

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LITTLETON, COLORADO

October 3-4, 2026

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



NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

KNOWING CHRIST IS MORE VALUABLE THAN ANY HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT AS WE GATHER

“God loves you.” It is not like we have never heard that before. We may even have taken that fact for granted, thinking, “Well, of course He does! That’s His thing! 1 John 4:8 says that God *is* love.” Nevertheless, as our lives and circumstances unfold, through the uncertainties of sin and doubt and failure, many have come up short and been forced to wonder, “How can God love me now?” Love, after all, is always in direct proportion to our worthiness of it, to how lovable we are, right?

The highest love of God, agape, can commonly be defined as the love of intelligence and corresponding purpose. This definition may seem at first to drain the whole idea of the depth of emotion or the value of love. But we discover the power of God’s love even more as we are convinced of the greatness of our need—our own sin and unworthiness. That’s when the cross of Calvary and the sacrifice of Christ crucified shines forth as the highest, greatest, and almost unbelievable love of God for you—even you. Notice how many of today’s hymns examine the depth and, yes, “strangeness” of the fact that God loves you.

✠ PREPARATION ✠

Prelude "O Love, How Deep (Intro & Finale)" Walter Pelz

Pastoral Greeting

Opening Hymn "O Love, How Deep" *LSB 544*
Verses 1-2, 5-7

Invocation

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

People: **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 43:4; 124:8; John 3:16*

Pastor: I will go to the altar of God,

People: **to God my exceeding joy.**

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the LORD,

People: **who made heaven and earth.**

Pastor: God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son,

People: **that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *2 Corinthians 5:14–15, adapted from KJV*

Pastor: Beloved, "the love of Christ constrains us," because "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." For the sake of the miraculous love of God, let us draw near to Him with a true heart and confess our sins and our need for God's love.

People: **Lord God, heavenly Father, we confess to You that we have sinned against You through our fears and failure to live according to Your will and design. Because our love for You has faltered, so also have we not loved those whom You would have us call our neighbor. So certain are we of our sin that we have even wondered at times how You could still love us. Because of Your merciful invitation alone, we come before You, begging Your forgiveness solely and alone for the sake of the sacrifice of Your Son. O Lord, have mercy on us.**

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. 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.**



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

“Rise, Shine, You People ”

LSB 825
Verses 1-3



1 Rise, shine, you peo - ple! Christ the Lord has en - tered
2 See how He sends the pow'rs of e - vil reel - ing;
3 Come, cel - e - brate, your ban - ners high un - furl - ing,

Our hu - man sto - ry; God in Him is cen - tered.
He brings us free - dom, light and life and heal - ing.
Your songs and prayers a - gainst the dark-ness hurl - ing.

He comes to us, by death and sin sur -
All men and wom - en, who by guilt are
To all the world go out and tell the

round - ed, With grace un - bound - ed.
driv - en, Now are for - giv - en.
sto - ry Of Je - sus' glo - ry.

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✠ WORD ✠

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 5:1-7

(God's love song for His beloved)

Let me sing for my beloved
my love song concerning his vineyard:

**My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.
He dug it and cleared it of stones,
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
and he looked for it to yield grapes,
but it yielded wild grapes.
And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.
What more was there to do for my vineyard,
that I have not done in it?
When I looked for it to yield grapes,
why did it yield wild grapes?
And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.
I will make it a waste;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and briers and thorns shall grow up;
I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.
For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah
are his pleasant planting;
and he looked for justice,
but behold, bloodshed;
for righteousness,
but behold, an outcry!**

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Epistle: Philippians 3:4-14

(The surpassing worth of knowing Christ)

Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as



loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Please rise for the Verse and the Holy Gospel.

VERSE *John 6:68*



Al-le-lu-ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter-nal life. Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

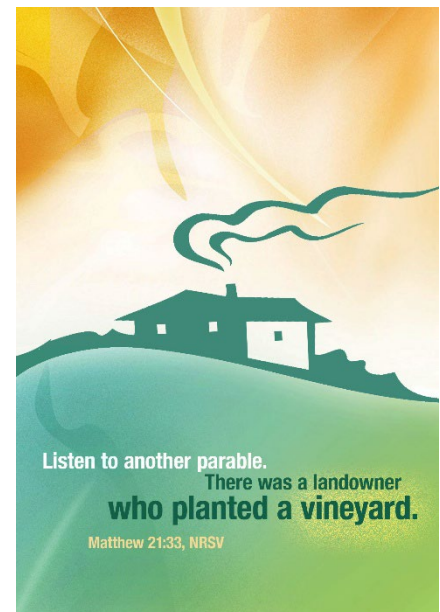
Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-first chapter.

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

Holy Gospel: Matthew 21:33-46

(The parable of the tenants)

“Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those



wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;

this was the Lord's doing,

and it is marvelous in our eyes’?

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

Hymn of the Day “By Grace I’m Saved”

LSB 566
(Verses 1-4)

Sermon “Forward or Back?”

