

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LITTLETON, COLORADO

July 4-5, 2026

4:00 p.m. Saturday and 9:00 a.m. Sunday



SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST / 250TH INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION

ONE NATION, UNDER GOD

AS WE GATHER

Although the major focus of national celebration in the Year of Our Lord 2026 in the United States is the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, there is another memorable anniversary to be noted as well: 2026 is the 235th anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights by the first US Congress. The very first words of the very first amendment within the list of additional guarantees added to the Constitution of the United States in 1791 known as the Bill of Rights states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." That solemn guarantee enables us to gather freely to worship God without fear of disturbance or reprisal. As we gather, we can reflect on what a blessing religious freedom is ours in this God-blessed nation. Happy anniversary, United States of America!

✧ PREPARATION ✧

Prelude

"Fantasia on 'America the Beautiful'"

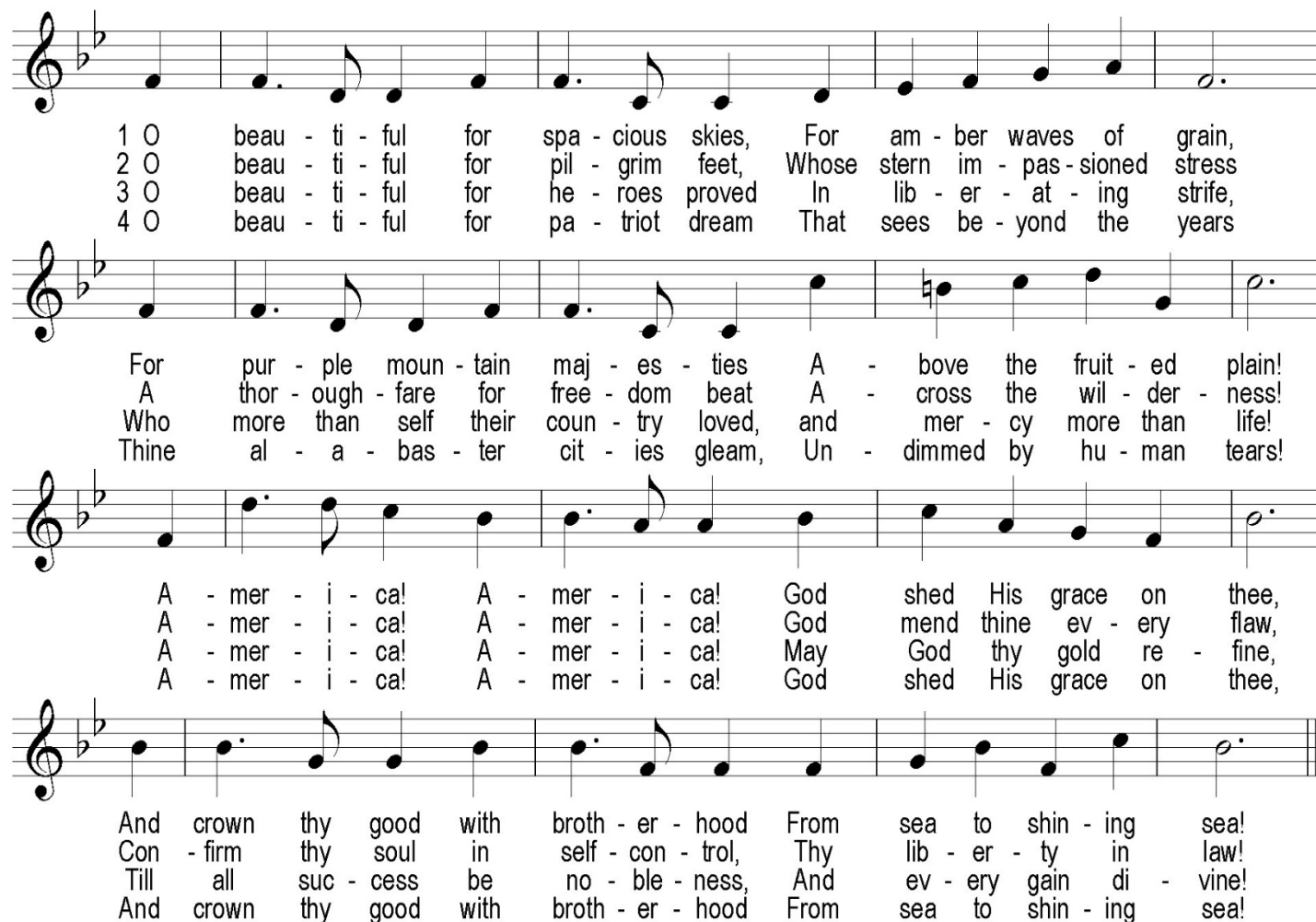
Rex Koury

Pastoral Greeting

Opening Hymn

"America the Beautiful"

HWC 572



1 O beau - ti - ful for spa - cious skies, For am - ber waves of grain,
2 O beau - ti - ful for pil - grim feet, Whose stern im - pas - sioned stress
3 O beau - ti - ful for he - roes proved In lib - er - at - ing strife,
4 O beau - ti - ful for pa - triot dream That sees be - yond the years

For pur - ple moun - tain maj - es - ties A - bove the fruit - ed plain!
A thor - ough - fare for free - dom beat A - cross the wil - der - ness!
Who more than self their coun - try loved, and mer - cy more than life!
Thine al - a - bas - ter cit - ies gleam, Un - dimmed by hu - man tears!

A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God shed His grace on thee,
A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God mend thine ev - ery flaw,
A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! May God thy gold re - fine,
A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God shed His grace on thee,

And crown thy good with broth - er - hood From sea to shin - ing sea!
Con - firm thy soul in self - con - trol, Thy lib - er - ty in law!
