

True Wealth

9th Sunday After Pentecost

July 26, 2026 • Proper 12 A • Ascension Lutheran Church • El Paso, Texas

As We Gather

Years ago my wife Mari and I went to a weekend seminar on drug addiction. The speaker began by asking all of us to take out a piece of paper and list 15 different things that we most valued in life. We all wrote down things like "Family", "Job", "Good Health", "Faith", "Church", "Financial Security", "Honesty", "Love", and so on. Once we finished, the speaker asked us to cross out half of those things on our lists, and leave just the 8 things that we felt were the most important. When that was done, they asked us to again cross out half of the things on the list, leaving just 4. Then they asked us to cross out half again, leaving us with 2. Finally, they asked us to cross out one more thing and leave just one item, the thing that we valued most in life. The speaker then said, "For the addict, if they are honest, that one thing that is left on the list would be their drugs. They may have other values, other things that are important to them, like family or a job or being a good person. But when push comes to shove, they will sacrifice everything else for the most important thing on their list."

What is the most important thing on your list? Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven – that is, our relationship with God – is worth giving up everything else for (Matthew 13:44-46). If we are not right with God, if we are not trusting in Jesus as our Savior, then we are not part of the kingdom of God and we will be in trouble when the end of the world comes (Matthew 13:47-50). For his part, God loves us more than we deserve (Deuteronomy 7:6-9). Nothing can separate us from God's love. He has a plan for us and even if we have to face suffering in this life, Jesus is with us and he has a beautiful future for us (Romans 8:28-39). If God were to make a list, we would be the most important thing on it.

Prelude

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)

Opening Hymn: Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty

Lutheran Service Book 901



1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty; Zi - on, let me
 2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore Thee; Come Thou al - so
 3 Here Thy praise is glad - ly chant - ed; Here Thy seed is
 5 Speak, O God, and I will hear Thee; Let Thy will be

en - ter there, Where my soul in joy - ful du - ty
 un - to me. Where we find Thee and a - dore Thee,
 du - ly sown. Let my soul, where it is plant - ed,
 done in - deed. May I un - dis - turbed draw near Thee

Waits for Him who an - swers prayer. Oh, how bless - ed
 There a heav'n on earth must be. To my heart, O
 Bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone, So that all I
 While Thou dost Thy peo - ple feed. Here of life the

is this place, Filled with sol - ace, light, and grace!
 en - ter Thou; Let it be Thy tem - ple now!
 hear may be Fruit - ful un - to life in me.
 foun - tain flows; Here is balm for all our woes.

Text and tune: Public domain

Invocation

Lutheran Service Book 167

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.** (*Matthew 28:19, 18:20*)
P If we say that 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*)

Prayer of Confession

- P** We begin our worship by confessing our sins and failures before the Lord.
A **Heavenly Father, open my eyes so that I can see where I have done wrong. Before you I acknowledge and confess that I have sinned,**

that I have on many occasions failed to obey your command to love. Give me your sweet forgiveness for the sake of Jesus my Savior. Give me a fresh start again today and help me to love others more, just as you love me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, out of his great love, died and rose again for us, and for his sake God forgives us completely. Today I have the privilege to announce to all of you who trust in Jesus, what God declares in his Word: we are forgiven, in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

Sit

✠ Service of the Word ✠

Psalm 125 (Special Music by Bryan Perdue)

Trust in the Lord, you people of God,
Like the mountains around you that cannot be moved!
His arms like the mountains surround you in love.
Trust in the Lord, you people of God.

The wicked scepter, it shall find no rest,
In the land I have given for whom I have longed.
Keep watch, my children, lest your hand do wrong!
The wicked scepter, it shall find no rest.

Peace be upon you, oh my Israel.
You changed the crooked and made straight the path.
You live in this land with your upright hearts.
Peace be upon you, oh my Israel.

Mountains surround you, oh Jerusalem,
From now until the ending of time.
Do good to those who are upright and straight.
Mountains surround you, oh Jerusalem.

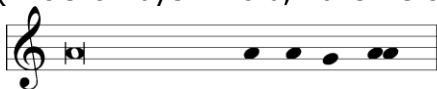
Stand

Gloria Patri (Praise: "Glory be to the Father")

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")

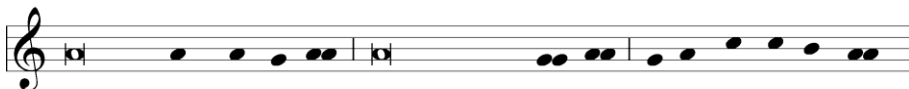
Lutheran Service Book 168



A In peace let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



A For the peace from a-bove and for our sal-va-tion let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the uni-ty of all let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



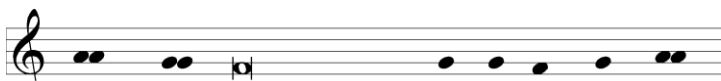
A For this holy house and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise



let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



A Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



C A - men.

