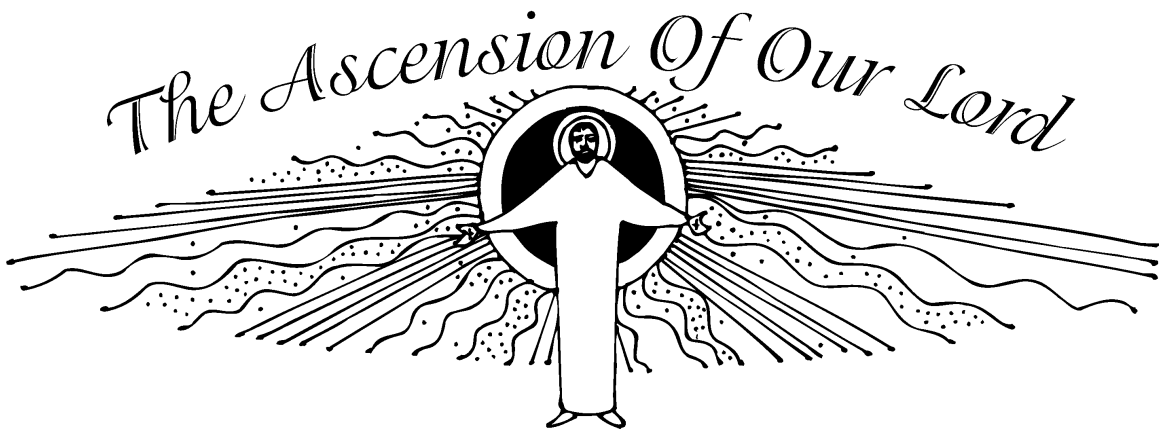


**SOLOMON'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
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*"Solomon's Evangelical Lutheran Church, following the example of Jesus Christ, seeks to live in the confidence and fullness of God's grace; to preach the Good News boldly and truthfully; to support and serve others in faith; to work in harmony with all creation."*

**ASCENSION OF OUR LORD**  
**May 21, 2023**

**May 21, 2023**  
Ascension of Our Lord

*In today's readings the risen Christ ascends into heaven and his followers are assured that the Spirit will empower them to be witnesses throughout the earth. The disciples were told to not gaze up into heaven to look for Jesus (Acts 1:11); we find his presence among us as we proclaim the word and share the Easter feast. We too long for the Spirit to enliven our faith and invigorate our mission.*

**GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father,  
and of the ✝ Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.**

**Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## GATHERING SONG *You Servants of God* (ELW 825)



1 You ser-vants of God, your Mas-ter pro-claim, and pub-lish a -  
2 As-cend-ed on high, al-might-y to save, yet still he is  
3 Sal-va-tion to God who sits on the throne! Let all cry a -  
4 Then let us a-dore and give him his right, all glo-ry and



broad his won-der-ful name; the name, all-vic-to-rious, of  
nigh, his pres-ence we have. The great con-gre-ga-tion his  
loud and hon-or the Son. The prais-es of Je-sus the  
pow'r and wis-dom and might, all hon-or and bless-ing, with



Je-sus ex-tol; his king-dom is glo-rious and rules o-ver all!  
tri-umph shall sing, as-crib-ing sal-va-tion to Je-sus, our king!  
an-gels pro-claim, fall down on their fac-es, and wor-ship the Lamb.  
an-gels a-bove, and thanks nev-er ceas-ing, and in-fin-ite love!

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt.

Music: LYONS, attr. Johann Michael Haydn, 1737–1806

## GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

# CANTICLE OF PRAISE (ELW p. 139)

*Refrain*



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb



who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

*Refrain*



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and



strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

*Refrain*



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of  
 God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or,  
 glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

*Refrain*  
 This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia,  
 al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 4 For the Lamb who was  
 slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

*Final refrain*  
 This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.  
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

**Almighty God, your only Son was taken into the heavens and in your presence intercedes for us. Receive us and our prayers for all the world, and in the end bring everything into your glory, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**CHOIR ANTHEM      *LIFT UP YOUR HEADS***

## FIRST READING: Acts 1:1-11

A reading from Acts.

