



Volume 8, Issue 5
May 2023

The Trinity Times



May 3 – Lunch at Vo Tech with a *Star Wars* Theme (10:30 am). First 12 to sign-up with Sally DeJesus.

May 7 – 5th Sunday of Easter – 9:15. West District Conference – 1:30 West Willow UMC.

May 14 – 6th Sunday of Easter & Mother's Day Flowers for all women at the 9:15 worship service.

May 18, 19, & 20 - UMC Annual Conference (See article on page 2.)

May 21 – Trinity's 3rd Sunday Worship Service at American House (2:30).

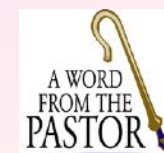
May 28 – Pentecost Sunday

May 29 – Memorial Day

May or June – Trip to Longwood Gardens (Date and time TBD) - \$25 for adults; \$22 for Seniors. Talk to pastor Jessica if interested.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Consider honoring your loved ones with flowers on the altar at a Sunday Worship Service. If you are interested, please contact Donna Mease. She will order the flowers for you or you may choose to bring in your own floral displays. In either case, please let Donna know so that she can reserve your date, floral preference, and wording for our Sunday Bulletin.



May Flowers - Yes Please!

I asked my Husband once, "How come you never bring me flowers?"

He answered, "Because flowers remind me too much of funerals."

I replied, "Does that mean I have to wait till I die to get them?" I always remember my husband's response in May, because that is when we begin to see flowers start to bloom in our area. Flowers remind us of the beauty that God has created, we want to brighten our homes with color, vibrancy, and life. I am also reminded of what the Lord says to us in the Book of Isaiah 40:8a (NRSV)...

The grass withers, the flower fades;

But after reminding us of the passing of the flowers in the fields, The remainder of this verse (Isaiah 40:8b) gives us joyous hope...

but the word of our God will stand forever!

Just as God created the heavens and the earth, every flower we see and the fragrance they give, reminds us of the incredible beauty and wonder and variety of God's creation.

Yes, I know some flowers don't smell good, and some make us sneeze, but there is no denying the beauty and joy of flowers and there nothing as beautiful as God's love for us.

In Romans 5:8, Paul says, "But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us."

And yes, I know you cannot hold on to flowers in their natural form, and we can't make someone give them to us... but.. ***We can, buy, grow, and preserve them!***

No, we cannot make them last in the form God created them, but the Word of the Lord will never fade, never die, and the blood that Jesus shed will never lose its power to save, transform, and make of our lives something beautiful.

Yes. The beauty of flowers is wondrous but more so is God's unfailing love, power, and Word.

Pastor Jessica





2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE | MAY 18-20

2023 Annual Conference

May 18-20

Using the theme **“Possibility,”** the 2023 Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference will meet May 18-20 at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks. This will be the first “live” meeting since 2019. The session begins on Thursday, May 18 at 8:30 AM with the Episcopal Address by Bishop John Schol, pre-

siding over his first EPA Conference session. Pastor Jessica, Gloria Clark, and Carol and George Hollich will represent Trinity at the Conference. Preparation for Annual Conference begins with a West District meeting on May 7 and pre-Annual Conference Special Sessions held via Zoom on Tuesday, May 9 at 3 p.m., and Wednesday, May 10. The Pre-Conference sessions will review key legislation, including the 2024 budget, and provide an opportunity for Q&A with presenters of legislation. This year conference-goers will also assemble 500 disaster response kits to send to UMCOR for distribution to survivors in need of cleaning supplies and hygiene products, including feminine hygiene products.

