



## Ascension Lutheran Church

# ANNOUNCER

Dear saints in Christ,

I write this in the wake of an Easter massacre: six Sri Lankan churches attacked in three different cities, over 300 dead, over 500 injured. About 150 saints are estimated to have died during St. Sebastian's Easter Mass in Negombo; to relate the tragedy, we had 146 attend Easter services at Ascension. To kill someone at worship—whether it's New Zealand or Sri Lanka—is wholly evil and cowardly. We know from Scripture that Pontius Pilate engaged in such acts (Lk 13:1), and we know from Jesus that such heinous acts upon Christians will be deemed pious works, for “the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God” (Jn 16:2). It was only two years ago that 47 saints were killed and 126 injured in explosions during Palm Sunday worship in Egypt.

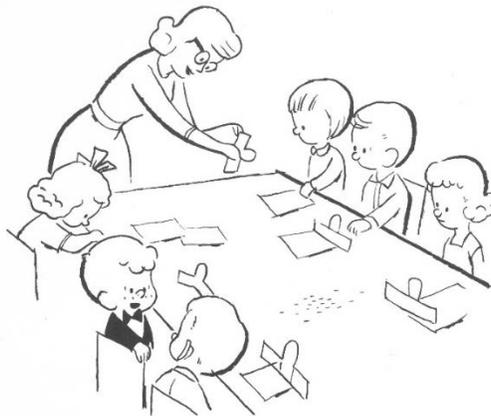
Monthly throughout the world, “345 Christians are killed for faith-related reasons; 105 Churches and Christian buildings are burned or attacked; 219 Christians are detained without trial, arrested, sentenced and imprisoned” (<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/>; last accessed 4/23/19). The Christians who have died in these circumstances are blessed martyrs, dying in the confession of the One True God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Those who perpetrated the killings will be declared martyrs by their associates, but they are far from it. Martyrdom is imposed, not enacted. To die a martyr is to abhor death while at the same time being willing to die for the uncompromised confession. One properly “seeks” martyrdom under only one condition: having to choose between confessing *or* living. In that circumstance, choosing to confess is choosing to die a death imposed upon you by someone else. If you can confess *and* live, you do so, even if it means fleeing the persecution. Paul fled numerous times, but he never denied Christ (Acts 9:29-30; 13:50-51; 14:5-7; 17:13-14). In common sense, he realized that staying alive was the most efficient way to spread the gospel and help others! When he could save his skin and confess, he did so. A martyr dies, but only when confessing leads to no other option than being killed. To seek martyrdom when you can

both confess and live isn't serving God but serving self—suicide bombers are evil, cowardly, and self-serving, and justice will be rendered in God's time (Rev 6:9-11).

Jesus died willingly as the first martyr whose “testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession” (1 Ti 6:13); the apostles were willing to die for confessing the One who made the good confession (Mt 26:35; Jn 11:16; Acts 21:13); and we also are willing to die in that same confession, for Jesus said, “whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it... everyone who confesses me before men, I also will confess before my Father who is in heaven” (Mk 8:35; Mt 10:32). The lives of the saints in Sri Lanka were taken while they confessed the One True God on the holiest day of the year. It's an incomprehensible tragedy, but I tend to think there's no other way those saints might choose to die absent the ability to flee: confessing on Easter the very glory of Christ in which they have a share, for “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom 8:18)!

Where is God in this? Where is He after such evil is imposed upon the innocent? God is right where each person wants Him to be: for those who want hope, He gives living hope; for those who want comfort, He gives eternal comfort; for those who want peace, He gives peace that surpasses all understanding (1 Pet 1:3; 2 Thes 2:16; Phil 4:7). For those who want life restored, He will resurrect the dead unto existence without sin forever, for “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” Thereafter, Martha confessed—along with the saints of Sri Lanka, Ascension Lutheran, and every other holy church throughout time—“Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world” (Jn 11:25-26).

In His holy name,  
*Pastor Greg*



“Except for Bible stories, hymns, memory work, and prayers, this is just like school.”

# Announcements



LWML Meeting Saturday, May 11, 2019 from 10am – 12pm. All women are invited to come and bring a friend!

## Movie Review: *Unplanned*

Directed by Cary Solomon and Chuck Konzelman  
Starring Ashley Bratcher, Brooks Ryan, and Robia Scott  
Rated R for some disturbing/bloody images

On Tuesday, April 9, the brother pastors of Ascension, Concordia, Our Savior, Redeemer, Shepherd of the Hills, and Trinity Lutheran met for a viewing of one of the most controversial films ever released. *Unplanned* is based on the story of and same-named book by Abby Johnson, who at one time was one of the youngest Planned Parenthood directors in the United States. It follows her volunteer work, employment, and eventual resignation from Planned Parenthood after witnessing an ultrasound-guided abortion. Ms. Johnson herself had two abortions before her departure from Planned Parenthood, which is one of the many intriguing aspects of the story: how she initially justified what she came to be a leading voice against.

