

January 11 & 12, 2025

SERVICE OF THE WORD

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we welcome Seminarian Joel Schewe from our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) in Mequon, Wisconsin. WLS is our seminary where “Pastors form Pastors to Proclaim God’s Grace.” Joel will also be leading us in Bible Study during our Family Bible Hour.

OPENING HYMN

“Lord, Open Now My Heart to Hear”

Hymn 632

Lord, open now my heart to hear,
and through your Word to me draw near.
Let me your Word e’er pure retain; let me your child and heir remain.

Your Word inspires my heart within;
your Word grants healing from my sin.
Your Word has pow’r to guide and bless;
your Word brings peace and happiness.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in One,
shall glory, praise, and honor be now and throughout eternity.

INVOCATION

M: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

+ CONFESSION OF SINS AND ABSOLUTION +

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

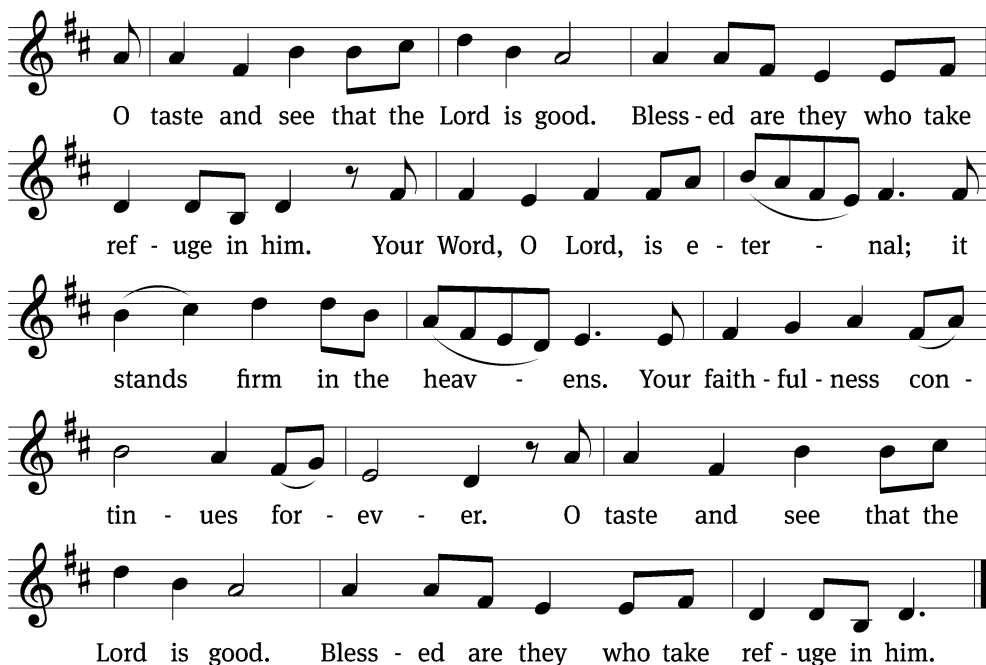
M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will. **Amen.**

+ PRAYER AND PRAISE +

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

HYMN (No Introduction)

"O Taste and See"



O taste and see that the Lord is good. Bless-ed are they who take
ref - uge in him. Your Word, O Lord, is e - ter - nal; it
stands firm in the heav - ens. Your faith - ful - ness con -
tin - ues for - ev - er. O taste and see that the
Lord is good. Bless - ed are they who take ref - uge in him.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your Word. By your Holy Spirit, help us to receive it with joy and bring forth fruits in faith, hope, and love; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 17:22–24

“ ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it; I will break off a tender sprig from its topmost shoots and plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it; it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid cedar. Birds of every kind will nest in it; they will find shelter in the shade of its branches. All the trees of the forest will know that I the LORD bring down the tall tree and make the low tree grow tall. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish.

“ ‘I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.’ ”

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 1A

Refrain



Bless - ed are they, bless - ed are
they who hope in the LORD.

Tone



Blessed is the one who / does not walk
in step with the / wicked
or stand in the way that / sinners take
or sit in the company of / mockers,
but whose delight is in the law / of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law / day and night.
That person is like a tree planted by streams of / water,
which yields its fruit in / season
and whose leaf does not / wither—
whatever they do / prospers. *Refrain*

Not so the / wicked!
They are like chaff that the wind / blows away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the / judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the / righteous. *Refrain*

For the LORD watches over the way of the / righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to de- / struction.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,
as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

SECOND READING

Colossians 1:3–8

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.
Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Mark 4:26–34

He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."

With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there 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.

