



CHRIST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
MILFORD

May 24, 2020  
Ascension Sunday

# LOVE IN THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

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Responding to Coronavirus as individual Christians:

**Be Wise:** Practice good hygiene and cleanliness. If you're sick, stay home, and take an abundance of caution. Regularly wash your hands. Make wise decisions about travel, avoid large events. Consult the CDC for more information on how to prepare and be safe.

**Be Calm:** In Philippians 4 Paul says that in times of uncertainty and suffering we should be “anxious for nothing.” When he wrote those words, he was following Jesus’ lead (Matthew 6.25-34) in reminding us that our hope in this world is not in human economies, or medicine, or technology, or cleanliness. Our hope is in Lord, the maker of Heaven and Earth (Psalm 121). So, if you're feeling anxious or afraid over the coming weeks, remember that the God who watches over you is a God who does not slumber or sleep. He promises that He will watch over your life; your coming in and going out both now and forevermore.

**Be thoughtful:** Keep in mind that certain people will be impacted more than others: Be aware of those who may be “shut-in” and alone. Take a moment to think about people who might inadvertently become “invisible” and be intentional about reaching out to them.

- **Be aware of our older generation and the risks that are more relevant to them as related to the virus. Be intentional about checking up with them.**
- **Be aware of our neighbors, especially those who may be alone and/or have special needs in this context. This is a moment when the love and mercy of Christ can shine through you!**
- **Local businesses can absorb losses from people staying home less than big national chains. If you are able buy stuff from them, do so.**
- **People who work on hourly wages and those who rely on tips will probably be hurt more than those on salary. Be aware of who is confronting this and find ways to help.**
- **Health care workers: lots of people will be showing up at hospitals etc. to be checked or treated. Nurses, doctors and support staff will be pulling multiple extra shifts. Write them notes. Let them know how thankful you are for them.**

**Be Prayerful:** Scripture teaches that Prayer is action and when it is done through faith in Christ, the Lord can use it to move mountains and heal diseases. Therefore, let's join together during this time to pray for the Lord to guide our officials, equip our medical professionals, comfort the sick, shield the healthy, and arrest this virus from causing more harm.

Historically, Christians have been known as people of love and compassion in times of disease and illness. When smallpox came to Rome most fled to the countryside, while Christians remained in the city to care for the sick and needy. When Romans evicted their infected loved ones out of their homes, Christians were the ones who invited them in to care for them. Of course, we want to proceed with caution and wisdom in the days to come. Yet, the Church has had some of her finest moments in situations like this. Let's pray and look for opportunities to be the Presence of Christ in Milford, His means of responding with love and grace to this crisis.

REFLECTION

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**Celebrating the Ascension of Jesus Christ:  
Lord of all Authority and Power**

Blessing them,  
    He ascended into heaven.  
Gone, but not gone.  
Ascended, but still with us.  
Alive among us  
Among us  
Us!  
No longer sad at his leaving,  
    we wait in joy and wonder  
    for the Spirit.  
Blessed,  
    we wait to do his bidding,  
    to go out  
    to all the world  
    to tell the Good News  
        that God loves us so much  
        He chose to live among us.  
Lo, He is with us always  
    even unto the end of the world...  
Ascended Lord, ever Emmanuel!

— *Ann Weems, 1991*

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## ASCENSION SUNDAY

Advent + Christmas + Epiphany + Lent + Easter + Pentecost

### **Gathering Hymn** Ascend

Come let us see our Lord and King  
He's reigning in glory  
Lift up your eyes all earth and sky  
His Kingdom is coming  
From glory to glory  
We will arrive

#### **Chorus**

We will ascend the hill of the Lord  
And we will declare His holy word  
With clean hands and pure hearts  
With clean hands and pure hearts  
We will see God

We fix our eyes we give our lives  
Our hope is in Heaven  
So let us run we have overcome  
Now and forever  
From glory to glory  
We will arrive

#### **Chorus**

And when we see Him we'll be like Him  
Face to face we'll know what love is  
(Repeat)

#### **Chorus**



1. A hymn of glo-ry let us sing; new songs through-out the world shall
2. The ho - ly ap - os - tol - ic band up - on the Mount of Ol - ives
3. To whom the an - gels, draw - ing nigh: "Why stand and gaze up - on the
4. "A - gain shall you be - hold him so as you to - day have seen him



ring: *Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!* Christ, by a road be - fore un -  
stand; *Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!* and with his fol - low - ers they  
sky?" *Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!* "This is the Sav - ior," thus they  
go, *Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!* in glo - rious pomp as - cend - ing



trod, as - cends un - to the throne of God.  
see Je - sus' re - splen - dent ma - jes - ty. *Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -*  
say. "This is his no - ble tri - umph day.  
high, up to the por - tals of the sky."



*lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!*



— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

### **Call to Worship**

from Ezekiel 34:22-24 & Ephesians 1:20–23:

“I will rescue my flock,” says the Lord God; “they shall no longer be a prey. ....And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant, David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the Lord; I have spoken.”

**And we know He accomplished this “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 one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”**

Invocation

**Old Testament Lesson** Psalm 47

**Praise Hymn** A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing

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**Confession of Sin** from Colossians 3:1-10)

If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”

**O Lord, we have put our trust in you; we have been raised with Christ our Lord; but the things above seem so far off.**

“Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.”

**O Lord, the things of earth captivate, they thrill,  
they distract; the things above seem so far off.**

“For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”

**O God my Father, the present task, or success or fun, the present crisis, or pain, or boredom, captures me; and the future glory, won for me by my Savior at the Cross, seems so far away.**

“Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness — which is idolatry. On account of these things the wrath of God is

coming. in these you once walked, when you lived in them.”

**O Lord, much that is impure lives in me still, and it is painful to put it to death. O Lord, have mercy on me.**

“But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator.”

**“Put them all away!” O God, we have sinned; O God, I have sinned. I have not put all these things away; though your Spirit has created a new heart in me, I find myself unwilling to leave the old, dead ways behind. O holy Father, forgive us; O Christ our Savior, remember your sufferings on our behalf; O Spirit of purity, hear our prayer for Jesus’ sake, and fill us with his goodness. Amen.**

**Absolution** Hebrews 7:22–28

The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but [Jesus] holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

**Thanksgiving Hymn** All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name

**New Testament Lesson** Acts 1:1-11

**Peace of Christ**

The peace of the Lord be with you!

**And also with you!**

1. All hail the pow'r of Je - sus' name! Let an - gels pros - trate fall;  
 2. Crown him, ye mar - tyr's of your God, who from his al - tar call;  
 3. Ye seed of Is - rael's cho - sen race, ye ran - somed of the fall,  
 4. Sin - ners, whose love can ne'er for - get the worm - wood and the gall,

bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem, and crown him Lord of all;  
 ex - tol the Stem of Jes - se's rod, and crown him Lord of all;  
 hail him who saves you by his grace, and crown him Lord of all;  
 go, spread your tro - phies at his feet, and crown him Lord of all;

bring forth the roy - al di - a - dem, and crown him Lord of all.  
 ex - tol the Stem of Jes - se's rod, and crown him Lord of all.  
 hail him who saves you by his grace, and crown him Lord of all.  
 go, spread your tro - phies at his feet, and crown him Lord of all.

5. Let ev'ry kindred, ev'ry tribe,  
 on this terrestrial ball,  
 to him all majesty ascribe.  
 and crown him Lord of all;  
 to him all majesty ascribe,  
 and crown him Lord of all.

6. O that with yonder sacred throng  
 we at his feet may fall;  
 we'll join the everlasting song,  
 and crown him Lord of all;  
 we'll join the everlasting song,  
 and crown him Lord of all.



## **Gloria**

Glory be to the Father,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Ghost  
As it was in the beginning,  
is now and ever shall be,  
world without end, Amen! Amen!

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

## **New Testament Lesson** Acts 3:1-13, 4:1-22

This is the Word of the Lord!  
**Thanks be to God!**

**Sermon** “The Acts of the Ascended Christ, 4” | Pastor Curran Bishop

## **Response Hymn** 10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord)

### **Chorus**

Bless the Lord O my soul O my soul  
Worship His holy name  
Sing like never before O my soul  
I'll worship Your holy name

The sun comes up it's a new day dawning  
It's time to sing Your song again  
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me  
Let me be singing when the evening comes

### **Chorus**

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger  
Your name is great and Your heart is kind  
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing  
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

## Chorus

And on that day when my strength is failing  
The end draws near and my time has come  
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending  
Ten thousand years and then forevermore

## Chorus

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

### Bringing Our Life to God

Profession | Collection | Prayers

### Confession of Faith

Nicene Creed (325 AD)

Christians, what do you believe?

