



ALC Connections January 2016

LCMS Ascension Lutheran Church 2780 Haslett Rd. East Lansing MI

The Discipleship Chat

“The Birth of Salvation”

Christian writer N.T. Wright put it this way:

“Its Christmas that is the moment when God launched a ‘divine rescue mission’ of humankind.”

A divine rescue mission. Not with X-wing or TIE fighters. Not with super powers or mutants (a la comic book style). Not with Army Rangers or Navy SEALs or drones.

God sent His Son. God took on human flesh – so that He could take on our human sin, and the human penalty, punishment for rebellion and disobedience.

Why? The answer is a simple word. Love. With a complex and impossible understanding. How and why would a holy, righteous, perfect, all-powerful God have such love for His created beings, His favored beings that rebelled against Him in such a treasonous way, and continue on that path. Even those who follow Him and proclaim allegiance fail Him.

God’s love isn’t to be understood. Its to be appreciated. And its to be received. Since we cannot do anything to pay for our own sin, or to make things right with God, all we can do is let Him do it. And receive what He gives to us in grace and love.

That’s what Christmas is about. God (Jesus) coming into the world, taking on human flesh, so that He could take our sin, our penalty, our punishment upon Himself and pay for it. For us. For YOU.

Sure, Gods thinks the birth details are important enough that He had Matthew and Luke include them in their Gospels, and had John give an explanation for them. God is in the details (to turn a phrase).

So we celebrate. The birth of Jesus account is marvelous in itself. Who would make up such a story? But our real celebration is our salvation in Jesus, on the cross, at the empty tomb. When we say **Merry Christmas**, or **Blessed Christmas**, we celebrate our salvation through Jesus. And THAT is reason to celebrate!

A **blessed Christmas** to all of you.

Pastor Dave



MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Saturday, January 23 from 9am to 12:30pm is our annual Parish Planning time. This year it is even more crucial that all members attend as Pastor Walther joins us to lead the continuing discussion about the mission, visions, and ministries of Ascension in 2016 and beyond. Even if you haven’t attended earlier meetings with Pastor Walther in the Self-Study, you will gain valuable information and have an opportunity to give your input on what Ascension will be doing as we move forward Growing Disciples of Jesus.

Are you interested in joining Ascension Lutheran Church? Or are you just interested in learning what Lutheran Christians believe? Or perhaps you are a member looking for a Bible Study to deepen your faith, commitment and understanding. **A Closer Walk** is just that class. Fulfilling the requirements for membership, it is also a Bible Study to deepen your discipleship. It begins in January. Join us.

Stephen Ministry - Since 1975, Stephen Ministries has been equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. We celebrate 40 years of Stephen Ministry in 2015. Congratulations Ascension for joining this ministry.

PRAYER CHAPEL – The Chapel is open for Prayer on the first Saturday of the month from 10:30 am until noon. It will be staffed by an Elder.

Saturday, January 16th 9am-2:30pm at Hope Lutheran Church, on Herbison Rd, in DeWitt: A special presentation on *Living The Law of God as Gospel People* (The Third Use of The Law). Cost \$20 per person. Continental Breakfast and Lunch included. Call Hope to register at 517-669-3930.

Rev. Dr. Roy Schroeder, Ascension’s pastor from 1971-1996 has completed another book on The Scripture Readings using The Passion Narratives from The Gospel of John. He will have these available after the service next Sunday for your perusal and/or purchase (in the Narthex).

Thank You! So much for the thoughtful cards and gifts given to us at Christmas time. We appreciate them. We appreciate the thoughts and love behind them. And We appreciate your love, not only during this beautiful season, but throughout the year. May God Bless us one and all. Pastor Dave, Debby, Deacon John, Alix and Keith and Robin (custodians)



Portals of Prayer for 2016 (Jan-Mar) are available on pews or in the Narthex.