The film is absolutely brutal—there’s no other way to put it. The directors and Ms. Johnson wanted to portray what truly happens during an abortion, and specifically, during the abortions she witnessed. The ultrasound-guided abortion is illustrated through computer-generated imagery; her own abortions are related in very bloody scenes; a dismembered baby is shown lying on a table; a woman who faced a crisis resulting from the procedure is graphically portrayed. The MPAA got it right when assigning an “R” rating—the sick irony of it all is that many states allow young women to have an abortion who would be denied entrance to this film. In fact, the rating affirms that abortion is not simply a “routine medical procedure.”

Many reviews that disliked the film focus on the style, giving critiques of the acting, writing, directing, or production quality, frequently labeling it “propaganda”—one review ended condescendingly, “‘Unplanned’ views humanity itself in black and white.” But no review I’ve read critiques the substance, which is the harsh reality of abortion. No review I’ve read wrote the equivalent of, “This film’s depiction of abortion is fantasy.” That’s because it’s not. People indeed claim that Ms. Johnson invented her assisting in an ultrasound-guided abortion, to which I direct you to her response: <https://thefederalist.com/2019/04/08/yes-really-see-ultrasound-guided-abortion-made-pro-life/>. I, for one, believe her. Is the film, as another review puts it, “non-stop proselytizing [against] abortion”? Yes. But to dismiss a film because it wishes to convey a message is to go against artistic intent in general. That many believe the anti-choice message of *Unplanned* to be wrong is undeniable—similarly undeniable is the violent reality of abortion portrayed on-screen.

The film certainly preaches to the choir. And the heavy heavy majority of viewers entering the theater know this film’s message. But there have been testimonies of those contemplating abortion leaving the theater with a view toward life. Praise God! For the choir, the film keeps urgency for pro-life action alive. It’s our human tendency to become lackadaisical over time—abortion was deemed legal over 45 years ago. But like Norma McCorvey, the story of Abby Johnson provides hope for our culture’s return to God’s absolute morality at the most basic level. She’s a modern-day St. Paul of the abortion industry: an enemy converted to a voice of truth. I’m not sure I could view this film a second time unless I went to support those who were unsure of viewing it themselves. For those who think they can endure the gruesome visual of abortion, I urge you to support this film; for those who think they can’t, I suggest Ms. Johnson’s book; for those who neither want to see nor read of the brutal reality of abortion, I fully understand. And to everyone I remind that Jesus “came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (Jn 10:10). Special thanks to Rev. Phil Young for organizing the viewing. —Pastor Greg



# Missions & Ministry

Organizations and people we support:

 <p><a href="http://rescue1global.org/">http://rescue1global.org/</a></p>
 <p><a href="https://www.trinityhope.org/">https://www.trinityhope.org/</a></p>
 <p><a href="http://helpmadison.org/">http://helpmadison.org/</a></p>
 <p><a href="https://nashvillerescuemission.org/">https://nashvillerescuemission.org/</a></p>
 <p><a href="https://www.hopeclinicforwomen.org/">https://www.hopeclinicforwomen.org/</a></p>
 <p>Caring Closet and other programs <a href="http://www.lstn.org/">http://www.lstn.org/</a></p>
 <p>International Health Partners <a href="http://ihptz.org/">http://ihptz.org/</a></p>
 <p>Seminarian Corey Shaffer and family <a href="https://www.csl.edu/">https://www.csl.edu/</a></p>
 <p>Missionary photographer: Johanna Heidorn <a href="https://www.lcms.org/heidorn">https://www.lcms.org/heidorn</a></p>
 <p>Missionaries in Germany: Carl and Karen Cecil <a href="https://www.lcms.org/cecil">https://www.lcms.org/cecil</a></p>



“...‘Cause what if your blessings come through raindrops / What if Your healing comes through tears / What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near / What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise...”

—Laura Story, Mercies in Disguise

I heard this song recently while driving and it unleashed more tears than I would like to admit. I didn't just cry for myself and some of my own raindrops, sleepless nights and trials, but I cried for friends I know who are going through really hard situations. And I cried for our sweet clients who show up on our doorsteps and the ones who are too afraid to walk in at all. We like to celebrate stories when God's blessings pour out, but we are hesitant to talk about the seasons where God appears to be silent or stagnant. We want to believe: God is never late. We even say it, but sometimes we hide from others the question mark of doubt in our head.

The truth is, for me, for you, and for our clients, that we may be in seasons that include rainstorms and not just raindrops, depression and anxiety that clutches at our well being and not just a few sleepless nights, an all out war instead of one trial. The ONLY thing I think we can do in those moments for one another is: 1) reach out and connect and be willing to walk with someone through this journey as a community 2) point to the One who IS faithful, IS good, IS just. I know when people are trying to help me their words, their compliments, their hugs are good... but they are not enough. I need them to steer my focus heavenward in kindness. They must remind me this is not home; this world is not fair or perfect or just, but God CAN do something incredible if we look at His face. And He can do something even when it looks like He is doing nothing at all.

