



# ALC Connections

## June 2015

LCMS Ascension Lutheran Church 2780 Haslett Rd. East Lansing MI

### The Discipleship Chat

#### *The Foundations*

Psalm 11:3 says, “*When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?*”

This Scripture certainly resonates with us; all around us we see the foundations of our society, and our faith being eroded. All social and moral restraints are being cast aside, and people are encouraged to do what they feel like doing. We read about this in the Old Testament book of Judges, where the people of God rebelled against God’s Word and His ways. Judges 21:25 describes it this way, “*In those days, Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.*” They followed their own inclinations, which were sinful.

That sounds like the current culture. Psalm 25:7 reminds us of who we are; “*Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways.*” My sinful nature is rebellious; my own inclinations will take me away from God’s ways, to towards them. This is the reason that Jesus came – to save us from our sin, ourselves and our own sinful inclinations and ways.

Make no mistake – we are not saved by being good, moral or perfect. We are saved by God’s grace, by Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross which fully pays for all our sin. He went there in our place. But we do ourselves no favors by pretending that there is nothing wrong with us or our inclinations. Remember 1 John 1:8? “*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*” We must face up to our sin and repent. Then the sweet words that follow in 1 John 1 will comfort us: “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*” God’s power, grace and forgiveness are the only things that can change our lives. Only they have the power to make such changes. And, like the Psalmist, as redeemed children of God, we do desire such changes. We desire God to lead us away from our sin. Psalm 25:4-5 “*Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide*

*me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior ... He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way (8-9).*”

God has chosen us to receive His free gift of salvation. God desires to lead us to follow Him, to walk with Him, and to walk in His ways. And His Word will teach us His ways. God’s way is different from our (sinful) way. But it is a good way, and it is the blessed way. And God has specifically chosen this way for us, as the Psalmist again says, (Psalm 25:12) “*Who, then is the man that fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him.*”

What can the righteous do? Seek Him who saved us. Follow Him who gave His life to redeem us. Let Him teach, direct and lead us in the way of life ... for the sake of Jesus who died.

Notice how this ties in with the articles written by our Head Elder and the Education Article. The study of God’s Word is so crucial to the Christian life, the life of discipleship. How can we help you grow in His Word?

May God keep our foundations strong.

Pastor Dave



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### What is Ascension?

When I first came to Ascension I was pretty certain it was the kind of church where I would feel comfortable. Similar to the church I grew up in it was one of those “less than 100 worshipping” type churches. I was familiar with the close familiarity among members. The informal feel when interacting with the Pastor. But I also arrived with some history. I had seen my childhood church decline and, unable to turn around, close its doors. I saw hurt and pain from folks unable to come to grips with the end of a season and unable to realign their thinking to make the changes necessary to move forward.

I came to understand that Ascension carried with some history of its own. That it had been through heartache, split and a long time of healing. Time continued to move on. Some of those wounds had scabbed over, others had barely healed. But Ascension was together and learning to trust again. A lot of energy was expended internally to heal. That’s good and right. When convalescing ones attention should be on healing so you don’t succumb to the disease.

### What is Ascension?

We are part of the Body of Christ! We are His hands and feet here on earth while we await His return. We carry on the Great Commission given to the Apostles, going into the world making disciples of all nations and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

### How are we doing this?

Education- Not education simply for knowledge’s sake, but education about God and His mercy (i.e. - the Gospel). At this time we now have 3 Sunday School classes and 3 small group Bible studies. Take advantage of this time to come together in fellowship and learning. Sit and listen to the Holy Spirit speak through the words of Scripture.

Compassionate Care – Two years ago Ascension undertook the charge to approve and support a Stephen Ministry to provide a listening ear and Godly care to those hurting around us. One member trained to be a leader and provides oversight of the group; seven members of our congregation completed the training in an accelerated fashion,

completed it successfully and were commissioned by our Church to minister! This has been no small task to date and the potential for ministering to those inside and outside our church is exciting.

Other care ministries – We have provided funerals, weddings, raised funds for various causes and supported one another with love and care through Men’s and Women’s Venues. We have shown our love to one another.

Our hearts continued to move forward.

The question I now come to is,  
“Where do we go from here?”

The world around us has changed. Questions and assumptions that the world would never have dared challenge the Church with even as close as five years ago now stare us in the face. Satan continues his attacks on humanity, constantly giving us reminders of the fallenness of man which repeat over and over thanks to our 24 hour “news” cycle.

Now more than ever, the world needs to hear the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. Now more than ever we need to be agents of God’s justice, His mercy and His love.

We are looking at using a self-evaluation provided by the District to evaluate Ascension and give us a clearer picture of where we are at. Members of the congregation will be asked to complete this evaluation and the Pastor, Elders and Council will work with a representative from the District to read and comprehend the report.

This report will help us to assess ourselves, but let’s take some time to put ourselves in the right frame of mind. As with our Savior, we are a broken, spent body. We have been hurt and scarred. When we look in the mirror we may not like what we see. But please remember, the same holes where they pierced our Saviors hands, feet and side were the same wounds that allowed Thomas to confess, “My Lord and my God!”