*Before he is lifted into heaven, Jesus promises that the missionary work of the disciples will spread out from Jerusalem to all the world. His words provide an outline of the book of Acts.*

[Luke writes:] <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.”

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: Psalm 47

(Sung responsively between women and men, beginning with the women.)



Psalm tone reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year C* © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.  
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- <sup>1</sup>Clap your hands, | all you peoples;  
shout to God with a | joyful sound.
- <sup>2</sup>**For the LORD Most High is | to be feared:**  
**a great king over | all the earth,**
- <sup>3</sup>who subdues the | peoples under us,  
and the nations un- | der our feet;
- <sup>4</sup>**who chooses our inheri- | tance for us,**  
**the pride of Jacob, | whom God loves.**

<sup>5</sup>God has gone up <sup>1</sup> with a shout,  
the LORD with the sound <sup>1</sup> of the ram's horn.

<sup>6</sup>**Sing praises to <sup>1</sup> God, sing praises;  
sing praises to our <sup>1</sup> king, sing praises.**

<sup>7</sup>For God is king of <sup>1</sup> all the earth;  
sing praises <sup>1</sup> with a song.

<sup>8</sup>**God reigns o- <sup>1</sup> ver the nations;  
God is en- <sup>1</sup> throned on high.**

<sup>9</sup>The nobles of the peoples have gathered as the people of the <sup>1</sup> God of Abraham.  
The rulers of the earth belong to God, who is high- <sup>1</sup> ly exalted.

## SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:15-23

A reading from Ephesians.

*The risen and exalted Christ reigns over the entire universe. The author of Ephesians prays that we are given the wisdom to know the power of the risen Christ and the empowering hope that the knowledge of this inheritance provides.*

<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.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *Gospel Acclamation (Celtic): Celtic Alleluia (ELW 174)*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

*Verses may be sung by a leader. Then the alleluia is repeated.*

## GOSPEL: Luke 24:44-53

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*On the day of his ascension, Jesus leaves his disciples with a commission, a blessing, and a promise of the Holy Spirit.*

<sup>44</sup>[Jesus said to the eleven and those with 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.

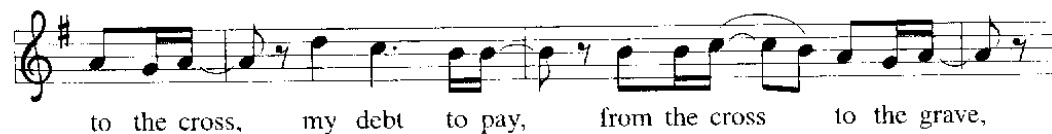
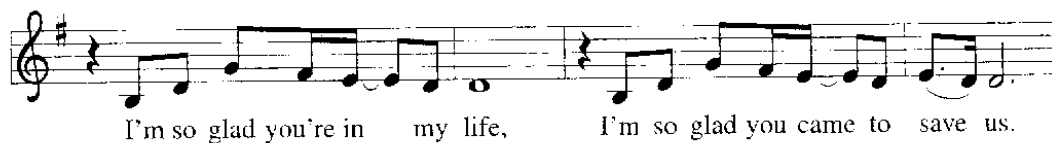
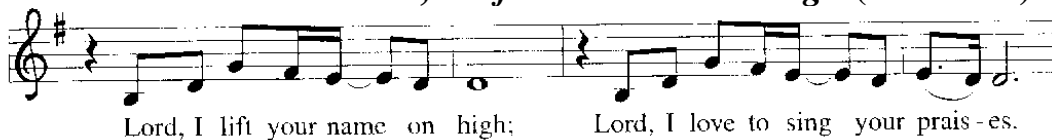
<sup>52</sup>And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; <sup>53</sup>and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON PASTOR BARB**

**HYMN OF THE DAY** *Lord, I Lift Your Name on High* (ELW 857)





## 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 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.**

## PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH *(Please respond.)*

*P: Hear us, O God. C: Your mercy is great.*

## PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

## OFFERTORY *Now the Feast and Celebration* (ELW 167)

*Refrain*

Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion, all of cre - a - tion  
sings for joy to the God of life and love and free - dom;  
praise and glo - ry for - ev - er - more!

