

The Witness

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 ESV

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July 2022

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And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

This passage of Scripture is familiar to most of us, because it is often used by our pastors and Christian friends when they admonish us to make sure we keep going to church. As the summer months are now upon us, with all of the distractions and alternatives to church attendance that they present to us, we would probably benefit from hearing such an admonition once again. It is a valid matter of the law of God, to warn people of the sin of neglecting the services of his house. The Second and Third Commandments clearly apply to our obligation to honor the Name of God in worship, and to make use of the opportunities that are afforded to us to rest from our earthly labors, so that we can be instructed from God’s Word, and so that we can reflect on the deeper questions of our existence.

There is, however, much more to the Hebrews passage than this. Going to church is not just a matter of obeying God’s law. We are drawn to the assembly of God’s house by the sweet invitation of the Savior who is present there in his Word and Sacrament, and who offers to us, in the Gospel, many and great blessings. The verses that immediately precede the verses we have already quoted testify to this:

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:19-23).

Your Baptism, with all its forgiving power, draws your cleansed conscience toward the source of that cleansing, namely the Lord Jesus Christ, who is present in the assembly of his people as their great and loving High Priest. He is there also in his true flesh and blood, inviting you in faith to partake of the salvation that he won for you on the cross, by means of the special gift of his Holy Supper. We come to church for these reasons too, and not just because we would feel guilty if we did not come. In fact, we come to church chiefly for these reasons. There is so much that is uniquely available to us only in the ministry of Word and Sacrament! There are so many ways to be built up in our faith, and to help to build others up in their faith, when we make use of God’s Word in the public gatherings of the Lord’s people. Jesus, the Lord of his church, calls us and draws us. He cleanses us and forgives us. He builds us up as members of his mystical body. He instills in us a living hope that will never fade away.

And so, “let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

In Christ,
Pastor Matthew Uttenreither

(continued on page 3)

(continued from page 2)

Saint of the Month: Robert Barnes, Confessor and Martyr, July 30, 1540: Remembered as a disciple of Martin Luther, Robert Barnes is considered to be among the first Lutheran martyrs. Born in 1495, he became the prior of the Augustinian monastery at Cambridge, England. Converted to Lutheran teaching, he shared his insights with many English scholars through writings and personal contacts.

During a time of exile to Germany he became a friend of Luther and later wrote a Latin summary of the main doctrines of the Augsburg Confession titled *Sententiae*. Upon his return to England, Barnes shared his Lutheran doctrines and views in person with King Henry VIII and initially had a positive reception. In 1529 Barnes was named royal chaplain.

The changing political and ecclesiastical climate in England later claimed him as a victim; he was burned at the stake in Smithfield in 1540. His final confession of faith was published by Luther, who called his friend Barnes "our good, pious table companion and guest of our home, this holy martyr, Saint Robertus."



**Independence Day
July 4, 2022**



**Lutheran Women's
Missionary League**
Lutheran Women
In Mission

Where Mites Go

Gospel Outreach to Women and Children in Mongolia

Grant: \$100,000

Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) has an opportunity to expand its mission outreach of the Gospel to the Kazakh women and children in Mongolia, a non-Christian country. The Kazakh people are nominally Muslim and the country of Mongolia is largely Buddhist with a less than one percent Christian population. Through widely-accepted Women's Listener groups, religious broadcasts, and Christian resources in the Kazakh language, family members and relatives will be impacted by the Gospel in their homes. LHM has the media expertise to ensure the Gospel message is brought to a region where the populations have not heard the Gospel. Christian resources are being distributed, including Bible studies and booklets translated into the Kazakh language, as well as into Mongolian, the main language of the region.

Testimonies from Around the World:

As a young woman, I am writing to thank you for your provision of Christian books. I used to hear the Word of God only on Sundays at church, but now days I read it on a daily basis. I have been through several personal challenges in my life but with your help, I read these books and they encourage me to serve God with my whole heart and strengthen me as a young woman. I also got a small commentary book and now I'm able to explain the Word to my husband and children without fear or hesitation. I thank you so much and may God bless you forever.

God's Providential Care



Everything we have and everything we are is a gift of God's providential care. We understand that we're not islands unto ourselves, that we could not exist without those who have gone before us and are alongside us. God has given us forefathers in family, country, and faith. We are recipients of what God worked through them. We know that God provides for our well-being through these means.

He gives us farmers and ranchers of all sorts so that we can eat. But more than that God created and gave us all the things that those farmers and ranchers cultivate. He gave us the corn, the beans, the wheat, the cows for milking, the steers for grilling. He gave each of those things, properties for our nourishment and sustenance. Without God creating and instilling in those things their taste and their nutritional value, we would not exist.

