

Dear Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church Family,

Today in worship, we celebrate Christ's ascension into heaven. Historically, the Church has understood this day to be 40 days after Easter (this year, May 21), but the celebration was moved to the Sunday following Ascension Day. We read this story in the Acts lesson. (By the way, as I study Scripture, I continue to find 40 days as a significant marker in God's timeframe; a topic for another time.)

All Christian creeds affirm Ascension as a central doctrine of the Church. John Wesley affirmed this as one of the non-Sunday holy day observances along with Good Friday and Christmas. Wesley wrote about this service by stating it "marked not just something about Jesus or the church, but about the scope of salvation for the whole universe. We also are reminded by the Gospel lesson Jesus ascends into heaven and His throne, we are not abandoned. Instead, we are united in oneness with each other and with God; Jesus prayed to The Father for this unity (the Gospel lesson)!

Sadly, a survey of Church history frequently demonstrates repeated periods of division and schism. I pray daily this current time in our world will unite the Church rather divide us. The world needs to hear and to see a Church united as we face these uncertain times with a virus/pandemic that seems to follow a course that is difficult to understand. Because I work in healthcare, I find the best medical practices change at least weekly if not daily. I have struggled and wanted to criticize because I, like all humans, want control and predictability. Ascension Sunday reminds me Christ, the Redeemer, of the World, has returned to His rightful place and invites me to live in certainty of God's guiding hand in all of Creation. I also recognize that this holy responsibility requires me to surrender self to the God and invites me to live in unity with Him. I am not God nor is any other human! For me, that is a relief! Unity also requires I pray daily the Holy Spirit makes me more into the image of Christ in my words and actions. Our Methodist doctrine of perfection or sanctifying grace invites us to consider whether our words and actions are more like Christ. If we cannot answer affirmatively, may we pray the Holy Spirit will have freedom to work in us and guide us as we interact with others both in and out of the Church. (Next Week is Pentecost, so we will hear more about the work of the Holy Spirit.)

Because I worshipped remotely last Sunday, I have some observations. I found worship to be praise-worthy of God as I participated fully. I gathered on our back porch and read the responses out loud, sang out loud, stood, sat and even kneeled. I had a candle that I lit and extinguished. I encourage you to do this at home; it provided an intentionality worthy of our Triune God in our homes yet united with our church family!

Finally, I express deep appreciation to my church family for your prayers, expressions of love, and support in my brother's journey from temporal life into eternal life. You faithfully have prayed for David; I ask you to continue to pray for his wife, Rita. God's Grace and Sufficiency have surrounded my family! I had the holy privilege of praying with my siblings and sister-in-law at David's bedside on Monday night. We had tears; our grief was and is real, but we grieve with a certain hope that the crucifixion of Christ and our trust in Jesus as Savior and LORD of our lives enables us to know David joined the Church Triumphant on Wednesday morning. This is a universal truth for all of us. May Christ continue to guide us as we live by faith in a time of uncertainty. May we encourage one another and bear one another's burdens.

With love and a heart that desires to serve in faithfulness,

Marcus

**Lake Toxaway United Methodist Church
Home Worship for Community Worship
Ascension Sunday, May 24, 2020**

PRELUDE

Chorale, Duo, and Meditation on "Diademata", Charles Callahan

GREETING

L: Mystery of God, draw us near.

C: Fill our minds with awe!

L: Wisdom of God, surprise us!

C: Encourage us with unending hope!

L: Glory of God, shine upon us.

C: And shine through our lives!

All: May we worship you in Spirit and truth. Amen!

HYMN #327

Crown Him with Many Crowns
(Printed w/ permission)

INVOCATION

God of incredible surprises, as we gaze into the clouds, help us to see that we are standing on holy ground.

Place our feet on the pathways of peace and hope.

Draw our attention to the vision of the Lord rising to the heavens to be with you, while also reminding us we are called to live out our Resurrection faith as the Church.

