



Connections

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

“CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY TO CHRIST!”

Pastor's Desk

Table of Contents

Page 1-3

Pastor's Desk
Children's Ministry

Page 4 - 5

Stewardship Minute
Treasurer's Report
Board of Christian Service
Serving Together

Page 6-7

Altar Care Committee
“Worship Anew”
Men's Resources
Ysleta Lutheran Thrift
Prayer Chain
Mercy Meals
PrayerTime
Business Listings

Page 8-9

Bible Study Opportunities
Missions News

Page 10-11

Activities Page
Upcoming Events Calendar

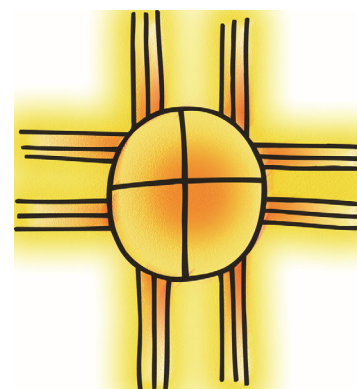
Over the past few decades, Libertarians in America regularly sound frantic alarms about government surveillance, secret wire-taps, data mining, and spy drones. We love our privacy in this country. We don't like “Big Brother” or anyone else for that matter watching over our shoulders. Technology companies don't ever want to let government agents into the data in their smartphones. Such a breach raises a great outcry.

Do you realize that God knows absolutely everything about you? In fact, He knows even the deepest thoughts of your heart. God said to Samuel, “Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7). And He doesn't need technology to accomplish it. Does that scare you? Or does that reassure you? God's eyes see it all, His ears hear it all, and His infinite RAM capacity is greater than all the servers on earth linked together. The Lord sees and knows it all!

The psalmist says, “From heaven the LORD looks

down and sees all mankind; from His dwelling place He watches all who live on earth” (Ps. 33:13-14). That's actually good news for believers. You may think of yourself as pretty small and insignificant—just another grain of sand on life's seashore. Compared to the trillions of stars in each of the trillions of galaxies in the limitless universe, you and I are, well, pretty microscopic indeed. But, in God's eyes, we are not insignificant! God pays close attention to every trivial detail, to everything about you. “You know when I sit and when I rise . . . Before a word is on my tongue You know it completely” (Ps. 139:2, 4).

The Lord God planned you from all eternity. He designed your shape. He loaded gifts and abilities into your DNA. He placed you in a unique location on earth. He chose you to be His very own. He cleansed you of your sin through your Baptism, and now has taken up residence in you—*personally*. He watches everything you do and say and think. And He takes immense delight



in your growth and development. “See, I have engraved you on the palms of My hands” (Is. 49:16).

That's how much you matter to the supreme Lord of the universe. It is a comfort for us to know that God sees us. When Hagar, Sarah's maid, was in distress, she said: “You are the God who sees me” (Gen. 16:13). God sees you and is aware of your needs, your afflictions, and your weaknesses. And these move Him to compassion.

All of this is possible because of Christ Jesus. We are God-reconciled, recognized children. We cannot see God with our natural eyes, but He sees us and provides for us, protects us, and will someday bring us to heaven, where we shall know all things and see Him face to face. ✠

6520 Loma de Cristo Drive
El Paso, TX 79912-7301
Office: (915) 833-1009
Fax: (915) 581-3216
Preschool: (915) 833-4849
alc6520@swbell.net
www.alconnect.faith



CHILDREN'S Ministry NEWS

By Kim Bestian
Director of Children's Ministry

It was a *roaring* good time at the 2019 **Friends and Family Night Vacation Bible School** in June! From the two-year-old class, on through the elementary children, up to the teen and adult Bible class, faith nurture was evident! The meals were delicious while active fellowship and new friendships were formed. Cool air filled the African themed building for comfort in this early summer outreach evening event. Openings and Closings were full of joyous praise to God, inspirational faith object lessons, and opportunity for giving back to God through missions. We rejoice in those who participated, sponsored items, and served to share about Jesus. It was a great blessing to have Ascension members attend and welcome guests to partner with them during those four nights. Thank you again to all of you who answered God's call at Ascension to help *Connect the Community to Christ* through V.B.S!

The newly dedicated Ascension Library is a great place to come and bring your children to check out

books, CDs, and videos. The **Kid's Corner**, along with the rest of the library, is open Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. and Sunday mornings. Many adventures can be found in the pages of the books on the shelves. In the Kid's Corner, you will find children's Christian books and other resources not found in the public library. Treat yourself and your children!

