

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

May 16, 2021 Ascension Sunday
"At Home Worship"

Call to Worship

The heavens shout out the glories of the Lord.

God's handiwork is written across the skies.

The music of creation sings throughout the earth.

Day by day, night by night, in word and in deed,

let us declare the glories of the Lord!

We gather to worship and glorify our God.

Opening Prayer Most High God, as Christ ascended into the heavens, may our hearts ascend to you in this time of worship. Open our eyes to the power of your love. Open our lives to the fullness of your grace. Renew in us again our purpose as Christ's followers: to proclaim his name to all people in all places. In Jesus' holy name, we pray. Amen.

Scripture Reading "You will be my witnesses."

Read Acts 1.1-11

A Prayer of Confession Ever-present God, we find so much to worry about. The world seems a scary place, filled with so much that we cannot control. Things seem to be coming apart and we don't know what the future holds. Help us to place our trust in you, O God. Remind us of your continuing care for all creation. Teach us to see the needs of the world and to respond with care and compassion, that we may be faithful, gentle, loving people. In the name of the One who brings us peace, we pray. Amen.

Time of Silent Confession Offer the confessions of your heart to God in these quiet moments.

Words of Assurance The Creator God who made heaven and earth dwells among us to bring us love and fullness of life. Let us praise the Lord our God, for the One who loves us is faithful and forgiving. Thanks be to God.

Scripture Reading "Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you." Read I Peter 4.12-14; 5.6-11

Remembering our Joys and Concerns in Prayer Please spend a few moments remembering those who are on our prayer list and the joys and concerns you bring to God today.

Unison Prayer Loving and Caring God, we come before you in hope as we worship this morning – hope that will sustain us and those we love in trying times, in doubting times. Open up to us the possibilities of encountering you in unexpected ways, the possibilities of seeing the miraculous in everyday life. We give you thanks that you answer us according to your will, and not our own. May we rest in your unfailing love as we pray for one another in the holy name of Jesus, who taught us to pray together, saying.....

The Lord's Prayer

Scripture Reading "All mine are yours, and yours are mine."

Read John 17.6-19

Meditation The words we read in John's Gospel for this week are a part of what scholars have called Jesus' "high priestly prayer." This prayer was offered by Jesus right before the time he spent in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night preceding his crucifixion. Jesus knew what awaited him in the days to come; he knew that his earthly life was about to end. So, in very human fashion, Jesus looked back in reflection upon the ministry with which he had been involved for three years. As he prays, Jesus recalls how he revealed God to us: "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.”

One of the most important reasons why Jesus stresses the relationship the disciples of his day had with God is because he knows that they will be the ones left to carry on what he had begun among them. The ascension marks the end of Jesus’ face-to-face interactions with his followers and the beginning of the ministry in which they will be active – setting the stage for the work of ministry for all of the ages to come.

If pressed I could not explain the details of the ascension. But then again, do the details matter? What is truly important is that we are God’s people, followers of Christ. As believers, we are the ones called upon in our day and age to continue the ministry Christ began so long ago. To do just that, Jesus promises us the coming of the Holy Spirit which we celebrate next Sunday on Pentecost. With that Spirit’s power, his disciples began to follow Jesus’ example: “healing, teaching, preaching, causing trouble (in a good way), trying to figure out how to be a community together even though they got on one another’s nerves.”

In our own ways, using our own diverse gifts, we continue this ministry – even in trying times - maybe especially in trying times. Now more than ever we need to be the Body of Christ, remembering how Jesus prayed for us and sent us forth, as he says in the words of his prayer to God: “*As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.*” As believers, we are people of hope, knowing that God in Christ is always with us to encourage us and remind us we are the blessed people of God. How will you live out your calling in the week ahead?

Closing Prayer Holy God, having worshipped you, we go forth into this new week to pursue your ways: righteousness, holy living, faithfulness, love, and justice. We go forth to share the abundance of your gifts with others, ever grateful, Almighty God that you go with us. We ask that you would bless us and keep us as faithful disciples for your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.



Lisbon United Methodist Church
welcomes, nurtures, and serves
all people
with the love of Christ.