

CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter of Ascension Lutheran Church
6520 Loma de Cristo Drive, El Paso, TX 79912
September 2018



“CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY TO CHRIST”

Rev. Brian R. Bestian, Pastor

Marhel Cueva, Director Ascension Preschool

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WORSHIP SERVICES: Sunday Mornings @ 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.; Family Bible Hour @ 9:15 a.m.

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SEPTEMBER-AT-A-GLANCE

September 2: PrayerTime @ 5:00 p.m.

September 4: Pastors’ Conference @ 8:30 a.m.

September 8: LWML Brunch & Bible Study @ 10:00 am

September 18: Church Council Meeting @ 7:00 p.m.

September 20: Ladies Night Out @ Pasta Avanti at 8001 N. Mesa (Crossroads Shopping Center) @ 6:30 p.m.

September 21: October Newsletter Article Deadline

September 29: LWML Rally at Mission Lutheran in Las Cruces @ 9:30 a.m.

Weekly Activities

Sunday: Worship @ 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.; Family Bible Hour @ 9:15 a.m.; Confirmation @ 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday: Woman To Woman Bible Study will resume meeting on September 11 @ 10:30 a.m. at the church

Men’s Bible Study @ 6:30 p.m.

Women’s Bible Study @ 6:30 p.m. will resume meeting on September 11 at the DeMartelaere home
Boy Scouts @ 6:45 p.m.

Wed: Preschool Chapel @ 8:45 a.m.

Weight Watchers Meeting @ 10:00 a.m.

Choir Rehearsal @ 7:00 p.m.

Thursday: Women’s Bible Study @ 9:45 a.m. at Schlak home

Saturday: Men’s Bible Study and Breakfast @ 8:00 a.m. begins September 8 at the church

The story is told of a young man graduating from college and anticipating a new car as a gift. But instead of handing him car keys, his father gave him a wrapped box. He quickly tore open the package only to find a new Bible inside. Angry and disappointed, he shoved the box back into his father's hands and stomped away in silence. In fact, he was so angry that he refused to speak to his father for a number of years.

The young man's stubbornness and pride prevented him from reconciling with his father, and unexpectedly the father died. After the funeral service, back at his parents' home, this broken young man walked into his father's study and spotted his gift box sitting on a chair in the corner. Full of tears and remorse, he glanced inside and saw the Bible his father had given him, years earlier. For the first time, he opened his Bible and found a loving note inscribed on the front cover from his dad. Along with the inscription, he found an envelope containing his name. He unsealed it and discovered a cashier's check tucked inside with the exact amount of the new car he wanted and dated the day before his college graduation.

If he had taken the time to open his Bible, the young man would have discovered what he wanted all along. Instead, he missed out on everything his father had done for him. Now I don't know if this story is fictional or not, but I do know that his Bible contained something far more valuable than a cashier's check for a new car. It held God's priceless words of eternal life.

Our heavenly Father has a wealth of gifts to share with us in His Word, if we would only take the time to open it, read it, and study it. Very few people do. In fact, many people seem to have an adverse reaction to God's Word. Don't believe me? Next time you are sitting on a plane or in a coffee shop, just pull out your Bible. By some people's reaction, you would think that you just pulled out a skunk or a Smith & Wesson revolver. I've seen people literally recoil from the mere sight of a Bible.

Scripture is the most powerful and significant book on the planet. Reflecting on this significance, King David wrote in Psalm 19, "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple" (v. 7).

Allow me to point out a few things. First, the Hebrew phrase "*law of the LORD*" can be paraphrased as "Scripture" or the "Bible." Secondly, the Word of God is *perfect*. Nothing needs to be added to it. Even more, as society changes, you don't have to bend with the wind of popular opinion or stumble over political correctness. You can stand firm on the foundation of Scripture. Thirdly, the Bible *revives* you, restores you, and transforms you. And, finally, Scripture is *trustworthy* and will make you *wise* unto salvation and help you make *wise* decisions.

Ultimately, success or failure in the Christian life depends upon how much of God's Word you get into your heart and how much you follow it on a regular basis. Think of it this way: ***You need to get into the Word, so that the Word can get into you!***

As you get back into a structured routine for the fall, make sure you carve out adequate time each day to read and study God's Word. Just pencil it in next to "eating breakfast." You will be eternally glad you did—and richly blessed, too! ✂

Just a Reminder: Pastor's sermons and Sunday morning Bible Study can be heard on the church website—ALConnect.faith.

