

TODAY'S WORSHIP NOTES

What is the church season or special day? _____

What is the color of the altar cloths today? (circle one)

- White** perfection, joy, purity **Black** absence of color; symbolic of death
- Blue** hope **Green** life, nourishment
- Purple** royalty, mourning, repentance **Gold** royalty, riches, victory
- Red** fire, fervor, blood, martyrdom, victory in the blood of Christ

How does the color of the day fit the theme of the day? _____

What led our singing today? video organ piano other

Did we have special music today? choir soloist guest musicians

Did we have a sacrament today?

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Communion? | Baptism? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

The sermon text is: _____, found in Old Testament New Testament

What did I learn today about God, myself, or my Christian faith? _____

What was my favorite song today? _____

Did we do something special or out of the ordinary in worship today? _____

I would like to ask pastor this question (*in person, text or email!*): _____



The risen Savior is a constant benefit to those living in relationship with him by faith. He produces a new kind of life that flows from him to us to bear fruit in witness and love that serves our neighbor and brings glory to God. The fact that he lives again - body and soul, God and Man - gives substance and power to his promise to produce fruit in us when we remain connected to him by faith. We aren't connected to a mere memory. We are filled with the power and presence of a living person. The fruits of faith in our lives are also fruits of Jesus' resurrection. In our gospel reading today, Jesus describes our relationship with him this way: **"I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him is the one who bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing."** (John 15:8). The apostle Paul describes this fruit in Galatians 5:22-23 - **"the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."** Who among us wouldn't want more of such fruit growing in us? How can that happen? By staying connected to Jesus by faith - faith nourished by Word and Sacrament - such fruit will come!

Ascension Lutheran Church

April 28, 2024

Welcome to worship today at Ascension!

⌘ Our order of service today is from the new **Christian Worship**. Our goal is to provide variety in worship, retain the best of our Christian hymns, add new hymns, and help worshippers to become comfortable and familiar with new things even as we treasure the old.

⌘ **Acknowledgments and Permissions to print:** Scripture readings are from the Evangelical Heritage Version. Liturgy, hymns that are not in the public domain as well as our Psalm of the Day are reprinted here under OneLicense #A-713900. Children’s activity pages printed under subscription to Sermon 4 Kids, Inc.

⌘ **Our Mission:** Ascension exists to proclaim the joy of Jesus Christ in the Macomb County area by gathering to grow in the timeless truths of the Bible and by scattering to share the hope of heaven with everyone we meet.

⌘ **Would you like to know more about Ascension Lutheran Church?** Please contact Pastor Dan Simons at revdsimons@gmail.com. Phone or text: 586-569-9895. Visit us at www.ascensionmacomb.com or you can also like us on Facebook at facebook.com/ALCmacomb.

⌘ Need to connect to Wi-Fi here at church?

Our Wi-Fi name is ASCENSION Guest. Password is macombwels.

⌘ Thanks to those who serve us today

Worship accompanist - Gloria Aita; Recording/Streaming Engineers – Sandy Borkowski, Paul Kokesh; Security – Paul Fuller; Worship Leader /Preacher – Pastor Dan Simons.

⌘ Last Week at Ascension:

Ascension members in God’s house for worship - 44
Repeat visitors in God’s house for worship - 9
First-time visitors in God’s house for worship - 0
Worshipped with us online - 4
Total - 57

At the Lord’s Table for Holy Communion - 41

Children in Christlight for Kids – 4 children, 2 teachers

Confirmation Instruction Class - 4

Confirmation Instruction Class repeat on Monday night - 3

Faith conversations and invitations to worship by Ascension people: 2

Ascension people in touch with each (planning, encouraging, etc.): 10

64% of those who in God’s house for worship stayed to grow in the Word and be involved in our congregational meeting.

