



ASCENSION

Lutheran Church

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

Second Sunday In Lent – March 1, 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.

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.

SERVING TODAY:

ELDER(S): Bob Booth & Mike Fiffik

LAY READER: Bob Booth

USHERS: John Russler & Lynn Gunther

ACOLYTE: Elijah Blake

SERVING NEXT WEEK:

ELDER(S): Dave Dille & Cooper Blake

LAY READER: Dave Dille

USHERS: Matt Gunther & Jim Obringer

ACOLYTE: Craig Fleishauer

Second Sunday in Lent

Pre-Service - Lead Me to the Cross

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 - God So Loved

Verse 1

Come all you weary
Come all you thirsty
Come to the well that never runs dry
Drink of the water
Come and thirst no more

Verse 2

Come all you sinners
Come find His mercy
Come to the table He will satisfy
Taste of His goodness
Find what you're looking for

Chorus 1

For God so loved the world that He gave us
His one and only Son to save us
Whoever believes in Him will live forever

Verse 3

Bring all your failures
Bring your addictions

Come lay them down at the foot of the cross
Jesus is waiting there
With open arms

Chorus 2

For God so loved the world that He gave us
His one and only Son to save us
Whoever believes in Him will live forever
The power of hell forever defeated
Now it is well I'm walking in freedom
For God so loved God so loved the world

Bridge

Praise God praise God
From whom all blessings flow
Praise Him praise Him
For the wonders of His love
(Repeat)

Chorus 3

For God so loved the world that He gave
us
His one and only Son to save
(Chorus 2)

Bring all your failures
Bring your addictions
Come lay them down at the foot of the
cross
Jesus is waiting
God so loved the world

Verse 4

Exhortation

1 John 1:8–9

- P** 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.**

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

Confession of Sins

- P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. 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 - Baptized Into Your Name Most Holy

LSB 590

Sit

Old Testament

Genesis 12:1–9

¹The LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ²And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

⁴So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, ⁶Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. ⁹And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle Reading

Romans 4:1–8, 13–17

¹What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” ⁴Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, ⁶just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

⁷“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered;

⁸blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.” . . .

¹³For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

¹⁶That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

Holy Gospel

John 3:1–17

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the third chapter.

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

¹Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” ³Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

⁹Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

¹³No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

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

Sit

Children's Message

Pastor Thompson

Hymn of the Day - Water, Blood, and Spirit Crying

LSB 597

Sermon

Pastor Thompson

Lutheran Catechesis - Holy Baptism - Fourth

- P** *What does such baptizing with water indicate?*
- C** It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

- P** *Where is this written?*
- C** St. Paul writes in Romans, chapter six: “We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Romans 6:4)

Stand

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven

and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
 and was made man;
 and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
 He suffered and was buried.
 And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
 and ascended into heaven
 and sits at the right hand of the Father.
 And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
 whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the Lord and giver of life,
 who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
 who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
 who spoke by the prophets.
 And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
 I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
 and I look for the resurrection of the dead
 and the life † of the world to come. Amen.

Sit

Offering

Meditation Song - My Faith Looks Up to Thee

Praise Team

Stand

Offertory - When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

LSB 425 st. 4

4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, That were a
 trib - ute far too small; Love so a - maz - ing,
 so di - vine, De - mands my soul, my life, my all!

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748
 Tune: Lowell Mason, 1792-1872
 Text and tune: Public domain

Installation of Chris Schroeder as Ascension's Youth Director

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 ✠ 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 - Eat This Bread

LSB 638

How Deep the Father's Love for Us

Verse 1

How deep the Father's love for us
How vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure
How great the pain of searing loss
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory

Verse 2

Behold the Man upon a cross
My sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers
It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life

I know that it is finished

Verse 3

I will not boast in anything
No gifts no pow'r no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection
Why should I gain from His reward
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom

Tag

Why should I gain from His reward
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom

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 - My Song Is Love Unknown

LSB 430 st. 1



1 My song is love un - known, My Sav - ior's love to

me, Love to the love - less shown That they might love - ly
 be. Oh, who am I That for my sake
 My Lord should take Frail flesh and die?

