

# The Witness

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

## *Ascension Lutheran Church*

LCMS

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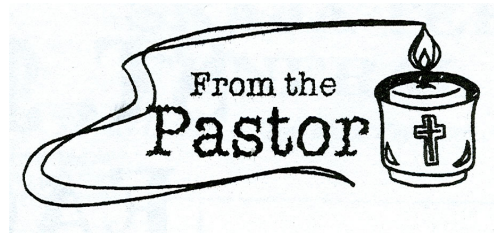
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**July 2020**

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Volume 6 No. 7

*This year, Pastor Gunia will be writing on piety and spirituality. The intention is to help you live your life with increasing joy, closeness to God, and love for others. Don't take these as the Law, but rather think of them as suggestions from someone whose been working on his personal piety for quite some time now and who would love to see your faith grow stronger.*

Worship is central to our life together. Every Sunday (the day of our Lord's resurrection), we gather together in the presence of Jesus. During the summer months—with a different rhythm of life and a desire to enjoy the summer weather, worship attendance normally drops between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Therefore, this seemed to me a good time to provide a refresher in the things you already know—how to worship.

First, it is important to remember that worship has both a horizontal and a vertical dimension. Horizontally (person to person) worshippers show one another their faith. When you say, "I believe in God the Father Almighty..." you are telling all those around you what you believe. When you kneel at the Communion rail, you show that you believe a number of things. Receiving Communion tells everyone who sees you that you are a Christian, that you believe that you are a sinner in need of forgiveness, that Communion offers you that forgiveness, that you believe that the body and blood of Christ is in the bread and wine, and that your faith is the faith confessed by the congregation at which you receive Communion (which is partly why we practice closed Communion).

Even simple gestures like folding your hands in prayer, placing money in the offering plate, or greeting a friend shows reverence, obedience, and hospitality. Children and those young in faith watch the mature and learn about Jesus from them in worship.

In the vertical dimension (person-to-God), you give God your thanks and praise. You offer your prayers to the God who loves you. You take what God has revealed about His person and works and you sing them back to our Lord.

But the most important element of worship is the vertical dimension of God-to-you. The major reason we gather together for worship is not to do things for God, but to allow God to do things for us.

In worship, God teaches us through the Scripture readings and hymns. In worship, God grants us forgiveness in Absolution and Communion. In worship, God bestows His gifts upon us. In worship, God comes to us to strengthen our faith.

There is the old (annoying) argument for not attending worship: "I can pray on a golf course just as well as I can pray in church." In theory, that is true; in practice, it is never true. Besides, this limits worship only to the "what-I-do-for-God" dimension. You don't usually find the Sacraments on a golf course. Forgiveness isn't bestowed upon you while you drink a latte at your favorite coffee shop. Nobody reads the Scriptures or expounds on the Scriptures while you're doing a Sunday morning run. Fish don't sing hymns to Sunday morning fishermen. God can do anything He wants and so He can certainly serve you anywhere...and the place He chooses to bestow His gifts upon you is in worship.

So, here are some suggestions for worship:

1. Go to church. This seems obvious enough, doesn't it. Make worship attendance a priority. Write the service times on your calendar (including midweek Advent and Lent services, Ascension Day, Holy Week services, and the like).
2. In preparation for Holy Communion, read the Small Catechism's sections entitled "The Ten Commandments," "The Lord's Supper," and "Christian Questions and Their Answers."

