



Ascension In Action

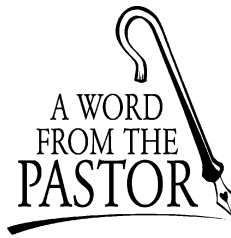
Ascension Lutheran Church

August 2017

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Hope When Things Are Getting Worse

Life experiences can go from bad to worse. I won't say "Things couldn't be worse!" because too often there are ways, often unforeseen, that things can get worse. I am saying this as a Christian, one who believes that God is over all things and that God is loving and gracious as revealed through Jesus. So we have a powerful and loving God and things can go from bad to worse? This is not an easy idea to accept especially when we are feeling the worse.



In August, we will be preaching a series of sermons on the book of Revelation. John of Patmos wrote to churches who were experiencing things going from bad to worse. Understandably, these new Christians expected a benefit, some goodness from worshipping and being faithful to God. But they were suffering from increasing persecution. They were shunned by businesses and their families. And on occasion, the Roman authorities would kill some of them. They had questions: "Why are our prayers for relief unanswered?" "What hope might we have in the face of our suffering?"

As much as we are not facing persecution, we do face times when things go from bad to worse. We pray and it feels like God is not answering us. In such times, we can feel like God is distant and lose hope that God will do anything for us. Revelation was written for such times. It reveals God as greater than all things and working to come through for his people. It reveals God being proud and rewarding of those faithful who suffer. Finally, God will bring in a new day where there will be no more crying, sorrow, pain and death. Therein is our hope.

Revelation has a theology of the cross. In our times, much of Christianity supports a theology of glory. In a theology of glory, your faith in God should mean that things get better and better here. If you are not happy, prosperous, and having prayers answered, it is because your faith is weak. A theology of the cross understands that suffering and hard things are part of this life and that God is present and working there. This theology is based on our earthly reality of suffering and that Jesus, the most faithful and loving one, suffered horribly on the cross and it was the height of his glory. There is much more to say on this – which is the point of our preaching series on Revelation.

Pastor Dan

Change of Address

If you have had a change of address or phone number please contact the church office with your new address or phone number. This will help us stay current with information on how to contact you. As many of our youth head off to college please send along their address for the upcoming school year so we may be able to stay in touch with them. Although they are not physically present with us they are still members of our Ascension family.

Watch for Children

School will be starting in August. Our Children's Learning Center continues to have kids being dropped off and picked up, and our Sunday School will be getting started soon, so there will be more children running around outside. Please be careful when entering and exiting our parking lot from both the south and north drives any day of the week and at any time of day. It is easy to miss children and adults walking along Circle Drive when exiting the north drive.



What's Happening

The July 11 CPC meeting included the following actions and discussions:

- Pastor Daniel Smith led devotions by sharing a part of the devotions that will be used during the youth trip to Wisconsin and had us share a favorite story of service to others.
- Board Directors gave brief updates on current activities and future plans.
- Pastor Dan noted we have had a number of funerals this summer and we have had a number of baptisms as well.
- Pastor Daniel mentioned that First Lutheran will be holding their 125th anniversary and as part of that celebration presiding Bishop of the ELCA, Elizabeth Eaton will be speaking.
- Donna Crump mentioned she was in the process of getting a contract from our strategic planner. Donna is gathering a team of people to participate in the ministry site review later in the month. The review will help in our strategic planning efforts.
- Greg Gulliksen gave an update on the sanctuary upgrades. Window film had been installed on two window panes for the congregation to review. Greg also mentioned he had heard back from the electrical company and the costs were much higher than anticipated.
- Rex Rudy reported that we continue to be behind on our general offerings. The board of Stewardship continues to review why this may be happening. Rex made a motion that we use unspent monies from special projects to help offset the cost of hiring a strategic planner. The motion carried.
- John Hayes, on behalf of the Board of Lay Ministry, made a motion that would start the process of making Pastor Daniel a co-pastor with Pastor Dan. The motion carried. The board will start the process and will be informing the congregation as efforts continue. The process will take them through the fall and the congregation will vote on the change of status at the December congregation meeting.
- Elisa Thompson, on behalf of Team Armstrong, gave an update on what the team has been doing and where they are heading in the future. They have been doing things concerning lifting up the challenges of aging. A goal is to get people to have a vision for the second part of their life.
- Pastor Dan Holt led closing with prayers and the Lord's Prayer.
- The approved minutes of recent meetings are posted on the kiosk in the Fellowship Hall and are available in electronic format from the church office.

