

The brightness of Easter is only just behind us... it continues to illumine our paths as we journey forward; though it is less like a light behind us that shines in the direction in which we are going... and which we block as we move forward... but is more like a light suspended above us, which lights up everything around us, and like a satellite in geosynchronous orbit, it stays with us as we move ahead.

And we continue to encounter Easter events of new life during this season—they not only serve as guideposts for our journey, but direct us to the higher road onto which God invites us.

We celebrate Mother's Day this month... and although we know that greeting card companies, chocolatiers, and florists celebrate increased sales at this holiday—and on Father's Day which soon follows—Mother's Day gives us a chance to remember the fifth commandment, and honor those who gave us life through the love they celebrate and the creative power engendered by God.

We celebrate Ascension Day in May as well... the day on which we commemorate Jesus' bodily ascension into heaven. There is some mystery associated with the body which ascends... for it is the body about which Jesus says to Mary in John 20:17 "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father." This is the same resurrected Jesus who broke bread with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and then vanished into thin air. And the same Jesus in John 20:19, who when "the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.'" This is a body which seems to be both of this world and not of this world... Jesus has flesh and bones and eats fish... but seems not to be the least bit impinged by walls. There is a new mystery going on here... a new thing into which we are invited.

Five young people from Ascension Lutheran Church will be confirmed this month (in the Episcopal Church, only bishops confirm; while Lutheran polity allows pastors to preside at this rite of passage). When I've met with these young people, I've tried to emphasize that although confirmation marks the more formal end of "Sunday school," it really begins a lifetime process of learning about God, self, and others.

For them, this journey will be a new thing. They will learn to form the questions which press on their hearts... they will seek to find deeper meaning in the Augsburg Confession and how it connects them to life outside of church walls... they will find joy in the insights they gain, and patience when those insights do not come as quickly as they'd like... they will learn to navigate the road of ambiguity and draw strength from other certainties, until the gaps in their roadmaps are filled... it will quite legitimately include Thomas' doubt and the certain belief at the tomb, of the disciple whom Jesus loved. And the emotional swings which may accompany this range of certainty are nothing less than normal.

We often think we know what normal is... or believe we know what the journey is and means... but have you ever driven the same route over and over again to work, or to a friend's home... and then for some reason, you decide to, or need to walk it... and on that walk you notice a rich tapestry of detail, and beauty, or simple interest which car windows have obscured for so long? And you may be touched in unexpected ways by something you see or hear; or by some beautiful thing in an unexpected place.

In our fast-paced society, we have often lost sight that the journey can be—and sometimes must be—at least as enjoyable as our arrival at the destination. But this journey is not just for these five young people... it continues for each one of us, as we continue from within our own traditions to read scripture, spend time in prayer, sit in silence, engage in community, and listen to the still small voice of God in our hearts and minds. Spring is a re-newed time to enjoy the outdoors—which in Michigan is quite beautiful—but it also embodies Easter hope and the promise of new life.

God's invitation to us is patient and steady... we may sometimes feel the impatience of a fourth grader eager for summer break to arrive, but it arrives nonetheless on its own schedule; and we likewise are invited by God to enjoy—to the degree we can—the journey laid out before us... after all, the destination has already been accomplished for us. Happy Easter!

The Rev. Mike Wernick



Worship Services

May 6 – 10:45 a.m. Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 22:25-31;
1 John 4:7-21; John 15:1-8

May 13 – 10:45 a.m. Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 10:44-48; Psalm 98;
1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17

May 20 - 10:45 a.m. Ascension of Our Lord

Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47 or Psalm 93;
Ephesians 1:15-23; Luke 24:44-53

May 27 - 10:45 a.m. Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21 or Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b;
Romans 8:22-27 or Acts 2:1-21;
John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Thanks to:

Shirley Neitzel for donating several yards of mulch for the front garden and to everyone that helped spread it; Roger Hamilton for keeping our sign updated; the Highlight Helpers for preparing the newsletter for mailing; Donna Macomber for organizing the Agape meal on Maundy Thursday; Solomon and Peggy Toppel and Rick Magnuson for making Easter Breakfast; Everyone that donated seeds for the refugee garden.

Ascension is on Facebook

Check it out at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/324653027587025/>

The Mission of Ascension

"Act and Serve in God's Word!"



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Kentwood, MI 49512

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Sunday Schedule

Worship Service - 10:45 a.m.
Sunday School/
Adult Bible Study - 9:30 a.m.

Visit our web site at
www.alchurch.org
Email:
ascension2627@att.net
Phone: (616) 455-8108

Living in Faith at Ascension

A Feeding America Mobile Food Pantry will be at Ascension on June 2nd at Noon. There will also be a clothing give-away and kid's activities that day.

