

# THE MONTHLY

July 2017



## ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

*transforming community with Jesus' message*  
**FROM THE PASTOR**

The Lord is with you!

Normally, we think of the contemplative seasons of Advent and Lent as the ideal times to recover or add certain disciplines to our practice of Jesus' Way. Being deliberate about worship, prayer, study, stewardship, and service during those busy times forces us to prioritize faith over everything else. That having been said, there is some special kind of blessing when one works at recovering or adding a Christian discipline during the slow-and-quiet seasons of the year. Spirituality doesn't always have to be hard! In the desert, the summer's heat compels us to take it easier than we normally may. Let me commend to you this season the recovery of one of the central disciplines of Jesus' Way—the reading of the Scriptures.

A great first step in getting back into the Bible may be to interact with the passages we read each Sunday during worship. At Ascension, we follow the Revised Common Lectionary, a three-year schedule of readings shared by many Christian denominations that includes readings from the Hebrew Scriptures, a psalm, a reading from a Christian epistle, and a reading from one of the four Gospels. You can easily find the passages for each Sunday online. We've printed the readings for the month of July in this newsletter, too. Before you read each passage, take some time to read the introduction to that particular book of the Bible (most Bibles include such introductions nowadays). That should help to give you some sense of the overall message and context of a given book before you delve into a particular passage. The Spirit of Jesus may surprise you with how much more lively the Sunday reading of Scripture seems when you've read and/or studied the passages before Sunday.

Rev. Stephen S. Talmage  
*bishop*

Rev. Ryan M. Hersch  
*pastor*

M. Jayne Baker  
*diaconal minister*

Thomas Mueller  
*administrator*

Tina Samuel  
*office support*

Dale Niehaus  
*organist*

Dr. Christopher Samuel  
*cantor/choirmaster*

Judy Lenz  
*children's minister*



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**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

*(Continued)*

## FROM THE PASTOR *(continued)*

At Ascension, we have a couple resources to aid you in your interaction with each Sunday's readings. First, Ascension's almost weekly Bible study will help you to learn the historical and literary context of each passage, and to be attentive to what the Spirit of Jesus is saying to us today through these ancient words. The Bible study meets most Thursdays of the year at 9:30 AM. We also offer a printed resource entitled, "Christ In Our Home." This small, paperback book is available on the resource table in the narthex. This great little book will help you to pace your interaction with the coming Sunday's text. On Thursday, you will read the Old Testament reading for the coming Sunday. On Friday, you'll read the Psalm. On Saturday, you'll read the Epistle. And on Sunday, you'll read the Gospel. Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays are devoted to passages related to the Sunday readings. Each day's reading includes a short devotional reflection and one-line prayer. It's a great little booklet!

The preceding represents a good first step toward re-engaging Scripture. A great next step would be to follow one of two Daily Lectionaries available to us. The first can be found in our old green hymnal, *Lutheran Book of Worship*. This two-year schedule of daily readings would take you through most the New Testament almost four times in two years and almost all of the Old Testament once in two years. The disadvantage to this two-year daily lectionary is that it doesn't always relate particularly well to the Sunday readings. Its advantage is that you read through entire book of the Bible in a systematic way (instead of jumping around). If you'd like to use this reading plan, I know we still have a few of the old LBWs that you'd be welcome to take home. The second Daily Lectionary available to us can be found in our new cranberry hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. This three-year lectionary selects passages that are related to the Sunday readings. The advantage to this lectionary is that its reading will stick close to each Sunday's themes. The disadvantage is that you'll jump around the Bible a little more.

If you'd like some coaching in getting back into the habit of reading Scripture, or you'd like to take your Scripture discipline to the next level, please let me know! I'd be happy to show you the ropes!

Ryan+

## TEENS IN FOSTER CARE PROJECT

Thanks to the love and support of the Ascension Boomer Women and the greater Ascension family we are proud to announce that our Backpacks for Foster Teens in Arizona was a success. The Foster Care System in our state is overwhelmed by the need and number of children requiring support. It is estimated that there are 30,000 children in the Arizona system alone and unfortunately that number is growing.

This project focused on a portion of the population most often forgotten - our teenagers. Sponsors gather supplies needed by teens as they are moved from their home into foster care. With the generosity of our Ascension community we supplied 30 backpacks and supplies with an estimated value \$1,750.00

The backpacks were blessed during the 10 am service on Sunday June 18. Lutheran Social Services is now in the process of delivering those supplies to teens in need.

