



Service of Worship for Ascension Sunday

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

May 17, 2026 at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Forty days after Easter is the Ascension of Jesus as described in Acts, Luke, and Mark. Today we observe this festival. In many traditions, the Feast of the Ascension is one of the holiest and most celebrated moments in the liturgical year; it is also among the most ancient of Christian traditions. The Church holds that the day of Ascension is a day for celebration because all the work that Jesus came to do has been accomplished, and he returns to the right hand of God the Father. On this culmination of the Easter season, we celebrate Jesus's ascension and remember Jesus' promise that his disciples would be "clothed with power from on high" to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth.

CHIMES *At the sound of the chimes, we invite you into a period of quiet reflection preparing for today's service.*

OPENING VOLUNTARY "We Know That Christ Is Raised"

Setting by Larry Visser

GREETING

† CALL TO WORSHIP

The heavens proclaim God's righteousness; we behold God's glory.

God has gone up with a shout, with a sound of a trumpet.

Give thanks to God, O faithful ones.

Sing praises to our King; sing praises!

† HYMN 312 "Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise"

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM (11:00 a.m.)

Joshua Harrison Ford

Pastor to congregation:

Do you, as Christ's body, the church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ? **We do.**

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and include Joshua, now before you, in your care?

With God's help we will proclaim the Good News and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround

Joshua with a community of love and forgiveness, that he may grow in his trust of God, and be found faithful in his service to others. We will pray for him that he may be a true disciple who walks in the way that leads to life.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE *All sing:*

Joshua Harrison, God claims you,

God helps you, protects you, and loves you too.

We this day do all agree, a child of God you'll always be.

Joshua Harrison, God claims you,

God helps you, protects you, and loves you too.

OUR SHARED LIFE

The flowers are given to the glory of God and in honor of Jay and Carol Little's 60th wedding anniversary.

The roses honor the births of Audrey Maghee, child of Brandon and Maghee Harper, born May 3, 2026; and Patrick Lee, child of Alex and Emily McCollam, grandchild of Susan Hightower, great-grandchild of Bill Humphreys, born May 6, 2026.

The votive candle is in memory of Barbara Jamison.

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

† HYMN 610 "We Know That Christ Is Raised"

CHILDREN'S SERMON

† PASSING OF THE PEACE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

An offering is collected to support the work of First United Methodist Church sharing God's love with the world. Please take a moment and record your attendance on a card located in the blue folders in the pews. Place the card in the offering plate when passed to you. Make a secure gift by scanning the QR Code or visit fumcbr.org/give to give online.



OFFERTORY "Joy and Celebration"

Lee Afdahl

† DOXOLOGY **Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that, as the scriptures are read and your word proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON Acts 1:1-11

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach ² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹ They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

† HYMN 302 “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” verses 1-4

† BENEDICTION

CLOSING VOLUNTARY “Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise”

Setting by Albert Travis

MINISTRY OF WORSHIP

Acolyte	Ian Venuto (8:30 a.m.); Dawton Harr (11:00 a.m.)
Children’s Sermon	Beth Newell
Lay Reader	Cindy Mann (8:30 a.m.); Mary Elizabeth Hart (11:00 a.m.)
Liturgist	Pattye Hewitt, <i>Executive Director of Adult Education, Hospitality, and Care</i>
Musicians	The Woodland Ringers; Holden Miller, <i>Associate Director of Music and Organist</i> Lamar Drummonds, <i>Director of Music and Worship</i>
Preaching	Reverend Brady Whitton, <i>Senior Pastor</i>
Soundboard	Rebecca Mitchell (8:30 a.m.); Jim Hewitt (11:00 a.m.)

Welcome to First United Methodist Church

Café 930 - Enjoy fellowship and a cup of hot coffee or tea from 8:00-11:00 a.m. (Ory Parish Hall) every Sunday morning. An assortment of teas, flavored syrups, and sweeteners are available. All are welcome.

Families with Children – Children are always welcome in worship! Childcare is available during all services for children ages 6 weeks through Kindergarten. FUMC also offers Sunday morning groups for children and youth from 9:45-10:45 a.m. To find a group, visit the check-in table located across from the welcome desk in the Conference Center lobby.

