



Ascension Lutheran Church

3801 Oakwood Avenue NW
Huntsville, AL 35810



Reflections

Summer Edition

July 2025

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Reminder

July 4 - Office Closed

VBS - July 7-10

5:30 - Meal; 6:00-8:00 - Program

Women's Bible Study -

Tuesdays - 10:00 AM

Men's Prayer Breakfast -

4th Saturday - 10:30 AM

There's Still Time!



From the Elder - Rick Hilst

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23:46, ESV)

The following is an excerpt from the sermon delivered by Johannes Bugenhagen at the funeral of Martin Luther. This was part of a recent morning devotion and is worth sharing with the whole congregation.

Dear friends, so that you might also have a short report about our dearly beloved father, Dr. Martin's, blessed parting, I will give it. When he noticed that his hour had come, he prayed thusly:

"O my heavenly Father, one God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, God of all comfort, I thank you that you have revealed to me your dear Son, Jesus Christ, in whom I believe, whom I have preached and confessed, whom I have loved and praised, whom the loathsome pope and all the godless revile, persecute, and blaspheme. I implore you, my Lord Jesus Christ, let my little soul be commended to you. O heavenly Father, although I must leave this body and be snatched away from this life, I am, nevertheless, certain that I will remain with you eternally and that no one can tear me out of your hands."

And then he said three times: "Into your hands I commend my spirit. You have redeemed me, you faithful God."

Also, John 3:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son so that all who believe in him will not be lost but have eternal life."

Into Your Hands

Then he folded his hands and gave up his spirit to Christ in grand silence. Therefore, we should also justly rejoice with him, as much as we are able to do so in our grief.

When your time on earth is up, when you reach the end of your life, will you, like Jesus, like Martin Luther, commend your spirit into the hands of your Father? Will you trust in God as your Lord and Savior until the end or is your true faith in something else, someone else? If you were to lose everything tomorrow, your house, your family, your friends, your savings, your health, would you despair or would you, like Job, declare *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."* (Job 1:21, NIV)?

These are tough questions. It's easy to proclaim your faith when things are going well, but a completely different thing when times become rough, when your world seems to be caving in on you. However, the answers to these questions are tremendously important, are truly the only thing that matters. Do you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and are you prepared to cling to that faith until the end?

As I am writing this article, I just received a phone call from my younger brother Kent who lives in the same town as my older brother Rusty. As most of you probably know, my older brother has been suffering from ALS and Kent called to inform me that Rusty's primary caregiver had indicated that Rusty's end was coming very soon, perhaps within the next 24 hours. Joanne and I had already planned to go to Kansas this weekend for what I had envisioned as a final farewell to Rusty. However, we may be too late. He may be gone before we get there.

Rusty has been a lifelong Missouri Synod Lutheran and, although his illness has, in the last year or so, prevented him from attending in person, he has been a regular attendee at the Our Redeemer Lutheran services broadcast over the Internet. Therefore, my hope and prayer, since we cannot see into the hearts of others, is that he, like Jesus, like Martin Luther, in his final hours, commends his spirit into God's hands.

In whom or in what do you trust? My fervent hope and prayer is that, the answer for all of you, is in our Lord and Savior and that when your time comes to leave this earth, you can pray like Martin Luther prayed, *"Into your hands I commend my spirit."*

Youth in Action

The Youth Group is actively earning funds for their trip to Louisiana this month for the National Youth Gathering. Painting, digging, unpacking mulch bags for the flower beds around the church (Job still pending). If you have anything that requires physical labor around your house or any other job for which you'd like a little help, sign up or call the church office to get on the schedule. It's as simple as that!

