



Connections

Newsletter of Ascension Lutheran Church • El Paso, Texas • May 2019

“CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY TO CHRIST!”

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Dr. James Dobson is well-known for having said, “There are two kinds of people in the world: those who *are* suffering and those who *will* suffer.” None of us are immune. Suffering is not an “if” but a “when” proposition. The floor will drop out from underneath us at some point—not because God is absent or doesn’t care, and not because we haven’t been “good enough.” Christians and non-Christians alike are subject to the consequences of living in a fallen world.

Wise King Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes: “The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all” (9:11). The rain falls on the righteous and the unrighteous. And drought also comes to both. Believers lose their homes to tornadoes and their health to cancer right alongside unbelievers. Dementia doesn’t discriminate either.

From time to time, we find ourselves being the one with the stack of problems that seem bigger than one person or even a family can possibly attempt to deal with, let alone overcome. The Bible doesn’t tell us God won’t give us more than we can handle. Instead, God gives us account after account of people in situations that no one could handle. And it also gives us account after account of the Lord God rescuing and walking with His people during those problematic times.

Case in point: the account of Jesus walking on the sea. We read the account from Matthew 14, Mark 6, and John 6. By putting the three accounts together, we are able to see the BIG picture.

Jesus sent the disciples on their way across the lake, while He went up the mountain to pray. During the night He saw the disciples straining at the oars. This was a miraculous thing since it was not only dark, but they were in the middle of the lake, approximately 3.5 miles away at the time. How good is your eyesight? Not that good!

They had been struggling since evening. These grown men rowed four, five, maybe even six or seven hours—not just 10 minutes. That’s when Jesus strolled out to them, across the top of the water. After the incident with Peter taking a few steps on the water, then sinking and being rescued, Jesus got into the boat; and they immediately reached shore.

Please understand that this isn’t just a cute story about something Jesus did “once upon a time.”

God sees us struggling in the storms of life, too. Physical storms. Financial storms. Occupational storms. Mental storms. Emotional storms. Marital storms. Relational storms. Take your pick. Precisely when we’re helpless, He comes to us and gets in the boat with us. We may not reach the shore immediately as the disciples did that day, but we won’t be fighting the waves



alone. We will be in the boat with the One who controls the wind and the waves, the One who keeps us upright even while the storm is raging all around us.

So, if today you’re hanging by a thread, just remember Who holds the spool. He is the One who holds power over life and death. He is the Risen Lord of the empty tomb. And if you’re in the middle of smooth sailing, pray for your struggling friends or hop in the boat with them and take the oars for an hour or two.

We all struggle with life now and then. (If not, check and make sure you still have a pulse.) But we don’t struggle alone. God is either watching from the shore or walking to us on the water or already in the boat. Just remember He is in control of the storm and His timing is perfect. Don’t fight Him, and don’t miss Him. Cling to Him. He’s there—for you! ✠

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By Kim Bestian
Director of Children's Ministry

Thank you for participating along with K.I.P. (Kids in Prayer club), grades 4-6, as you placed the names of those needing healing on the cross this Lent. It made a deep impression on the children. Thanks be to God that He always listens to our prayers.

We were privileged to watch and sing along with the Ascension children, Kids' Praise Choir, as they dressed up in *Bible time* clothes on Palm Sunday and sang praises to Jesus waving their palm branches. Andrew Burchfield represented Jesus as he brought in a stuffed donkey for us to remember that first Palm Sunday so long ago.

The day before Easter, many people came to Ascension to celebrate the victory of Jesus over evil! A big thanks to everyone who served our Lord by helping or participating in the 6th annual New Life Festival! Thank you to those of you who brought the purchased items needed

and those who brought their friends and family. The center leaders and child guides did an outstanding job! Thanks to pastor Bestian for leading the adult and teen video center. Those who attended had a great experience learning how the butterfly is such a marvelous reminder of our Lord's resurrection! Thanks to the Interpretative Liturgical Dancers for dressing up as butterflies and expressing their faith as they fluttered around the cross to the song, *Alive, Alive!* Thank you to those who funded the Mariachi band for the balloon release. It was an uplifting time as our spirits soared! Also, big thanks to everyone who helped decorate and prepare for this event before, and to those who served with the clean up afterwards. The whole morning was a mountain top experience! All glory to God!

