

The Messenger

Ascension Lutheran Church

Vol. 41, No. 6

June 2020

MISSION

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

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 Sara Gregor, Parish Nurse
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WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sundays and Wednesdays
 on Facebook and You Tube

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A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR JULIE

"In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."—Acts 2:17



It is the end of May, between our celebrations of the Ascension and Pentecost. The above passage is one of my favorites from the assigned reading from Acts for Pentecost. This promise of God may never be more hoped for or real than today, as we face all we have been through.

It has been months since we have been together in person, many in our community experienced devastation with flooding, others have been diagnosed with "The Covid," and all of us are dealing with everyday life issues and more. And yet I continue to hear the plea and the question, when are we going to get back to normal? This is often tied to the question of when are we going to worship in person together?

I will respond to the second question first with I don't know. I realize other denominations are planning opening their buildings in the next week or two, and some of us may feel the pressure to open our doors because "they" are. We made the decision early on to respond to the data, and not to the known desire and pressure to get back to normal. Plus we must be led by the guidelines/restrictions set forth. But even if we aren't worshipping together in person, we are worshipping together, online. We are still church even when we aren't in the building, and maybe especially when we aren't in the building. As followers of the risen and ascended Lord, we know that God is with us in this and all things, now and always; and that as the body of Christ we are called to care for each other in our congregation and community, and yes, even the world. And in all things, rejoice.

When are we going to get back to normal? We aren't, if what is meant by "normal" is the way things used to be. The way we have always done it is really over now. We have had some jarring in our lives and we can never go back to the way it was, and that is okay! We have this opportunity to grow stronger in our faith and relationship with Jesus, to be witnesses as our Ascension reading from Luke 24:46-48 says: "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." We are called to be witnesses of repentance and forgiveness, of care and joy we have for each other because of our faith and relationship with Jesus.

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This is a time for us to be in prayer for when we are able to gather in person, and a time to pray for who we are as church. We are more than a group of people who gather together for worship three times a week! Yes, that is important to us, and we are strengthened in the Word and in the Meal...but as the body of Christ, we are now called out, in the name of Jesus. The Spirit is upon us, and it is time to see visions and dream dreams!

This is not an easy time, I know. I struggle remembering what day it is and what needs to be done when. I saw some of the devastation of the floods today as I went out and was overwhelmed. But today as I prayed with one family, we know God is in control. We don't know what the future holds, but we know we are not on this journey alone.

So people of God, let us pray...we give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give your daughters and sons new birth, cleanse them from sin, and raise them to eternal life. Sustain each of us with the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, for you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. Amen.

WORSHIP AND EDUCATION

ADULT BIBLE STUDIES

As we continue in our journey of faith, reading and praying with scripture is an important aspect of our faith practice.

In June, we will continue the following studies:

Sunday, 9:30 a.m.: How Lutheran's Interpret the Scripture. This is a repeat offering of something some of us participated in maybe five years ago. It is a good review for those who join us for the first time or for the repeaters!

Tuesday, 11:00 a.m.: We are reading through 1 and 2 Thessalonians.



JOIN OUR
STUDY

Both studies are conducted via Zoom. If you don't currently attend but are interested, please let Pastor Julie know (pr_julie@sbcglobal.net) so that you can get the invite. Even if you can only join us for one class, we invite you to join us when you can.

If you just aren't sure you are ready for a group, I encourage you to check out <https://elca.org/dailydiscipleship>. This can provide an outline to your own devotions and uses the texts for each Sunday as the guide.

WORSHIP AND EDUCATION



HOLY COMMUNION: SUNDAYS 11:00 A.M./WEDNESDAYS 7:00 P.M.

At the table of our Lord Jesus Christ, God nourishes faith, forgives sin, and calls us to be witnesses to the Gospel. (The Use of the Means of Grace-Principle 31, page 36).

If you would have told me two months ago what the last two months have been, I would have never believed you. I was naïve in thinking that this would last a short while and we would be back to normal. It is clear I was wrong. We are learning to be church in new and different ways, but our purpose is the same!

We are called to be witnesses to the gospel, and I can think of nearly no time in my life that this was more necessary. Our faith is certainly being challenged, we have turned to other gods, and being witness is clearly a need in our world.