Pr. Mike's schedule: Holy Cross Episcopal Monday & Wednesday, Ascension Lutheran Tuesday & Thursday; (usually) from 9 am to 1 pm, or by appointment. Parishioners can reach him at the churches those days or by email **anytime at** rectorpastor@comcast.net; and for pastoral emergencies after hours, please call 616-780-8489.

Thrivent Builds - This year's Thrivent/Lutheran build is at 1408 Paris SE. If you are interested in participating, a daily schedule for April-August is posted on our Community bulletin board. Please note you must be 16 yrs. or older to work on the home.

Book Sale - Browse our Book Sale and you'll be sure to find something interesting to read. Proceeds benefit the Good Samaritan fund which pays for the Mobile Food Pantry trucks. Each dollar you spend for a book will purchase 10 lbs. of food for a hungry family.

Clean-Up Crew - We need volunteers to clean up the fellowship hall on Sunday mornings – clean out the coffee pot, put away the coffee supplies and wipe off the tables if needed. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board. Please help out if you are able by signing up for a week or two.

If you miss Sunday worship and would like a copy of the weekly announcement page e-mailed to you, please contact Judy by Tuesday morning.

In the Community

Benefit Concert for ACCESS – "To God Be the Glory" #4 will be presented Sunday, May 6 at 4:30 p.m. at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 3215 Four Mile Rd. NE. John & Amy Amos, Kelley Lorencin & Art Hale, The St. Luke's Worship Team, Mere Image will lead a good, old-fashioned hymn sing and a grand puppet show for the children. Free-will offering will be taken. Child care provided. Gourmet dessert to follow!

MapleCreek Events - May 9 at 1:30 p.m. - Heritage Gospel Hymn Singers - Chapel at the Terraces; May 17 from 5:00-8:00 p.m. - MapleCreek Block Party - Outside at the Terraces. All events are free and open to the public.

Warm Up America women remain devoted to the ministry of afghans for Blodgett foster children. Not only do we receive 20 or more afghans at each meeting but, due to creative efforts of members, we are also receiving financial support from various churches represented as well as personal donations. As our Thrivent grant decreases every year, members have approached their churches, friends, one retired woman even received a volunteer grant from a former employer, to help defray the increasing cost of yarn and supplies. We are also happy recipients of washable yarn that may be hibernating in closets, or purchases of new worsted weight yarn, even old knitting books are fun for the ladies to peruse. The generosity shown at a time when finances are challenging for churches and need is high, is a testimony to the commitment to our ministry. We will celebrate and honor all of them at our annual potluck luncheon picnic May 12 at 11:00.

Foster children blossom at summer camp

By Doug Lachniet,
Director of Major/Planned Gifts, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan

Living Water Ministries and Lutheran Social Services of Michigan are partnering again this year to offer a camp experience at Michi-Lu-Ca for children in foster care. Being separated from birth parents and siblings is extremely difficult for kids, and this program offers children an opportunity to heal and grow together in a community of Christ. Last year, 32 children spent a week at Michi-Lu-Ca with their siblings. The program was so successful we are expanding it this year to include foster children who don't have siblings or whose siblings are not the right age. The program will be available to all children in foster care with Lutheran Social Services in grades 3 through 12.

Last year's campers provided a lot of positive feedback. Some told us how great it was to "feel normal" for a week. Others enjoyed adventures they'd never had before, like fishing and archery. The goal was for the children to have a week of fun, friendship, and faith-building.

We can only provide this camping experience with your support.

There are many ways that you can help. A \$400 donation covers tuition, a T-shirt, an account at the camp canteen, a canoe trip, and transportation to and from camp for one child. Lutheran Social Services also seeks donations to help cover the cost of the children's camping equipment and supplies. A donation of \$150 will provide a sleeping bag, pillow, flashlight, toiletries and swimsuit. Any donation amount is welcome and will help a child to experience this amazing program.

We thank you for helping to give our foster children positive experiences that empower them to reach their full potential.

To make a donation on our secure website, go to www.lssm.org/donate/. Checks can be mailed to Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Attn. Development Department, 8131 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit, MI 48214. Please note "Sending Foster Kids to Camp" on your donation.

For Lutheran Social Services' free monthly e-newsletter, *Epistle*, register at www.lssm.org.