Date

- May 7
- May 14
- May 21
- May 28

Liturgist

- Barb Querry
- Dea Kishpaugh
- Phyllis Carter
- Keith Earle



If you are unable to serve as liturgist, please call... 717-838-2812



MAY BIRTHDAYS

- May 6 *Mary Earle*
- May 7 *Natalina Harrison*
- May 7 *Sue Hinkley*
- May 14 *Mark Fortna*
- May 20 *Luke Earle*
- May 23 *Tiffany DeJesus*
- May 29 *Marilyn Smith*



Our Spring Bible Studies continue on ZOOM on Wednesday Evenings at 6:30 and Thursday mornings at 10:30. To be included in the Wednesday evening study on the Book of Revelation contact

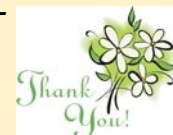
Pastor Jessica. The log-in information for the Thursday study – *Finding Jesus in the Psalms* by Bar Roose -- can be found on Trinity’s Facebook page or by calling the study leader, Rev. Rick Clark. Any and all are invited to join either or both of these enjoyable learning experiences on Zoom!

“Happiness is a butterfly, which when pursued, is always just beyond your grasp, but which, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.”



Thank you so much Trinity for an incredible Holy Week Experience. From Palm Sunday to Easter, this was one of my most memorable Lent to Easter experiences. From the richness and thoughtfulness of our worship services to the beauty of the sanctuary, and your thoughtful gifts to the church and one another. Your dedication and service to Almighty God shines through all you do. As we now enjoy our Easter Season, I pray God will continue to use you to make a difference for Christ in our Community and our world. Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Jessica



*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers*



<i>Jim & Betsy Allwein</i>	<i>The Baron family</i>
<i>Vera Brumbaugh</i>	<i>Jill Brickley</i>
<i>Brossman family</i>	<i>Penny Brown</i>
<i>Joyce Dissinger</i>	<i>Gail Emerich</i>
<i>Kitty & Elmer Fair</i>	<i>Joan Groff</i>
<i>Kim Hollich</i>	<i>The Jacobs family</i>
<i>Wilson Justiniano</i>	<i>Tom Leahy</i>
<i>Katie Marchak</i>	<i>Steve Miller & family</i>
<i>Joshua Mullins</i>	<i>Karen & Bob Neblock</i>
<i>Linda Perini</i>	<i>Alissa Plant</i>
<i>Sue & Gary Robson</i>	<i>Pastor Jessica</i>
<i>Marilyn Smith</i>	<i>Snyder family</i>
<i>Pat Swartz</i>	<i>Reba Sterner family</i>
<i>Jack Stouffer</i>	<i>Brandi Tamayo</i>
<i>Joyce Twigg</i>	<i>Tahlia Valdez</i>
<i>Judith Wentzel</i>	<i>Bill Weik Family</i>
<i>Wire family</i>	<i>Carol Yeagley</i>
<i>Dave Wease & family</i>	<i>George Wilkins family</i>
<i>Walt & Kathy Zehring</i>	

*Traveling mercies for all those on the road
Our Church, Community, Country, and World
Families & recovering victims of crime & abuse
All who are sick & shut in & their caretakers
All those devastated by natural disasters
Issues surrounding Turkey & the Ukraine
Our men and women in uniform*

A Prayer of Confession and Petition

Dear Lord, We believe in your resurrecting power. You are God in three persons - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We praise your Holy Name. You have risen from the dead and you are Lord. We know that every knee shall bow and every tongue will one day confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. We humbly confess our faults, our shortcomings, and our sins. Forgive us we pray. Free us for joyful obedience as we humbly pray for all of our loved ones, our church family, our Country, and our World. We need your healing hand, your resurrecting power, and your peace. Guide us to understand your goodness, mercy, and grace, to keep us focused on You, on your Power, Majesty, and Truth. We know that we cannot fight our battles ourselves. We need you every hour and every minute of every day. Keep us, strengthen, and heal us, we pray, in Jesus Precious Name. Amen.

Our Church Prayer

Dear Lord,
We pray for our church family and all of those on our sick and shut in list. Grant them healing, mercy, and grace. We pray for all who are suffering and pray for your Holy intervention into every situation that is in need of your loving, guiding, comforting hand. O Lord, help us to continue to magnify your name with gladness and praise you in all that we do.
We humbly pray for not just our church to grow, but for the growth of the body of Christ universal. Bless us O Lord, that we may shine your light so that others may see you clearly and follow you in the way we should go. In the Name of Jesus the Christ our Lord and Savior
We Pray. Amen.