We move forward in the healing of our Savior. We will move forward in unity bringing the Gospel to the world.

James  
Chairman, Board of Elders



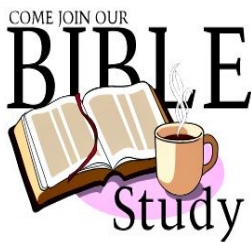
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## Dear Ascension Family,

We are so appreciative of your overwhelming generosity. Thank you for the heartfelt thoughts and gift and for so quickly and warmly welcoming us into the Ascension family. The Good Lord has blessed us with a beautiful home church filled with amazing members and a wonderful pastor. We look forward to getting to know each of you better as we work together for the good of His Kingdom.

-Great blessings, Ross and Katie



**Men's Bible Breakfast every Saturday.** We are starting with Matthew, a story of a Jewish man. Come and have donuts and coffee with us and feel free to bring a friend. Great fellowship with other Christian men.

**Please designate** on your envelope or check your donation to the masonry repair on the **Bell Tower/Sign Wall and/or Parking Lot** maintenance/improvements approved by the April Voters' Assembly. The Church Council will get, review, and approve bids, estimated to total approximately \$22,000. The Bell Tower and Wall work is maintenance to halt deterioration and preserve the beauty of these structures. The parking lot project includes repairs, coating (not repaving), striping, removal of the small grass only area, and replacement of light fixtures/bulbs on existing poles. If needed, current undesignated funds will be used to initiate the projects and cover costs not met by donations. By using reserves as a back up, we are not borrowing money or using special fund raising activities as we did for the roof/furnace project. With sufficient donations these projects can be completed before winter. Look for updates in Newsletters and bulletins.

**Cancer Crushers** (Kathy) thank you for your support of \$145.00 towards our goal in our fight against cancer. We will finish our fight on June 13, 2015 at East Lansing High School. All are welcome to attend. Also, thank you to Pastor Dave for your wonderful blessing. **MAY GOD BLESS US ALL IN THIS FIGHT!**

**June Elders** meeting has been moved to Tuesday, June 23rd.

**Women's Venue** is June 18th at P.F.Chang in Eastwood  
**Men's Venue** is Tuesday, June 16th at Reno's North.

**Messiah Child Development Center** (MCDC) is looking for a temporary cook to serve our child care facility while our current cook has shoulder surgery. This is a paid position and will last approximately three months. Starting date is flexible but we would like some one as soon as possible. For more information, please contact Ms. Kelly, Director of the MCDC, at 694-7344 or [MCDCKids@messiahlutheranholt.org](mailto:MCDCKids@messiahlutheranholt.org)

Church Extension Fund has provided dedicated Christian financial management since 1901. Your ancestors have likely invested with CEF for just as long, helping to build our faith through ministries across the state. Now, you and your family can carry on this important tradition and further the vital funding needs of Michigan District congregations. You'll enjoy proven investment products, competitive interest rates, measurable results, and the the knowledge that the Church is benefiting, too. Call 800-242-3944 or visit us at [www.mi-cef.org](http://www.mi-cef.org) to get started.

Be sure to sign up for lawn mowing, sign up on the kiosk.



**Altar Service** is a quiet, behind-the-scenes way to serve God at Ascension. During a monthly assignment an altar servant is responsible for preparing the altar for all worship services, including Christmas, Lenten, etc. Tasks involve dusting, candle maintenance, linen management, flower oversight, minor attention to altar furnishings, and washing/setup for Holy Communion. Contact Charles, an elder, or the church office if you are considering serving in this way.





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### Christian Education at Ascension

We have you covered! When making a list of classes and Bible studies at Ascension, a review of the church calendar shows that classes and studies take place at least five different days of the week and at different times of the day. By attending you will see your Christian faith deepen alongside others taking part in classes and Bible studies. As a church body we can encourage each other by participating in classes and Bible studies.

Ascension Church's Bylaws for Christian Education calls for planning and promoting opportunities for growth in Christian knowledge and life of all its members. To me, one facet of building Christian knowledge means searching the Scriptures in a group setting, learning together and sharing together. We may learn who God is and what our relationship should and could be to the Holy God. Our Christian faith may deepen and mature. The next step is applying what we are learning.

What does Christian life mean to you? Being students of the Word should cause us to strive to live with faith and hope in the Gospel. We should be living differently than the world because of our faith, which like a garden needs to be cared for with regular attention. In addition to attending church and individual devotions, classes and Bible studies are great ways to do this.

Many opportunities for growth in Christian knowledge and life are available at Ascension Church. During the school year, Sunday School is offered for children through adults.

Also taking place during the school year is a youth Confirmation Class which has been held on Tuesdays this past school year. On Monday evenings a group of adults gather for a small group Bible Study. A Closer Walk, a membership class which may also serve as a refresher class is held periodically through the year.

Thursday afternoon Bible Study is another opportunity. A new addition to the line-up, is Men's Bible Study taking place on Saturday mornings. We hope that you plan to join us soon for a class and Bible study!

Holly  
Education Chairman



STEPHEN MINISTRY

Pray continually.

1 Thessalonians 5:17