August starts the ramp up of fall events such as Gods Work, Our Hands, Blessing of the Backpacks, Fall Rally day for Sunday School, Social Outreach opportunities, and many more activities to get involved in. See upcoming fall events in this and future newsletters and get involved. Remember we are “A Community of Grace, Called to Serve”, and that is what we do.

The Thrivent Builds team is always in need of helping with the house they are building.

Have you gotten involved or attended a small group this summer? There are still many ways to be involved with small groups. This is a great way to get to know others in the congregation especially those who attend that other service.

“A Community of Grace, Called to Serve.”

Peace be with you, Greg Gulliksen, President CPC
637-9313 / greg.gulliksen@gmail.com

Capital Campaign Update

As of August we have \$64,906 available for renovations in the sanctuary such as new carpet, new window blinds, wall patching & painting, new lighting, and to reduce our mortgage. Thank you for all who have completed your pledges and to those who continue to contribute to your pledge. Your continued support is still very important to the overall success of our capital campaign. The costs for redoing our lighting came in much higher than anticipated so we are in the process of reviewing what we can do with the funds available. Two samples of window film tint were installed on two panes of glass on the south windows. Window shade cloth samples will be installed for review in August. We are in the process of getting estimates for the gypsum board work, painting, carpet & base, window tint & shades. This will help determine how much of the lighting package we can afford.

Finances

In the first half of 2017 our revenue from giving and CLC tuition was \$13,000 less than projected and \$7,500 less than our revenue for the same period last year. Total spending was about \$18,000 less than our budget, but about \$3,800 higher than the first half of 2016. The CLC is planning to raise tuition this fall to cover higher teacher wages. The Council may prepare to curtail outlays for ministry programs and social outreach if offerings to the church general fund continue to lag our budget in the third quarter. Meantime, Ascension members are asked to compare their second quarter contribution statements with their giving plans for 2017.

2017 Operating Activity Compared with Budget and Previous Year						
Type of Activity	As of 6/30/17		2017 Budget		As of 6/30/16	
			(%)		(%)	
Revenues	\$388,990		\$401,980	(97%)	\$396,506	(98%)
Less Expenses	- 381,793	-	399,930	(95%)	- 377,931	(101%)
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$7,197		\$2,050		\$18,575	(39%)
Operating Cash	\$111,431				\$126,742	(88%)

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY TO...

**Marilyn Gulliksen & family (Mother Virginia) at the death of her father, Joshua Stanley.

Blessing of the Backpacks

The Board of Parish Education is pleased to announce that the annual Blessing of the Backpacks is scheduled for Sunday August 6 at both services. All students, teachers and other school personnel are invited to receive a special blessing. The Board of Parish Education will give small tokens to be worn on backpacks, messenger bags or whatever you carry to school as a reminder of God's presence as the new school year gets underway. Be sure to bring your school bag on August 6!



We will also be collecting school supplies for the elementary students who attend before and after school care at Ascension Children's Learning Center. Approximately, 25 CLC kids need help acquiring school supplies. Any leftover supplies will be donated to the CLC & Audubon Elementary School. If your family could use some assistance with school supplies this year, please contact Pastor Daniel or Pastor Dan.

A table for collecting donations has been set up in the narthex. If you have questions, please contact Elisa Thompson 719.641.5184 or elisat92@gmail.com. If it's easier for you, feel free to make a monetary donation.

RE•FORMATION
THEN • NOW • ALWAYS

500th Anniversary of the Reformation

On October 29, 2017 we will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, but over the course of this year, there will be a series of events, classes, and materials made available to our Ascension family to give us a better understanding of the reformation. The Ascension Endowment Committee recently approved a grant to cover the cost of the lunch that we will have after the service on the 29th, so MARK IT ON YOUR CALENDAR! This lunch will be in lieu of our church picnic and will have a German theme honoring the German roots of the Reformation and of the Lutheran Church. The timing also coincides with October Fest so we can expect German beer and wine with our lunch.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY TO...