Easter Sunrise Service

Whose Crown Is It Anyway?

A special thank you to all those who helped prepare our Easter Sunrise service, including Barb Query and the Trinity Troopers for the inspiring skit; to Sally DeJesus for treating everyone to breakfast after the service; and Pastor Jessica for relinquishing part of her sermon time on Easter so that the 9:15 worshippers could also experience this meaningful experience.



Thank you, Lord, for the blessings you have bestowed on my life. You have provided me with more than I could ever have imagined. You have surrounded me with people who always look out for me. You have given me family and friends who bless me every day with kind words and actions.

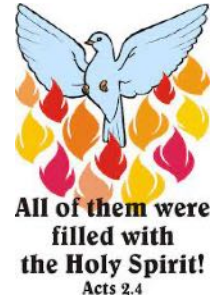
V O L U N T E E R

all that's missing is U!

Our hospitality table always needs home-made goodies (or store-bought if you're not a baker) for Sunday morning after service snacks! A sign-up sheet is on the music stand beside the snack table. Thank you!

Secretary, Deb Forry

Adult Sunday School – May



This month we conclude the theme of the Spring Quarter, **JESUS CALLS US**, with a series of lessons entitled **“The Birth of the Church”**. The work begun with Jesus’ ministry and transformed by his death and resurrection continues in the community he chose: the church. Our third unit takes us back to the earliest days of the church, which was and is God’s instrument for the inbreaking of his kingdom. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come; and ever since he did, God’s kingdom has been transformed. Pentecost is one dramatic example of this. The same Spirit who empowered the disciples that day continued to work miracles for the sake of God’s kingdom. These included healing, welcoming people into the community who had been excluded before, and recreating the heart of a man who zealously tried to destroy this emerging kingdom.



The Roman Empire was vast, and the distance from its central city in many ways correlated with the distance from its



April 30	Jesus Makes a Promise	Acts 1:1–11
May 7	The Day of Pentecost	Acts 2:1–8, 14–24, 37–40
May 14	Jumping for Joy	Acts 3:1–11
May 21	An Ethiopian Is Baptized	Acts 8:29–39
May 28	Saul of Tarsus	Acts 9:9–17

cultural heart. Devout Jews, especially those who resisted adopting Greco-Roman culture or continued to reside in the region that had been ancient Israel, were looked down on by their pagan neighbors. Jewish traditions such as circumcision, Sabbath-keeping, and ritual cleanliness laws were considered silly, even offensive, to Romans. Jews from Galilee— like Jesus and several of his disciples—were ridiculed and marginalized even by fellow Jews who wielded influence from Jerusalem. Galilean Jews were seen as uneducated bumpkins. And their proximity to the Gentiles made these Jews even more suspect to Jerusalem’s religious elite.

A rabbinical prayer dating to about this time reads in part, *“Blessed art thou, O God, for not making me a Gentile, slave, or woman.”* Women were not permitted positions of leadership in the synagogue, nor given access to the inner courts of the Jerusalem temple. Women could not become sons of the covenant through circumcision and their witness in legal proceedings was considered highly unreliable. While the Jews had a higher view of children (particularly sons) than the Gentiles, youngsters were still seen as more burden than blessing. To the Jews the best thing about children was that they eventually grew up to be adults.



Yet, Jesus included women in his traveling band of disciples and some of these women were the first witnesses to his resurrection! And Jesus said of children, *“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”* We have much to learn from Jesus’ ministry to the marginalized. It is no wonder that His teachings posed a threat to their ideas of status, esteem, security, and the way things ought to be. Interestingly Jesus gave a very odd first step to completing the Great Commission, basically telling them, *“Do nothing until the Holy Spirit comes upon you”*. With millions of people waiting to hear the gospel, he instructed the only ones who knew anything about it to sit and wait until he had sent them something mysterious from above. That meant they were not to write books. They were not to go out to try to make converts. They were not to plan. They were to do nothing. Why? Until he came, they couldn’t really do anything of value to the mission. Jesus had promised that *he* would build his church, and the mission. And to this end He sent the Holy Spirit.

