

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

918 Garfield Avenue, Albert Lea, Minnesota
www.gracealbertlea.org • Facebook.com/GraceAlbertLea

Nineth Sunday after Pentecost

July 26, 2026

**Denotes to stand if able.*

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

***Gathering Hymn:** Gather Us In..... **ELW 532**

Sacrament of Holy Baptism

Baptized at worship is **Wallace Wesley Wacholz**, son of Spencer & Abigail Wacholz. Sponsors for Wallace are Ronald Wacholz, Sally Strom, Kristin Bishop & Michelle Schoeb.

This is a congregational celebration! As we celebrate God's promises to Wallace, we make promises of our own, profess our faith boldly, and welcome our new brother in Christ.

A Reminder of God's Promises: Pastor Shane Koepke

Promises of the Parents, Sponsors, and Congregation:

L: Do you also promise to help Wallace grow in these ways throughout his life.

Parents: We do.

L: Do you as sponsors, encourage Wallace to grow in faith and life.

Sponsors: We do.

L: As a congregation, we promise to make this a safe place for all of God's children to learn and grow. Will you take your part in encouraging Wallace as he grows in faith?

A: We will.

Profession of Faith

L: Let us be bold in professing our faith.

**A: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.**

L: Do you renounce evil, the devil, and all the forces of this world that rebel against God?

A: We do.

L: Do you believe in the Christian faith as we have just confessed in the Creed?

A: We do.

Baptism

Anointing and Prayer

Welcome

L: As we light Wallace's baptismal candle, we remember that our families are our kids' primary congregations and encouragers in faith. With that in mind, their parents and sponsors have these important words of encouragement for them:

Parents and Sponsors: Let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

L: Let us pray for their parents and sponsors as they continue their ministry of family. Giver of all life, we give you thanks for Spencer, Abigail, Ronald, Sally, Kristin, and Michelle. Lead them to be teachers and role models of grace, mercy, compassion, and love for Wallace. Bless him with patience, strength, and faith so that he may know your gifts through them. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen.

Let us welcome Wallace!

A: We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world.

***Greeting**

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

A: And also with you

***Prayer of the Day**

L: Let us pray,

A: Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Psalm 139:7-12

L: ⁷Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?

**A: ⁸If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.**

L: ⁹If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

**A: ¹⁰even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.**

L: ¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and night wraps itself around me,"

**A: ¹²even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.**

Reading: Luke 15:1-7

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³ So he told them this parable: ⁴ “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

L: The word of the Lord

A: Thanks be to God

Jonah and the Big Fish (Spark Bible pg. 190)

One day, when Jonah was just minding his own business, God spoke to him. God said, “Jonah, I want you to go to Nineveh and tell the people that I know they aren’t living the way I want them to! I want them to change their ways.”

Jonah may have started with the right idea, but once he started walking, Jonah began thinking about what a long walk it was to Nineveh. “Hmmm,” Jonah thought, “I don’t really want to go to Nineveh—I’ll go the other way! God will never know.” So Jonah walked and walked—away from Nineveh. When Jonah got to the sea, he paid to get onto a boat to take him even farther away.

“Aahhhhh,” Jonah yawned. “All that walking made me tired! I’m going to take a nap.”

Jonah curled up on a pile of rope and fell asleep. But God saw Jonah! WHOOSH! God sent a strong wind that tossed the ship to and fro. The sailors were so afraid that they started throwing things overboard to make the boat lighter and save themselves.

The sailors worried. “What’s going on?”

They woke Jonah up.

“God is mad at me for not listening,” Jonah said, “so throw me overboard!” And they did! Suddenly the sea was calm again.

Look out, Jonah! Here comes a BIG fish! Gulp, gulp, gulp. The fish swallowed Jonah, and Jonah sat inside the dark, smelly fish for three days and three nights. Jonah prayed, “Help me God! I’m sorry.” Finally, the fish spit Jonah out on the beach.

Trudge, trudge, trudge. Jonah went to Nineveh. He told the people what God had said, and they believed him and changed the way they were living. God was happy that the people of Nineveh were now living as God wanted.

L: The word of the Lord

A: Thanks be to God

Children’s Message: Deacon Jessie Camp

Sermon: Pastor Shane Koepke

***Hymn of the Day:** My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less ELW 597

Blessing of the Youth Trip Participants

***Prayers of Intercession**

Each petition ends with the words:

L: God of grace...
A: hear our prayer.

***Sharing Peace**

L: The peace of Christ be with you always.
A: And also with you.

Offering

***Offertory Song:** Create in Me a Clean Heart ELW 186

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with your free Spirit.

***Offering Prayer**

L: Let us pray,
A: Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you
and share freely of your love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask
this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever.
Amen.

***Holy Communion**

***The Great Thanksgiving**

L: The Lord be with you.
A: And also with you.
L: Lift up your hearts.
A: We lift them to the Lord.
L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
A: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

***Words of Institution**

***Lord's Prayer**

A: 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.

Distribution

Hymns: As the Grains of Wheat **ELW 465**
Let Us Break Bread Together **ELW 471**

Prayer after Communion

L: Let us pray,

A: Compassionate God, through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever. Amen.

Blessing

L: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, ☩ one God, bless, heal, and hold you today and always.

A: Amen.

***Sending Hymn:** On Our Way Rejoicing **ELW 537**

*Sending

L: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

A: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

THANK YOU for joining in worship at Grace Lutheran!

Welcome to all members and visitors! May God bless this time of worship with joy and peace. If you're seeking a church home, we invite you to join the Grace family—please speak with the pastor or deacon for more information.

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

WORSHIP LEADERS: Pastor Shane Koepke and Deacon Jessie Camp

MUSIC: Aaron Bartz

SCRIPTURE READER: Matt Zoller

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS: Jack & Andy Zoller

COMMUNION WINE & BREAD: Given in memory of Andy Munyer by Jim & Judy Munyer

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