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## OFFERING PRAYER

Generous God,  
in this meal you offer your very self.  
We give thanks for these gifts of the earth.  
In the breaking of this bread  
reveal to us the Risen One.  
In the pouring of this wine  
pour us out in service to the world;  
through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ;  
who, enthroned forever at your right hand,  
intercedes for us as our great high priest.  
And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection,  
with earth and sea and all their creatures,  
and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *Holy, Holy, Holy* (Schubert) (ELW 190a)**



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



heav-en and earth are full, full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.



Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Come and know Christ,  
broken and poured out for you.

## **COMMUNION**

*Continuous - Please continue down center aisle at the direction of the usher. After you receive the bread, you may take a cup of red wine or white grape juice from the tray. Please place your empty communion cup in the basket. Gluten free wafers are available, ask the Pastor when you come forward. Notify the Head Usher if you would appreciate receiving Communion at your seat rather than walking up to the altar, the Pastor and Communion Assistant will be happy to bring Communion to you.*

COMMUNION SONG *We Remember You* (W&P 152)

In bro - ken bread and the cup that we share, we re -  
mem - ber you. In bro - ken bread and the  
cup that we share, we re - mem - ber you.  
We re - mem - ber you, Je - sus. We re -  
mem - ber your love for us. We re - mem - ber the  
blood you shed. We re - mem - ber you.

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## HYMN DURING COMMUNION *Beautiful Savior* (ELW 838)



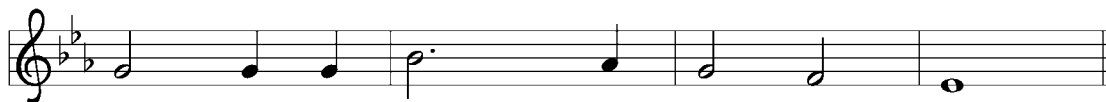
1 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of cre - a - tion,  
2 Fair are the mead - ows, fair are the wood - lands,  
3 Fair is the sun - shine, fair is the moon - light,  
4 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, Lord of the na - tions,



Son of God and Son of Man!  
robed in flow'rs of bloom - ing spring;  
bright the spar - kling stars on high;  
Son of God and Son of Man!



Tru - ly I'd love thee, tru - ly I'd serve thee,  
Je - sus is fair - er, Je - sus is pur - er,  
Je - sus shines bright - er, Je - sus shines pur - er,  
Glo - ry and hon - or, praise, ad - o - ra - tion,



light of my soul, my joy, my crown.  
he makes our sor - rowing spir - it sing.  
than all the an - gels in the sky.  
now and for - ev - er - more be thine!

Text: *Gesangbuch*, Münster, 1677; tr. Joseph A. Seiss, 1823–1904  
Music: SCHÖNSTER HERR JESU, Silesian folk tune, 19th cent.

## COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.  
**Amen.**

## SONG AFTER COMMUNION *Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise (Young)* (ELW 206)



Thank-ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev - 'ry - one what God has



done. Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.



Send us with your prom - is - es, O God, and lead us forth in



joy with shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980

Music: *Bread of Life*, Jeremy Young, b. 1948

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## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious God,  
in you we live and move and have our being.  
With your word and this meal of grace,  
you have nourished our life together.  
Strengthen us to show your love  
and serve the world in Jesus' name.  
**Amen.**

## BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.  
**Amen.**

## SENDING SONG *Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing* (ELW 389)



1 Christ is a - live! Let Chris - tians sing. The cross stands  
2 Christ is a - live! No long - er bound to dis - tant  
3 In ev - 'ry in - sult, rift, and war, where col - or,  
4 Wom - en and men, in age and youth, can feel the  
5 Christ is a - live, and comes to bring good news to



emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with  
years in Pal - es - tine, but sav - ing, heal - ing,  
scorn, or wealth di - vide, Christ suf - fers still, yet  
Spir - it, hear the call, and find the way, the  
this and ev - 'ry age, till earth and sky and



prais - es ring. Love, drowned in death, shall nev - er die.  
here and now, and touch - ing ev - 'ry place and time.  
loves the more, and lives, where e - ven hope has died.  
life, the truth, re - vealed in Je - sus, freed for all.  
o - cean ring with joy, with jus - tice, love, and praise.

