

# Fifth Sunday After Pentecost

## Stumbling Blocks

June 28, 2026 • Proper 8 A • Ascension Lutheran Church • El Paso, Texas

---

### **As We Gather**

Back in the time of the New Testament, the Christian faith was known as “the Way” (see Acts 9:2, 18:25, 19:9, 24:14, etc.). God tells us to “walk by the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16), that is, we are to live in faith and love. But walking in God’s way is not always easy. Sometimes there are stumbling blocks in the road. One obstacle is the false prophets and false religions that seem to sprout up like mushrooms. Jeremiah had to face down a false prophet in his time (Jeremiah 28:5-9, 15-17). Another obstacle is the popular idea that we can all be “good enough” to get into heaven, we can keep God’s Law “good enough” to get by if we really try. But the truth is that no-one is good enough – God’s Law doesn’t save us, it just shows us our sin (Romans 7:1-13). Sometimes the obstacle is that other people discourage us from following Jesus – sometimes people from our own families (Matthew 10:34-42).

But God calls us to overcome these stumbling blocks. In this life we will face challenges; but instead of becoming discouraged or turning back, remember how God has loved us and forgiven us and saved us. He will help us get past the obstacles and more, to share his love and salvation with the people around us. The sermon today calls us all to be “evangelists”, that is, to communicate God’s love at every opportunity. We don’t have to have special training or abilities to share God’s Word; we just need to be willing, to be bold, to show love, and to make the effort to reach out – but most of all to trust Jesus for his forgiveness and help.

**Prelude:** “Old Hundredth” – Piet Post

“Melita” – Wayne Wold

### **Words of Welcome**

Stand

### **Sharing God’s Peace with One Another**

We greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying “Peace be with you” as a sign of our unity and reconciliation in the Holy Spirit. As we are forgiven by God, so we forgive each other. (Matthew 5:22-24; Ephesians 4:1-3)

## Hymn: Rise Up Oh Church of God

Make a Joyful Sound (White Booklet) 3

1. Rise up, oh church of God! Have done with lesser things.  
Give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve the King of kings.
2. Rise up, oh church of God! His kingdom tarries long.  
Bring in the day of brotherhood and end the night of wrong.
3. Rise up, oh church of God! The church for you does wait,  
Her strength unequal to her task. Rise up, and make her great!
4. Lift high the cross of Christ! Tread where his feet have trod.  
As brothers of the Son of Man, rise up, oh church of God. Amen.

## Invocation

- L** In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
**C** Amen.

## Prayer of Confession

- L** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.  
**C** **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** (1 John 1:8-9)

*We take a few moments for silent prayer and reflection.*

- A** **Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. Our very nature leads us astray. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved other people as you call us to love. We deserve to be punished. But for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us. Help us to walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

## Assurance of Forgiveness

- L** Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Matthew 9:13) Jesus died on the cross to pay for all our wrongdoing. He rose from the dead and lives to forgive us. As pastor, I have the privilege to announce to you what God says in his Word: All of us who trust in Jesus are forgiven, in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**C** Amen.

## ✠ Service of the Word ✠

### Psalm 119:153-160

- L** Look on my suffering and deliver me,  
**C** **For I have not forgotten your law.**
- L** Defend my cause and redeem me.  
**C** **Preserve my life according to your promise.**
- L** Salvation is far from the wicked,  
**C** **For they do not seek out your decrees.**
- L** Your compassion, Lord, is great.  
**C** **Preserve my life according to your laws.**
- L** Many are the foes who persecute me,  
**C** **But I have not turned from your statutes.**
- L** I look on the faithless with loathing,  
**C** **For they do not obey your Word.**
- L** See how I love your precepts!  
**C** **Preserve my life, Lord, in accordance with your love.**
- A** **Glory be to the Father and to the ✠ Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever! Amen.**

**Kyrie** (Ancient Prayer: "Lord, Have Mercy")

Lutheran Service Book 152

- L** In peace let us pray to the Lord.  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- L** For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- L** 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.  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- L** For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.  
**C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- L** Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.  
**C** **Amen.**



## Prayer for this Day

Lutheran Service Book 156

- L** The Lord be with you.
- C** **And also with you.**
- L** We pray together:
- C** **Heavenly Father, you lead us with love in your way of truth, but we often stumble. Other people try to discourage us or lead us astray, and our own sinful hearts often wander away from you. Forgive us and strengthen us so that we can follow you faithfully, avoiding the sin that so easily entangles us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

Sit

## Old Testament Reading

Jeremiah 28:5-9, 15-17

### ***First Stumbling Block: False Prophets***

*A false prophet predicts prosperity, but it is a lie.*

Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> He said, "Amen! May the LORD do so! May the LORD fulfill the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the LORD's house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon. <sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: <sup>8</sup> From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. <sup>9</sup> But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true..."

Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, "Listen, Hananiah! The LORD has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies. <sup>16</sup> Therefore this is what the LORD says: 'I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die, because you have preached rebellion against the LORD.'"

<sup>17</sup> In the seventh month of that same year, Hananiah the prophet died. (NIV)

- R** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

## New Testament Reading (Epistle)

Romans 7:1-13

### ***Second Stumbling Block: Trusting in the Law for Salvation***

*Through Jesus, we die to the law and live for God;  
the law doesn't save us, but shows us our sin*

Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law has authority over someone only as long as that person lives? <sup>2</sup> For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him. <sup>3</sup> So then, if she

has sexual relations with another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress if she marries another man.

<sup>4</sup> So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. <sup>5</sup> For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. <sup>6</sup> But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

<sup>7</sup> What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." <sup>8</sup> But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead. <sup>9</sup> Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. <sup>10</sup> I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. <sup>11</sup> For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.

<sup>12</sup> So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. <sup>13</sup> Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! Nevertheless, in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it used what is good to bring about my death, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful. (NIV)

**R** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

## Alleluia

Lutheran Service Book 156

**C** 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.

## Gospel Reading

Matthew 10:34-42

### ***Third Stumbling Block: People who Don't Want Us to Follow Christ***

*Take up your cross and follow Jesus, even if your own family turns against you*

**L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 10.

**C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—<sup>36</sup> a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'

<sup>37</sup> "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. <sup>38</sup> Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup> Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

<sup>40</sup> "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. <sup>41</sup> Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. <sup>42</sup> And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward." (NIV)

**L** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C** **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Sit

## Hymn: Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

Lutheran Service Book 660



1 Stand up, stand up for Je - sus, Ye sol - diers of the cross.  
2 Stand up, stand up for Je - sus; The trum - pet call o - bey;  
3 Stand up, stand up for Je - sus; Stand in His strength a - lone.  
4 Stand up, stand up for Je - sus; The strife will not be long;



Lift high His roy - al ban - ner; It must suf - fer loss.  
Stand forth in might - y con - flict In this His glo - rious day.  
The arm of flesh will fail you, Ye dare not trust your own.  
This day the din of bat - tle, The next the vic - tor's song.



From vic - t'ry un - to vic - t'ry His ar - my He shall lead  
Let all His faith - ful serve Him A - gainst un - num - bered foes;  
Put on the Gos - pel ar - mor; Each piece put on with prayer.  
The sol - diers, o - ver - com - ing, Their crown of life shall see



Till ev - 'ry foe is van - quished, And Christ is Lord in - deed.  
Let cour - age rise with dan - ger And strength to strength op - pose.  
Where du - ty calls or dan - ger, Be nev - er want - ing there.  
And with the King of Glo - ry Shall reign e - ter - nal - ly.

Text and tune: Public domain

## Sermon (Elder Andrew Barber)

Stand

**Apostles' Creed** (Public declaration of our faith)

Lutheran Service Book 159

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

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## Prayer of the Church

Jesus invites us to pray in his name for all our needs.

- L** Heavenly Father, let your Holy Spirit open our hearts. Give us courage and increase our faith. For Jesus' sake,
- C** **Hear our prayer.**
- L** Holy Spirit, there are so many people who do not yet trust in Jesus as their Savior. Open our lips and give us the words to speak out about your love. For Jesus' sake,
- C** **Hear our prayer.**

- L** Heavenly Father, by your Holy Spirit, increase the love and unity in our congregation and in your church throughout the world. For Jesus' sake,
- C** **Hear our prayer.**
- L** Guide the leaders of all the different nations, so that they will be able to overcome evil and divisions, and so that there will be peace. Protect our soldiers and all who risk their lives for peace in this world. For Jesus' sake,
- C** **Hear our prayer.**
- L** God our Father, open our eyes to the needs that surround us. Give us what we need each day and help us to have your compassion for others, and to share our daily bread. For Jesus' sake,
- C** **Hear our prayer.**
- L** In the midst of our struggles and sufferings, help us to know that Jesus is by our side. Comfort and help those who are living with pain, grief, loneliness, or sickness, especially those on our prayer list and those we name in our hearts now... For Jesus' sake,
- C** **Hear our prayer.**
- L** Lord, help us with all of these needs, and hear also the petitions that we have not spoken aloud, but which are deep inside our hearts, which only the Holy Spirit knows. In Jesus' name we pray.
- C** **Amen.**

### Lord's Prayer

- A** **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.**

Sit

### Offering

The Bible says, "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income." (1 Corinthians 16:2a, NIV) Our offerings are part of our worship, part of our response to God's love.

#### Offering Options

You can contribute offerings using any of the following methods:

**In-Person donations:** You can place your donation in the offering plate as it is passed during the service.

**On-line Banking donations:** You can utilize the on-line bill pay option at your financial institution to donate to Ascension Lutheran Church, 6520 Loma de Cristo, El Paso, TX 79912.

