

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LITTLETON, COLORADO

January 24-25, 2026

4:00 p.m. Saturday and 8:00 a.m. Sunday

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER

EPIPHANY

ORDINARY DISCIPLESHIP

AS WE GATHER

The Epiphany season proclaims and celebrates the salvation of God coming into the world as a light shining in a dark place.

Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah predicting the dawning of that light into the darkness of unbelief, separation from God, sin, and “the shadow of death” (Matthew 4:16). That light was and is Jesus and His message: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (v. 17). It may seem like a minor detail that Matthew says Isaiah’s prophetic words were fulfilled when Jesus left His hometown of Nazareth to live “in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali” (v. 13). Yet even this little fact testifies to how real the words of the Old Testament are and how they are fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ.

Likewise, it may at times seem insignificant and even unimportant when the light of the Gospel is preached in our hearing and in our world today. How many of us have heard God’s voice directly saying, “Follow me”? Those who were baptized as infants have no memory of ever being apart from God or His church. The life of faith in God may just seem normal or even routine to us—nothing out of the ordinary. Still, our sins remind us of the temptation to ignore God. Like the Christians in Corinth, we have sinful pride that causes divisions and quarreling among us. And while that’s no different than anywhere else in our world, to be a disciple of Jesus means to be truly different than the world. Repentance means being transformed by love of God and love of neighbor. Today, Jesus truly is saying to you, “Repent” and “Follow Me,” even in the ordinary details of life.



✖ PREPARATION ✖

Prelude "The People That in Darkness Sat" Paul Manz

Pastoral Greeting

Opening Hymn "O Christ, Who Called the Twelve" LSB 856

Invocation

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✖ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 43:4; Matthew 4:16*

Pastor: I will go to the altar of God,

People: to God my exceeding joy.

Pastor: The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, . . .

People: on them a light has dawned.

CONFESION AND ABSOLUTION *Psalm 22:22*

Pastor: Today Jesus Christ comes to you with an invitation, saying, "Repent" and "Follow Me." Let us prepare to receive His Word, leave our sin behind, and follow Him in the power of His forgiveness.

People: Lord God, open our ears to hear Your call of salvation and life. Enable us to hear the voice of Your Son, Christ our Lord, that His Word may move us to turn from our ways and our walk without You, and follow Him in faith, that we may learn and live in the light of Your love.

Pastor: Lord Jesus, "I will tell of Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise You."

Upon this your confession, I, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to you. And in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✖ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Now, let us follow Him!

People: Amen.

KYRIE

Pastor: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

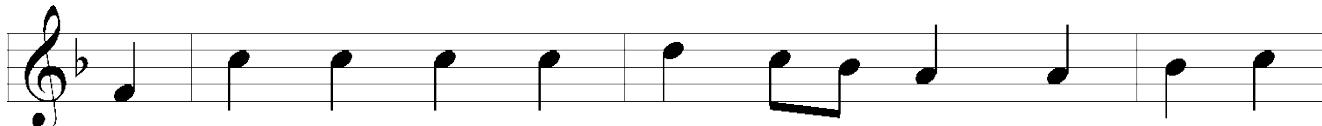
People: **Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

“The People That in Darkness Sat”

LSB 412

Verses 1-2, 5-6



1 The peo - ple that in dark - ness sat A glo - rious
2 To hail Thee, Sun of Righ - teous - ness, The gath - 'ring
5 His righ - teous gov - ern - ment and pow'r Shall o - ver
△ 6 Lord Je - sus, reign in us, we pray, And make us



light have seen; The light has shined on them who long In
na - tions come; They joy as when the reap - ers bear Their
all ex - tend; On judg - ment and on jus - tice based, His
Thine a - lone, Who with the Fa - ther ev - er art And



shades of death have been, In shades of death have been.
har - vest trea - sures home, Their har - vest trea - sures home.
reign shall have no end, His reign shall have no end.
Ho - ly Spir - it, one, And Ho - ly Spir - it, one.

Tune and text: Public domain

¤ WORD ¤

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 9:1-4

(The light of God's reign breaks into the world.)

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

**The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;**

those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.
You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.
For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

(Divisions in the church)

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Please rise for the Verse and the Holy Gospel.

VERSE *Matthew 4:17*

Pastor: Alleluia.

People: **From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."**

Pastor: Alleluia.