In your Holy Spirit, touch us, bless us, keep us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

GLORIA PATRI (UMH #70)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Acts 1:6-14

- 1:6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?"
- 1:7 He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.
- 1:8 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."
- 1:9 When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.
- 1:10 While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.
- 1:11 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."
- 1:12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away.
- 1:13 When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.
- 1:14 All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Psalms 68:1-10, 32-35

- 68:1 Let God rise up, let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee before him.
- 68:2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire, let the wicked perish before God.**
- 68:3 But let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy.
- 68:4 Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds--his name is the LORD-- be exultant before him.**
- 68:5 Father of orphans and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.
- 68:6 God gives the desolate a home to live in; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious live in a parched land.**
- 68:7 O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness, Selah
- 68:8 the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain at the presence of God, the God of Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel.**
- 68:9 Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad; you restored your heritage when it languished;
- 68:10 your flock found a dwelling in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.**
- 68:32 Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth; sing praises to the Lord, Selah
- 68:33 O rider in the heavens, the ancient heavens; listen, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.**
- 68:34 Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel; and whose power is in the skies.
- 68:35 Awesome is God in his sanctuary, the God of Israel; he gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!**

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

- 4:12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.
- 4:13 But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed.
- 4:14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.
- 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time.
- 5:7 all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.
- 5:8 Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour.
- 5:9 Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.
- 5:10 And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.
- 5:11 To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

John 17:1-11 (please stand)

- 17:1 After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you,
- 17:2 since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.
- 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
- 17:4 I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do.
- 17:5 So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.
- 17:6 "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.
- 17:7 Now they know that everything you have given me is from you;
- 17:8 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.
- 17:9 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.
- 17:10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.
- 17:11 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.

L: *Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.*

P: ***Thanks be to God!***

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Patient God, it hasn't been easy for us to be disciples or witnesses to your love. We get caught in traps of anger, impatience and fear. Our words and spirits become cynical and jaded. Yet, at all times, you are with us, guiding and guarding us. On this day in which we celebrate the ascension of Jesus into heaven, we are reminded that we are not being left without guidance. The promise of the Spirit is given and in that promise we have hope and courage to become true disciples. Forgive us when we forget that! Forgive us when we act as though you didn't care about us or about this world. We are called to be those who live the faith of hope and reconciliation, of courage and understanding. Lift us up when we have fallen, guide our hearts when we speak, for it is in the name of our risen Savior Jesus that we ask these things. AMEN.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Celebrate, dear friends! God's Spirit will be coming to you to give you hope and courage. AMEN.

HOMILY

STATEMENT OF FAITH (United Church of Australia)

*We believe in one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
We proclaim Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen One,
confessing him as Lord to the glory of God the Father.
In the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
we acclaim Jesus as the Lord of the Church,
the Head over all things, the beginning of a new creation.
We acknowledge that we live and work
between the time of Christ's death and resurrection
and the final consummation of all things which he will bring.
We are a pilgrim people,
always on the way towards a promised goal;
on the way Christ feeds us with word and sacraments,
and we have the gift of the Holy Spirit
in order that we may not lose the way.
We will live and work within the faith and unity
bearing witness to that unity which is both Christ's gift and his will.
We affirm that every member of the Church
is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified.
Together with all the people of God,
we will serve the world for which Christ died.
And we await with hope the day of the Lord Jesus.*

OFFERING

<https://www.wnccumc.org/online-donations-to-churches>

OFFERTORY

Prelude on "Beach Spring", Gilbert M. Martin

DOXOLOGY

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

With joy and confidence in your abiding love and presence with us, we present these gifts, tokens of our lives, as an offering for service in and to this world which you have entrusted to us. Bless these gifts and bless all those who place their trust in you. AMEN.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #368

My Hope is Built
(Printed w/ permission)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Trumpet Tune Wayne L. Wold

