



The Messenger

Ascension Lutheran Church

Vol. 39, No. 4

April 2018

MINISTERS

"As a progressive and open church, we boldly make Christ's vision known."

STAFF

Julie Bailey, Pastor
Bob Aldrich, Education Coordinator
Jennifer Salowitz, Musician/Choir Director
Sara Gregor, Parish Nurse
Cheryl Huebner, Secretary
Dawn Dalton, Custodian
Lisa Mlujeak, Custodian
Nicole Crump, Nursery Attendant
Sarah Hecht, Nursery Attendant

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Charleen Boland, Treasurer
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WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sundays 8:00am & 10:30am
Wednesdays 7:00pm

Phone (989) 781-2170
ascensionlc@sbcglobal.net
Website - www.ascensionlc.org

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JULIE

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. 2 Corinthians 5:16-20



Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen indeed! Alleluia! AMEN!

As we begin the month of April, we celebrate the resurrection of Christ, and the ushering in of new life. Once and for all, Jesus conquered death. We are justified, made right with God through the grace of Jesus Christ. For this we are thankful, though undeserving.

This also is a reminder that we are all human and fall short. We are being made new every day as we live into the calling and resurrected life Jesus ushered in for us. We know that all are children of God, all reconciled to him through his death and resurrection. And yet, we are so often reminded that we are human as well.

In this letter to the Corinthians, the writer reminds them that everyone is a new creation, and has become new! God has given us this through the ministry of reconciliation, a process that includes forgiveness. Reconciliation also takes some intentionality to refrain from those things that are human nature and harm relationships. This might include gossip, hurtful comments, and ideas of vindictiveness or revenge. As people of the resurrection, we are called to rise with Christ above the frailty of human actions and to forgive one another when we fail to do so. This can only come with intention and practice.

In Matthew 15, Jesus instructs that if we have a problem with someone, we go directly to them. I know we fail to do this; I fail to do this at times. I have also been the victim of these kinds of issues. Reconciliation is harder when I hear these rumors through others, because as a human it hurts and can be embarrassing.

Living lives as saints and sinners (check out the teaching of Martin Luther) is difficult. We know we are to live in Christ, and yet we will sin—that is why we need the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. I encourage the disciples of Ascension to live into this new creation that Christ has ushered in; and in doing so, we will boldly make Christ and Christ's vision known to our community.

WORSHIP AND EDUCATION

WALKING TOGETHER

Registration is open for Walking Together: A Day of Worship and Formation for Congregational Leaders! This year's theme is Leading with Faith, Hope, Love...and Knowledge. Join us Saturday, April 21st at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids. Registration is \$10 and all forms must be submitted to the Synod Office by April 10th (<http://mittensynod.server303.com/docs/WalkingTogetherRegistration18.pdf>).

YOUTH

CHARGE

That is what Dave Huston and I did with 15 of our middle school youth. Madi, Anni, Erika, Ashley, Chase, Nathan, Ahren, Ben, Carlie, Emily, Alexis, Courtney, Joscelyn, Diedre and Lyric spent a weekend at Great Wolf Lodge in Traverse City getting charged up and recharged. Pastor Yehiel Curry, a Lutheran pastor who is active in the Multi-Cultural Youth Leadership Academy and pastor of a congregation outside of Chicago, was our speaker. We heard about the charge to tend to our relationship with God, charge to love ourselves as our neighbors, charge to leave worry behind, and charge to go and do something. We sang and danced, we listened, we grew in our relationship as a group, we went to the water park, ate ice cream, ate a lot of junk, had way too much food, and through all of this, I believe loved on God more and more. Want to know more about it? Ask one of the youth. Ask about the boards we painted. Ask them to tell you how faith and love are like a short stop on a baseball team, and why we can't just run from first to third. Ask them what they learned about one another. Next year CHARGE will be held March 22nd—24th at Great Wolf Lodge. All youth 6th—8th grade are welcome.