Because I can't see into the future, neither the day nor the hour that we will be returning to in-person worship, I sense God's call to find a new way to share in the sacramental meal Christ prepares for us. ***With prayer and discernment, we are now serving communion on Sundays between 11:00 a.m. and noon, and on Wednesdays from 7:00 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.***

The two principle parts of the liturgy of Holy Communion, the proclamation of the Word of God and the celebration of the sacramental meal, are so intimately connected as to form one act of worship. (The Use of the Means of Grace, Principle 34, page 38). As a congregation, as the people of God, we are called to hold both the Word and the Sacrament together. In this unprecedented time, we are receiving the Word of God in worship online. Holy Communion as a meal together proves more difficult online.

Therefore, we are offering communion at the times similar to when we would if we were together. The expectation will be that you will have received the Word through worship via Facebook or YouTube and then come to the building where we will be so that you can receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. ***You will be expected to social distance, wear a mask until you receive the bread and wine, and to treat the sacrament with the respect and honor we would if receiving via other means.***

I will continue to work on how to distribute communion to those who are unable to come to the church building. I understand if you are uncomfortable and choose not to receive, and yet want to offer to those who find this necessary in life at this time.

In peace, Pastor Julie Bailey

OTHER

THANK YOU

Thank you for remembering us during Bill's illness and at his death. Your cards, notes and prayers of love and support were so appreciated. Sometimes praying seems like a small thing, yet we know God hears our prayers—and answers them—even though not always as we want. God, in His great wisdom, knows what we need. He loves us so much that He sent His Son to the cross for us. We've been promised forgiveness of sin, God's faithfulness, and full adoption as His children. We trust in Christ and receive His gift of eternal life. Thanks be to God!

Sincerest thanks, Sara Gregor, Cindy and Michael Korte, Grace, Matt and Faith



OTHER



HELP WANTED

We will be planting watermelons in our garden again this year. We will need help weeding the garden when it dries out. It should only take an hour or so. If interested in helping, please contact Tom Bailey.

BRING YOUR POP CANS TO CHURCH

If your cans are piling up...Ascension could use them. We would be happy to store them in the garage and return them when we are able to do so. We will be using 50% of the proceeds for the roof and the other 50% will be placed in the general fund to support our necessities and ministries. Bring them when you come for communion on Sundays/Wednesdays, or drop the cans off to the garage anytime on Fridays, and we will see they make it inside. If the garage is open, please place them in the northwest corner of the garage (back and to the right). PLEASE...rinse the cans to prevent pests. Thank you!!

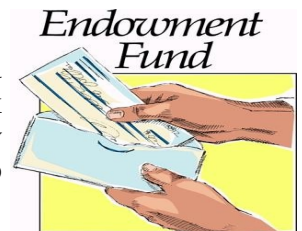


GRACE LUTHERAN MISSION ENDOWMENT FUND

The Grace Lutheran Mission Endowment Fund (GLMEF) was created in 2014 to carry forward the legacy of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, ELCA, of Saginaw. Its purpose is to support local mission outreach in the Saginaw Metropolitan area and within the County of Saginaw and is administered under the N/W Lower Michigan Synod of the ELCA. Only the investment earned income derived from this fund is used. Applications are available on our website and must be postmarked by Friday, July 17th. Grant awards will be mailed by September 18th.

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH ENDOWMENT FUND

The Endowment Fund Committee authorized \$500 scholarships to Nathan McClure and Makenzie Collier. The committee also authorized \$1,000 for the Weekend Backpack Food Program, \$1,000 for the Back to School Fair, \$1,000 for the Pastor Discretionary Fund, \$1,000 for worship software and computer, and \$158.89 for the Eastside Soup Kitchen.



RISE UP SOCCER CAMP 2020—CANCELED

Our camp has been canceled this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Earnesty.

The MESSENGER is published monthly by
Ascension Lutheran Church.

Deadline for the July 2020 issue is
Monday, June 22nd at 12:00 noon.

Articles may be emailed to ascensionlc@sbcglobal.net.

HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

Health Highlights by Steven G. Haupt, Ph.D.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth, to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.—Revelation 6:8



Does it seem as if we are living in a time of plague or pestilence these days? We live in an unprecedented time for those alive now, certainly a very fearful time. As I write this, it is early May. Most of us are social distancing and wearing masks.

Early projections suggested that without mitigation, as many as 2.2 million Americans could die from COVID-19, frightening figures to be sure. With the social distancing and other mitigating guidelines in effect, these projections have dropped markedly, but as of this writing (May 4) the U.S. had over 1.2 million cases and there had been over 68,000 deaths. Most people contracting the virus will have only a mild to moderate illness, but the risk of a more serious reaction or death appears to rise with age, as well as with the presence of other serious health conditions.

