



THE GRAPEVINE

The Newsletter of the Reformed Church of the Ascension, United Church of Christ
1700 West Main Street, Jeffersonville, PA 19403, (610) 539-1693
The Rev. Dwayne A. Mosier, Pastor

Volume 28, Issue 01

July 2020

The Mission of Ascension Church

is to reach out to the local and world community with faith and joy. We will commit our spiritual and material resources, and our personal involvement to share the word of God through worship and Christian living. We will provide spiritual support, care and hope for all as we teach and grow in the love of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Please enjoy the read below of Pastor's sermon from May 31st, Pentecost Sunday.

Many who are a part of the Ascension Church community are aware that one of my favorite Hebrew words is *Ruach*. It is a word we talk about a lot in our church; *Ruach* is wind, breath and spirit all rolled into one word. It is the very breath God has breathed into humanity. This breath of God, this *Ruach*, is the very Spirit of God. So, every time you take in a breath, it is God's Spirit being breathed in and out of your lungs, in and out of your being.

On Pentecost Sunday we are called to allow God's Spirit to enter into us. Pentecost Sunday is indeed a celebration in the life of the church. At Ascension Church we celebrate, as in so many other churches,

Confirmation. We expected to celebrate with a Confirmation classes on this Pentecost. It is a joy to have Confirmands stand up and to make their personal confession (we will celebrate with them on a later date, after COVID 19 when we may be with these young folks in person), but God's Spirit doesn't just work on Pentecost. Pentecost as a day of celebration. We treat it like a party with a birthday cake and red balloons. There have been times in the past, when we had a big red arch of balloons in our Sanctuary to celebrate Pentecost.

This Pentecost, May 31st, 2020 feels a little bit different. As we gathered to worship, we gathered amidst a global pandemic, and we now know that over 120,000 people have lost their lives in the U.S. and we have no idea of what the future of that pandemic will look like, or whether a second wave is coming. We have civil

unrest, as more black men have died in our city streets at the hands of those sworn to protect. There have been protests in just about every city, and it seems that things are crazy all over our nation. People are kneeling and praying in protest. While other seem more intent on riots and burning and looting. These were not somewhere else, but within 3 miles of our Sanctuary. So, as we gathered Pentecost it didn't feel much like the time of a party, it doesn't feel like much of a time for us to be celebrating this wonderful, glorious birthday of the church. It feels quite different this year. Yet, Pentecost is much more than a day for a party. Pentecost is more than a time for balloons that take us back to a time of childhood and smiles. Pentecost is a day of a new beginning; for the disciples of Jesus Christ and for us!

Pentecost made a dramatic difference in who disciples were and what they did. Pentecost changed how they understood

themselves and what they were called to do. Up until this time, the disciples had not really been doing very much publicly. The presence of risen Jesus had stood before them and told them he was alive. For the last 50 days he had had been teaching and leading them in the faith. On the day of Pentecost, they were all gathered together and they began to make a proclamation. They began to proclaim that they were the disciples of Jesus Christ. They lifted their voices and shouted out the Good News for the world to hear, and amazing things happened. Everyone at the festival understood the words they were speaking. They all spoke different languages, yet somehow the message of Jesus Christ was heard and understood by everyone. This is indeed a miraculous story; this is a day that talks about the power of the Holy Spirit blowing through that place and causing something dramatic to happen.

We should not lose the context for our story this morning, we should not lose the understanding of what was going on in their world that day. They proclaimed the message of Jesus Christ, the message of this same Jesus Christ that we proclaim as Lord and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. This is a story about this man Jesus who came to earth, this person Jesus Christ, who was from God, but chose to come and live the life that we know. Most of us in our community do not utterly understand the life that Jesus

chose to live. Most of us come from a community where we have always had the best of life, the best choices, schools that were adequate and tables that have food on them, we live in homes that are warm and secure, and we were not afraid of how we were going to make it through the next day. Now that is not to say, that we did not have problems and struggles in our lives, because we do. In the United States of America, in the year 2020, if you happen to belong to a community that is a white community, you live a pretty good life, and you understand what it means to live the American dream. Jesus did not choose to live that type of life, Jesus chose to come to earth and was born as a child in a stable, Jesus lived under the Roman domination. When his parents were told to go to Bethlehem; they went. That beautiful story we tell about the baby being born in a manger, was all about Rome and collecting taxes for Caesar. Jesus preached a word of love in a time when some people had a good life. If you were a Roman citizen, you had a good life. Romans had built a mighty empire, and for Roman citizens it was good.

