

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
RALEIGH, NC

ORGANIZED MARCH 8, 1812



May 21, 2023

# THE CHURCH IN WORSHIP

## ASCENSION SUNDAY

May 21, 2023

Eleven o'clock

About our Worship: Today is the Seventh Sunday of Easter, but it is also the Sunday closest to the Ascension of our Lord (May 18 this year). The texts are taken from this latter emphasis which shapes this service. We follow early disciples who are trying to make sense of how they are to live after the departure of the resurrected Christ. While they seem drawn to political conquest and gazing into the heavens, Jesus gives them a different mission — to be his witnesses, to be about his work. And then, he promises them the gift of the Spirit to empower them. The worship music, prayers, and sermon all explore these themes and callings, as we recognize that our challenge is not that different nearly 2,000 years later. We have faith in a Christ who is not with us physically. How are we to live with his absence? Not by gazing into the heavens or seeing all our political hopes realized in a moment do we live, but by being Jesus' faithful witnesses in this world.

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### GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

The Greeting of Worshipers

Leah Reed

The Trinity Chimes

*Three chimes are sounded, awakening us to the presence of God, alerting us to the voice of Christ, centering us in the embrace of the Spirit. As we gather, we present ourselves "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our spiritual worship."*

The Prelude

"Like a River Glorious"  
Brent Olstad

Becky and Cady Mercer

The Introit

“The Day Is Coming”

Mark A. Miller

Youth Choir  
Charlotte Phillips, solo

The lands in longing call out your name;  
the tongues are different, the prayer the same.  
With humble spirits can we believe  
that God is bigger than we conceive?

*The day is coming, the Lord will move  
with the hand of justice and the heart of love.  
The will of heaven on this earth be done;  
the day is coming, oh, let it come.*

With willing spirits, Lord, let us dare  
to kneel with strangers and join in prayer.  
Grant in your mercy the hope that heals,  
the law of love your word reveals.

A barren wasteland we must reclaim,  
with hearts for bearing each other's pain.  
Give us the courage to make a place  
to plant tomorrow's seeds of peace.

Words: Laurie Zelman, 2008

The Invocation

The Call to Praise

from Psalm 47

LEADER: Clap your hands, all people!

**PEOPLE: Shout to God with loud songs of joy!**

LEADER: For God rules over earth and heaven.

**PEOPLE: Sing our psalms of praise!**

LEADER: God has gone up with a shout;

**PEOPLE: O let us sing to the Lord!**



1 O sing to the Lord; O sing God a  
2 For God is the Lord, and God has done  
3 So dance for our God and blow all the  
4 O shout to our God, who gave us the  
5 For Je - sus is Lord! A - men! Al - le -



new song. O sing to the Lord; O sing God a  
won - ders. For God is the Lord, and God has done  
trum - pets. So dance for our God and blow all the  
Spir - it. O shout to our God, who gave us the  
lu - ia! For Je - sus is Lord! A - men! Al - le -



new song. O sing to the Lord; O sing God a new song.  
won - ders. For God is the Lord, and God has done won - ders.  
trum - pets. So dance for our God and blow all the trum - pets.  
Spir - it. O shout to our God, who gave us the Spir - it.  
lu - ia! For Je - sus is Lord! A - men! Al - le - lu - ia!



O sing to our God; O sing to our God.

Words: Brazilian folk song,  
tr. Gerhard M. Cartford, 1982  
Music: Brazilian melody

## LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

The First Reading

Acts 1:1-11

Mary Powell Rhodes

<sup>1</sup>In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning <sup>2</sup>until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; <sup>5</sup>for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

<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."

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

## The Second Reading

Ephesians 1:15–23

<sup>15</sup>I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason <sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup>I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup>so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. <sup>20</sup>God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. <sup>22</sup>And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

## The Call to Prayer

Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior! Lord of the na - tions!

Son of God and Son of man! Glo - ry and hon - or,

praise, ad - o - ra - tion, now and for - ev - er - more be thine!

Words: German, 17th Century  
tr. Joseph A. Seiss, 1873  
Music: Silesian Folk melody

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

The Gospel

Luke 24:44–53

<sup>44</sup>Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

<sup>50</sup>Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. <sup>51</sup>While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup>And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; <sup>53</sup>and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

LEADER: This is the Gospel of Christ.

PEOPLE: **Praise be to you, O Christ.**

The Anthem

Youth and Sanctuary Choirs  
Rhonda Lowe, Will Mercer  
rhythm & bass

“Praise His Holy Name!”

Keith Hampton

Sing till the power of the Lord come down.  
Shout Hallelujah! Praise his holy name.  
Sing till the power of the Lord come down.  
Shout Hallelujah! Praise his holy name.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see  
Jesus, Jesus, how I love thee!  
Shout Hallelujah! Praise his holy name.

Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free?  
No, there's a cross for everyone and there's a cross for me.  
Jesus, Jesus, how I love thee!  
Shout Hallelujah! Praise his holy name.