3. Occasionally, we have a “bad hair day” at worship. My voice is off, or the music isn’t quite right, or I struggle with the sermon, or it’s too hot, or a child throws a tantrum or...whatever. When you see such things, please pray. Ask God to do His blessed work in spite of distractions or human weakness. Ask God to fix my voice, grant skill to those leading worship, cool the sanctuary, calm the child, or whatever. We would all appreciate that.
4. Be loud. Belt out those hymns (I don’t care if you like your singing voice or not). Use your “outdoor voice” instead of your “indoor voice” when speaking the boldface type in your bulletins.
5. Remember that little eyes are watching you. Children (especially those who can’t yet read) and those new to the Christian faith are watching the people around them to see how they should behave in worship. Set a good example for them. For example, be reverent in your posture; pray before and after the worship service; pray before and after Communion; look like you’re paying attention to the sermon. Don’t groan or complain; don’t make wiseguy comments; don’t play with your phone.
6. Listen to the sermon. Listen for Jesus. What is Jesus doing in there sermon? What does Jesus do *for me* in the sermon? What am I to believe? What am I to do? What am I to stop doing? Do I have any questions to ask Pastor about the sermon?
7. Be welcoming. The opening theme for the television show *Cheers* features the line, “you want to go where everybody knows your name and they’re always glad you came.” Make Ascension that place (instead of your local watering hole). Greet people by name (if you know it). Ask people’s names if you don’t know them. (by the way, making it a regular habit to pray for the people in our directory really helps you to connect faces and names; I speak from experience). It’s OK to hug others, shake hands, or sit and catch up before and after the service. I am actually very happy after worship when I’m standing at the door by myself and nobody is leaving the sanctuary because you’re all talking with each other. That helps to strengthen our congregation.

The more effort we put into our worship, the more we get out of our worship. I encourage you to approach worship more and more like work and less and less like a spectator sport.

Pastor Gunia



## Ascension Women’s League Still Exists!

Unfortunately, we were unable to hold our Ice Cream Social scheduled in April to encourage other ladies of the congregation to join our organization. We will have to reschedule this event once things get back to normal.

First order of business when we return to normal will be to schedule our annual “dinner out”, usually held in June. Again, food is our focus, and we look forward to dining indoors at a restaurant, and being served.

Lastly, once Ascension is opened further, we will resume collecting items for Christ the King Hygiene Kits.

God bless you and keep you healthy and safe!



**Lutheran Women's  
Missionary League**

Lutheran Women  
In Mission

Keep a look-out. We will return soon!

Arletta A. Stuebe, President

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**Gardening for Good**



Plant three rows of peas:

- Peas of mind
- Peas of heart
- Peas of soul

Plant four rows of squash:

- Squash gossip
- Squash indifference
- Squash grumbling
- Squash selfishness

Plant four rows of lettuce:

- Lettuce be faithful
- Lettuce be kind
- Lettuce be patient
- Lettuce really love one another

Plant three rows of turnips:

- Turnip for services
- Turnip for meetings
- Turnip to help one another

To conclude our garden....we must have thyme:

- Thyme for each other
- Thyme for family
- Thyme for friends
- And especially thyme for GOD

Water freely with patience and cultivate with love. There is much growing in our garden because we reap what we sow.

**From the Treasurer's Desk...**

Although we are experiencing some very different times during the Covid 19 Pandemic, praise be to our Lord for the many members of Ascension who have recognized the need for continued contributions and have faithfully remained good stewards of God's gifts to them.

Expenses for salaries, insurance, utilities, etc. continue, even though we have essentially been "closed". Contributions are still needed, and we ask for all members to continue or resume regular giving.

Thank you!



**Worship Services**

As of this writing, we are holding worship services each Sunday morning at 10:00 and 11:00 am. All services are limited to 25 pre-registered people. Masks MUST be worn at all times, and members MUST sit where instructed by an usher.

If you wish to be assigned a worship time, please call the church office at 847/647-9867 to reserve your time. You will keep this timeslot each week. As each service is limited to 25 reserved members, according to State of Illinois and Niles guidelines, NO others can be admitted.

Please bear with us as we navigate these difficult times. If you have any questions, feel free to call the church office.

## Statement from LCMS President Matthew C. Harrison on the death of George Floyd and the ensuing riots

Source: [blogs.lcms.org/2020/statement-on-the-death-of-george-floyd-and-the-ensuing-riots/](https://blogs.lcms.org/2020/statement-on-the-death-of-george-floyd-and-the-ensuing-riots/) published June 2, 2020

Discriminatory treatment of human beings on the basis of race is irrational evil and results in evil. It is folly, which can produce only anger and hatred. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” America’s original sin of legal racism, the denial of human rights based on race, has reaped the whirlwind.

