

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LITTLETON, COLORADO

September 26-27, 2026

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



EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JESUS HAS AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS AND HEAL

AS WE GATHER

From the beginning, God implanted His life-creating power into His creation with the command “Be fruitful and multiply” to animals (Genesis 1:22) and to humans (1:28), with one important difference. You are not an accident or only a product of biology. Every human being is a personal soul. So we confess, “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” (Small Catechism, Creed, Explanation of the First Article). Because of our inherited sin, however, “the soul who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). Nevertheless, God’s design is for life—eternal life. He declares, “I have no pleasure in the death of anyone” (18:32). Because God so loves you, He sent His Son to take away your sin by the shedding of His blood on the cross. Therefore, “we preach Christ crucified, . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:23–24). Christ died to sin for you. By Holy Baptism, you died with Christ and are raised to new life in Him. The love of God is yours today by faith in the cross of Jesus Christ. The Father’s declaration of Jesus now becomes yours: “My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

✠ PREPARATION ✠

Prelude "A Joyous Acclamation" Lani Smith

Pastoral Greeting

Opening Hymn "Jesus Has Come and Brings Pleasure" LSB 533

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; Isaiah 25:9*

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: Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, that He might save us.

People: **This is the LORD; we have waited for Him; let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: God invites His whole creation to the great feast of His salvation. That we may boldly enter into His gates of mercy, let us lift up our prayer of repentance and faith.

People: **Lord God, heavenly Father, with thanksgiving for Your great love and promise of new life and hope for living, we confess to You all our sins, our waywardness, our neglect of Your call, as well as our failure to be of help to our neighbor and one another. We humbly pray, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew and cleanse our hearts and minds, and give us true faith in Your promised grace and deliverance.**

Pastor: The feast of God's salvation has already begun for you by your Baptism into Christ. Now receive the Lord's abiding forgiveness, faith, strength, and help to live in the certain hope of eternal life in fellowship with Him: I 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

"Majesty"

Hayford

Majesty

Words and Music by
Jack Hayford

Maj-es-ty, wor-ship His maj-es-ty. Un-to Je-sus be all
glo-ry, hon-or, and praise. Maj-es-ty, king-dom au-thor-i-ty
flow from His throne un-to His own; His an-them raise.
So ex-alt, lift up on high the name of Je-sus.
Mag-ni-fy, come glo-ri-fy Christ Je-sus, the King.
Maj-es-ty, wor-ship His maj-es-ty~ Je-sus who
died, now glo-ri-fied, King of all kings.

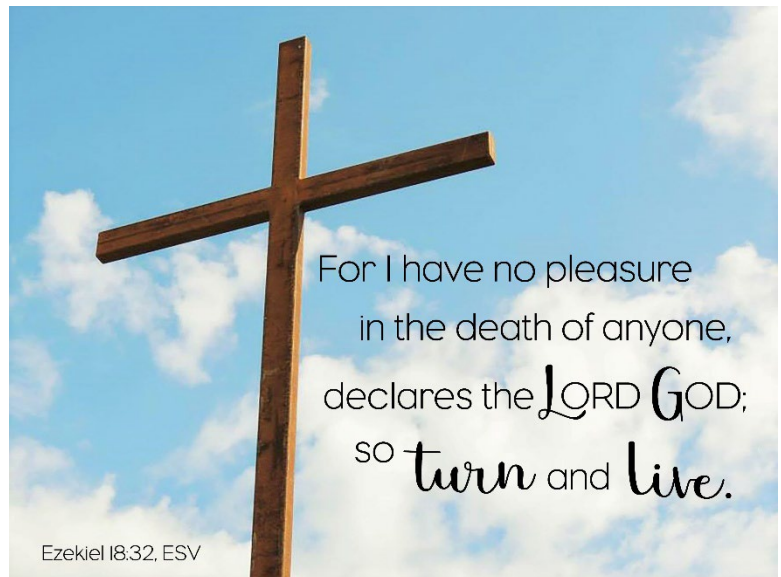
✂ WORD ✂

Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

("I have no pleasure in the death of anyone.")

The word of the Lord came to me: "What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live, declares the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

"Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?"



"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live."

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Epistle: Philippians 2:1-18

(Christ's example of humility)

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is

yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

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*



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

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

Holy Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32

(The authority of Jesus is challenged.)

And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?" And they discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From man,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I will, sir,' but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

Hymn of the Day

"Praise the One Who Breaks the
Darkness"

LSB 848

Sermon

"Authority"

Pastor John Larson

Text: Matthew 21:23-32

Apostles' 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)

