



Rollstone Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

199 Main Street, Fitchburg, MA

Pastor: Rev. David B. Hanks 978-821-9571

Moderator: Paul Stansel 978-337-1608

Church Organist and Musician: Gavin Klein

Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 16, 2021

Prelude:

Prelude

Mendelssohn

Call to Worship:

Leader: Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth, sing praise to the Lord.

People: **To him who rides across the highest heavens, the ancient heavens,
who thunders with mighty voice.**

Leader: Proclaim the power of God.

People: **Whose majesty is over Israel, whose power is in the heavens.**

Leader: You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives
power and strength to his people.

ALL: **Praise be to God!**

Gathering Prayer:

O Christ, the risen One, ascended into heaven, yet closer than our own breath,
draw us into your presence. Be near to us -- near to our praises, our prayers, our
words, our songs; near to our wonderings, our tentative answers, our hidden
doubts, our deepest affirmations. Be near to us, risen Lord. Amen.

Opening Hymn:

“Lord, You Give the Great Commission”

Abbot's Leigh

A Reading from the Gospels

Luke 24:44-53 (New International Version)

44 He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

The Ascension of Jesus

⁵⁰ When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵² Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

A Reading from the Epistles**Acts 1:6-14 (New International Version)**

6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

12 Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city. 13 When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. 14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

A Time of Prayer – *let us remember all of our brothers and sisters on the prayer list, especially those who are having a difficult time during this period of social distancing. Please share your prayer concerns so that they may be added to the prayer list by emailing your concern to Pastor Dave at rollstonepastor2012@gmail.com or by calling him direct at 978-821-9571. He is available Monday through Thursday and most every evenings.*

Gracious and loving Creator, Sometimes the words just are not there. God, you are so amazing that our words and thoughts of how best to praise you pale in comparison to the splendors of your name. You are the Almighty, you are the Redeemer, you are grace never ending and the embodiment of love itself. And when we come to you in prayer, sometimes words fail us in what to say. Yes, we lift up our concerns, and yet sometimes they seem so small in comparison to the tribulations encountered across your creation. How can our problems compare to disasters people face, or the fighting that surrounds people trying to escape, or the horrors that no child should ever experience? Lord God, sometimes when we come to you to pray, we are clueless as to what we should ask for. You know the thoughts in our minds and the desires of our hearts, and there are times when they conflict. Sometimes we want what is not always the best for us, and there are times that we long to hold on to the things we should let go of. There are times when really the best thing we can do is just pray thy will be done. In these

moments, dear God, we are so very thankful for the lessons of your Son Jesus Christ for teaching us the words to pray when our own are insufficient, for our tradition teaches that Jesus said to pray to Our Father by saying “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.”

Musical Interlude:

Canticle of Simeon

Richard Proulx

The Message:

“Scheduling Issues”

Closing Hymn:

“We’ve a Story to Tell to the Nations”

Message (Nichol)

Benediction:

As we leave this place, let us depart in the assurance that God does not remain hidden in a cloud, concealed from us. God is still among us! Let us not gaze longingly at heaven for a sign. God is revealed! Let us glimpse the face of Christ in one another. Let us celebrate the Holy Spirit, who works in our community. Let us give glory to God our Creator, today and every day. Amen.

Postlude:

St Anthony Chorale

Haydn

PRAYER LIST

Jacob Allen
Janet Aveyard
Amy Belli
Carolyn Barney
Jack Brigham
Becky Colwell
Maureen Daoust
David Dufour
Diana Escarbie
Robert Fitton
Keeley Folan
Cathy Fontaine
Bob and Pat Goguen
Linda Haas
Douglas Hanks
John Hanks, Jr.
Timothy Hoffman
Linda Hurd
Tom Kazanjian
Sarah Kee
Colin Lajoie
Bob and Doris Lane
Diane Lane Cormier
Linda Long
Sue Mattison
Lorraine Michaud
Audrey Painchaud
Maria Piazza
Melanie Pouliot
Del Sampson
Elwin Shepard
Amanda Sicard
Ron Smith

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Family of Diane Staples
Carole Ann Sumner and Henry
Donna Thorne
Daniel Tousignant
Marilyn Wales
Mary Wayman

All who are experiencing difficult times and situations
All who are lonely or depressed