Till all suc - cess be no - ble - ness, And ev - ery gain di - vine!
And crown thy good with broth - er - hood From sea to shin - ing sea!

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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.



OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 29:2; 33:12, 22; 115:1; 145:10; 147:5*

Pastor: Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; His understanding is beyond measure.

People: **All Your works shall give thanks to You, O LORD, and all Your saints shall bless You!**

Pastor: Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.

People: **Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to Your name give glory, for the sake of Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness!**

Pastor: Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom He has chosen as His heritage!

People: **Let Your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in You.**



CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Almighty and eternal God, You have blessed us with a free land, having rights and privileges others dream about. We live in a land where liberty is given to us. With freedom also comes temptation to misuse our freedom.

People: **Forgive us, Lord, for misusing freedom in selfish ways. Keep us from squandering the precious opportunities You have given to us by the many freedoms we have.**

Pastor: For these sins and all sins, sins of thought, word, and deed; by what we have done or failed to do,

People: **we stand before You now, asking Your forgiveness, and for the help of the Holy Spirit to amend our sinful lives.**

Pastor: Hear the Good News! God has heard your confession. He has called me, a called and ordained servant of our King, to deliver this message to you: your sins are forgiven because of the cross of Christ. Receive that forgiveness in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen! Thank You, Lord, for forgiving me. Help me, by the aid of Your Holy Spirit, to relish the freedoms You have given us as Christians and as a country.**

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 sets 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,

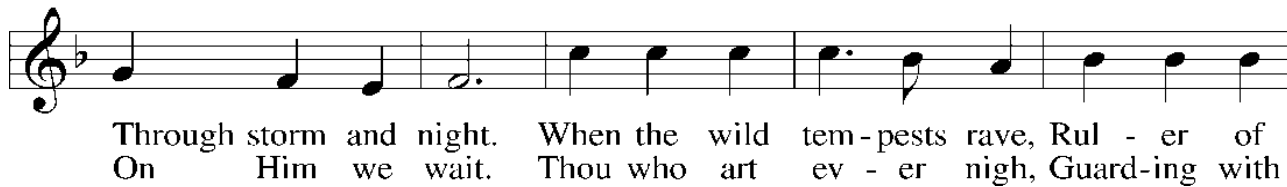
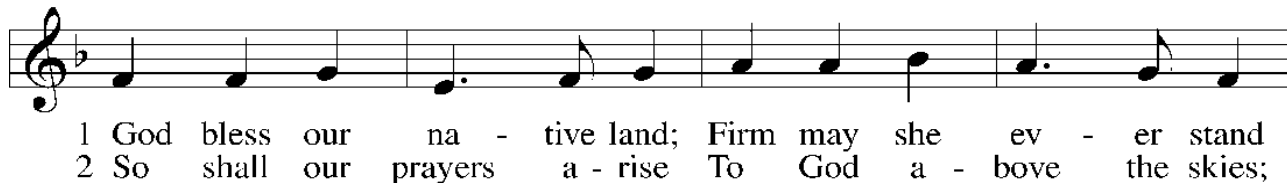
People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Thank You, Lord, for our freedom in Christ.