We hope to do this project several times each year. If you would like to get involved contact Dawn Jeffers at [jeffersdm@hotmail.com](mailto:jeffersdm@hotmail.com)



# SUNDAY READINGS IN THE MONTH OF JULY

from the complementary series of the Revised Common Lectionary, Year A

## July 2 + Lectionary 13 + the fourth Sunday after Pentecost

The welcome of baptism is for all God's children. This baptismal gift sets us free from the power of sin and death. In today's gospel, Christ promises that the disciple who gives a cup of cold water to the little ones serves Christ himself. From worship we are sent on our baptismal mission: to serve the little ones of this world and to be a sign of God's merciful welcome.

- Jeremiah 28:5-9 – *The test of a true prophet*
- Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18 – *Your love, O LORD, forever will I sing. (Ps. 89:1)*
- Romans 6:12-23 – *No longer under law but under grace*
- Matthew 10:40-42 – *Welcome Christ in those he sends*

## July 9 + Lectionary 14 + the fifth Sunday after Pentecost

The mystery of God's ways is sometimes hidden from the wise and intelligent. Jesus associates with the lowly and outcast. Like Paul, we struggle with our own selfish desires and seek God's mercy and forgiveness. We gather to be refreshed by Christ's invitation: "Come to me, all you that are weary." Gathered around word, water, and meal, we find rest for our souls.

- Zechariah 9:9-12 – *The king will come in humility and peace*
- Psalm 145:8-14 – *The LORD is gracious and full of compassion. (Ps. 145:8)*
- Romans 7:15-25a – *The struggle within the self*
- Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30 – *The yoke of discipleship*

## July 16 + Lectionary 15 + the sixth Sunday after Pentecost

God's word is like the rain that waters the earth and brings forth vegetation. It is also like the sower who scatters seed indiscriminately. Our lives are like seeds sown in the earth. Even from what appears to be little, dormant, or dead, God promises a harvest. At the Lord's table we are fed with the bread of life, that we may bear fruit in the world.

- Isaiah 55:10-13 – *The growth of the word to accomplish God's purpose*
- Psalm 65:[1-8] 9-13 – *Your paths overflow with plenty. (Ps. 65:11)*
- Romans 8:1-11 – *Live according to the Spirit*
- Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 – *The parable of the sower and the seed*

## July 23 + Lectionary 16 + the seventh Sunday after Pentecost

It is an age-old question: why is there evil in the world? In the parable of the wheat and the weeds Jesus suggests that both grow together until the harvest. With Paul, we long for the day that all creation will be set free from bondage and suffering. Having both weeds and wheat within us, we humbly place our hope in the promises of God, and from the Lord's table we go forth to bear the fruit of justice and mercy.

- Isaiah 44:6-8 – *There is no other God than the LORD*
- Psalm 86:11-17 – *Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth. (Ps. 86:11)*
- Romans 8:12-25 – *The revealing of the children of God*
- Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 – *The parable of the weeds*

## July 30 + Lectionary 17 + the eighth Sunday after Pentecost

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

- 1 Kings 3:5-12 – *Solomon's prayer for wisdom*
- Psalm 119:129-136 – *When your word is opened, it gives light and understanding. (Ps. 119:130)*
- Romans 8:26-39 – *Nothing can separate us from God's love*
- Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 – *Parables of the reign of heaven*

## ASCENSION SUNDAY SCHOOL Mark the Date! Pencil us in!!!

Dear Ascension Families,

We hope you are all having a fabulous summer and enjoying your vacation time. It won't be long and another exciting Sunday School Year will begin. The Ascension staff has already been meeting and scheduling some very important start dates that you won't want to miss. So grab your pens, pencils and crayons, and mark them down.

August 13 – BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS SUNDAY

Pastor Ryan will be blessing your backpacks after the 10:00 a.m. service.

August 20– SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS

All Are Welcome!!!

