

A wooden pier with railings extends from the foreground into the ocean. The sky is filled with dramatic, golden clouds, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow that illuminates the clouds and the water.

*“You also must be
ready, for the Son of
Man is coming at an
hour you do not expect.”*

Luke 12:40 ESV

Ascension Lutheran Church
New Year's Eve ~ December 31, 2024

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Welcome to all who are attending our service today. We are glad you are with us! To all guests and visitors, we especially extend our hands of friendship. May God bless the worship time for each one of you. Please come again!

NURSERY AVAILABLE We have an unstaffed nursery for your convenience and privacy. The nursery has audio and video so you may hear and see the worship service while attending to your child.

Holy Communion is celebrated at the 8:30 service on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, and at the 11:00 service on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. + PREPARATION +

THEME: "ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS"

AS WE GATHER: Tomorrow, we celebrate the beginning of the new year. For many, that will mean a family gathering, a meal, and stories about the past. On this New Year's Eve, many will make New Year's resolutions—something they intend to change in the upcoming year. There is a good chance you already know where you will spend that time, often with family, food, and storytelling. Have you ever considered there is a day coming that will be like no other before it? That day will be a day of judgment and salvation. It will be a day when wickedness is forever vanquished to the pits of hell and the righteous will celebrate with a feast and the story of our salvation told. It will be a day of change—one the world has never seen before and never will again. Thanks be to God for that day—let us look forward to it with great joy!

PRELUDE

WELCOME

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

LSB 733

- 1 O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home:
- 3 Before the hills in order stood
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.
- 4 A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.
- 6 O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last
And our eternal home!

O God, Our Help in Ages Past, Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt., Text: Public domain

INVOCATION

- P** In the name of the Father,
C **who loved us with a fatherly love before He created the world;**
- P** and of the Son, Jesus, our Savior,
C **who loved us and left His throne in heaven to redeem us with His blood;**
- P** and of the Holy Spirit,
C **by whom we were sanctified, bringing us to faith and keeping us in the faith. Amen.**

OPENING SCRIPTURE

Psalm 31:11–16

- P** Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors, and an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me.
- C** **I have been forgotten like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel. For I hear the whispering of many—terror on every side!— as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.**
- P** But I trust in You, O LORD; I say, “You are my God.” My times are in Your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors!
- C** **Make Your face shine on Your servant; save me in Your steadfast love!**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- P** Let us 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.**
- 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.**

SALUTATION

- P** The Lord be with you.
- C** **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Eternal God, we commit to Your mercy and forgiveness the year now ending and commend to Your blessing and love the times yet to come. In the new year, abide among us with Your Holy Spirit that we may always trust in the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

SHARING THE PEACE OF THE LORD

P The peace of the Lord be with you all.

C And also with you.

+ THE WORD +

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 51:4-6 (ESV)

⁴“Give attention to Me, My people,
and give ear to Me, My nation;
for a law will go out from Me,
and I will set My justice for a light to the peoples.

⁵My righteousness draws near,
My salvation has gone out,
and My arms will judge the peoples;
the coastlands hope for Me,
and for My arm they wait.

⁶Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
and look at the earth beneath;
for the heavens vanish like smoke,
the earth will wear out like a garment,
and they who dwell in it will die in like manner;
but My salvation will be forever,
and My righteousness will never be dismayed.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 90:1-12; antiphon v.17

- P** Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us;
- C** **yes, establish the work of our hands!**
- P** Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.
- C** **Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.**
- P** You return man to dust and say, "Return, O children of man!"
- C** **For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.**
- P** You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning:
- C** **in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.**
- P** For we are brought to an end by Your anger; by Your wrath we are dismayed.
- C** **You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence.**
- P** For all our days pass away under Your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh.
- C** **The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty;**
- P** yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.
- C** **Who considers the power of Your anger, and Your wrath according to the fear of You?**
- P** So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.
- Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us;
- C** **yes, establish the work of our hands!**

EPISTLE READING

Romans 8:31b-39 (ESV)

If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the One who died—more than that, Who was raised—Who is at the right hand of God, Who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

“For Your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

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

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 12:35-40 (ESV)

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the twelfth chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

³⁵[Jesus said:] “Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. ³⁷Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! ³⁹But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

- 1 Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee.
Thou changest not: Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

**Refrain Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!**

- 2 Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. **(refrain)**
- 3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! **(refrain)**

Great Is Thy Faithfulness, Text: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1866–1960, Text: Public domain

SERMON
“WATCHFUL THINKING”

Pr. Jim Sprengle
Luke 12:35-40

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 \dagger of the world to come. Amen.