People: Amen!

Hymn of Praise "God Bless Our Native Land"

LSB 965



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CELEBRATION SEQUENCE FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY

Pastor: Today we thank God as we celebrate 250 years of God's blessings on the United States of America. The psalmist writes: "Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting" (Psalm 147:1). As part of our celebration this day, we sing our thanks for living in what truly is a God-blessed land.

Reader: We thank God for the land that is our home—a land of mountains and seashores, of rivers and forests. This is a rich and fruitful land, a land that has supplied generations with its bounty. The psalmist writes: "Let the redeemed of the LORD . . . thank the LORD for His steadfast love, for His wondrous works to the children of men" (Psalm 107:2a, 21). Together we sing our thanks through the stanzas of the well-loved hymn "We Praise You, O God."

God Bless America



HYMN

“We Praise You, O God”

LSB 785
Verses 1-2

1 We praise You, O God, our Re - deem - er, Cre - a - tor;
2 We wor - ship You, God of our fa - thers, we bless You;

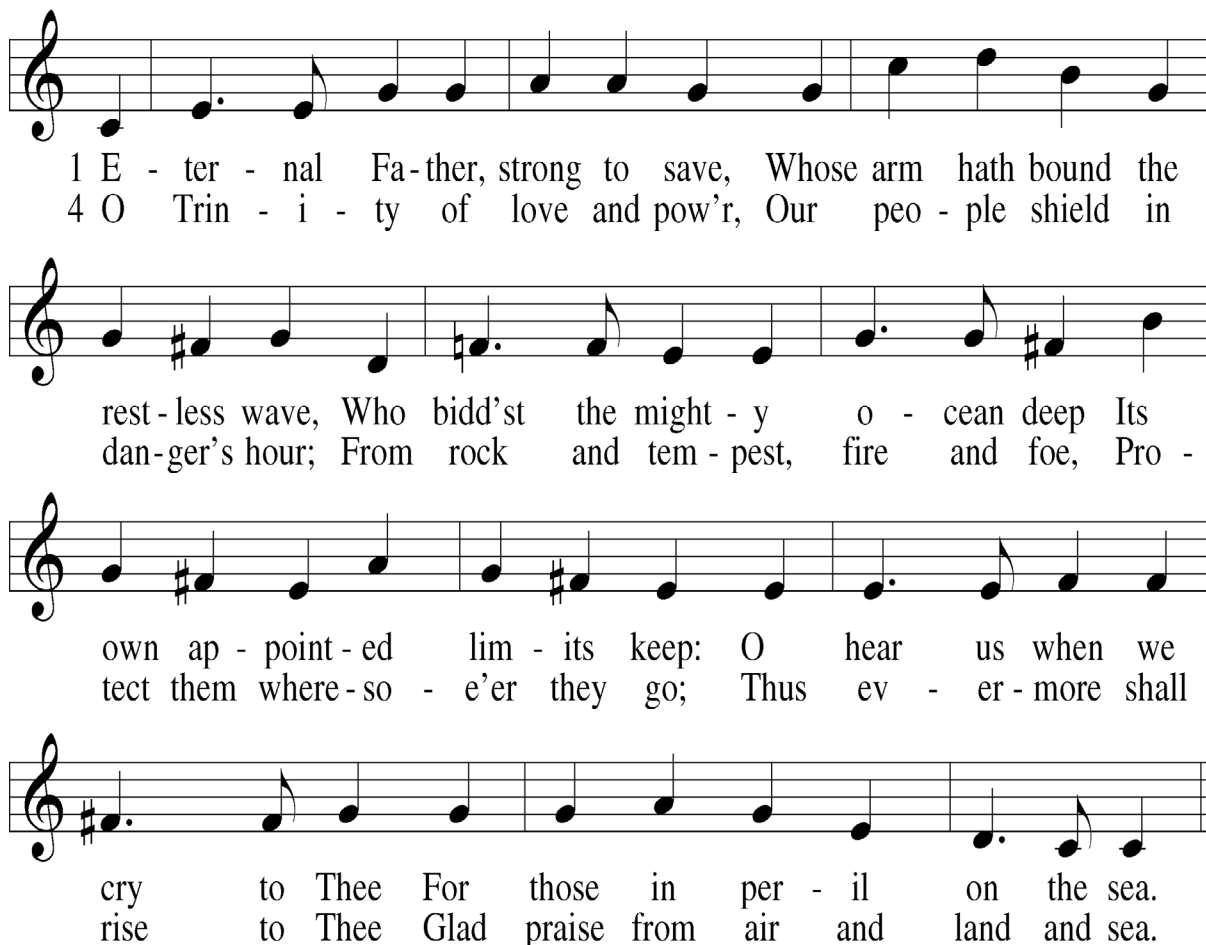
In grate - ful de - vo - tion our trib - ute we bring.
Through tri - al and tem - pest our guide You have been.

