

November 2023 News & Updates



From the Pastor's Pen:

You know, we have been trying something for about the past twenty years here at Ascension. It has not proven to be effective in bringing in new people and has been a big issue in the hearts of several of our members.

It has been said, "If you want the church to grow, you have to have a contemporary service." That has been the mantra for several decades within the "Church" (Church universal). And you know, there are many "mega churches" who have bought into that and it has become the greatest thing since sliced bread for a couple of church bodies.

We here at Ascension have tried over the past couple of decades to follow along with the "Modern" church worship style. We were told early on that "in order for the church to grow, you have to have a contemporary service." We did this for a number of years under our former pastor and even under me as pastor. I have been told that I need to know our "context" and reach out that way. So, I did. I was told by several people in the community that if I started a Country Music service, they would come.

The elders and I spoke about this and decided to give it a try. I reached out to those people who said they would come... but not one has.

I have been hearing over the past decade that the younger generation are looking for something deeper, something different than the status quo. They don't care for the "Entertainment" style of worship.

Recently I sat and spoke with an LCMS church member in Idaho. They were worshipping about 175 members prior to Covid. Right as Covid began to break their pastor either retired or took a call to another congregation. They were vacant for over a year. Due to Covid and no pastor, they dropped in attendance to about 90 persons.

They were able to finally call a younger pastor (he's about 34) from Michigan. Their congregation was split regarding contemporary service by a margin of 40%. This new pastor only does Traditional Liturgical services. In the past two years he has been there, that congregation is now worshipping around 200 per Sunday, with many new younger families. He said to me, "Yeah, we're even experiencing a 'Baby Boom' right now."

Scripturally, God has given His Church, even from the days of Moses, a way to worship that is pleasing to Him. In the book of Leviticus, Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's two sons, decided on the day that formal worship began for Israel, that they were going to do their own thing, and do something different. Each loaded up censers with hot coals and put incense in them and at once, fire came out from before the

Lord and both were incinerated on the spot. "Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD." (Leviticus 10:1-2)

Why are we playing around with our worship of God? Our Lutheran heritage is so rich with Christ centered worship. Our Lutheran liturgy and worship is different. It hasn't always been that way, but as the progressive movement has infected the Church, it has brought with it the ways of the world.

Christian worship of the Lord is to be different than the common things of this world. It is to be holy and sacred. Unfortunately, we and others have messed with what is holy and sacred and brought into worship music that, as some here have told me "is not appropriate."

Not only that but using the music we have been using has cost our congregation extra money every year. You see, in order to use these different songs for worship, we have had to have special copyright licenses. These licenses cost us over \$500 per year. And as our giving is way down, corners have to be cut, and this is one that I have no problem cutting.

What all this boils down to is this: Beginning with the new church year, the last Sunday of November, we are moving to only traditional liturgical services. We are going back to our Lutheran roots and heritage. And, we are praying prayers of repentance for messing with God's Divine Service, and seeking to go back to what is non-worldly and common. It's time to put holy and sacred back into our worship lives. Only the Lord knows, but perhaps, He might start blessing us again.

May what is common no longer affect what is Holy and Sacred!



From the Elders

The other morning, I looked out on the congregation and there were all our regular attendees. What I didn't see were any guests nor visitors. Have you given this any thought? When was the last time you invited someone to a church service or, for that matter to one of our other events? I know that I'm as guilty as any, maybe more so because I'm a church officer. So if we all try a little harder to invite a friend, a neighbor or a co-worker to one of our services, potlucks or any other event, knowing that our friendly and

loving members will make them feel welcome (as you did Lynda and me) and prayerfully feeling they have found a home. This is so very important, as our church has had a declining membership for a while. May God Bless our efforts to build His church here at Ascension.

Ken Porter
Head Elder



From the Deacon's Desk

BIBLICAL TRUTHS

Genesis 37, 39-48, 50

Joseph the eleventh son of Jacob and the first child of Rachel whom Jacob loved. Joseph's story starts in Genesis 37:5 when he had his first dream, that the brother's sheaves of wheat had gathered round and bowed down to him. This was followed by a second dream wherein the sun moon and stars bowed before him. This enraged his brothers, his mother and father, so the brothers plotted to kill Joseph. Ruben stepped in and convinced them to instead sell him to the Midianites. Genesis 37: 9-11. By the end of the Chapter 37: 36 "Meanwhile the Midianites had sold {Joseph} in Egypt to Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard." In chapter 39, we see Joseph doing well in Potiphar's house and is put in charge of the affairs of the house. A slanderous lie of attempted rape by Potiphar's wife lands him in prison. "But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of the prisoners, who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it." (Genesis 39:25)

Chapter 40 tells us about the cupbearer and the baker who committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt. Both had been put into the same prison as Joseph and both had the same night a dream three days before Pharaoh's birthday. The cupbearer was reinstated as Pharaoh's cupbearer and the baker was hanged just as Joseph interpreted each of their dreams. It was two years later that Pharaoh had two dreams that no one in the house of Pharaoh could tell the King of Egypt what the dreams meant. Then the cupbearer remembered Joseph, who was still in prison and how he interpreted their dreams.