To watch the Interpretative Liturgical Dancers on Easter Sunday in the worship services was breathtaking. These four little children presented their praise and faith expression to the song, "Shout to the Lord!" Their preparation for this presentation took many hours of practice over the course of three months. They worked hard and helped us to share in the joy of the resurrection! A big *thank you* to the parents for their help and support. This ministry, at Ascension, is in its forth year.

June 3-6 will be our Friends and Family Night Vacation Bible School. Planning began last Thanksgiving and will continue on throughout this month of May, as we get ready for this great outreach event. Be watching for ways you can serve the Lord and pray for this ministry. Think about who you would like to invite to come along with you! It is quickly approaching and will be here before you know it. Such a great opportunity to share Jesus with people of all ages since it offers something for everyone at every age! You are invited to help on Saturday, June 1, for decorating the sanctuary for the big V.B.S. kick off Sunday June 2! Watch for more information to come.

The *Treats for Tots*, during worship, is in need of more *plain* Cheerios! If you would like to donate a box for this ministry, please deliver your unopened box of this brand of cereal to Kim Bestian or the church office. Please no *flavors*—just plain. Thank you!

Summer Sunday School for pre-school through just completed 6th grade children will begin June 2 in the children's wing of the Ascension building. The focus will be on the Ten Commandments! Be sure to bring your children. "Let the little children come!"

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FRIENDS AND FAMILY
VACATION
BIBLE SCHOOL



JUNE 3-6, 2019
6:30 - 8:15 PM

Dinner will be served at 5:45 PM

For **more info** or to **register**, go online to **www.ALConnect.faith**
or call the Church Office at **(915) 833-1009**.



Ascension
LUTHERAN CHURCH

6520 Loma de Cristo Drive • El Paso, Texas 79912 • (915) 833-1009 • ALConnect.faith

Pray with Expectation



How often do you find yourself praying? Right before you take a test? Before you walk on to the court or field? When you wake up, when you go to sleep, before your meal? Do you pray when you're in need or hurting? Do you pray when you're happy and full of joy? In the good times as well as the bad?

There's so many times and circumstances when we have the opportunity to pray—to reach out and connect with our Heavenly Father through a means given to us by our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now, let me ask you this—when you pray, how do you pray? Do you pray believing? Do you pray with expectation?

When expectation is involved, there is no doubt or fear, because you know the work has been

done. You expect to get a perfect score for a test you studied hard for. You expect to win a game you've practiced hard for. Expectation is what gives us the drive and determination to do all we can to get the outcome we want.

Many times, we find ourselves offering up prayers without expectation. It's become a one-sided conversation because we don't think God is going to answer those prayers. We ask without believing, we seek without hope, and we knock without expecting an answer. Our prayers only go as far as the ceiling above us, or so we think.

*“Therefore I tell you,
whatever you ask for in
prayer, believe that you
have received it, and it
will be yours.”*

Mark 11:24

Learn to pray with expectation, at all times. Not because you believe you'll always get what you want, but because you know, with

absolute certainty, the work has been done so your prayer can be heard.

Pray with the expectation of God's will—His way and His time. Pray with the expectation He will always love you and will guide you to a better place you can possibly imagine. Pray with the expectation it all matters to Him—because if you mattered enough for His Son to be given over to death for your sins, then all things in your life, big or small, matter to Him.

Praying with expectation is praying with trust, praying with faith, praying with love. It's a no holds barred, no walls up kind of way to pray. When you pray with expectation, you reach out and connect with God in a way that helps you grow as His child, no matter the answer. Because your expectation will remind you, no matter what happens, God will hear your prayer and will always give you what is best for you, no matter what.



Greater Things

2019 Youth Mission Trip!

Furthering the Kingdom of God through simple acts of kindness!

Secure Your Spot!

Ask Luz for more information!

