

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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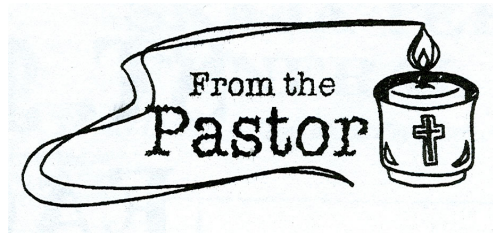
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June 2020

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Volume 6 No. 6

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.

The disciples once asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. They also mentioned that John the Baptist spent time teaching his disciples how to pray. (Luke 11:1)

This leads me to believe that prayer does not come naturally for most people—it is a discipline that has to be learned and practiced. Like many disciplines, the more you do it, the better you get at it. Think of exercise, a job skill, or cooking—the more time you spend doing it, the easier it gets.

In our Small Catechism, Martin Luther encourages families to build prayer around our bodily needs. In the morning, immediately after waking up, we are instructed to cross ourselves, say the Apostles Creed, say the Lord's Prayer, and finish with Luther's Morning Prayer. (this all takes less than two minutes, by the way). Right before going to sleep, we repeat the same process: cross ourselves, Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Luther's Evening Prayer. Before and after each meal, we are instructed to recite a few verses from particular Psalms, pray the Lord's Prayer, and pray a short prayer of thanksgiving.

You eat every day. Every day you wake up. Every day you go to sleep. Since you do these things anyway, make prayer a habit tied to these daily activities.

Old, written-down, memorized prayers are very good things. They are gifts from our Christian ancestors to the Church. They have remained in use for hundreds or thousands of years because they are especially profound in their insight, scope, and/or utility. Praying these old prayers unites us with other Christians (past, present, and future) who pray these same words along with us. Memorizing these prayers takes away the task of struggling for our own words and allows us to need at hand (rather than how the need might be expressed).

But, while written and published prayers are highly valuable, there are no ancient prayers that list your personal concerns. Your sick loved ones, your job stress, your breaking-down appliances are all on your mind and you want to cast these concerns upon God as well.

Therefore, in addition to these routine prayers referenced above, try to set aside ten minutes each day to pray for your own particular needs. Here are some suggestions I've picked up along the way:

Begin your time by thanking God for whatever things come to mind. Next, confess your sins (name them specifically) and ask God for Jesus' forgiveness; ask God for help so that you grow away from these sins. After that, acknowledge before God the highlights of your day—the times you did the right thing, the success you've enjoyed, the good idea you had—and thank God for these moments. Then, move acknowledge your worries, fears, and desires before God (ask God for the things you want; don't beat around the bush or be diplomatic; God can handle respectful bluntness). When ten minutes us up, pray the Lord's Prayer and then go about your day.

Finally, don't be afraid to change things up. Different people find different patterns work for them. For one person, setting aside a time of prayer in the morning works wonderfully, but it simply doesn't work for another person. One person may rely heavily on printed resources while another prays for the things that come to mind in the moment. Personally, I find it necessary to change up my routine a few times every year—what worked for me in January simply doesn't work as well for me in June.

Prayer is actually not a difficult undertaking. It's not like small motor repair or cleaning out the refrigerator. But its difficulty lies in the spiritual realm. Prayer can be demanding to your spirit and therefore, it can drain you. The Devil, the world, and even your sinful flesh don't want you to pray so all manner of obstacles mysteriously appear to interrupt or delay prayer. Prayer is not difficult, but it isn't exactly easy either.

I pray (literally) that the members of Ascension grow in faith, in love, in the study of Scripture, and in prayer. I am happy to talk with you individually and coach you in developing a stronger prayer life. I sincerely hope that God answers my prayers for your spiritual growth and that he uses me toward this end.

Pastor Gunia

Thoughts from the Midst of the Virus (Lutheran Witness, May 11, 2020)

by Rev. Derek Lecakes, president of the Atlantic District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS).

Life has changed. We have all been forced to adapt. On March 1, 2020, the first case of the novel coronavirus hit New York. No one could have imagined the impact it would have on our lives in the coming weeks. As time went on, restrictions were placed on gatherings. First, the occupancy limit of rooms was cut in half, then reduced to 50 people, then to 20 people or fewer. Next, social distancing measures encouraged people to maintain six feet of distance between themselves and other people. Lastly, an executive order from the governor of New York placed the state on “pause”: All non-essential workers were to stay at home.

At the governor’s request, the congregations of the LCMS Atlantic District “paused” to prevent the spread of the virus. We watched the number of positive cases begin to double every two days. Hospitals closed their doors to any and all visitors including clergy and care teams. Funeral homes and cemeteries also quickly changed their normal operating procedures to help curb the spread.

