



# **ASCENSION**

Lutheran Church

A **Christ-centered** community where we **connect, learn, and serve.**

**Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany – February 8, 2026**



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**Welcome! We're happy you're with us for worship today.**

**IF YOU ARE VISITING FOR THE FIRST TIME**, please take a moment to sign in at the podium at either sanctuary entrance. We pray your time with us strengthens your faith in the Lord. We are a member congregation of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). You can find more information about our beliefs at [LCMS.org/about/beliefs](http://LCMS.org/about/beliefs).

**IF YOU HAVE SMALL CHILDREN**, we understand that God made them wiggly and noisy at times, but we also believe they should be with us in worship. If you need a moment, we have a nursery available to you through the hallway to the right of the altar. Children's bags are also available in the Narthex for use during service.

**HOLY COMMUNION** is celebrated at Ascension Lutheran on each Sunday. We receive this Holy Sacrament in the glad confidence that our Lord Jesus, as His word says, gives not only bread and wine, but also His true Body and Blood for us to eat and drink for the forgiveness of our sins (Matthew 26:26-28). Our Lord invites to His table those who, repenting of their sins, believe His word that His body and blood are truly present for the forgiveness of our sins. All baptized believers who hold our confession of faith and have examined themselves according to Scripture's guidance (1 Corinthians 11:27-29), are invited to receive His Sacrament. If you are not yet baptized or are visiting us for the first time, we invite you to come forth during communion and fold your arms over your heart for a blessing. Pastor would be happy to discuss receiving Holy Communion at Ascension with you.

**AFTER EACH SERVICE** from September to May, please join us for a brief time of **FELLOWSHIP** with coffee and treats downstairs in our Fellowship Hall briefly before we begin our **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION** hour for those ages 2 and above.

**If you have any questions, seek out Pastor, an usher, or a member with a name tag; they will be happy to help you out.**

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**SERVING TODAY:**

**ELDER(S):** Mike Fiffik & Bob Booth

**LAY READER:** Trish Young

**USHERS:** Ken Lindsey & Cristen Fiffik

**ACOLYTE:** Hannah Koontz

**SERVING NEXT WEEK:**

**ELDER(S):** Mike Fiffik & Cooper Blake

**LAY READER:** N/A

**USHERS:** John Russler & Matt Gunther

**ACOLYTE:** Elijah Blake

# Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

## Pre-Service - You Said I Am (Behold and Believe)

### Welcome

### Prelude

*Stand*

### Invocation

*Matthew 28:19b; 18:20*

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**C** Amen.

### Opening Hymn - Thy Strong Word

*LSB 578*

### Exhortation

*Psalm 124:8; Psalm 130:3–4; Luke 18:13*

- P** Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
**C** **who made heaven and earth.**
- P** If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?  
**C** **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.**
- P** Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

*Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.*

### Confession of Sins

- C** **Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

## Absolution

[John 20:19–23]

**P** 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.

**C** Amen.

## Greeting of Peace

*Following the Absolution, the people may greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying, “Peace be with you,” as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matthew 5:22–24; Ephesians 4:1–3).*

## Hymn of Praise - Hail to the Lord's Anointed

LSB 398 sts. 1–2, 4–5

*Sit*

## Old Testament

Isaiah 58:3–9a

<sup>3</sup>“Why have we fasted, and you see it not?  
Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?’  
Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure,  
and oppress all your workers.  
<sup>4</sup>Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight  
and to hit with a wicked fist.  
Fasting like yours this day  
will not make your voice to be heard on high.  
<sup>5</sup>Is such the fast that I choose,  
a day for a person to humble himself?  
Is it to bow down his head like a reed,  
and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?  
Will you call this a fast,  
and a day acceptable to the LORD?  
<sup>6</sup>“Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of wickedness,  
to undo the straps of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?  
<sup>7</sup>Is it not to share your bread with the hungry  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover him,  
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

<sup>8</sup>Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up speedily;  
your righteousness shall go before you;  
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.  
<sup>9</sup>Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;  
you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’”

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

**C** Thanks be to God.

## Epistle Reading

*1 Corinthians 2:1–16*

<sup>1</sup>And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. <sup>2</sup>For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup>And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, <sup>4</sup>and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup>that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

<sup>6</sup>Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. <sup>7</sup>But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. <sup>8</sup>None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup>But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,  
nor the heart of man imagined,  
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

<sup>10</sup>these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup>For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup>Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. <sup>13</sup>And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

<sup>14</sup>The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup>The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. <sup>16</sup>“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

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

*Stand*

## Holy Gospel

*Matthew 5:13–20*

- P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the fifth chapter.  
**C** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>13</sup>[Jesus said:] “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

<sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

<sup>17</sup>“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup>For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup>Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup>For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

- P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**C** Praise to You, O Christ.

