

## Church at Home

Olivet Congregational Church

*Easter 7 Sunday May 24, 2020*

*This document is designed for those unable to, or who choose not to, participate in the LIVE worship experience we offer via the internet on Sunday mornings, at 10am. You should have received an invite and instructions as to how to participate with the community of faith LIVE in it.*

*For those who need or want the following option, we hope this will assist you in your at-home worship life AND help keep you spiritually fed and nourished by the Word.*

**Christ is risen. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

**Prayer:** God of Love and Mercy,

As your Church seeks ways to gather in the name of Jesus Christ during these days of quarantine, remind us that we are not alone; that others are praying together, considering your promises together, and looking toward you for hope and healing. Hear now our prayers for one another. Protect our friends, family, and all those we love; we pray for the whole world, and especially all who stand in need this day of healing, those who grieve, and those in fear wherever they may be. Strengthen each of us as we take this time out of our weekend to meet with you, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that resides with us all. AMEN.

Hold down your control key (Ctrl) and Click on link below for the **HYMN** “All Things Bright and Beautiful” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUnQMvwaXlc>

The following **lessons** are assigned in the Universal Common Lectionary for today. As you read these verses from scripture be mindful that Christians all over the world will be reading these same passages and seeking hope with you. Ponder how the words apply to your own life today. Find a quiet place, alone or together with someone you love—near a window, or even outside if that works. Read through each passage, reflect on your response to the questions, and offer up a simple prayer to God.

**Acts 1:6-14**

***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." Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.***

Reread this story and imagine yourself there, with the other disciples, watching Jesus ascend. What do you imagine they were feeling and thinking in that moment?

What was the last thing that Jesus said to them?

Do you ever wish you could call God on your phone? What would you say to God today? Beyond that, what might God have to say to you?

#### **Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35**

***Let God rise up, let God's enemies be scattered; let those who hate flee before God.  
As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire,  
let the wicked perish before God.  
But let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy.  
Sing to God, sing praises to God's name;  
lift up a song to God who rides upon the clouds—God's name is the LORD-- be exultant before  
God.***

***Father and Mother of orphans and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.  
God gives the desolate a home to live in; and leads out the prisoners to prosperity,  
but the rebellious live in a parched land.***

***O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,  
the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain at the presence of God, the God of Sinai,  
at the presence of God, the God of Israel.  
Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad; you restored your heritage when it  
languished;***

*your flock found a dwelling in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.*

*Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth; sing praises to the Lord,  
O rider in the heavens, the ancient heavens; listen, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.  
Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel; and whose power is in the skies.  
Awesome is God in the sanctuary, the God of Israel gives power and strength to all people.  
Blessed be God!*

The Psalm says we should lift up a song to God—what would your song sound like, and what might some of the lyrics be?

Do you have a favorite hymn/song that is spiritually uplifting and good for your soul?

The Psalmist recalls all the ways that God has blessed him. How has God blessed you, saved you, restored you?

Hold your control key (Ctrl) and Click below for the **HYMN** “Praise to the Lord”

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roxlm\\_gCb7c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roxlm_gCb7c)

### **1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11**

*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.*

Read the first verse again. Does it feel like we are in an ordeal and that something strange is happening to us?

The passage says that we are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that God can exalt us in due time. What does that mean for you today?

The passage also says that we are to cast all our anxiety on God, because God cares for us. What are your anxieties today?

Does it feel like maybe God is changing everything right now? How do you feel about everything changing?

### **John 17:1-11**

***After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.***

Reread this lesson and underline the places where Jesus points to God.

Now reread it again and circle the places where Jesus points God's attention to "those you gave me."

How important is it for you to know that YOU belong to God? Protected by God?

"Being one" is much easier said than done. What does this have to do with our community of faith at Olivet?

Hold your control key (Ctrl) and Click on the link below for **HYMN** "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-hN740J6qA>

*And now may the peace of the risen and ascended Christ that passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**AMEN.**

*And now may the peace of Christ that passes all understanding, comfort  
and guide you in this day, and on into the life that is to come for you.*

*AMEN.*