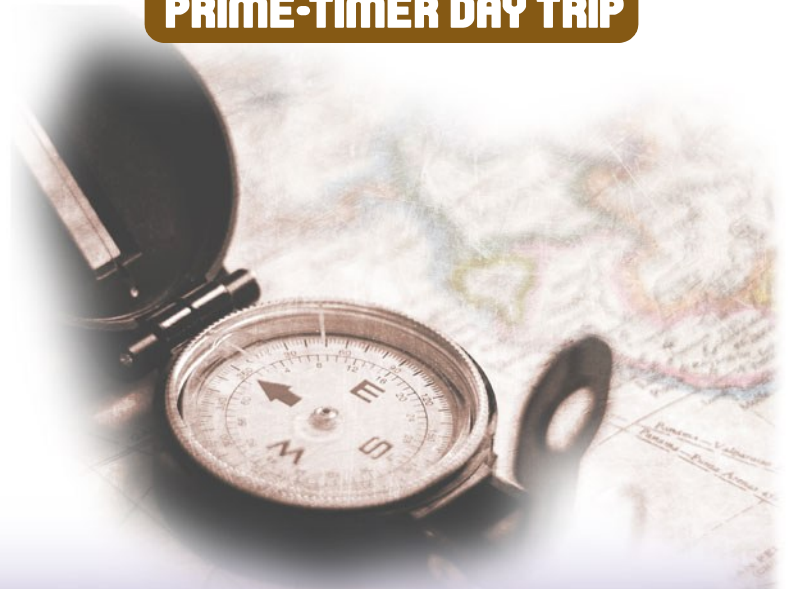


Senior Outreach

Who is interested in being part of a seniors' group at Ascension? We are gauging interest in forming such a group. The group would meet regularly (probably once a month) and would take field trips to locations of interest. If this sounds like something you might be interested in, please contact Jimmy Damron or Rick Hilst.



PRIME-TIMER DAY TRIP



Facts:

June 25, 2025 (6 months until Christmas)

6:00 PM

Temperature: 102 degrees

Bags of mulch: 20

Finished spreading: 6:10 PM

Looks like they didn't break a sweat!

Birthday Club

Oana Burhans	07/03
Alexander Arthur	07/07
Todd Ballentine	07/09
Brenda Booze	07/09
Brandon Strain	07/10
Ilse Crevoiserat	07/11
Genevieve Grott	07/11
Vanda Beamer	07/17
Amber Doumar	07/17
Abi Mwakabumbila	07/18
Wesley Juron	07/19
Todd Orf	07/20
William Arthur	07/21
Jimmy Damron	07/21
Paul Hunze	07/21
Georgiana Hartwig	07/25
Andrea Charnock	07/25
Brian Levenhagen	07/31

Anniversary Club

Ken & Kelly Aschenbrenner
July 16 (25 years)

Brian & Sheila Levenhagen
July 22 (37 years)

Missional Outreach

Every month, the Missional Outreach teams visit two nursing/assisted living homes in Huntsville. This month, the dates for visiting Regency will be July 3, 17 and 31 at 10:45 AM and the visits to HHR will be July 9 and 23 at 10:15 AM. Visits include:

Welcome

Song 1

Song 2

1st Reading

Song 3

Song 4

2nd Reading

Song 5

Song 6

Gospel Reading

Song 7

Message

Song 8

Song 9



From the Pastor

Rev. Derek Waffel



This summer, we have two big events happening in the life of the broader LCMS community, the national LWML convention and the LCMS National Youth Gathering. At the very end of June, we had two ladies from our congregation go to Omaha, Nebraska to attend the LWML convention. It's a very different kind of event from the youth gathering, but I hope they had fun there! This is one of those events, as a part of working together in our church body, that reminds us of our common ties together and helps further the work of Christ's kingdom that we are seeking to do faithfully. One of the things the LWML does most prominently is support missions work in our country and throughout the world, and in addition to worship and fellowship, their work is dedicated to that evangelism and support for the Church in many ways. It's a reminder that we do not work alone, but part of a community that goes far beyond ourselves yet shares the same faith and the same Lord.