God’s Word rejects racism. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “No one is righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). All are equally created by God. All are equally accountable to God. The sins of all are equally atoned for by Christ. All are equally precious to God. Racial animosity is the result of sin and is sin in itself. Racism is not acceptable in the church. Jesus Himself bids us love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31) and did so precisely while rejecting racial preference (cf. Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25–37).

Unity in the church according to the Augsburg Confession is defined by Article VII: “For it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached ... and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word.” Christ and His gifts bring unity and equity in the church. Racial discrimination in or by the church is sin. Racial conflict in our nation calls every Christian to introspection. “It is time for judgment to begin at the household of God” (1 Peter 4:17). “Righteous indignation” without self-reflection and repentance is meaningless, or worse, hypocrisy.

The one who grievously and unjustly took the sacred gift of life from George Floyd — resulting in a charge of 3rd-degree murder — will, ironically, be given the very thing he denied his victim, due process of the law. Justice must be meted out according to the law. Others may be charged.

We weep for George Floyd, for his family and loved ones because he was robbed of life. We weep for our nation. We weep for those across our nation who believe their only recourse is destruction. We weep for police officers everywhere, who carry out their honorable vocations with courage and goodwill but find their task infinitely more challenging and dangerous in the wake of the sad events in Minneapolis. We pray for the safety of all and the welfare of those who have lost property and livelihood. We pray for the police who must stand against mayhem. We support the First Amendment rights of the peaceful protestors.

We deplore injustice. We deplore destruction, robbery and doing physical harm to others. That, too, is injustice. We plead to citizens and governments of this nation for communities beset by poverty, crime and injustice. We plead for rational and unifying policies that will end injustices and address social breakdown, lack of economic access, and other factors that fuel anger, hatred and dissension.

We shall pray, but we shall do even more. We shall follow the ancient mandate of the prophet of Yahweh: “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8).

And we shall proclaim Christ, “in season and out of season” (2 Timothy 4:2). “For one will scarcely die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die — but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:7–8).

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Colossians 3:1–17 ESV).

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison  
President  
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



We congratulate the following members of Ascension as they celebrate their **birthdays** in July.

July 3	Richard Schultz
July 16	Jadon Gregorio
July 20	Matt Giannopoulos Karen Hepburn
July 25	Hal Downs Tom Giannopoulos



And we congratulate the following couples as they celebrate their **wedding anniversaries** in July.

July 5	Rev. Matthew & Kathy Gunia
July 24	John & Arletta Stuebe

These are the **birthdays** and **wedding anniversaries** recorded in our church records for the coming month. If any birthday or anniversary was omitted, please notify the church office.

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## Money principle #15: Pay the Taxes You Owe

**Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.**

—Romans 13:7–8

In this brief passage where Paul communicates the debt of love that all of Jesus' followers are under, he addresses taxes. This was in a time when Rome was using taxes to do everything from build roads to erect statues of Caesars to be worshiped. To Paul, how taxes are used isn't the taxpayer's issue.

He simply tells them, "If you owe taxes, pay them."

## Time & Talent

### Deacons

July 5	TBD
July 12	TBD
July 19	TBD
July 26	TBD

### Ushers

July 5	TBD
July 12	TBD
July 19	TBD
July 26	TBD

### Altar Guild

July	Susan Gunia Arletta Stuebe
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## ASCENSION 2020 BOARD MEMBERS

<b>President:</b>	Tom Friedewald
<b>Vice President:</b>	Jim Jenne
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Coby Mueller
<b>Secretary:</b>	Audrey Schultz
<b>Financial Secretary:</b>	Sandy Friedewald
<b>Board of Deacons:</b>	Jim Jenne (Chair) Hal Downs Tom Friedewald Jim Jenne Jonathan Schultz John Stuebe
<b>Board of Christian Ministries</b>	Lois Marten (Chair)
<b>Board of Trustees:</b>	Jason Romano (Chair)
<b>Board of Youth:</b>	Sarah Lindahl (Chair)

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### **OFFICIAL ACTS**

None on record

Do you have an announcement to share about your family such as a birth, death, engagement, graduation, etc., **let us know! We'd love to hear from you!**

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