Worship the LORD

Opening Hymn

727:1-5 Where Charity and Love Prevail



1 Where char - i - ty and love pre - vail, there
2 With grate - ful joy and ho - ly fear God’s
3 For - give we now each oth - er’s faults as
4 Let strife a - mong us be un - known, let
5 Let us re - call that in our midst dwells



God is ev - er found; brought here to - geth - er
char - i - ty we learn; let us with heart and
we our faults con - fess; and let us love each
all con - ten - tion cease; be God’s the glo - ry
Christ, his on - ly Son; as mem - bers of his



by Christ’s love, by love are we thus bound.
mind and soul now love God in re - turn.
oth - er well in Chris - tian ho - li - ness.
that we seek, be ours his ho - ly peace.
bod - y joined, we are in him made one.

Text: tr. Omer E. Westendorf, 1916–1997, alt.; Latin, c. 9th cent.
Tune: Lucius Chapin, 1760–1842
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Tune: Public domain

Stand

Invocation

M: In the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Confession

M: If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

C: **If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

M: Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

C: **Holy God, gracious Father, I am sinful by nature and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have not loved you with my whole heart; I have not loved others as I should. I deserve your punishment both now and forever. But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins with his innocent suffering and death. Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

Silence for meditation and reflection

M: Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy

M: In peace let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

M: For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

M: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

M: For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

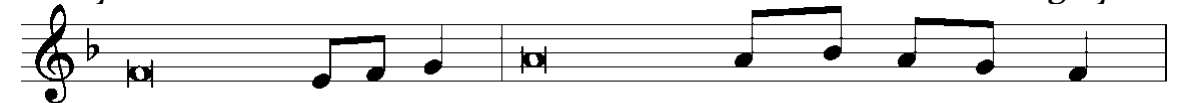
M: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.



A - men.

Glory Be to God

Sung by all



Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



We praise you, we bless you, we wor - ship you, we glorify you,



we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,

God the Fa-ther Al - mighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;

O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sin of the world;

have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; re-ceive our prayer.

You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.

For you on-ly are holy; you on-ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the

Ho - ly Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

The Word

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

M: Let us pray.

O God, you form the minds of your faithful people into a single will. Make us love what you command and desire what you promise, that among the many changes of this world, our hearts may ever yearn for the lasting joys of heaven; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Be seated

First Reading

Acts 4:32-37

God had blessed the proclamation of the gospel richly in Jerusalem. Verse 4 of this chapter tells us that the church there had grown to 5,000 men. The total congregation was two or three times that number! A church that large is a challenge to lead and administer. Add to these challenges the fact that it was composed of both Jews and non-Jews. Yet that congregation enjoyed remarkably impressive unity. Their hearts and minds were one, united in their faith in Jesus Christ. That unity showed itself in a genuine and self-sacrificing care for each other. May the unity of faith and purpose God has worked among us here in our congregation also express itself in devotion to the apostles' teaching and to sacrificial giving to the proclamation of that message!



The whole group of believers was one in heart and soul. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they held everything in common.³³ The apostles continued to testify about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ with great power, and abundant grace was on all of them.³⁴ There was not a needy person among them. For from time to time those who were owners of lands or houses sold them, brought the proceeds received from what was sold,³⁵ and laid it at

the apostles' feet. It was distributed to each one according to what anyone needed.

³⁶ Joseph, who was called Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated "son of encouragement"), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, ³⁷ sold a field that belonged to him. He brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm of the Day!

1C The Tree beside the River Grows

This hymn version of Psalm 1 explains what God does in his people as they sink their roots deep into his Word: he grows fruits of faith in love and service.