We lay it be - fore You, we kneel and a - dore You;
When per - ils o'er - take us, You will not for - sake us,

We bless Your ho - ly name, glad prais - es we sing.
And with Your help, O Lord, our strug - gles we win.

Text and tune: Public domain

Reader: We bless God for the peace that our nation has known on its shores for two and a half centuries. And we give our thanks for the generations of military men and women who have lived devotedly and even died sacrificially to keep the freedoms that we enjoy and to maintain the peace that we know here in our land. King David wrote in one of his psalms: “But You, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head” (Psalm 3:3). In the words of a devotional hymn text, we lift up our military people in prayer as we sing “Eternal Father, Strong to Save.”



1 E - ter - nal Fa - ther, strong to save, Whose arm hath bound the
4 O Trin - i - ty of love and pow'r, Our peo - ple shield in
rest - less wave, Who bidd'st the might - y o - cean deep Its
dan - ger's hour; From rock and tem - pest, fire and foe, Pro -
own ap - point - ed lim - its keep: O hear us when we
tect them where - so - e'er they go; Thus ev - er - more shall
cry to Thee For those in per - il on the sea.
rise to Thee Glad praise from air and land and sea.

Text and tune: Public domain

Reader: We give glory to God for the United States that each of us knows, no matter what location in this vast country we call home. In a heartfelt exclamation centuries ago, King David the psalmist wrote: "May the LORD give strength to His people! May the LORD bless His people with peace!" (Psalm 29:11). Peace and prosperity have been blessings from God in these United States for two and a half centuries. Confident of future blessings and with true thankfulness, we can echo the words of Psalm 126, which summed up the sentiment of God's people: "The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad" (verse 3). With glad hearts and joyful voices we sing "Now Thank We All Our God."

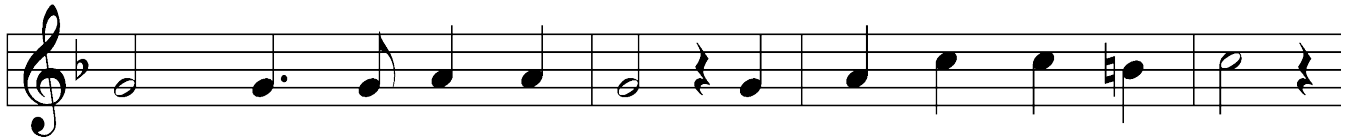




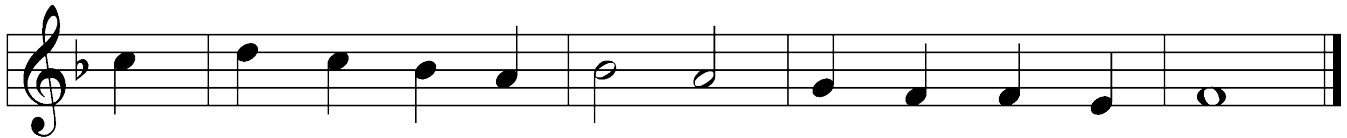
1 Now thank we all our God With hearts and hands and voices,
2 Oh, may this bounteous God Through all our life be near us,



