

**“Life Lessons from the Games We Play”**  
**“The Game of Life, Called, Sent, Blessed”**

Today is the last Sunday in Easter. In more liturgical churches, Thursday was celebrated as the Ascension of Jesus. It always falls ten days before Pentecost and so always falls on a Thursday. Obviously most churches skip over it or they celebrate on Sunday. It is a hard thing to get one’s mind around, and yet in the Apostle’s creed, we state that Jesus ascended into heaven. This week, we are focusing on how to understand the Ascension of Jesus, dedicating memorials and legacy gifts AND honoring Memorial Day weekend in our culture. How do these things go together? Perhaps they don’t or perhaps, inviting people to wait with the disciples for the gift of God’s spirit and to honor the gifts already received makes some sense. So we move through the last days of Easter and prepare for the coming of God’s Spirit. Pastor Cindy

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“The Game of Life, Called, Sent, Blessed”**

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**Prayer for the Week**

O God of earth and sky, as Jesus came among us in Bethlehem to raise us up to heaven, so today we recall his departing from us at Jerusalem to be in all places. Though he is hidden from our sight, enable us to abide in him by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, until his mercy and grace fill your whole creation. Amen. Copyright © 2000 Order of Saint Luke Publications. Used with permission.

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**This week’s sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>**

## Study Guide

Monday, 5/29/17 Luke 24: 44-49

In Luke's gospel, this is Jesus' last appearance to his disciples. Again in these verses, Jesus recounts how everything in the law and the prophets and the psalms point to a different kind of Messiah. This Messiah doesn't rule by strength, but by suffering and serving. "Christ is risen from the dead" so that "a change of heart and life be preached." "You are witnesses." Much of what we do as people is a witness to something whether we realize it or not. Is what we say or do pointing to something greater, pointing love, pointing to God? On this Memorial Day, take a moment and remember those you have loved and lost and what the witness of their life has meant to you. Then ponder what your witness will be.

Tuesday, 5/30/17 Luke 24: 50-53

Jesus has asked the believer to wait for the Spirit. They worshipped and praised God without knowing what would happen next. Jesus blesses them and then leaves the disciples so that his presence and more importantly God's presence could be made real in their lives and witness. They returned to Jerusalem overwhelmed with joy and continuously were praising God in the temple. Praising God for what? For what God had done in their lives through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Later this week, we will read the beginning of Acts which this author restates what this story is in more detail. What would cause you to be overwhelmed with joy and make you constantly praise God?

Wednesday, 5/31/17 Ephesians 1: 15-19

Paul begins this letter to the church at Ephesus reminding the believers there that they are children of God through Christ. In the first fourteen verses, Paul packs much into this plan of God who gives us good news in Christ Jesus. Paul is praying for the church because of their faith and their love for all God's people. "I pray that the eyes of your heart will have enough light to see what is the hope of God's call...that is working among believers." Unity is an important theme in this letter as is the understanding that the church is to live out God's love and grace. God has gifted those who follow Jesus with the power and spirit of wisdom that makes sharing the good news with others possible. This legacy of faith that is given is possible through the hope and love and grace and energy given by God. How do you live out your faith?

Thursday, 6/01/17 Ephesians 1: 20-23

Paul continues to emphasize Christ life, death and resurrection as part of that power. Christ is the "head" of this community of faith and the church is the "body." Christ's presence can fill this community in so many ways. Part of focusing on the ascension of Jesus is that physically one person cannot be everywhere. The Spirit, which is not physical, can fill and strengthen and challenge and help the church be all that God wants it to be. Jesus' presence becomes more real because of the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a gift. How do you know and experience the power of Christ in your life?

Friday, 6/02/17 Acts 1: 1-14

The author of Luke/Acts begins his "sequel" by recounting again the ascension of Jesus. Beginning with the sixth verse, he adds some more information. The disciples were concerned with the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. Jesus certainly tried on many occasions to show how this is not the kingdom he was talking about. Instead, he encourages them to wait, until they have experienced the gift of the Spirit which will help them be witnesses to all they have seen and known. As he leaves they are greeted by two men and asked why they are looking up? They returned and waited and prayed for what was promised. The disciples were looking back to when Israel was a great power and looking up to where Jesus had gone, but they forgot to look forward to where God was leading them. Sunday we celebrate Pentecost the birthday of the Church. Come and worship as we look forward to what God is doing and will do in the lives of those who love Him!