1 The tree be - side the riv - er grows; it drinks the
2 The fruit that blos - soms from the tree is sweet and
3 Just so, the one who feeds on God, who, filled with

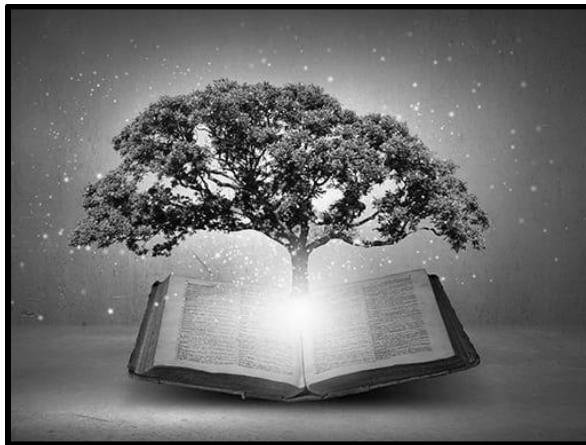


wa - ters fresh and pure that feed its branch - es
fra - grant, good to taste. It stands there, love - ly
hun - ger for good things, will is - sue forth with



and its leaves that nev - er with - er but en - dure.
to the eye, to nour - ish those who pass its way.
works of love that flour - ish in the spark - ling spring.

Text: Gracia Grindal
Tune: Heinrich Schütz
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Tune: Public domain



Second Reading

1 John 3:18-24

How can we know whether we are truly connected to Jesus as a branch is connected to the vine? John encourages us to look at the fruit we produce, that is, the love we show through the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. John tells us not to let our displays of love be a matter of words only. Rather, we are to show our love in actions. Another evidence of our connection to Jesus comes in the confidencs we have as we approach our heavenly Father in prayer.

Dear children, let us love not only with word or with our tongue, but also in action and truth.

¹⁹ This is how we know that we are of the truth and how we will set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰ If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God. ²² We also receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commands and do what is pleasing in his sight. ²³ This then is his command: that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and that we love one another just as he commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps his commands remains in God and God in him. This is how we know that he remains in us: We know it from the Spirit, whom he has given to us.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Hymn of Encouragement

730:1-3 Blest Be the Tie That Binds



1 Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Chris - tian love;
2 Be - fore our Fa - ther's throne we pour our ar - dent prayers;
3 We share our mu - tual woes, our mu - tual bur - dens bear,



the fel - low - ship of kin - dred minds is like to that a - bove.
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our com - forts and our cares.
and of - ten for each oth - er flows the sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.

Text: John Fawcett, 1740–1817
Tune: Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

Stand

Gospel

John 15:1-8

(These words of Jesus are the source of our meditation on the Word today.)

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he is going to cut off. And he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it will bear more fruit.

³ “You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I am going to remain in you. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Likewise, you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ “I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him is the one who bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers. Such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this: that you continue to bear much fruit and prove to be my disciples.

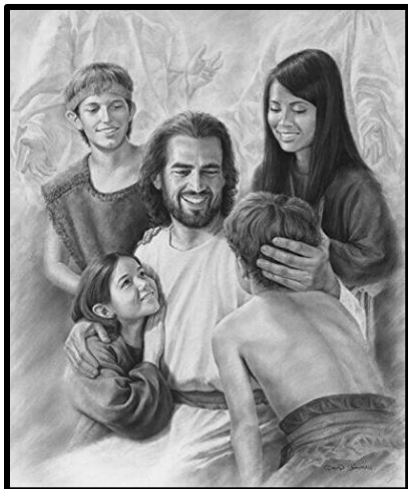
M: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ.

Be seated

Children’s Message

“Real love shows!”



Children are now invited to the chancel steps for a special message from John’s words in our second reading today:

“Dear children, let us love not only with word or with our tongue, but also in action and truth.”

Sermon Hymn

709 Christ the Vine



1 I long to serve my Sav - ior, to seek what’s good and right,
2 There came, with grace un - spar - ing, a vine from heav’n a - bove,
3 And so I’ll serve my Sav - ior with pow’r that he pro - vides,



to trust and nev - er wa - ver, to walk in truth and light.
its branch - es meant for bear - ing the fruits of self - less love.
for he, my blest Re - deem - er, with - in my soul a - bides.