Filled and Growing, Empowered and Going! is the Christian education theme for the 2018-2019 year here at Ascension that we celebrated on Sunday, August 26. The Sunday School will also continue on with this motif and refer back to it often. When we are daily in God's Word, we become *filled* with the Holy Spirit who *grows* our faith! He then *empowers* us to *go* and tell others about Him through our words and by our actions.

A big thank you to everyone who helped make our Christian Education Sunday a very special day in the life of the church. Many also helped with the games following the Rally Day picnic. It was very appreciated since the fellowshiping nurtured our Christian friendships and relationships to grow together! As one part of the morning, the Sunday School children enjoyed *jumping up* to their next class level as their parents gathered together for a presentation on *Gifts for Parents*.

We are blessed with this year's Sunday School teachers: Caroline Carnahan, Cheryl Canada, Linda Canada, Jean DeWitt, Kristen Moravec, Jan Schlak, and Dava Tilley! If you are so moved by the Holy Spirit to join the teaching team or substitute teach, please talk with Wanda Melendez our Sunday School Head Coordinator. May God richly bless these willing souls who put much, prayer and preparation into the lessons as they partner with parents!

Christian Education is just the first element in children's ministry. There are many other opportunities for children such as expressing their faith. One such occasion is Interpretative Liturgical Dance. If your child is interested in this form of praise, please talk with me (Kim Bestian) as soon as possible. We need to find out if there is interest and how many would like to participate. We are approaching our 3rd year in this ministry.

Remember to check out the Kid's Corner in the church library! The children's books are just waiting for little hands to hold them and glean from their pages!



CONSTANT VIGILANCE

For those of you who don't know, I am a huge Harry Potter fan. I think it is a great work of fiction, with many life lessons that can be applied to everyday life. One of the characters, Mad-Eye Moody, is a man who lived the above phrase -constant vigilance. He was paranoid, hyper aware of everything, and distrusting of most people and things. His demise came about by trusting someone who was wishy-washy about the mission at hand.

So, the question is, what exactly can Mad-Eye Moody's life motto -Constant Vigilance -teach us about our faith in a world of options and distractions? Well, if we were to take his philosophy of life and turn it into a Proverbs, it would be chapter four...and the two-word phrase would become this: **"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it"** (Proverbs 4:23).

God calls for us to be constantly vigilant in our everyday life. Jesus constantly reminded His disciples to be vigilant over the teachings of those who did not follow God's Word. In Matthew 16, He warns them to **"be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees"** (Matthew 16:5). We think to ourselves, in this modern world of ours, there are no Pharisees and Sadducees, so the warning doesn't apply to us. How wrong we are in thinking this way! This modern world teaches the extremes of tolerance and acceptance -it hammers home the acceptance of the sin along with the sinner, the tolerance of the wrong and false no matter what we know to be right and true. Without realizing, we've become blind and desensitized to the goal of the enemy -**"Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour"** (1 Peter 5:8b).

We must always be vigilant -be on guard, of sober mind, prepared and ready to stand firm in our faith (1 Corinthians 16: 13) when faced by the enemy's lies and twisted promises of things he cannot and will not give without taking our souls. He infiltrates our lives through so many ways -family, friends, media, music, literature, art, gossip, success, treasures, dreams, goals, and so much more. He draws out our old Adam and entices us with the same lie he told Eve -we are gods. He turns our God-give love and twists it into a form of self-worship. He takes our pride and builds altars to it. He takes our shame and guilt and chains us to death. He pours rock and concrete into our hearts until we are hard and unyielding, seeking our pleasure and will, believing we have endless days to turn back to our Savior.

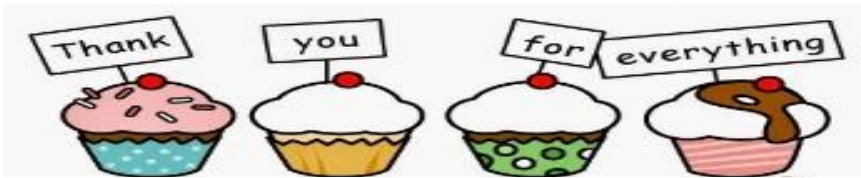
"But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming" (2 Peter 3:8-12a).