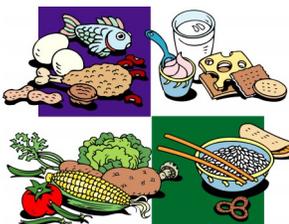
CELEBRATING HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE GRADUATES

We will be celebrating graduates on Sunday, May 13th during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. We invite you to come celebrate with us. If you are a graduate, please let Bob Aldrich know. He needs your name, pictures (graduation ones if you have them, when you were young, maybe at church events), where you're graduating from and plans for the future (if going on to school, have a job, taking a year off for service....whatever those plans are). You can email pictures to trammilou@sbcglobal.net. Deadline to submit pictures and information is Sunday, April 29th. Thanks!!!

OTHER

SEWING GROUP

Ascension's Sewing Group will meet in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, April 4th and Wednesday, April 18th from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Bring your sewing machine, and join us for fun and fellowship. We will be working on an easy community service project.



NOISY OFFERING

We will be taking a Noisy Offering on Sunday, April 8th and Wednesday, April 11th for the Saginaw Metro Ministries Food Pantry (SMMFP). Through the end of April, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan will credit an additional 10% to the amount raised for the SMMFP. We are always looking for ways to raise money for our food pantry, and this is a great opportunity.

FAMILY FUN NIGHT

We are hosting a family open house game/movie night at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, April 13th and Sunday, May 20th. Bring a snack/treat to share and your favorite board game and join us for a night of fun. Snacks and games will be in the Fellowship Hall and the movie will be in the Sanctuary. All are welcome!!! Contact Jen Salowitz with any questions.



CROP UNTIL YOU DROP

Ascension is hosting an All Day Crop on Saturday, April 28th from 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Bring your own scrapbook supplies. Each person will have a banquet table and outlets are available. Breakfast, lunch and snacks will be provided. Please bring a dish to pass for dinner (along with the recipe) and your own drinks. Cost is \$25.00. Deadline to register and turn in your payment is Friday, April 20th. Please make checks payable to Ascension Lutheran and mail with this registration form to Michelle Wardlow, 11355 Swan Creek Rd., Saginaw, MI 48609. *All proceeds will benefit the Ascension Youth Group.*

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

SAGINAW METRO MINISTRIES FOOD PANTRY APPRECIATION DINNER

The dinner will be held on Friday, May 4th at 6:00 p.m. at the food pantry. Please plan on attending if you in any way helped, donated, or prayed for the food pantry. Contact the Church Office at 781-2170 if you are coming. Thanks!!



ABI DINNER

We will be holding our Annual Year-End Celebration Dinner for our ABI students on Sunday, May 6th at 6:00 p.m. Our ABI students and parents will be celebrating the completion of another program year of our confirmation classes and would like to invite the congregation to join us for a potluck dinner. Guardian Angels for our 8th grade students will be revealed.

OTHER



BACK TO SCHOOL FAIR

We will be hosting our Fifth Annual Back to School Fair on Thursday, August 9th from 6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m. This is part of the God's Work-Our Hands Initiative—for the church to proclaim the gospel in our actions and show the world the love we have from God. It truly is God's work and our hands. We have been making the necessary preparations, and it is time to ask for your help.

You can help by:

- Donating new socks and underwear (bin is in the Gathering Area)
- Donating financial gifts
- Volunteering to help sort clothes as they come in (see Kris Friend or Melissa Morgan)
- Bringing in gently used clothes for all K-12th youth
- Setting aside August 9th to help with set-up, work during the event, and help with clean-up

“NO GO LIST” 2018

Did you see the article “No Go List” in the Saginaw News? *Guess what country is No. 8? Honduras!* Travel Guide Fodor's reason: “because of its high murder rate, particularly of the LGBT community.” As Honduras Team members, we know that the murder rate is high. Our annual mission trips continued in spite of that. The main reason for postponing our 2018 trip is the increased political turmoil in the country.



Many Ascension members know that our Synod (N/W Lower Michigan Synod) has had a companion relationship (through the Honduras Team) with the Lutheran Church of Honduras (ICLH) for 13 years now. Our congregation and others in the Synod have supported this Health for Life Ministry in many ways, including annual health mission trips to work with our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Honduras.