But con - duct pure and ho - ly re - quires a pow’r not mine;
This vine is Christ who of - fered his life up - on a tree;
The fruit of self - less giv - ing will grow by God’s de - sign



a branch is fruit - ful on - ly when an - chored in a vine.
for all my sin he suf - fered and made a branch of me.
as I, the branch, keep liv - ing by faith in Christ the vine.

Text: Michael D. Schultz, b. 1963

Tune: Irish

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Tune: Public domain

Sermon

John 15:1-8

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he is going to cut off. And he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it will bear more fruit.

³“You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I am going to remain in you. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Likewise, you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵“I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him is the one who bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers. Such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this: that you continue to bear much fruit and prove to be my disciples

We are blessed to be his branches!

Grafted in Christ, the Vine (vv. 1,4)

Pruned by the Father, the Master Gardener (vv. 2-3)

Fruitful by the power of Christ (vv. 5-8)

Things I want to remember from God’s Word today:

Stand

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.

Be seated

Offering

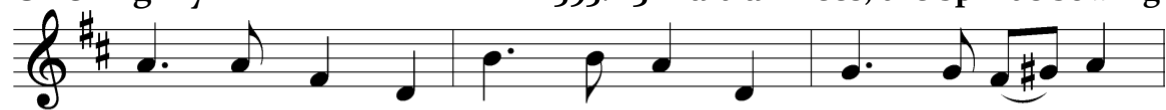
Our praise and worship are not the only gifts with which we honor our King. The fruits of faith the Holy Spirit grows in us means that we honor Jesus with our very selves. Regarding those gifts that represent our time, effort, sweat, and sacrifice, many worshippers prefer to use offering envelopes each week. If you do not have offering envelopes and would like a set, please ask. We will be glad to provide them, whether you are member or not. A growing number of our worshippers choose to give their offerings online using our website. You can do so at www.ascensionmacomb.com. Click on the WATCH A SERVICE tile, then scroll down to the GIVE NOW button to make an offering or to set up an automatic recurring offering. Whichever way you choose to give your gift to the Lord, it is an important part of worship. That’s why each week we take this time in our worship to acknowledge that with an offering hymn.

“Each one should give as he has determined in his heart, not reluctantly or under pressure, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

(2 Corinthians 9:7)

Offering Hymn

595:1-3 Fruitful Trees, the Spirit's Sowing



1 Fruit - ful trees, the Spir - it's sow - ing, may we rip - en
2 Lad - en branch - es free - ly bear - ing gifts the Giv - er
3 Root - ed deep in Christ our Mas - ter, Christ our pat - tern



and in - crease, fruit to life e - ter - nal grow - ing,
loves to bless; here is fruit that grows by shar - ing,
and our goal, teach us, as the years fly fast - er,



rich in love and joy and peace.
pa - tience, kind - ness, gen - tle - ness.
good - ness, faith, and self - con - trol.

Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith, b. 1926; Tune: Ralph C. Schultz, b. 1932; Text: © 1984 Hope Publishing Co. Used by permission: OneLicense no. A-713900
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Stand

Prayer of the Church

The 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.

Blessing

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.

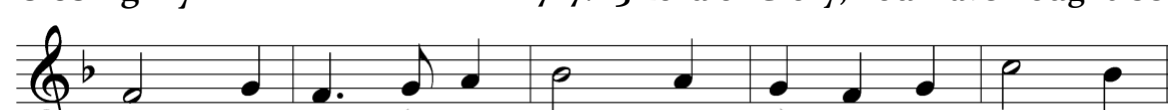
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace.

