

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LITTLETON, COLORADO

March 15, 2026

10:30 a.m. Sunday Concert/Service with Concordia University
Nebraska's University A Capella Choir



**SERVICE FOR FOURTH SUNDAY IN
LENT WITH CONCORDIA
UNIVERSITY-NEBRASKA
A CAPELLA CHOIR**

**JESUS TURNS OUR DARKNESS
INTO LIGHT**

AS WE GATHER

The Lord is grieved by the spiritual blindness of His people, but He does not forsake them. Instead, He promises to turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground (Isaiah 42:16). The Lord does not give up on His servant, Israel, but sends another Servant who is the light of the world (John 9:5). Jesus' light comes to us in His Word, His water, and His Supper. These are His means for opening our eyes to see and to live as children of light (Ephesians 5:8). Baptized into Christ, we look forward to the day when these words will come pass: "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" (Ephesians 5:14).

Today we welcome **Concordia University Nebraska's University A Cappella Choir**. It has been performing concerts and joining congregations in worship for over 87 years. One of the United States' oldest touring Lutheran collegiate choirs, the University A Cappella Choir has performed throughout the U.S., and internationally in Greece, Italy, France, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, India, Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Austria, Spain, Mexico, South Africa, and Australia. In May of 2026, the choir will make its first concert tour to Ireland.

The 72-voice choir is chosen by audition and is comprised of majors from most academic disciplines, representing many states and some foreign countries. Over 180 students audition each fall for the internationally renowned concert choir.

The choir has been invited to perform for NMEA and ACDA conferences, and international competitions. They received the Gold Medal for performance at the 12th Australian International Music Festival in Sydney and earned a spot in the winner's circle at the 42nd International Choral Competition in Spittal, Austria. The choir is under the direction of Dr. Kurt E. von Kampen with Dr. Elizabeth Grimpo on the piano. **Welcome!**

✠ PREPARATION ✠

Pastoral Greeting

Preservice Concert by Concordia University's A Capella Choir *(Beginning at 10:20)*

"Were You There" (*arr. Norman Luboff*)

"Awake, Arise!" (*Kyle Pederson*)

Prelude "Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow" Michael Burkhardt

Opening Hymn "Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death" LSB 697

INVOCATION *based on John 3:16; 8:36; Romans 5:1*

Pastor: In the name of the Father,

People: who loved us and sent His Son to set us free.

Pastor: In the name of His ✠ Son, Jesus,

People: whose sacrifice gives us freedom and peace.

Pastor: In the name of the Holy Spirit,

People: who brings us to faith and sustains our faith through the working of water and the Word. Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Psalm 142:1*

Pastor: With my voice I cry out to the LORD;

People: with my voice I plead for mercy to the LORD.

Silent reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

Pastor: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

People: Most merciful God, we confess that we were born in utter sin. To this day and by nature, we have eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear. We have trusted in the things we have made rather than You. Our thoughts, words, and actions have been unfruitful and dark. We have been blind to our sin, but You have seen it. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, open our eyes. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. Jesus is the light of the world and your

salvation. He has enlightened you with His gifts and given you ears to hear Jesus' words. It is He who is speaking to you. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Spoken Kyrie

Pastor: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the freedom given to us by Christ, let us thank the Lord,

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For Holy Baptism, which washes us free from sin, let us bless the Lord,

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For our gracious God, who desires all men be saved, let us thank the Lord,

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Thank You, Lord, for our Savior, Jesus Christ.

People: Amen!

Ministry of Music *(by Concordia's Choir)*

"Holy, Holy, Holy" (*arr. Dan Forrest*)

"Total Praise" (*Smallwood/Rao*)

"Go to Dark Gethsemane"

(arr. T. Tertius Noble)

"God is Gone Up" (*Gerald Finzi*)

☩ **WORD** ☩

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 42:14-21

(The Lord will lead His people in a new way, turning darkness into light.)

For a long time I have held my peace;

**I have kept still and restrained myself;
now I will cry out like a woman in labor;**

I will gasp and pant.

