-alcoholic grape juice.)

Prayer After Communion

Loving God, you have raised our humanity in Christ and have fed us with the bread of heaven. Nourished with such spiritual blessings, grant that we might set our hearts in heavenly places as well. Amen.

*Closing Song

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

#506 NCH

***What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.***

***Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged; take it to our God in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to our God in prayer!***

***Are we weak and heavy laden, burdened with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge, take it to our God in prayer!
Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to our God in prayer!
Jesus' arms will take and shield you; you will find a solace there.***

*Benediction

*Postlude

Assisting in Today's Service:
Cindy Macaulay, Bridget Reistad, Ushers
Byron Klimek, Cello; Deb Rausch and Nick Brown, French Horn, Musicians