

**A Grief Observed – an Ascension Day Service  
First Congregational United Church of Christ  
Columbus, Ohio**

**May 21, 2020 – 12 noon and 6:00pm**

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**Opening Reflection**

We gather on Ascension Day to lift up our Savior Jesus Christ as he is lifted up to the right hand of God. He humbled himself to become one of us. He poured himself out in love for all he met. Jesus came to show us the way of compassion, kindness, healing, love and grace in the midst of a world of suffering and struggle.

Human in every way, he laid down his life for all. He was obedient to death, even death on a cross. God raised him from the dead, showed the world the immensity of his love through 40 days of Resurrected Life, and today has exalted him on high.

God has given him a name above all names. At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow in heaven, on earth, and in the depths. Every tongue shall proclaim: Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God.

**Reading from the Psalms**

**Psalm 46**

<sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,  
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

<sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

<sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.

<sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;  
God will help it when the morning dawns.

<sup>6</sup> The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;  
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

<sup>8</sup>Come, behold the works of the LORD;  
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.

<sup>9</sup>He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;  
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.

<sup>10</sup>“Be still, and know that I am God!  
I am exalted among the nations,  
I am exalted in the earth.”

<sup>11</sup>The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

### **Silence to Reflect on the Psalm Reading**

#### **Responsive Prayer**

Leader: O God, arise above the heavens  
All: On the earth, your glory!

Leader: Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us,  
We find shelter in you.  
All: On the earth, your glory!

Leader: We shelter in the shadow of your wings,  
Till the storm has passed.  
All: On the earth, your glory!

Leader: We call on God most high,  
To send your Holy Spirit and save us.  
All: On the earth, your glory!

Leader: Your love is high as the heavens,  
Your faithfulness, as the clouds.  
All: On the earth, your glory!

Leader: Glory to God, the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of us all!  
All: O God, arise above the heavens.  
And on the earth, your glory! Amen.

## **A Reading from The Acts of the Apostles 1:6-11**

### *The Ascension of Jesus*

<sup>6</sup>So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup>He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup>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.” <sup>9</sup>When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup>While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. <sup>11</sup>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.”

### **Silence to Reflect on the Reading**

### **Reflection on Ascension Day and this Time we are facing**

**Rev. Dr. Tim Ahrens at noon; Rev. Emily Corzine at 6:00pm**

### **Intercessory Prayer**

Leader: Arise, O Lord, in your strength

All: We will sing and pray to your Glory, Lord!

Leader: For those who are close to us and have special need of prayer today, let us pray to the Lord.

- *Let us lift up Prayers for those close to us in need of prayer today -*

All: God of Love, we lift our loved ones to you.

Leader: For those who we are sick and in need of special prayers today, let us pray to the Lord.

- *Let us lift up prayers for those who are sick –*

All: God of Healing, we lift up our prayers to you.

Leader: For all who have died and passed to eternal life and have been welcomed by our Ascended Lord and God on High,

let us pray to the Lord.

- *Let us lift up the names of all who have died unto the Lord –*

All: God of Mercy and Eternal Grace, accept our prayers for our beloved who have gone before us to our Savior.

Leader: For those who been stricken by COVID-19 in need of prayers today, let us pray to the Lord

- *Let us lift up those who are sick, who have died and all who recovering from COVID-19*

All: God who weeps for our 5.1 million brothers and sisters testing positive for COVID-19 and the more than 330,000 of Your children who have died from this Coronavirus across the globe and over 93,800 in the United States and over 1720 in Ohio, 200 in Franklin County, hear our prayers and receive the souls of all who have died from COVID-19.

Leader: For all leaders of this world in all areas of politics, science, medicine, business and faith who are working for to hold our global community together in these pandemic days, let us pray to the Lord.

- *Everyone is invited to lift up prayers for leaders across the globe –*

All: God of Hope, we pray that you grant courage and strength to all who lead us through these pandemic days.

Leader: For all people, everywhere, who are working together to save lives, serve their sisters and brothers in each community across this globe, let pray to the Lord.

- *Let us lift up the names of those who we know who stand in need of special thanks and prayers this day –*

All: God of Love, hear all our prayers for those who live love as they serve each of us and all our neighbors in need across the globe today.

Leader: Lord, you are true and tender. You are merciful and just. You are kind and compassionate. In the name of our Ascended Lord we pray, Amen.

### **Collect**

Almighty God, we exult in thankful joy your Son who is Risen and has entered the glory of your love. By his victory, we too are sure of victory. May this be our hope and our goal, all the days of our life, through Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, Amen.

### **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 and we forgive our debtors  
and lead not into temptation, but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom,  
and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

### **Closing Blessing**

Leader: Let us bless the Lord, Alleluia!

All: We give our thanks to God, Alleluia!

Leader: May God's love and grace be with us all as we continue to love and care for others, we pray in the name of our Risen Savior, Amen.

Drawn from "Praise God: Common Prayer at Taize,"  
Oxford University Press, NY, 1977.