Who wondrous things has done, In whom His world rejoices;
With ever joyful hearts And blessed peace to cheer us



Who from our mothers' arms Has blest us on our way
And keep us in His grace And guide us when perplexed



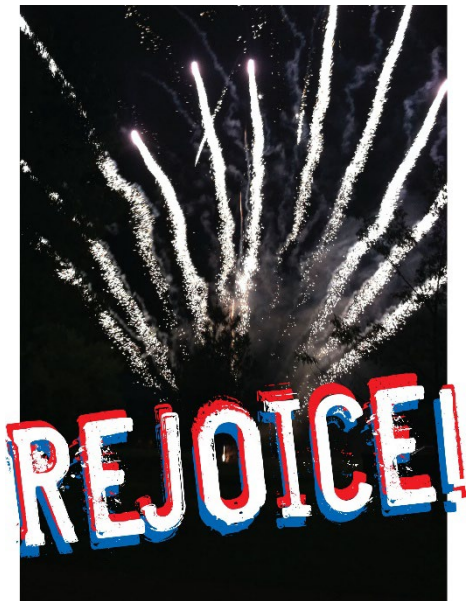
With countless gifts of love And still is ours to-day.
And free us from all ills In this world and the next!

Text and tune: Public domain

✧ WORD ✧

Old Testament Reading: Zechariah 9:9-12
(Rejoice! Your King comes to you.)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall speak peace to the nations;
his rule shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.
As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.



**Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;
today I declare that I will restore to you double.**

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Epistle: Romans 7:14-25a

(I know that nothing good lives in me apart from Christ.)

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Please rise for the Verse and the Holy Gospel.

VERSE *Psalms 147:12–14*

Pastor: Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!

People: Praise your God, O Zion!

Pastor: For He strengthens the bars of your gates;

People: He blesses your children within you.

Pastor: He makes peace in your borders;

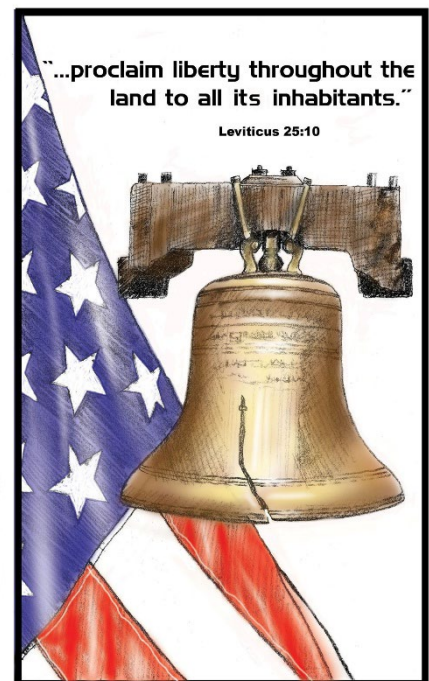
People: He fills you with the finest of the wheat.

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

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

Holy Gospel: Matthew 11:25-30

At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things



have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

(No Children’s Message this week)

Hymn of the Day

“God of Our Fathers”

HWC 573

1. God of our fa - thers, whose al-might - y hand Leads forth in
2. Your love di - vine has led us in the past; In this free
3. From war's a - larms, from dead - ly pes - ti - lence Make your strong

beau - ty all the star - ry band Of shin - ing worlds in
land by you our lot is cast; Oh, be our rul - er,
arm our ev - er sure de - fense. Your true re - li - gion

splen - dor through the skies: Our grate - ful songs be - fore your throne a - rise.
guard - ian, guide, and stay; Your Word our law, your paths our cho - sen way.
in our hearts in - crease; Your boun - teous good - ness nour - ish us in peace.

