

Faith after ascension (Ephesians 1:15-23)

We hope and pray that God will meet us, even if God feels absent to us.

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When Jesus withdraws from his followers and ascends into heaven, he becomes present in another sense—present on earth through our lives, present through and in us. Christ gives his body through the church. “God has made Jesus the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all,” says Ephesians. After the ascension, we are the body of Jesus.

“I have heard of your faith,” writes the author of Ephesians. Faith is whatever happens inside us that draws us into the body of Jesus, whatever moves us to assemble with others in the church—to join our lives to others for worship. Faith is that feeling that keeps you coming back to commune with Jesus, to welcome him with your hands, with your prayers, with your love. To come to worship is an act of faith, as we hope and pray that God will meet us there, even if God feels absent to us, as if God has withdrawn from what we’re dealing with these days. Even if we’re confused about our own motives.

To be church together is an act of faith that invites us to experience the world as filled with Christ “who fills all and is in all”—with God in whom we live, move, and have our being. Worship is an invitation into faith as a way of life. Church is an invitation to let our faith open up a new world in this world—not as an escape but as a way to experience the life of God at the heart of all things, the sustaining presence of God’s love. Faith is the way we can experience human love in all of its ordinariness as the love of God in all of its mysterious depths. Faith is an invitation

into a way of life that moves with God's love for the world, that draws us into communion with neighbors and strangers.