1st Payment of \$150 to be made by May 19



June 3 - 6, 2019
5:30 pm—8:30 pm

Family and Friends Night Vacation Bible School

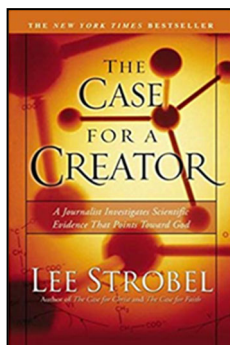
Youth, sign up to help!

This is an amazing opportunity to share God's love through fun, music, and fellowship!

Teens Bible Study Series

God's Word states, "In the beginning..." Science teaches evolution without a beginning...

We are delving further into Scripture and science, where our youth will encounter the mind-stretching discoveries from cosmology, cellular biology, DNA research, astronomy, physics, and human consciousness presented as astonishing evidence in Lee Strobel's *The Case for a Creator*.



May 2019



Sundays

9:15 - 10:15 am

Continuing

The Case for A Creator

May 5

May 12

May 19

May 26

All junior & senior youth will meet in the YOUTH ROOM for Sunday Morning Bible Study.

Contact Info:

Luz M. Soto, DYM

(915) 219-1686

luzsoto07@gmail.com

Sunday Morning Bible Study

Family Bible Hour: Pastor Bestian will continue the study on the Book of Acts Sundays at 9:15 a.m. All members & friends of Ascension are encouraged to attend.

Men's Bible Study

Men's Saturday Breakfast and Bible Study: this group meets every Saturday at 8:00 a.m. at the church. They recently started the Lutheran Hour Ministries study, "Explaining All the Scary Stuff in Revelation."

Tuesday Night : This group meets every Tuesday at the church at 6:00 p.m. The current study is, "Noah: The Man, The Ark, The Flood"



Ladies' Bible Study

Woman-to-Woman: This group meets Tuesday morning at the church at 10:30 a.m. They continue the Bible study "Family Trees & Olive Branches." The final two meetings are May 14 and 21. and they will resume in September.

Tuesday Evening: Tuesday evening Ladies Bible Study resumed on April 30th with a video based study of *Hebrews, The Nearness King Jesus* by Lisa Harper. We meet at 6:30 p.m. at the DeMartelaere home. Session dates are: May 7, 14; June 4, 11, 25; July 2. For more information contact Anita Werner at (915) 494.2335.

Thursday Morning: This group meets at the Schlak home at 9:45 a.m. They are doing a study on the book of Ecclesiastes.

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



Samaritan's Purse Reminder



When you travel and are staying at a motel, hotel or resort, please remember to bring the unused complimentary toiletries back with you. They can then be placed in the Samaritan's Purse box at church. The box is on the Board of Christian Services table in the Fellowship Hall. The items will then be taken to the Women's Shelter.

Preschool Spring Program



May is always a busy month in a school setting, and that's no exception in our preschool! Our students are preparing for the spring program to be held on Friday, May 10 at 10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. There is nothing quite like watching 2, 3, and 4-year-olds perform for their family and friends—our little ones are quite the showmen! If you need a boost of positivity or just reason to smile, please join us for this most entertaining event! Refreshments will follow in Fellowship Hall.

Board of Christian Service



**Ysleta Lutheran Mission
Human Care**

The Board of Christian Service will **collect paper products for Ysleta Lutheran Mission and Opportunity Center on alternating months..** Paper towels, paper plates, napkins, toilet paper, etc are suggested donations—please be generous!

Items can be placed on the appropriate table in the Fellowship Hall.

**MANAGING GOD'S RESOURCES
IS A HIGH, HOLY, AND
SIGNIFICANT CALLING.**

"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2).



**Finance
Update**

Treasurer's Report

Approved Council Minutes are sent to Ascension members with the Friday e-mail when they are received by the Church Office. Please call 833-1009 to request a copy of the minutes.

Treasurer's Report: 2019 Income & Expense Statement [March]

		March	YTD	Budget
Income:	Offerings	\$28,450.53	\$ 73,463.89	\$ 75,075.00
	Other Income	\$ 5,408.93	\$ 15,293.84	\$ 12,893.73
	Total	\$33,859.46	\$ 88,757.73	\$ 87,968.73
Expense:		\$33,527.13	\$ 91,847.62	\$ 96,380.55
Raise The Roof				
	Donations - 2019	\$ 6,108.46	\$ 18,675.46	
	Total 2017-2018		\$ 124,992.00	

Starting Over: Angalia's Story



Angalia is 24 years old. She lives in Nairobi, Kenya, where she makes her living selling secondhand clothes. But her former way of life was much different.