If you are new to First United Methodist and are ready to learn more or have questions, we invite you to join us for a **Newcomer Coffee** on June 7 from 9:45-10:45 a.m. in Ory Parish Hall. Registration is helpful (scan the QR code) but not required. For information, contact Shan Schatzle, at shan@firstmethodist.org.



Believe & Belong – Are you discerning becoming a member of FUMC or ready to join? Attend the next Believe & Belong today from 9:45–10:45 a.m. in the Conference Center. Childcare and Children’s Sunday School are available during this hour. Register by scanning the QR code. Questions? Email Pattye Hewitt, *Executive Director of Adult Education, Hospitality, and Care*, at phe Witt@firstmethodist.org.



Announcements



The Love Your Neighbor Van needs restocking! Please place your donations in the box near the America Street entrance. Visit the Love Your Neighbor Van Amazon Registry by scanning the QR code. We are in desperate need of new or gently used men’s athletic shoes (sizes 10-12).



Today is deadline to register for the **Music Camp** (June 8-11 from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.) for rising 1st-6th graders. Previous musical experience not required. There is an option for pre and after-care at ELC summer camp. Visit fumcbr.org/MusicCamp to register.



One of the goals of renovating the historic sanctuary six years ago was not only to improve worship experiences, but also create an environment inviting and engaging for musicians and musical organizations in the community. The sanctuary, with its improved acoustics, has garnered acclaim and is becoming a destination for community engagement through music. You are invited to attend the following concert and bring a friend!

Spencer LeFebvre, *Tenor*, will present a recital of vocal and solo piano works today at 4:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Spencer, a member of the Chancel Choir, graduated from LSU with a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance last Friday.

The FUMC Church Council will meet on Monday, May 18, at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Center. All members are welcome to attend.

Register today for Vacation Bible School (July 13-17 from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.) Children entering pre-K4 (who are potty trained) to those entering 6th grade are invited to become VBS Challengers and gear up for frosty games, snowy surprises, lessons about resilience and faith. Cost is \$45/child and includes materials, t-shirt, and a daily snack. The deadline to register is June 15, and there is an option for pre and after-care at ELC summer camp. Visit www.firstmethodistchildren.org to sign up!

Our Ministries Require Your Support: Your contributions help underwrite the important ministries of FUMC. Recurring gifts provide stability for our church, helping us know how much income to expect and to manage cash flow throughout the year. To establish a recurring gift via ACH bank draft, contact Destiny Muse, *Contributions Coordinator*, at dmuse@firstmethodist.org, or at (225)383-2777, extension 218. For instructions on setting up an online recurring gift, visit <http://www.fumcbr.org/give>.

A century of worship. A future of generosity. Easter Sunday marked the centennial of the completion and dedication of the sanctuary. In celebration of this milestone, we will receive a special offering throughout the year to launch the Century Fund. This new fund will help FUMC provide lasting support to local nonprofit partners in Baton Rouge. We are grateful for the support the campaign has already received. As we continue working toward our goal of \$1,000,000, we invite you to pray about how you will support this effort. Scan the QR Code to make a gift.



Please hold the high school youth in your prayers during their mission trip to Oljato, Utah from May 23-31. 18 youth and 11 adults will lead Vacation Bible School and complete projects for the Oljato United Methodist Church, continuing FUMC's decades-long friendship with this congregation.

Youth	Abigail Harr	Vaughn Meiners	Connor Schilling	Will Stout
Caroline Cohn	Lily Henry	Will Rogers	Joselynn Silva	Elliot Walsh
Macy Gendron	Amelia Hursey	Charlotte Sanders	Annika Small	Davis Wolfe
Aubrey Gilly	Samuel Hursey	Pierce Sanders	Helen Smith	
Adults	Bennett Hernandez	Anna Langford	Gabe Smith	
Jenny Cohn	Andy Hursey	George Ragsdale	Shannon Walsh	
Stuart Gilly	Haley King	Jeremain Robinson	Kale Wetekamm	

Each **Sunday sanctuary flowers** are given to the glory of God by members and friends of our congregation who want to remember a loved one or to give thanks for the people and events in their lives. Requests can be on-going for annual placement or one-time only recognitions. To reserve flowers, contact Virginia Guffey at vguffey@firstmethodist.org or by calling (225) 383-4777, ext. 210.