

SHARE:

[Join Our Email List](#)

Weekend Connections

May 22



Meditation: Rise to the Occasion

Charles and I sat in a state of anxiety as we watched the final episode of a recent Netflix series. Our apprehension stemmed not from an impending tension yet to be resolved, but from a climax birthing a happy ending. I noted, "If this director kills the entire cast, I'm gonna be livid." Despite my reservations, we kept watching as an African-American actress was praised, a gay couple celebrated their love, an Asian-American was lauded, and a woman was congratulated for her wisdom. We sat there with tears in our eyes realizing we had been shown a glimpse of paradise.

In an interview about the show, the director was asked about his reasoning for an ending that produced unexpected moments of joy. His response was insightful: "Movies don't just show us how the world is, they show us how the world can be." This resonated with me because I often say this is one of the underlying themes of the Hebrew Bible. This collection of texts is not a historical account of the ancient world. It is a glimpse of the aspirations of faithful people living in daunting circumstances. The Hebrews wanted a promised land where the strangers were welcomed; they wanted a society

where neighbors were honored and widows and orphans were cared for; they wanted a place where the land was respected and the bounty was shared; and they wanted a place where peace and freedom were common occurrences. These longings have been told for so long over time that many people now consider their chronicles a historical fact.

I have been contemplating aspiration this week as I have struggled with The Feast of the Ascension, the annual occurrence where the church universal proclaims the bodily rising of Jesus to heaven. My theological leanings rarely, if ever, place Jesus in the sky, but plant his feet firmly on the ground. And although I cast many doubts on magical floating in the air, I am a strong believer that Jesus would rise to the occasion at hand. He lived an aspirational life where he met chaos with calm; sickness with healing; scarcity with abundance; and, hatred with love. This is evidenced at the stilling of the storm, the healing of a little girl, the feeding of the multitude, and the welcoming of lepers.

Rising to the occasion means that we meet extremely difficult situations with generosity, selflessness, and grace. It does not imply that we ignore injustices in our world. In fact, part of our prophetic responsibility is to be truthful about indifference and inequity. Yet, that is only a portion of our vocation as people of faith, and if we remain only in a state of revelation without the work of imagination and transformation, then we are bolstering a system we are trying to reform. Despite the formulas or policies, it is our calling to make all things new and take care of each other, embrace our neighbors, feed those who are hungry, and offer solace to those needing rest. This seems to be the job of faithful people: To rise up and create the world that should be.

-Brian Crisp

Op-ed: Is It Christian To Re-Open North Carolina Churches?



Nancy Petty weighs in on the topic of re-opening churches in an op-ed in [Cardinal & Pine](#), a local publication:

<https://cardinalpine.com/story/is-it-christian-to-reopen-nc-churches/>

Search Committee Update- and thanks!

The search and interview process for our next Church Administrator continues moving forward during this unusual time, The Search Committee is not taking

Brooks Wicker for granted. We've now had three Zoom meetings to discuss candidates and qualifications, and within the next few days will interview two candidates for the Church Administrator position. The Search Committee is pressing forward to find a new Church Administrator and allow Brooks Wicker to retire this year as she had planned. Brooks has graciously offered to continue in that role until her replacement is in place. This is the second time Brooks has pushed out her retirement! Her amazing sacrifice and commitment during these extraordinary times enables the Search Committee to work towards the best hiring decision for our church. Thank you, Brooks!

Catherine Corbett, Chair, Personnel Committee

Kyle Hampton, Convenor, Church Administrator Search Committee

Stay Connected to Pullen Church during Covid-19

Pullen has suspended indefinitely our Sunday groups, Sunday morning in-person worship, and Wednesday night programs. Our church office is also closed.

Please visit the Pullen Website for an archive of the latest email and video links:



Staying Connected

Watch our Livestream Services



Pullen Memorial Baptist Church
1801 Hillsborough St. | Raleigh, NC 27605
919-828-0897 | www.pullen.org | [@PullenChurch](https://www.instagram.com/PullenChurch)