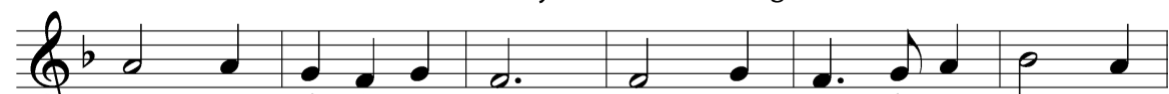
C: **Amen.** (*Be seated*)

Closing Hymn

767:1-3 Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us



1 Lord of glo - ry, you have bought us with your
2 Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to give you glad - ly,
3 Won - drous hon - or you have giv - en to our



life - blood as the price, nev - er grudg - ing for the
free - ly, of your own. With the sun - shine of your
hum - blest char - i - ty in your own mys - te - rious



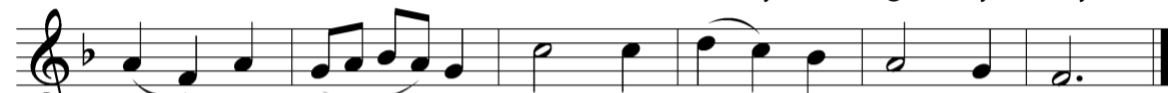
lost ones that tre - men - dous sac - ri - fice;
good - ness melt our thank - less hearts of stone
sen - tence, "You have done it all for me."



and with that have free - ly giv - en bless - ings
till our cold and self - ish na - tures, warmed by
Can it be, O gra - cious Mas - ter, that you



count - less as the sand to th' un - thank - ful
you, at length be - lieve that more hap - py
need what we can do, say - ing by your



and the e - vil with your own un - spar - ing hand.
and more bless - ed 'tis to give than to re - ceive.
poor and need - y, "Give as I have giv'n to you"?

COMING UP AT ASCENSION:

Today 9:30 a.m.....Worship w/ Children’s Message
 10:30 a.m.....Meet, Greet, and Eat
 10:45 a.m..... Christlight for Kids: Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead
 10:45 a.m.....Stories They Didn’t Teach You in Sunday School Bible Class:
 “Eutychus: The Boy who Got Preached to Death and Back Again”
 12:00 p.m..... No Confirmation Instruction Class
 1:00 p.m.....Pastor Simons officiates at the 4th Annual Blessing of the Bikes
 At American Legion Post 4, on Groesbeck south of Hall Rd. Open to
 the public. Stop by for music, vendors, and food!

Monday 7:00 p.m.....Alcoholics Anonymous-Covenant Chapter meets at Ascension

Sunday, May 5th 9:30 a.m.....Worship with Holy Communion
 10:30 a.m..... Meet, Greet, and Eat
 10:45 a.m..... Christlight for Kids: Zacchaeus – Jesus calls a
 man out of a tree and into the kingdom of God!
 10:45 a.m.....Special congregational meeting

COMING IN MAY:

Sunday 5/5 - ALL members of the Ascension family are asked to attend a very important special congregational meeting. We have been gathering quotes for replacing our badly worn parking lot. Because of the size and cost of this project, the benefit of the collective wisdom, prayers, and thoughts of our church family are desired. We may also be enjoying a cookout for lunch - plans are being discussed and more info will be coming your way.

Sunday 5/12 - Mother’s Day

Sunday 5/19 - Confirmation Sunday at Ascension: Charlotte Ciaramitaro and Nathan Fortuna will be confirmed in the faith.

Sunday 5/26 - Pastor Simons and family will be out of town attending the high school graduation of grandson, Lucas Steinbrenner.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE

New Beginnings is a parachurch organization of WELS Christians which offers pregnancy counseling and support for single new moms. Plastic baby bottles are available in the church lobby in which you can gather your gifts of coins or folding money. They are due today – please bring them back as soon as possible. Thank you for your kindness to those in need!



“Stories They Probably Didn’t Teach You in Sunday School”

Can you relate?

Your eyelids are getting heavy. It’s not that the preacher is saying things that are uninteresting or not opening the Word up to you – it’s rather that he has so much to say. He’s been at it for a while now and you are starting to lose connection. It seems the harder you try to keep your eyes open, the harder it is. When that first nod hits, you try to disguise it a bit by acting like you are nodding in agreement or really focusing on what he’s saying. And then it happens; the final “amen” of the sermon jolts you awake. The questions start running through your mind - “Did the preacher notice that I was sleeping?” “Did I snore at all?” “Did I mumble something in my sleep?”