Gloria in Excelsis (Song of Praise: "Glory in the Highest") Lutheran Service Book 170



A Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to His peo - ple on earth.



C Lord God, heav - en - ly king, al - might - y God and



Fa - ther: We wor - ship You, we give You thanks, we



praise You for Your glo - ry. Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly



Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God: You



take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on



us. You are seat - ed at the right hand of the



Prayer

- P** The Lord be with you.
- C** **And also with you.**
- P** We pray together:
- C** **Lord God, you are worth more than any amount of earthly treasure. Help us to remember that material things come and go, but that you will be with us forever with the love and salvation and eternal life that you give us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

Sit

First Reading

Deuteronomy 7:6-9

(We are precious to God, not because we are great but because he loves us.)

For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

⁷ The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. ⁸ But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹ Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

R This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle Reading

Romans 8:28-39

(God knows us and loves us; nothing can separate us from his love.)

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

R This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

Hymn: Seek Ye First

Lutheran Service Book 712

1 Seek ye first the king - dom of God, And His
3 Man does not live by bread a - lone, But by
righ - teous - ness. And all these things shall be
ev - 'ry word That pro - ceeds from the



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Holy Gospel

Matthew 13:44-52

(The Kingdom of God is worth much more than any other thing we may treasure.)

P The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 13.

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

[Jesus said,] "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied.

⁵² He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

Sit

Children's Song: The B-I-B-L-E

(Little Ones Sing Praise 48, modified)

1. The B-I-B-L-E, yes, that's the book for me!
I stand alone on the Word of God, the B-I-B-L-E.
2. The B-I-B-L-E, its stories help me see
The love of Jesus, God's own Son; the B-I-B-L-E.

Story Time

Hymn of the Day: Be Still, My Soul

Lutheran Service Book 752



1 Be still, my soul; the Lord is on your side; Bear pa - tient-
2 Be still, my soul; your God will un - der - take To guide the
3 Be still, my soul; though dear - est friends de - part And all is
4 Be still, my soul; the hour is has - t'ning on When we shall



ly the cross of grief or pain; Leave to your God to or - der
fu - ture as He has the past. Your hope, your con - fi - dence let
dark - ened in this vale of tears; Then you will bet - ter know His
be for - ev - er with the Lord, When dis - ap - point - ment, grief, and



and pro - vide; In ev - 'ry change He faith - ful will re -
noth - ing shake; All now mys - te - rious shall be bright at
love, His heart, Who comes to soothe your sor - rows and your
fear are gone, Sor - row for - got, love's pur - est joys re -



main. Be still, my soul; your best, your heav'n - ly Friend
last. Be still, my soul; the waves and winds still know
fears. Be still, my soul; your Je - sus can re - pay
stored. Be still, my soul; when change and tears are past,



Through thorn - y ways leads to a joy - ful end.
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt be - low.
From His own full - ness all He takes a - way.
All safe and bless - ed we shall meet at last.

Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon

Stand

Apostles' Creed (Public Declaration of our Faith)

A 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.

Sit

Offering

The Bible says, "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness." (Psalm 96:8-9a, NIV) Our offerings are part of our worship, part of our response to God's love. We give because Jesus gave everything for us. We give to help share Jesus' love with others.

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 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.

Ascension Lutheran Church is a non-profit organization. Donations to Ascension qualify as charitable donations for tax purposes.



Special Music during the Offering

Stand

Offering Prayer of Dedication

- A** **Almighty God, thank you for your Word, the message of salvation. Help us to put your Word into practice in our lives. Bless these offerings and use them to proclaim your Word in every part of the world. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

Offertory: Lord, You Are More Precious than Silver

Lord, you are more precious than silver.
Lord, you are more costly than gold.
Lord, you are more beautiful than diamonds.
Nothing I desire compares with you.

Prayer of the Church

- P** The Bible states that God hears our prayers and that he wants us to place all of our concerns in his hands. God will always help us. If he doesn't take away the problem he will strengthen us to face it. For that reason, we pray with confidence.

