

Carry Your Cross

August 30, 2026 • Proper 17 A • Ascension Lutheran Church • El Paso, Texas

As We Gather

Peter the apostle was riding high. Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" and Peter replied, "You are the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God!" And Jesus said that Peter was absolutely right, and that Peter was blessed. (Matthew 16:13-20).

But then Jesus started to unpack what it would mean for him to be the Messiah, the Savior. He told his disciples that he would have to suffer and die. Peter said, in effect, "No way! You're the Savior! That can't happen to you!" But Jesus scolded Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan!" (Matthew 16:21-28)

Poor Peter! One minute his words are blessed by God and the next minute they are from the devil. But we are often the same way. We tend to think that if we are just good enough, or if we just have enough faith, then life will be a bed of roses. Nothing bad will happen!

But we forget that we live in a world twisted by sin and that we ourselves sin all too often. God has put us here, not to have a vacation but to point the way to heaven. Sometimes that means making sacrifices. Sometimes that means enduring suffering.

In Romans 12:9-21, God calls us to sacrifice our right to revenge and do good to those that treat us badly. In Jeremiah 15:15-21, Jeremiah was suffering attacks from the Jewish people and their leaders, but God called him to stand firm like a wall and speak God's Word faithfully. These are examples of "carrying our cross" and following Jesus.

But just remember, when the going gets tough, the Christian turns to Jesus. Jesus already carried his cross in order to save us, in spite of Peter's words. Even though we have not always been faithful about carrying our cross, Jesus forgives us and gives us a new opportunity. God strengthened Jeremiah and he will strengthen us too. And one day we will lay our cross down and be in heaven with Jesus.

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)

Call to Worship: Enter His Gates (Santiago Fernandez – Psalm 100)

Choir

Refrain: Enter his gates with thanksgiving! Enter his courts, singing praise!
Give thanks to the Lord and bless his name! Sing joyfully to the Lord!

1. Shout to the Lord, you lands! Worship the Lord, all the earth!
Come before the Lord with joyful song! (Refrain)
2. Know that the Lord is God, our Maker to whom we belong.
We are his people, the flock he tends. (Refrain)
3. Good is the Lord indeed! Forever his mercy endures,
And his faithfulness shall never end. (Refrain)

Hymn: Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me

Lutheran Service Book 722



1 Lord, take my hand and lead me Up - on life's way;
2 Lord, when the tem - pest ra - ges, I need not fear,
3 Lord, when the shad - ows length - en And night has come,



Di - rect, pro - tect, and feed me From day to day.
For You, the Rock of A - ges, Are al - ways near.
I know that You will strength - en My steps toward home.



With - out Your grace and fa - vor I go a - stray;
Close by Your side a - bid - ing, I fear no foe,
Then noth - ing can im - pede me, O bless - ed Friend;



So take my hand, O Sav - ior, And lead the way.
For when Your hand is guid - ing, In peace I go.
So take my hand and lead me Un - to the end.

Text: © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110005074
Tune: Public domain

Invocation

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Prayer of Confession

P God is very generous with us. He has given us food, clothing, a home, and everything good that we have. Sadly, all too often we care more for the material things we have than we do about the God who gave us those blessings. We have often failed to do what God wants. For that reason we take a moment to confess our sins now and to ask the Lord to forgive us in Jesus' name.

C **Lord God, we confess in your presence that we have disobeyed you in different ways. Sometimes our words and actions have not been right or loving. Other times we have fallen into temptation with our thoughts and secret desires. But we sincerely repent of this and ask you to have mercy on us. In Jesus' name, forgive our sins and help us in our weakness. Amen.**

Words of Forgiveness

P We have been reconciled to God through the death of his Son (Romans 5:10). Jesus died for our wrongdoing and he rose from the dead to give us eternal life. Because of your confession and faith, I therefore announce to you that your sins are forgiven, in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Service of the Word

Psalms 37:1-11

P Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong,

C **For like the grass they will soon wither; like green plants they will soon die away.**

P Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

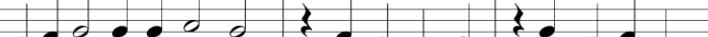
C **Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.**

P Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this:

C **He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun.**

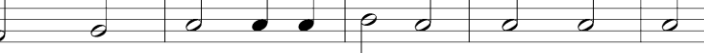
- P** Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.
- C** **Do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.**
- P** Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret – it leads only to evil.
- C** **For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land.**
- P** A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found.
- C** **But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity.**

Gloria Patri (Song of Praise: "Glory be to the Father") Lutheran Service Book 186


Glo-ry be to the Fa-ther and to the Son and to the Ho-ly Ghost;


as it was in the be-gin-nig, is now, and ev-er shall be, world with-out end. A-men.

Kyrie (Ancient Prayer: "Lord, Have Mercy") Lutheran Service Book 186



Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up - on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

Prayer for This Day

- P** The Lord be with you.
- C** **And also with you.**
- P** We pray together:
- A** **Jesus, you willingly went to the cross in order to save us. Help us to carry our cross as well by sharing your love no matter what it may cost. If people hurt us, help us to overcome evil with good. If people attack our faith, help us to stand strong. Lord Jesus, we can't do this on our own; but we trust that you will forgive us, give us strength, and help us. In your own name we pray. Amen.**

Old Testament Reading

Jeremiah 15:15-21

(Jeremiah feels depressed because of all the people who attack him and refuse to listen to God's Word; but the Lord promises to protect him and help him.)

[Jeremiah says:] "Lord, you understand; remember me and care for me. Avenge me on my persecutors. You are long-suffering—do not take me away; think of how I suffer reproach for your sake. ¹⁶ When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, Lord God Almighty. ¹⁷ I never sat in the company of revelers, never made merry with them; I sat alone because your hand was on me and you had filled me with indignation. ¹⁸ Why is my pain unending and my wound grievous and incurable? You are to me like a deceptive brook, like a spring that fails."

¹⁹ Therefore this is what the Lord says:

"If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me; if you utter worthy, not worthless, words, you will be my spokesman. Let this people turn to you, but you must not turn to them. ²⁰ I will make you a wall to this people, a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you to rescue and save you," declares the Lord. ²¹ "I will save you from the hands of the wicked and deliver you from the grasp of the cruel." (NIV)

R This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle (New Testament Reading)

Romans 12:9-21

(Overcome evil with good.)

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (NIV)

R This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

Alleluia

Lutheran Service Book 190



Reading from the Gospels

Matthew 16:21-28

(Take up your cross and follow Jesus.)

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 16.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

²⁸ "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." (NIV)

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

Sit

Song: I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus

(Little Ones Sing Praise 24)

1. I am trusting you, Lord Jesus. You have died for me.
All my sins have been forgiven. I am free!
2. I am trusting you, Lord Jesus, as you guide my way.
In your loving arms you hold me night and day.

Story Time

Hymn of the Day: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross Lutheran Service Book 425



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross On which the
2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast Save in the
3 See, from His head, His hands, His feet Sor - row and
4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, That were a



Prince of Glo - ry died, My rich - est gain I
death of Christ, my God; All the vain things that
love flow min - gled down! Did e'er such love and
trib - ute far too small; Love so a - maz - ing,



count but loss And pour con - tempt on all my pride.
charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to His blood.
sor - row meet Or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
so di - vine, De - mands my soul, my life, my all!

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.