Pastor: Marcus Dodson: 828-553-0282, marcus61dodson@gmail.com

Organist: Charlie Steele: cwsorgan@comporium.net

Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh, 469-569-2314, administrator@laketoxawayumc.org

Lay Leaders: Barbara Kline: 828-862-5585 and Paula Markert: 828-553-9434

Liturgist: George Bagwell

Announcements

The Bishop of Western North Carolina sent communication this week that United Methodist Churches in our Conference will continue to worship w/ a 10-person maximum limit and online through the end of June. The Worship Committee has been receiving information and preparing for how we carefully re-open. All of us are anxious to worship in the sanctuary again, but we also practice the Three General Rules provided by John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement in America: Rule 1) Do no harm, Rule 2) Do good, Rule 3) Stay in Love with God. Our first priority remains the wellbeing and safety of parishioners. The guidelines we will have to follow when we are able to re-open are a daunting challenge.

The Administrative Council will meet on Friday, June 12 at 9 am. If you are a member of the Council, you will receive a Zoom Invite. If you are not a member and would like to attend the meeting, please email Tom Blackstock as these meetings are open to all members, but only members have a vote if actions are required. You can email Tom @ tomblackstock@gmail.com.

Flowers for the altar have been put on hold until further notice due to Covid-19. We appreciate those who have volunteered to provide the weekly flowers.

Thank you to Mary Collins who has made some "no sew" bandana Covid-19 masks. Please call or e-mail Saunders 469-569-2314 (cell), administrator@laketoxawayumc.org to arrange a time to pick one up.

If you are a committee chair and need to schedule a socially distanced meeting in the Fellowship Hall, please continue to use the calendar located in the Fellowship Hall or call/e-mail Saunders to schedule: 469-569-2314 (cell), administrator@laketoxawayumc.org

We have devotionals from Our Daily Bread available quarterly. We are in the last month of this quarter and the next quarter is June – August. If you are interested in a copy of Our Daily Bread for this current quarter or next quarter, please reach out to Saunders, our Church Administrator 469-569-2314 (cell), administrator@laketoxawayumc.org to get a copy.

There are two new church e-mail addresses for everyone's use.
info@laketowawayumc.org – designed for general LTUMC questions
administrator@laketoxaway.org – Church Administrator: Saunders Grommesh

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1. Crown him with man - y crowns, the Lamb up - on his throne.
 2. Crown him the Lord of life, who tri-umphed o'er the grave,
 3. Crown him the Lord of peace, whose power a scep - ter sways
 4. Crown him the Lord of love; be - hold his hands and side,

Hark! how the heaven-ly an - them drowns all mu - sic but its own.
 and rose vic - to - rious in the strife for those he came to save.
 from pole to pole, that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise.
 those wounds, yet vis - i - ble a - bove, in beau-ty glo - ri - fied.

A - wake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,
 His glo - ries now we sing, who died, and rose on high,
 His reign shall know no end, and round his pierc-ed feet
 All hail, Re - deem - er, hail! For thou hast died for me;

and hail him as thy match-less King through all e - ter - ni - ty.
 who died, e - ter-nal life to bring, and lives that death may die.
 fair flowers of par-a - dise ex - tend their fra-grance ev - er sweet.
 thy praise and glo-ry shall not fail through-out e - ter - ni - ty.

WORDS: Matthew Bridges, 1851, and Godfrey Thring, 1874 (Rev. 19:12)
 MUSIC: George J. Elvey, 1868