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

(Our offerings are made as an act of worship, given in loving response to all that God has graciously given us, both materially and spiritually.)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

- P** Let us pray for the whole people of God and for all people according to their needs.
- C** Lord, we ask in Your mercy to hear and answer our prayers.
- P** Almighty God, You created this world from nothing, and by Your will it exists to this day;
- C** yet there is coming a day when You will be revealed, the world will be judged, and we will be home forever.

- P** We look around our world, and we do not understand it;
C **we see things we do not understand, such as violence against others, and our hearts are broken.**
- P** We long for the day Isaiah prophesied that will come;
C **today, however, You have made us Your hands, feet, and heart to other people as long as we are here.**
- P** Therefore, we lift up those who are suffering in this life, be with them, provide for their needs, and comfort them in their hour of affliction, reminding them of their great reward.
C **Help us remember Paul’s reminder that our sufferings are not worthy of being compared with the glory that awaits us.**
- P** You have commanded us to pray for rulers everywhere in Your Word.
C **We lift up our President, all members of Congress, and our state and local leaders, and ask that they would be led by Your Spirit to make decisions pleasing to You and helpful for us, as well as all who rule this world.**
- P** For those whose needs are not known to us, we lift them up in silence, knowing You will hear and answer.

A moment of silence is observed.

- P** Lord Jesus, we look forward to the day when tomorrow is no more;
C **hear our prayers and keep us in the true faith, so we need not worry about tomorrow or eternity;**
- P** for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, the same yesterday, today, and forever.
C **Amen.**

LORD’S PRAYER

- 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.

+ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT +

We believe in the real presence of the body and
blood of Christ in Holy Communion.

Here our Lord offers to us the forgiveness of all our sins.

*(Grape juice is available in the center of the trays for those who do
not drink alcohol, and gluten-free wafers are available upon request.)*

PREFACE

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE PEACE OF THE LORD

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

+ DISTRIBUTION HYMNS +

I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table

LSB 618

- 1 I come, O Savior, to Thy table,
For weak and weary is my soul;
Thou, Bread of Life, alone art able
To satisfy and make me whole:

**Refrain Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood
Be for my soul the highest good!**

- 2 Thy heart is filled with fervent yearning
That sinners may salvation see
Who, Lord, to Thee in faith are turning;
So I, a sinner, come to Thee. **(refrain)**
- 3 Unworthy though I am, O Savior,
Because I have a sinful heart,
Yet Thou Thy lamb wilt banish never,
For Thou my faithful shepherd art: **(refrain)**
- 4 Weary am I and heavy laden;
With sin my soul is sore oppressed;
Receive me graciously and gladden
My heart, for I am now Thy guest. **(refrain)**
- 5 What higher gift can we inherit?
It is faith's bond and solid base;
It is the strength of heart and spirit,
The covenant of hope and grace. **(refrain)**

I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table, Text: Friedrich Christian Heyder, 1677–1754; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, abr., Text: © 1941 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110004673

My Faith Looks Up to Thee

LSB 702

- 1 My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine.
Now hear me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away;
O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine!

- 2 May Thy rich grace impart
Strength to my fainting heart;
My zeal inspire!
As Thou hast died for me,
Oh, may my love to Thee
Pure, warm, and changeless be,
A living fire!
- 3 While life's dark maze I tread
And griefs around me spread,
Be Thou my guide;
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray
From Thee aside.
- 4 When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold, sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll,
Blest Savior, then, in love,
Fear and distrust remove;
O bear me safe above,
A ransomed soul!

My Faith Looks Up to Thee, Text: Ray Palmer, 1808–87, Text: Public domain

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

P Let us pray.

Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage that, on the day of His coming, we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end; 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

- 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.

Abide with Me

LSB 878

- 1 Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.
- 2 I need Thy presence ev'ry passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.
- 4 Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.
- 6 Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Abide with Me, Text: Henry F. Lyte, 1793–1847, alt., Text: Public domain

DISMISSAL

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Ascension Lutheran Church

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Church Office Hours: Monday–Friday 9am to 3pm

Our Mission Statement:

~Go and Share Jesus Christ~

Our Vision Statement:

“Take part...Join Jesus on His mission.”

The members of Ascension Lutheran Church are committed to being God’s witnesses in Gresham, and in all of Portland and the Northwest, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8):

With the universal Christian Church, we believe, teach and respond to the love of the Triune God— the Father, Creator of all that exists; the Son Jesus Christ, Who left His home in Heaven to become flesh and blood, to suffer and die for the sins of all peoples of the world, and Who rose from the grave, victorious over sin, death and the devil, that we too might live with Him in Heaven; and the Holy Spirit, Who creates faith in our hearts in Christ Jesus through God’s Word and Sacrament. The three Persons of the Holy Trinity are one God, co-equal and co-eternal. The core teachings of our faith from the Lutheran perspective can be summarized in three short phrases: Grace alone, Scripture alone, Faith alone.

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