

Boulevard United Methodist Church



The most interesting question may be, not “How can we *understand* the Ascension?”, but rather, “How can we *experience* the Ascension today?” We are blessed to have the accounts recorded in the Bible about how people of Israel and the early church experienced God. But these accounts can never substitute for cultivating our own firsthand experiences with God today.

- Carl Gregg

May 8, 2016

On the Cover: The Christ of Vung Tao, Vietnam.

321 N Boulevard
Richmond, Virginia 23220
www.boulevardumc.org

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

We make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world (Matthew 28).

Order of Worship for Ascension Sunday

(UMH) - The United Methodist Hymnal
(TFWS) - The Faith We Sing

* Please stand, as able.

Gathering

Opening Words

Introit *A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing*

*Call to Worship

*Hymn *Eternal God Transcending Time*

Insert

Prayers of the People

Joys and Concerns

Litany

One: We are sons and daughters, fearfully and wonderfully made.

All: Thank you, Lord.

Among us are mothers who have made countless sacrifices.

Sustain them, Lord.

Others grieve mothers who went away too soon.

Uphold them, Lord.

We know women who labor to provide, women who are expecting,
and women who have mothered, saying to heck with biology.

Bless them, Lord.

We honor the pain of those who wanted to, but could not;
those who bear the weight of children dying.

Make us mindful. Enlarge our hearts!

Beloved are these, your women.

**Give us grace to honor them by bringing our best before you;
this hour, this day, and always. Amen.**

Proclamation and Response

First Lesson

Epistle Reading *Ephesians 1:15-23*

Time with Children

Scripture Lessons *Acts 1:1-11*
Luke 24:44-51

Sermon "You Went Away" Rev. Rachel G. May

*Hymn *The Church of Christ in Every Age* UMH 589
Tune: Maryton

Offering Tithes and Gifts

Offertory *Lord I Lift Your Name on High*

*Prayer of Thanksgiving and The Lord's Prayer (895 UMH)

Sending Forth

*Hymn *I'll Fly Away* TFWS 2282

*Dismissal with Blessing



OUTREACH

participating in ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy

{Outward}

MAY IS FOR OUR ANNUAL CONFERENCE. What is that? It is an event, a place, and a people. Annual Conference convenes in June. It's also a geographical entity. [Our is the Virginia Annual Conference.] It is a body composed of clergy and laity that enable us to be who we are: Connected. For the sake of ministry that is both local and global.

At each year's Annual Conference session, relief-supply kits are collected. A leader, a point person for the assembly of school or health kits, a description of which is available online at www.umcor.org; That would be game-changer.

It is also customary for each Conference to take up an offering for specific connectional ministries. Bishop Young Jin Cho hopes the 1,200 congregations in Virginia can collectively offer: \$50,000 for Virginia disaster relief (February 2016 tornadoes), \$25,000 for leadership development in Mozambique, \$25,000 for The Shade and Fresh Water Project in Brazil, and \$50,000 to fund the Methodist Mission of Cambodia. You can help Boulevard do its part through cash or checks made out to BUMC, memo-lined "Annual Conference Offering".

NURTURE

caring for one another, for our space, and for our growth as disciples

{Inward}

WE ARE PRAYING for Brittany Leggett, the families of Arthur C. Thurston, Sue Lockhart Larson and Audrey Clements, Mary and Keith Bedson and family, Oscarlyn and Todd Elder, and Casey Bowman Miles. Wish to add or restore a name? Say so via the offering plate or the church's e-mail address.

OUR NURSERY is not staffed. However, the door to "Noah's Ark" is an open one. This space is on the first floor. Please feel free to exit and return at any point during this morning's service. We welcome infants and young children in the sanctuary. With them, we are more complete.

A LOOK AT LIFE TOGETHER in numbers.

	Ministry Costs	Your Gifts
April 2016	\$14,310	\$10,609

FOLLOWING WORSHIP NEXT SUNDAY, May 15, you are invited to receive and respond to a plan for Boulevard's future. This hour is a continuance of the March 13 vision-sharing session.

Congregational leaders will share a proposal that involves selling a portion of the property we own (or hold in trust for the greater United Methodist connection, to be precise). Members and regular worship attendees will have the opportunity to support a resolution to proceed along the way of selling some property and redeveloping another parcel.

Consider attending not only to "be in the know" but also in acknowledgement of the 500 + hours invested thus far in this process. Envisioning a way forward with God and one another takes time and heart!

Acts 1:1-11

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.³ 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.⁴ 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; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

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

Luke 24:44-51

⁴⁴Then 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." ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And 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."

⁵⁰Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven.

Stay: A Blessing for Ascension Day by Jan Richardson

I know how your mind
rushes ahead
trying to fathom
what could follow this.
What will you do,
where will you go,
how will you live?

You will want
to outrun the grief.
You will want
to keep turning toward
the horizon,
watching for what was lost
to come back,
to return to you
and never leave again.

For now
hear me when I say
all you need to do
is to still yourself
is to turn toward one another
is to stay.

Wait
and see what comes
to fill
the gaping hole
in your chest.
Wait with your hands open
to receive what could never come
except to what is empty
and hollow.

You cannot know it now,
cannot even imagine
what lies ahead,
but I tell you
the day is coming
when breath will
fill your lungs
as it never has before
and with your own ears
you will hear words
coming to you new
and startling.
You will dream dreams
and you will see the world
ablaze with blessing.

Wait for it.
Still yourself.
Stay.