In our time together this month we will witness the Spirit at work in the apostles and in the growth of the early church and discuss how this same Spirit remains at work in us, as continue to grow in faith, love, and hope. So, join us in our May Sunday School time as we discuss, **“The Birth of the Church”**.

April 30

1. While John baptized with water, Luke promised a forthcoming baptism of the _____. Acts 1:5
2. The view of Jesus’ ascension was blocked by a cloud. T/F. Acts 1:9

May 7

1. In response to accusations of drunkenness, Peter quoted from the prophet _____. Acts 2:16
2. To receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, Peter told the crowd to do what?
(choose two: sacrifice, repent, be baptized, be circumcised) Acts 2:38

May 14

1. The temple gate to which the man was being carried was called _____. Acts 3:2
2. Peter had silver and gold to give the man at the temple gate. T/F. Acts 3:6

May 21

1. Philip heard the man in the chariot reading from the prophet _____. Acts 8:30
2. After the eunuch was baptized, he took Philip to the next city in his chariot. T/F. Acts 8:39

May 28

1. The Lord told Ananias to visit the house of _____. Acts 9:11
2. Ananias called Saul by what title? (Brother, Friend, Anointed?) Acts 9:17

Administrative Council Meeting via Zoom April 10, 2023 - 1:00 pm - Minutes



Facilitator: George Hollich

Minutes: Carol Hollich (*summary to appear in the May newsletter*)

Attendance via Zoom: Sally DeJesus, Keith Earle, Deb Forry, Carol Hollich, George Hollich, Dea Kishpaugh, Jack Kishpaugh, Barb Querry, Pastor Jessica Ross, Marilyn Smith, Reba Sterner, Dave Wallett. **Excused:** Gloria Clark, Joyce Dissinger, Elmer Fair, Kitty Fair.

Housekeeping – Attendance, Approval of Past Minutes & Agenda

Devotions – RESURRECTION JOY: A New Beginning - Matthew 3:11

Calendar Dates that Reflect our Ministry

Other than the 9:15 In-Person Worship, the 9:15 Streamed Worship Service & Committee meetings will be held via ZOOM, unless other arrangements are announced.



April 12 – Lunch at Revive Cafe (12:00)

April 16 – Worship service at American House (2:30)

April 30 – Free Lunch for Community (11:00 to 1:00)
Pizza meal for Trinity members and others

May 3 – Lunch at Vo Tech (Star Wars) (10:30) (12 people)

May 14 – Mother's Day (flowers for the women)

May 18, 19, & 20 - UMC Annual Conference

May 21 – Worship service at American House (2:30)

May or June – Longwood Gardens (Date and time TBD) - \$25.00 Regular price; \$22.00 for Seniors.

June 7 – Staff Parish (7:00)

June 8 – Worship Team (7:00)

June 12 - Ad Board (7:00)

June 18 – Father's Day (gift for the men)

June 18 – Worship service at American House (2:30)



Discussion - Current or Emerging Projects that Clarify Our Ministry

Bible Studies – Rev. Clark is finishing the Adam Hamilton book and will then begin a study and discussion of a new book, "Jesus in the Psalms". They meet Thursday morning at 10:30. All are welcome. Pastor Jessica will continue her study of Revelations on a Wednesday evening at 6:30.

Communications – The website and Facebook are up to date and the Trinity Times goes out at the end of each month. To see video recordings of our church services please go to our Facebook site....

<https://www.facebook.com/lebanontrinity/>. It was mentioned that all requests for building repairs or improvements in the church building should be addressed to the Trustees with copies also going to the pastor and secretary. Answers will be provided after the Trustees have had a chance to discuss the issue.

