



ALC Connections

January 2017

LCMS Ascension Lutheran Church 2780 Haslett Rd. East Lansing MI

January 2017 Newsletter

The Discipleship Chat

Epiphany – Jesus, the Light of the World

The Epiphany season celebrates the revelation of Jesus as the Christ (Messiah), the Son of God and the light of the world. Epiphany themes include the revelation of Jesus to the Gentiles (the Magi/Wise Men), the Baptism of Jesus, His preaching of repentance, his changing water into wine, choosing His disciples, returning to His hometown (and getting run out of town!), the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount, and it culminates with the Transfiguration of Jesus, right before we enter the Lenten season at the beginning of March.

Your eyes can get used to the darkness. When you wake up at night, usually you can see, due to light from nightlights and other “glows”, outside lights, including the moon, etc. But turning on a flashlight or a light switch floods the room with light; its almost too bright for our eyes, until they adjust.

Many live in this spiritual darkness, not knowing about the forgiveness of our sins, the grace of God, the sacrifice of Jesus, or even knowing that they are sinners, enemies of God by their fallen, sinful nature. We are, by nature, in the dark, only our eyes get used to the darkness.

Jesus is the light of the World. He is God’s light, sent not only to give light, but to redeem the world from its darkness. We have been brought out into the light. We are forgiven, Baptized children of God, through faith in Jesus. He hears our prayers and helps His children. He promises His presence, even in the midst of our struggles. He is OUR light. Not only does He shine, but He shines THROUGH us. We, as His disciples and children, are called to be His reflectors. Just as shining a flashlight into a mirror multiplies the light, God shining through us shines His light into many more lives. As the song says, we are truly His “Gospel lights!”

Pastor Dave

Michigan District Theological Conf in February

This year the Michigan District is sponsoring its annual Theological Conference (for all) at just one central location – Our Savior Lutheran Church on the west side of Lansing (W of I-69/96) on St Joe Rd, on Sat Feb 11.

The topic is the timely issue of human sexuality. Entitled “Let’s Talk: Male & Female”, it is a look at the multiple issues of today in light of what God’s Word says. Since Scripture says that God created us Male & Female, He has much to speak to us about His marvelous creation. Sin wants to destroy God’s creation; Jesus came to heal it. More information may be found at the Michigan District’s website:

<https://www.michigandistrict.org/>

You can register at:

www.michigandistrict.org/theological17 or

call Debbie Cameron at 888-225-2111

The Chapel will be open Saturday, January 7th from 10:30am until noon. For personal prayer time, and someone will be there to pray with you if you like.

News and Notes ... St Luke Lutheran Church in Haslett has moved to take on the responsibility of Christ Lutheran Church in downtown Lansing. Christ staff will be retained; it will be one congregation in two locations.

Looking ahead ... now is the time to plan for next summer. Could a Mission Trip be in scope of things for Ascension? There are great opportunities with MOST (Mission Opportunity Short Term) and LAMP (Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots). MOST makes trips to many countries. LAMP-Canada takes church groups into northern Canada communities to run VBS and related activities. Perhaps take the time to Google these, and dream. There are two versions of LAMP. *LAMP Canada* carries the original vision of reaching northern, remote communities.



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Up Coming meetings: Elders—Tuesday, January 10th @ 7pm.

Poinsettia plants are available to anyone who would like to give them a home. Help Yourself! Thanks!

Trinity Lutheran Church, Lansing, invites all to an “Organ Re-dedication and Celebration Service” on January 22, 2017, 3:00 PM. As part of the first half of the service, Susanne Hoekzema CAGO, current organist at Trinity, will perform works by Biery and Widor to showcase the extensive organ repair and renovation of the Swell chamber. Following the time of re-dedication in the service, Dr. Stephen R. Lange, organist, will provide a program of organ music, playing music by Ore, Franck, Larsen and Laskey. He will be joined by Dr. Jon Pumplin, flautist, to play the pieces by Larsen and Laskey. An afterglow reception will follow the service. The church is located at 501 W. Saginaw (corner of Saginaw and Chestnut), Lansing MI. Parking is located on Chestnut with handicap accessible parking off Saginaw, west of the church. For more information call 517 372-1631.