Has that ever happened to you? Almost certainly, it has. Sometimes the environment just makes it hard to stay awake – it’s warm, quiet, and safe. We don’t get many moments like that in our work-a-day lives, so mind and body are a bit inclined to shut down. Sometimes it’s the result of being up too late the night before: sick kids, a TV movie that ran a little long, out with friends a bit late, or just a really, really busy week – all that can set us up for having a hard time staying awake in church.

A pastor would be tempted to use this remarkable little story as a cautionary tale about the dangers of falling asleep in church – this story is about a young man who died because he did.

A church member might be tempted to see this story as confirming what many pew-sitters have thought: long-winded preachers aren’t good for you. This story is about a young man who actually died because the preaching went on for a long time.

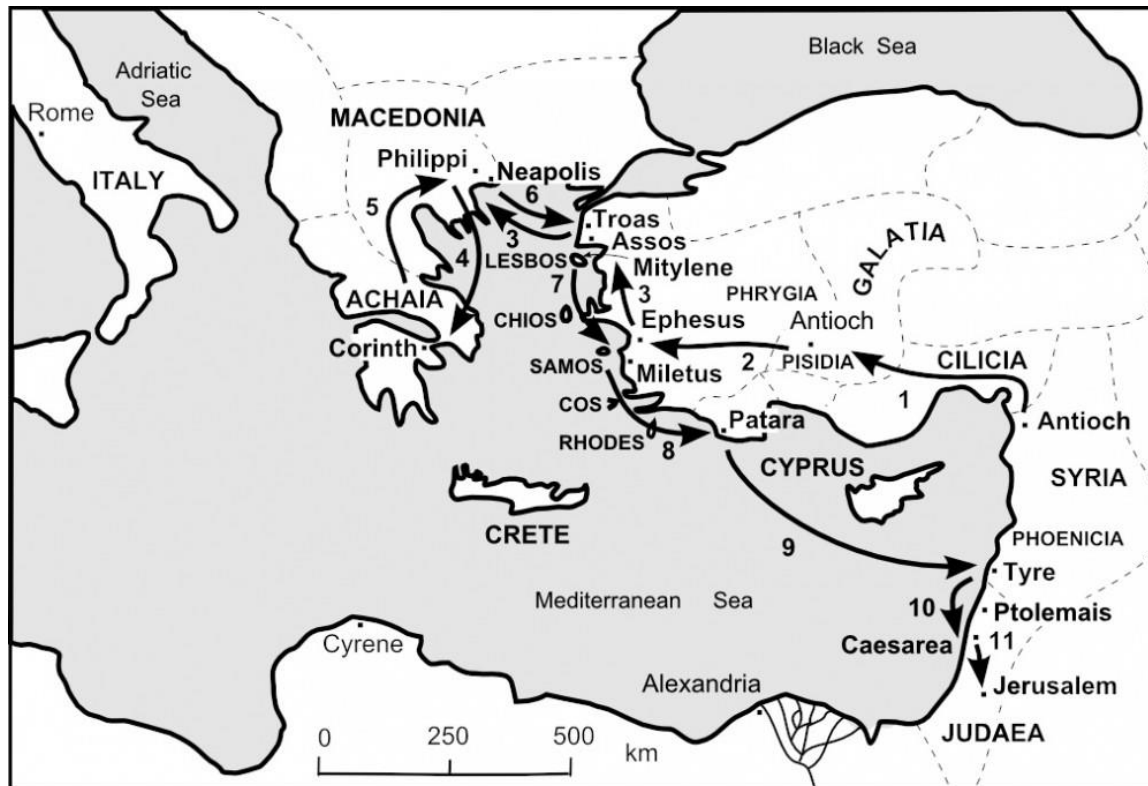
In truth, this surprising little account tells us something about God’s power at work. Let’s take a closer look at the story of **Eutychus, the boy who got preached to death and back again!**

When and Where Are We?