Like too many young Kenyan women, Angalia turned to prostitution to survive. Not only did that career prove insufficient to pay her monthly bills, it left her feeling guilty. She distanced herself from attending church as she had during childhood. Now she felt unworthy of returning.

One day, during a chance encounter, someone invited Angalia to a monthly fellowship activity hosted by Lutheran Hour Ministries-Kenya. She continued to attend. After several visits, she felt the Lord nudging her to separate herself from prostitution.

Angalia participated in Reaching Rahab, an LHM program that helps young women escape prostitution

through vocational training. Soon she had the skills she needed to run her own small secondhand clothing business, her current endeavor. She also completed our Bible Correspondence Courses, which helped her mature in her rediscovered faith.

"I am happy that God by his grace has saved and transformed my life," Angalia says. "My family has accepted me back, and now I have a sense of acceptance and belonging."

Thank you for your loving support. Your prayers and giving enable LHM to share Christ's comfort with individuals like Angalia—in Kenya, the United States, and around the globe.

Source: Lutheran Hour Ministries

Member Spotlight—Ascension is Proud of You, Kendra!

Wanda and Leo Melendez recently traveled with their daughter, Kendra, as she prepared to participate in the Boston Marathon. What an experience it was, filled with pride, as they greeted Kendra at the finish line. Kendra exceeded her last year's time by 9 minutes—what an accomplishment! The following paragraph describes her "run" and tells us of her life following graduation from UT Austin last spring.

"For 26.2 grueling miles, through the streets of Boston, over 30,000 runners took to the streets for the world's oldest marathon, uniting not just a city, but a worldwide community of runners. All 50 U.S. states and 118 countries were represented. I'm in awe of the magic, history, and spirit of this race. So grateful I got to be a part of it—took it all in! I smiled at the spectators, gave all the high-fives, and threw up my Horns anytime someone yelled

'GO TEXAS'. Here's to another personal best, another Boston Marathon and another BQ (Boston Qualifier) in my pocket! I feel so blessed! Thank you for all your support and prayers Ascension Lutheran Church.

I currently work in Dallas and work for ISNetworld which is a contractor software company. We are a third party company that works with contractors in prequalifying them to work with their client. We do this by reviewing their health and safety documents. The contractors submit this to our online platform, ISNetworld, to view they are safety certified and qualified. I work with a team of individuals to ensure contractors are compliant with their clients' requirements."

-Kendra Melendez



Stewardship Minute—God's Draft Choices

Two of the most highly watched sporting events on television are not when teams or athletes are competing against each other; rather they involve the drafting of players for the National Football League (NFL) and National Basketball Association (NBA) teams. For many hours, fans of professional sports will watch intently to see whom their favorite teams will draft.

Most of us won't be drafted by professional football or basketball teams, but, as Christians, we receive a greater calling. We, in essence, are God's draft choices. *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit"* (John 15: 16). God has made us a part of His team. We are not chosen by God because we are successful in our careers, great athletes, or wealthy. God chooses ordinary people to do extra-ordinary things. *"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not nullify the things that are"* (I Corinthians 1 :27-28).

Through faith, we understand that we are among the foolish and weak through whom God carries on his life-saving work. *"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us"* (2 Corinthians 4:7). God entrusts us—clay jars—with this treasure—the Gospel. Even though we are frail and unworthy of our tasks, God has chosen us to carry His message of love to the world. As humble people of faith, we are empowered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He transforms and molds us. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone; the new has come!"* (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is God



Who does the drafting and the changing. Through faith, we will stay on God's team, and we will bear the fruit that He calls us to bear.

The professional athletes who are drafted are expected to perform. They are paid large sums of money to do very athletic things. As God's chosen people, we may not receive large compensation but our benefits are out of this world! Therefore, we are eager to use our lives and resources in God's service for His glory. Paul wrote, *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"* (Ephesians 2; 10). What a privilege it is to be part of and serving on God's winning team!