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the fourth chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**



Holy Gospel: Matthew 4:12-25

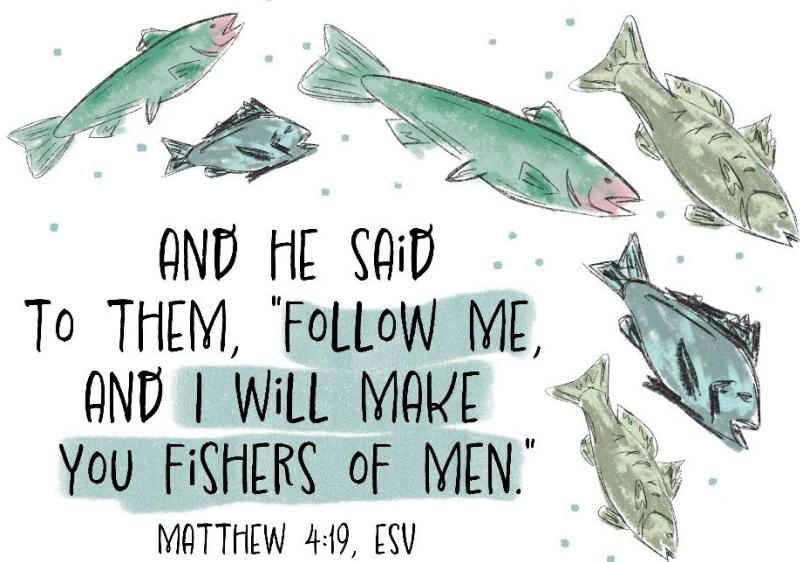
(Jesus begins calling the first disciples.)

Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—
the people dwelling in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death,
on them a light has dawned.”

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.



And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

Hymn of the Day “Listen, God is Calling”

LSB 833

Sermon**"Listen, God is Calling"**

Pastor John Larson

Text: Matthew 4:12-25

The Apostles' Creed*(found in the back of the hymnal)***PRAYER OF THE CHURCH** *Matthew 4:16–17, 19*

Pastor: "The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light."

Lord of light and life, we thank You for opening our eyes to see the light of Your mercy and salvation, our ears to hear Your call, our hearts to receive the faith that saves, and our minds to acknowledge Your glory. Cast Your light of grace through our lives, that many in our dark world may turn in repentance and joy to You. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Lord Jesus Christ, by Your Holy Spirit, give us faith to turn and follow You each day. Direct, guide, and rule our hearts that we may reflect Your love and forgiveness. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Jesus says, "Follow Me." Help us, O God, to leave the cares of our lives in this world to pursue the life You give us anchored in Your Word and gracious will. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Jesus came teaching, preaching, and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. Continue to come to us and especially to all who suffer any need, injury, disease, or fear, [especially . . .]. Grant the healing of body, mind, and spirit with faith in Your never-ending help and kindness. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: As You blessed the land of Zebulun, Naphtali, and Galilee of the Gentiles, so grant Your blessing on our nation, that those in positions of leadership and community service may work for the health, peace, and safety of all. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Remembering all who have followed You in faith whom You have called to Yourself through the grave and gate of death, give us endurance and strength to abide in the fellowship of Your church all our days, that we may enter the glorious fullness of Your eternal kingdom. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **hear our prayer.**

(Other intercessions may be offered)

Pastor: Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

Sharing of the Peace

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: And also with you.

You may now greet one another in the name of the Lord using...Peace be with you!

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Elizabeth Wilhelm
Carla Kuhlman
William H. Conner, Jr.
Tony Olimpio
Nicole Henry Becker
Gary Gaudreault
Karen Winckler
Bill Winckler
Andrea Winckler
Clint Winckler
Jackson Winckler
Will Winckler
Bill Brookhart
Miriam Brookhart
Edward Brookhart



Offering (4:00 pm – collected in the back;
8:00 – collected in the pews)

Offering Music

“Be Thou My Vision”

arr. Julie Turner
Gloria Dei Ringers

¤ HOLY COMMUNION AT ASCENSION ¤

The Lord, our Host, invites to his Supper those who are baptized into the Christian faith, confess him as Savior, have been instructed and have examined themselves, truly repent of sins, believe the Risen Lord is present in the sacrament with his true body and blood, and resolve to live faithfully and obediently. For those with an intolerance to alcohol, the center ring of the tray contains grape juice. Gluten free wafers are available to those with wheat allergies. Children who have not been instructed, yet desire a blessing, are invited to come forward with arms crossed. When receiving the bread and wine, the communicant may respond with “Amen!”, a word of affirmation and belief.

