



ALC Connections December 2016

LCMS Ascension Lutheran Church 2780 Haslett Rd. East Lansing MI

The Discipleship Chat **The Foundation of Christmas**

The Advent season is such a joyful season. Not only is Christmas 'in the air', but the Advent season is one of 'preparation' for the coming of the Savior. Our Scripture Readings remind us of the Day of the Lord, the first and second comings of Jesus, about John the Baptist and his (and Jesus'!) message of repentance. They introduce the birth of Jesus with the accounts of Zechariah the priest, the angel appearing to Mary and Joseph, along with a few of the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah (Savior).

Christ the Savior is born. But why?

The answer to that question takes us back to the beginning ... the beginning of time and the beginning of Scripture. In Gen 1 and 2 we see God creating mankind in His own image, holy, perfect, to live forever in fellowship with Him. In Gen 3, we find His creation, mankind disobeying God, rebelling against Him and His authority. The result was condemnation, death and separation from God. Now, God must punish the sin in mankind, and the punishment is eternal.

But God in His grace, gave a promise of redemption. In Gen 3:15, God promised a Savior to defeat the devil's victory over humans, and the ensuing slavery to sin.

Throughout the Old Testament times, we see the promise of the Messiah (Savior) unfold and develop. It was the saving faith of the Old Testament people – faith in God for the forgiveness of sins (not the obeying of commandments). Salvation was by grace from the very beginning.

As St Paul says in Gal 4:4-6, "*When the **time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman,***

born under law, to redeem those under law ... because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts."

And so we celebrate Christmas. God fulfilled His promise of grace and salvation. God sent His Son, God in human flesh, the incarnation. For us. Have a very blessed Advent-Christmas season!

Pastor Dave

Plan to spend Wednesday evenings in worship during Advent, which continues this Wednesday, December 7th. We will be meeting in the Chapel around the theme: The Three Gifts of the Christ—child. 7pm.

The tradition of decorating the altar area with poinsettias on Christmas Eve continues with a sign-up sheet on the kiosk. You may dedicate your plant in memory of or honor of someone if you wish. Names will appear in the Christmas Eve bulletin. Please make your check for \$8.50 per plant (you may purchase more than one) payable to *Women of Ascension*. The check must be received by December 21. You may pick up your plant after the Christmas Day service. Thank you for your support of this fund-raising effort by Women of Ascension.

Women of Ascension

There will be no December meeting. You are encouraged to visit St Peter, Riley on Tuesday, December 6 for their annual **Advent Brunch**. Please contact Rebecca (517.694.7054) by December 1 if you plan to attend.

St. Peter Lutheran Church, Riley, 8990 Church Road, St. Johns, invite the ladies of the congregation to their annual Advent Brunch "A Child is Born" on Tuesday, December 6th beginning at 10:00am. Please join us for a great morning of delicious food, singing and fellowship. There will be a



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free will offering to help defray costs, with the remainder going to the Mite Box Collection for LWML. The Ladies Aid will also sell their RADA cutlery and crafts before and after the brunch.

We look forward to seeing you there! Your Sisters in Christ at St. Peter Lutheran Church.

Christmas Decorating Party will be Saturday, December 10, starting at 6:00 PM. All are welcome to "deck the halls" and Christmas trees.

Men's Advent by Bonfire... Our Savior Lutheran's *Men of Courage* is having the men's version of Advent by Candlelight... Friday, December 9th from 6:30 to 8:30pm. Jesus time led by Pastor Dave. Dinner and more. And of course a bonfire! See poster on bulletin board in hallway. Looks like fun! Cost: \$10 per person. Location: 12711 Forest Hill Rd, DeWitt. (Home of Keith and Sue Barber) To sign up, email or call church office or email: dwright@oursaviorlansing.org. See poster on kiosk or on bulletin board in hallway.

Up Coming meetings: Elders—Tuesday, December 6th, 7:00pm

Voter's Meeting Sunday December 11th to approve 2017 budget. **Consider attending the Voters Assembly** next Sunday after the worship service to discuss and approve Ascension's 2017 budget and discuss plans for ministry in 2017. Contact the church office if you did not receive an agenda via e-mail or letter

Sunday School Christmas Program rehearsal-Saturday, December 10th; Program on Sunday the 11th.

Christmas Caroling Saturday, December 17th

Thank you for your response to the Giving Tree. There are still a couple of tags left. If a group of people wanted to go together for those that would be great. Please wrap all gifts, except the potty

chair, stroller and car seat, and return them with the tag attached. The last day to return gifts to the church is Wednesday, December 14.

The Lange Ensemble will present their holiday concert, *Venite Adoremus Dominum* Sunday, December 4, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 218 W.. Ottawa, Lansing at 7:30 p.m. Tickets at the door: \$10. Seniors and students: \$8.00

Women's Venue will meet December 12th at 6pm at Gilbert and Blakes, 3554 Okemos Road, Okemos
Men's Venue December 13th at Fiesta Charra, Park Lake Road. 6pm All men invited

"**Thank you** for the beautiful quilts for Elizabeth and Isaiah. They are so blessed to be members of such an amazing church family. Love, the Abrahams and Pynes".

See Evelynne Pyne if you are able to help out with the coffee schedule for 2017. Thank you to everyone who helped with coffee and snacks after church this year. We really appreciated it!