Text: Samuel Crossman, c. 1624–1683
 Tune: John N. Ireland, 1879–1962
 Text: Public domain
 Tune: © John Ireland Trust. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110004761

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 - Amazing Grace, My Chains Are Gone

Verse 1

Amazing grace how sweet the sound
 That saved a wretch like me
 I once was lost but now I'm found
 Was blind but now I see

Verse 2

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
 And grace my fears relieved

How precious did that grace appear
 The hour I first believed

Chorus

My chains are gone I've been set free
 My God my Savior has ransomed me
 And like a flood His mercy rains
 Unending love amazing grace

Verse 3

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures
(Chorus)

Chorus

My chains are gone I've been set free
My God my Savior has ransomed me

And like a flood His mercy rains
Unending love amazing grace

Verse 4

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine
But God who called me here below
Will be forever mine
Will be forever mine
You are forever mine

Sit

Announcements

Memory Verse For The Week: John 3:6 - That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Dismissal

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

Acknowledgments

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Looking Ahead - Next Week's Verses:

Ex. 17:1-7; Psalm 95:1-9; Rom. 5:1-8; John 4:5-26(27-30, 39-42)

This week we pray for:

- **NEW:** Clayton Mees as he recovers from hip surgery.
- Give thanks for the newest members of our Ascension congregation, Shane, Amber, Jadon, Caleb and Noah Mitchell and Brian and Anitha Brugos. We ask God to bless them as they assimilate into the congregation.

- 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
-

Church News & Announcements:

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 2nd floor in the education room and is divided into three classes: PreK taught by Mrs. Fleishauer; K-2nd taught by Mrs. Lopresto and 3rd-6th taught by Mrs. Koontz. There are signs located outside of each classroom.

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

Adult Bible Class-

- **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.

- **New Bible Study Class-March 8th:** Join Mike Fiffik in Fellowship Hall beginning March 8th for Junk Drawer Jesus study. Each of us is the owner of a seemingly random collection of theologies, doctrines, and superstitions—a junk drawer of religious ideas and influences.
 - It's the witticisms your grandmother tossed around with ease that sounded like they came from a religious text
 - It's the mental screenshot of a meme shared on social media.
 - It's the empowering idea you underlined in a book and wrote on a Post-it Note now forever affixed to your laptop.

These are the things stuffed in our spiritual junk drawers because something in us says, "This might be useful." And so we hold on. But should we? In *Junk Drawer Jesus*, the spiritually exhausted are invited to examine our religious clutter and compare it to the person and the promises of Jesus Christ. We'll discover what—if anything—of our spiritual collection should be kept.

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.

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! We specifically need help to cover the month of July. Contact Nancy Hughey at 412-780-5641 to find out how you can help. Thank you.

Lenten Dinners – Lent has begun and so have 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. Thank you for your help.

Pie Day Bingo Fellowship Night: We're thrilled to invite you to Bingo Night, featuring a Pie Day Meal! Join us on Sat, March 14th from 5-7:30pm in the Fellowship Hall. If you plan to attend, please sign up in the Narthex. Please sign up to either bring a dessert pie OR plan to bring a pizza donation of \$5 per person or \$10 per family. Lastly, don't forget to bring 1-2 prizes per person for the bingo winnings table! Think of something fun you'd love to win (examples include candy, small toys, candles, card games, small gift cards, regifts etc.). The kids are welcome to take turns volunteering to spin the wheel. Winners might even get the chance to PIE Pastor! See you there! Questions to Lora Koontz & Elizabeth Russler.

Easter Flowers- It's that time of year again! We are offering for sale Tulips, Hyacinths and Easter Lilies. Tulips and Hyacinths are \$10.00 each and Easter Lilies are \$12.00 each. All orders are due by **March 12th**. Checks should be made payable to Ascension Lutheran Church. Please give order forms to Alicia by leaving them on her desk or placing them in the secretary mailbox in the narthex. Please do not put the order forms in the offering plate. Flowers are being provided by West View Floral. Order forms are available on the table by the bulletin board in the narthex.

Ladies' Bible Study- Ladies of Ascension, come join us for some fellowship, conversation and study of the faith on Saturday, March 14th at 10 am in the Fireside Room.

Board of Stewardship- We are currently looking for someone to fill the Head of the Board of Stewardship. The Board of Stewardship's main objective is to initiate programs of good stewardship attitudes amongst the Congregation members regarding their time, talents, and treasures. This can include, but not limited to recognizing members for their stewardship, annual pledges, training

opportunities, and assistance with finding ministry opportunities. If you feel called to serve in this role, please contact Pastor Thompson, pastor@ascensionpgh.com or Beth Gard, president@ascensionpgh.com

This week at Ascension Lutheran Church:		
Sunday 03/01	Divine Service Christian Education Hour	9:30 AM 11:00 AM
Tuesday	Outreach Committee Meeting Worship Committee Meeting Christian Education Meeting	1:00 PM 6:30 PM 7:00 PM
Wednesday	Prayer & Praise Lenten Dinners Mid-Week Lenten Service Choir Rehearsal	10:00 AM 4:30-5:45 PM 6:30 PM 7:30 PM
Sunday 03/08	Divine Service Christian Education Hour Pizza Party & Easter Egg Stuffing	9:30 AM 11:00 AM Noon