ENDURE

In July we have the National Youth Gathering, which happens once every three years. This time, it's relatively close to us, down in New Orleans, and we have a group of seven high school youth plus adult leaders who are going. Many of you, or your children or grandchildren, have attended a youth gathering in the past, so you may be familiar with what goes on there. There are Bible studies, worship services, speakers and breakout sessions, fellowship, service events, and more; but one of the greatest benefits of these large gatherings is that youth get a glimpse of the larger church.

It's easy for us all to focus just on our local congregation and to forget that we're part of something much bigger. Our church body has around 6,000 congregations and nearly 2 million baptized members, and when tens of thousands of them are together in one place it can certainly make an impression. Seeing an entire stadium full of those who share our faith and our worship is a powerful reminder of our unity in the Gospel, and

In the LCMS

the special gift that the Lutheran tradition has in its clear proclamation of grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone. More than that, we are part of the universal Christian Church in the faith in Christ that is shared not just by thousands of others, but by hundreds of millions – as Scripture says in Revelation 7:9, “*a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.*”

The LCMS is just one small corner of the entire Christian Church on earth, but it's the one to which our congregation belongs. Even in the New Testament, we see how each city or region would have its own local church organization, but were still tied together by the common bond of faith with the Christians in every other place; just as Paul writes in Ephesians 4, “*There is one body and one*



Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” We remember we are united with the rest of our Lutheran brothers and sisters in the LCMS, as well as part of the Body of Christ with all believers everywhere. And so, I encourage you this month to remember and pray for all those traveling and attending and serving in these

events, that all that they experience and do and say would be pleasing to God and beneficial for the Church, reflecting this fundamental unity of faith.



From Stewardship

Bobbie Scroggins

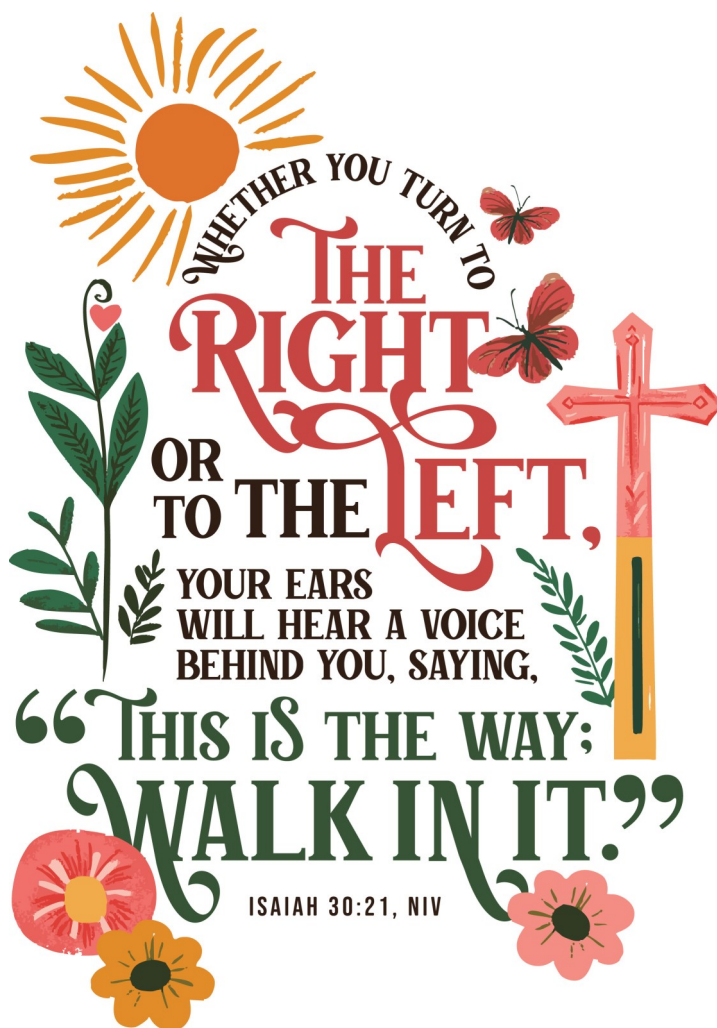
"Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. "If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."

