

# ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD  
LITTLETON, COLORADO

*October 4, 2026*  
10:30 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 ✂

**Gathering Song**

**BLESSED BE YOUR NAME**

Redman

Blessed be Your name  
In the land that is plentiful  
Where Your streams of abundance flow  
Blessed be Your name

Blessed be Your name  
When I'm found in the desert place  
Though I walk through the wilderness  
Blessed be Your name

Ev'ry blessing You pour out I'll  
Turn back to praise  
When the darkness closes in, Lord  
Still I will say

**CHORUS**

**Blessed be the name of the Lord**  
**Blessed be Your name**  
**Blessed be the name of the Lord**  
**Blessed be Your glorious name**

Blessed be Your name  
When the sun's shining down on me  
When the world's all as it should be  
Blessed be Your name

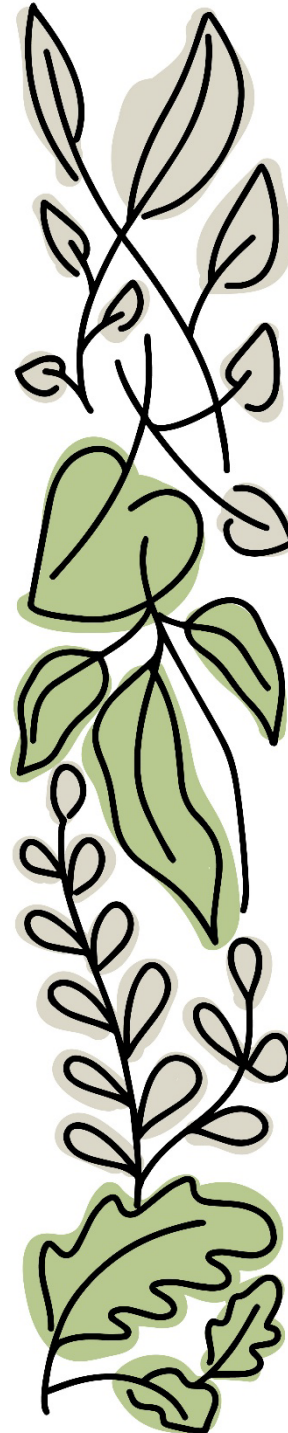
Blessed be Your name  
On the road marked with suffering  
Though there's pain in the offering  
Blessed be Your name

Ev'ry blessing You pour out I'll  
Turn back to praise  
When the darkness closes in, Lord  
Still I will say

**(CHORUS 2X)**

You give and take away  
You give and take away  
My heart will choose to say  
Lord blessed be Your name **(4X)**

**(CHORUS 2X)**



**Pastoral Greeting**

There was no way until You made one  
Grace upon grace, hallelujah  
Even though I don't deserve it, You did it  
Even though I couldn't earn it, You give it

**CHORUS**

**Who am I that You keep me on Your mind?**  
**God, I'm just grateful for You**  
**God, I'm just grateful for You**  
**All my life, You've been right here by my side**  
**God, I'm just grateful for You**  
**God, I'm just grateful for You**

Holy holy, there's only One  
I give You glory for all that You've done  
Even though I don't deserve it, You did it  
Even though I couldn't earn it, You give it

**(CHORUS x2)**

I, I'm lifting both of my hands  
You gave me chance after chance, after chance  
I, I'm giving all that I am  
You gave me chance after chance, after chance **(x2)**

**(CHORUS x2)**

I survived and I'm here to testify  
God, I'm just grateful for You  
God, I'm just grateful for You  
I'm alright if they say I'm outta my mind  
God, I'm just grateful for You  
God, I'm just grateful for You

CCLI Song # 7270317 Abubakar Baker Shariff-Farr | Chandler Moore | Joshua Emanuel Coleman | Pat Barrett | Steven Furtick © 2025 Pat Barrett Designee; Music by Elevation Worship Publishing; For Humans Publishing; Maverick City Publishing; Remaining portion is unaffiliated CCLI License # 11489815