Clothes-to-Go – Although it was a bittersweet time, the committee packed up the remaining clothes and miscellaneous items and took them to Jubilee and LCCM. There are still a lot of hangers left in the nursery. The plan is to take plastic ones and pants hangers to Jubilee and the rest will go to recycling. It was suggested that the cleaners might take the wire hangers. Let Barb Querry know if you wish to take some of the hangers home with you.

Flood Buckets – 4 UMCOR Cleaning Kits (*new name*) were filled and taken to mission central for helping those affected by floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes to begin the overwhelming job of cleaning up. Thanks to all who made donation of items or money to help fill these buckets.

Ladies' (& Men's) Luncheon - There will be monthly luncheons in April and May. We will not have luncheons over the summer but will resume in September.

LINKS – The combined services on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday were well received. Although the next meeting date has not yet been set, there is a desire to include laity at these meetings so that the burden of planning and sharing with the individual congregations doesn't all fall on the clergy.

Use of Church Spaces – Narcotics Anonymous continues to meet at Trinity on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Highlights from Reports that Support Our Ministry

Education – Sally DeJesus - The crafts table after church will begin again on April 16. They will be making gifts for the Lebanon School District staff.

Finance – Keith Earle – Financially 2023 is starting out as a bleak year. We currently have expenses that are \$15,000 more than our receipts. Although the gas heater for the church is relatively new, the distribution system is quite old, and we are constantly faced with costs to make repairs. Most recently it was repairs to fix the heating circulators. As a possible fund raiser, Carol Hollich suggested a small silent auction on November 3rd with a few crafts and perhaps some food for sale, but helpers will be needed. Pastor Jessica also found a list of ideas for fundraisers in the Tools for Ministry Session she attended in March.



Missions – Dea Kishpaugh – We gave 79 pounds of food to LCCCM in March and finished 4 cleaning buckets for disaster relief. We will be sending the food collected in the parlor basket to LCCM. Pastor Jessica thanked Barb Query for helping at the March 19 service at American House and Sally DeJesus volunteered to help at the April 16 service. The pastor needs more volunteers with this mission our church provides to the residents at American House on the third Sunday afternoon each month. Please consider helping with this project. Pastor Jessica would like Dea to supply her with her report to use in her meetings with the District Superintendent.



Staff Parish – Keith Earle – Our sexton, Wilson Justiniano, needed to resign his position because of longer work weeks at his main employment. The congregation was asked to make suggestions to anyone who would be interested in this job. Barring any in-house interest, we may have to investigate a contracted service. We certainly want to thank Wilson for his many years of service to Trinity.

Trustees – Jack Kishpaugh – The trustees are meeting with the Horst Signs agent and seeing what sign we could put in front of our building. The old sign is falling apart. The new one will be run by a computer. Since this is considered a building repair, the money for this project can be taken out of the money gained from the sale of the parsonage.



Worship Team – Carol Hollich – The organ tuner will be contacted for Spring tuning and the piano tuner will come on Apr. 18 around 10:00. Sally DeJesus took apart the palms and the Kishpaughs and Walleys arranged the lilies which Donna Mease picked up on Good Friday. Holy Thursday service went well - thanks to the 8 liturgists and Dave Wallely who took care of lighting and extinguishing the 15 candles. It was nice to hear messages from the different pastors of Link and to have a full church on Good Friday. Thanks to the combined choir members for singing. Thanks to Sally DeJesus and Barb Query for leading the Easter sunrise service. We had about 30 in attendance. The skit by the Trinity Troupers was presented again for the 9:15 service and the Pastor's message was a great ending to a happy Easter service. Pastor Jessica wants a hospitality section to be included in the WT agenda. Deb Forry, Dean Zehring, or Dave Wallely will see that there is coffee after the services, and there is a sign up for the snacks after church. Caroline Jacobs will take a vacation day on April 30. Carol Hollich will be the organist and Mary Zehring will provide the special music. Carol Hollich will take a vacation day on May 28 and Caroline Jacobs will supply the special music. For Mother's Day, flowers will again be provided for the Trinity women by the Kishpaughs.