Text: Brian A. Wren, b. 1936

Music: TRURO, T. Williams, *Psalmody Evangelica*, 1789

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### SENDING IN SERVICE

Go in peace. Serve the Risen One.

**Thanks be to God.**

### EXTINGUISHING THE CANDLE/SILENT PRAYER

### POSTLUDE

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## SERVING TODAY

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Church Office Email Address .....	<a href="mailto:office@solomonslutheran.org">office@solomonslutheran.org</a>
Organist .....	Doug Mummert
Head Usher .....	Frances Reichard
Acolyte .....	Barbara Aldrich
Lector.....	Wayne Dale
Securing Offering .....	Marjorie Dale & Phil Johnson
Communion Set-Up.....	Iлона & Jerry Laney
Communion Clean-Up .....	Kathy Bowen & Janice McEntire
Communion Bread .....	Zoe Mummert
Communion Assist .....	Iлона Laney & Peggi Norman
Attendance last Sunday.....	56

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Welcome Visitors!** We welcome you to our worship service. We hope your visit with us will be a time of blessing. If you have any concerns, please talk to the Head Usher. We invite you to worship with us again!

**Prayer requests for the following:** *Family and friends of Geneva Shaffer Gossert, Family and friends of Steve McCleaf, Family & friends of Kathy Koffman, Janice McEntire, Kathy Largent, Cody Banks, Tana Vance and Deanna Vance, Marty Wenger, Virginia Detwiler, Terry Fell, Callie Mummert, Bernie Harris, Matthew, Lexi and Brooke Bowen, Jim & Carole Darr, Beth Floyd, Sarge and Barb Weaver, Tina Smith, Patricia Yetter, Nancy Marshall, Darrell Veilleux, Linda Wepking, Bill and Jane Brindle, Esther Gift, Jean Jackson, Marjorie McMullin, Joe Mock, Ina Shreiner, Genny Grant, Frances Kramer, Linda Russ, Carol Locke, Betty Amt, Ukrainian Nation, Peace for the World.* If anyone has a prayer request, please call Janice McEntire. **Please Be Aware: If you would like to remain listed on the next month's list, or if you would like to have your name removed from the list before the end of the month, please call the office.**

### **Weekly Calendar Reminders:**

May 24 - Psalms Study 10AM  
Qigong/Tai Chi Class 6PM

**Office Hours for Pastor Barb** are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. until 12 noon or call for an appointment.

**Pentecost Sunday is May 28th.** We remember God's gift of the Holy Spirit. **Wear red to the worship service.** Red reminds us of the tongues of flames as seen by the apostles. Come Holy Spirit! Kindle in us the fire of Your love. Bring revival to Solomon's as we seek Your direction for how to live out Your mission.

**Save the Date! The next outdoor worship will be Sunday, June 4 at 10:15 in the picnic woods.** Please bring a lawn chair to use during the service. **Food assignments for the picnic lunch** after worship are listed by the beginning letter of your last name: A-H meat/main course, J-R veggies/salads, S-Z desserts.

**SpiriTrust Lutheran Chambersburg Auxiliary** is holding their membership drive the month of May and extended. You may join for \$1.00. Info is in your mailbox or see Becky Pecha. We appreciate everyone 's support. Benefits programs at The Village at Luther Ridge.

**Richard Graven is teaching Adult Bible School every other Sunday.** Study material is taken from the book, "Navigating Genesis" by Hugh Ross. The dates for the class are: May 7, 21, June 18 (June 4 is outdoor worship, there will be no class.) July 2, 16, 30, August 13, 27.