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Thy Strong Word"

Hymn 630

Thy strong word did cleave the darkness; at thy speaking it was done.
For created light we thank thee while thine ordered seasons run.
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!

Lo, on those who dwelt in darkness, dark as night and deep as death,
broke the light of thy salvation, breathed thine own life-giving breath.
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!

Thy strong Word bespeaks us righteous; bright with thine own holiness,
glorious now, we press toward glory, and our lives our hopes confess.
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!

From the cross thy wisdom shining breaketh forth in conqu'ring might;
from the cross forever beameth all thy bright redeeming light.
Alleluia, alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia without end!

Give us lips to sing thy glory, tongues thy mercy to proclaim,
throats to shout the hope that fills us, mouths to speak thy holy name.
Alleluia, alleluia! May the light which thou dost send
fill our songs with alleluias, alleluias without end!

God the Father, light-creator, to thee laud and honor be.
To thee, Light from Light begotten, praise be sung eternally.
Holy Spirit, light-revealer, glory, glory be to thee.
Mortals, angels, now and ever praise the holy Trinity!

SERMON

Mark 4:26-34

"God Makes His Kingdom Grow"

HYMN

"One Thing's Needful"

Hymn 645

One thing's needful; Lord, this treasure teach me highly to regard.
All else, though it first give pleasure, is a yoke that presses hard.
Beneath the heart is still fretting and striving,
no true, lasting happiness ever deriving.
This one thing is needful; all others are vain—
I count all but loss that I Christ may obtain.

How were Mary's thoughts devoted her eternal joy to find
as intent each word she noted, at her Savior's feet reclined!
How kindled her heart, how devout was its feeling,
while hearing the lessons that Christ was revealing!
All earthly concerns she forgot for her Lord
and found her contentment in hearing his Word.

Wisdom's highest, noblest treasure, Jesus, is revealed in you.
Let me find in you my pleasure; make my will and actions true,
humility there and simplicity reigning,
in paths of true wisdom my steps ever training.
If I learn from Jesus this knowledge divine,
the blessing of heavenly wisdom is mine.

OFFERING

If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an "I Give Online" card in the pew racks.



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Lord God, our maker and preserver, we praise and thank you for all that you give us day after day.

C: **We are not worthy of all the mercies you show us.**

M: You have given us your precious Word to nourish our souls and to protect us from the temptations of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature.

C: **We thank you for those who teach and preach your saving truth at this place and everywhere. Grant them a rich measure of patience, wisdom, and love.**

M: Heavenly Father, we pray that you shield us from every kind of danger: sudden catastrophe, terrors of crime, and the pain of disease. Watch over those who travel by land, sea, and air. Keep our loved ones from whatever perils may threaten them.

C: **Heal those who are sick, cheer those who are sad, calm those who are distressed, and comfort all who are old and infirm.**

M: Bless our land, our people, and those who hold offices of high trust. Keep our government and schools upright and strong for the advancement of good citizenship and useful vocations, that we may enjoy your gifts of peace, security, and well-being.

C: **Grant your blessing to every nation on earth. Where there are wars, may there be peace. Where there is hatred, let it be healed. Where there is poverty, danger, or disaster, come with your almighty power to help and restore.**

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring to you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

M: We bring these requests before you in the name of Jesus our Lord, and ask you to hear us. Take all that we have, our bodies and minds, our time and skills, our ministries and offerings, and use them to your glory.

C: **We give ourselves to you that we may serve you in whatever way is pleasing in your sight. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

CLOSING PRAYER

M: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“On What Has Now Been Sown”

Hymn 925

On what has now been sown your blessing, Lord, bestow;
the pow’r is yours alone to make it spring and grow.

O Lord, in grace the harvest raise and you alone shall have the praise!

To you our wants are known; from you are all our pow’rs.

Accept what is your own and pardon what is ours.

Our praises, Lord, and prayers receive and to your Word a blessing give.

O grant that each of us now met before you here

may meet together thus when you and yours appear

and follow you to heav’n, our home. E’en so, Amen! Lord Jesus, come!

Acknowledgements: Created by Christian Worship: Service Builder © 2025 Concordia Publishing House. Texts and music covered under OneLicense.net #A-712373 and CCLI Copyright License 11194382, CCLI Streaming License CSPL059933. Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™ Service of the Word O Taste and See Tune: © 2006 Kermit G. Moldenhauer, admin. Northwestern Publishing House Thy Strong Word Text: © 1969 Concordia Publishing House. Psalm 1A Text: © 1969, 1981, 1997 ICEL (refrain). Music: © 1998 GIA Publications, Inc. Lord, Open Now My Heart to Hear Text (st. 2): © 1993 Mark A. Jeske, admin. Northwestern Publishing House.