



Ascension Lutheran Church

ANNOUNCER

Dear saints of Ascension,

This year, Ash Wednesday falls on February 26th, so I've decided to write three weeks early for the February newsletter instead of three days late for the March newsletter! The origin of the solemn day might be very ancient. We have record of the church father Irenaeus (130-202) writing a letter to Pope Victor I (d. 199) about the date of Easter and its preceding fast, in which he says, "its observance has not originated in our time; but *long before in that of our ancestors* (Eusebius, *Church History* V.24). Recalling that Irenaeus lived only two generations after the apostles gives the strong impression that observing Easter and its fast originated during apostolic times. The apostles did not fast while Jesus was visibly with them, but they did fast after they could no longer see Him: "people came and said to him, 'Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?' And Jesus said to them, 'Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day'" (Mk 2:18-20); in the meantime, Jesus instructed them how to fast (Mt 6:16-18). And so, after Jesus' ascension, the apostles reinstated fasting (Acts 13:2; 14:23). By the time the Council of Nicaea met in 325, the pre-Easter fast was so widespread that its fifth canon simply refers to it by name without explanation: "let these synods be held, the one before Lent... and let the second be held about autumn." The Greek word used in the canon for "Lent" is "τεσσαρακοστῆς," which means "fortieth," as in the forty days of Lent; however, the origin of our word "Lent" is the Old English word "lencten," meaning "lengthen," as in the lengthening hours of daylight during spring. Over time, the pre-Easter fast was deemed so essential that it simply took on the name of the entire season!

The origin of Lent is very ancient. But that doesn't say anything about Ash Wednesday... or does it? In the worship order for that day, as I impose ashes on your forehead, I say, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Ge 3:19; cf. 18:27). As the

words indicate, the ashes are a reminder of our mortality. In addition, the ashes are a public sign of self-abnegation and repentance: “I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:6); or, as Jesus warns, “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes” (Mt 11:21). Receiving ashes is a confession that we have sinned and return to the dust of the ground in death... but ashes are also received in the sign of the cross, a second confession of what Jesus has done for us to conquer this death! Wearing ashes in repentance is nearly as old as the Bible: when Israel sinned against God, “Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening, he and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their heads” (Jos 7:6). Even those without the Bible knew the custom: “The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes” (Jon 3:6). The self-denial of fasting was a logical companion to wearing ashes, as Israel demonstrated when confessing their sin (Neh 9:1). Is it possible to marry the ancient pre-Easter fast with the wearing of ashes in repentance? It seems probable to me that the traditional sign of repentance attested by Jesus accompanied the fast originating in the first two generations of the church, which is what we observe to this day.

Although Ash Wednesday serves as a bleak reminder of who we are as sinners, the sign of the cross on our foreheads points forward to Jesus bearing our sin for the salvation of both soul *and* body—we return to dust, yet He “will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body” (Phil 3:21). With this in mind, I pray this Lent is a salutary season of reflection on who you are: both sinner and saint, dead in yourself but alive in Christ!

In His holy name,
Pastor Greg



“Did you help Noah build the ark, too?”

Announcements



On Thursday, January 9, 2020, Hans Springer and his wife Marie, traveled to the LWML Office in St. Louis to accept a check of \$100,000 for 2019-2021 Mission Grant #4, God's Grace for This Generation, on behalf of Lutheran Association of Missionary Pilots (LAMP). This grant will help LAMP's cross-cultural ministry share Christ with God's people in remote areas of Canada by expanding their staff of full-time missionary pilots to four or five. "The LWML has always supported LAMP and we thank God they continue to bring hope to the people of northern Canada," Hans said.



About this Ministry:
LAMP Ministry Inc. has ministered for nearly 50 years in northern Canada where many villages are reachable only by aircraft or seasonal roads. Currently, nearly one million Indigenous people live in these isolated areas with about half of them under the age of 14. The most alarming statistic is that over 15 percent of children and youth will actually take their own lives out of despair and hopelessness. When LAMP goes into these communities with VBS, Bible studies, and personal witnessing, these communities will have access to Christian education for faith in Christ.

In order to fulfill their mission of sharing the gospel in the next few years, LAMP will need to expand their staff of full-time missionary pilots to four or five. LAMP will need to recruit and train 100 to 200 more volunteer missionaries committed to serve at least five years. This grant will provide the funds to help LAMP reach their goal. When you contribute mites, 25% of the money donated is sent to the National Headquarters to fund mission projects like this one. 75% of our contributions fund projects in the Mid-South District. There are still several projects the District hopes to fully fund before our current grant period ends. In June of this year, new projects will be selected by delegates at the convention that will be held in Arkansas. Thank you for your support of the mission work done through the Mites Program of the LWML.