John 14:12-17

If you could ask God for anything, what would it be? Asking something of someone, known or unknown, is humbling. We usually petition others because we believe they will hear us. God is not a magic-genie-vending machine that flippantly grants desires to those who ask. No, He qualifies the asking ("If you"); gives wide-open options ("ask me anything"); assumes established relationship ("in My name"); and finally, emphatically gives assurance ("I will do it").

When Jesus says we can ask for anything, we must remember that our asking must be in His name; that is, according to God's character and will. God will not grant requests contrary to the nature of His will, and we cannot use His name as a magic formula to fulfill our selfish desires. If we are sincerely following God and seeking to do His will, then our requests will be in line with what He wants and He will grant them.

Ask



Soon, Jesus would be leaving His disciples, yet He would remain with them. How could this be? The Advocate - the Spirit of God Himself - would come after Jesus was gone to comfort, encourage, guide and intercede for the disciples. The regenerative power of the Spirit came on the disciples just before Jesus' ascension and the Spirit was poured out on all the believers at Pentecost after Jesus ascended into Heaven. The Holy Spirit, the very presence of God within us and all believers, helps us live as God wants us to live and empowers us every day.

In our prayers, we do ask God for answers, guidance, wisdom and assistance. If we acknowledge His existence, if we are in Him, and if we call on His name, then we are confessing that we believe in Him and, of course, He will hear us.

When we face problems, deal with anxiety, distress and confusion - and we will - we must never forget to go to the One who mercifully offered to be our Father. In Him, we find consolation, strength and mercy because He cares for us and understands all that we are

experiencing. When we go to His throne and give Him ourselves in prayer and supplication, He gives us the peace of mind that only He can give. With His hands on us, He leads us safely through the labyrinth of life.

Are we feeling incompetent and inadequate in some of life's situations? Are we looking to our own strengths and abilities for answers? Simple solution: Take it to the Lord in prayer. Jesus made it very clear that we are incapable of doing anything without Him. However, with Him, we can do anything that needs to be done.

In this truth lies the assurance to all our fears, doubts and insecurities. Whatever we do in life, we must first take it to God in prayer, seek His help and lay all our expectations and concerns before Him. He will grant us outcomes that we never even dreamed could be.

Psalms 17:1-6

*"Hear me, LORD, my plea is just;
listen to my cry.
Hear my prayer—
it does not rise from deceitful lips.
Let my vindication come from you;
may your eyes see what is right.
Though you probe my heart,
though You examine me at night and test me,
You will find that I have planned no evil;
my mouth has not transgressed.
Though people tried to bribe me,
I have kept myself from the ways of the violent
through what Your lips have commanded.
My steps have held to Your paths;
my feet have not stumbled.
I call on You, my God, for You will answer me;
turn Your ear to me and hear my prayer."*

Was David saying he was sinless? Far from a proud assumption of purity, David's claim was an understanding of his relationship with God. In Psalms 32 and 51, David freely acknowledges his own sins. Nevertheless, his relationship with God was one of his close fellowship and constant repentance and forgiveness. His claim to goodness, therefore, was based on his constant desire to closely follow God.

1 Peter 5:7: *"Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you."*

Stewardship (Continued)

Carrying our worries, stresses and daily struggles by ourselves shows that we have not trusted God fully with our lives. Humility is needed, however, to recognize that God cares, to admit our needs and to let others in God's family help us. Sometimes we think that struggles caused by our own sin and foolishness are not God's concern. But when we turn to God in repentance, He will bear the weight, even of those struggles. Letting God carry our anxieties calls for action, not passivity. Do not submit to circumstances, submit to the Lord who controls circumstances. (ASK)

James 5:13: *"Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise."*

The only way we could possibly cope with life is in partnership with God. He created each of us. He sent His Son to die so that we may have eternal life. Therefore, He will not allow us to be defeated. He will deliver us from evil.