In 2017, 4 leaders from the ICLH visited several churches in Michigan: Saginaw, (including Ascension), Lansing and Grand Rapids. A team trip to Honduras was planned for March 2018 but was canceled due to the political unrest (demonstrations, protests, violence) resulting from the fraudulent presidential election in November. Our ELCA leaders overseeing the Latin American countries, Pastor Stephen Deal, Regional Representative for Latin America, and Paulina Dasse, ELCA Global Mission Manager for Relationships in Latin America, urged us to delay our trip for now. It is the team's hope that a visit can happen later in 2018. These are very difficult times for many Hondurans. Please pray for their safety and peace in their country.

The Honduras Team continues to support the ICLH by approving a budget for the ongoing ministries of the kindergarten nutrition program, water filters for families, children's dental program, women's health program and health education. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve our Lord and share His love with our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Honduras. It is encouraging for them to know we pray and care for them. We do make a difference!

Sara Gregor, Honduras Team



SECURITY IN PLACES OF WORSHIP

Our church council has authorized the creation of Ascension's Security Team (AST). As most of us know, it is very important in today's society to provide a safe, secure and comfortable location for people to gather. The purpose of AST will be to evaluate our current situation at Ascension, from a security perspective, and through discussion and communications with *everyone*, to determine what is best for us. These issues will apply to events such as worship services, youth activities, bible studies, small gatherings and the like and simply when our church is open and there are only a couple people inside. Our recommendations may be accomplished in part with assistance from knowledgeable consultants and experienced trainers. The team consists of Mike Clifford, Dawn Dalton, John Whelton, Rick Herren, Jim Stuart and Ron Fries. We plan to meet on a regular basis with our first meeting in a couple weeks. This is a very serious issue, unfortunately. Communication is a two-way street. You will hear from us in the announcements, the Messenger, and a few meetings. We want to hear from you too...your thoughts and your concerns as we work our way through this, together. Thank you.

In God's Service,
AST

OTHER

ALTAR FLOWERS FOR APRIL

April 1st	Given to the Glory of God by Jack and Delila Colpean
April 8th	Given to the Glory of God by Tanya Blehm
April 15th	<i>Flowers Needed</i>
April 22nd	<i>Flowers Needed</i>
April 29th	Given to the Glory of God by Eric and Linda Lentner



The Flower Chart is posted in the Gathering Area on the Usher/Acolyte Room door. The cost is \$25.00. A payment envelope will be mailed to you. These arrangements are placed in the Sanctuary each week for worship and may be picked up after the late service on Sunday morning.

STEWARDSHIP



STEWARDSHIP

In April, we will hear more about how we are called to be stewards of all God has given us, and how we are called to give of our first fruits. Each family will be receiving a letter along with a pledge card that we ask you to return. There will be follow-up letters and visits for those who do not turn in their cards. In addition to your financial commitment, we are asking if there is interest in online giving, IRA rollovers, and estate planning.

Our financial goal as a congregation is to increase our giving by 3% and to pay off our mortgage in about ½ the time left. Thank you in advance for your help.

MORTGAGE FUND

Ascension has an outstanding mortgage from when the new Sanctuary was built. We currently owe approximately \$584,500 and at the current rate, the mortgage should be paid off in 15 years. Our goal is to pay this off in seven years. Our current monthly payment is over \$4000. We recognize that our ministry would benefit greatly if we had this money monthly to support our current and new ministries. If you have a one-time gift you would like to share, please consider directing this to the mortgage fund. ***We ask that you not decrease your general giving to give to the mortgage fund.***



THRIVENT MEMBERS

Are you a member of Thrivent Financial Services? Did you know you may have financial opportunities that cost nothing to you? You may be eligible for Thrivent Choice dollars. This is money that Thrivent gives to help 501c3 ministries (non-profits), including the congregation. To access this, you will need to sign into your account online, and you can direct your funds. This money again costs you nothing, and our representative tells us much of this money goes unclaimed. If you need help, please let the congregation know, and we can help you. You also are eligible to apply for a Thrivent Action team. This is another benefit as a member that provides \$250 seed money for projects. People have applied for things like our new freezer meal ministry, the chili cook-off, our youth program, soccer camp, back to school fair, our emergency bag program, etc. If you would be willing to help us with an action team, please let us know.