For us to allow the enemy to lull us into thinking we can trust ourselves, him, and the world puts us in a very dangerous situation. We have been given a precious gift in Christ Jesus -salvation through grace, mercy from God, and His Word for Truth.

It may not seem like it, but we are at war -one already won by our Lord and Savior -but while we are on this world, and not of this world, we must stand firm, be courageous, be strong, and above all, practice Constant Vigilance, for the enemy is waiting for the chance to devour us. Thanks be to Jesus' death and resurrection, we have the Holy Spirit with us to strengthen and preserve us as we march forward to the final goal of eternal life.

ALC Youth Happenings

September 2018



What a blessing to have a family in Christ! Many thanks to all who helped with the Youth Baked Goods Sale by donating delicious baked goods.

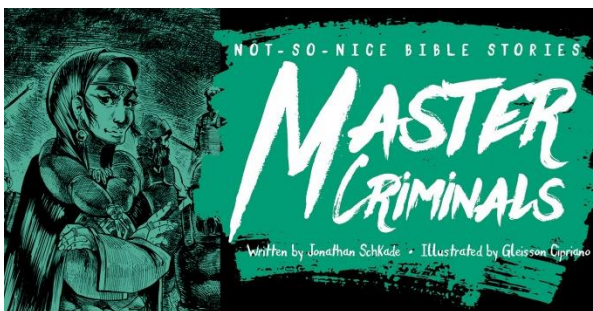
We are truly blessed to have y'all supporting us as we grow in faith through service, discipleship, and fellowship!



Need a new book to read?

Check this one out from our Ascension Library!

It is the first of a trilogy and it is truly a great book to help see what persecution in a modern world can look like.



New Youth Bible Study!

Join us in the Library this month to learn more about the scoundrels in the Bible! We will approach each 'case' as investigators, seeking evidence of their crimes and its impact in today's people!

**Every Sunday during Family Bible Hour
(9:15am-12:15am)**



Sundays
9:15-10:15AM
New Bible Study:
Master Criminals
of the Bible

September 2
September 9
September 16
September 23
September 30

All junior and senior youth will be meeting in the LIBRARY for Sunday Morning Bible Study

Contact Information

Luz M. Soto, DYM
Phone: (915) 219-1686
E-mail: luzsoto07@gmail.com

STUDYING THE WORD THROUGH BIBLE CLASS

♥ Men's Bible Study:

- Men's Saturday Breakfast and Bible Study:** the group will resume meeting on September 8 at 8:00 a.m.
- Men's Tuesday Night Bible Study:** will continue their study on the book of James. This group meets at the church @ 6:30 p.m.

♥ Ladies' Bible Study:

- Woman To Woman Bible Study:** This group will resume meeting on September 11 @ 10:30 a.m. They will begin the Bible study "Family Trees & Olive Branches."
- Tuesday Evening Bible Study:** This group resumes meeting on September 11 @ 6:30 p.m. They will begin the Bible study "Discerning the Voice of God" by Priscilla Shirer.
- Thursday Morning Bible Study Group:** This group will resume meeting on September 6 at 9:45 a.m. at the Schlak home. They will continue their study on the book of Psalms.

- ♥ Another resource available to you can be found at www.lhm.org. You will find the Lutheran Hour daily devotions at this website.

MINISTRY & BOARD REPORTS

ALTAR CARE COMMITTEE

NEW TEAM MEMBERS NEEDED!

Looking for a way to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in a meaningful way?

Being a part of the Altar Care Committee is very rewarding. We insure that the Altar is prepared for all services so that our Lord is glorified by a proper Altar setting.

In signing up for Altar Care, you will be given instructions both personally and given a handout. You may sign up to work with someone already dedicated to the month, either 8:00 a.m. service or the 10:30 a.m. service. We hope you will consider being a part of this wonderful group.

Assistance is needed for the 10:30 a.m. service in April, August, and September!

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

We would like to thank everyone who helped with Rally Day festivities; your help and enthusiasm is very much appreciated! We would also like to thank Thrivent Financial's Action Team for their seed money contribution of \$250 for the purchase of pies for the Youth "Slice of Pie" booth.