*Sit*

## Children's Message

*Pastor Thompson*

## Hymn of the Day - Lord, Whose Love through Humble Service

*LSB 848*

## Sermon

*Pastor Thompson*

## Lutheran Catechesis - Holy Baptism - Third

- P** *How can water do such great things?*  
**C** Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the

**water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three: "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying." (Titus 3:5–8)**

*Stand*

### **Apostles' Creed**

**☐ 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**

**Meditation Song - Nothing But the Blood of Jesus**

*Praise Team*

*Stand*

## Offertory - His Glory and My Good

To our God be the glory  
To our God be praise  
He alone the name above all names  
I will boast ever only in the Lord my God  
For I know His glory is my good

## Prayer of the Church

*[1 Timothy 2:1-4]*

*After each prayer, the response will be:*

**P** Lord, in Your mercy,  
**C** Hear our prayer.

## Lord's Prayer

*Matthew 6:9-13*

**P** Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:  
**C** 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.

## The Words of Institution *Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25*

**P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My  $\text{✠}$  body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new



testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.  
This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

## Peace of the Lord

*John 20:19*

**P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C** Amen.

*Sit*

## Holy Communion

### Distribution Hymns - Take, Eat, This Is My Body

#### Chorus

Take eat this is My body broken for you  
For I am come that you might have life  
Eat of My flesh and live  
Eat of My flesh and live

#### Verse 1

My blood was shed for many  
Taking away your sin  
And if I shall make you free  
Then you shall be free indeed  
You shall be free indeed  
(Chorus)

#### Verse 2

Though your sins be as scarlet  
They shall be white as snow  
Though they be red like crimson  
They shall be as wool  
They shall be as wool  
(Chorus)

#### Verse 3

For God so loved the world  
He gave His only Son  
That whosoever believeth on Him  
Might have everlasting life  
Might have everlasting life  
(Chorus)

## My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

*LSB 575*

## Communion Dismissal

**P** Now may this true body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,  
strengthen and preserve you, in body and soul, unto life everlasting. Depart  
in His peace and with joy.

**C** Amen.

*Stand*

## Post-Communion Canticle - For the Bread Which You Have Broken

For the bread, which You have broken  
For the wine, which You have poured  
For the words, which You have spoken  
Now we give You thanks, O Lord  
By this promise that You love us  
By Your gift of peace restored  
By Your call to Heav'n above us  
Hallow all our lives, O Lord

## Post-Communion Prayer

- P** Let us pray.  
We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

## Benediction

*Numbers 6:24-26*

- 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 Song - Facing a Task Unfinished

### Verse 1

Facing a task unfinished  
That drives us to our knees  
A need that undiminished  
Rebukes our slothful ease  
We who rejoice to know Thee  
Renew before Thy throne  
The solemn pledge we owe Thee  
To go and make Thee known

### Verse 2

Where other lords beside Thee  
Hold their unhindered sway

Where forces that defied Thee  
Defy Thee still today  
With none to heed their crying  
For life and love and light  
Unnumbered souls are dying  
And pass into the night

### Chorus

We go to all the world  
With (His) kingdom hope unfurled  
No other name has power to save  
But Jesus Christ The Lord

### Verse 3

We bear the torch that flaming  
Fell from the hands of those  
Who gave their lives proclaiming  
That Jesus died and rose  
Ours is the same commission  
The same glad message ours  
Fired by the same ambition  
To Thee we yield our powers  
(Chorus)

### Verse 4

O Father who sustained them  
O Spirit who inspired  
Saviour whose love constrained them  
To toil with zeal untired  
From cowardice defend us  
From lethargy awake  
Forth on Thine errands send us  
To labour for Thy sake  
(Chorus x2)

*Sit*

## Announcements

**Memory Verse For The Week:** Matthew 5:14 – “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

## Dismissal

- P** Go in peace and  
**C** serve the Lord!

## Acknowledgments

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### Looking Ahead - Next Week's Verses:

Ex. 24:8-18; Psalm 2:6-12; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matt. 17:1-9

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### This week we pray for:

- Thanksgiving for healthy and safe deliveries and the gift of new life for Nelle Powers and Marissa Thompson.
- John Fagen, for strength and faith as he battles cancer.