OUTREACH

Saginaw Metro Ministries Food Pantry (SMMFP) Fund Drive is being held through April 30th



Your contribution to Saginaw Metro Ministries Food Pantry during the
FOOD BANK OF EASTERN MICHIGAN (FBEM) MARCH TO FIGHT HUNGER
campaign is a great way to maximize your gift.

What can I do?

It's easy!! Sponsor an event during April, or ask a business, group or individual
to mail a check to **Saginaw Metro Ministries**.

Once the program is over, FBEM will tally the money raised by SMMFP and the Food Bank will credit an **additional 10%** of that amount to our account. For example, if you raise \$1,000, the Food Bank will credit SMMFP an additional \$100; so you will have a total of \$1,100 for SMMFP!

We are always looking for ways to raise money for our food pantry, and this is a great opportunity.
In today's economy, a 10% return on your investment is the best thing going!

Please mail all checks to:

**Saginaw Metro Ministries
P.O. Box 6472
Saginaw, MI 48608**

***Checks must be made payable to Saginaw Metro Ministries**

***Matching Funds Program P-981 must be written in the memo line.**

***Checks must be dated for March or April to be eligible for this program and received by April 30, 2018.**

March Against Hunger

March 1st – April 30th

I want to help in the fight against hunger through the 10% matching funds program.

Please accept this donation of \$ _____ to be credited to the following Food Bank account:

Agency Account Number P-981 Date _____

Agency Name: SAGINAW METRO MINISTRIES FOOD PANTRY

Please send a receipt of this gift to the agency and an acknowledgement to:

Contributor _____

Address _____

Please make check payable to:

Saginaw Metro Ministries

P.O. Box 6472

Saginaw, MI 48608

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Fellow Members in Christ,

It has been some time since I updated you on the progress being made towards our strategic plan, so I thought I would brief you on a couple of things that are soon to be happening that center around our global goals. I will touch upon each of them briefly and as best as I can.



Our **Spiritual Health** Goal is “Nurture every relationship with Christ and equip each disciple in his/her Faith Journey”. One of our 3 - 5 year initiatives is to create a worship experience that evokes disciples to live and serve. Some of the short-term goals to achieve this experience have been to invite others to join as worship leaders: sound board, choir, altar guild, ushers; as well as train them in their duties. We have seen new faces in some of these roles and appreciate their willingness to share their God-given talents with us.

Our **Congregational Care** Goal of “Tending to every person of our community of faith with unconditional love and compassion in word and deed” is a daunting task. We have struggled a bit with just how to tackle this, and always welcome suggestions as well as individuals called to serve in this capacity. One such way to care for those struggling with serious medical issues is to provide resources, such as the book currently housed in the Library, “Cancer, So Now What”. This is for any member or someone you know that may be dealing with this terrible disease. Another initiative, that recently came about from a gathering of some of the Women of Ascension, is to create a space to store frozen meals to be taken to members who have returned from a hospital stay or have lost a loved one.

Our **Finance & Resource Management** Goal is to “Practice first fruits giving of time, talent, and treasures to ensure sustainability of our mission.” One of our 3 - 5 year initiatives is to increase giving by 3%, and our method to achieve this was to have an intentional stewardship program. You will be receiving a letter and stewardship pledge card in the mail. Please look for it and return it no matter your pledge amount. Another part of this intentional program is for lessons in the latter half of April to be focused on stewardship. A separate goal has been to increase our mission support, and we have been monitoring our financial status closely. At this time, we feel our finances are stable enough to support an increase in giving. Starting April 1st, we will send 3% of our weekly offering to mission support.

Outreach is our last, but not least goal to “Make a positive impact on the community by sharing the Kingdom of God”. We have done this the last several years by hosting the Back to School Fair. Last year we began the 48-hour emergency food bags, and hope to begin a weekend bag for school-aged children who may be going home with little to no food.

If you have any questions regarding any of the above programs, are inspired to serve in some capacity, or you see an unmet need, please feel free to reach out to a council member. We will gladly welcome your ideas, talents, and time.

In Christ's Service,

Kris Yackel-Friend

The MESSENGER is published monthly by
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Deadline for the May 2018 issue is
Monday, April 16th at 12:00 noon.
Articles may be emailed to ascensionmessenger@yahoo.com.