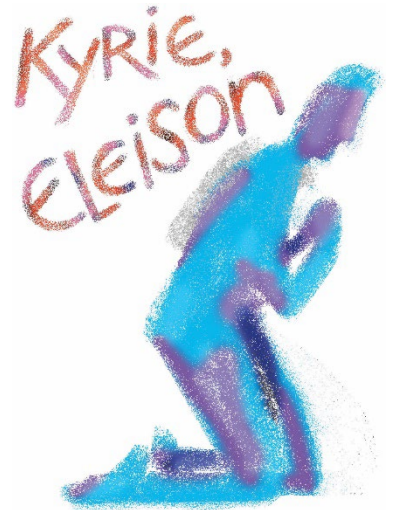
**I will lay waste mountains and hills,
and dry up all their vegetation;**

**I will turn the rivers into islands,
and dry up the pools.**

And I will lead the blind

**in a way that they do not know,
in paths that they have not known
I will guide them.**

**I will turn the darkness before them into light,
the rough places into level ground.**



These are the things I do,
and I do not forsake them.
They are turned back and utterly put to shame,
who trust in carved idols,
who say to metal images,
“You are our gods.”

Hear, you deaf,
and look, you blind, that you may see!
Who is blind but my servant,
or deaf as my messenger whom I send?
Who is blind as my dedicated one,
or blind as the servant of the Lord?
He sees many things, but does not observe them;
his ears are open, but he does not hear.
The Lord was pleased, for his righteousness' sake,
to magnify his law and make it glorious.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-14

(The Lord positions us to walk as children of light.)

For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Please rise for the Holy Gospel.

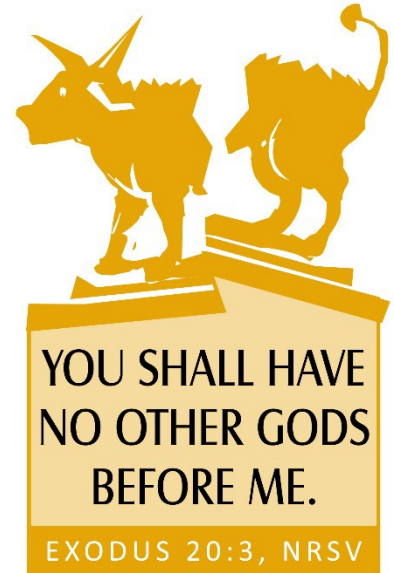
Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the ninth chapter.

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

Holy Gospel: John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39

(Jesus heals a man born blind.)

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of



God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a

sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”



**“LORD,
I BELIEVE.”**
JOHN 9:38

Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

Hymn of the Day “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” *LSB 411*

Sermon “Don’t Let Anyone Steal Your Joy” **Pastor John Larson**
Text: John 9

The Apostles’ Creed *(found in the back of the hymnal)*

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 (10:30 am - collected in back)

✠ **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** ✠

Spoken Preface

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

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.**



DISTRIBUTION MUSIC *(Choral Music by Concordia's Choir)*

"Beautiful Savior"

"Grant Peace We Pray" (*Mendelssohn arr. Schalk*)

"We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace" (*arr. Hogan*)

LSB 537



General Communion Blessing

Post-Communion Thanksgiving

Pastor: Let us pray.
We give thanks to You, almighty God, for opening our eyes through this salutary gift. Help us to walk as children of light, with our eyes ever toward You in faith and toward one another with love; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

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 "Toccata Brevis" Daniel Gawthrop

Please note: Concordia University has graciously made this concert available to us without charge. To support their ministry we are taking up a "free will offering." An additional offering plate is available in the back for this purpose. Any checks may be made payable to Concordia University. There are also CD's and other things on a table in the narthex which you may purchase to support their ministry.



SHINE YOUR LIGHT. SHARE GOD'S LOVE!

SERVING IN WORSHIP

PREACHER / CELEBRANT

MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP / ORGANIST

CONCERT CHOIR

CONDUCTOR

PIANIST

ELDERS

ACOLYTE

LECTORS

COMMUNION SERVERS

ALTAR GUILD

Pastor John Larson

Michael Zehnder

Concordia University, Nebraska

Dr. Kurt E. von Kampen

Dr. Elizabeth Grimpo

4:00 pm Jeff Dunker; 8:00 am Benjamin Dallet;
10:30 am David Pearman and Jim Wert

8:00 am Colette Dallet; 10:30 am Brynn Aldrich

4:00 pm Dave Olsson; 8:00 am Scott Luethy; 10:30 am Jude Donovan

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Tanya Schmitt, Charmaine Rohde, Cathy Utecht



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