Make sure to check out the Bible Studies available to you here at Ascension!

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

OPPORTUNITY CENTER

The Board of Christian Service will **collect paper products for Opportunity Center through September.** Paper towels, paper plates, napkins, toilet paper, etc are suggested donations—please be generous!

BOARD OF PRESCHOOL

The staff at the preschool has already begun preparing for the 2018-2019 school year even though they don't officially begin until August 20th. Many teachers have started decorating their classrooms and preparing lesson plans for the arrival of children on August 27th. We have very few slots left in the 3 and 4 year-old classes, while the 2 year old class already has a waiting list. Members of Ascension Lutheran Church receive a 15% discount on tuition.

Our staff will be taking part in CPR training on August 17th. It has been suggested that CPR training be offered for interested church members, as well. Look for more information to come.

Save the date for our Fall Fest which will be held on October 19th from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. There will be lots of games, food, and fun for children of all ages. Everyone is welcome to attend!

October will also kick off our fundraiser for this year! We will be introducing crazy socks during our “Socktober” campaign. You won’t want to miss out on this fun event!

Are you interested in giving of your time to help in a classroom reading to the children or doing some type of educational activity with them? We are always happy to welcome anyone who would like to visit our preschool occasionally to spend quality time with our little ones. You will find a volunteer form in your mailbox that may be submitted to any member of the preschool board.

Great things are happening in the preschool and every member of the Board of Preschool is proud to be a part of it!

CHURCH COUNCIL

Approved Council Minutes are sent to Ascension members with the Friday E-mail when received by the Church Office. Please call 833-1009 to request an electronic or paper copy of the minutes.

Treasurer's Report: 2018 Income & Expense Statement [July]

| | July | YTD | Budget |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Income: | | | |
| Offerings | \$25,134.29 | \$167,505.15 | \$185,115.50 |
| Other Income | \$4,233.39 | \$32,418.99 | \$28,797.37 |
| Total | \$29,367.68 | \$199,924.14 | \$213,912.87 |
| Expense: | \$31,779.04 | \$215,440.81 | |
| Raise The Roof | | | |
| July Donations | \$3,326.00 | \$67,999.00 | |
| Total | | | \$101,704.00 |

From your Financial Secretary, Anita Werner:

Did you know??? If you utilize online bill pay through your financial institution you can also send your donations to Ascension via your online bill pay. Simply set up Ascension Lutheran Church as one of your accounts to pay; enter our address (6520 Loma de Cristo Drive, El Paso, TX 79912) and most importantly enter your envelope number as the ‘account number’ to ensure your donations are properly credited. Your financial institution will then mail the church a check whenever you direct them to do so.

Offering Reminder—don’t let your giving go on vacation when you go on vacation!

ANNOUNCEMENTS



THE DEADLINE for the October 2018 Newsletter is **Friday, September 21.**



ALTAR CARE FOR SEPTEMBER: 8:00 a.m.: Linda Haycraft 10:30 a.m.: Barb Spott

Members who assist with Altar Care are necessary and valuable servants of the congregation. Anyone who would like to serve the Lord in this capacity may contact the Church Office @ 833-1009.



MERCY MEALS OF ASCENSION consists of volunteers who bring meals to families of Ascension. The church office will get in touch with the group’s leader (marked by an *) when they hear of a home that needs assistance. If you have a need, please call the church office at 833-1009.

Mercy Meals for September are: *Marij Brady, Christy Mielke, Jan Larson, Jill Weyer

Volunteers Needed! Mercy Meals service is looking for new volunteers. **What is this service?** When a need of a congregational member for a meal is identified by the church office or pastor, the Mercy Meals group for that month is notified. The group then plans a meal and each member of the specific month brings part of

the meal to the family/member in need. If you would like to be part of this ministry, please let the church office know and you will be assigned to a specific month.



SAY! DID YOU KNOW? There is a service for members and friends of Ascension who need transportation to church, doctors' appointments, shopping etc. If you have a need for this service, call the church office and you will then be put in touch with someone who will drive you to and from your appointments or errands.



