**Saginaw First Free Methodist Church**

**ASCENSION OF THE LORD**

**May 24, 2020**



*“Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven.” (Luke 24:50-51)*

Minister: Rev. Jason Evans

First Free Methodist Church

2625 N. Center Rd.

Saginaw, Michigan 48603

Phone: (989) 799-2930

Email: saginawfmc@gmail.com

[www.saginawfirstfmc.org](http://www.saginawfirstfmc.org)

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**The mission of Saginaw First Free Methodist Church is to be faithful to God and to make known to all people everywhere God’s call to wholeness in Jesus Christ.**

**Prelude**

**Greeting/Announcements**

**Call to Worship** (*spoken responsively*)

L: In awe and wonder, we lift our eyes to the heavens

**P: We come to worship the Ruler of time and space**

L: We gather to remember the God who shared our common lot

**P: We celebrate the life and ministry of Christ Jesus**

L: We open our lives to the leading of the Spirit

**P: We seek the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge**

L: We are Christ’s witnesses in the world today

**P: Together we are filled with power from on high**

**\*Opening Hymn:** “Rejoice, the Lord is King”

**Rejoice, the Lord is King**

**Your Lord and King adore**

**Rejoice, give thanks, and sing**

**And triumph evermore**

**Lift up your heart, lift up your voice**

**Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!**

**Jesus, the Savior, reigns**

**The God of truth and love**

**When He had purged our stains**

**He took His seat above**

**Lift up your heart, lift up your voice**

**Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!**

**His kingdom cannot fail**

**He rules o’er earth and Heav’n**

**The keys of death and hell**

**Are to our Jesus giv’n**

**Lift up your heart, lift up your voice**

**Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!**

**Rejoice in glorious hope!**

**Our Lord, the Judge shall come**

**And take His servants up**

**To their eternal home**

**Lift up your heart, lift up your voice**

**Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!**

**Invocation and Lord’s Prayer**

L: Lord of heaven and earth, as we worship Christ’s ascension to the throne, we are reminded that the Spirit permeates this world. You abide with us in this life, we can not escape your care. Remind us our understanding is limited, and we are to focus on imitating Christ. Help us to be led by the Spirit, as we serve in a new frontier. Let us usher in abundant life for this world, as we pray together the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples…

**P: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done in 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 Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**Gloria Patri**

**First Scripture Lesson:** Acts 1:1-11

 In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. 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.

 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.”

 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?”

 He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 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.”

 When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.

 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.”

**Prayer of Confession**

L: Christ is alive within us and among us. But is the Spirit observed in our words and deeds? Let us admit our shortcomings as we confess…

**P: God with us, You sent the comforter and advocate to us, but we instead claim Your world as ours. You call us to proclaim good news and forgiveness of sins to the world, but we often witness only when we have something to gain. We seek power from your throne, only to use power to control those we are called to minister. We use Your Name to justify our actions of vengeance and hatred, instead of following the leading of the Spirit to share your love and forgiveness. We have taken our heavenly inheritance and sold it for worldly fame and fortune. Empower us to be true and faithful again. Amen.**

**Affirmation of Faith:** Psalm 47

**P: Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy. For the LORD, the Most High, is awesome, a great king over all the earth. He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet. He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves. God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the king of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm. God is king over the nations; God sits on his holy throne. The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted.**

**\*Hymn of Affirmation: “**Jesus Paid It All”

**I hear the Savior say, “Thy strength indeed is small,**

**Child of weakness watch and pray**

**Find in Me, thine all in all”
Jesus paid it all, all to Him I own**

**Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow**

**Lord, now indeed I find, Thy power and Thine alone**

**Can change the leper’s spots, and melt the heart of stone**

**Jesus paid it all, all to Him I own**

**Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow**

**And when before the throne I stand in Him complete**

**“Jesus died my soul to save,” my lips shall still repeat**

**Jesus paid it all, all to Him I own**

**Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow**

**New Testament Scripture Lesson:** Ephesians 1:15-23

 I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.

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, 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, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

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, 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.

And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

**Special Music:** Micki Martin

**Passing of the Peace**

**Prayers of the People**

L: Lord in Your Mercy…

**P: Hear our prayer.**

**Gospel Lesson**: Luke 24:44-53

 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.”

 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 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, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. 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.”

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

**Sermon**

**Prayer of Response**

**Hymn of Response:** “He Lives”

**I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today**

**I know that He is living, whatever men may say**

**I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer**

**And just the time I need Him, He's always near**

**He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!**

**He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way**

**He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart**

**You ask me how I know He lives?**

**He lives within my heart**

**In all the world around me I see His loving care**

**And though my heart grows weary I never will despair**

**I know that He is leading, thro' all the stormy blast**

**The day of His appearing will come at last**

**He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!**

**He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way**

**He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart**

**You ask me how I know He lives?**

**He lives within my heart**

**Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian! Lift up your voice and sing**

**Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ, the King**

**The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find**

**None other is so loving, so good and kind**

**He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!**

**He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way**

**He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart**

**You ask me how I know He lives?**

**He lives within my heart**

**Invitation of Offering**

L: Great joy comes when we serve those in need. Power from on high fills the gifts we give out of love. Pray for those who will witness the fruits of our giving, as we collect this morning’s tithes and offerings.

**\*Doxology**

**Prayer**

**Closing Hymn**: “When We All Get to Heaven”

**Sing the wondrous love of Jesus**

**Sing his mercy and his grace**

**In the mansions bright and blessed**

**He'll prepare for us a place**

**When we all get to heaven**

**What a day of rejoicing that will be!**

**When we all see Jesus**

**We'll sing and shout the victory**

**Let us then be true and faithful**

**Trusting, serving every day**

**Just one glimpse of Him in glory**

**Will the toils of life repay**

**When we all get to heaven**

**What a day of rejoicing that will be!**

**When we all see Jesus**

**We'll sing and shout the victory**

**Benediction**

L: Christ appeared to many after the resurrection. The Spirit of Christ is seen today in people like you. Our care for each other and the world magnifies the life of Christ. Carry your worship into the community, as you go in peace to love and serve. Amen.