¤ SACRAMENT ¤

Preface (Divine Service, Setting One)

LSB 160

Proper Preface

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; in whom all who dwell in the darkness of sin may see the great light of Your salvation. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus (Divine Service, Setting One)

LSB 161

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer *Matthew 6:9-13*

People: **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Agnus Dei (Divine Service, Setting One)

LSB 163

DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

Special Organ Music “Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness” Michael Burkhardt

Hymn “Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness”

LSB 849

Hymn “O Christ, Our True and Only Light”

LSB 839

General Communion Blessing

Benediction (Divine Service, Setting One)

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

People: **Amen**

Closing Hymn “Rise, Shine You People”

LSB 825

Congregational Concerns

Dismissal

Pastor: Go in peace.
Serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude "Rise, Shine You People (Incorporating John Stanley's 'Voluntary in D')"
Benjamin Culli



Brothers and Sisters in Christ

SERVING IN WORSHIP

OFFICIANT / PREACHER

Pastor John Larson

MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP / ORGANIST

Michael Zehnder

BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR

Stephanie Roettjer

ELDERS

4:00 pm Jeff Dunker; 8:00 am Benjamin Dallet; 10:30 am Michael Lawrenz

ACOLYTE

8:00 am Benjamin Dallet; 10:30 am Tobin Lawrenz

LECTORS

4:00 pm Dick Castleman; 8:00 am Scott Luethy; 10:30 am Lisa O'Neal

COMMUNION SERVERS

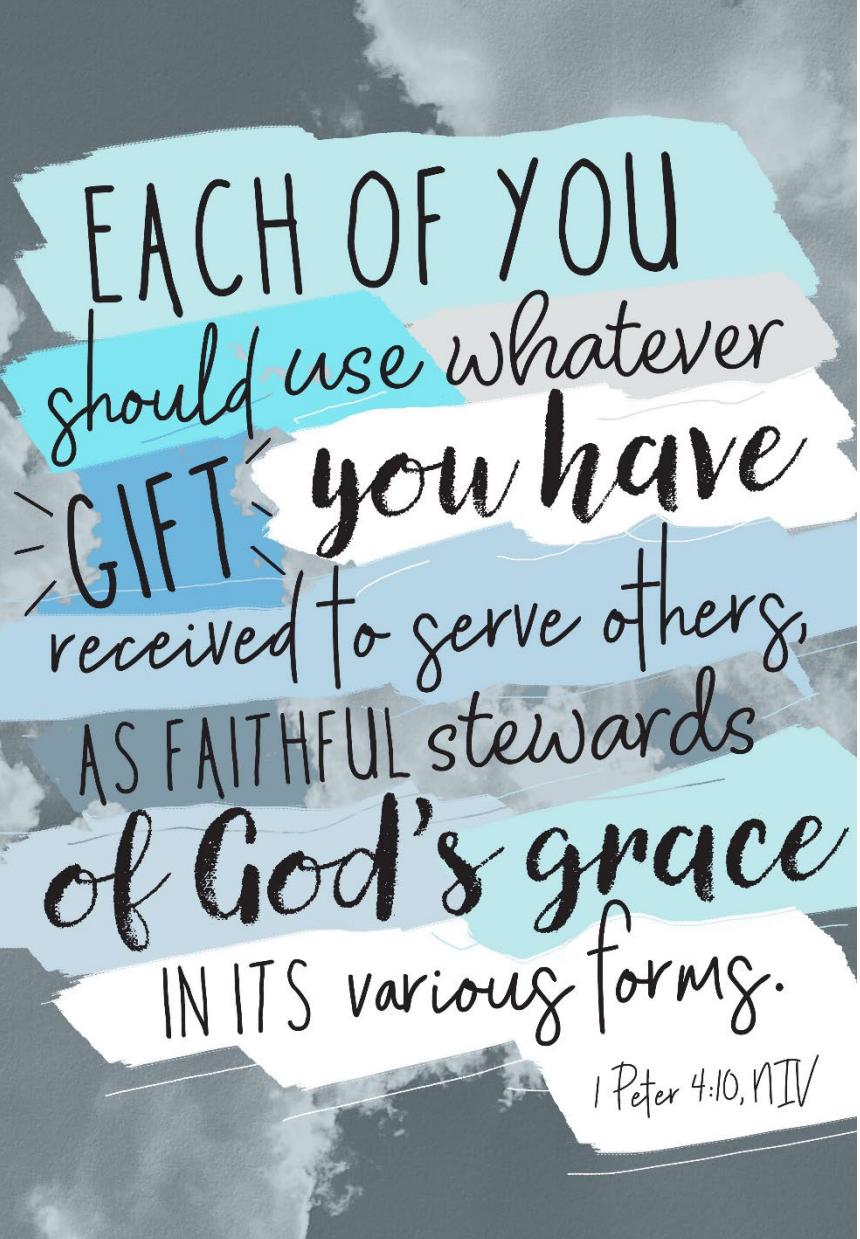
4:00 pm Dick Castleman; 10:30 am Lisa O'Neal

ALTAR GUILD

Shelia Beu, Charmaine Rohde, Cathy Utecht

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EACH OF YOU
should use whatever
GIFT you have
received to serve others,
AS FAITHFUL stewards
of God's grace
IN ITS various forms.

1 Peter 4:10, NIV