See you there,

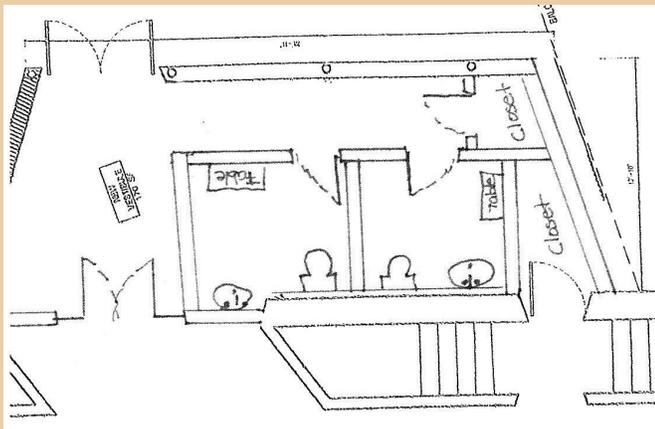
The Ascension Sunday School Staff



## BUILDING IMPROVEMENT/DEBT REDUCTION CAMPAIGN

We are officially beginning our fundraising approved in Option One by the congregation at the special congregational meeting in March. These include the addition of main floor restrooms and renovation of the downstairs restrooms in Phase One, and additional improvements and reduction of our debt in Phase Two. **We need to have received enough funds to cover the restroom phase before construction can begin.** It is cost effective to use the same contractors for both restrooms, as the same plumbing, electrical, and drywall work will be required for both. A general contractor has been selected and is waiting for our approval to let him begin. Please spread the word to raise enough funds to begin Phase One this summer!

### Main Floor Restroom Addition



### Downstairs Restroom Renovation



## BIBLE STUDY SCHEDULE

Bible study will be on summer break after June 29 and resume on September 14.



## OFFICE SUMMER HOURS

The office will be closed the week of July 3rd and on Fridays during the summer until Labor Day.



# COFFEE CONNECTION



FEATURING IN JULY-

**ORGANIC WHOLE BEAN COFFEES –  
French Roast & Breakfast Blend**

**ORGANIC DRIP GRIND COFFEES -  
French Roast, Breakfast Blend & Decaf  
1st Sunday only – JULY 2nd**



Fair Trade sales help support LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF COFFEE PROJECT farmers globally and \$3 of every purchase helps support LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES locally. Stop by the display at the back of the sanctuary on JULY 2nd to make your purchase(s).

For more information about LWR Fair Trade, click

[http://lwr.org/site/c.dmJXKiOYJgl6G/b.7521971/k.C73D/Support\\_Fair\\_Trade.htm](http://lwr.org/site/c.dmJXKiOYJgl6G/b.7521971/k.C73D/Support_Fair_Trade.htm)



Lutheran World Relief  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.



Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest



## NEWS FROM DUET



Duet's most recent volunteer orientation was filled with 17 eager new partners in service, including several from partner congregations. Hurray – and thank you! Every day brings multiple new “neighbors” calling for help.2

### Got the Summertime Blues?

Perk up your summer by helping a person in need. Temperatures are on the rise, and so is the need for volunteers at Duet. Ninety homebound adults – mostly elders - are waiting for grocery shopping, friendly visits and rides to medical appointments. Being part of a “duet of service” is an easy way to share, and receive, joy. Sign up for a volunteer orientation at [www.duetaz.org](http://www.duetaz.org) or 602-274-5022. You may also reach out to Duet for help. Thank you!



*"Duet is my lifeline for groceries and doctor transportation. Without your caring volunteers, I could not survive." - Polly, homebound elder*

### Respite Gives Grandparents Raising Grandchildren a Break

School is out, which can mean additional fatigue and financial hardships for many grandparents raising grandchildren. Duet offers respite by paying for all or a portion of registration fees for children's camps and programs. Call Duet at (602) 274-5022 to learn more. If you know a grandfamily, please tell them about Duet's free-of-charge services. They don't have to be alone!

## FINANCE UPDATE

June Planned Income	\$36,750.	June Planned Expenses	\$40,866.
June Projected Income	\$39,383.	June Projected Expenses	\$38,811.
	7.2% over goal		5.0% under goal
2017 Budget Income	\$490,000.		
YTD Actual + Remaining Plan	\$506,501.		
Over (Short)	\$13,868.	3.37% over goal	

## RECEPTION FOR BISHOP ALMEN

A big thank you to the Boomers and friends who hosted a reception honoring Bishop Almen's 50th anniversary of his ordination following worship on June 11.



## THRIVENT FINANCIAL

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, a fraternal insurance company which provides financial products to many Lutherans throughout the United States, distributes funds to Lutheran agencies, organizations, and congregations through a program called Thrivent Choice.



**Thrivent Financial for Lutherans®**  
**Let's thrive!**

Thrivent members who own various products such as life insurance, annuities, term insurance and a host of other financial products can now designate how charitable funds that their products earn can be directed. You are able to direct these special charitable funds as you see fit.

We hope that you will keep Ascension Lutheran Church in mind when you make your selections. Previously these funds were directed through regional chapters, but now you as a Thrivent product owner can direct these funds yourself. It also means that Thrivent product owners throughout the world can direct these funds also to our ministry here at Ascension.

