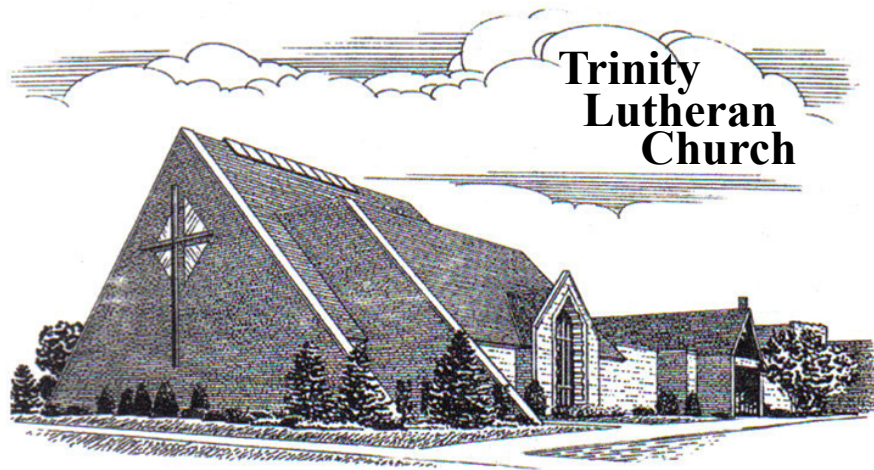


Ascension Sunday



May 18-24, 2026

Weekly Outline

Invocation

L: O Lord, open my lips.

C: And my mouth shall declare your praise.

L: Almighty, everlasting God, Lord, heavenly Father, whose Word is a lamp to our feet and a light on our way: Open and enlighten my mind that I may understand thy Word purely, clearly, and devoutly, and then, having understood it aright, fashion my life in accord with it, in order that I may never displease thy majesty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Scripture

May 18: Acts 1:1-11

May 20: Ephesians 1:15-23

May 22: Luke 24:44-53

Devotion

Closing Prayer

L: Faithful God, whose mercies are new to us every morning, we humbly pray that you would look upon us in mercy and renew us by your Holy Spirit. Keep safe our going out and our coming in, and let your blessing remain with us throughout this day.

Preserve us in your righteousness, and grant us a portion in that eternal life which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

C: Amen.

Monday

Acts is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. Luke is the author of both. In his first book (the Gospel), Luke records the teachings and life of Jesus. In Acts, Luke records the history of the Church following the ascension, focusing on the apostle Peter and the church in Jerusalem in the first half of Acts, and the apostle Paul and his missionary journeys in the second half.

Chapter 1 records Jesus' ascension and the instructions that he leaves to the apostles. The apostles ask if the kingdom of God is going to visibly appear on earth right away, and Jesus says, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Though Jesus withholds from the apostles the knowledge of when the kingdom of God will come in its fullness, he tells them what they are to do in the meantime. They are to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Like the first disciples, we too would like to know when the kingdom of God will come in its fullness. Widespread speculation on how the world will end or when Christ will return occurs almost every decade. The truth is, we will not know until it happens. However, the Church has been given a great mission in the meantime. To witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To proclaim the Law so that all might repent, and the Gospel, so that all might be saved through faith. That is the purpose of every congregation, and it is the great work that God has set before Trinity. Empowered by the Spirit, may we fulfill our calling. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Wednesday

Every investor looks wise when the stock market is rising. Every government feels powerful when things are going their way. But wisdom and power are proven in adverse conditions. The wise see opportunities when others do not. The truly powerful bend circumstances toward their goals even when such circumstances seem impossible. The power and wisdom of Jesus Christ is proven in exactly this way.

In our epistle reading, Paul reminds the Ephesians that God the Father raised Christ from the dead, and then he says that God seated Christ "at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God put everything under his feet." To have everything under the feet of Christ means that Christ exercises absolute authority. There is nothing that exists outside of his power. There is no enemy so clever as to escape his wisdom. His wisdom destroys the wisdom of man, and his power bends even the plots of his enemies toward the outcome he has ordained. His power and wisdom are absolute.

Paul concludes by reminding his readers why God put all things under Christ's feet. He writes, "God made him head over everything *for the church*." All things serve Christ, and because Christ is head of the Church, all things serve his body. That includes you. United to Christ by faith, all things are made to serve your salvation, because the Lord of all things is also your gracious head. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Friday

Between the ascension and second coming of Jesus is the time of the Church. The time of the Church is a time of God's grace, where the offer of salvation through repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ stands open to all. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 6, "Behold, now is the time of favor; now is the day of salvation!" However, this period of grace will eventually come to an end. Christ will return, the dead will be raised, and each person will give an account of his life to Christ, receiving punishment for his sins or a reward for his faithfulness. This means that the primary task of the Church during this period is witness. We must preach the Gospel so that all might repent, believe, and receive salvation from Christ on the day that he returns.

But before we can be witnesses, we must have something to witness to. Jesus points us to the source of our witness in Luke 24. Jesus said to his disciples after the resurrection, "These are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms." The Law, Prophets, and Psalms are the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus tells his disciples that his life is found in those sacred pages. They are prophecies of his suffering, death, resurrection, and the proclamation of forgiveness in his name. Then he adds, "You are witnesses of these things."

The witness of the Church is drawn from Scripture. The entirety of Christ's life and its meaning is found in the Old Testament, and also the New, as the New Testament is the writings of the apostles, the testimony of those who heard Jesus' voice, saw his miracles, and received the proof of his resurrection. Today is the day of the Church. It is the time of salvation. It is the age of witness, the time where we are blessed to receive the testimony of Scripture concerning Christ and proclaim the Gospel to others so that all might be saved. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Evening Prayer

You may pray one or more of the following after dinner or before bed:

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day; and I pray you that you would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.



Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep; if I should die before I wake, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take; and this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.



Visit, O Lord, our home, and drive from it all the snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell in it to preserve us in peace, and may your blessing be upon us evermore; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

A Parent's Blessing

You may place your hand on the head of your child before kissing them goodnight and say:

My loved one, rest securely,
for God this night will surely
from peril guard your head.
Sweet slumbers may he send you
and bid his hosts attend you
and through the night watch o'er your bed. Amen.

Memory Verse

MEMORY VERSE

*Rejoice in hope,
be patient in
tribulation,
be constant
in prayer.*

ROMANS 12:12



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