**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.

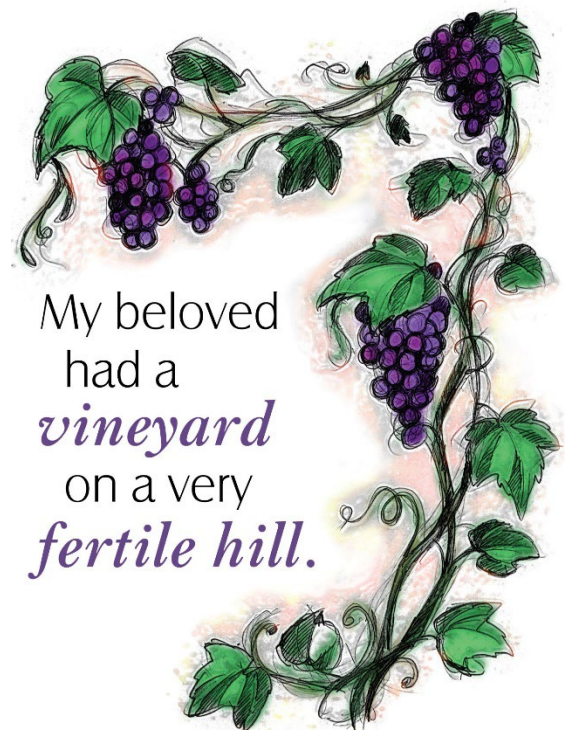
People: **Amen.**

☩ **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?**



My beloved  
had a  
*vineyard*  
on a very  
*fertile hill.*

Isaiah 5:1, NRSV

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 briars 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 Holy Gospel.*

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.**

**Children's Message**

Stephanie Roettjer

**Song of the Day      BUILD MY LIFE**

Younker | Martin

Worthy of every song we could ever sing  
Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring  
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe  
We live for You

Jesus, the Name above every other name  
Jesus, the only One Who could ever save  
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe  
We live for You, we live for You

### **CHORUS**

**Holy there is no one like You**  
**There is none beside You**  
**Open up my eyes in wonder and**  
**Show me Who You are**  
**And fill me with Your heart**  
**And lead me in Your love to those around me**

Jesus, the Name above every other name  
Jesus, the only One Who could ever save  
Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe  
We live for You, we live for You

### **(CHORUS)**

I will build my life upon Your love  
It is a firm foundation  
I will put my trust in You alone  
And I will not be shaken **(2X)**

### **(CHORUS 2X)**

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**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** *(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 ✠

### **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**

**Song** **O COME TO THE ALTAR** Brown | Brock | Furtick | Joye

Are you hurting and broken within?  
Overwhelmed by the weight of your sin?  
Jesus is calling  
Have you come to the end of yourself?  
Do you thirst for a drink from the well?  
Jesus is calling

## CHORUS

O come to the altar  
The Father's arms are open wide  
Forgiveness was bought with  
The precious blood of Jesus Christ

Leave behind your regrets and mistakes  
Come today there's no reason to wait  
Jesus is calling  
Bring your sorrows and trade them for joy  
From the ashes a new life is born  
Jesus is calling

## (CHORUS)

Oh, what a Savior  
Isn't He wonderful?  
Sing "alleluia", Christ is risen  
Bow down before Him  
For He is Lord of all  
Sing "alleluia", Christ is risen (x2)

## (CHORUS x2)

Bear your cross as you wait for the crown  
Tell the world of the treasure you've found

CCLI Song # 7051511 Chris Brown | Mack Brock | Steven Furtick | Wade Joyce © 2015 Music by Elevation Worship Publishing CCLI License # 11489815

## 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

## BUILD YOUR KINGDOM HERE

Llewellyn | Gilkeson

Come set Your rule and reign  
In our hearts again  
Increase in us we pray  
Unveil why we're made  
Come set our hearts ablaze with hope  
Like wildfire in our very souls  
Holy Spirit, come invade us now  
We are Your church  
We need Your pow'r in us



YET I WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD,  
*I will be joyful*  
IN GOD MY SAVIOR.

HABAKKUK 3:18, NIV

We seek Your kingdom first  
We hunger and we thirst  
Refuse to waste our lives  
For You're our joy and prize  
To see the captives' hearts released  
The hurt, the sick, the poor at peace  
We lay down our lives for Heaven's cause  
We are Your church  
We pray revive this earth

### **CHORUS**

**Build Your kingdom here  
Let the darkness fear  
Show Your mighty hand  
Heal our streets and land  
Set Your church on fire  
Win this nation back  
Change the atmosphere  
Build Your kingdom here, we pray**



Unleash Your kingdom's pow'r  
Reaching the near and far  
No force of hell can stop  
Your beauty changing hearts  
You made us for much more than this  
Awake the kingdom seed in us  
Fill us with the strength and love of Christ  
We are Your church  
We are the hope on Earth

### **(CHORUS 2X)**

CCLI Song # 6186078 Chris Llewellyn | Gareth Gilkeson | William Herron © 2011 Thankyou Music Ltd CCLI License # 11489815

## **Congregational Concerns**

### **Dismissal**

**Pastor:** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

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



## SERVING IN WORSHIP

**PREACHER / CELEBRANT**

Pastor John Larson

**MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP / ORGANIST**

Rev. Michael Zehnder

**GLORIA DEI RINGERS DIRECTOR**

Stephanie Roettjer

**CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER**

Cody Knapp

**ELDERS**

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

**ACOLYTES**

8:00 Ellise Friend; 10:30 Abby Williams

**LECTORS**

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

**COMMUNION SERVER**

4:00 Anita Baresel; 10:30 Candace Uyeda

**ALTAR GUILD**

Shelia Beu, Cathy Utecht, Charmaine Rohde



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