

# Midweek Message

May 20, 2026

Volume 26, Issue 5.3

## DAY OF PENTECOST

**Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.**

Join us in person or Livestream the service via our Facebook page. On this great day in the Church Year, we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out in wind and fire upon the whole church and all who follow Jesus.

***We invite you to wear the color RED on this festival day!***



Please help our Transitional Pastor Doug Stewart and other guest Pastors in learning the names of members & friends by wearing your name tag each Sunday in worship.

## ADULT FORUM SUMMER BREAK

Adult Forum is taking a break for the summer months. We look forward to welcoming more speakers in the fall. Contact Susan Touhsaent or Margy Peet if you have any questions.

## CHICKEN BBQ THIS SATURDAY!

**Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> from 4:00 p.m. until sold out**

You can skip cooking dinner! Come to our easy, drive-through Chicken Barbecue and get a full, delicious meal of BBQ chicken, along with corn, broccoli salad, a roll with butter, and a cookie for dessert. The cost is just \$15 per meal, and all proceeds will benefit the Brighton Habitat Coalition of Churches.



## ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC SUNDAY, JUNE 7

Join us after worship for fellowship, food, and fun at our annual Church Picnic. We will provide sandwich wraps/subs and beverages.

*Please sign up in the church narthex to bring a side dish or dessert to share...  
or to assist with set-up/clean-up.*

## SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR RED WINGS OUTING

**Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:45 p.m.**

Atonement's annual Red Wings outing will be on Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup>. The Red Wings will take on the Toledo Mud Hens. Game time is 6:45 p.m. Tickets are \$16 and all are welcome! There is a **sign-up** sheet on the narthex table, or see Tom Thompson, or Email Tom at [tommyth27@gmail.com](mailto:tommyth27@gmail.com) to reserve tickets.



# Atonement Lutheran Church

## **PASTOR'S PAGE: "Not Gone-Sent Ahead"** **An Ascension Day Reflection by Pastor Doug**

He did not vanish into absence,  
did not slip quietly out the back door of history  
like a teacher whose lesson failed to land.

He rose—  
not to escape us,  
but to draw the horizon higher.

We stood there, necks craned,  
eyes straining toward a sky  
that has never once answered a human question.  
And still we look up,  
as if heaven were a direction  
instead of a reality breaking in.

"Why do you stand looking?" the messengers ask—  
and the question still stings.

Because it's easier, Lord,  
to search the clouds  
than to bear Your presence in our bones.

Easier to wait for Your return  
than to risk becoming Your body.

You ascend,  
and we feel the old fear rising with You—  
the fear of being left behind  
in a world that devours the gentle  
and rewards the cruel.

But Your leaving is not abandonment.  
It is an anointing.

You take Your place beyond our sight  
so that we might take our place within Your work.

You withdraw Your visible form  
so that we can no longer confuse  
watching with following.

Now the miracle is this:  
Your hands are no longer seen—  
so ours must heal.

Your voice no longer echoes in Galilee—  
so ours must speak.

Your feet no longer walk dusty roads—  
so ours must carry good news  
into places we would rather avoid.

Ascension is not an ending.

It is a dangerous transfer of responsibility.

The cloud that takes You  
does not hide You—  
it reveals us.

No more waiting for rescue  
from above.  
No more mistaking distance for divinity.

You reign, yes—  
but not as one removed.

You reign in the breaking of bread,  
in the courage of the weary,  
in the quiet defiance of those  
who refuse to worship power.

You reign wherever love refuses to be practical.

So here we are—  
blinking in the light of Your departure,  
feeling the weight of Your trust  
settle onto our ordinary lives.

And maybe that is the scandal of it all:  
that the risen, reigning Christ  
would choose not to stay  
and instead entrust the kingdom  
to people like us.  
Still, You promise—  
not absence, but presence.

Not a far-off throne,  
but a Spirit that will not leave us alone  
even when we wish it would.

So send us, Ascended One.  
Send us into the ache of the world  
with more courage than certainty.

Send us not as spectators of heaven  
but as witnesses of resurrection  
in a world addicted to death.