A RESOURCE FOR MEN: Men, the Lutheran Hour Ministries has a website specifically for you! The website has specific devotions, Bible studies, discussion groups, etc. for men. Check this out at www.lhmmen.com. You will need to register and create a password; there are no fees to be a part of this resource.



PRAYERTIME: takes place on **Sunday, September 2** at 5:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.



DO YOU HAVE A NEED for temporary use of Durable Medical Equipment? Check the list in the Church Office of equipment available for your medical needs.



PRAYER CHAIN OF ASCENSION is composed of congregational members who have agreed to pray for members and non-members concerns. Requests can be sent to Olga Sullivan (phone chain) or Jan Schlak (e-mail chain), and they will activate the Prayer Chain. Contact Olga or Jan to be notified of prayer requests via phone or e-mail. **If you would like your request to be spoken at the Altar on Sunday morning, please call the church office at 833-1009.**



WORSHIP FOR SHUT-INS: Did you know that there is a TV program called Worship Anew? It is produced by Lutheran Ministries Media which is based on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. It can be seen via satellite on DIRECTV Channel 377 Sundays at 9:30a.m. MST. That channel is the Total Christian Television (TCT); if you don't have DIRECTV, it may be on your TV Provider's listing. Check this program out when you are unable to attend our Sunday services or video tape it and view during the week.



PULL TABS for Ronald McDonald House: Please save the aluminum pull tabs from canned drinks and bring them to the kitchen area. They are used by the Ronald McDonald House to provide a home away from home for hundreds of families with seriously ill children.



YSLETA LUTHERAN THRIFT STORE: Remember that you can donate used clothing and other household items to the Mission's Thrift Store, the proceeds of which go to help the work of the Mission. You can put your donations in the container located in Library; the Ysleta Mission staff will pick up the donations.

FYI

LCMS WORLD RELIEF & HUMAN CARE JULY 2018

Delivering Medical Care and Christ in Sierra Leone

It took a year to prepare for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's first Mercy Medical Team (MMT) to Sierra Leone, West Africa. During this time, LCMS missionaries worked with local Lutherans to scout locations, secure government authorizations and order medications.

But long before this, Fatmata was sick and in pain. She believed that Allah was cursing her for her wickedness. She didn't see any hope out of her situation from the hand of Allah. And yet, she heard that people were coming to set up a clinic to provide medicine and care.

In May, all the planning came to fruition when a seven-person team traveled to Yardu, Sierra Leone. During the week, more than 1,450 people received medical care at the MMT clinic, including 29-year-old Fatmata.

As Fatmata was treated by Sierra Leonean nurse Rugiatu Kamande, team leader Rev. Michale Awe held Fatmata's hand and shared with her the truth of God's grace in Christ. At the end of their time together, Fatmata's tears flowed with the release from the fear of Allah to the hope in Christ.

The Lutheran Church of Sierra Leone works every day to share the love of Christ through His Word and Sacraments, and the MMT and LCMS missionaries assist in this good work.

“People will come to receive the medicine, and when they are coming and waiting, we preach to them. . . Christ is the only way, the truth and the life,” said Patricia Missah, a member of the Sierra Leone church. “If we receive medicine, it is from Christ, and not from us. So, when people come for the medicine, we tell them Christ is the way and not us.”

Thanks be to God, the church in Sierra Leone is growing.

PRAY FOR OUR DEPLOYED SOLDIERS



Drew Rossow

Becca Brady—Naval Boot Camp

JUST FOR LAUGHS

A notorious gambler offered to donate \$1,000 to a church project for the homeless. The offer greatly upset a church elder. She confronted the pastor: “We can’t take his money. It’s the devil’s money.” “If that’s the case,” the pastor replied calmly, “the devil has had his hands on it long enough. Now let’s see what God can do with it.”

From “Holy Humor: inspirational wit and cartoons” by Cal & Rose Samra, pg. 118

BUSINESS LISTINGS

Premier Designs Jewelry

Marjory Brady, Consultant
915-799-7898

marjorybrady.mypremierdesigns.com

Luz M. Soto

Professional Writing Services
(915) 219-1686

luzsoto07@gmail.com

Taylor Kahre

Lularoe Fashion Consultant
812-760-3393

facebook.com/groups/LularoeTaylor

Keri Howell

Young Living Essential Oils
Phone 915-345-1095

Firefly180@msn.com

M & J’s Babysitting

*Certified by the
American Red Cross*

Melissa and Jessica Hankele
Melissa Cell: 915-252-7371
Jessica Cell: 915-252-7065

Sold On El Paso!

team of Keller Williams Realty
Kevin & Robyn Cooper, Realtors
915-229-5995

We help families get the best
value for their home,
whether Buying or Selling.



