

# Ascension Sunday

Seventh Sunday of Easter  
Mother's Day

The First Church in Belfast  
United Church of Christ  
*An Open and Affirming Congregation*  
May 13, 2018  
10:00 a.m.

*WE ARE GATHERED IN*

WELCOME TO THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

PRELUDE

BRINGING IN THE LIGHT

CHORAL ANTHEM

*"Ain't No Rock Gonna' Shout for Me"*

OPENING SEQUENCE

**Awaiting the Spirit as the Easter season ends**

**Responsive Reading**

Adapted from Acts 1:1-5, 9

Luke writes: "In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning,

**until the day that he was taken up to heaven,**

after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

**After his suffering, Jesus presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs,** appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

**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,

**for John baptized with water,**

but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

**When he said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up,**

and a cloud took him out of their sight.

**Thanks be to God!**

**Reflection** "Carried *UP* into heaven" by Thomas H. Troeger

*"The direction of 'up' may have left our cosmology,  
but it has never left our souls..."*

## Hymn of the Easter Season

“Spirit of Christ, With You We Arise”

tune: O FILII ET FILIAE words: Rev. Kate Winters, Easter season, 2018

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Spirit of Christ, / with you we arise.  
With fear put aside / and light in our eyes,  
we embrace the peoples, / the earth, and the skies.  
Alleluia, alleluia.

As the sweet dew / of Hermon came down,  
Let water so pure / refresh the ground,  
that all lakes and rivers / to heaven resound –  
Alleluia, alleluia.

On the fifth day, / the waters were filled,  
Sea monsters and fish, / all scaly and gilled!  
And then came the creatures, / with skin, fur and quill.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

When air is pure / and clean in the day,  
the colors of earth / appear full array.  
So vivid the stars / at night seem to say –  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

The fertile soil holds / the seed in the deep.  
In mystery grows / the life that we reap.  
The earth is God’s garden / to love and to keep.  
Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Spirit of God / calls forth humankind,  
to open the heart / and deepen the mind,  
for living the beauty / of Love’s design!  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

### YOUNG PEOPLE’S MESSAGE AND MINISTRY

#### GREETING OF PEACE

Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks to the risen One.  
Alleluia, Alleluia, give praise to God’s name.

#### ***WE HEAR THE WORD***

**FIRST READING** Ephesians 1:15-23 Valerie Haskins

**GOSPEL READING** Luke 24:44-53

**MESSAGE** *“The Heavenly Human Story”*

#### ***WE LIVE THE WORD***

**\*HYMN** “I Love to Tell the Story” #522

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

### INVITATION TO GIVE

#### \*DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise God all creatures here below.  
Praise God for all that love has done.  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, one.

*(Note: The First Church honors the diverse languages of faith. Please sing with words that are meaningful to you. Other versions of the Doxology are found in our hymnal, #776-781.)*

### PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**May these gifts be a sign of our commitment to your way, O God, the way of compassion, the way of mercy, the way of justice. Give us the wisdom to use them well to heal what has been broken, restore what has been depleted, and build this beloved community of the Risen One! Amen.**

### WE ARE SENT AND BLESSED

\*CLOSING HYMN "O God, Whose Steadfast Love" #426

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Choir Anthem Lyrics

### ***"Ain't No Rock Gonna' Shout for Me"***

*(Words by J. Paul Williams, based on Luke 19:38-40; Music by Lloyd Larson)*

Here comes the Lord ridin' on a donkey  
with people waving branches and callin' him "King."  
Here comes the Lord ridin' through Jerusalem.  
If the people don't shout, the rocks will cry out!

Rocks, keep silent! Jesus comes to set me free.  
Rocks keep silent! I'm gonna' shout in victory!  
Rocks, keep silent! Jesus reigns in majesty.  
Ain't no rock gonna' shout for me.

Here comes the Lord as thousands throng to see him.  
Children stand on tip-toe to see the King.  
Here comes the Lord; excitement in the air.  
If the people don't shout, the rocks will cry!  
Oh, yes, the rocks will cry out! to open the heart / and deepen the mind,  
for living the beauty / of Love's design!  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!