Now, church workers are faced with the real question of how to provide Christ-centered care when they cannot visit or see the members of their congregation or school. Our training revolves around being at the sides of the sick and dying to comfort and console or to celebrate the milestones of life.

Changed reality

In New York there have been over 18,000 deaths. This is not just a number. It includes LCMS Atlantic District church members; it includes those who have attended worship with us and served our parishes. We have seen the virus take sisters and brothers, friends and family. At this point, 28 churches have reported deaths of members resulting from COVID-19. Some parishes have experienced ten to twenty deaths.

We have heard stories of family members dropping off a loved one at the emergency room. The one with the virus is admitted; the family is forced to stay outside. The only contact is by phone. No one can enter the hospital to be by their side. We have adapted the way we teach, lead worship, care for members and so much more. Video conferencing has become a tool by which we can remain present in people’s lives. It has taken on the role of the classroom and the sanctuary. Each Sunday members gather as family units in their homes to hear the precious words of the Gospel spoken by the familiar voice of their pastor. We begin with the invocation and are immediately reminded of God’s presence with us. Pastors, teachers and others are calling on members by phone, text, social media and old-fashioned letter writing. COVID-19 has forced us to rethink how we can do ministry when we are forced to be physically distanced from one another. But amid the seeming darkness there are signs of light.

Signs of light

Many LCMS parishioners work on the front lines as doctors and nurses in hospitals. These hospital workers see the worst of this crisis. These saints gather co-workers at the beginning of shifts and call their pastor to offer a blessing over the hospital, doctors, nurses and all workers in that moment. They are being the presence of Christ.

Some pastors gather at gravesides with a small group of family — less than 10 — or sometimes alone to record the interment. The rest of the family participates through video conference; it is one way they can say goodbye. This is a challenge, but in it is the presence of Christ.

There are devotions, family Bible studies and more going out each day from congregational workers via email, social media, text and phone. This is how we can proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ at this moment. It is one more way we can bring the presence of Christ to others.

This situation has been a challenge. It has forced our pastors, teachers, deaconesses, DCEs and all our workers to figure out how to speak the love of Christ into these unique situations. However, the promises that God has made to us have not changed.

What has not changed

The reality of Christ’s death and resurrection means that He has paid the price of sin and redeemed us. In the waters of Holy Baptism, we are rescued from death and the devil. Luther writes in his explanation of the Third Article of the Apostle’s Creed. This reality that we confess in the creed and elsewhere has not changed. God’s Word has not changed. The promises therein remain steadfast and unchangeable. The Holy Spirit is at work through the Word and the lives of all of us. We must hold to God’s promises as we live out our baptismal promises in this life. The situation has changed, but presence of Christ in God’s Word has not changed as we work to proclaim Him. The living presence of Christ is in His Word, in our worship, in our prayers and in us. As we live our lives, the living presence of Christ is with us. St. Paul reminds us of the eternal hope that we have in Jesus: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Rom. 15:13).



Lutheran Women's Missionary League

Lutheran Women
In Mission

LWML NID Convention

Keep the dates of September 11 and 12 open to attend the 2020 District Convention at the Holiday Inn in Gurnee. The theme will be "Led by the Spirit." Deb Burma will be the Keynote Speaker and Bible Study Leader. Also we will be enlightened about the food pantry at the seminary in Fort Wayne. More information as it becomes available.

Where Mites Go

Mobile Medical Mercy Missions Bus for Guatemala

Grant: \$100,000

Over 50 percent of the children in Guatemala are malnourished and have no access to any form of medical or dental care. A network of LCMS partner churches and the Lutheran Church of Guatemala have partnered to share God's physical and spiritual healing with as many souls as possible. This mission grant will be used to purchase and retrofit a bus with medical equipment. Bible school equipment will also be purchased, enabling teams to heal both the physical and spiritual needs of the Guatemalan children. While physicians tend to physical needs, ministers and lay leaders will go into villages and set up Bible classes, Vacation Bible School, and worship services.

Love Packages

Testimony from Zimbabwe

This was amazing - this church called Christ Assembly only had one Bible. The pastor and congregants fasted several times each week for 4 years. They survived with 1 Bible only, so it was a great day, a great day indeed when they all got Bibles from Love Packages. The report I got was that they had a service from 10 am to 6 pm just reading the Word, each one taking turns reading. They could not believe they were actually holding their own personal Bible. The pastor was in awe, awe, awe!

Arletta A. Stuebe, President



Worship Services

As of this writing, we are holding worship services on Sunday morning at 9:00 and 10:00 am, and Wednesday evenings at 6:00 pm. All services are limited to 10 pre-registered people. Masks MUST be worn at all times, and members MUST sit where instructed.