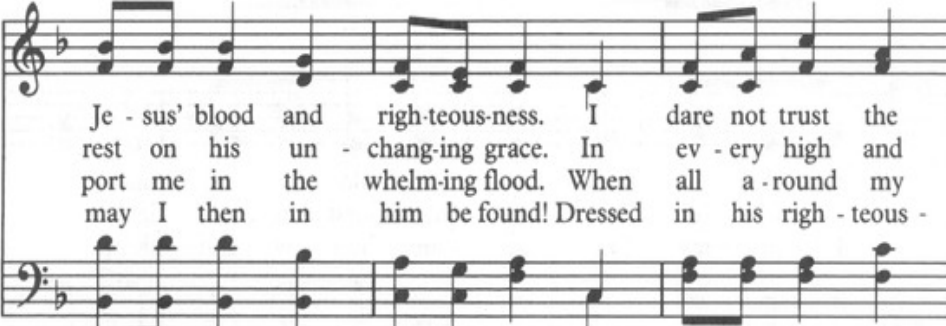
DIADEMATA
 SMD

My Hope Is Built

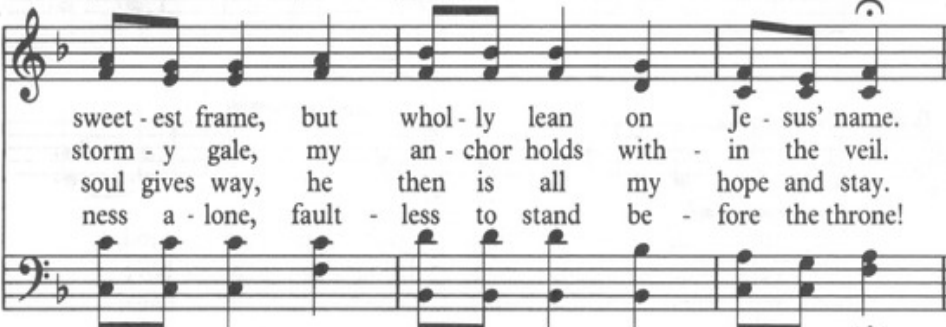
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1. My hope is built on noth - ing less than
 2. When dark - ness veils his love - ly face, I
 3. His oath, his cov - e - nant, his blood sup -
 4. When he shall come with trum - pet sound, O

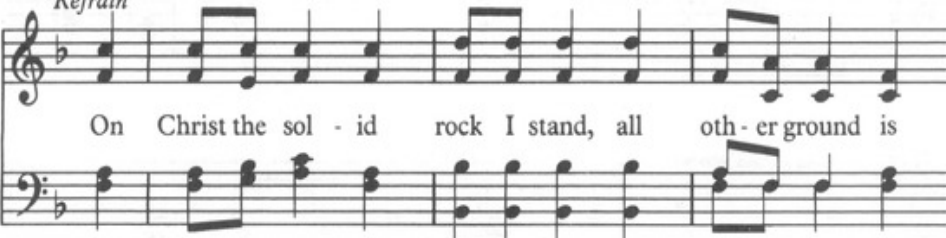


Je - sus' blood and righ - teous - ness. I dare not trust the
 rest on his un - chang - ing grace. In ev - ery high and
 port me in the whelm - ing flood. When all a - round my
 may I then in him be found! Dressed in his righ - teous -

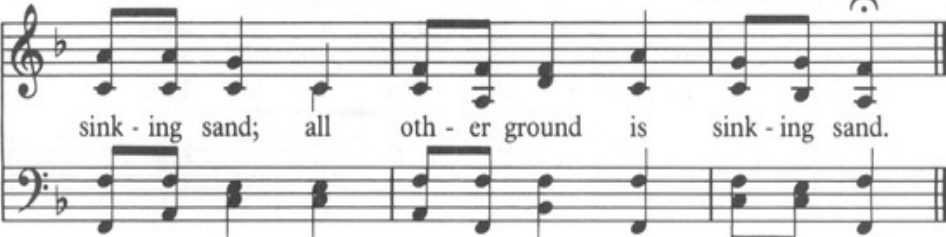


sweet - est frame, but whol - ly lean on Je - sus' name.
 storm - y gale, my an - chor holds with - in the veil.
 soul gives way, he then is all my hope and stay.
 ness a - lone, fault - less to stand be - fore the throne!

Refrain



On Christ the sol - id rock I stand, all oth - er ground is



sink - ing sand; all oth - er ground is sink - ing sand.