



DOUGLAS UCC
A JUST WORLD FOR ALL

Order of Service for Sunday, May 21, 2023

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Thank you for joining us today.

For Announcements, Birthdays, Anniversaries, and Prayer List, [visit this week's E-Pistle here](#), where you can also subscribe to receive it by email, if you like.

***- stand if you wish to, and are able.**

Congressional Responses in Bold

Prelude *Spirit Song*

Peter Black

(Please use this time for quiet reflection and preparation for worship)

Welcome & Announcements

Lighting of Altar Candles & Ringing in the Hour

Let us recognize the light of the world within us and ring in the hour of worship.

Introit (please stand)

This is the Day

This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad.

This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad.

Call to Worship

Reader: Tom Fahlstrom

One: Let the inner and outer worlds be as one.

Many: *Let all the opposites dance together.*

One: Let the mind reflect nature's interweaving.

Many: *Let the heart know divinity within.*

One: Let the image reflect the imageless mystery.

Many: *And the mystery be perceived in all things.*

One: Let joy be the way.

Many: *And let love be its celebration. Amen.*

***Opening Hymn,**

We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder

(Black New Century Hymnal No.500)

(Find Music at the end of this program)

Unison Prayer

Loving God, as I walk this journey of life, help me to practice taking just one step at a time. Walking with you, moment by moment, brings the power of your love to bear on all that I face. When challenges and obstacles arise, help me to feel the awareness of your abiding presence. Through prayer, I can tap into the wisdom of your Spirit, knowing that your Divine Light will illumine my way. Step by step, I trust in your guidance. Today, I give thanks that I am learning and growing, moment by moment, step by step. Amen.

Assurance of Grace and Peace

One: Peace be with you.

Many: *And also with you.*

One: Let us offer one another a sign of Peace.

Passing the Peace

Metta Prayer

May I be at peace. May my heart remain open.

May I awaken to the light of my own true nature.

May I be healed and be a source of healing for all beings.

May we be at peace. May our hearts remain open.

May we awaken to the light of our own true nature.

May we be healed and be a source of healing for all beings.

Words of Integration & Guidance

by Rev. Thomas Shepard

In today's reading from Genesis, Jacob has a dream in which he envisions a great ladder reaching up to heaven. This is a wonderful and important image—both for Jacob and for us. Jacob, having manipulated his father Isaac to bestow on him the blessing that by law should have gone to his brother Esau, is fleeing from his brother's wrath. He is forced to leave all the material things—money, authority, power—that he had been struggling to claim as his own. He is alone in the wilderness, and only now can he 'remember' his true identity as an expression of eternal Spirit. Since the ladder has seven steps, many spiritual teachers have suggested that the ladder represents the seven chakras, which our Eastern brothers and sisters believe are the energy centers which run along the spine and lead towards enlightenment. Like the seven chakras, the seven rungs of Jacob's ladder lead you from earth to heaven by raising your consciousness higher and higher. There are indications throughout scripture—from the seven days of creation to the seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation—that there are consistently seven stages in our spiritual development while we are here in mortal form. We move consistently upward as we become more and more expressive of our true Spirit nature. In Jacob's dream, angels not only descend to him from God, but also ascend in the other direction. It's important to realize that the energy, like the angels, flows in both directions. We don't leave our lower charkas behind; we transform them through the spiritual awareness we receive as we move higher.

Ascension Sunday

The Words of Holy Scripture

One: A Reading of Scripture from Genesis 28:10-19

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

All: Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Lesson

One: The Holy Gospel according to Luke 24:44-53

All: Glory to you, O Christ.

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily

“Spiritual Ascension,” Rev. Salvatore Sapienza

Offering & Offertory

Joys & Concerns/Tibetan Prayer Bell

One: Thanks be to God!

Many: Alleluia!

One: O God,

Many: Hear our prayer.

***Doxology** *Alleluia, Give Thanks*

Alleluia, alleluia give thanks to the risen Lord.

Alleluia, alleluia give praise to our God.

Spread the good news o'er all the earth, Jesus has died and is risen.

Alleluia, alleluia give thanks to the risen Lord.

Alleluia, alleluia give praise to our God.

***Celebration of Holy Communion**

One: God be with you.

Many: *And also with you.*

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: *We lift them up to God.*

One: Let us give thanks to God.

Many: *It is good to give God thanks & praise*

***Creation's Praise** *Holy, Holy, Holy*

Holy, holy, holy, God ruler almighty.

Heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Glory be to you, O God.

Blessed is the one who comes, who comes in the name of God.

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.

(Please be seated)

Breaking of the Bread *A Communion Hymn*

This we do in remembrance of You, this we do to honor you; Oh-h-h-h--

This we do in remembrance of You, because you have bid us to.

(Repeat after verse)

Sharing of the Bread & Cup

(grape juice only on both sides of the aisle)

Receive the Bread of Life. *Amen.*

The Cup of Love, the Drink of Compassion. *Amen.*

***The Lord's Prayer**

Our Mother/Father, always and everywhere, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us

this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive

those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us

from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

***Hymn of Sending**

Higher Ground

(Black New Century Hymnal No.442)

(Find Music at the end of this program)

Benediction

Postlude

Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above

Peter Black

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and the work of our service groups here:

www.douglasucc.org

<https://www.youtube.com/douglasucc>

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DISCIPLESHIP

500

We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder

Gen. 28:10-17

African-American spiritual

1 We are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-der, we are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-der,
 2 Ev-ery round goes high-er, high-er, ev-ery round goes high-er, high-er,
 3 Rise, shine, give God glo-ry, rise, shine, give God glo-ry,

we are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-der, bear-ers of the cross.
 ev-ery round goes high-er, high-er, bear-ers of the cross.
 rise, shine, give God glo-ry, bear-ers of the cross.

Like many spirituals, this one uses a story from the Hebrew scriptures as its starting point and the element of the ladder as a creative device to draw us into the narrative. In like manner, the following twentieth-century adaption of the song by Carole Etzler employs the story of Sarah, the matriarch of the Hebrew people, and extends the direction of the pilgrimage from the upward climb of the ladder to the outward embrace of a circle.

Tune: JACOB'S LADDER 8.8.8.5.
 African-American spiritual

I'm Pressing on the Upward Way (Higher Ground)

Johnson Oatman, Jr., 1892; alt.

1 I'm press-ing on the up-ward way, new heights I'm gain-ing ev-ery
 2 My heart has no de-sire to stay where doubts a-rise and fears dis-
 3 I want to live be-yond the world, though Sa-tan's darts at me are
 4 I want to scale the ut-most height, and catch a gleam of glo-ry

day; Still pray-ing as I'm on-ward bound, "O plant me,
 may; Though some may dwell where these a-bound, my prayer, my
 hurled; For faith has caught a joy-ful sound, the song of
 bright; But still I'll pray till heaven I've found, "God, lead me

Refrain

God, on high-er ground."
 aim is high-er ground. O lift me up, and I shall be by faith in heaven e-ter-nal-ly,
 saints on high-er ground.
 on to high-er ground."

A high-er plane than I have found, O plant me, God, on high-er ground.