Lord, thank you for saving us, for forgiving us, for giving us eternal life and for being with us when we struggle. Help us to love others as you have loved us. Lord, in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

- P** Lord, fill us with your Holy Spirit so that our faith may be strong and so that we can walk in your ways without faltering. Lord, in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

- P** Help us to take advantage of the opportunities you give us to share Jesus' love with others. Lord, in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

- P** Thank you for the many material blessings you have given us. Guide us so that we use them for your glory, for the good of our families and for your mission here on this earth. Lord, in your mercy,
- C** **Hear our prayer.**
- P** Lord, protect your church throughout the world, that we may be bold in our witness and ready to serve others. Strengthen and defend those who are suffering persecution for their faith. Lord, in your mercy,
- C** **Hear our prayer.**
- P** Help those who are sick or hurt or recovering from illness. Have mercy on them and heal them according to your will. Lord, in your mercy,
- C** **Hear our prayer.**
- P** Comfort those who are grieving. Help those who are struggling. Grant us your peace in the midst of trouble and save us from the problems that seem impossible. Lord, in your mercy,
- C** **Hear our prayer.**
- P** Lord, send your Spirit to the hearts and minds of those who are far from you. By your Word of truth, help them to understand and to repent and to come to faith in you. Lord, in your mercy,
- C** **Hear our prayer.**
- P** We thank you, Lord, because we know you hear all of our concerns, even those which are in our hearts which we have not spoken aloud. In Jesus' name.
- 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.**

Thank the Lord

Lutheran Service Book 181





Closing Prayer

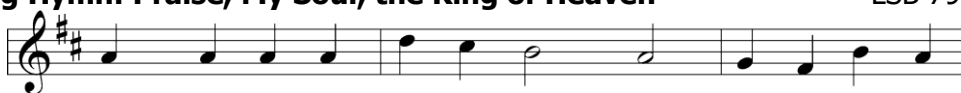
- P** Let us pray.
- C** **Heavenly Father, I give you thanks and praise because you have strengthened my faith and because you have forgiven me through Jesus Christ your Son. Help me now to live a life worthy of you, founded on your Word and full of your love. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

Benediction (2 Corinthians 13:14)

- P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
- C** **Amen.**

Closing Hymn: Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

LSB 793



1 Praise, my soul, the King of heav - en; To His feet your
 2 Praise Him for His grace and fa - vor To His peo - ple
 3 Fa - ther-like He tends and spares us; Well our fee - ble
 4 An - gels, help us to a - dore Him; You be - hold Him



trib - ute bring; Ran - somed, healed, re - stored, for - giv - en,
 in dis - tress; Praise Him still the same as ev - er,
 frame He knows; In His hand He gent - ly bears us,
 face to face; Sun and moon, bow down be - fore Him,



Ev - er - more His prais - es sing: Al - le - lu - ia,
 Slow to chide and swift to bless: Al - le - lu - ia,
 Res - cues us from all our foes. Al - le - lu - ia,
 All who dwell in time and space. Al - le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia! Praise the ev - er - last - ing King.
 al - le - lu - ia! Glo - rious in His faith - ful - ness.
 al - le - lu - ia! Wide - ly yet His mer - cy flows.
 al - le - lu - ia! Praise with us the God of grace.

Text and tune: Public domain

Sending

P Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

C Thanks be to God!

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Two from Lutheran Service Book

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Worship Leaders

Pastor: Rev. Richard Schlak
Organist: Ruth Ann Ostergren
Elder: Steve Behl
Acolyte: Elizabeth Valdes
Reader: Bryan Perdue
Greeters: Meraz Family
Ushers: Team 2
Altar Care: Mielke
Projectionist: Jacob Canada
Sound/Camera: Ron Seiders/Mike Mielke

Prayer Ministry

Philippians 4:6-7

Please fill out the blue friendship card or call the church office @ 915-833-1009 to include a prayer request or an update for the prayer list. If you have a prayer request or update for the prayer chain, please e-mail Jan Schlak at oveja6925@aol.com. The prayer list is no longer included in the bulletin; but a separate sheet of paper that can be picked up alongside of the bulletins in the entrance.

Ascension News and Notes

Altar flowers for today's service are provided by Steve & Kathy Wilmeth in honor of Adam Morales' birthday & all of the July birthdays!



Both sets of flowers are \$70.

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



July 26 — Adam Morales

July 28 — Daren Walker

July 30 — Judie Pinal

July 31 — Norma Rust

August 01 — Luca Primo Martinez



Most currently needed donations:



Backpacks

Towels

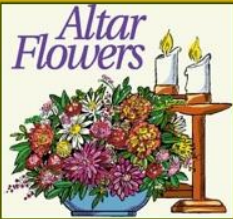
Travel-size toiletries

Razors

Deoderant

Donations can be left in the clear bin in the fellowship hall labeled "Rescue Mission of El Paso".

Sign-up lists in the fellowship hall
(Altar flowers, Sunday Snacks, & Altar Care):





2nd : (Bryan Perdue) In memory of his late wife, Ann Perdue.

9th :

16th :

23rd : (Wilmeth) In celebration of Steve & Kathy's anniversary.

30th :

Sign-up sheet is in the
 fellowship hall on the bulletin board.
 Both sets of flowers total \$70.

Sunday Snack Refreshments: August 23rd & 30th are open.

Altar care: October, November, & December are open.