Prayer of the Church

- P** Oh Lord, we are often weak and of little faith.
C **Come, Holy Spirit, and strengthen our faith in Jesus.**
P Lord, we want to better understand your Word.
C **Come, Holy Spirit, and on every page of Scripture show us Jesus.**
P Lord, we want to do your will.
C **Come, Holy Spirit, and help us to imitate Jesus.**
P Lord, fill us with your love and help us to forgive one another.
C **Come, Holy Spirit, and make us one in Jesus.**
P Lord, so many people are depressed or sick or suffering serious problems.
C **Come, Holy Spirit, and help us and heal us in Jesus' name.**
P Lord, peace and justice are lacking in many parts of our world.
C **Come, Holy Spirit, and make us truly free through Jesus.**
P Lord, raise up good leaders who will follow your guidance.
C **Come, Holy Spirit, and guide us in the footsteps of Jesus.**
P Lord, today we especially pray for those on our prayer list who really need your help and comfort. And we also pray for others whom we name in our hearts now... We pray:
C **We lift all of these people up to you, trusting that you will be with them as you have promised.**
P Dear God, you always hear us when we pray in Jesus' name. Take away the spirit of fear in us,
C **And give us your Spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline through Jesus. Amen. (2 Timothy 1:7)**

Sit

Offering

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all that she had to live on." (Mark 12:41-44, NIV)

Our offerings are part of our worship, part of our response to God's love. We give like the widow, from the heart.

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: Freely Given, Freely Received (Bryan Perdue)

*You came into our lives and touched our hearts.
Oh Lord, you made us know your love is real.
Now we kneel before your throne,
To share our gifts with you alone,
Gifts given freely for your love.*

*Now your love is in our hearts; it lives inside us now.
Your gift of grace was given through your Son.
At your table we leave our gifts to show our love for you,
Freely given and freely we received.*

*You sent to earth your Spirit to impart
The wisdom of the ages yet unknown.
Through the fires on earth we walked,
Our tongues on fire and yet we talked.
The greatest gift you shared is your love.*

Stand

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 (Song of Dedication)

Lutheran Service Book 806

Give thanks with a grate-ful heart, Give thanks to the

Ho-ly One, Give thanks be-cause He's giv-en Je-sus

Christ His Son. Give thanks with a grate-ful heart, Give

thanks to the Ho - ly One, Give thanks _____ be-cause He's giv-en_

Je - sus Christ His Son. And now let the weak say "I am

strong," Let the poor say "I am rich," _____ Be-cause of

what the Lord has done for us. And now let the

weak say "I am strong," Let the poor say "I am

rich," _____ Be-cause of what the Lord has done for us.

Give thanks, _____ give thanks. _____

Text and tune: © 1978 Integrity's Hosanna! Music. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110005074

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 164



C Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev-'ry-one what He has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and proud-ly bear His name.



He re-calls His prom-is - es and leads His peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks-giv-ing. Al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia.

Closing Prayer

P Let us pray.

C **Lord, you are the strength of those who hope in you. Be with us, we pray, and help us in our weakness. Guide us so that we can be different, so that we can become more and more like Jesus. In Jesus's own name we pray. Amen.**

Benediction *(Numbers 6:24-26)*

Lutheran Service Book 166

P 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.

C **Amen.**

Closing Hymn: Living for Jesus

(Make a Joyful Sound 60)

1. Living for Jesus a life that is true,
Striving to please him in all that I do.
Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free,
This is the pathway of blessing for me.

Refrain: Oh Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to thee,
For thou, in thine atonement, didst give thyself for me.
I own no other Master. My heart shall be thy throne.
My life I give, henceforth to live, oh Christ, for thee alone.

2. Living for Jesus, who died in my place,
Bearing on Calvary my sin and disgrace.
Such love constrains me to answer his call,
Follow his leading and give him my all. (Refrain)
3. Living for Jesus, through earth's little while,
My dearest treasure, the light of his smile.
Seeking the lost ones he died to redeem,
Bringing the weary to find rest in him. (Refrain)

Sending

- P** Go in peace! Serve the Lord!
G **Thanks be to God!**

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Three from Lutheran Service Book

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:	Rev. Richard Schlak
Organist:	Ruth Ann Ostergren
Elder:	Mike Mielke
Acolyte:	Emma Valdes
Reader:	Ron Seiders
Greeters:	Ken & Laurie McLennan
Ushers:	Team 2
Altar Care:	Wiegert
Projectionist:	Jacob Canada
Sound/Camera:	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 can be picked up alongside of the bulletins in the entrance. It is also available to view in the weekly email sent out on every Friday.