RAISE THE ROOF

**Restoring God's House
With Our Gifts**

Join the Ascension Lutheran Church capital campaign!

Desperately needed:

- New Roof
- Air Conditioning System
- Paint Church Exterior

To this date we have raised over \$104,000, we thank you for helping us provide a safe sanctuary, gathering area, and school to establish and grow in our faith walk. Roof repairs and installation of the Air Conditioners were complete in April, 2018. The next step is to stucco and paint the outside of the church, which the Trustees are planning for September-November, 2018

Therefore, Ascension's "Raise the Roof" goal is to raise \$15,000 by September 2, 2018. This is a large goal for 3 months, but trust in the Lord and "Thy will be done." We praise God for the gifts we have already received and for the blessings we will receive.

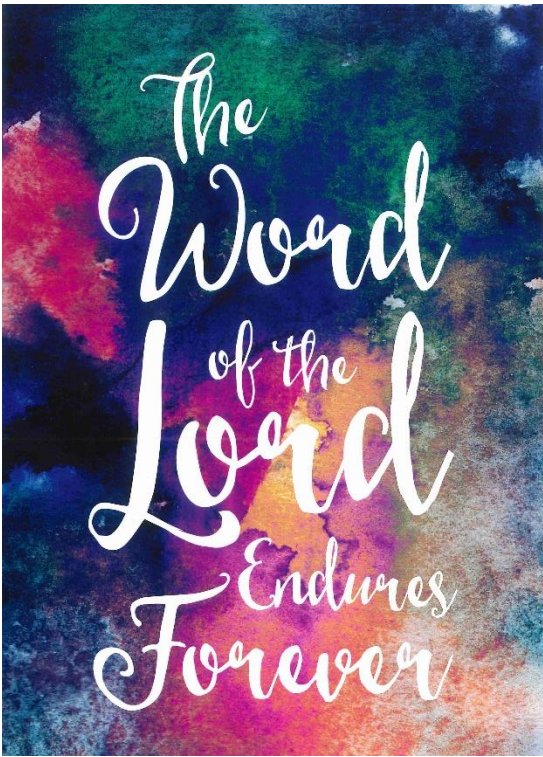
"It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Luke 6:38)

**Donation Envelopes are available at
the Welcome Center or in the pew racks!**

Please put your donation in the Offering Plate.

Concordia Publishing House Resources!



Your mission is our passion. On the CPH blog community, you'll find blog posts, eBooks, devotions, and more to support your everyday faith.

The Word Endures

BLOG.CPH.ORG

The Word Endures is the official blog of Concordia Publishing House. You'll find updates on forthcoming books, topical posts, and free downloadable Bible study questions and family devotion calendars.

Technology & Your Ministry

CONCORDIATECHNOLOGY.ORG/BLOG

Discover how to leverage technology in your church with free downloadable eBooks, tips for church websites, and graphics for your church's social media.

Sunday School Matters

SUNDAYSCHOOLMATTERS.ORG

Our Sunday School blog seeks to encourage, motivate, and inspire volunteers and parents to share the faith at church and home.

Concordia Academic

ACADEMIC.CPHBLOGS.COM

From works by Martin Luther to our Concordia Commentary series, you'll find information on some of our newest books that are written for anyone interested in deeper study of God's Word.

CPH EDU

EDUCATION.CPH.ORG/BLOG

If you are involved in education in any way you'll appreciate the CPH EDU articles that are written to guide you in your pedagogical or parental journey.

Prelude to Postlude

MUSIC.CPH.ORG/BLOG

Prelude to Postlude is your destination for all things music.

Today in the Church Year

CALENDAR.CPH.ORG/BLOG

The Church Year helps us keep our eyes fixed on Christ by reminding us of His coming again on the Last Day. Each blog post features a short devotional passage on feasts, festivals, and Sundays.