- Thanksgiving for successful surgery for Kurt Dolph and continued treatment.
  - Thanksgiving for successful surgery for Larry Sauer and a blessed and swift recovery.
  - For the family and friends of Alice Helmink, Marissa's great-grandmother, who died in the faith. Comfort them with the hope and peace that comes from the promise of the resurrection victory in Jesus.
  - Greg Horne, husband of Rosalie Horne, as he deals with physical and mental distresses. Grant him relief and healing from his afflictions.
  - Darryl Gunther for healing for his eyes.
  - Barb, Jackie Dolph's sister, as she undergoes treatment for cancer, that the treatments are effective.
  - We give thanks for the progress Jim Obringer Sr. has made recovering from his stroke. We pray you continue to grant him a return to even more mobility.
  - Shirley Waselko, who has started another round of chemo treatments every six weeks. Prayers that she continues tolerate the treatments and that they continue to work.
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### **Church News & Announcements:**

**Happy Birthday to:** Janet Seitz February 13<sup>th</sup>

**Happy Anniversary to:** Robert & Karen Booth February 14<sup>th</sup>

**Christian Education Hour -** Join us at 11am (after some tasty treats in the Fellowship Hall) for one of our Bible Classes and Sunday School! Options are available for those aged 2 and above. See the Learn bulletin board in the Narthex for more info and about future classes and offerings.

**Sunday School-** Sunday school meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in the education room and is divided into three classes: PreK taught by Mrs. Fleishauer; K-2<sup>nd</sup> taught by Mrs. Lopresto and 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> taught by Mrs. Koontz. There are signs located outside of each classroom.

**Youth Group (7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>)-** Join Janine Nicolette in the Youth Room as she will present Children & Teen Study.

### **Adult Bible Class-**

- **Foundations of Faith-** Join us for a 12-week class on the Foundations of the Lutheran Confession of the Christian faith. This class is for visitors looking to become members of our congregation, transfers from other LCMS congregations, and anyone who wants to get a refresher on the basics of the Christian faith. We will meet in the Fireside Room each week during the Christian Education hour. Any questions, see Pastor Thompson.
- **Adult Topical Study-** Join Mike Fiffik in Fellowship Hall for a workbook study of the book of Titus.
- **Adult Book of the Bible Study-** Join Cooper Blake for an adult book bible study on Proverbs.

**Prayer and Praise:** We are meeting this Wednesday at 10am for Prayer & Praise! We meet in the Fireside Room at church or we have an online option via Zoom. The link is sent in the Weekly Reminder email. If you have questions or need prayer, please contact Bob Booth at 808-295-1835.

**A/V Booth Helpers Needed:** We are looking for volunteers to help in the A/V Booth. If interested, please reach out to me at [pastor@ascensionpgh.com](mailto:pastor@ascensionpgh.com).

**New Members needed for Praise Team** – With the departure of some of our long-time Praise Team members we need some new people to help serve the worship of the congregation on Sundays. Please prayerfully consider joining our Praise Team! If you have any questions, please contact Lisa or Emily Marcellus.

**Altar Guild Help:** Looking for a way to serve? How about joining the Altar Guild? Only one month a year to set up the altar and a year's worth of good feelings from your service! Contact Nancy Hughey at 412-780-5641 to find out how you can help. Thank you.

**Meal Train for Thompson Baby:** We have another new church baby! Let's shower Pastor & Marissa with some church love and help them transition to life with two little ones. Sign up to bring them a meal here: <https://takethemameal.com/XBDT5162> If you don't want to sign up online, call or text Ronette Blake (412-443-3704) and she'll get you scheduled.

**Ladies' Bible Study-** Ladies of Ascension, come join us for some fellowship, conversation and study of the faith this Saturday, February 14<sup>th</sup> at 10 am in the Fireside Room.

**Congregational Meeting:** There is a congregational meeting on Sunday, February 22, 2026 following the Divine Service.

**Lenten Dinners** – Lent begins February 18<sup>th</sup> and so do our Lenten dinners. We will be serving before Wednesday services from 4:30 to 5:45 pm (to allow time for clean up) in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome. Invite your family, friends, and neighbors. Encourage them to stay for the service. We need help with contributions of soup and desserts. You can find a sign-up sheet under the Serve Board in the Narthex. If you're able to help clean up, please put a check mark in that column too. Any questions, please contact Vicki Wiegand at 724-816-0413 or [vickig@zoominternet.net](mailto:vickig@zoominternet.net). Thank you for your help.

**Special Music Survey –** Attention everyone! If you have any interest in participating in bells or choir for Holy Week 2026 please fill out this [Special Music Survey](#) by **today** Sunday, Feb. 8. No musical talent required! More details can be found in the survey. Email Lisa ([LMarcellus@ascensionpgh.com](mailto:LMarcellus@ascensionpgh.com)) with any questions!

**Men's Bible Study:** Men of Ascension, come join us for some fellowship, conversation and study of the faith on Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 am.

## This week at Ascension Lutheran Church:

<b>Sunday 02/08</b>	<b>Divine Service Christian Education Hour</b>	<b>9:30 AM 11:00 AM</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Church Council Meeting</b>	<b>6:30 PM</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Prayer &amp; Praise Confirmation Class</b>	<b>10:00 AM 7:00 PM</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Ladies Bible Study</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>
<b>Sunday 02/15</b>	<b>Divine Service Christian Education Hour</b>	<b>9:30 AM 11:00 AM</b>