## MOUNT OF OLIVES NEWS

Mount of Olives Food Closet

We are partnering with the Mount of Olives Food Closet and have been asked to help with the food that is given out each week to the homeless. Until further notice we will be asking you to pick up one or two of the following items when you do your grocery shopping during the month.

- 16 oz peanut butter
- pop top cans of chunky soup
- pop top cans of vegetables
- saltine crackers

These items are desperately needed and any items you can contribute will be greatly appreciated! Thank you for your partnership in this ministry at Ascension. Jan Peterson 480-659-7328



## SUNDAY BRUNCH FOR VISITORS AND GUESTS

We understand that visiting a church for the first time can be a little intimidating. Getting the chance to talk to members is sometimes awkward and the coffee social after church may not be adequate. Because of this we have organized a Sunday Brunch program where we invite visitors and guests to a monthly brunch held the last Sunday of the month at a nearby restaurant. This is your chance to meet other Ascension members and ask questions you may have about the church community. RSVP is requested and Brunch is on us! If you or someone you know is looking for a new church home, please have them contact us for a visit. Contact Dawn Jeffers by phone or text at 480-824-8207 for more information.



## SUMMER ART CAMP

During the summer Ascension Lutheran Church is hosting exciting camps for kids 3-13 years old. Children will be grouped with similar ages. Learning about international countries, kids will make and eat delicious foods such as pastas, mud pie, pizzas, tacos, pies, cookies, breads, and cakes. They will also create art projects like bird houses, paintings, sculpture, and jewelry.



Instructor Jana Peterson received her Master's Degree in Art Education at Arizona State University and is a professional artist and certified art teacher who has taught elementary, high school, and college students for 20 years.

Classes will run from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM at Ascension Lutheran Church July 3-7, July 10-14, and July 17-21. Five art and cooking classes cost \$150. Sign up for one or more weeks!

For more information please call Jana Peterson at 480-326-2927.

## SERVING BREAKFAST TO THE HUNGRY

On the third Sunday of each month, we partner with Grace Lutheran and Trinity Episcopal Cathedral to help serve breakfast to 300-400 homeless people in downtown Phoenix at Grace Lutheran Church. Contact Jane McCarty at [jmc1841@gmail.com](mailto:jmc1841@gmail.com) or 602-549-0557 to join us. You will need to arrive at Grace by 6:15 AM; we are finished by 8:30 AM in time to come to worship at Ascension. Training will be provided. All ages from tweens to adults are encouraged take part in this needed mission in our own back yard.



## FRY'S COMMUNITY REWARDS

If you shop at Fry's, be sure to enroll in Fry's Community Rewards program! By registering your Fry's V.I.P. Cards online at Fry's secure web site [www.FrysCommunityRewards.com](http://www.FrysCommunityRewards.com). Once registered, every time an enrolled participant shops at Fry's using his or her Fry's V.I.P. Card, Ascension will earn rewards. In addition, once a household member enrolls his or her card, all linked Fry's V.I.P. Cards within that household will begin earning funds for Ascension. If you would like assistance in enrolling your V.I.P. card, please call the church office.



### How to Re-Enroll for the Fry's Community Rewards Program

- \*Go to [www.FrysCommunityRewards.com](http://www.FrysCommunityRewards.com)
- \*Click on 'Sign-In.'
- \*Enter your email and password then click on 'sign in.'
- \*Click on your name (top right hand corner), under 'Account Summary' scroll down to Community Rewards.
- \*Under Find Your Organization: Enter **Ascension Lutheran Church** then select 'search'.
- \*Under Select Your Organization: Click on the circle next to your organization.
- \*Click on 'Enroll'

\*If you have re-enrolled correctly, you should see a green box with 'Your enrollment in the Community Rewards Program has been updated. Thank you for participating!' You will also see the information listed under 'Community Rewards' on your Account Summary page.

## GOODSEARCH

Use Goodsearch to search the web and earn money for Ascension with every search! The GoodSearch toolbar makes it so easy to use– it also links your rebate to Ascension whenever you shop on the web at a participating retailer!

Click <http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar/ascension-lutheran-church-paradise-valley> to download this quick utility.



## AMAZON SMILE REWARDS

Please support Ascension when you shop Amazon! Amazon Smile is the same Amazon you know; same products, same prices, same service. Amazon Smile will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible Amazon Smile purchases to Ascension Lutheran Church whenever you shop on Amazon Smile. Support Ascension by starting your shopping at:

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## eSCRIP DINING REWARDS



Register your credit and debit cards with the church office! Ascension Lutheran Church earns corporate donations each and every time you shop at an eScrip merchant or dine at a Rewards Network restaurant– automatically!