

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

Phone: 847.647.9867

Ascensionniles.com
office@ascensionniles.com

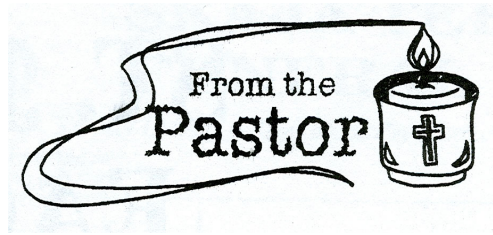
+ + +



May 2020

The Witness

May 2020



Volume 6 No. 5

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.

This month's article is on the spiritual discipline of sharing the Gospel. It is also called proclaiming Christ, or witnessing, or evangelizing, or giving a testimony. It has a lot of names. We tend to give a super-abundance of names to things we're uncomfortable about.

It can be worrisome, especially in our modern world (increasingly intolerant of our Christian faith) to "out yourself" as a practicing Christian. It can be worrisome to speak about something so deeply connected to our core identity. It can be worrisome not knowing how others will react when we speak of Jesus. It can be worrisome because speaking about Jesus can lead to confrontation or expose or ignorance of the doctrines of the Church, or come back to bite us later.

You have to speak about Jesus anyway. That's God's command so it's our obligation. And yet, there is also Gospel, as you speak the Gospel, you also hear the Gospel proclaimed from your mouth. God works through your own words to give you the benefits of the Gospel. The Gospel remains the power of God for salvation for all who believe, yourself included.

The Holy Bible is the pure and perfect Word of God. All people should go to the Holy Scriptures to read them, learn them, and inwardly digest them. But, realistically, how many non-Christians are going to decide to pick up the Bible and start reading it? If the faithfully attending members of strong congregations neglect their Bibles, what makes us think that those estranged from the Church are going to pick up the Bible and start reading it? When's the last time you felt the urge to study the Koran or the Hindu Vedas or the Book of Mormon? So then why would a Muslim, a Hindu, or a Mormon feel the urge to study the Bible?

Why would they? Because they first heard the Gospel through you.

Our God is so loving, that he allows the Gospel to go beyond the Holy Scriptures into human words and works inspired by and faithful to the Scriptures. This includes our essays, books, sermons, hymns, speeches, spoken prayers, and even works of visual art. This also includes the faithful words that come out of your mouth.

I don't, by any means, believe my sermons are on par with the Holy Scriptures, but I recognize that God's Gospel is present in my words. And God even works through my worst-constructed and worst-delivered sermons to give hearers forgiveness of sins, and life, and salvation.

Think of your favorite hymns. The Gospel is contained there as well. Whether it's "Amazing Grace" or "Salvation Unto Us Has Come" or "Silent Night" within that text and that tune is the Gospel, which has the power to bestow the entirety of Jesus' riches.

I'm sure you've been strengthened by some sermon you've heard or by some hymn you've sung. I'm sure some prayer has touched something within you or you read a blog post that really struck you. These are all imperfect works created by imperfect human beings. And yet God in those works to bestow wonderful, unexpected blessings.

The very same is true of you, O imperfect reader and your imperfect words (or songs or art). Your words are not amazing or eloquent or persuasive in themselves. But Jesus promises to be present in even your weakest words according to his commands and promises. "Make disciples of all nations, teaching them..." "Preach the word. Be ready in-season or out of season." "I will be with you always."

So, here's some advice for growing in your piety by spreading the Gospel.

1. Begin with yourself. You can't give what you don't got. If you don't know about Jesus, how are you going to talk about him? Be diligent in exposing yourself to the Gospel in the Holy Scriptures, in prayer, in worship, in song, and in books (especially the Small Catechism). Grow in your faith and understanding. By so doing, you strengthen your own faith and prepare yourself to speak of Jesus to others.
2. Talk to "safe people" about Jesus. Talk with family, fellow church members, or your pastor about Jesus. This gives you experience talking about your faith. Experience tends to take away the fear of the unknown.
3. Pray for those people you would like to speak with about Jesus. This develops a genuine care for them. Remember, if we are only performing loving things for a person because we think we're going to get something out of them, that's called manipulation. We renounce manipulation, deceit, and all underhandedness. We love all people, but we do so because of their personhood and the instructions of Jesus. Our love for them is not contingent upon their attitude toward Jesus.
4. Pray for opportunities to speak of Jesus to others, for the wisdom to see these opportunities, and for the courage to speak. You might be surprised at the ways God grants this prayer.
5. Support others in the spreading of the Gospel. This is more than writing a check to an overseas missionary. Encourage those you actually know and interact with at Church to do 1-4 above. Write letters of encouragement to overseas and domestic missionaries. Remember them in your prayers.

Talking about Jesus can be frightening if you convince yourself that others' eternal salvation is riding on you—the words you choose, the way you present yourself, your mental nimbleness. But it doesn't depend on you; Jesus works through you and he, himself does the work.

Talking with Jesus can be frightening if you consider the all the possible negative consequences. It becomes much easier when you remember that Jesus will never leave you nor forsake you. He will be with you always to the end of the age.

Pastor Gunia

Coronavirus Resources from NID

The Apostle Paul often opened his letters with such a greeting as this: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 1:3) These words from our Lord are true today as well and especially needed in these hours. The coronavirus pandemic is a serious and growing concern as the number of those affected with it rises to over 100,000 world-wide. Yet, rather than respond to this crisis with dismissive apathy or fearful panic, as the followers of Jesus, we have the opportunity to reflect the comfort of His grace and the peace He has imparted to us in how we care for fellow believers and our surrounding community.