Our Prayer List

In our prayers:

HEALING: *Rachel* – Alzheimers; *John* – hospice care; *Loraine* – recovering from pneumonia; *Aaron, Anne, Betty, Bob, Debbie, Geneva, Keith, Marian, Nan, Ruth* – recovering from surgery; *Earl, Pete, Ramon* – recovering from a stroke; *T.J.* – leukemia; *Alan, Don* – ALS; *Andy, Beth, Dave, Debra, Dick, Elaine, Larry, Mitchell, Pat, Ruth, Sharyn, Wayne* – cancer treatment; *Jim, Lonnie* – dialysis; *Brittany, Ted* – depression; *Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese, Brian, Kathy, Leo, Scott* – healing; *Alfred, Bill, Dorothy, Ed, Freddie, Geraldine, Grover, Janet, Jill, Jim, Judy, Paul, Phil, Peggy, Shannon, the Dennis Family* – health concerns.

HOMEBOUND: Alyce Dersch, Virginia Speese
EMPLOYMENT: All of those seeking employment

MILITARY: *Travis* in Afghanistan, *Cassandra and Eric Raese* (Macomber's granddaughter, husband and family stationed in Bellevue, NE), *Gabby and Matt Scherbinski* (Macomber's granddaughter, husband and family stationed in England), *Kevin Francis* (Macomber's nephew deployed to Afghanistan)

We want to be a "praying family" at Ascension. We want to pray with and for each other as we move along our spiritual journey together. For May, you are asked to uplift the designated persons throughout the week in prayer. May our Lord Jesus Christ use this ministry of prayer to build His Church in love!

April 29-May 5: Alyce Dersch; Roger Hamilton; Jim, Sandy and Mitch Spencer

May 6-12: Virginia Ebb; Mike and Sue Holt; Jeff, Cindy, Brittany and Jessica Stormoen

May 13-19: Connie Egleston; Barb Isler; Brian and Kathy Teets

May 20-26: Phil and Mary Ernvall; Mike Kaufman; Solomon & Peggy Toppel and T.J. Bertges

May 27-June 2: Mark, Wendy & Liz Ferguson; Loraine LeFurge; Dan, Marjri and Lizzie Weller

Our Prayer Chain

If you have a prayer request for yourself, friends, or family, call Peg Paske (455-0349) or Loraine LeFurge (241-4250) to start the prayer train. It's easy. Directions for using the prayer chain are as follows:

1. Anyone in need of prayer should call and request prayer. No request is too small.
2. If possible, phone in requests between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. If it is an emergency, please call any time. We are here to serve.

Please let us know how your prayer was answered. We like to know how people are doing so we all may grow in faith and trust in a God that hears our prayers. Prayer has power. Won't you join us in interceding for the needs of others?



May 2012

Worship & Activities Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>Please remember our "Noisy Offering" the first Sunday of the month</i>		1	2	3	4	5 <i>10:00 am-Altar Guild Brunch at Annette Rabb's</i>
6 <i>9:30 am - 10:30 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 10:45 am-Worship Noon - Team Meetings</i>	7 <i>6:00pm-Happy Souls</i>	8	9	10 <i>7:00 pm-AYSO 7:00 pm-Review/ Oversight Committee</i>	11	12 <i>11:00 am-Warm-Up America at St. Matthew</i>
13 <i>9:30 am - 10:30 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 10:45 am-Worship</i>	14 <i>6:00pm-Happy Souls</i>	15 <i>Deadline for Highlight</i>	16 <i>7:30 pm-Church Council Meeting</i>	17 <i>Synod Assembly - Lansing</i>	18 <i>Synod Assembly - Lansing</i>	19 <i>Synod Assembly - Lansing</i>
20 <i>9:30 am - 10:30 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 10:45 am-Worship</i>	21 <i>6:00pm-Happy Souls</i>	22	23	24	25	26
27 <i>9:30 am - 10:30 am Sunday School/Adult Bible Study 10:45 am-Worship</i>	28 <i>6:00pm-Happy Souls</i>	29	30	31 <i>10:00 am-Highlight Helpers</i>		

Leadership & Staff

Rev. Mike Wernick

rectorpastor@comcast.net
616-780-8489

Council President - Kevin Barry

Vice President - Dan Weller

Treasurer - Jeff Stormoen

Secretary/Property - Brian Teets

Council Members at Large:

Wendy Ferguson
June Peterson
Annette Rabb

Church Secretary - Judy Magnuson

Organist - Mike Kaufman

May Service Schedule

Assisting Minister:

All Month: Cindy Stormoenl

Altar Server(s):

All Month: Annette Rabb

Ushers:

All Month: Brian and Kathy Teets

Greeters:

All Month: The Denzinger Family

Acolytes:

May 6: Contemporary Worship
May 13: Meg Barry
May 20: Jessica Stormoen
May 27: Sammy Oster

If you cannot serve as scheduled, please find a replacement and notify the office as soon as possible. Thank you!