Ascension News & Notes



September 1 — Cheryl Canada-Karl

September 1 — Kent Kaneer

September 1 — Billie Meitler

September 4 — Anthony Barron

September 4th — Al & Sylvia Diaz



Join us for food & fellowship on
**Fellowship Sunday,
August 30th.**

**Sign-up sheet in the
entrance on the A-frame
board.**

Please sign-up to bring a main dish, side dish, appetizer, dessert, or beverage.



Operation Christmas Child

It's almost Shoebox Collection Time!!!

Start collecting treasures to include in the shoeboxes you'll be packing in October.

- School Supplies
- Toys
- Hats & gloves
- Hair & grooming accessories
- Coloring books
- And lots more!

Points of Contact: Melanie Gallagher
& Charlene Radach

Sunday School & Adult Bible Study:

God calls us to encourage each other in studying His Word and putting it into practice.

A great way to do this is to come and join us for Sunday School and Bible Study right before worship service on Sundays!

We meet from 9:00 to 10:00 AM.



Sunday
Adult Bible Study
9 to 10 AM
in the Fellowship Hall



The Book of Isaiah

Nursery Care

available for 2 & under

Pre-K to 6th grade:

Kids meet in the Preschool Library

7th grade to 12th grade:

Youth meet in the Church Library

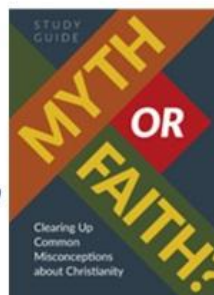
Adults: Meet in the Fellowship Hall

TUESDAY NIGHT Men's Bible Study

in Ascension's Church Fellowship Hall

at 7 p.m.

Currently studying *Myth or Faith | Clearing up Common Misconceptions about Christianity*
(Concordia Publishing House)



Contact Elliott Werner (915-603-7497) for more information

Tuesday Nights Ladies Bible Study will resume **Sept. 8th (6:30-8 pm)**. Contact Anita Werner for more information. 915-494-2335 or awerner@elp.rr.com.

Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study will resume **Sept. 10th** to complete the book of Matthew. **Gather at 9:45 am and begin at 10 am.** For more information, contact Jan Schlak: oveja6925@aol.com or Gretchen Schmalz 915-284-6143.

Next **LWML** meeting will be on **September 19th at 10 am** in Ascension's fellowship hall; & the **LWML Rio Grande Zone Fall Rally** will be on **September 26th at Trinity Lutheran Church in Alamogordo, NM**, beginning at **8:30 a.m.** (Ingathering of Adult sizes of socks & underwear for Runner's Refuge (ministers to the homeless of Alamogordo); and RMD Delegate dues will be collected.

This Week @ Ascension

Sunday (August 30th)

9:00 AM Adult Bible Study & Sunday School

10:00 AM Fellowship

10:30 AM Worship

Immediately after church: Welcome new members
and church potluck



HAPPENING THIS WEEK

Monday (August 31st)

Church Office Closed

Tuesday (September 1st)

6:30 PM Boy Scouts (L)

7:00 PM Men's Bible Study (FH)

Wednesday (September 2nd)

9:00 AM Preschool Chapel (S)

10 AM-1 PM Sit-N-Sew group (FH)

Thursday (September 3rd)

6:30 PM Choir Practice (S)

Friday (September 4th)

12-2:30 PM Preschool Extended Care

Saturday (September 5th)

Thank you to everyone for contributing to our bible studies and our worship service by either supplying treats for everyone in fellowship with others, beautifying our altar with flowers in honor of God, or preparing our altar for worship.

Altar flowers, Sunday Snacks, & Altar Care:

Altar flowers: September 20th is open. **Altar care:** December is open. Both sign up sheets are on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall.

Sunday Snack Refreshments: Sept. 13th & 27th are open. Next to the kitchen counter, there is a new sign-up sheet up for September, October, November, and December.

September Calendar, Newsletter, & Portals of Prayer (July-Sept. 2026) are both available for pick-up in the **entrance of the church**.