**We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of the same essence as the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made human. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried. The third day he rose again according to the Scriptures. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will never end. And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified. He spoke through the prophets. We believe in the one holy catholic and apostolic church. We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to the life in the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

Collection

# Praise Ye The Lord; Alleluia

Hal - le - lu, hal - le - lu-, hal-le - lu, hal - le - lu-jah, Praise ye the Lord! Hal - le -

The first system of music features a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The bass line provides a steady accompaniment with chords and single notes.

lu, hal-le-lu, hal-le-lu, hallelujah, Praise ye the Lord! Praise ye the Lord, hal-le-lujah!

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are aligned with the notes in the treble clef. The music maintains the same key signature and time signature.

Praise ye the Lord, halle-lu-jah! Praise ye the Lord, hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord!

The third system concludes the piece with a double bar line. The melody and accompaniment end with a final chord. The lyrics are aligned with the notes in the treble clef.

## **Communion in Christ Jesus**

*All Christians are invited to join us to receive Christ's presence of bread and wine. During this time of social distancing we offer for our pastor to come and bless your partaking of elements you provide to preserve the corporate-presence of Christ pictured in the supper as best we can. If you've been part of our streaming service please text Curran (203-812-9928) to set up a time he can meet you (from a distance) to celebrate communion.*

## **Lamentation**

### **Communion Hymn**

### **Behold the Lamb**

Behold the Lamb who bears our sins away  
Slain for us and we remember  
The promise made that all who come in faith  
Find forgiveness at the cross  
So we share in this Bread of Life  
And we drink of His sacrifice  
As a sign of our bonds of peace  
Around the table of the King

The body of our Savior Jesus Christ  
Torn for you eat and remember  
The wounds that heal the death that brings us life  
Paid the price to make us one  
So we share in this Bread of Life  
And we drink of His sacrifice  
As a sign of our bonds of love  
Around the table of the King

The blood that cleanses every stain of sin  
Shed for you drink and remember  
He drained death's cup that all may enter in  
To receive the life of God  
So we share in this Bread of Life  
And we drink of His sacrifice  
As a sign of our bonds of grace  
Around the table of the King

And so with thankfulness and faith we rise  
To respond and to remember  
Our call to follow in the steps of Christ  
As His body here on earth  
As we share in His suffering  
We proclaim Christ will come again  
And we'll join in the feast of heaven  
Around the table of the King

**Prayer for those searching:**

Oh God, I am discovering that the more I have, the more I need to have, the more I am loved, the more I need to be loved, the more I achieve, the more I need to achieve. Nothing seems to satisfy me. Could it be, as someone once said, that “Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.” Dear God, if this is true, and if as the Bible teaches there is life and life eternal in Christ alone, please guide me to Him. Open me to the reality of the One who alone can satisfy my restless heart. Give me the courage to believe that which I cannot see but can understand, feel and touch through the Word, sacraments and church family. Lord I want to believe, help my unbelief! Amen.

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

**Benediction**            from Jude 24–25 and Romans 15:13

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. And to you His people, joy and peace in believing. Amen.

**Coronation Hymn**            See the Lord Ascends in Triumph

See, the Lord ascends in triumph:  
Conqu'ring King in royal state,  
Riding on the clouds, His chariot,  
To His heav'nly palace gate.  
Hark! The choirs of angel voices  
Joyful alleluias sing,  
And the portals high are lifted  
To receive their heav'nly King.

Who is this that comes in glory  
With the trump of jubilee?  
Lord of battles, God of armies,  
He has gained the victory.  
He who on the cross did suffer,  
He who from the grave arose.  
He has vanquished sin and Satan;  
He by death has crushed His foes.

While He lifts His hands in blessing,  
He is parted from His friends;  
While their eager eyes behold Him,  
He upon the clouds ascends.  
He who walked with God and pleased Him,  
Preaching truth and doom to come,  
He, our Enoch, is translated  
To His everlasting home.

Now our heav'nly Aaron enters  
With His blood within the veil;  
Joshua now is come to Canaan,  
And the kings before Him quail.  
Now He plants the tribes of Israel  
In their promised resting place:  
Now our great Elijah offers  
Double portion of His grace.