Organ Duo Concert: Friday, January 20, 2017, 7:30 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas at 955 Alton Road, East Lansing, featuring Dr. Hae Won Jang, organist and Dr. Jeong-Suk Bae.

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.

Flower Chart for 2017 is up. Please sign up for your special dates.

We are looking to expand our Lector pool. If you are willing to help please contact the office or tell Pastor Dave. Lectors pick the dates they are available to read. It works out to be perhaps once a month or less, depending on how many lectors are available. Could you help us out?

Ride to Ascension (RTA): We are in need of volunteers to pick up persons (mostly elderly) and bring them to church, either on a regular basis, or even just occasionally. Let's work together to help those who want to come to church but need a ride! There is a sign up sheet on the kiosk for those willing to help others get to church. Please provide your name, phone number, and e-mail and Parish Activities will compile a list of drivers to distribute so no one is ever in need. Thank you! . Contact Pastor Dave. Join the RTA!

A Closer Walk-adult instruction class for non-members (and members), beginning in late January. Call the church office, or watch for details.

‘Discover Your Spiritual Gifts’ classes- offered Wednesday morning and evening beginning January 25, 9:30 am and 6:30pm. If you’ve never taken a look at your Spiritual Gifts (or missed the class the first time), this is your opportunity. Please join us.

We are collecting old eye glasses for MOST Ministries. (MOST=Mission Opportunity, Short Term). MOST runs eyeglass clinics in 3rd world countries, and distributes many thousands of pairs. There is a basket in the Narthex for your old glasses. (Sorry, they cannot use bifocals). Check them out at www.mostministries.org. In 2017 there will be eyeglass clinics in Nicaragua, Belize, Guatemala, Guinea, Tanzania, Mexico and India. They also have dental, medical and construction mission trips, and they set up clean water filters in villages.

Portals of Prayer for January-March 2017 are available for you at the ends of the pews. They are free for you to take and use as part of your personal devotions.

The Mission Statement of Ascension is: Growing Disciples of Jesus. How may we help you grow as a disciple of Jesus?

Men’s Venue is at Leo’s on January 17th @ 6pm.



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What Your Will or Trust Reveals about You

We have all heard the story. Mom or Dad have passed away but never took the time to make their thoughts known by writing a Will. But now you have to deal with the aftermath. Picture yourself in charge of their affairs or remember your real life nightmare. How should things get divided? Did everyone agree on who should get what items? Were you questioned about how you were handling things?

The frustration mounts but finally you complete the task. You are determined not to put your kids through that! Writing your Will or Revocable Trust says a lot about who you are.

Number one, it shows you care. You don't want to leave your family scrambling to handle the distribution of your estate. Having a well thought out Christian Will or Revocable Living Trust should make it easier for them to handle legal matters regarding the transfer of your property. All of your assets will go to family. It will go either to your earthly family, God's family or Uncle Sam. You get to decide how you want God's Gifts to you distributed when you go home. Your plans may alter the percentages that go to each of those families.

Secondly, writing your Will or Revocable Living Trust means you sought to conserve your Estate. Designating where assets/keepsakes go and who will be your Personal Representative or Successor Trustee can help reduce Probate costs and taxes. While leaving IRA assets to your children is nice, it results in income taxes for them when they take distributions. Gifting IRA assets to Ministry passes tax free.

Third, your plan provides insights into the things that were most important to you. Bequests to family express your love and concern for them. Gifts to your favorite ministries show how important they were in your life. Your continued support affirms your belief in the mission of those ministries and your desire to help them spread the great news of God's forgiving grace.

Did you know that if you haven't included a Ministry Gift as part of your Estate Plan, there is no provision in Michigan Probate Law that allows you to make that Legacy Gift from your estate after you get the best gift, Heaven?

Make your thoughts known. Write your Will or Revocable Living Trust now. If you already have yours in place, make sure it communicates the messages you want heard. Do it today!

Bill Burmeister, Michigan District Church Extension Fund