

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 6, 2026
Zoar Church, Tofte, MN

Welcome Visitors - Please fill out the Visitor Card and put it in the giving box in the Narthex

Pastor: In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Congregation: Amen

Pastor: The Lord be with you

Congregation: And also with you

Opening Prayer

Bell

Opening Song: "The Shadow of Your Love" - CCLI # 5865448

V1 I just wanna stay in the shadow of Your love
And never leave, no matter where it goes
I don't wanna lift my feet from solid ground
Or miss Your voice, forget how it sounds
I just wanna stay in the shadow of Your love.

Chorus

When I call
don't you always rescue me
When I fall...You always carry me...
Into the shadow of your love.

V2 I just wanna go, where I'm supposed to go
No matter what that means, or where it leads
I just wanna see what lies in front of me
Seems that's not Your way so I must walk by faith
As long as I can stay in the shadow of Your love

V3 I don't wanna live, the way I used to live
How I couldn't see all You've done for me
Now I just wanna sing, Heaven's melodies
And lift my voice no matter what life brings
I just wanna stay in the shadow of Your love

Confession and Forgiveness (From 1 John & Psalm 32)

Pastor: God is light

Congregation: in him there is no darkness at all.

P: If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another,

C: and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(Silence for reflection and confession)

P: I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord

C: And he forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Song “There Was Jesus” - CCLI # 7138043

V1 Every time I tried to make it on my own
Every time I tried to stand and start to fall
All those lonely roads that I have traveled on
There was Jesus

V2
When the life I built came crashing to the ground
When the friends I had were nowhere to be found
I couldn't see it then but I can see it now
There was Jesus

Bridge
On the mountain, in the valleys (there was Jesus)
In the shadows of the alleys (there was Jesus)
In the fire, in the flood (there was Jesus)
Always is and always was
No, I never walk alone (never walk alone)
You are always there

V3 For this man who needs amazing kind of grace
For forgiveness at a price I couldn't pay
I'm not perfect so I thank God every day
There was Jesus (There was Jesus)

Chorus
In the waiting in the searching
In the healing and the hurting
Like a blessing buried in the broken pieces
Every minute every moment
Of where I been or where I'm going
Even when I didn't know it or couldn't see it
There was Jesus

Ending
There was Jesus There was Jesus
There was Jesus

Song “Only You” - CCLI # 133969

V1 No one but You Lord
Can satisfy the longing in my heart
Nothing I do Lord
Can take the place of drawing near to You

V2 Father I love You
Come satisfy the longing in my heart
Fill me overwhelm me
Until I know Your love deep in my heart

Chorus:
Only You can fill my deepest longing
Only You can breathe in me new life
Only You can fill my heart with laughter
Only You can answer my heart's cry

Prayers & 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

Old Testament Readings: Genesis 19:13B, 24-25 (NIV)

The outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it.”

Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the Lord out of the heavens. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, destroying all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land.

New Testament Reading: 2 Timothy 4:3–4 (NIV)

For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

Gospel Readings: Matthew 11:16-24 (NIV)

“To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:

“‘We played the pipe for you,
and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge,
and you did not mourn.’

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.”

Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.

And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.”

P: The Word of God for the people of God C: Thanks be to God

Message: “*What’s Your Excuse?*” - Pastor Al Alexander

Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the
right hand of the Father.
He will come again 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

Communion

Please come forward during the communion hymn and take a cup of wine or grape juice and a wafer back to your seats. If you are joining us at home, please use your own bread or crackers and wine or juice. We believe the Lord's Supper is a "means of grace" offered freely to all who seek Him. Please join us.

Words of Institution & Prayer of Thanksgiving

P: Holy and merciful God, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you gave your Son both as a sacrifice for sin and a model of the godly life.

C: Enable us to receive him always with thanksgiving and to conform our lives to his, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

P: Through Him, with Him, in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever,

C: Amen

Communion Song: "Come to the Table" - CCLI # 7036352

Song: "Good Good Father" - CCLI # 7036612

V1 Oh I've heard a thousand stories
Of what they think You're like
But I've heard the tender whisper
Of love in the dead of night
And you ou tell me that You're pleased
And that I'm never alone

V2 Oh and I've seen many searching
for answers far and wide
But I know we're all searching for answers
Only You provide
Cause You know just what we need
Before we say a word

V3 Oh it's love so undeniable
I can hardly speak
Peace so unexplainable I can hardly think
As You call me deeper still
As You call me deeper still
As You call me deeper still
Into love love love

Chorus

You're a Good Good Father
It's who You are
It's who You are
It's who You are
And I'm loved by You
It's who I am
It's who I am
It's who I am

Bridge

Cause You are perfect in all of Your ways
Perfect in all of Your ways
You are perfect in all of Your ways to us

Announcements

- September Mission: Hope Academy - See poster in Narthex
- Community Bible Study
 - Monday's 6:00-7:00 pm at Zoar or Zoom (contact lmsalexand@gmail.com)
 - No Study this week (9/7/26) - Labor Day
- Jeremy and Plami Chase Baptism - 9/20/26, 11:30 am, near Fr. Vargas Cross, Schroeder
 - Light lunch following
- Zoar Annual Meeting - 9/27/26 after church
 - Brunch served
- Church on the Rocks Sundays at 8:00 am near Fr. Baraga's Cross in Schroeder.
- Please pray through the Zoar prayer list every day
- Thanks to all who are praying for our young people
- Pick up a copy of Our Daily Bread devotional in the Narthex
- To get on the prayer chain - email or call Pastor Al or the church.
- Prayer Requests - Form in seat back; box in Narthex or email Pastor Al
- Sign up for after church treats - sheet in Narthex
- Puzzle exchange - downstairs in the fellowship hall. Lots of puzzles!
- Billy Peterson book - See Pastor Al
- Giving: Box in Narthex, online through our webpage or send a check to the church.

Benediction Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV)

The Lord bless you and keep you;

the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;

the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace

Bell

Sending

Pastor Al: Go in peace and serve the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God. We Will! Alleluia. Amen

Dismiss

Website: www.zoarchurch.org • Email: zoarchurchtofte@gmail.com • Church Phone: 218-663-7925
Pastor Al Alexander 612-308-2185 • Music provided this morning by Dave Gustafson
Offerings can be dropped in the labeled box in the narthex
or by clicking the link "Give" on the zoarchurch.org homepage.