A community response is required for us to weather this crisis; it is important to think of the welfare of others as well as ourselves. We all need to observe the guidelines set forth by the CDC and resist the temptation to follow those who do not take this seriously. While having to restrict one's activities and to not be able to work is very frustrating, "protest" gatherings seeking to overturn "shelter-at-home" orders are not just unhelpful, they may contribute to a more rapid spread of the disease. We must keep in mind that human lives are more important than retaining our usual freedoms. Panic buying and hoarding of certain items (toilet paper, household cleaners) creates artificial shortages and may also promote the spread of the virus due to people needing multiple trips to acquire what they need—thus increasing the potential of exposure to the virus.

It is important to pay attention to health professionals and scientists at this time regarding how to respond to this pandemic. Politicians and celebrities and random writers or "influencers" on the internet lack the knowledge required to comment expertly on this.

So many things have changed in our lives due to this outbreak. So many of our usual routines have been disrupted. We cannot go to church, go out to dinner or to the movies or to a ballgame. Family members are being kept apart. Many people have lost their jobs, creating significant economic hardships.

Most of us are afraid. It is normal to feel anxious and afraid at this time. We may feel anxious about our own health, or the health of loved ones who may be at an elevated risk. At this time, it is best to focus on what you can do to protect yourself and your family, as well as all of those around you. Have hope; work continues on developing treatment protocols and vaccines. Have patience; understand that this may last many months yet.

We need to focus not just on avoiding contracting the virus for as long as possible, but also protecting others from becoming infected.

References: www.nytimes.com; www.imperial.ac.uk; www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.

Health Highlights are brought to you by the Parish Health Committee whose members are Sara Gregor, Parish Nurse, Sharon Boyd, Dr. Steve Haupt, Marie Stuart, Joan Ford, Kris Friend and Traci Collier, DC.

MEMBER NEWS

June Birthdays

1st	Jack Colpean	20th	Owen Edsall
2nd	Brooke Phillion		Landen Wagner
3rd	Joyce Berg	21st	Patrick Carney
	Ali Denman		Rob Joslyn
	Jack Fleissner		Julie Stoltow
6th	Savannah Maddox		Vicki Wenzel
7th	Donna Frollo	22nd	Katiana Milbrandt
	Sherry Stuller		Carol Wilson
8th	Tom Erskine	23rd	Kelly Phillion
	Alana Fleming		John Stroebel
9th	Michael Gottlieb	25th	Nathan Earnesty
10th	Thomas Stoddard		David Faerber
11th	Larry Nuechterlein		Jessica McRae
	Josh Mack		Jackie O'Dell
12th	Wanda Dankert	28th	Wendy Awad
	Angelica Espinoza		Alec Preston
13th	Spence Webb		Garrett Preston
	Sally York		Sabrina Wagner
14th	Liam Fleming	30th	Deborah Harrington
	Sarah Wortley		Jeff Whelton
17th	A.J. Denman		Marv Yancer

Anniversaries this Month



2nd	Jon and Alicia Leffler
6th	Craig and Joan Ford
	Thomas and Rae Stoddard
11th	James and Cheryl Andrus
13th	Tim and Carol Wilson
14th	James and Donna Hayes
19th	Rick and Nikki Herren
20th	Eric and Dori Dalton
21st	Anthony and Kate Naples
27th	Tom and Sue Bailey

PLEASE REMEMBER THOSE ON ASCENSION'S CARE LIST

Mail a card, plan a visit, or say a prayer for these members of our church family.

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

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

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

Heidi Osterloh - 9345 Geddes Road, Saginaw, MI 48609

Marcy Schafer - 8049 Area Drive, Saginaw, MI 48609

Marv Yancer - 8936 N. Brookshire Drive, Saginaw, MI 48609

Delila Colpean - 302 Fulton Street, Room 103, St. Charles, MI 48655

Leslee Arnst - 2815 N. Orr Rd., Hemlock, MI 48626

Bev Daubert - Candlestone Assisted Living, 4124 Waldo, Midland MI 48642

Julia Attridge - 302 Fulton Street, Room 101, St. Charles, MI 48655

Kay Ballien - Healthsource, 3340 Hospital Road, Room 371, Saginaw, MI 48603