Stewardship

We have a good start on the New Year at this time. Are you organized and set for the rest of the year? Are you praying for godly wisdom to manage every God given gift? I sure hope so! Every good and perfect gift is from above (Jas 1:17). All we have that is "ours" has been given to us by God to care for, while we make our journey through this life on into eternal life. What a blessing and what an opportunity we have to serve Him, as we serve one another through our Christian Stewardship.

Please remember your pledged amounts and that we are trying to pay down the church mortgage. Look through your box of Offering Envelopes and note the envelope marked for "The Lutheran Witness." Your donation helps offset the balance of that fund. Here's wishing you joy in managing all the blessings you receive each and every day!

—Ora Mae Golter

From the Library



There never yet have been, nor are there now, too many good books.
—Martin Luther (*What Luther Says*, 335)

There are so many good books! Fiction carries us away to other times or situations and entertains us. Non-Fiction books, where we are led to believe every word is true. We are pulled into a historical event or we learn about something “real.” It is unfortunate when we later discover that the authors have embellished a little bit.

The Bible is inspired and inerrant. It has stood the test of time, and is almost word for word translated as it was in the original manuscripts. Perhaps we don’t have as many details as we would like, but many discoveries have been made about places and events mentioned in the Bible, and even science has confirmed specific data written about centuries ago. God Himself tells us that his word is alive and active (Heb 4:12). The truth God gives us has the power to save eternally and also change lives now.

When I grew up, it was standard practice for confirmands to memorize... just about everything! The pastors faithfully taught us doctrine, and we were prepared for the public examination that was held before our confirmation day. Many people attended that examination day, and when it was over, it was clear we learned what Lutherans believed. We were ready to be confirmed and join the church. Did I understand what I had memorized? Did I understand biblical principles and could apply them to my life?

The Bible tells us God also gave the children of Israel the Ten Commandments and told them to “teach them diligently” to their children. They were to talk about them “when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way” (Deu 6:7-9). And, not only the Israelites, but almost all cultures, have passed down stories about the creation of the world, a flood, and how God has interacted in human history. The people Jesus encountered also went and told others of their experiences. Not only the people who were healed, but people like the woman at the well, who went to her family and told them how Jesus knew all about her. She helped bring them to faith.

What a blessing it is in our day to not only have stories that are passed down, but the actual printed Bible itself. We are also fortunate to have writings from many others, like Martin Luther, who have studied the Bible and wrote their thoughts. We can buy Bible commentaries for further study. We also have the accounts from people who can testify to the power and presence of God in their own life.

We know from Scripture, that the disciples often wondered among themselves, and asked Jesus, what he meant by some of the things he said and taught. I love to read, but many times in school, when a teacher asked for our interpretation of what the author meant in a particular piece, like the disciples, I missed the point! Over the years, in books about the Christian life, and even Christian fiction, many authors and their writings have helped me to see biblical principles more clearly. The Holy Spirit helps me identify what is not what God really said, and my pastors have helped me with other points that I have questioned. “The multitude of books is a great evil. There is no measure or limit to this fever for writing; every one must be an author; some out of vanity, to acquire celebrity and make a name, others for the sake of lucre and gain” (Martin Luther, *Table Talk*).

Speakers on Christian radio programs have also made statements that have given me an “Ah-Ha” moment. In a sermon I recently listened to on the Sunday morning broadcast of “The Lutheran Hour,” the speaker added a sentence to a phrase we all know well. He said that “A pessimist looks at a glass and sees it half-empty, and an optimist sees the same glass as half-full. As a Christian, we can confidently say with the Psalmist, our cup is overflowing!” Yes, I am aware there is always something to be thankful for, but the way he put it was an “Ah-Ha” moment for me!

There are many things I have read and heard that have helped me to grow spiritually since my confirmation days when I had memorized all the right answers. Many other Christians and I have shared insights and experiences. I would encourage you to browse through the shelves of our library and find a title that interests you. Who knows what little nuggets you might find!

—Linda Kubitz

Missions & Ministry

Organizations and people we support:

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



At 4:45 PM on January 12, 2010 a strong earthquake struck below the mountains on the Southern claw of Haiti; bringing destruction from Port-au-Prince to the city of

Leogand several miles to the west. There were an estimated 350,000 lives lost and more injured; and the majority of the survivors were left homeless. A person from my home congregation asked me "What do people do at such time when they don't have Jesus?" We who have peace know that we are saved because of what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross; but what about the lost that died clinging to the lies of the vodou priest.