Then there were the other people, like the Jewish community to which Jesus belonged. Jesus was not a Roman citizen; his community was not part of the establishment that enjoyed all the beauty and wonder and greatness of Rome. Jesus and his community knew none of that. They did not dare raise

their voices to the injustice that was in Rome for a brown skinned child born in a barn. If you raised your voice against that, Rome did not put up with that stuff. That is what happened to Jesus. His message of love and righteousness was considered treasonous to Rome. He was sentenced to death by an official of the Roman government, a lower level official, who knew Jesus was innocent, yet, sentenced him to death.

It was an innocent man, who hung on the cross. Jesus hung on a cross where he would suffocate in a slow and painful death. You know Rome thought that is what you do to people who cause trouble. That is what you do to people who threaten the norms that were Rome. If you threaten the way things are, people like Herod and Caesar would get nervous and worried about what's going on, so they got rid of Jesus by crucifying him on a cross, snuffing out the breath of God that was in him. If Rome thought it could put a stop to the voice of this radical Jewish Rabbi who was wandering around the streets, Rome was about to discover God had other plans.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a message Rome could not stop. The Gospel message proclaims that religious sellouts and political powers cannot put an end to the voice of God. The message of the resurrection tells everyone that God conquers death with life. On Pentecost, the disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, were ready to

speak. God's breath did not enter them as a gentle breeze but entered them like the rush of a violent wind. The disciples were filled with the Spirit that moved them into action. The huge crowd of people started shouting out, and in one accord they were all understanding this one message. This message that came to turn the world upside down, to tumble what seemed normal into a world of disarray, was spoken for all to hear.

On Pentecost the church gathers to hear this word spoken by the *Ruach* and to see what God's Spirit can do to a people of faith. We need to hear the story as the transforming story that it is. This is not just another story, which we tell in front a polished brass cross. This is a story with the force of a might wind. This is a story that blows down Rome's attempt bring an end to the truth of God.

There is no difference between the Roman cross and the lynching tree, the lynching tree that so many people of color have been killed in our recent history. The lynching tree where so many have been left to hang so that others would not to question the norms – even if they are racist.

When I was teaching about the crucifixion and the resurrection in our Confirmation class, one of our students, Addison Gear, called out and said she did a paper and a picture she had drawn of Emmett Till, a young 14 year old African American

who was lynched in Mississippi in 1955. Addison drew the picture with his face divided in two sides: one showing him alive and the other showing him after his lynching. "I know this may sound strange," She said, "but when you're talking about the crucifixion of Jesus, it sounds just like what they did to this young Emmett." She was right, it was exactly what happened to Jesus. Jesus and Emmett were both lynched. And, today as we gather for worship, during Covid-19 with all the fears of illness and death, and fears of wanting to get back to normal, get back to the way things were. There continue to be voices that cry out, that cry out from grave, that cry out from our streets, that cry out for things not to be normal. Voices cry out in the power of the Spirit for God to once again be heard. The word of God that sends the Spirit to us, the mighty wind that will churn things up and turn them over.

Today, the Spirit of God continues to blow though our world-- a world where people are judged without knowing, a world where people are judged by the color of their skin. Jesus Christ, that brown man from Nazareth, is calling to us to receive the Holy Spirit and to recognize that God does not show partiality between the children of God. God knows every child deserves to receive water to quench their thirst, that every child should be fed, that every person should have the healthcare they need, that every

person should be able to drive down their street without being afraid that if they do something wrong, it may cost them their life.

Come, Holy Spirit, Come. I pray that on this Pentecost Sunday, as we are scattered, that we will gather into one and will hear the word of our God and the Holy Spirit will give us new life. We cannot remain silent. For fifty days, the disciples were silent. Then the mighty wind of the Holy Spirit blew by.