On this third missionary journey, Paul pretty much retraced his steps from his second journey. He'd planted Christian congregations on that second trip, and now he was revisiting them to strengthen them, help them deal with issues they might be having, and to keep them focused in their primary task of proclaiming the gospel clearly.

This mission trip is covered in Acts 18:22-21:17. While we won't take time to read that entire account in our Bible class, it is worthy of a careful read. There is much to learn there about Paul's love for souls, the challenges of church planting across cultures, and faith-born courage in the face of opposition to the gospel.

On the map, you can follow Paul's route outbound from Antioch and finally returning to Jerusalem. The story of Eutychus takes place on the homebound track in the city of Troas.



Here's What Happened:

“On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul spoke to the people. Since he intended to leave the next day, he continued talking until midnight. ⁸There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were gathered. ⁹Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus. He was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul kept on talking for a long time. When he was sound asleep, he fell down from the third story and was picked up dead. ¹⁰Paul went down, bent over him, threw his arms around him, and said, ‘Do not be alarmed, because he is alive!’ ¹¹Then he went upstairs, broke bread, and ate. After talking for a considerable time until dawn, he left. ¹²They brought the boy home alive and were greatly comforted.”

Paul was in Troas for about a week. But it was with the congregation in Troas as with most congregations today, we have contact with most of our members on Sunday when we gather for worship. Paul and the members at Troas were determined to make the most of this limited opportunity before he left the next day.

As you read the account, what details do you notice that seem to have played a part in Eutychus falling asleep?

The Greek verb in verse 7 that describes what Paul was doing has been translated “preaching” or “speaking.” If we hold to that translation, what strikes you about this entire incident?

The Greek verb in verse 7 is actually the Greek word from which the English word dialogue comes. What picture do you have of what Paul and those attending were doing?

What might this suggest as a way for preachers to make the proclamation of the Word of God more engaging?

This description helps us appreciate that in Paul's work as he planted and strengthened churches through the Word of God, the distinction between sermon and Bible class were rather blurred. Discuss: What can we do to try to foster a Sunday morning culture of growing in the Word more than a 15-20 minute sermon in one room and a 45-60 minute Bible study and discussion in another room?

The death and raising of Eutychus might sound a bit familiar. We've seen and heard things like this before.

Compare what Paul did with what Elijah did in Zarephath, Sidon in the Old Testament:

“Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times, and he cried out to the Lord, ‘O Lord, my God, let this boy’s soul return to his body!’²² The Lord listened to Elijah’s voice, and the boy’s soul returned to his body, and he came to life.²³ Then Elijah took the boy and brought him down to the house from his upstairs room, and he gave him to his mother. Elijah said, ‘See, your son is alive!’” (1 King 17:21-23)

- What is similar about the places where these occurred?
- What is similar about the manner in which the raising occurred?
- What is similar about the effect of that raising on people who saw it?

Compare what Paul said about Eutychus with what Jesus said about Jairus’ daughter:

“As he was saying these things to them, there was a ruler who came, bowed down to him, and said, ‘My daughter has just died. But come, place your hand on her, and she will live.’¹⁹ Jesus got up and followed him, as did his disciples. ...²³ When Jesus came into the ruler’s house and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd,²⁴ he said to them, ‘Go away, for the girl is not dead but is sleeping.’ But they laughed at him.²⁵ When the crowd was sent out of the house, Jesus went in, took the girl by the hand, and she was raised.” (Matthew 9)

- How could Paul – mere man – duplicate what Jesus – the Son of God – did?
- What do these incidents tell us about God’s power over death?
- For some help, read 1 Corinthians 15:20-27 – **“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.²¹ For since death came by a man, the resurrection of the dead also is going to come by a man.²² For as in Adam they all die, so also in Christ they all will be made alive.²³ But each in his own order: Christ**

as the firstfruits and then Christ’s people, at his coming.²⁴ Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has done away with every other ruler and every other authority and power.²⁵ For he must reign ‘until he has put all his enemies under his feet.’²⁶ Death is the last enemy to be done away with.²⁷ Certainly, ‘he has put all things in subjection under his feet.’”