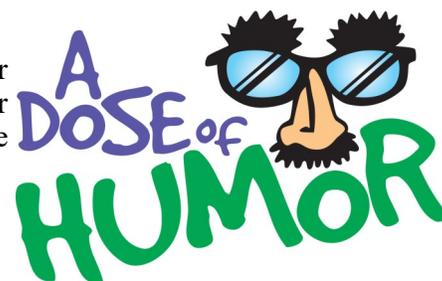
HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

Health Highlights by Sara Gregor, RN, Parish Nurse

LAUGHING: CAN IT KEEP YOU HEALTHY?

Generally, people with a good sense of humor have less stress and better health. Humor or mirthful laughter has positive effects on many of our body's systems. Laughter has real healing properties, too. Studies have shown that laughter:

- Reduces stress hormone levels.
- Increases antibodies that fight infections.
- Raises levels of immune-enhancing chemicals.
- Improves one's tolerance to pain.
- Increases one's pulse rate and metabolism—improving muscle activity and heart health. The deep breaths that come with laughter stretch and clear the lungs.



Humor connects us with others and helps us view the world with a broader perspective. If you are laughing, can you be angry at the same time? Not likely! In using humor or laughter, though, make sure you are laughing **WITH** the person. Laughing **AT** a person is rude and hurtful. (Look at their face. Are they uncomfortable, embarrassed or humiliated?) Be kind in sharing laughter.

Even with all the physical and emotional benefits we know laughter provides, sometimes we become “terminally serious” and forget to laugh.

- Remember to laugh at yourself. Allow yourself to be imperfect occasionally and laugh at your humanness.
- Be thankful for your problems. Life is a challenge. If it weren't for problems, most of us would be unemployed!
- Develop your sense of play and creativity.
- Take time to laugh. Share humorous insights, events of the day, or whatever makes you laugh. More is better.
- Keep smiling; it takes more energy to frown.
- Hang around kids; they still know how to laugh.
- The Lord wants us to have joy in our lives!

“Let me hear joy and gladness...restore to me the joy of Your salvation.” Psalm 51:8, 12 NIV

“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness...” Psalm 100:1-2 NIV

Make humor part of your lifestyle. The prescription for longevity: good doses of laughter, often along with giggles, chuckles and guffaws. Experience the joy that our Lord wants for us!

Sources: Landon J. Napoleon (Vim and Vigor); Can Laughing Keep You Healthy? (Taking Care)

	<p>BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING</p> <p>Mark your calendar for blood pressure screenings by the Parish Health Committee. The next one will be held on Sunday, April 8th after each worship service.</p>
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Health Highlights are brought to you by the Parish Health Committee whose members are Sara Gregor, Parish Nurse, Sharon Boyd, Jennifer Deaton, Dr. Steve Haupt, Marie Stuart, Joan Ford, Kris Friend and Traci Collier, DC.

MEMBER NEWS

April Birthdays

1st	Jill Colpean Thomas Deaton	18th	Courtney Wardlow
2nd	Rhys Awad	19th	Judy Carr Pam Mackel
5th	Margie Fruk	20th	Frances Edie Ryann Kittle
9th	Greyston Hendrickson Hannah Waters	23rd	Courtney Favazza Steve Haupt Kathy McNally
11th	Joel Richardson	24th	Dale Caverly Jack Goschke Sara Gregor
12th	Dawn Dalton	25th	Breana Mack
13th	Glen Mack Darold Schultz	26th	Debbie Viers
14th	Brent Fleissner Carlie Kolb Carrie Nielsen	28th	Susie Mackel
17th	Ray Kelley, Sr.		

Anniversaries this Month



3rd	John and Carol Schroeder
15th	Michael and Elizabeth Clark
17th	Ben and Chris Crump
22nd	Eric and Linda Lentner John and Marisa Richardson
28th	Ron and Lori Schultz
29th	Larry and Maija Preston

PLEASE REMEMBER THOSE ON ASCENSION'S CARE LIST

These are members who are unable to worship with us on a regular basis, who need to be remembered by their family at Ascension. Mail a card, plan a visit or say a prayer for these members of our church family.