So, let us pray this day for God's *Ruach* to blow through the church. We can put away the balloons and the happy birthday banners and ask the Spirit to fill us with the Word of God and take us out into the world to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Amen.

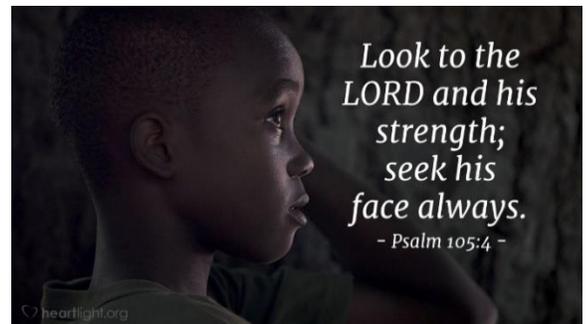
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Ruach". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned in the lower right area of the page.

Here at Ascension UCC, we will be initiating an anti-racist group, working to actively address racism within ourselves and the world. If you are interested in joining us, please let us know, either via email, ascensionucc@comcast.net, or by calling the office, 610-539-1693. We will get back to you with further details. We are stronger together!

ATTENTION:

Please note that Pastor Dwayne is on vacation starting July 1st through August 5th. Office hours will vary during this time, but please feel free to call and leave a message at the office and your call will be returned, or if you have something urgent, please reach out to one of the Elders.

Please continue watch worship on Sundays at 11:00am on Facebook, or you can also watch them at our channel on youtube.com. The service will be available on both at 11:00am every Sunday.



I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who have mailed in their offerings to the church, dropped them in our mailbox, or have given on-line through our PayPal account. The ministry of Ascension Church continues, we need your support. Although we cannot gather in the building right now, we still have our expenses to pay and our outreach continues.

As you can see from our numbers, our offerings are down quite a bit, and have actually declined even more so, and we are reaching out at this most difficult and yet important time to ask you to help your church to stay alive and ardent in its ministry and outreach to all of you and our community.

We truly appreciate your sacrifice and generosity to Ascension, and we continue to pray for all of you and ask you to continue to pray for us as well. We look forward to when we can gather again, in person!

Blessings to you all,

Judy Parker, Financial Secretary

Consistory Corner

Report from Financial and Stewardship Committee

May 2020 Financial Results

Total Income	\$ 7,025.34
Total expense	\$15,095.31
Net Income (Loss)	(\$ 8,069.97)

YTD Financial Results (9/19-5/2020)

Total Income	\$ 64,602.10
Trustee Transfer	\$ 78,800.00
Total expense	\$187,669.67
Net Income (Loss)	(\$ 44,267.57)

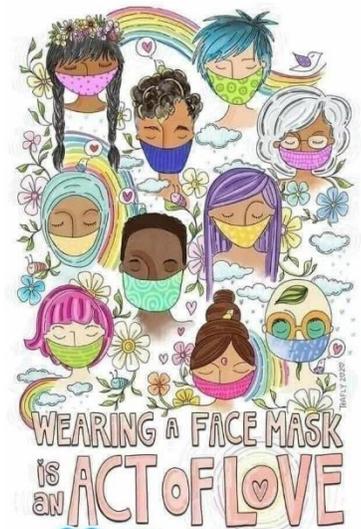
Dear Siblings in Christ,

We want you to know how much we have missed seeing each of you, in person, at Ascension UCC. These last several months have been difficult for everyone, and we pray that we will soon be back inside the building for our worship.