He has raised our human nature  
On the clouds to God's right hand;  
There we sit in heav'nly places,  
There with Him in glory stand.  
Jesus reigns, adored by angels;  
Man with God is on the throne.  
By our mighty Lord's ascension  
We by faith behold our own.

## **Announcements**

## REFLECTION

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### Heaven and Earth Reunited

In the beginning, there was blessed fellowship between God and man, between heaven and earth. Although God and His creation were separate, they were united without being identified. But our fall into sin disrupted all that. Separateness became separation. The alienation of sin brought disfellowship into creation. Man alienated himself from God; people became alienated from one another, and from the creation. Life in creation was subjected to the principle of self-existence, independence and isolation. But the glorious purpose—and result!—of Christ's work was the re-union of heaven and earth, of God and His people. Redemption, which was intended and provided in terms of the original creation, aims at the restoration of fellowship. The principle of self-existence was overcome, in redemption, by the greater principle of reconciliation.

That's what Christ's ascension is about: reunion, fellowship restored, oneness between heaven and earth brought about by our Savior's entrance into the Father's presence.

So much about our Savior's ascension is unique. There were no Christmas angels, no Golgotha darkness, no Easter earthquake. No brightly lit sky or rending of the veil or rolling stone. No singing.

The event is reported in utter simplicity: **he was taken up.**

Ah, but notice the *timing* of Christ's departure: **'when He had spoken these things.'** What things? You may recall that the disciples had asked Jesus a question, a good question, actually: **'Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'** The Savior's answer came immediately, in word and in deed. The word was this: you don't need to know the times or season in the Father's hand; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses around the world. **'Now,'** writes Luke, **'when He had spoken these things...He was taken up.'**

And what, do you suppose, is the meaning of his divine act-as-answer? It is this: the restoration of God's rule requires the reunion of the Son with the Father. The Son of God, who is the Second Adam, carries His flesh (and ours), His sacrifice (for us), and His obedience into heaven, there to receive the Father's approval and reward. The kingdom of God is restored on the basis of atonement and reconciliation. *The ascension belongs to Christ's reconciling work for His sheep.*

—N.D. Kloosterman (1992)

# WE ARE A LOCAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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## **Local**

We are a church in and for our community. We want to celebrate its goodness, serve its specific needs, and work towards the flourishing of all its citizens. We worship in the voice of our community and seek to be a church that grows organically out of our neighborhoods. We are committed to working for the common good. We look to serve, not to be served. We look to give, not to take. We are eager to bless others because we have been blessed by God.

## **Presbyterian**

Being Presbyterian means we are led by elders and connected with other churches. This provides accountability, oversight, and produces real pastoral care. We are part of the Reformed Tradition which teaches that God knows us intimately and enables us to know Him intimately. We believe that life in relationship with God is not only possible but vibrant. That God is the initiator of this relationship and the whole is based on grace and forgiveness offered to us in the being and action of Jesus Christ.

## **Church**

We believe that church is not an event or a program but rather a family. A place where you no longer have to choose between being really known or really loved. Within the family of God we don't need to perform in order to be accepted. We no longer relate to each other based upon our past failures or future potential but rather we relate to each other as brothers and sisters who have been loved by God in Christ!



## COMING UP

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### **Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting**

In the midst of pandemic, financial crisis and social isolation we need each other, and we need God. Please join us as we follow a short prayer and scripture liturgy, pray for each other, and have some “digital fellowship” while staying home and staying safe.

Follow the link a few minutes before 7 PM: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/823911975>

Or just input the meeting ID in the app: 823 911 975

### **Rooted: Applying the Essentials of the Faith**

We're partnering with Christ Pres. Fairfield to do an online training together aimed at anyone who would like to know more about what the Bible teaches, how to read the Bible faithfully, and what the general beliefs of the Presbyterian Church are. The course also serves as the introduction to any leadership role in the church: Sunday school teacher, ministry coordinator, community group leader, elder, etc. We're committed to making the course engaging and practical, digging into questions, and learning together.

Zoom Link for 8pm meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88538451252>

Meeting ID is: 885-3845-1252

### **Contact us**

203.812.9928 or [curran.bishop@cpcmilford.org](mailto:curran.bishop@cpcmilford.org); find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/CPCMilford](https://www.facebook.com/CPCMilford) or visit us online at [cpcmilford.org](http://cpcmilford.org)



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