

**Mennonite Church of Normal**  
**Ascension Sunday            May 16, 2021**

**Focus:** We celebrate Jesus' Ascension by reflecting on a story which illustrates what can happen when God's people are empowered by God's Spirit—the point Jesus made just before ascending. Many Christians catalogue the David & Goliath story (1 Samuel 17) under “children’s story.” Many Mennonites just avoid it because of the violence. In doing so, we miss an important point the text makes before the violence: *God always wins the battle*. God often wins the battle and saves a community, through an individual who steps up, when everyone else is frozen in fear. What five things did David bring, in addition to bread and cheese, to enable God to win this battle? Do we have access to the same five? David: was **aware of** God's call on his life; had vision; put the community first; had a healthy self-understanding; knew his Spirit-given gifts.

**Gathering in God's Presence**

**Prelude** Denise Hedberg

**Welcome/Congregational Life** Gary

**Call to Worship**    VT 30    Jesus Calls us

**Opening Prayer** Gary

**Praising the Name of Jesus**

**Songs of Praise**    VT 98    Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise  
                              VT 364    All Hail the power of Jesus' Name

**Words of Praise**    VT 107    Psalm 146:1-3 Gary

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord, o my soul!

**I will praise the Lord as long as I live;**

**I will sing praises to my God all my life long.**

Do not put your trust in princes,

In mortals, in whom there is no help.

**Praise the Lord!**

**Hearing God's Word**

**Children's Story:** Gerry Schrock

**Invitation to Listen:**    VT 405    *Listen to the Word*

**Scripture Reading:**            Luke 24:45-53

**Sermon:**                    *The Lord always wins the battle*    (1 Samuel 17:1-54) Gary

## Receiving God's Grace

**Reconciling** VT 900

Most loving, most strong God,  
who is able to fight against you?  
The ancient serpent, the diabolical dragon,  
is not able to oppose you.  
I want you to help me fight against  
the fiery dragon within me  
that eats away my soul.  
I want to be like the strongest sword,  
fashioned by you,  
with the sharpest blade  
that will cut through the dragon's scales.  
And as I slay the dragon within myself,  
I want to offer a safe refuge for all,  
who like me are frail and vulnerable,  
so they may slay their own dragons,  
and together we may live in peace. Amen.

Hildegard of Bingen (present-day Germany), 1151

**Response Song** VT 585 Faith begins by letting go

**Witnessing, Sharing and Prayer**

Gail Fisher

## Sent in the Spirit's Power

**Benediction**

Gary

**Postlude**

Denise

Luke 24:45-54

<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup> and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

<sup>50</sup> Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. <sup>51</sup> While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup> And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; <sup>53</sup> and they were continually in the temple blessing God.