Our Lord has given to us His love which casts out fear (1 John 4:18) through His Word and Sacraments, and His abiding promise to provide us with all we need to support this body and life. The latter of these promises He often fulfills through the care and service of others. The NID staff has assembled resources on their website (nidlcms.org) for use by our congregations, schools, and ministry partners to equip us all to help combat the spread of this illness and to ready us to be Christ-like caregivers to our neighbors in this time of need.

In these hours of seeming uncertainty and potential fear, what an opportunity our Lord gives us as the Church to proclaim Him to those around us! According to His merciful will, may our neighbors see and hear from us who know our Savior our confident hope in His redeeming grace and the compassionate touch of His loving heart.



**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



* * *

Remember!

"One man's junk is another man's treasure. and sometimes it's just junk!"

While we appreciate all the items people bring from home to donate to our church, please ask the Trustees or other appropriate individuals to make sure we need them and have room to store them. Thanks!



Time & Talent

Deacons

May 3	Tom Friedewald
May 10	Jim Jenne
May 17	John Stuebe
May 21	Jonathan Schultz
May 24	Tom Friedewald
May 31	Jim Jenne

Ushers

May 3	Ron Albrecht Nick Giannopoulos Bonnie Schultz John Stuebe
May 10	Tom Friedewald Steve Galka Sarah Lindahl John Stuebe
May 17	Lance Ahlgrim Tom Ahlgrim Jim Jenne Bonnie Schultz
May 21	Jim Jenne John Stuebe
May 24	Nick Giannopoulos Bonnie Schultz Jonathan Schultz John Stuebe
May 31	Lance Ahlgrim Tom Ahlgrim Sarah Lindahl John Stuebe

Greeters

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

Altar Guild

May

Gail Bujnowski
Judy Darville

News & Views from Ascension

Not much of the former just now. Having lots of at home time to look around and think has brought some reading material to the surface. First, a fascinating book about a pastor in Romania who spent 14 years in communist prisons due to his Christian faith and his public witness. 2nd, an illustrated book and personal story of a Lutheran missionary to the people of Enga, a rugged province in Papua New Guinea. Third, a charming book about a rescued donkey named Flash. Fourth, "The Hope of Glory," black/white and colored, illustrations, reflections on the Last Words of Jesus from the Cross, authored by Jon Meacham, biographer and historian. These volumes could show up on the shelves in the narthex at church—when we return for worship. Check them out.

These are strange times. How do families deal with this and their children? With the schools not being in session, one misses a sense of organization. As an adult, I feel oddly cut off from my church family. It is Lent, the historical penitential time in the church year, yet no more Lenten services and not even Sunday worship. No Holy Week services: hard to grasp. Well, there is the Lutheran Hour at 6 a.m. Sunday on WGN. Blink and it is over. Our Roman Catholic neighbors have mass on TV which I suppose one can find listed in the TV guide, and maybe their parishes share the information. Pr. Gunia makes personal phone calls, we have Portals of Prayer, if one picked up the newest one before the shutdown. I am sure Pastor could be reached in an emergency, and we all have Bibles. Church means a gathering together of the saints for worship and strength. The secular stuff on TV, on-line and in the press does not help. One cannot help feeling insecure about getting ill from this wretched virus. Gracious Father, save us.

Faith, Hope, and Peace ministry for GlenBridge (now EL-EVATE) sent us a box with current Portals of Prayer and small bamboo crosses for Palm Sunday to hand out to our little congregation there. The box was delivered and received at GlenBridge at the door. One just hopes the contents did get to the residents. We won't know for some time, I fear. It's good to remember them in our prayers: Micha, Donna, Marianne, Corina. Andy, Kim, Ed, Stephen.

Normally, one looks forward to Easter and the festive service on Sunday with special music,—Monty usually finds a trumpet player, and the choir sings—and there are Easter lilies in the chancel. We rejoice with all the saints and angels in remembering Christ's resurrection and in singing the Alleluias once more, and we love how our children and even adults appear in Easter finery, maybe even in hats! No Easter church this year, maybe not even during Holy Week. Something is surely missing in our lives.

Rosalie Streng



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

May 1	Michael Powyszynski
May 2	Robert Galka Otto Gunia Charles Schwenn
May 4	Elaine Wallace
May 12	Karen Aragosa
May 14	Steven Galka
May 19	Tom Friedewald
May 22	Harold Hasselman



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

May 16	Marc & Audrey Schultz
May 19	Michael & Janice Fleck
May 29	Harold & Janice Hasselman
May 31	Tom & Kim Giannopoulos

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 #13: 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.



Thursday, May 21, 2020

ASCENSION 2020 BOARD MEMBERS

President:	Tom Friedewald
Vice President:	Jim Jenne
Treasurer:	Coby Mueller
Secretary:	Audrey Schultz
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)

* * * * *

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!**

CHURCH NAME AND ADDRESS

Ascension Lutheran Church #106244
7429 Milwaukee Avenue
Niles, IL 60714

TELEPHONE

847 647-9867

CONTACT

Audrey Schultz

SOFTWARE

MSPublisher 2016
Adobe Acrobat Standard DC
Windows 10

PRINTER

HP Photosmart 7510

EMAIL

office@ascensionniles.com

TRANSMISSION TIME

Tuesday 2:00pm

NUMBER OF PAGES SENT

1 through 8

NEWSLETTER DATE

May2020

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

of copies: 200

Expected delivery: Thursday, April 23, 2020