Lift our eyes, yes—  
but not so we can escape.

Lift them  
so we can see more clearly  
where to go next.

## **INTRODUCTION TO REVEREND KEITH PATTERSON**

Everyone has a story, and here is a Cliff Notes version of mine. I am recently retired as the Rector (Pastor) of the Episcopal Church of St. Luke & St. Simon Cyrene (Two Saints) on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025. In 2009, I entered the ordination process in the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont because my home diocese, an ultra-conservative one, would not ordain me (that's a story unto itself). My sponsoring parish for ordination was St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Bennington.

I gained parish experience at St. James' Episcopal Church in Arlington until my ordination to the transitional diaconate in May of 2013 and then to the priesthood in January of 2014. Later in 2014, God led me to the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire, where I accepted a call to serve as the part-time Curate at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, a large parish in Concord, New Hampshire. While there, I was responsible for a pastoral care team that ministered to many members of St. Paul's. During my time in Concord, I also completed the required hours for chaplaincy certification at Havenwood Heritage Heights.

In 2016, I accepted the call to serve as Rector of Two Saints in downtown Rochester. Coming to Rochester brought me closer to my childhood roots in Buffalo, NY. I completed high school in Coxsackie, NY, a small town south of Albany, NY, and attended SUNY College at Potsdam, where I majored in Religious Studies and earned certification as an elementary education teacher. I received my Master of Divinity in 2008 from the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, MA. I love Weber's mustard, Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons, my husband of 24 years, and our two cats, Harold and Gracie.



## **A NOTE FROM PASTOR GAIL**

My thanks and gratitude for the prayers, cards, and good wishes for my recent surgery.

I'm recuperating at home... walking with a walker... and working on my Physical Therapy exercises each day, grateful for this time to rest and heal. Indeed thankful for God's loving care which surrounds us all.

It is well with my soul... and my hip!

Blessings to you,

Pastor Gail

# Come Worship With Us ... Everyone Is Welcome!

9:30 a.m. Sunday Morning Worship *Or Livestream on our Facebook Page*  
Website: [www.atonementrochester.org](http://www.atonementrochester.org) Facebook: [fb.com/atonementlutheranchurch](https://fb.com/atonementlutheranchurch)

## CLICK ON OUR MUSIC LINK

*"Next to the Word of God, Music Deserves the Highest Praise" -Martin Luther*

C. Hubert H. Parry - And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time (Jerusalem) for Choir (1916)

[Score-Video] For Memorial Day weekend, I thought it might be appropriate to show this hymn. It was written in 1916 by CHH Parry as a fundraiser for the British war effort. The poem, by Blake (written over a century earlier), starts off with four questions wondering if Jesus ever visited England, and ends by deciding, after four imperatives, to build a new Jerusalem there through "mental fight." It's become an unofficial national anthem.

## CHOIR PRACTICE

This week is our last practice & performance for the season. See you in the fall!

## JUNE CELEBRATIONS

### **Birthdays**

1 Wes Jones	14 Benjamin Bell
7 Karan Thompson	22 Faye Domroes
8 Pr. Debbie Johnson	27 Adeline Smith
11 Sahara Kruidenier	29 Barb Santspre
12 Molly Jones	30 Alexa Howe
Paige Jones	

### **Anniversaries**

22 Ed & Nancy Heise
25 Norm & Judy Karsten



## Looking Ahead

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
Thursday	May 21st	7:00 p.m.	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Saturday	May 23rd	4:00 p.m.	Chicken BBQ: 4:00 p.m. until Sold Out!	Drive-Through
Sunday	May 24th	9:30 a.m.	Worship	Sanctuary
Sunday	May 24th	10:30 a.m.	Fellowship/Coffee Hour	Reissig Hall
Wednesday	May 27th	10 am-1 pm	Pastor Doug Stewart's Office Hours	Pastor's Office

1900 Westfall Road, Rochester NY 14618

Church Office Hours: 9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. on Tuesday ~ Wednesday ~ Thursday

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The Rev. Doug Stewart, Interim Pastor