

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LITTLETON, COLORADO

May 3, 2026

10:30 a.m. Sunday



THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

EASTER LIGHT – ETERNAL LIGHT

AS WE GATHER

Since 1986, voice actor Tom Bodett has had his career defined with a one-line promotion for the Motel 6 hotel chain. He always ends his commercials for the company with a simple line stating “we’ll leave the light on for you.” Having an assured place to be going to can be encouraging and comforting. As Jesus speaks with His disciples, we hear Him reassure them and us that He will be in His Father’s house, the heavenly place where lights are not even necessary. In the Revelation to John, we have this insight about our God’s eternal city: “And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb” (Revelation 21:23). In “Jerusalem the Golden,” medieval monk Bernard of Cluny writes of the “radiancy of glory” and the “bliss beyond compare” that are in store for God’s redeemed people there (*LSB* 672:1). As we share in the foretaste of the feast to come through our worship, we can only imagine what joys still await us.

✘ PREPARATION ✘

Gathering Song

MIGHTY TO SAVE

Morgan / Fielding

Everyone needs compassion, Love that's never failing. Let mercy fall on me.
Everyone needs forgiveness, The kindness of a Savior. The hope of nations

CHORUS: Savior, He can move the mountains.

My God is mighty to save. He is mighty to save.

Forever, Author of salvation.

He rose and conquered the grave. Jesus conquered the grave.

So take me as You find me, All my fears and failures. Fill my life again.

I give my life to follow, Everything I believe in. Now I surrender. **CHORUS**

Shine your light, And let the whole world see.

We're singing for the glory of the risen King.

Jesus, Shine your light, And let the whole world see.

We're singing for the glory of the risen King. **CHORUS**

Shine your light, And let the whole world see.

We're singing for the glory of the risen King.

Jesus, Shine your light, And let the whole world see.

We're singing for the glory of the risen King. **CHORUS**

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Pastoral Greeting

Opening Song

CORNERSTONE

Myrin

My hope is built on nothing less,
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly trust in Jesus' Name.

CHORUS: Christ alone. Cornerstone.

Weak made strong in the Savior's love.

Through the storm, He is Lord. Lord of all.

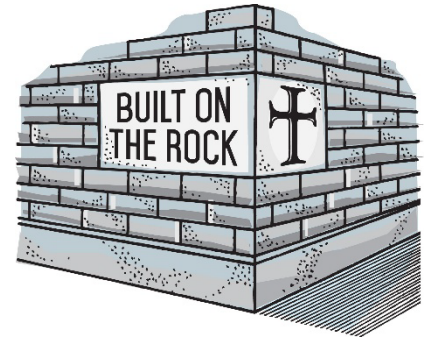
When darkness seems to hide His face,
I rest on His unchanging grace.

In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil. **CHORUS**

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh may I then in Him be found.

Dressed in His righteousness alone.

Faultless to stand before the throne. **CHORUS**



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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 27:1; 147:11; 104:24a, 31a; Isaiah 2:5b*

Pastor: The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

People: **The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?**

Pastor: The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him,

People: **in those who hope in His steadfast love.**

Pastor: O LORD, how manifold are Your works!

People: **In wisdom have You made them all.**

Pastor: May the glory of the LORD endure forever.

People: **Come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: As penitent people, we ask God for His grace and mercy.

Pastor: Humble yourselves then before God, confess your sins to Him, and implore His forgiveness.

People: **O almighty God, most merciful Father, I, a repentant sinner, confess to You all my sins and iniquities with which I have offended You. By nature, I am a sinful creature. In thought, word, and deed I have continually transgressed Your law. For this I justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of the sufferings and death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, a penitent and contrite being. Forgive me all my sins and grant me the power of Your Holy Spirit that I may amend my sinful life and bear fruit in keeping with true repentance.**

Pastor: God be gracious to you and strengthen your faith.

People: **Amen.**

Pastor: As you believe, so let it be. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

Preschool Singers

Children's Message

Pastor Larson



✂ WORD ✂

First Reading: Acts 6:1-9, 7:2a, 51-60

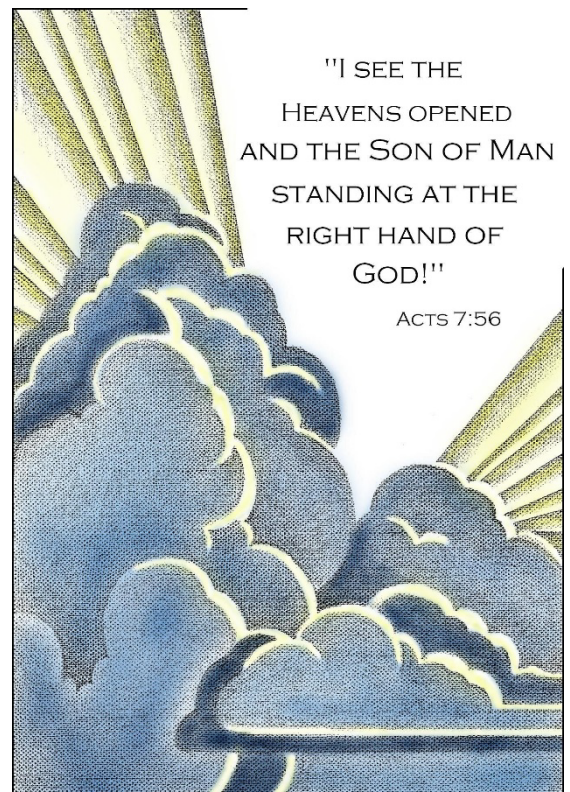
(Stephen is stoned and becomes a martyr for Christ.)

