

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LITTLETON, COLORADO

September 19-20, 2026

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



SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

DO NOT BEGRUDGE GOD'S GENEROSITY

AS WE GATHER

On the surface, the parable of the laborers in the vineyard seems wrong. Shouldn't the worker receive the wages he or she deserves for his or her time and labor? It offends our sense of fair play that one who worked less should receive the same as one who worked more. If you only focus on the perspective of the laborer, that might seem true, but if you focus on the generosity of the vineyard owner, you get a very different perspective. God's mercy is not the reward for our labor but a pure gift of grace given to those who deserve none of His kindness. When you begin to look at this parable from that perspective, God's abundant generosity becomes clear. The Lord does what none of us would do—forgives all our sins, no matter how great, and bestows upon us the mercy and salvation we did nothing to earn and could never deserve. How can anyone begrudge Him such generosity?

✠ PREPARATION ✠

Prelude

“Lord of All Hopefulness”

Joseph Martin

Pastoral Greeting

Opening Hymn

“Lord of All Hopefulness”

LSB 738

Invocation

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

People: **Amen.**

CONFESSIO AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Almighty God,

People: **Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, and judge of all people, we confess to You that we have sinned. We have turned away from one another in our thinking, speaking, and doing. We have done the evil You forbid and have not done the good You desire. We do repent and are truly sorry for these our sins. Because of the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us, forgiving us all that is past and granting us the Holy Spirit to guide us into the future.**

Pastor: God has promised forgiveness of sins to those who repent. The Lord keep you in His grace and favor and bring you to everlasting life. 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.**

Pastor: He who began this good work within you will bring it to completion on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

"God of Grace and God of Glory"

LSB 850
Verses 1-2



1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, On Your peo - ple
2 Lo, the hosts of e - vil round us Scorn the Christ, as -
pour Your pow'r; Crown Your an - cient Church's sto - ry;
sail His ways! From the fears that long have bound us
Bring its bud hearts to glo - rious flow'r. Grant us wis - dom,
Free our hearts to faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom,
grant us cour - age For the fac - ing of this
grant us cour - age For the liv - ing of these
hour,
days, For the fac - ing of this hour.
For the liv - ing of these days.

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✠ WORD ✠

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 55:6-9

("Seek the LORD while He may be found.")

**"Seek the Lord while he may be found;
call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to the Lord,
that he may have compassion on him,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts."**



Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Epistle: Phil. 1:12-14, 19-30

("Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.")

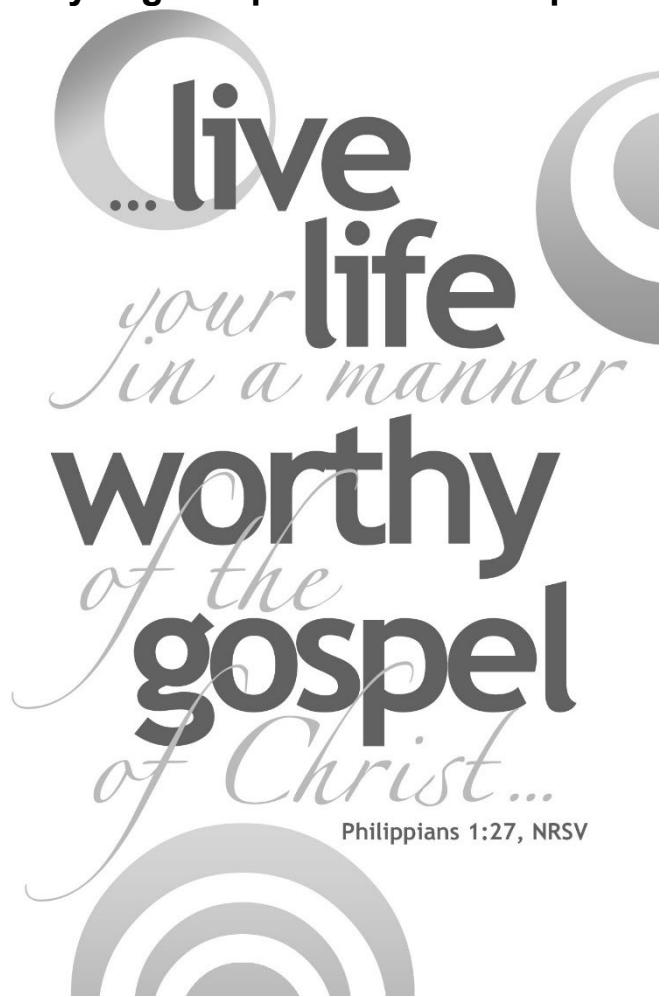
I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

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 twentieth chapter.

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

Holy Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

(Do you begrudge the Lord's generosity?)

For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' So the last will be first, and the first last."

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Hymn of the Day "You are the Way; Through You Alone"

LSB 526

Sermon "Life or Death? Which is Better?"

Pastor John Larson

Text: Philippians 1:12-14, 19-30

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 (4:00) “Preludio in E-Flat” J.S. Bach

Offering Music (8:00) "Glad Praises We Sing" arr. Patti Drennan
Ann Westra, flautist
Ascension Chorale

✠ 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, having created all things, took on human flesh and was born of the virgin Mary. For our sake He died on the cross and rose from the dead to put an end to death, thus fulfilling Your will and gaining for You a holy people. 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

LSB 163



DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

Special Piano Music	"Sent Forth By God's Blessing"	Nielsen and Young
Hymn	"Seek Ye First"	LSB 712
Hymn	"Take My Life and Let It Be"	LSB 783

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	"Almighty Father, Bless the Word"	LSB 923
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Congregational Concerns

Dismissal

Pastor: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude	"Almighty Father, Bless the Word"	Fred Bock
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SERVING IN WORSHIP

PREACHER / CELEBRANT

MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP

ORGANIST / PIANIST

CHOIR DIRECTOR – ASCENSION CHORALE

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER

ELDERS

ACOLYTES

LECTORS

COMMUNION SERVER

ALTAR GUILD

Pastor John Larson

Rev. Michael Zehnder

Diana Gaide

Stephanie Roettjer

Stephanie Roettjer

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

8:00 Ellise Friend; 10:30 Abby Williams

4:00 Curt Engle; 8:00 Joyce Lord; 10:30 Jude Donovan

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Shelia Beu, Cathy Utecht, Charmaine Rohde



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