We have moved into the next phase here in Montgomery County “green,” but we must continue to be mindful of the ongoing risk of virus infection and diligent in observing important restrictions regarding our personal behavior. We are also aware that in some places where reopening has occurred earlier, there has been a resurgence of the virus. The Consistory believes our largest concern is in making sure it is safe for us to gather for in person worship.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of some important information for when the Consistory determines a possible date of return to the Church for our worship. Our next Consistory meeting is scheduled for July 9th. When the church does reopen, we intend to follow the “Guidelines for Safer Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic” published for Religious Institutions by Montgomery County. In general, these guidelines recommend:

- Masks or other face coverings be required for all while in the building.
- Hand sanitizer be readily available throughout the building.
- Individuals and family groups should space themselves at least 6 feet from others.
- Upon entering the sanctuary, individuals and family groups should proceed to their seats and remain there throughout the service.
- The pastor and other persons involved in the service will speak from the pulpit area.
- No hymns or special music will be sung or performed during the service.
- No Passing of the Peace.
- Offerings and communion will be modified to limit movement.
- Bathroom access limited to one restroom and be required to wipe down toilet and sink surfaces with a disinfecting wipe.
- No refreshments or fellowship time will be permitted after the service.



To return to Ascension UCC, we also must address the need for a thorough cleaning of the sanctuary, kitchen, bathrooms, and hallways prior to each service. We want to know that you and your family will feel comfortable in the worship space and confident that all sensible measures are being taken to limit the spread of the virus among our almost universal high-risk group.

Although we have moved to the “Green” phase, the virus is still present. We love you all too much to take the safety of your health lightly, especially in this time of pandemic. Our love for God inspires us to worship God no matter where we are. Our love for our neighbors keeps us social distancing and wearing masks to keep the risk of exposure to a minimum.

Thank you for your prayers as we discern when to safely return. Thank you, as well, to those who have had to struggle with new technology, who have worked to find new ways to connect, and have reached out to check-in on one another. Our hope is in God and may our faith in Jesus Christ grow even in this time of pandemic as we put our trust in the One who is, who was and who is to come.

Peace and Blessings,

Rev. Dwayne Mosier, Pastor

Elizabeth Brunton, Consistory President

BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

July Birthdays

1 Lowell Ladd
2 Mike Chronister
4 Cornell Alb
12 Maureen Hallman
Laurie Fryer
14 Jacob Thomas Snyder
John Wanner
16 Joseph Clayboss, Jr.
Dele Fryer
17 Ann Spahr
19 Helen McDonald
Todd Gieringer
22 Jacob Thomas Dzedzy
24 Mabel Clayboss
26 Renee Rhen
27 Mark Moll
28 Richard Gear, Jr.
Abigail Comrie
29 Danny Spahr
30 Justin Satterwhite

July Anniversaries

3 Molly & Bryen Lorenz
19 Lowell & Kristen Ladd
21 Justin & Jennifer Satterwhite
31 Joan & Norman Hagerman

August Birthdays

1 Shawn Van O'Linda
Emma Hope Youmans
4 Rachael McLaughlin
12 Cheyenne Ernst
13 Mary Kate Sicher
Liam Ladd
15 Jonathan Dzedzy
18 Loretta Rhoads
19 Beryl Rosen

22 Cindy Mosier
Mike Perez
24 Neko Crespo
25 Sandy Paine
26 Kyle Hahn
28 Chuck Schaller
29 George Klehamer
31 Jan Thierfelder