Our perceived impossibilities are God's opportunities to display His power, omnipotence and majesty. Now is always the perfect time to call on Him, before those promised and challenging times come. After all, we would not need Him if we were capable of handling everything on our own, would we?

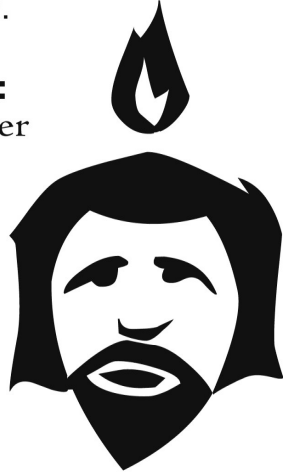
O Lord Jesus, the Word become flesh, we ask that Your Word be proclaimed faithfully. Keep us mindful that Your Word is true and infallible. Send Your Spirit to grow the seeds of Your Word. Guard against false preaching. Lift up those proclaiming You, Christ. Bless those hearing your Word to treasure it and to grow closer to You. Amen.

Spirit Spinner

For Pentecost, make a thaumatrope, a spinning toy that creates an optical illusion of motion.

What you need:

- White paper
- Cup
- Scissors
- Pencil and markers
- Plastic drinking straw
- Glue



What you do:

1. Using the cup's circular shape, trace two identical circles on the paper. Carefully cut them out.
2. In pencil, draw a person's head on one circle. Then place the blank circle on top and use the image beneath to guide you in drawing a flame above the head.
3. Color the two images with markers.
4. Apply glue to the backs of the circles and sandwich the top of the straw between them so it looks like a lollipop. Let dry.
5. Roll the straw quickly between your hands to view a mini motion picture.

PUZZLE



Wind, fire & spirit

Acts 2 describes the amazing events of Pentecost, when the apostles received the Holy Spirit.

Directions: The last letter(s) of each word is the beginning letter of the next. Fill in the missing words to complete Acts 2:1-4, NIV.

1. HEAV
2. ABLE
3. AY OF PENTECOS
4. ONGUE
5. PIRI
6. OGETHE
7. ES
8. ONGUE
9. A
10. IND



"When the _____ came, they were all _____ in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent _____ came from _____ and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They _____ what seemed to be _____ of fire that separated and came to _____ on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy _____ and began to speak in other _____ as the Spirit _____ them."

ACTS 2:1-4, NIV

Answer: 1. heaven, 2. enabled, 3. day of Pentecost, 4. tongues, 5. Spirit, 6. together, 7. rest, 8. tongues, 9. saw, 10. wind

July

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 10:00 AM - Women's Bible Study	2	3 10:45 AM - Regency	4 OFFICE CLOSED	5
6 8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship 9:30 AM - Classes 9:45 AM - Regency	7 6:00 PM - Worship 5:30 PM - VBS	8 10:00 AM - Women's Bible Study 5:30 PM - VBS 6:00 PM - Board of Directors	9 10:15 AM - HHR 5:30 PM - VBS	10 5:30 PM - VBS	11	12
13 8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship 9:30 AM - Classes 9:45 AM - Regency	14 6:00 PM - Worship	15 10:00 AM - Women's Bible Study 6:00 PM - Board of Elders	16	17 10:45 AM - Regency	18	19
20 8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship 9:30 AM - Classes 9:45 AM - Regency	21 6:00 PM - Worship	22 10:00 AM - Women's Bible Study	23 10:15 AM - HHR 6:00 PM - #2 Summer Choir Rehearsal	24	25	26 8:30 AM - Men's Prayer Breakfast
27 8:00 & 10:45 AM - Worship 9:30 AM - Classes 9:45 AM - Regency	28 6:00 PM - Worship 7:00 PM - Chinese Food after Service	29 10:00 AM - Women's Bible Study	30	31 10:45 AM - Regency		