

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
RIVER FALLS, WISCONSIN

*"Ascension Sunday"*  
*"Seventh Sunday of Easter"*

May 16, 2021

10:00 am

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**GATHERING MUSIC**

**WELCOME**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: Today is Ascension Sunday when we celebrate Christ's return to God.

**P: We look up in wonder as Jesus is lifted from us into heaven.**

L: But this is not just a time to gaze upward. There is work to be done.

**P: Jesus has entrusted the ministry of God's love to us.**

L: So let us worship, asking God for strength, courage and faith so that we can do the work God has entrusted to each of us.

**P: Let us make our hearts ready for the task ahead with prayer and praise!**

**All: Come let us worship!**

**SONG** *"Alleluia! Sing to Jesus"* **Vocals and Bell Choir**

*Alleluia! Sing to Jesus! His the scepter, his the throne;*

*Alleluia! His the triumph, his the victory alone;*

*Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion thunder like a mighty flood;*

*Jesus out of ev'ry nation has redeemed us by his blood.*

*Alleluia! Not as orphans are we left in sorrow now;*

*Alleluia! He is near us, faith believes, nor questions how;*

*Though the cloud from sight received him, when the forty days were o'er,*

*Shall our hearts forget his promise, "I am with you evermore"?*

**OPENING PRAYER (unison)**

Holy God, one of Jesus' final earthly acts before he ascended to be with you was to open the minds of his followers so they might understand the Scriptures. He wanted them to know how his life and ministry had fulfilled everything that was written about him. We too desire to understand your word to us. We want to know the meaning of your life and death to our daily experiences. We ask for wisdom and understanding as this sacred text is read and proclaimed. Speak to us, we pray, the message of life and hope and faith. Instruct us in the way you would have us go. Amen.

**PSALM 47**

L: Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy.

**P: For the LORD, the Most High, is awesome, a great king over all the earth.**

L: God subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet.

**P: God chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves.**

L: God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.  
P: **Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.**  
L: For God is the king of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm.  
P: **God is king over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.**  
L: The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham.  
P: **For the shields of the earth belong to God; the Lord is highly exalted.**

**SCRIPTURE LESSON**

**Acts 1:6-11**

**HOMILY**

**Rev. Chris Myers**

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

*“Blessed Assurance”*

**Bell Choir**

**\*STATEMENT OF FAITH – The Apostles’ Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**THE PRAYERS & LORD’S PRAYER (debts/debtors)**

Lord in your mercy, ...do not leave us alone.

**...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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

**SONG**

*“I’ll Fly Away”*

*Some glad morning when this life is o’er, I’ll fly away;*

*To a home on God’s celestial shore, I’ll fly away.*

*I’ll fly away, O glory, I’ll fly away;*

*When I die, hallelujah, by and by, I’ll fly away.*

**\*BLESSING**

**POSTLUDE**

Please remember the following in your prayers this week:

**Those who are ill or recovering:**

Bernice Larson, Megan (daughter of Steve and Janice Healy), Augie (friend of Rose Rude), Peg Thompson, Dorothy Shavers (Rene Bylander's mother), Roger Hirstein, Jim, TC (brother in law of Cori Fosmo) and his family, Mischa (friend of Bobbie Kuhn), Elaine Dixen, Jodi (sister of Lori Johnson), Jackie Nesvig (sister of Marshall Skule), Jacob Helmrick (son of Jodie and Kurt), Paul (friend of Janice Healy)

**Prayers for the ministry of our congregation:**

- For the Youth Ministry Search team as they seek to find a new Youth Minister by the fall, that they may think creatively about future ministry possibilities with our young people
- For the Church Van Campaign, that we may quickly raise enough funds to purchase a used 15 passenger van
- For the Wisconsin Conference UCC Annual Meeting that was held this past week virtually, that we may all grow in love and service
- For Carol Merriman who will be helping at Moon Beach Camp and Tim Bylander who will be going to Moon Beach for a Work Camp, we are blessed by your dedication to our camping program
- For our Trustees who cleaned the church inside and outside these past two Saturdays and for all who helped in this endeavor
- For our incredibly faithful and flexible musicians, webteam and deacons who are willing to put in the extra work each week for worship
- For those who continue to support our church's ministry with their tithes, offerings and gifts--you are all a blessing

**Prayers for our World:**

- For peace and resolution to centuries of problems in Israel and Palestine, come Holy Spirit
- For those at RFHS going to prom—hallelujah you can go this year!
- For those trying to be vaccinated and those who already have, that we may continue to act safely
- For police officers who are struggling with so many expectations
- For students gearing up for exams, the last days of school and grad parties—may you finish strong!
- For those in the military, especially for Jean Smith's grandson Jake who leaves for an overseas deployment
- For our fractured nation, that we may find ways to come together and solve our real problems

**Prayers of Thanksgiving:**

- For Lois Hall, the 103 year old sister of Polly Wymer who died recently, may she join the saints in heaven
- For Catherine Engstrom and Steve Papp who are the proud parents of Margaret Jean Papp born April 29 at 7 pounds 5 ounces and 20.5 inches long in Hudson with happy siblings Brandon, Wes and Trudy—may she grow in love and trust
- For Carole and Tim Hoopman who celebrated their 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on May 7 and Duane and Mary Church who celebrated their 61<sup>st</sup> wedding anniversary on May 9
- For Mike Noreen, member of our church and conservation officer for the City of River Falls who has made River Falls second in the nation in its use of renewable energy.
- For Sawyer Sitz, son of Heather and Dan Sitz to be baptized on June 20 and Weston Fuller, son Kahla and Farnum Fuller to be baptized on June 27—that they may grow in grace and years
- For Marshall Skule who has created a pouring urn to be used to inter ashes in our new Memorial Garden
- For the over 155 million people vaccinated so far in this country, thanks be to God

**For those grieving the loss of loved ones:**

- For the family of Amanda, sister-in-law of Lori Johnson and wife of Mike, who died recently and whose memorial service was in early May, that they may receive God's comfort
- For the family of Jenny Sperling who died recently at Comforts of Home and whose funeral was recently led by Pastor Roger Kampstra, and whose interment in Webster will be in early June, that she may rest in peace
- For the family of Phyllis Huber who will be interred at St. Paul's UCC cemetery on Saturday, May 15 at 2pm
- For those in mourning, including the Wymer, Williams, Filkins, Reilly, Zeman and Greub families, as well as all those who have died from Covid-19

If you have people you wish to include on our prayer list, please contact the church office or one of the pastors.



These pictures of the Church of the Ascension were taken on the Holy Land Tour two years ago. Notice the mosque to the left of the church. On the right, inside the church, is the spot Jesus is said to have ascended from.

### SCRIPTURE LESSON: Acts 1:6-11

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.”

#### Worship participants for this week:

Audio/Visual: Jeff Hoffman, Andy Myers

Music: Jamie Mills, Terry Mithun, David Reilly

Preacher: Rev. Chris Myers

#### Treasurer's Report

	<u>May 9, 2021</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
General Fund Income*	\$ 13,580	\$ 223,875
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,262	\$ 175,978

A full accounting of all income and expenses is available in the church office.

\*Includes annual and monthly gifts.