Twice in this account, Paul and the members of the Troas church did something together – once when they first gathered and then again after Eutychus was raised. What was that?

Reflect and discuss: How is this reflected in our practice here at Ascension and why is that important?

Some have wanted to make this story about Eutychus an allegory about being spiritually sleepy. This is not an allegory; it was an actual historical event. Yet it can serve as a jumping off point for a discuss about something Jesus wrote to one of the church in Asia Minor, not far from Troas:

“To the messenger of the church in Sardis write:

The one who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars says this:

I know your works. You have a reputation for being alive, but you are dead.² Wake up, and strengthen what is left, which is about to die, for I have found that your works are not complete in the sight of my God.³ Therefore remember what you received and heard. Hold on to it and repent! If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come upon you.

⁴Yet you have a few names in Sardis, people who have not defiled their clothes. They will walk with me in white clothing, for they are worthy.

⁵The one who is victorious in this way will be clothed in white clothing. I certainly will not erase his name from the Book of Life, and I will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

⁶Whoever has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

What strength(s) does Jesus observe and praise in the congregation at Sardis?

What weakness(es) does Jesus observe and warn about in the congregation at Sardis?

What is the key to correcting spiritual apathy according to verse 3?

What are the dangers of succumbing or even embracing spiritual apathy according to verses 2a and 3b?

How would you assess the level of spiritual apathy or engagement in the congregation in Troas?

I Am the Vine

"I am the vine: you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.," John 15:5 (NIV)

The puzzle is based on John 15:1-8



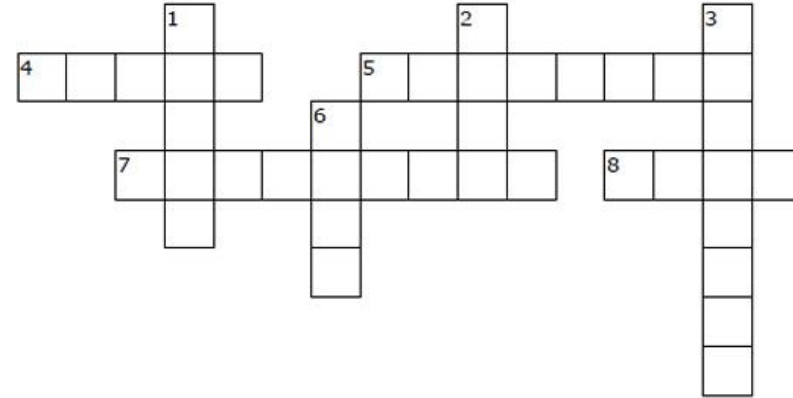
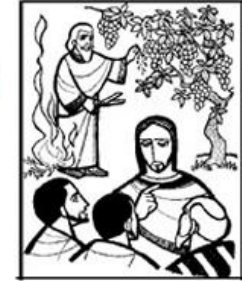
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BURNED	WITHERS	GARDENER	GLORY	BRANCH
FIRE	THROWN	WORDS	PRUNES	CLEAN
TRUE	FRUIT	REMAIN	VINE	BEAR

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ACROSS

- 4. Praise or honor
- 5. A person who works with plants and flowers
- 7. Those who follow Jesus
- 8. A plant that climbs or creeps along the ground

DOWN

- 1. The part of a vine or tree which is eaten
- 2. The opposite of false
- 3. Arms that grow out from the trunk of a tree
- 6. Burning flame

FRUIT	FIRE	BRANCHES	GLORY
TRUE	DISCIPLES	GARDENER	VINE