The Sermon

Christopher Chapman

“Getting Out of Our Comfort Zone”

## RESPONDING IN FAITH

The Invitation to Christian Discipleship

*If you desire membership in this congregation, you are invited to present yourself during the singing of the Hymn of Discipleship. As an open membership church, we honor your previous baptism in any other Christian community. If you have not made a confession of faith, we invite you to do so and receive Christian baptism. Church members are invited to use this time to reflect upon their covenantal relationship with God and their commitment to Christian service.*



\*The Hymn of Discipleship “O Christ, When You Ascended”

LANCASHIRE

**O Christ, when you ascended, you took your rightful throne;  
Your time on earth had ended — yet we weren't left alone.  
You reign o'er earth and heaven; your Spirit guides our way.  
Your prayers uphold your people; you lead your church each day.**

**We look at earthly rulers and see what they command:  
We note their years of power, the borders of their land.  
Yet, Lord, you are not bounded by things like time and space;  
Your reign is never-ending, you rule in every place.**

**We're tempted, Lord, to leave you in stories nicely told;  
Sometimes we don't believe you and say your ways are old.  
Sometimes we feel so lonely and live in doubt and fear —  
But your ascension means, Lord, you're present with us here.**

**One day, O Lord, we'll know you, as we are fully known;  
One day we all, together, will bow before your throne.  
One day, God's whole creation will sing and praise your name;  
On earth as now in heaven, we'll celebrate your reign.**

Words: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2007, alt.

Music: Henry Thomas Smart, c. 1835

## DEPARTING TO SERVE

\*The Benediction

\*The Chimes

*Three chimes are sounded, sending us into the world with the love of God, the Good News of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit. As you go, remember, “you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people.”*

\*The Postlude

“O Sing to the Lord”

Maureen Howell

Mark Sedio

\*The congregation may stand.

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The Deacon on Call is Mary Powell Rhodes. A 45-year member, Mary Powell serves on the Hospitality Committee and as co-chair of the Prayer Circle via Email. She is also a member of the Prayer Shawl Group, the Evening Bells and Pathfinders Class. Mary Powell and her husband Bob have two children, Sarah Catherine Rhodes and J.D. Rhodes.

The banner is hung in memory of their parents and in honor of their children, JD and Sarah Catherine, by Bob and Mary Powell Rhodes.

Sympathy to Annette Barnes and family on the May 18 death of George Barnes.

The handbell choir *Music Made in Heaven* cordially invites you to attend "The Gathering" this afternoon at 2pm in the fellowship hall, as they present an annual spring concert. A reception will follow. Free and open to all; donation baskets available.

Church conference: Wednesday, May 24; meal served at 5:15pm, prayer time and meeting at 6:15pm. See the *Rose Window Weekly* for documents and Zoom link.

Wednesday night meal reservations may be made at the church website ([www.fbcraleigh.org/foodservice](http://www.fbcraleigh.org/foodservice)), by email ([dmast@fbcraleigh.org](mailto:dmast@fbcraleigh.org)), or by calling the church office (919-832-4485). The menu for May 24 is: sweet BBQ chicken with roasted potatoes and corn; non-meat option: mock chicken; kids: nuggets.

Class of 2023, congratulations! If you are graduating from college, email Deborah ([dmast@fbcraleigh.org](mailto:dmast@fbcraleigh.org)) by May 26 with the following information for our church's publications: graduate's name, college, degree, and your relationship to the graduate, and any family connections within our church.

Plan now for the annual end-of-year picnic and the second annual team scavenger hunt, to be held Wednesday, May 31, from 5:30–8pm at shelter 4 (520 Ash Avenue) at Pullen Park. Go to <https://fbcraleigh.org/foodservice/> or call Deborah Mastrodonato (919-832-4485) to make supper reservations.

Our May mission project is collecting items for the preschool program in El Carrizo, Honduras, such as chubby crayons and pencils, construction paper, glue sticks, coloring pencils, and safety scissors. Place your donations in the drawer marked for Honduras donations in the Lewis lobby. Questions? Contact Cara Lynn Vogel ([clvogel@gmail.com](mailto:clvogel@gmail.com)).

Vacation Bible School will be held Monday, July 17–Friday, July 21, from 9am–noon and it's for rising three-year-olds through rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Friends and neighbors are welcome too! Register by Wednesday, June 7, by going to <https://www.dropbox.com/s/n2n6vwp5kpfawv/2023%20Registration%20Form2-fillable.pdf?dl=0>.

Diaper changing stations are located in the men's and women's bathrooms on each floor of the Lewis building, and a nursing room is located in our preschool suite on the first floor.

Children of all ages are welcome in worship! Worship bags are located in the narthex and in the Gathering Room; preschoolers (birth – kindergarten) are also welcome to join the supervised play in the preschool suite on first floor.

## **Calendar Highlights**

**May 21-28**

Sunday, May 21

- 9:45 Sunday School
- 11:00 Worship (sanctuary & YouTube)  
JBC worship (226)
- 12:15 Deacons' meeting (220/Zoom)
- 2:00 Music Made in Heaven concert (fellowship hall)
- 3:00 Concert reception (fellowship hall)
- 6:00 Youth supper (301)
- 6:30 Youth program (Blue Room)

Monday, May 22

- 10:00 Clothing ministry open
- 6:30 High school Bible study (Wade home)

Tuesday, May 23

- 10:00 Staff meeting (conference room)
- 10:45 WMU Group 2 (Springmoor)
- 1:00 WMU Group 2 (Independence Village)

Wednesday, May 24

- 11:30 Preschool graduation ceremony (fellowship hall)
- 5:15 Meal served (fellowship hall)
- 6:15 Church conference (fellowship hall)
- 7:30 Adult choir rehearsal (310/S)

Thursday, May 25

- 7:00 Band of Brothers (Zoom)
- 10:30 Thirty-Niners (fellowship hall)

Sunday, May 28

- 9:45 Sunday School
- 11:00 Worship (sanctuary & YouTube)  
JBC worship (226)
- 6:00 Youth supper (301)
- 6:30 Youth program (Blue Room)