Following the quake, many Christians were glued to the internet and CNN watching video streaming live from PAP, showing the devastation and desperation as search efforts were undertaken to recues the living and later recover the dead. What did the unbelievers do without a Savior to help them? Haiti claims to be over 80% Christian but you need to factor in that an estimated 65% of the county actively practices vodou. You cannot serve the Lord and the devil too.

In the days following the quake, stories began to make the news of Christians singing hymns of thanksgiving to their Triune God and praying out loud in the dark streets in the evenings. Faith, their faith, was alive in the camps where they had found refuge. Their faith was encouraging others to give thanks for their life as they had more work to accomplish for their Heavenly Father.

The vodou priests had no reply for the strong earthquake; the power of the Triune God silenced their efforts to bring people to continue to fear their evil spirits. Their 'religion' could only bring additional fear, pain and suffering and could not bring any comfort for the vodou followers; all the priests could do was to watch as their followers limped through this tragedy. Our Triune God has done so much for His children as they grieve, give thanks, survive and as they rebuild.

There are clear differences between Christianity and vodou; we clearly see and understand that we need a Savior and the vodou followers always need another daily 'miracle' from the vodou priest; for a price. We need a Savior who will rescue us from our pains and problems; who will forgive us for our sins. In the Person of Jesus, our loving Father has given us such a Savior. In Jesus we have forgiveness of our sins and the promise that there is a world where there are no tragedies like Haiti has seen; we have a mansion prepared for us in Heaven. This message is being taught to the children attending Christian schools in Haiti. Your prayers and generous donations to Trinity HOPE are helping these children to take the message to the lost throughout the neighborhoods in Haiti.

Let it be our prayer that the people of Haiti may be brought to this Savior who can help them in this life and bring them to the next; you know the place where there is no darkness and no tears. —Jay Brinkmeyer

The following article is reproduced from the LCMS Reporter and can be found online at:

<https://blogs.lcms.org/2020/faith-in-the-public-square-lcms-youth-starts-pro-life-group-at-her-public-high-school/>

Listen to an interview with Anna on KFYO at: <https://www.kfyo.org/2020/01/23/coffee-hour-012320-the-pro-life-generation/>

Faith in the public square: LCMS youth starts pro-life group at her public high school

By Cheryl Magness

At a time when biblical Christianity is under increasing attack in both popular culture and the public square, it can be scary to stand up for the sanctity of life.



The new Davidson County SFLA group has about 20 active members. (Elizabeth Parker)

But that didn't deter Anna Young, an LCMS pastor's daughter in Nashville, Tenn., from doing so. Several months ago, Anna started a Students for Life of America (SFLA) group at her public high school. It is the first such group at a public high school in Davidson County, Tenn.

"I think it is one thing to say you are pro-life, but it is another to actually act on that," Anna explains. "I think a lot of people keep their pro-life views to themselves, but I found myself questioning that. I always think of the Elie Wiesel quote, 'Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim.' ... I had to do something."

For Anna, that "something" could have easily remained within her family and church. She grew up being taught that life is

sacred because it is created by God. Her father, the Rev. Phillip Young, is pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Nashville and life coordinator for the LCMS Mid-South District, so Anna has participated in pro-life conferences and other events since she was a child. But she wanted to do more.

"This isn't just a religious or political issue," continues Anna. "It's a human rights issue. ... People ask why I don't keep this issue in the faith realm. Why did I have to extend it to the public arena of my high school?"

"My answer is simple. It is too important. Life is too precious — all life, at all stages, from all backgrounds and all parts of the world. Life is not just a political or religious issue, but a human rights issue. Once I truly understood the magnitude and reality of the injustice at hand, I couldn't sit and watch my fellow peers not know the truth."

Making a difference

Anna researched the guidelines for clubs at her school and began working through the steps to get approval for a Students for Life group. First, she had to find a faculty sponsor for the group. She says that wasn't easy because "public high school teachers aren't encouraged to voice their beliefs on this sort of thing." But she approached a teacher she knew to be Christian, and the teacher was willing.

The next step was to fill out and submit an application for her proposed club, explaining the club's purpose and plans and how its presence would benefit the school. Anna wrote to the school principal:



Students for Life members Bella Ford and Bailey Babb write letters to clients of Hope Clinic, a Nashville pregnancy resource center. The letters will be included in care packages for expectant mothers. (Anna Young)

“The Students for Life community is a group of pro-life students that encourages students, specifically, but all people to choose life. Students for Life is found in over 1,100 high school and college campuses nationwide and is making a big difference. Although the matter at hand is controversial, I strongly believe our club would only be a positive influence This is a topic many students . . . are passionate about.