**Nancy Stannard & family at the death of her husband Jim.

RUTH CIRCLE

All ladies of Ascension are invited to join us on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 9:30am for fellowship and casual Bible Study. We will be starting a new study from the book *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*, by Joanna Weaver. Hostess for the August 10th gathering will be Elaine Glover. If you are new to Ascension or just looking for a casual Bible Study group, we hope you will come and join us! Please see Nancy Shatto for a book.

WOW!

August is here, wasn't graduation and the end of the school year just "last week." I am enjoying the summer, my garden is thriving and my back patio is my nightly refuge. The kids living on my street have enjoyed each other and the yelling and the laughter is a witness to play is not a thing of the past.

I hope you all have been able to be outside and enjoy some "play."

BUT [as they say] things come to an end. School will start soon and the school supply shopping lists are showing up everywhere. The school and sport physicals are being scheduled. Did you know that August is "National Immunization Awareness" month [big surprise]? I am old fashion and well as an RN, I support immunizations, everyone to their own path. But I have seen whooping cough and polio and it is ugly. I also grew up in the 50s; it was a time of fear and anxiety, when children became infected with life threatening polio. Parks were closed and parents kept children at home, afraid to go out in public, play was not happy during those summers. And then came Dr. Jonas Salk. We stood in lines to first get the 'polio shot' and then a few years later to get Dr. Sabin's 'sugar cube.' There were fewer of my classmates getting sick that next school year. I also support the ongoing immunizations for adults, I encourage everyone to get and keep the cycle up to date. WOW! Sorry about the preaching.

There is still plenty of summer left. The state fair is just a few weeks away and there are lots of long evenings to enjoy watching a sunset. Keep playing.

Sara Petz, Abundant Life Group

August SUP Gathering

On August 17, 12pm-1:30pm we will welcome Dr. Will Stoller-Lee, Director of Fuller Theological Seminary in Colorado to talk about film and faith! Please bring a side dish or dessert to share, main dish is provided. To help in planning, please let Karen Rubinow know you're coming at nodak@sidkar.com

~~US & THEM~~ WE:

The Board of Social Outreach would like to extend "thank you's" to the following:

- Dr. Bill Ayen – for an outstanding July 9th presentation packed full of info regarding Lutheran Family Services. The Library was filled nearly to capacity and I think everyone wished we had more time for learning and discussion. Thank you so much.
- Mike Matkin – For 11 years of service, transporting food from our church's food pantry to Mercy's Gate. You have been a blessing!
- Wanda Hughes – For agreeing to take up the mantle of "Food Pantry Courier" now that Mike is taking a well-deserved break to serve in other areas. Thank you for your willingness to serve!

As we start to think about Fall 2017, here are a few things to keep in mind for fall:

- 1) "God's Work. Our Hands." Will be Sept 10 from noon-3 pm. Keep a lookout for info for how you can be involved in this wonderful day of community service.
- 2) Lutheran Family Services Innkeeper Dinner – October 3, 2017, 5:30-8:30 pm at the Marriott Hotel. This is always a fun night of celebration and information on how LFS is making significant differences people's lives. You can register online at LFSRM.ORG/EVENTS.

Thank you, Ascension Family, for your continued support of people in need!

Sharla Saunders –
Director, Ascension Board of Social Outreach

THANK YOU!!!

The HS youth and Youth Board would like to thank the congregation for their generous support for their summer mission trip to Kenosha, WI from July 14 - July 22. The group would also like to invite all to join them for a Trip Review on Sunday July 30, 9:15 am - 10:15 am in the library. Come see and hear what the group did in Wisconsin with the youth from Lord of Life Lutheran Church!



Rally Day for Sunday School is September 10th from 9:15-10:15. We will be celebrating the 500th year since Martin Luther's Reformation. We hope you will join us.

BECOME INVOLVED...

****Coffee Fellowship Hour – Smell the Aroma!**

Please help keep the coffee hours going by signing up to host a Sunday morning Fellowship Hour! All directions for coffee making are in the coffee station, or just ask for assistance. One or two people is all it takes, and you are so appreciated! See the sign-up sheet on the Kiosk in Fellowship Hall.

****Prayer Ministry** – as we pray for people it helps us to have updates to keep us connected to the person and situation. If you have a prayer concern or would like to become a member of our Prayer Chain, contact the office, 634-1694 or office@ascensionlutheranelca.org.