**Mail donations:** Mail your check to the church office: Ascension Lutheran Church, 6520 Loma de Cristo, El Paso, TX 79912. The mail is checked daily.

**Other Electronic donation option:** You can make a secure contribution from your credit card or bank account at [www.alconnect.faith](http://www.alconnect.faith) or by scanning the QR code below. We use Vanco, a reputable agency which specializes in donations to churches and nonprofit organizations. Your contribution can be set up to be recurring, such as each week or month, or as a one-time donation.

**Donations via an app:** If you prefer using your phone or tablet, you can download the Vanco Mobile app. You can easily set up an account and donate through the app.

*The ministries of Ascension are supported by the love, generosity and sacrificial giving of our members and friends. As a guest, please do not feel obligated in any way to make a contribution. We believe that any gift to the Lord should be uncoerced and from the heart — as a loving response to God's grace.*



### **Special Choir Music during the Offering: The Summons (John Bell)**

1. Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my name be known?  
Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?
2. Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare, should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?
3. Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?  
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,  
And admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

4. Will you love the “you” you hide if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you’ve found to reshape the world around,  
Through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?
5. Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.  
In your company, I’ll go where you love and footsteps show.  
Thus I’ll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

## Offering Prayer

- A** Heavenly Father, fill us anew with your Holy Spirit, and help us to live for you. Bless these offerings and use them to bring others to faith and to help those in need. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

## Offertory (Sung Prayer of Dedication)

Lutheran Service Book 159



**C** What shall I ren-der to the Lord for all His ben-e-fits to



me? I will of - fer the sac-ri-fice of thanks-giv - ing and will



call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of sal-



va - tion and will call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my



vows to the Lord now in the pres-ence of all His peo-ple, in the



courts of the Lord’s house, in the midst of you, O Je - ru - sa - lem.

## Closing Prayer

- L** We pray together:  
**C** **Lord God, thank you for your forgiveness, for your love, for your promises of eternal life. Go with us as we leave this place, and help us to worship you with our lives and to share your love with everyone that you put in our path. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

## Benediction

- L** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine on you and be gracious unto you. The Lord look upon you with favor and grant you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)  
**C** **Amen.**

## Closing Hymn: We've a Story to Tell to the Nations (tune "Willar" from Culto Cristiano 372)

Hymnal "Praise" 502

1. We've a story to tell to the nations  
That shall turn their hearts to the right,  
A story of truth and mercy,  
A story of peace and light.

Refrain: For the darkness shall turn to the dawning,  
And the dawning to noonday bright,  
For the kingdom of Christ is coming soon,  
The kingdom of love and light!

2. We've a song to be sung to the nations  
That will lift their hearts to the Lord,  
A song that will conquer evil,  
And shatter the spear and sword. (Refrain)
3. We've a message to show to the nations  
That the Lord who reigns above  
Has sent us his Son to save us,  
And show us that God is love. (Refrain)
4. We've a Savior to show to the nations  
Who the path of sorrow has trod,  
That all of the people around us  
May come to the truth of God! (Refrain)

## Sending

**P** Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

**C** **Thanks be to God!**

## Postlude

### Acknowledgments

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2024 Concordia Publishing House.

## Worship Leaders

Pastor:	Out of Town
Organist:	Ruth Ann Ostergren
Elders:	Andy Barber Russ DeWitt
Acolyte:	Rudy Valdes
Reader:	Ron Seiders
Greeters:	Ken and Laurie McLennan
Ushers:	Team 1
Altar Care:	Tuchenhagen
Projectionist:	Jacob Canada
Sound/Camera:	Ron Seiders/Mike Mielke

## Ascension News and Notes

Altar flowers for today's service are provided by Pastor Rick & Maritza Schlak in celebration of their 35th wedding anniversary.



Both sets of flowers are \$70.

PLEASE PLACE YOUR CHECK IN THE OFFERING PLATE  
OR DROP IT OFF IN THE CHURCH OFFICE.



**June 27 – Lindsay Morales**

**June 28 – Aydin Miller**

**July 01 – Aden Morales**

**July 02 – Tito Holguin**

**June 29th – Rick & Maritza Schlak**





### (SHORT) Congregational Meeting

July 12th, 2026

Please join us immediately after the worship service.

### Voting on the proposed 2026-2027 Preschool Budget

\*The following copies are available in the church office to be printed upon request:

Congregation Agenda for July 12th, 2026 meeting

Proposed 2026-2027 Preschool Budget & Registration

Proposed repair cost for the swing gate

Congregation Minutes for prior meeting on Dec. 14, 2025



### Snacks for Adult Bible Study & Sunday School

Sign-up sheet is on the kitchen wall next to counter.



**THANK YOU!**

June



July is OPEN!



7th:	Brady
14th:	Radach
21st:	Barton-Gandara
28th:	Mielke