Sermon

“Finding Rest for Your Souls”

Rev. Larry A. Alb

Text: Matthew 11:25-30

Statement of Faith: Catechism

The First Article

People: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and

mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: In our secular society our constitution begins with this paragraph:

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Let us use it as a guide as we ask our heavenly Father's continued care. We, the people of the United States.

People: **We recognize Your grace, O God, in creating us, calling us to faith, and leading us totally by grace. We thank You for placing us within this great land.**

Pastor: To form a more perfect union, establish justice.

People: **We pray, Lord God, that You would raise up people dedicated to working together for all people, serving them equally in the wisdom You provide.**

Pastor: Insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense.

People: **Lord Jesus, protect and guide those who serve in the armed forces and those who keep the peace in our neighborhoods.**

Pastor: Promote the general welfare.

People: **Bless, O Lord, all who run toward danger for the sake of others, those who use their gifts for health and healing, and those who raise crops, tend flocks, and distribute the gifts of this bountiful land for the good of all.**

Pastor: And secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

People: **Help us, O Holy Spirit, to maintain all that You have given us so that our children and children's children may also give thanks to You with all You so graciously provide.**

(Other intercessions may be added here)

Pastor: These and any other things You would have us ask, gracious God, grant to us for the sake of 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!

Offering (4:00 pm - collected in back; 9:00 am – collected in the pews)

Ministry of Music (4:00 pm) / Offering Music (9:00) (Organ / Piano Duet)

“Hymns of God and Country”

arr. Nielsen & Young
Diana Gaide, pianist
Michael Zehnder, organist

✠ **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.**

DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

Piano Solo “America”

Bill Wolaver
Diana Gaide, piano



Hymn "Before You, Lord, We Bow" LSB 966

Hymn "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow" LSB 805

General Communion Blessing

Benediction

Pastor: Go out into the world in peace, have courage, hold to what is good, return no person evil for evil, strengthen the fainthearted, support the weak, help the suffering, honor all people, love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. The almighty God—the Father, the ✕ Son, and the Holy Spirit—bless you.

People: Amen.

Closing Hymn "Christ, by Heavenly Hosts Adored" LW 499

1 Christ, by heav'n - ly hosts a - dored, Gra - cious, might - y,
2 On our fields of grass and grain Send, O Lord, the
3 Give us rul - ers faith - ful, true, Such as love and

sov-'reign Lord, God of na - tions, King of kings,
kind - ly rain, And through - out this spa - cious land
hon - or You; Let the pow - ers You or - dained

Head of the all cre - at - ed things,
Crown the in la - bors of each hand.
Be in righ - teous - ness main - tained.

By the Church with joy con - fessed,
Let Your kind pro - tec - tion be
In the the peo - ple's hearts in - crease

God the Son for - ev - er blessed, Plead - ing at Your
O - ver com - merce on the sea. O - pen, Lord, Your
Love of pi - e - ty and peace. Thus u - nit - ed,

throne we stand, Save Your peo - ple, bless our land.
boun - teous hand; Bless Your peo - ple, bless our land.
we shall stand One wide, free, and hap - py land.

Congregational Concerns

Dismissal

Pastor: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Postlude "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow" Michael Burkhardt

From Sea to Shining Sea



SERVING IN WORSHIP

PASTOR

Pastor John Larson

PREACHER / CELEBRANT

Rev. Larry A. Alb

MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP / ORGANIST

Rev. Michael J. Zehnder

PIANIST

Diana Gaide

ELDERS

4:00 p.m. Jeff Dunker; 9:00 a.m. Benjamin Dallet

ACOLYTES

9:00 a.m. Juliette Dallet

LECTORS

4:00 p.m. Dawn Munson; 9:00 a.m. David Kaiser

COMMUNION SERVERS

4:00 p.m. Dawn Munson; 9:00 a.m. Arvin Michel

ALTAR GUILD

Sharon Seible, Barbara Rutter



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