August Anniversaries

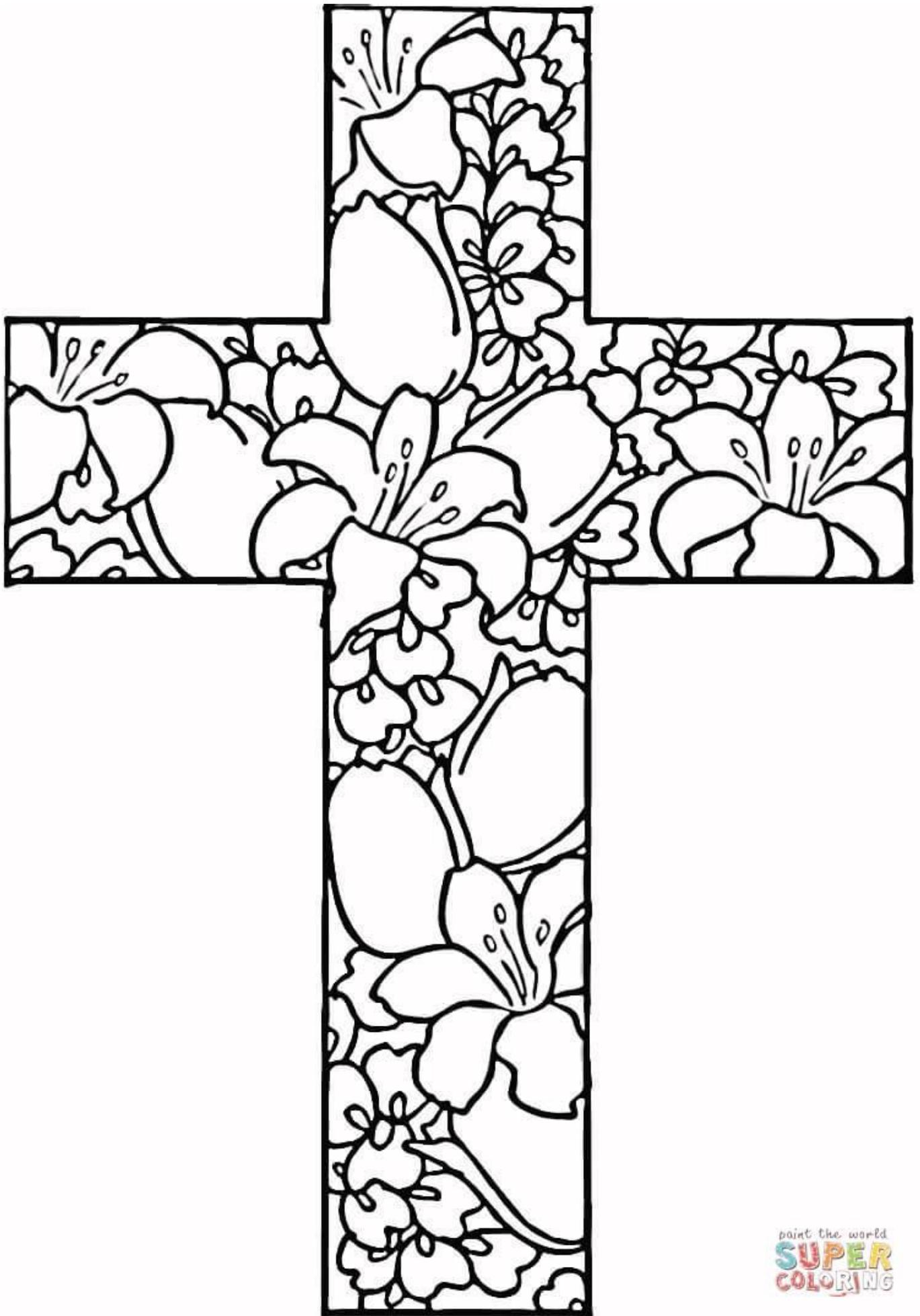
13 Bob & Mary MacNeel
21 Willie & Barbara Montague-Graham
31 Barry & Kathy Snyder

September Birthdays

1 Kent Eisenberger
Sean Thampi
3 Jennifer Satterwhite
Cheryl Melville
4 Jameson Leo McLaughlin
5 Renee Huber
8 Sandi Fryer
10 Nancy Perez
Mary Lambon
12 Barbara Cressman
14 Allison Dearing
16 Bruce Wetherill
18 William Rosen III
19 P.J. Harvey
Mabel Snyder
20 Mikayla Clayboss
Phyllis Burns
22 Eva Joy Youmans
25 Richard Weed
26 Ethan Brunton
28 Debbie Sickles

September Anniversaries

6 Dave & Jean Akers
10 Ken & Denise Kline
21 Pam & Rich Lotsch



THE REFORMED CHURCH OF THE

Ascension



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

1700 West Main Street
Jeffersonville, PA 19403

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Ascension UCC Worship
Faith Formation
TBA

Worship Service: 11:00^{AM}
Facebook Live

Ascension

United Church of Christ
an open and affirming congregation
1700 West Main Street, Jeffersonville, PA 19403

(610) 539-1693

www.ascensionucc.org

No Matter Where you are on life' s journey...

You are welcome here