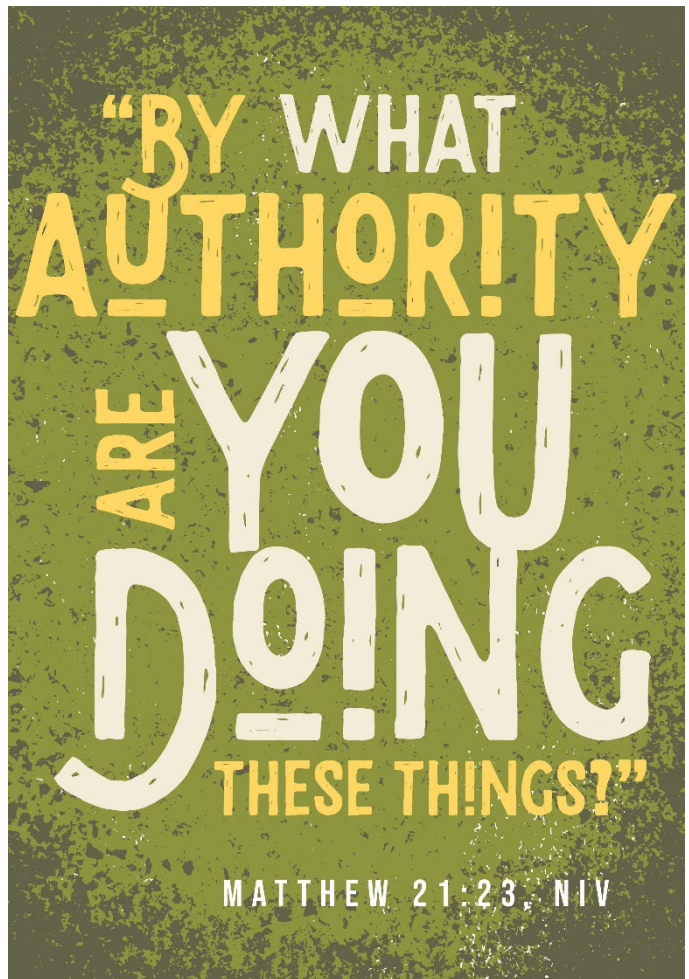
Organ Offering Music (4:00)

"Jesus Has Come"

Hildebrand

Bell Choir Offering Music (8:00) "Jesus Has Come"

arr. John Behnke
Gloria Dei Ringers



✠ 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 meet, 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. From the beginning, You declared Him Your beloved Son in whom You are well pleased, and through Him it is Your good pleasure to restore life to all in the forgiveness of sins won for us by the blood of His cross. Now by faith in Him it is Your good pleasure to call us Your own beloved sons and daughters. 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.

Text: © 1975 International Consultation on English Texts. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110000713 Tune: © 2001 Jeffrey N. Biersch. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110000713

DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

Special Music "Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness"

Michael Burkhardt

(Worship Notes: both communion hymns below have LSB hymn numbers, but these do not appear in your physical version of the LSB hymnal in our pews which only goes up to #966. Very inventively, our hymnal repertoire continues to expand and be updated under the auspices of the LCMS Commission on Worship, which approves and releases new material as deemed appropriate for use in LCMS churches. Yet these additional hymns are available to church leaders online for copying into bulletins.)

Hymn

"Jesus, Name Above All Names"

LSB 970 / AGPS 145

1 Je - sus, name a - bove all names, Beau - ti - ful
 2 Je - sus, lov - ing Shep - herd Vine of the
 3 Je - sus, Way of sal - va - tion, King 3 of

Sav - ior, glo - ri - ous Lord, Em - man - u - el, God is
 branch - es, Son of God. Prince of Peace, Won - der - ful
 kings, Lord of lords, The Way, the Truth, and the

with us bless - ed Re - deem - er, liv - ing Word.
 Coun - selor Lord of the u - ni - verse, Light of the world.
 Life, Might - y Cre - a - tor, My Sav - ior and Friend.

Hymn

"How Majestic is Your Name"

LSB 978

O Lord, our Lord, how ma - jes - tic is Your name in all the
 earth. O earth. O Lord, we praise Your name. O
 Lord, we mag - ni - fy Your name: Prince of Peace, Might - y
 God, O Lord God Al - might - y. O y.

1 D.S. 2 Final ending

Text and tune: © 1981 Meadowgreen Music Company, admin. EMI. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110000713

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 "Christ is Made the Sure Foundation"

LSB 909

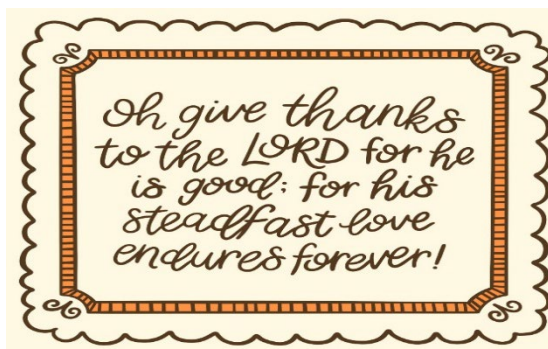
Congregational Concerns

Dismissal

Pastor: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude "Christ is Made the Sure Foundation" Paul Manz



SERVING IN WORSHIP

PREACHER / CELEBRANT

Pastor John Larson

MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP / ORGANIST

Rev. Michael Zehnder

BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR

Stephanie Roettjer

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER

Cody Knapp

ELDERS

4:00 Jeff Dunker; 8:00 Arvin Michel; 10:30 Michael Lawrenz

ACOLYTES

8:00 Connor Lujan; 10:30 Tobin Lawrenz

LECTORS

4:00 Curt Engle; 8:00 Tom Munson; 10:30 Lisa O'Neal

COMMUNION SERVER

4:00 Curt Engle; 10:30 Lisa O'Neal

ALTAR GUILD

Shelia Beu, Cathy Utecht, Charmaine Rohde

✠ ✠ ✠

Ascension Lutheran Church

1701 West Caley Avenue, Littleton, Colorado 80120

www.alutheran.org

(303) 794-4636 office@alutheran.org

Extended Day Preschool

303-730-2514 director@alcpreschool.com