Parish Visitor - Rick Clark – No report

Pastor Jessica – A copy of the Pastor's full report is in the church office. She thanked everyone for all the work done behind the scenes and in the worship services. She feels blessed to have such a caring congregation who helped her in a rough month of illness. She is looking at fundraising ideas presented at different meetings she has attended and as well as the need to for an emergency preparedness plan in our church. Preparing for a disaster is not usually at the top of the list of all the competing church priorities. But being prepared for the unexpected can save precious time when moments count and can lay the groundwork for a quick response. An emergency or disaster could be a natural disaster like a hurricane, tornado, flood, or earthquake, a health emergency, a fire emergency, act of terrorism, or armed intruder. We need to consider responses for different situations!

Adjournment - Dave Wallely moved and Barb Query seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. Pastor Jessica closed the meeting with prayer.

Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting: June 12 -- 7 pm

(Ad Board Meeting Schedule - February, April, June, August, October, December)

Trinity United Methodist Church

757 Willow Street, Lebanon, Pa. 17046

Where "Faith, Hope and Love abide to encourage all to respond to the call of Christ."

4th Sunday of Easter – April 30, 2023

(The service begins at 9:15 with the fellowship area opening at 9:00.)

To be a part of 9:15 worship on the computer go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89243085255>

or join by phone by dialing 1-646-876-9923 and entering 892 4308 5255 when prompted.

The flowers on the altar are in memory of Dea's mom, Betty Amy by Jack & Dea Kishpaugh

Gathering Music *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us* - Arr. Bradbury

Prelude *Gentle Like Jesus – Copeland*

Organist: Carol Hollich

Welcome & Announcements

Deb Forry

Call to Worship

Psalm 23

Hymnal #754

L: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

P: The Lord maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters.

L: He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

P: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

L: Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

P: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Hymn #381

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need thy tender care;
in thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use thy folds prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us, thine we are;
blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast bought us, thine we are.
We are thine; thou dost befriend us, be the guardian of our way;
keep thy flock, from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear, O hear us when we pray;
blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear, O hear us when we pray.
Thou hast promised to receive us, poor and sinful though we be;
thou hast mercy to relieve us, grace to cleanse and power to free.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, we will early turn to thee;
blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, we will early turn to thee.
Early let us seek thy favor, early let us do thy will;
blessed Lord and only Savior, with thy love our bosoms fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast loved us, love us still;
blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, thou hast loved us, love us still.



Opening Prayer

O God, our shepherd, our gate, our lamb: In the resurrection of your Son you have brought us into your pasture. Guide us to your clear streams, and tame the wolf at our gate; through Christ our Lord. Amen. Alleluia.

New Testament Reading

1 Peter 2: 19-25

N.T. page 233

Gospel Reading

John 10: 1-10

N.T. page 103

Special Music

Alleluia – Arr. Curnow

Mary Zehring, flute

Doxology & Prayer of Dedication

Hymn # 577: *God of Grace and God of Glory*

God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your power;
crown your ancient Church's story, bring her bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo, the hosts of evil round us scorn thy Christ, assail his ways.
Fears and doubts too long have bound us,
free our hearts to work and praise.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness; bend our pride to thy control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage lest we miss thy kingdom's goal,
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
let the search for thy salvation be our glory evermore.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage serving thee whom we adore,
serving thee whom we adore.



Sermon

Short Cuts Make Long Delays

Pastor Jessica Ross

Prayers of the People & the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Jessica Ross

Hymn #138 *The King of Love My Shepherd Is*

The King of love my Shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his and he is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow, my ransomed soul he leadeth,
And where the verdant pastures grow with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, but yet in love he sought me,
And on his shoulder gently laid, and home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill, with thee, dear Lord, beside me;
Thy rod and staff my comfort still, thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spreadst a table in my sight; thy unction, grace bestoweth:
And oh, what transport of delight from thy pure chalice floweth

And so through all the length of days thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise within thy house for ever.