Epiphany Lessons and Carols St. Mary Cathedral will present Epiphany Lessons and Carols on Sunday, January 8 at 7 p.m. Set in the style of services popularized by King's College, Cambridge, there will be several choral works performed by the St. Mary Cathedral Choir, readings, and the opportunity for the assembly to sing carols accompanied by the Cathedral's Casavant organ. St. Mary Cathedral is located at 219 Seymour Ave., Lansing, MI 48933.

Please sign the Christmas cards for Pastor Dave, Deacon John, Secretary Debby, Music Director Alix, and Janitors Keith and Robin on the table in the Narthex. Contributions for their gifts are welcome.





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Ascension Celebrates 60th Anniversary

Part Nine: 2000-2016

Pastor Fodor, with the encouragement and financial support of Ascension, earned his Doctor of Ministry degree in 2002.

Ingham County Medical Care Facility honored Ascension Lutheran Church with a certificate of appreciation for "valuable contributions and dedication to the residents" on March 22, 2000.

Regrettably, due to a lack of members able to assist, as of fall 2004, the Women of Ascension no longer conducted monthly bingo session at the Facility.

Priscilla and Michael Martin joined Ascension Fall 2003. Priscilla is daughter of Ascension's first pastor, Rev. Nicklesburg.



Rev. Mike Martin, in 2003, was a chaplain at Jackson

Prison; he now serves Grace Lutheran Church in Leslie.

In 2003, teams of elders and council members visited families of the church in their homes, taking a confidential survey to assess what direction Ascension should take to stem the steady tide of departure of members. The remaining congregation was fairly evenly split over the form of service preferred. The exit of members continued.

Organist and choir director Paul Dombroske left in August 2003 to take a position at a Lutheran church in Charlotte. After months of searching, Ascension hired Tim Tikker, a talented organist who commuted from Ann Arbor.

The Christian Art Show was held for the last time in 2003. Over 3,000 visitors attended. Joy Schroeder, who had taken over as coordinator when her husband retired, bowed out. A change in direction established by Pastor Fodor and the Council forced the closure of the two-week event timed around

the Easter season.

A retrospective of the art from the permanent collection of the past 41 years was held in spring 2004, organized by Jean Eggemeyer, chairman of Outreach.

In early fall 2004, a group of members met to discuss the declining membership. It was learned that Pastor Fodor was considering leaving the ministry. A farewell luncheon was held after his last sermon in late fall and commemorative and monetary gifts were presented to him and his family.

Organist Tim Tikker resigned in July 2005 and Paul Dombroske was welcomed back in September 2005.

Pastor David Winningham was called to Ascension in September 2006. A sports fan and a musician, Pastor Dave fits in well with the congregation.

The 50th Anniversary of Ascension was celebrated October 20-22, 2006, with Friday events from 5:00-10:00 p.m. including an exhibition of art from the Christian Art show, Organ Music Hymn Event, Jazz Liturgy, Saturday's pig roast, and following service on Sunday, a Program of Thanks with Tim Staudt as Master of Ceremonies.

Music Director Paul Dombroske left in 2008 and Irma Svanadze was hired October 1, 2008. She moved away September 30, 2009. After a diligent search, Alix Jenkins was hired as Music Director in 2010. Under her direction, a hand bell choir was added, enhancing worship.

The need to replace the flat roof and seven aging furnaces called for a major fundraising effort. A contest to come up with a name at the December 2011 Voters Assembly resulted in ARFF - Ascension Roof and Furnace Fundraiser. Over the next few years the congregation came together in various ways to pay off the debt ahead of the 5-year balloon loan. Kathy Pohl contributed creative ideas for activities. The loan was paid in 3-1/2 years.



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Stephen Ministry was introduced to Ascension by Judy Stromer in late 2013. Under her leadership, the number of Stephen Ministers has grown to 7. The original pastor's office in the back corner of the activities hall wing has become the Stephen Ministry room, a welcoming place for training and counseling.

On April 25, 2015, Katie Hoeksema, granddaughter of Peg Powell, and Ross Abraham were married at Ascension.

Rebecca Baughan revitalized the Women of Ascension in early spring of 2016. A successful LWML Zone Fall Rally was held at Ascension on October 22, 2016. Nabila Boctor of the Coptic Church spoke to the WofA at their November meeting. The Coptic Church has been meeting in Ascension's chapel for 30 years.

Vacation Bible School was held in June 2016 after decades of hiatus under the determined leadership of Kenda Bultman.

Starting September 2016, "Discovering God's Vision for Your Life: You and Your Spiritual Gifts" classes were held in morning and evening sessions. The classes were so well received it was decided to offer the Spiritual Gifts classes again starting in January 2017.

Donations dedicated to windows made it possible for the replacement of the aging windows in the women's restroom, kitchen, and Stephen Ministry room, completed Fall 2016.

A new space heater installed late November 2016 in the choir loft allows the quilting group to have a place where they can leave their sewing machines and fabric.

A modest celebration of Ascension's 60th Anniversary was held in conjunction with the traditional Harvest Dinner on November 13, 2016. President Alan Durkee (at the harvest buffet table) served before as president, previously for three consecutive years.



Friday, July 8, 2016, a severe wind storm caused damage.

Volunteers cleared the trees (and refrigerators) and repaired the chapel roof.



Service on Sunday was illuminated by generator.



Ascension accepts the challenges that lie ahead with faith and resolve, living the church's Mission Statement: Growing disciples of Jesus.