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people.

Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their



garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Epistle: 1 Peter 2:2-10

(An exhortation to live lives of Christian love)

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

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 fourteenth chapter.

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

Holy Gospel: John 14:1-14

(Jesus says that He is the way, and the truth, and the life.)

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If

So let it go and be amazed
By what you see through eyes of grace
The prisoner that it really frees is you
Forgiveness forgiveness
Oh forgiveness forgiveness

Chorus 2

**Show me how to love the unlovable
Show me how to reach the unreachable
Help me now to do the impossible
Forgiveness I want to finally set it free
Show me how to see what Your mercy sees
Help me now to give what You gave to me
Forgiveness oh forgiveness**

Forgiveness forgiveness
Forgiveness



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Sermon

"A Better Place, A Clear Path"

Pastor John Larson
Text: John 14:1-14

CATECHISM

The Second Article

Pastor: As we celebrate the risen Christ in this season of Easter, let us speak together the words of the Apostles' Creed regarding our Savior, who is the Second Person of the Trinity.

People: **I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

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 (collected in the 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 ✠

Preface (Divine Service, Setting One)

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.**



Be Strengthened

DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

Song **I NEED YOU** **Nockles/Carson/Reeves/Stanfill/Maher**

Lord I come, I confess, bowing here I find my rest
And without You I fall apart; You're the one that guides my heart

CHORUS

Lord I need You, oh I need You, Ev'ry hour I need You
My one defense, my righteousness, Oh God how I need You

Where sin runs deep, Your grace is more. Where grace is found is where You are
And where You are, Lord I am free. Holiness is Christ in me
Where You are, Lord I am free. Holiness is Christ in me

So teach my song to rise to You When temptation comes my way
And when I cannot stand I'll fall on You. Jesus You're my hope and stay
And when I cannot stand I'll fall on You. Jesus You're my hope and stay **CHORUS**

My one defense my righteousness Oh God how I need You

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Song **JESUS MESSIAH** **Tomlin**

He became sin, who knew no sin;
that we might become His righteousness;
He humbled Himself, and carried the cross.
Love so amazing, love so amazing.

CHORUS: Jesus, Messiah; Name above all names;
Blessed Redeemer; Emmanuel.
The Rescue for sinners, the ransom from heaven;
Jesus, Messiah, Lord of all.

His body, the bread; His blood, the wine;
Broken and poured out, all for love.
The whole earth trembled, and the veil was torn.
Love so amazing, love so amazing. **CHORUS**

All our hope is in You, all our hope is in You;
All the glory to You, God, the light of the world. **CHORUS**

Jesus, Messiah, Lord of all. The Lord of all! The Lord of all.

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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 Song **YOUR GRACE IS ENOUGH**

Maher

Great is Your faithfulness, O God;
You wrestle with the sinner's restless heart.
You lead us by still waters into mercy
And nothing can keep us apart.

**CHORUS: So, remember Your people, Remember Your children,
Remember Your promise O God.
Your grace is enough, Your grace is enough,
Your grace is enough, for me.**

Great is Your love and justice, God;
You use the weak to lead the strong.
You lead us in the song of Your salvation,
And all Your people sing along. **CHORUS**

Your grace is enough, Your grace is enough,
Your grace is enough, for me. **CHORUS**

Yeah, Your grace is enough; Heaven reaches out to us.
Your grace is enough for me.
God, I sing: Your grace is enough; I'm covered in Your love.
Your grace is enough for me, for me.

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Congregational Concerns

Dismissal

Pastor: Go in peace.
Serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERVING IN WORSHIP

OFFICIANT / PREACHER	Pastor John Larson
MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP / ORGANIST	Michael Zehnder
HANDBELL DIRECTOR	Stephanie Roettjer
CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER	Ann Kirkpatrick
PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR	Meg Stenman
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 Tobin Lawrenz
LECTORS	4:00 pm Dick Castleman; 8:00 am Dennis Lord; 10:30 am Jackie Warren
COMMUNION SERVERS	4:00 pm Dick Castleman; 10:30 am Jackie Warren
ALTAR GUILD	Tanya Schmitt, Laura Banko



STEPHEN BECOMES THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR

✠ ✠ ✠

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