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 10 reserved members, according to Niles ordinance, 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.

Time & Talent

Deacons

June 7	TBD
June 14	TBD
June 21	TBD
June 28	TBD

Ushers

June 7	TBD
June 14	TBD
June 21	TBD
June 28	TBD

Altar Guild

June	Arlene Koprivnik Rosalie Streng
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Board of Christian Ministries

On March 9th we met for our first meeting. Present were our Chair, Lois Marten, Gail Bujnowski, Judy Darville, Rosalie Streng, and Lilian Konozi.

Former church boards (Board of Mission, Board of Mercy, and Board of Spiritual Growth) were combined to form the newly names Board of Christian Ministries.

New projects were discussed:

1. Welcome packs
2. Supporting St. Matthew's Soup Kitchen
3. Putting together hygiene kits for Christ the King Church
4. Doing a mitten tree, also socks, hats and scarves
5. Sending out Thinking of You cards. We will each take one month to write and mail them.
6. Later in the fall, we will adopt a new seminarian
7. Do something for Rachel Meyer
8. Visiting homebound members

Board of Christian Ministries

News & Views from Ascension

We have not had a service in the sanctuary since March 29. No communion. The corona virus has done drastic things to almost everyone's life. Life as we have known it for decades is suddenly very different. Oh yes, the sun comes up each morning and sets each evening. The rain falls and sometimes even this early the snow. We watch the trees and shrubs for the first tiny green sprout. Forsythia and magnolia begin to add color to our world. For some of us who must go to work, we are aware of the change in traffic flow and amount. Those of us who live closer to O'Hare notice the lack of air traffic. The stores that are open are empty. Mostly we know that school is no longer in session because, goodness! Our kids are around all day every day. Even though there are lessons and material to be studied on line, some of our youngsters aren't involved with that for one reason or another. Parents are suddenly called upon to be teachers and are now aware of what their kids' teachers go through every day for nine months. Parents working from home have new challenges. And we won't begin to discuss the sword that hangs over all our heads, as we scrub our hands for the 20th time, hang or tie the mask around our faces, and try to get out of the house without touching anything. The obituary section in the paper is columns long. Monday—Friday even with an unfamiliar schedule we get through all right, but it's Sunday that throws the wrench into the works. What makes the morning so long? Don't I have to wear my Sunday shoes today? Why aren't we leaving for church yet? Where's my offering envelope? Oh, I don't need one yet. Wonder what our Sunday School class will learn today? Who will we pray for today? Will there be communion? Will there be any vehicles in the parking lot at all? And no coffee and...?

Fortunately, we at Ascension have chances to hear and read the Word even if not in our sacred place in the sanctuary. Pastor Gunia has recorded some devotions on line. How to access them will be explained. A computer is needed. The Lutheran Hour is on WGN Sunday mornings at 6 a.m. Well, we know it's there. Also is Worship Anew on a cable channel each Sunday at 8:00 a.m. It's telecast from the Ft. Wayne seminary, last 30 minutes and is quite satisfying: Liturgy, creed, hymns by choirs, homily (sermon), Lord's Prayer, Benediction. One can even sing along with the choirs as there are closed captions. I especially likes the Good Shepherd Sunday message. It was based on the 23rd Psalm. An oldie but a goodie. In between we have phone chats with church chums, Portals of Prayer, a mask to mask visit with members and even a call from Pastor Gunia. We will make it all together! Lean on the Lord!

Rosalie Streng



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

June 6	Katherine Gordon
June 7	Jill Gregorio
June 10	Joseph Gunia
June 12	Sheila Kolbe Ahlgrim
June 18	Jonathan Schultz
June 22	Gideon Aguilera
June 29	Scott Darville
June 30	Jason Romano



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

None on record

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.

Money principle #14: Give Money; Don't Serve It

"No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him.— Luke 14:13–14

When Jesus says, "you cannot serve God and money," the word used for money is specifically "mammon." Just as "wisdom" is personified throughout the Bible, Jesus personifies money here as another entity that vies for our allegiance. What's interesting here is that the Pharisees were infected with this love of money, and it caused them to immediately discount what Jesus was saying.

It's important that we periodically do a personal wellness check in regards to our attitudes about money and possessions. One of the sure signs that there might be a problem is related to how quickly we dismiss the idea that there might be a problem.



ASCENSION 2020 BOARD MEMBERS

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Vice President:	Jim Jenne
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Financial Secretary:	Sandy Friedewald
Board of Deacons:	Jim Jenne (Chair) Hal Downs Tom Friedewald Jim Jenne Jonathan Schultz John Stuebe
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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