The Pharaoh called for Joseph to be brought to him out of the prison. The first meeting was between the two: "Joseph answered Pharaoh. It is not me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer." In Genesis 41: 16 Pharaoh was pleased with Joseph's response to the two dreams and his plan for solving the dilemma. "And Pharaoh said to his servants, can we find a man like this, in whom is the spirit of God?". Joseph becomes second in command to Pharaoh in Egypt.

By the time the famine hits Egypt, Joseph had fathered two sons. "Joseph called the name of the first son Manasseh. For, he said, God has made me forget all my hardship and my father's house. The name of the second, he called Ephraim, For God has made me fruitful in the land of my

affliction." (Genesis 41: 51-52). Chapters 42-46 tells us how Joseph is reunited with his father Jacob and his eleven brothers. Because of Joseph, the family is given the land in Goshen. They are shepherds and herders (Chapter 47). In Chapter 48, Jacob blesses Joseph's two sons. In Chapter 49 Jacob blesses his twelve sons by two wives and two concubines. "And Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.'" (Genesis 50: 24)

What can we learn from Joseph's life? He was always looking forward, living in the present and not the past. God is with him. Every negative was turned into a positive move. He was united with his father and eleven brothers. He was the savior of his family from a world famine. He forgave his brothers who meant him harm because God's plan was to save the Hebrew Nation. Keep in the front of your thoughts that God has a plan to save us all. Look forward, as Joseph did, with the hope of the wonderful things to come.

Bible Trivia Question: September answer – East (Jonah 4:5)

Bible Trivia Question: What does the book of Psalms say is the normal lifespan of man? Answer next month.

In Christ,
Deacon Nick DeRose



From the Trustee's Bench

New toilet paper dispensers were installed, new trash cans for bathrooms were purchased - both buildings

Thank you to all that have donated towards the Paint Fund. The office/S.S building exterior has been completely repainted. All the white trim has been painted on both buildings including all the exterior doors. The west wall of the church has been painted but we will need more funding to finish the other three walls of the church.

The back field and solar area were weeded. The landscaper did the rest of the property last week. Looks good at least until the next rainstorm hits.

God bless!

Trustees
Dennis Coburn



Outreach Committee

Thank you for your help with the Thanksgiving Food Drive. Victor Valley Rescue Mission always appreciates our donations.

For Christmas we are planning to have a toy drive. We will be collecting **new toys** for ages 6 months-12 years old. Starting around Thanksgiving, the toys may be placed **wrapped** under the Christmas tree that will be in the narthex.

If you have any questions, please check with one of us. Thank you from,

Curtis & Cyndy Todd, Sheryl Truslow, Sue Brooks, Diane Short, Jan Blanton and Kathy Benzow



Stewardship News

Our Father in heaven has claimed us as His own. By the shedding of His Son's blood, by His death for our sins and His resurrection for our justification, God the Father has received us back into His family. By water combined with His Word, promise and name, the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in us. We belong to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is in us, and we are in Him. And being in Him, all things are ours. In Him, we are richly and abundantly blessed.

Our true treasure and wealth is that we belong to the most holy Trinity and everything that is His belongs also to us: righteousness, peace, eternal life. Even our temporal treasures are gifts from His fatherly, divine goodness and mercy.

We receive our treasures from Him, and thus, as good stewards of His varied grace, we manage them in such a way that they may be returned to Him. We bring them to Him, hallowed through prayers of thanksgiving and God's Holy Word, as a sacrifice. Thus all our possessions, as gifts from God, are also sacrifices to Him, from which we eat to nourish our bodies and share with our family, neighbors and fellow Christians, with the poor and even our enemies, as holy things given by our holy God. His temporal gifts are blessings to and for us, and bring blessing upon us even as they are pressed into His service for His kingdom and the souls that receive them.

Thus we place all that we have into God's hands. He never fails to remember us and pours out the fullness of His promises upon us. We give thanks for all that He has done, is doing and will continue to do. We give thanks by not taking for ourselves, but giving to all even as our heavenly Father has given to us.

As we prepare for Thanksgiving celebrations, may we all give thanks continually for all that we are and all that we have because of God's providential care. And may we be all the more diligent in bringing everything that we have received from God to Him, so that He may bless it and employ it for the good of all — even for us. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance.

Elders

By Member's Last Name:

A-I: Rick Ferrell	760-694-3309
J-R Mark Amer	602-619-2232
S-Z: Ken Porter	760-792-1069

November Birthdays

Cindy Holtgreffe	2
Ray Coburn	3
Fritz Durfee	7
John Holtgreffe	9
Roslyn Hanley	17
Brianna Cardenas	22
Linda Davis	24
Carol Schmidt	29



November Anniversaries

Mark & Vendy Amer 11/23/1985



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS NOVEMBER 5!



SET YOUR CLOCKS BACK ONE HOUR BEFORE GOING TO BED ON NOVEMBER 4TH!!!