****Funeral Committee** – Contact Val Rudy, 577-4637, if you would like to be added to the list of volunteers to help with food or serving at funerals. We are always looking for volunteers!

****Quilts for New Beginnings** – meets every Wednesday from 9-1 in the Fellowship Hall. They spread out quilts in all phases of creation, and if you'd like to help put together quilts for a good cause, come and join us. No experience necessary, just a good heart willing to learn and participate.

****Mercy's Gate – formerly Northern Churches Care** – Pantry items and toiletries are collected in the cupboard in the Fellowship Hall. Ongoing needs:

crackers, mac & cheese, oatmeal, spaghetti, corn, green beans, spaghetti sauce, tomato products, tuna, gravy toothpaste, tooth brushes, face soap.

****Knotty Kneedlers** – We continue to make small blankets and now sweaters and baby burial buntings for the Indian reservations, as well as prayer shawls. If you would like to become involved in this ministry, or just want to join us for fellowship and work on your own project, we meet every Wednesday at 1pm, in Fellowship Hall. Contact Bonnie Vawter, 579-6707, with any questions.

****Terrace Gardens Bingo.** Prizes and Volunteers are needed. Our church has been supporting bingo at the Terrace Garden Healthcare Center for about 35 years. Thank you for your continued support of this program. We call three games of bingo from 10:00-11:00AM on the third Wednesday of each month for the residents. We normally have about 15 players. We call out the numbers until every player wins in each game. After they win, we help them (if needed) to the prize table where they can pick out a prize of their choice. The prizes are all donated by members of the Ascension family. We could use some of the following prizes: our #1 need is for gently used men's clothing (sizes Large and higher), then we also have a need for women's clothing (large and Plus sizes), hygiene products (body washes, lotions, tooth paste, shampoo, etc), playing cards, some small containers of ladies' perfumes, adult coloring books/crayons, and lady's jewelry. Please mark items as "Bingo Prizes" and place them in the Terrace Garden Bingo box located on the counter behind the Welcome Center. While we have gained a few more volunteers, we are also in need of some additional volunteers to help the residents with their bingo cards and to help them determine which prize they would like to have. The residents really look forward to our bingo each month and it is rewarding to help them. Please contact John Hayes at 572-1052 or at blazehayes@aol.com if you'd like to help or learn more about this Outreach program.

****Campbell's Soup Labels:** Please just cut the UPC bar code and the picture of the "point value boy" from the following products: Campbells - soups, chunky soups, Healthy Request, Supper Bakes; Pepperidge Farm, Spaghetti-Os, Swanson, V-8 beverage caps and Prego Spaghetti Sauce. Thanks for continuing to collect these to help the people with disabilities.

****Pop can tabs** help the Ronald McDonald House. They may be placed in the container in the cupboard in the Welcome Center.



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

CHURCH STAFF

Normal Office Hours: 9-12 Mon-Fri (719) 634-1694
Pastor Dan Holt – off on Friday
Pastor Daniel Smith
Music Director – Megan Miller
Diaconal Minister of Faith Formation – Mary Stoneback
Office Administrator – Arlayne McKee
Consultant for Health Care – Dr. Dennis Caldwell
Child Learning Center Director – Teresa Adams
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Our Website: www.ascensioncos.org
September newsletter deadline: Aug. 17

*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers*

Beth Ayen (Daughter-in-law of Darcy & Bill Ayen), Dale & Dorothy Brown, Sharon Budd (Sister of Darcy Ayen), Brad Buhler, Jerri Butschky, Dennis Caldwell, Brandon Cordova (son of Tony & Ginger), Susan Curtis, Alice DeLoughry, Jacquelyn Ellison (Granddaughter of Marilyn & Troy Goodenough), Ron Elsdon, Elaine Glover, Sam Green (friend of Eric Dyer), Steve Hahn (Grandson of Joan Magee), Mark & Laurie Hauschild, and their son & daughter, Ryan Hauschild and Heidi Woerdeman, Paul Johnson (Father of Russ Johnson), Teddy & Lynni Lockner (Great-grandson of Ruth Andersen & his mother), Jeff Sebben, Jerry Smith, Cathy Stanley, Jim Stannard, Carol Thompson, and all of our men and women serving overseas.