Benediction

Benediction Response

Till We Meet Again

Till we meet, till we meet, till we meet at Jesus' feet;
Till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.

Postlude

Victory Through Jesus – L. Smith

Organist: Carol Hollich



Jesus Makes a Promise
Acts 1: 1-11

Study Text: Acts 1:1–11



KEY VERSE: *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.*

—Acts 1:8a

Flashbacks

We may find it surprising that a Gentile who was not an apostle wrote more of the New Testament than anyone else. We're talking about Luke the physician. His writings of the Gospel that bears his name and the book of Acts total 37,932 words in Greek across 2,158 verses. By comparison, Paul wrote 32,408 words across the 2,033 verses of his 13 epistles. The sheer volume of Luke's writing also explains why the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts are separate. Serialized television shows often feature brief flashbacks at the beginning of each episode. These flashbacks typically condense the key parts of the previous episodes. The resulting salient points help viewers make sense of the new installment. These are particularly important for those of us who watch only one episode at a time rather than binge-watch multiple episodes! Unlike any other pair of books in the New Testament, Luke begins his second volume (the book of Acts) with a summary of the first volume (the Gospel of Luke). This is a little like a modern flashback, a highly condensed version of the previous "episode" as a key to understanding the installment at hand. That's how the book of Acts begins.

Be One or Support One?

It took five flights and a three-hour canoe ride for me to get from Dallas, Texas, to the village of Yar in Papua New Guinea. There I saw speakers of the Waran language celebrate the completion of the New Testament in their language. Another time I sat in an East African refugee camp with men who were translating the Bible into their Nilotic language. As of the time of this writing in July 2021, there are 710 completed translations of both Old and New Testaments and 1,581 translations of the New Testament only. Further, efforts to translate the Bible into a whopping 2,753 languages are now underway. As great a blessing as that is, however, there are still more than 3,000 language groups who need Scripture, but no translation work is currently underway. Think about it: What could be more foundational to achieving the mandates of Matthew 28:19–20 and Acts 1:8 than getting a readable Bible into people's hands? Today you have a choice: either *be* a Bible translator or *support* Bible translators. The eternal destinies of those whose native tongue is one of those 2,753 languages hang in the balance.

Why Not Right Now?

As my wife pushed the swing in which our 4-year-old sat, a natural back and forth rhythm developed. There weren't any other children on the playground to interrupt their conversation, which went something like this:

"Mom, what will it be like when Jesus comes back?"

"It will be wonderful, like a party, for those who love him! We'll get to see him and be with him forever."

"I want him to come back now!"

"Well, there are other people we need to invite. Many people don't know that He's coming, and we need to give them party invitations."

"Then why don't you call them and tell them right now?" My son's response reminds me of the angel's question. Why procrastinate? We have work to do in sending out those invitations! Do you have anything to do in the week ahead that you consider to be more important than that?

Thoughts to Consider

- 1. How can today's passage be encouraging when you feel alone?**
- 2. What does it mean to be a "witness" for Jesus?**
- 3. What role does the Holy Spirit play in the lives of the witness and the listener?**

Jesus Makes a Promise

Lesson 9, Acts 1:1-11, NIV

In the Cloud

In your group, examine the Scriptures below and jot your conclusions regarding the significance and role of clouds.

Scripture Reference	Conclusions
Exodus 13:17-18, 21-22	
Exodus 14:19-24	
Exodus 24:15-18	
Exodus 33:9-10	
Exodus 40:34-38	
Luke 9:28-35	
Revelation 1:7	
Revelation 14:14	

What seems to be the significance of the presence of a cloud during Jesus' ascension?

What do we learn about the activity of God through the presence of a cloud from texts like these?

Circles of Influence

In Acts 1:8, Jesus promised that the disciples' witness would spread from Jerusalem to Judea, then to Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. What would be the modern-day equivalent to these places for you? Fill in the spaces in the circles below. As a group, fill out how your church witnesses to each place. Then fill in how you witness in those areas or how you might in the future.