 August 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
July 26 9:00 am Bible Study 10:00 am Fellowship 10:30 am Worship	July 27 Church Office Closed 9:00 am Ascension Preschool Staff Returns	July 28 6:30 pm Boy Scouts Resumes [J]	July 29	July 30 Ascension Preschool Open House: 11 am: 2 yr. olds	July 31 Ascension Preschool Open House: 9 am: 4 yr. olds 10 am: 3 yr. olds	August 1 12-3 pm Lety Behl hosts baby shower for her niece, Carolina Valdez (PH)
August 2 9:00 am Bible Study 10:00 am Fellowship 10:30 am Worship w/ Holy Communion	Church Office Closed 8:30 am Ascension Preschool Begins	6:30 pm Boy Scouts [J]	5	6	7	8 9 am to 1 pm: Circuit Pastor & Elders Meeting at Ascension Lutheran Church
9 9:00 am Bible Study (Bible Day/Sunday School Begins) 10:00 am Fellowship 10:30 am Worship (Sunday School Teachers Installation)	Church Office Closed	11 3:30 pm Worship Action Team Meeting (PH) 6:30 pm Boy Scouts [J]	12 12:30 pm Preschool Meeting 3:00pm Elders Meeting (PH)	13 3:00 pm- September newsletter due in office.	14	15
16 9:00 am SS & Bible Study 10:00 am Fellowship 10:30 am Worship w/ Holy Communion 12 pm Confirmation Class Begins (PO)	Church Office Closed	18 6:30 pm Boy Scouts [J] 7:00 pm Church Council Meeting (PH)	19 9:00 am Preschool Chapel Begins 6:00 pm Ladies' Night Out: Red Lobster located at 600 Sunland Park Dr [J]	20 6:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	21	22
23/30 9:00 am SS & Bible Study 10:00 am Fellowship 10:30 am Worship (Preschool Teachers Installation on the 23 rd - (Postcard on the 30 th)	Church Office Closed	25 6:30 pm Boy Scouts Resumes [J] 7:00 pm Men's Bible Study Resumes (PH)	26	27 6:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	28	29



Luca Primo Martinez 8/01
 Darlene Wladimir 8/02
 Romy Wladimir 8/02
 Kristal Wade 8/10
 Karsten Faugstad 8/11
 Brian Stickney 8/12
 Dawn Yumalde 8/12
 Andrea Faugstad 8/15
 Kathy Kphart 8/15
 Martha Neal 8/15
 Landrey Mars 8/17
 Alvin Downey 8/22
 Bryan Perdue 8/23

I praise You because I am fearfully and
 wonderfully made.
 Psalm 139:14a

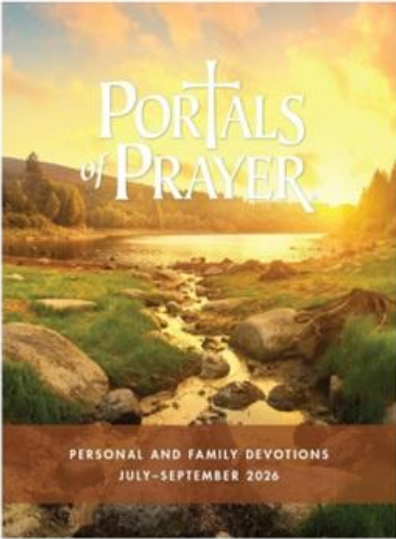


Elliott & Anita Wremer 8/02
 Steve & Kathy Wilmet 8/28

And now these three remain: faith,
 hope and love. But the greatest of
 these is love.
 1 Corinthians 13:13

(PH) - Fellowship Hall
 [J] - Library
 (PO) - Pastor's Office
 [S] - Sanctuary

August 2026 Calendar and
 Portals of Prayers (July-Sept. 2026)
 are both available for pick-up
 in the narthex entrance of the church.



This Week @ Ascension

Sunday (July 26th)

9:00 AM Bible Study
10:00 AM Fellowship
10:30 AM Worship



Monday (July 27th)

Church Office Closed
9:00 AM Ascension Preschool Staff Returns

Tuesday (July 28th)

6:30 PM Boy Scouts Resumes (FH)

Wednesday (July 29th)

Thursday (July 30th)

Ascension Preschool Open House
11:00 AM: 2 year olds

Friday (July 31st)

Ascension Preschool Open House
9:00 AM: 4 year olds
10:00 AM: 3 year olds

Saturday (August 1st)

12-3 PM Lety Behl Hosting Baby Shower for her niece, Carolina Valdez (FH)

Ronald McDonald House



Please save the **aluminum pull tabs** from canned drinks and bring them to the kitchen area or the church office. They are used by the Ronald McDonald House to provide a home away from home for hundreds of families with seriously ill children.