Sometimes we have a lot to say in the counseling room with clients. We can check off all the practical needs they have and celebrate when they move towards life and health. And sometimes we need to sit with them in the pain, grieve with them, and pray over them when they cannot pray themselves. Nothing we can say or do is going to get them out of the storm they are in. I hope in those moments we create space where they can encounter God in a way that lifts them up when we are not able. No, I don't just hope. I know, I have seen, and I have experienced this time and again at Hope Clinic and I am thankful that our team yields to this as much as we can.

Thank you so much for your prayers and support. We are so grateful you are a part of this incredible work that meets people in their darkest hour with a hope that is beyond this place.

Blessings,  
Renée Rizzo  
President/CEO

# Serving Ascension in May

	May 5	May 12	May 19	May 26
<b>Lector</b>	Linda Fritz	Liz Brown	Rick Speitel	Trisha LaLumondier
<b>Acolyte</b>	Michael Patterson	TBD	Michael Patterson	TBD
<b>Elder</b>	Tim Hanusa	Dennis Fritz	Dennis Fritz	Dennis Fritz
<b>Ushers</b>	Dennis Fritz & John Boggs			
<b>Cantor</b>	Tim Hanusa	Mark LaLumondier	Tim Hanusa	N/A
<b>Altar Guild</b>	Joan Johnson & Linda Fritz			

*If you're unable to serve, please find a replacement.*



## *Coffee Half-hour*

May 5: Minae Hayashi

May 12: Ora Mae Golter

May 19: Sandy Bradley

May 26: *Memorial Day weekend*

## **The Organist**

May 5: Minae Hayashi

May 12: Cindy Dougherty

May 19: Minae Hayashi

May 26: Cindy Dougherty



# Celebrations

## Birthdays

May 3: Eric Blittle  
May 7: Shannon Rose  
May 11: Diane Kelly  
May 13: Silas Johnson  
May 14: Toby Conner  
May 14: Jamie Fuller  
May 18: Sandy Bradley  
May 18: John Wright  
May 19: Connie Anderson  
May 19: Ben Conner  
May 21: Joshua Hancock  
May 23: Danny Johnson  
May 26: Erin Langston  
May 27: Derek Kendall  
May 29: Angel Foster



## ANNIVERSARIES

May 13: Robert & Amy Conner  
May 31: Jason & Sophia Mai



## Baptismal Birthdays

May 1: Linda Fritz  
May 10: Susan Hanley  
May 10: Carolyne Willis  
May 11: Sara Blittle  
May 11: Chris Fritz  
May 11: Caleb Oehlkers  
May 13: Sara Hancock  
May 18: Zach LaLumondier  
May 20: Ora Mae Golter  
May 22: Kiari Houston  
May 23: Trisha LaLumondier  
May 24: Cora Houston  
May 25: Shannon Rose



*If a celebration is incorrect or missing, please call (615-868-2346) or email (office@ascensionmadison.com) the church office so our records can be updated. Thanks!*

# Church Calendar

May						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 10:30 Bible study 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	3	4
5 9:00 Sunday school 10:30 Worship w/ the Lord's Supper	6 <i>Mid-South District East Pastor's Conference @ ALC</i>	7 <i>Mid-South District East Pastor's Conference @ ALC</i> 6:00 Dinner 7:00 Worship w/ the Lord's Supper	8 <i>Mid-South District East Pastor's Conference @ ALC</i>	9 10:30 Bible study 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	10	11 10:00 LWML
12 9:00 Sunday school 10:30 Worship	13	14	15	16 10:30 Bible study 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	17	18
19 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship w/ the Lord's Supper	20	21	22	23 9:00 ROMEO breakfast 10:30 Bible study 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	24	25
26 9:00 Sunday school 10:30 Worship	27	28	29	30	31	



The mission of Ascension Evangelical Lutheran Church is to connect people to the one true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—so that they may come to know and believe they are saved for eternal life by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.



Rev. Greg Bauch, Pastor  
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Office email: [office@ascensionmadison.com](mailto:office@ascensionmadison.com)  
Pastor Greg: (904) 553-7066  
Pastor's email: [pastorgregbauch@gmail.com](mailto:pastorgregbauch@gmail.com)  
website: [www.ascensionmadison.com](http://www.ascensionmadison.com)

**Sunday School & Bible Study at 9:00am**  
**Coffee Half-hour at 10:00am**  
**Worship at 10:30am**

*Please email newsletter submissions to [office@ascensionmadison.com](mailto:office@ascensionmadison.com) one week before the 1st of the month.*

*Please email all weekly bulletin announcements for the upcoming Sunday to [office@ascensionmadison.com](mailto:office@ascensionmadison.com) by Wednesday.*