PrayerTime



PrayerTime takes place every first Sunday of the month. Please join us as we each pray silently for the many prayers received in the church. You may come to the altar or pray in the pew as well. **The next PrayerTime dates are May 5 and June 2 from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.**

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



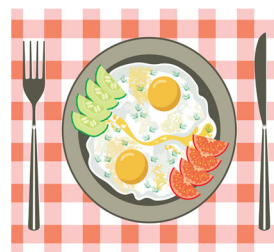
Remember that you can donate used clothing and other household items to the Mission's Thrift Store, the proceeds of which go to help the work of the Mission. You can put your donations in the container located in the Fellowship Hall; the Ysleta Mission staff will pick up the donations.

Prayer Chain



Prayer Chain of Ascension is composed of congregational members who have agreed to pray for members and non-members concerns. Prayer requests can be sent to Olga Sullivan (phone chain—581-1450) or Jan Schlak (e-mail chain—oveja6925@aol.com), and they will activate the Prayer Chain. Contact Olga or Jan to be a part of the prayer chain ministry 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.**

Mercy Meals



These volunteers bring meals to families of Ascension who need assistance. The church office will get in touch with the group's leader when they hear of a home that needs assistance. If you have a need, please call the church office at 833-1009.

Altar Care Committee



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. Anyone who would like to serve the Lord in this capacity may contact the Church Office at 833-1009.

Altar Care for May
8:00 a.m.: Candy Gebler
10:30 a.m.: Tuchenhausen/Schmalz

Premier Designs Jewelry
 Marjory Brady, Consultant
 (915) 799-7898
marjybrady.mypremierdesigns.com

Luz M. Soto
Professional Writing Services
 (915) 219-1686
luzsoto07@gmail.com

Taylor Kahre
 Dandelion Bay Clothing Boutique
 (812) 760-3393
DandelionBay.com

Keri Howell
Young Living Essential Oils
 (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.



Please e-mail the church office at alc6520@swbell.net you would like your business listed here.



May 4

10:00 am Board of Children's Ministry

May 5

11:30 am Board of Youth Ministry

5:00 pm PrayerTime

May 8

12:15 pm Board of Preschool

May 9

7:00 pm Board of Elders

May 10

10:00 am Preschool Spring Program

May 11

9:00 am Board of Christian Education

10:00 am LWML Brunch & Bible Study

May 12—Mother's Day

9:00 am Board of Christian Service

11:30 am Board of Evangelism

May 16

10:00 am Preschool Graduation

3:00 pm June/July Newsletter Article Deadline

6:30 pm Ladies Night Out (State Line Restaurant)

May 18—Armed Forces Day

9:00 am Board of Stewardship

May 21

7:00 pm Church Council

May 26

9:00 am Library Open House

Weekly Events

Sun: Worship @ 8:00 & 10:30 am
(Communion on 1st & 3rd Sundays)
Family Bible Hour @ 9:15 am
Confirmation @ 11:30 am

Tue: 10:30 am Woman-to-Woman Bible Study, church
6:00 pm Men's Bible Study, church
6:30 pm Women's Bible Study, Wade home
6:45 pm Boy Scouts

Wed: 8:45 am Preschool Chapel
10:00 am Weight Watchers Meeting
6:30 pm Choir Rehearsal

Thu: 9:45 am Women's Bible Study, Schlak home

Sat: 8:00 am Men's Bible Study & Breakfast, church

**If you're not sure or don't have a schedule already,
please call the church office at (915) 833-1009 to verify
if a specific Bible Study is being held that week.*



Our Staff

Pastor:

Rev. Brian R. Bestian

Director of Children's Ministry:

Kim Bestian

Director of Youth Ministry:

Luz Soto

Preschool Director:

Marhel Cueva

Music Director/Organist:

Ruth Ann Ostergren

Office Administrator:

Lynn Burchfield

Tender Care Nursery Attendant:

Haleigh Gonzales

Custodian:

Gail and David Regalado



Articles for the
June/July 2019
newsletter are due
**Thursday,
May 16.**



Our Sunday Schedule

Worship: 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

Coffee Fellowship: 9:00 a.m.

Family Bible Hour: 9:15 a.m.