

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

LITTLETON, COLORADO

January 31-February 1, 2026

4:00 p.m. Saturday, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday



THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

FOOLISH WISDOM

AS WE GATHER

“That was a foolish decision.” Maybe you have said that to yourself after a thoughtless word or action. Our human foolishness is noted in two hymns in Lutheran Service Book. In the paraphrase of Psalm 23 in “The King of Love My Shepherd Is,” we sing of our Good Shepherd: “Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, but yet in love He sought me” (LSB 709:3). And in a hymn based on the parable of the prodigal son, we sing, “As rebels, Lord, who foolishly have wandered” (LSB 612:1). Foolishness is not generally seen as a positive attribute. But Paul reminds his Corinthian readers and us that we are called to a certain special foolishness in Christ. “But God chose what is foolish . . . ; God chose what is weak . . . ; God chose what is low” (1 Corinthians 1:27–28). And Paul writes to the Ephesians, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who . . . chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:3–4). We can live as reflections of God’s most gracious choosing!

✖ PREPARATION ✖

Prelude

“Fantasy on ‘To God Be the Glory’”

Michael Burkhardt

Pastoral Greeting

Opening Hymn

“To God Be the Glory”

Lutheran Service Builder

Verses 1-2, 5

1 To God be the glo - ry, great things He has done, So
 2 To God be the glo - ry, great mer - cy He's shown: He
 5 To God be the glo - ry, great things He has done, Our

loved He the world that He gave us His Son. Who
 saved us and cleansed us and made us His own; Re -
 lives have been touched by the light of His Son— Called

yield - ed His life an a - tone-ment for sin And
 newed by the Spir - it, re - born from a - bove, That
 out of the dark - ness of death and de - spair; Made

o - pened the life - gate that all may go in.
 we might be jus - ti - fied by His rich love!
 priests in His king - dom, His deeds to de - clare.

Refrain

1-4 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His
 5 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His

voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the peo - ple re -
 voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the peo - ple re -

joice! O come to the Fa - ther, through Je - sus the
 joice! Sing praise to the Fa - ther, sing praise to the

Son, And give Him the glo - ry, great things He has done!
 Son, Sing praise to the Spir-it— our God, Three in One!

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Invocation

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

OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 89:1–2, 5, 8, 52; Isaiah 2:5b*

Pastor: I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever;

People: **with my mouth I will make known Your faithfulness to all generations.**

Pastor: For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens You will establish Your faithfulness.”

People: **Let the heavens praise Your wonders, O LORD, Your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!**

Pastor: O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty as You are, O LORD, with Your faithfulness all around You?

People: **Blessed be the LORD forever! Amen and Amen. Come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.**

CONFSSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Let us now make confession of our sins to God, our gracious heavenly Father.

People: **Eternal God, we confess that by nature we are sinful people. We are given to sinful thoughts, sinful words, and sinful deeds. We have transgressed Your law in many ways, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have often been heedless of our calling to follow in Your ways. Because of our sins and our sinfulness, we deserve Your punishment now and for eternity. Gracious God, in Your mercy, forgive our sin and restore us to a full and joyful relationship with You through the merits of Jesus, our Lord. Direct our days by Your Holy Spirit that we may joyfully follow Your will and gladly obey Your commandments as Your redeemed people, bringing the brightness of Your light to the darkened world.**

Pastor: 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.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it. Be at peace.

People: **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

✖ WORD ✕

INTROIT *Psalm 1:1–5; antiphon: v. 6*

Pastor: For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Women: ***Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;***

Men: ***but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night.***

Women: *He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.*

Men: *The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.*

People: *Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.*

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.



HYMN OF PRAISE

“Son of God Eternal Savior”

LSB 842

Verses 1-3

1 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, Source of life and
2 As You, Lord, have lived for oth - ers, So may we for
3 Come, O Christ, and reign a - mong us, King of love and

truth and grace, Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us
oth - ers live. Free - ly have Your gifts been grant - ed;
Prince of Peace; Hush the storm of strife and pas - sion,

Hal - lows all our hu - man race, You our Head, who, throned in
Free-ly may Your ser - vants give. Yours the gold and Yours the
Bid its cru - el dis - cords cease. By Your pa - tient years of

glo - ry, For Your own will ev - er plead: Fill us with Your
sil - ver, Yours the wealth of land and sea; We but stew - ards
toil - ing, By Your si - lent hours of pain, Quench our fe - vered

love and pit - y, Heal our wrongs, and help our need.
of Your boun - ty Held in sol - emn trust will be.
thirst of plea - sure, Stem our self - ish greed of gain.

Old Testament Reading: Micah 6:1-8

(God's people are to come before Him in humility.)

Hear what the Lord says:

Arise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the Lord,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for the Lord has an indictment against his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

“O my people, what have I done to you?

How have I wearied you? Answer me!

For I brought you up from the land of Egypt
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,

and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised,

and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him,

and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,

that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord.”