He gives us doctors, surgeons, nurses, and hospitals. He gives us medicine and medical instruments. Again, he gave us all things that go into making those medicines and medical instruments. He instilled in those things the properties that can be utilized for that purpose. Without God creating and instilling those healing properties into those things, and without God creating the ability within man to find this out and press it into service of our medical needs, we would not enjoy the kind of health we do now.

But there's more. He gives us gainful employment through our employers and provides for the necessities of life through the labor of our hands: "Then Moses said to the people of Israel, 'See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft. And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan.' " (Exodus 35:30–34)

And one step back from that, He has created and given us hands. And attached to those hands are arms with strength. He created us with minds in order to make those arms and hands move to accomplish the work set before us. And He has given us reason and senses. That mind, because of the reason God has instilled in it, is able to work through difficult problems before we press those arms and hands into labor. It allows us to grapple with concepts and run through scenarios instead of having to experience every situation personally. It allows us to learn from the mistakes as well as the accomplishments of others. This can be done for our entire body, all our skills and talents, everything that makes us ... us. So that everything we have AND everything we are is a gift from Him. This is what we confess in the First Article of the Creed when we say that we believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

But that is just the First Article of the Creed. We confess two more articles that deal with God's provision for our spiritual well-being. That He sent His son to die and be raised on the third day for our justification. That He delivers that justification through the Means of Grace (Baptism, preaching, the Word of God, and the Lord's Supper). And to give you those Means of Grace, He gives pastors and teachers, etc. Again, this could be expanded and expounded upon. So that literally everything that we have and everything that we are – in this life and the next – is an inexpressible gift from God.

And it is for this, all of this, that we give thanks. And that is what stewardship is all about – giving thanks for God's provision for us. To give thanks is more than having an attitude of gratitude, more than just a feeling in our hearts. It is an action. It begins in the heart, but it doesn't stay there. It works its way out through the mouth in praise for God's gifts and in love and charity through the hands to our neighbors in family, country, and church. "For all this is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey him" (*Luther's Small Catechism*, 16).

So give thanks to God for His inexpressible gift – for everything we have and everything we are. Do this not in word only but also in deed.

The New Colossus

Inscription on the Statue of Liberty

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame
 With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
 Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
 A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
 Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
 Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
 Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
 The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame,
 "Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
 With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
 Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
 The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
 Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
 I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

—Emma Lazarus
 Public Domain



Time & Talent

Deacons

July 3	Jonathan Schultz
July 10	Tom Friedewald
July 17	Jim Jenne
July 24	Jonathan Schultz
July 31	Tom Friedewald

Greeters

July 3	Judy Darville Rosalie Streng
July 10	Pam Hrajnoha Lois Marten
July 17	Gail Bujnowski Judy Darville
July 24	Judy Darville Rosalie Streng
July 31	Pam Hrajnoha Lois Marten

Altar Guild

July:	Linda Bauschke Lilian Konozsi
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We congratulate the following members of Ascension as they celebrate their **birthdays** in July.

- July 3 Richard Schultz
- July 16 Jadon Gregorio
- July 19 Luke Uttenreither
- July 20 Matt Giannopoulos
Karen Hepburn
- July 25 Hal Downs
Tom Giannopoulos



We also congratulate the following couples as they celebrate their **wedding anniversaries** in July.

- July 26 Gary & Wendy Duszak

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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Around Ascension . . .

Summer is finally here! We are enjoying the sunshine (and a little rain!) and warmer temps!

Congratulations to our graduates! Gideon Aguilera graduated from Culver Elementary School and is headed to Niles West High School in the Fall. Lance Ahlgrim graduated from Glenbrook South High School and is headed to Drake University in Iowa. God’s blessing to you both!

(If we have missed congratulating any graduates, please contact the office so we can update our records.)

Thanks to all who contributed to our door collection for Ukraine. Your donations will be sent to NID special missions for Ukrainian Refugees.

VBS is back! Join us Sunday, July 31st, 3:00—7:00 pm. Children 3 years through 5th grade are welcome to join our one-day program, “God’s Promise to Noah.” Bring your children, grandchildren and friends to a evening filled with God’s Word, music, crafts, games, and a light dinner. Check our Facebook page (Ascension Lutheran Church Niles, IL) and/or our webpage (ascensionniles.com) for the registration link.



Vacation Bible School
“God’s Promise to Noah”
Sunday, July 31, 2022
3:00—7:00 p.m.

2022 ASCENSION COUNCIL BOARD MEMBERS

President:	Tom Friedewald
Vice President:	Jim Jenne
Treasurer:	Sandy Friedewald
Secretary:	Audrey Schultz
Financial Secretary:	Carolyn Jannusch
Board of Deacons:	Jim Jenne (Chair) Hal Downs (Emeritus) Tom Friedewald Jim Jenne Jonathan Schultz
Board of Christian Ministries	Lois Marten (Chair)
Board of Trustees:	Jason Romano (Chair)
Board of Youth:	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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