Ron Schultz - 10400 Swan Creek Rd., Saginaw, MI 48609

Bob Foley - Great Lakes Rehab, 4181 Tittabawassee Rd., Saginaw, MI 48604

Frances Edie - 4850 Gratiot Rd., Apt. D2, Saginaw, MI 48638

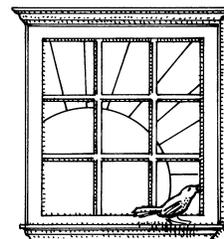
Peggy Lockhart - 6143 Longmeadow Blvd. North, Saginaw, MI 48603

Nancy Holvey - Saginaw Geriatrics Home, 1413 Gratiot, Saginaw, MI 48602

Gene Burchfield - 4354 Mt. Hope Road, Apt. 106, Williamsburg, MI 49690

Helen Nothelfer - 302 Fulton Street, Room 108, St. Charles, MI 48655

Heidi Osterloh - 9345 Geddes Road, Saginaw, MI 48609



SERVING IN APRIL

Head Ushers--8:00 a.m./10:30 a.m.

- 1 Marv Lentner/Andy Friend & Bob Beyerlein
- 8 Edna Bell/Dawn Dalton & Jeff Whelton
- 15 David Witker/Tom Page & Jim Stuart
- 22 Tim Wilson/Dave Dawson & Dave Huston
- 29 Marv Lentner/Andy Friend & Bob Beyerlein

Acolytes--8:00 a.m./10:30 a.m.

- 1 Erika Collier/Carlie Kolb & Ella Wardlow
- 8 No Acolyte/Nathan Ryder & Will Salowitz
- 15 Maliyah Johnson/Anni Mackel & Gabby Dalton
- 22 No Acolyte/Allison Faerber
- 29 No Acolyte/Joscelyn Whelton

Prayers of the Church--8:00 a.m./10:30 a.m.

- 1 Ruth Schomaker/Shelly Dawson
- 8 Charleen Boland/Lisa Espinoza
- 15 David Witker/Tom Page
- 22 Lynn Schomaker/Chris Crump
- 29 Charleen Boland/Linda Lentner

Readers--8:00 a.m./10:30 a.m.

- 1 Edna Bell/Shelly Dawson
- 8 Marty Debozy/Dan Durow
- 15 Charleen Boland/Melissa Durow
- 22 Tom Erskine/Lynda Goward
- 29 Edna Bell/Tom Page

Video Screen Operators--8:00 a.m./10:30 a.m.

- 1 Melissa Czubaj/Bob Aldrich
- 8 Melissa Czubaj/Joe Smith
- 15 Melissa Czubaj/Ben Salowitz
- 22 *Volunteer Needed*/Ben Salowitz
- 29 Larry Nuechterlein/Ben Salowitz

Sound Board Operators--8:00 a.m./10:30 a.m.

- 1 Ashley Blehm/Rusty Van Marter
- 8 Madison Morgan/Brittany Aldrich
- 15 Larry Nuechterlein/Josh Crump
- 22 Marty Debozy/Josh Crump
- 29 Marty Debozy/Rusty Van Marter

Friendly Callers

- 1 Sue Bailey
- 8 Bonnie Cavendish
- 15 David Witker
- 22 Sue Bailey
- 29 Bonnie Cavendish

Hospital Callers

- 1 Roger Koppenhofer
- 8 Bettie Lyle
- 15 Sandy Graham
- 22 Rick Hamilton
- 29 Carol Lange



WEDNESDAYS

Head Ushers

- 4 Mike Clifford
- 11 Bill Gottlieb
- 18 Glen Mack
- 25 Mike Clifford

Readers

- 4 Mike Clifford
- 11 Ben Salowitz
- 18 Larry Nuechterlein
- 25 Joyce Richardson

Sound Board/Video Screen

- 4 J. Schroeder/Connie Dutcher
- 11 R. Van Marter/Glen Mack
- 18 J. Schroeder/Connie Dutcher
- 25 R. Van Marter/Glen Mack

Prayers

- 4 Mike Clifford
- 11 John Grolle
- 18 Connie Dutcher
- 25 Mike Clifford

*Thank you to everyone who participates in these important ministries.
If you are unable to serve on your assigned day,
please let the Church Office know who will be filling in for you.*