**VBS - STELLAR "SHINE JESUS' LIGHT": June 19-23, 2023; 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm.** Ages: 3yrs – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade. **Celebration Sunday: June 25th at 10:15 in the Fellowship Center.** Registration & Photo Agreement Forms in your May & June Newsletters or see Barbara Aldrich or Zoe Mummert.

**Sign-up Sheets for worship assistants** for July – December 2023 are on the bulletin board in the Sunday School room. Communion: bread, set-up, clean-up, and assistant will be on a monthly basis. If you can't commit to the entire month, please see if you can share the month with someone else. Acolytes and Lectors are on a weekly basis. If you find you can't fulfill a chosen date, please call someone to take your place. Let Kimberly in the office know so the bulletin and newsletter info stays up to date. Thank you for your commitment to help provide opportunities for meaningful worship at Solomons. Kimberly will publish the schedule for each month in the newsletter.

**Power Pack Meals and donations will be collected until the end of May for the remainder of the 2022-2023 school year.** THANK YOU to everyone who participated this past school year. Solomon's members have been very generous.

**Sunday School is in Session -** Adult Sunday School classes begin at 9:00 a.m. in the Sunday School room. Children's Church will be held during morning worship and will meet downstairs at 10:20 a.m. Confirmation Class will be held at 9:00 a.m. in the Conference Room in the Fellowship Center.

**MAY 21, 2023**  
**ASCENSION OF OUR LORD**

*Empowered to forgive in Jesus' name.*



**ASCENSION DAY BIBLE READINGS**

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your Ascension Day observances.

<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Luke 24:44-53</b>	<b>The ascension of Jesus</b>
	<b>Acts 1:1-11</b>	<b>Jesus is taken up to heaven</b>
	<b>Psalms 47</b>	<b>God rules the nations</b>
	<b>Ephesians 1:15-23</b>	<b>Paul's prayer for the church</b>

**SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR ASCENSION DAY**

*And he [Jesus] said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." **Luke 24:46-47 (NRSV)***

**PRAYERS AND BLESSING**

**A Prayer for Ascension Day:**

God of power and might, free us to turn away from selfishness and to love you and others in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, with this food, strengthen us to be witnesses of your love in the world through Christ Jesus, our ascended Savior and Lord. Amen.

**A Blessing to Give:**

May God give you wisdom to be a witness of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

**CARING CONVERSATIONS**

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- How do you see people using power in the world around you?
- How does Jesus' power free us to care for others and God's creation?

## HYMN FOR ASCENSION DAY

*A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing!*



### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Luke 24:44-53.

The books of Luke and Acts are written by the same author (Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1). Acts 1 begins where Luke 24 ends, with the ascension. Although the ascension of Jesus can seem like Jesus is leaving his followers behind, he is actually elevating the ministry of the church by connecting the power of God to Jesus' followers. Jesus' ascension empowers all disciples to be witnesses to Jesus. That witness will be understood through the story of Jesus passed down through the ages and interpreted through the scriptures. It is Jesus who *"opened their minds to understand the scriptures"* (v. 45), and it is through Jesus that the scriptures are understood. The Bible interpreted through the life of Jesus gives us the fundamental message of repentance and forgiveness. We witness to Jesus by speaking of life as a movement of repentance that is away from ourselves and toward God. This new life empowers us to forgive in the name of Jesus, the one whose death, resurrection, and ascension sends us out to care for a world in need.

*Discuss:* How do you give witness to Jesus in the community and the world?

*Pray:* **Almighty God, give us courage and strength to be your witnesses of repentance and forgiveness through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this day, how might you serve others with the power of forgiveness in the name of Jesus?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Jesus spent the last days of his appearance on earth walking and talking with the disciples. On this Ascension Day, invite others to take a walk outside with you. While you are walking, think about Jesus ascending into the clouds to heaven. Find a place to sit and take time to gaze at the sky. Look for clouds and name the shapes you can see. Ask others to explain how they would have felt if they witnessed Jesus' ascension. Then say: **Alleluia! Jesus has ascended! Alleluia!**