“The purpose of our club is simple. We plan to educate, encourage and make a difference in the community.”

The club was approved. But “I would be lying,” says Anna, “if I said this process has been easy. At a public high school, abortion is not talked about. And if it is, it most definitely is not portrayed in the correct light.

“Since [the new group] was created . . . I have lost friends, had my own character criticized, been gossiped about, and even experienced a bit of administration push-back regarding events we wanted to host at school. In the end, it is all worth it. I have to take a step back and look at the big picture. Pro-life ideals are being talked about at a public high school. That is a miracle in itself.”

To spread awareness about the club, Anna and the group’s core members participated in the school’s lunchtime club fair. They got about 55 initial sign-ups, approximately a quarter of whom were male students. They also got a handful of antagonistic comments on the sign-up sheet.

But the group now has about 20 active members, is meeting semi-weekly and is planning to attend the National March For Life in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 24. Locally, they plan to host monthly events such as volunteering at a local pregnancy resource center, holding a drive to collect mother and baby items for donation, and gathering for learning and mutual support.

Recently, they took time to write letters of encouragement to expectant mothers being served by Hope Clinic for Women, a faith-based family and pregnancy resource center in Nashville. In the near future, they hope to watch the movie “Unplanned,” based on the book by pro-life activist Abby Johnson.



Parker and Young.

‘Cut from determined cloth’

Elizabeth Parker, the Tennessee and Kentucky regional coordinator of Students for Life of America, and the organization’s national minorities coordinator, worked closely with Anna in applying for the club’s school charter. She also attended and spoke at the club’s first meeting.

Parker said, “Sometimes it can be slow going getting SFLA clubs started at high schools and colleges. Hurdles can arise for all different reasons. Even though it took time and patience, Anna stuck to it. She is cut from determined cloth . . . a leader who truly cares about her peers and community. She and the new Students for Life of America group at her high school are living proof

that there is not only hope for the future, but amazing things [happening] in the present.”

The Rev. Dr. Gregory P. Seltz, executive director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty (LCRL) in Washington, D.C., says Anna is “just the kind of young person we’re trying to raise up for the next generation. These moral issues are fundamental to our culture if it’s to remain civil, humane and free. The LCRL is dedicated to providing all kinds of information and resources to support people like Anna.”

Sometimes people of faith feel like “strangers in a strange land” (Ex. 2:22). They know their hope is not of this world, and they feel out of place in it. The world grows ever more hostile toward them, and when they engage with it in the only way they know how, guided by the faith that defines them, they are branded as fools, haters or worse. They may sometimes wonder why they should bother.

Anna says she bothers because “we are making a difference. It may feel like we’re not doing anything . . . not saving lives. But Elizabeth [Parker] has always told us, ‘You won’t see how many lives you saved until you get to heaven.’ ”

To find out more about LCRL, visit lcrifreedom.org.

To learn more about SFLA, or starting your own SFLA group, visit studentsforlife.org.

To find out how you can join other Lutherans in marching for life in the nation’s capital or other cities around the country, see lcms.org/life-ministry/march-for-life.

Mission Haiti Trip!

Blessing the children of Haiti one bowl of
beans and rice at a time.

May 23-30, 2020

\$1500-\$1800

Estimated cost based on the team's number (7 spots available)

The team will visit a minimum of 5 schools in the JACMEL & LES CAYES districts, experience a Haitian worship service Sunday morning, participate in two home visits with local families, participate in a meeting with a local food vendor used by Trinity HOPE, and much more!



To reserve your spot, contact
Trinity HOPE at: admin@trinityhope.org or 615-394-4950

The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod currently offers two matching gift opportunities:

International Mission *Gifts matched up to \$50,000*

A disciple of Jesus is matching contributions directed to LCMS International Mission's general fund dollar-for-dollar, up to a total of \$50,000.

The International Mission General Fund gives program leaders and regional directions the ability to direct important financial resources to Gospel-focused, hope-sharing efforts where other donor contributions are unavailable or insufficient to complete the work.

At the present time, the general fund is one of two areas with the most pressing need for the Church's support — and yours.

Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty *Gifts matched up to \$50,000*

A bold and concerned couple stands ready to match any first-time donation of \$500 or more, given to support The Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, up to a total of \$50,000. The deadline for reaching this goal is December 31, 2020, or when the full \$50,000 has been claimed by those who respond to this opportunity. Eligible donations will be matched dollar-for-dollar.

The Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty leads, coordinates, teaches and encourages orthodox Lutherans as we give a bold public witness to the sanctity of all human life, the biblical definition of marriage, and the religious freedoms we claim as citizens under the First Amendment.

To give to either of these opportunities, visit <https://www.lcms.org/make-a-gift/matching-gifts>

Serving Ascension in February

	February 2	February 9	February 16	February 23
Lector	Pastor Greg	Dennis Fritz	Judie Mader	Linda Fritz
Acolyte	Foster Gerson	Michael Patterson	Foster Gerson	Michael Patterson
Elder	Dennis Fritz	Dennis Fritz	Dennis Fritz	Dennis Fritz
Ushers	Dennis Fritz & John Boggs	Dennis Fritz & John Boggs	Dennis Fritz & John Boggs	Dennis Fritz & John Boggs
Cantor	Tim Hanusa	Mark LaLumondier	Tim Hanusa	N/A
Altar Guild	Joan Johnson & Linda Fritz & Lily Graham	Joan Johnson & Linda Fritz	Joan Johnson & Linda Fritz & Isabella Gerson	Joan Johnson & Linda Fritz

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



Coffee Half-hour

February 2: Kathy Meyers

February 9: Linda Fritz

February 16: Minae Hayashi

February 23: Trisha LaLumondier

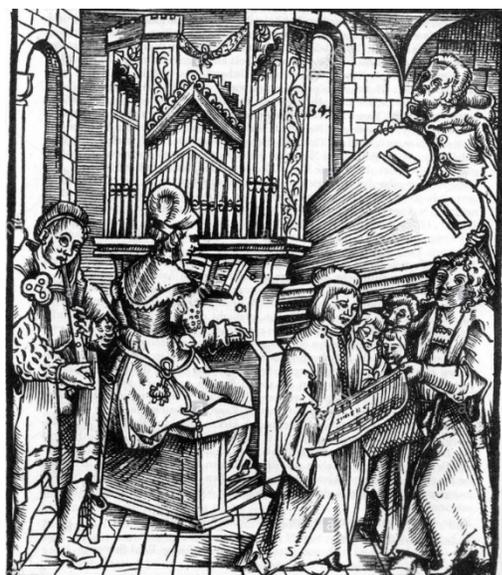
The Organist

February 2: Minae Hayashi

February 9: Cindy Dougherty

February 16: Minae Hayashi

February 23: Cindy Dougherty



February 2: Deborah Hann

February 9: Kathy Meyers

February 16: Minae Hayashi

February 23: Cherri Walker

Celebrations

Birthdays

February 1: Diane Gupton
February 7: Andrew Fuller
February 10: Emily Kendall
February 16: Maya Harleston
February 18: Henry Grobengieser
February 21: Sara Dillon
February 21: Erick Kendall
February 25: Frances Boggs
February 26: Dennis Anderson
February 27: Carolyne Willis
February 28: Robert Mader

ANNIVERSARIES

February 10: Corey & Katie Shaffer
February 16: Russ & Jane Gullett
February 22: Danny & Joan Johnson

Baptismal Birthdays

February 1: Samantha Golter
February 7: John Hanley
February 7: Rachel Oehlkers
February 8: Jonathan Wright
February 10: Mark LaLumondier
February 11: Dennis Fritz
February 15: Isabella Gerson
February 17: Liz Brown
February 18: Sophia Mai
February 19: Al Montes



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

February						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9:00 Sunday school 10:30 Worship w/ the Lord's Supper	3	4	5 6:30 Confirmation	6 10:30 Bible study 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	7	8 10:00 LWML
9 9:00 Sunday school 10:30 Worship	10	11	12 6:30 Confirmation	13 10:30 Bible study 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	14	15
16 <i>Pastor's vacation</i> 9:00 Sunday School 10:30 Worship w/ the Lord's Supper	17	18	19 6:30 Confirmation	20 10:30 Bible study 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	21	22
23 9:00 Sunday school 10:30 Worship	24	25	26 2:00 Ash Wednesday worship 7:00 Ash Wednesday worship	27 10:30 Bible study 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	28	29 10:30 POBLO presentation



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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Pastor Greg: (904) 553-7066
Pastor's email: pastorgregbauch@gmail.com
website: 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 one week before the 1st of the month.

Please email all weekly bulletin announcements for the upcoming Sunday to office@ascensionmadison.com by Wednesday.