Pastor John Larson
Text: Philippians 3:4b-14

Nicene 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 (4:00 pm and 10:30 am - collected in back; 8:00 am – collected in the pews)

Offering Music (8:00) “By Grace, I’m Saved”

Donald Busarow

✠ 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, who, out of love for His fallen creation, humbled Himself by taking on the form of a servant, becoming obedient unto death, even death upon a cross. Risen from the dead, He has freed us from eternal death and given us life everlasting. 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

LSB 161

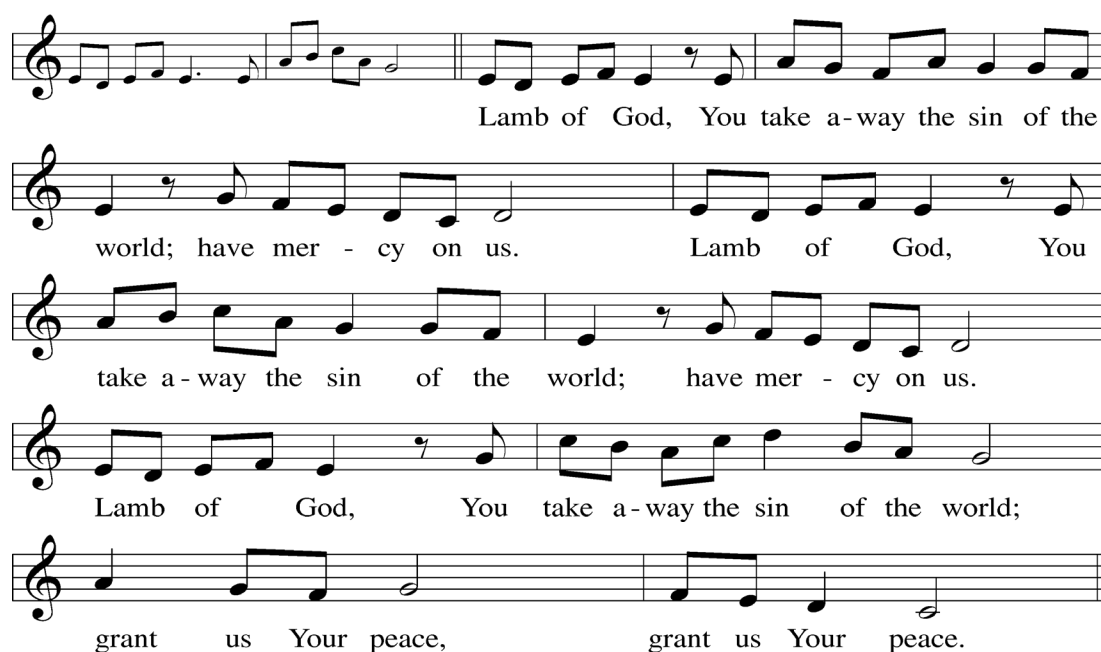
Words of Institution

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 II

LSB 963



Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, You
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the world;
grant us Your peace, grant us Your peace.

DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

Special Music

“Knowing You”

Graham Kendrick
Michael Zehnder, soloist and pianist

All I once held dear built my life upon
All this world reveres and wars to own
All I once thought gain I have counted loss
Spent and worthless now compared to this

Chorus

Knowing You Jesus knowing You
There is no greater thing
You're my all You're the best
You're my joy my righteousness
And I love You Lord love You Lord

Now my heart's desire is to know You more
To be found in You and known as Yours
To possess by faith what I could not earn
All surpassing gift of righteousness

Oh to know the pow'r of Your risen life
And to know You in Your sufferings
To become like You in Your death my Lord
So with You to live and never die



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Hymn

“Christ, the Word of God Incarnate”

LSB 540
(Verses 1-2, 4)

Hymn

“Fight the Good Fight”

LSB 664

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

“We Know That Christ is Raised”

LSB 603

Congregational Concerns

Dismissal

Pastor: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Postlude “We Know That Christ is Raised (from Hymn Prisms)” Sue Mitchell Wallace



SERVING IN WORSHIP

PREACHER / CELEBRANT

MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP / ORGANIST

GLORIA DEI RINGERS / ASCENSION CHORALE DIRECTOR

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER

ELDERS

ACOLYTES

LECTORS

COMMUNION SERVER

ALTAR GUILD

Pastor John Larson

Rev. Michael Zehnder

Stephanie Roettjer

Cody Knapp

4:00 Jim Wert; 8:00 Bob Olsen; 10:30 Michael Lawrenz

8:00 Ellise Friend; 10:30 Abby Williams

4:00 Anita Baresel; 8:00 Joyce Dowdy; 10:30 Candace Uyeda

4:00 Anita Baresel; 10:30 Candace Uyeda

Shelia Beu, Cathy Utecht, Charmaine Rohde



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Extended Day Preschool

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GIVE
thanks
TO THE
Lord;
FOR HE IS GOOD.
PSALM 107:1, NIV