“With what shall I come before the Lord,
and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

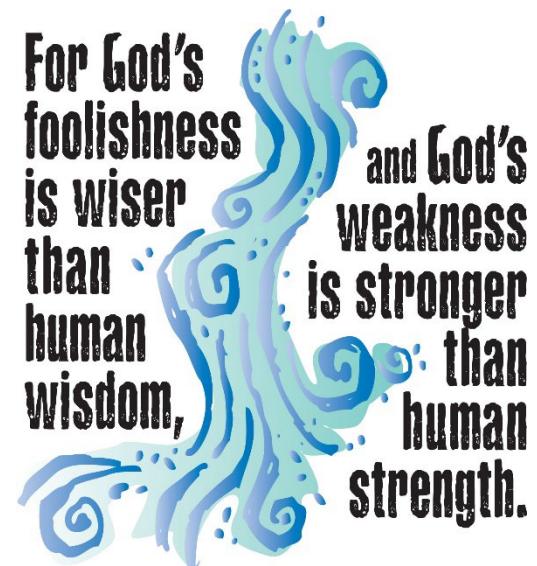
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

(Christ is the wisdom and the power of God.)

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. For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God



1 CORINTHIANS 1:25, NRSV

through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Please rise for the Verse and the Holy Gospel.

GRADUAL AND VERSE *Psalm 117:1–2a; 96:8; Matthew 5:3*

Pastor: Praise the LORD, all nations!

People: Extol Him, all peoples! For great is His steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts!
Alleluia.

Pastor: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Alleluia.

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

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

Holy Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

(Jesus teaches about blessed living.)

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

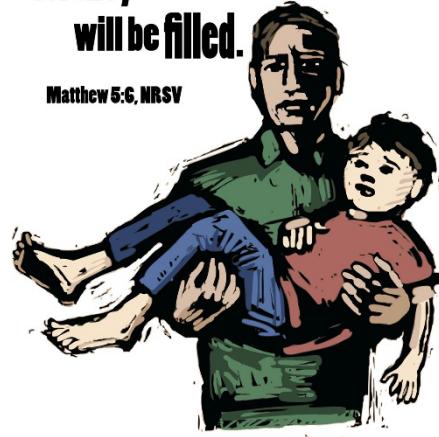
“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

**Blessed are those who
hunger and thirst
for righteousness,
for they
will be filled.**

Matthew 5:6, NRSV



**“Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall receive mercy.**

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

**“Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called sons of God.**

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Hymn of the Day “Jesus Sat with His Disciples” **LSB 932**

Sermon “The Lord’s Argument; The Lord’s Plea” **Pastor John Larson**
Text: Micah 6:1-8

CATECHISM *The Third Article*

Pastor: The Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed is focused on the Holy Spirit and the ways in which the work of the Spirit blesses our lives. Often given the heading “Sanctification,” the Third Article presents and emphasizes what matters for our spiritual lives now and forever.

People: **I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

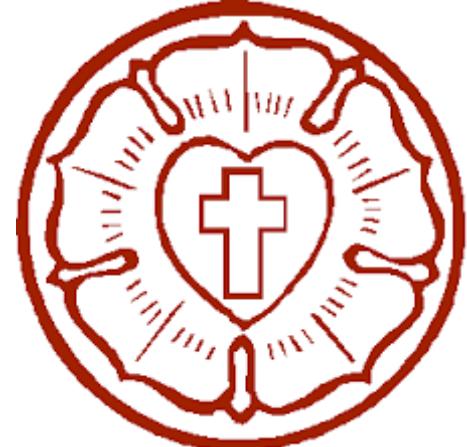
What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.



Prayer of the Church

Pastor: Lord, in your mercy ...

People: Hear our prayer.

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!

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

Offering Music (8:00) "Peace Like a River"

arr. Donald Moore
Ascension Chorale

⌘ 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, Lord our God, for You have had mercy on us and have sent Your only-begotten Son to be our Savior. Grant that we may have a right sense of the joy of His presence in all the seasons of our lives. Grant that we receive the body and blood of our Lord as the guarantee of our salvation and as a foretaste of the feast to come in Your eternal kingdom. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and praise, together with the Son and Holy Spirit, now and forevermore praising You and singing:

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 “Jesus Comes Today with Healing”

Michael Costello

Hymn “Jesus Comes Today with Healing”

LSB 620

Verases 1-4

Hymn “The King of Love My Shepherd Is”

LSB 709

(Verse 3 – Solo)

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 “Lift High the Cross”

LSB 837

Verases 1-4

Congregational Concerns

Dismissal

Pastor: Go in peace.

Serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude “Lift High the Cross” Michael Burkhardt and Trey Clegg

SERVING IN WORSHIP

OFFICIANT / PREACHER

Pastor John Larson

MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP / ORGANIST

Michael Zehnder

CHOIR DIRECTOR

Stephanie Roettjer

CHOIR ACCOMPANIST

Diana Gaide

ELDERS 4:00 pm Jeff Dunker; 8:00 am Bob Olsen; 10:30 am Michael Lawrenz

ACOLYTE 8:00 am Ellise Friend; 10:30 am Maria Olson

LECTORS 4:00 pm Dave Olsson; 8:00 am Carrie Friend; 10:30 am Jackie Warren

COMMUNION SERVERS 4:00 pm Dave Olsson; 10:30 am Jackie Warren

ALTAR GUILD Shelia Beu, Charmaine Rohde, Cathy Utecht



“Blessed
are those
who are
persecuted for
righteousness’
sake, for
theirs is
the kingdom
of heaven.”

Matthew 5:10

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