

Gray Weekly News



Week Leading to Sunday, May 29, 2022

What Is Ascension Day and Why Do Christians Celebrate It?

www.christianity.com

The Christian holiday of Ascension Day, also known as the Feast of the Ascension, celebrates when Jesus ascended to heaven. This feast day is one of the ecumenical feasts of Christian churches, along with the celebrations of the Passion, Easter, and Pentecost. Ascension Day is generally observed on a Thursday, the fortieth day after Easter.

This year, Ascension Day is Thursday, May 26, 2022. Forty days from the day He rose from the grave, Jesus ascended into heaven. Here is how Luke described the event:

Therefore, when they [the disciples and the risen Christ] had come together, they asked Him saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth. "Now when he had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight..." (Acts 1:4-9, New King James Version).

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Ascension Sunday



Acts 1:1-11

Psalm 47

Luke 24:44-53

“Up, Up, & (Not So Far) Away”

News and Notes

THIS WEEK
Sunday, May 29

Please join us on Sundays at 11 am. If you are unable to come in person, you can watch our livestream at graymemorialumc.org/facebook.com or graymemorialumc.org/youtube, at 11 am or any time after that at graymemorialumc.org/



If you have prayer requests, please contact Norma Adams, Jennifer Skinner or Gail Teems.

You may also call the church office at 850/385-6441 or send a text to 850/933-8469.

Prayer Requests

Sam and Norma Adams

Patsy and Betty

Ashley, Toni Walther's daughter

Bill Eddy – health concerns

Jack, Randy, Jim & Jane Workman

Joyce and Bob

All those suffering from job loss, health issues and family concerns

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Traditions of Ascension Day

Because the date of Easter varies from year to year, the celebration of the Ascension moves with it. It always falls on the fortieth day from Easter and, since Easter always falls on a Sunday, Ascension Day always falls on a Thursday; it is frequently called "Holy Thursday."

Ascension Day celebrates Christ's exaltation. While on earth, He was a servant. Now in heaven, He is the ruler and Lord of all. By entering heaven as the representative of mankind, He completed the work of our salvation and guarantees the eventual glorification of all who love Him. Just as Jesus went up in the clouds, He will return the same way. Again Luke described the scene: *"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'"*

1. The ascended and enthroned Christ pours out his Spirit on the church. Jesus himself had told his disciples that it was good for him to go away, because only then would he send them another Helper, the Spirit of truth (John 16:7-16). And that's exactly what happened on the Day of Pentecost, ten days after Jesus' ascension. The Spirit descended on the church with

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power, inaugurating a new age in the history of salvation. That's why Peter connects Jesus' exaltation and the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2:33: *Being, therefore, exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.*

2. The ascended and enthroned Christ applies the blessings of salvation.

Having accomplished redemption through his suffering on **the cross**, the risen and exalted Christ now applies the salvation he has won, by granting the gifts of repentance and forgiveness of sins. As Peter says in Acts 5:31: *God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.*

3. The ascended and enthroned Christ cares for his suffering people as they bear witness to him. We see this in Acts 7 when Stephen becomes the first martyr of the Christian church. *But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."* (Acts 7:55–56)

All of this should give us great encouragement! When feeling weak in ourselves, Luke reminds us that the exalted Christ has given us his Spirit, who equips us with the power, boldness, and courage we need to accomplish our mission.

This is the great hope of all Christians. For just as Jesus went into heaven, so will all Christians. Those who are dead will rise first; those who are living will be caught up to meet Him in the air, according to Paul, writing to the church at Thessalonica. With this hope in mind, Christians sometimes conclude their meetings with the words, "Come Lord Jesus."

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, May 24	7 pm	Board of Trustees Meets
Wednesday, May 25	10 am	Neighborly's Time with Afghan Mothers and Children
	7 pm	Acts Bible Study with Todd Clark
Thursday, May 26 Ascension Day	10 am	Bible Study
	5:30 pm	Choir Practice
Sunday, May 29	11 am	Worship Service – Ascension Sunday <i>Fifth Sunday Collection for Florida UMC Children's Home</i>
Monday, May 30		Memorial Day
Wednesday, June 1	10 am	Neighborly's Time with Afghan Mothers and Children
	12 noon	Wonderful Wednesday Brown Bag Lunch
	7 pm	Acts Bible Study with Todd Clark
Thursday, June 2	10 am	Bible Study
	5:30 pm	Choir Practice
Sunday, June 5	11 am	Worship Service – Pentecost Sunday <i>Don't Forget To Wear Red!</i>



Don't forget Wonderful Wednesday
12 noon - June 1