

WEEKDAY WORDS

Thursday, May 26, 2022

...You will be my witnesses (here)...and to the ends of the earth.

~ Acts 1:8

In the church, this day (Thursday) is called “Ascension Day.” The first chapter of Acts offers a review of Jesus’ life and ministry followed by the story of Jesus’ departure from earth. Before he departs, he has one more teaching for his disciples. Anticipating the day when Israel will know God’s way rather than Rome’s way, like eager kids, those disciples keep asking, “Are we there yet?” “Is it time yet?” “Now?” Jesus shrugs them off. Nope – we’re on a need-to-know basis and we aren’t privy to God’s timeline. Instead, Jesus teaches that we will receive a spiritual indwelling of Divine Presence, and that we are asked to live as witnesses to the Divine WAY revealed by his life and ministry. According to the story, Jesus is then *...lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight.*

Given all that Jesus said and did, reflecting on the essence of his teaching and his example, remembering the stories he told, it seems that love is at the very center of Jesus’ living. Paul got it. Remember how he said that there were three things: faith, hope and love...and the greatest is love? On this day of remembering Jesus’ departure and his final blessing – how are we doing? Do the words we say match our actions? Can we turn nouns into verbs and DO these things: live faith, live hope, live love?

If we are truly going to BE the church, we cannot hide our heads in sand. We can turn off the TV, but we cannot ignore the reality of our nation. Like me, you may be struggling with what to do. Issues of mental health and issues around use of guns seem insurmountable. People take sides, claiming a version of truth that is sometimes slanted left or right. I pray that our version of truth will be rooted in the Gospel of Love revealed by Jesus. And yes, that *being the church* will involve far more than thoughts and prayers.

Today we will see the pictures of those 2nd, 3rd and 4th graders who were shot at school in Texas. We’ll see two more teachers whose lives were lost just by reporting for one of the last days left in the school year. This school tragedy happened just one week after a person from south of Binghamton traveled to Buffalo, targeting people of color who just needed to pick up some groceries at TOPS. 10 people died in Buffalo and 21 in Texas.

As we pray...as we think...as we discern truth...may we cling to the verbs of faith, hope and love. May God help us to resist efforts to sensationalize, politicize or incite fear.

I want to live faith as I talk with frightened children. Will you join me?

I want to embody hope as I listen to employees of schools or grocery stores speak of their “escape-from-the-room” plans. Will you join me?

I want to stand firmly on the side of love –

in my listening, in my voting, in my living. Will you join me?

Tonight, I will attend the “Stop the Hate” event, hosted by area clergy and the Cortland Interfaith Council. Will you join me at 7 PM at the Interfaith Center?

Together, we are God’s witnesses, here and to the ends of the earth. I pray that our family of faith will offer respect as we honestly grapple with profound questions. Ultimately, may we be witnesses to an alternative way of living that fosters equity, extravagant welcome and profound love that is seen more than heard.

With God’s help, may this be so.

THIS SUNDAY

Weather permitting, this 5th Sunday of May, we will be outside.

It's not just for the kids! At 9:30, Faith Formation will work on a rock-painting project for our Memorial Garden. Come and paint a rock, which will be used as we spruce things up in the garden.

At 10:30 we will gather under the shade of the trees on our green to sing, pray and worship. Bring your own lawn chair or use one of ours. We will not live-stream the outside service.

In the event of rain, we will move inside.

Should it rain, we will live-stream and you can find the link at: www.homercc.com.

NEXT WEEK

Monday Our office will be closed for Memorial Day celebrations.

Wednesday A Celebration of Life for Doris Munson Haskell Polizzi
Gathering at 10:30 AM
Service begins at 11:00, followed by the graveside service.

Worship & Music will meet at 6:30 PM

Thursday Homer Nursery School picnic on the Green

Friday Confirmation Banquet
6:00 PM Appetizers in the Garden; rehearsal in the sanctuary
6:30 Introductions, Toasting and dinner

NEXT SUNDAY IS PENTECOST

Plan to wear RED!

June 5th will be very special as we welcome seven young people who will join our church, confessing their faith by confirming what was said at their baptisms. For the last eight months, these men and women have been meeting for classes with Pastor Vicki, Gary Harrington, and Kurt Schmidt. Additionally, each person has been talking with a Journey Partner. As we make our final preparations, say special prayers for:

<u>Confirmand</u>	<u>Journey Partner</u>
Jack Bertram	Jim McKenna
Amelia Brown	Julie Freeman
Jack Brown	Peter Wright
Daniel Ford	Jim Ulrich
Delanie McConnell	Cindy Stout
Claudia Joy Saddlemire	Carrie Scheibner
Matthew Stapleton	Stef Fellows

We wrap Bev Berry and her family in support and care as we grieve the passing of Steve last Saturday. A celebration of Steve's life is being planned for July.

AS YOU PRAY...

Joys:

To quote a hymn: ...for the beauty of the earth...

For neighbors and friends who sometimes embody God's presence.

For successful surgeries and for the ways our bodies heal.

For seven young people who participated in our Confirmation program.

For seven adults who shared their time and their faith as Journey Partners.

Concerns:

We pray for those with ongoing needs:

Franca, Katherine, Michael, Nadine, Nita, Paul, Paul, Tyler

We pray for grieving families in Buffalo and in Texas.

We pray for the Haskell/Polizzi family.

We pray for the people of Ukraine – may a pathway to peace be found.

We pray for the quiet prayers from our Prayer Bowl.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

1	Tyler Masterson
3	Evan, Kenian, Molly Ulrich
10	Mark Bertram
15	Drew Haaland
18	Henry Cornwell
20	Maureen Tarry Hilts
21	Keith Palm