The **Little Church Book for Parents** is located in the worship resource area by the blue children's worship bags and other worship supplies for families. This free pamphlet is offered as *worship help* for parents to be a wonderful blessing. It contains *Parent's Top Questions About Worship (But were afraid to ask!)* Pick up yours today!

New **Kid's Sermon sheets** are available by the *Sermon Scribble* papers, in the worship resource area, for elementary kids to use during the pastor's message. This partners with parents and their children in worship time for growing in listening skills and Christian family faith discussions.

There are a few more Sundays for **Summer Sunday School!** It has been a wonderful gathering time for the children to learn more about the Ten Commandments. Many of our congregational members have volunteered to teach while giving our regu-

lar Sunday School teachers a chance to take vacations and attend the Sunday morning adult Bible class. Our youth director, Luz Soto, has been working with our teens to help them learn ways to teach Sunday School lessons to children. It will help these youth have a foundation to grow on for becoming future Sunday School teachers. A big *thank you* to all our Summer Sunday School servant leaders!

Rally Day/Sunday School Jump Day will be held **Sunday, August 25**. The theme for the 2019-2020 Christian education year is **"With Hearts and Hands and Voices!"** This covers the whole body of Christ and how we work together in harmony and unity while equipping the saints for building up! (1 Corinthians 12:12-31 and Ephesians 4:12) The children and youth will meet in the sanctuary during the Sunday School hour that day, and *jump up* to their new class. They will also practice their special song for the worship service. Parents, please have your children attend Sunday School in August. We will be preparing for this worship song presentation along with the Bible lessons. An all-church *picnic potluck* will follow the service, complete with games and fellowship fun for celebrating the privilege of growing in God's Word together!



“It was a *roaring* good time at the 2019 Friends and Family Night Vacation Bible School in June! From the two-year-old class, on through the elementary children, up to the teen and adult Bible class, faith nurture was evident!”

Summer
Sunday
School

Fear, Love & Trust

Following God's
Commandments

June 2 – August 25, 2019
9:15 – 10:15 am

Children's Christian Education Wing Ascension
LUTHERAN CHURCH

©2019 Loma de Cristo Drive • El Paso, Texas 79912 • (915) 833-1009 • AlConnect faith

Summer Sunday School will be in the Fellowship Hall through August 18 and then children and youth will meet in the Sanctuary for Rally Day on August 25.

NEW Resources
for Children
& Parents!



**The Little Church Book
for Parents**
Ascension Lutheran Children's Ministry

Ascension Lutheran Church
6620 Loma de Cristo Drive • El Paso, TX 79912
Church Office (915) 833-1009



Stewardship Minute—Are You Saving for Retirement?



From the wisdom of Solomon, God shows us the wisdom of ants that save their provisions (Proverbs 6:6). With our anemic personal savings rate in this country of approximately 1.5%, we may be showing less wisdom than the ants. The Bureau of Labor Statistics

reports that, in 20 years, there will be a \$45 billion retirement income shortfall for retirement.

One of our top financial goals should be a comfortable retirement. To live comfortably during retirement, we can project that we will need approximately 80% of our pre-retirement income. This income will come from Social Security, pensions, and private savings. For most people, Social Security benefits will provide approximately one-third of their retirement needs. An im-

portant calculation that should be made is to determine the amount of an income gap or shortfall that we will have after we subtract social security benefits from our desired annual retirement income. The annual income gap will have to be covered by pension income or savings.

One of the greatest obstacles to a savings program for retirement is procrastination. We fall into the trap of telling ourselves that retirement is a long way off, so we will start saving next month. The problem is that next month never comes. Procrastination is detrimental, because it eats up the time that money can be put to work for us.

As a general rule of thumb, if we start saving for retirement in our 20s, we can set aside close to 10% of our incomes and have sufficient funds for retirement. As Solomon wrote, “. . . he who gathers money little by little makes it grow” (Proverbs 13:11). However, if we wait till we are in our 40s, our saving rate will have to increase to 30% or more.

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 [June]

		June	YTD	Budget
Income:	Offerings	\$ 27,462.12	\$ 145,434.04	\$ 150,150.00
	Other Income	\$ 4,667.87	\$ 28,042.12	\$ 25,681.46
	Total	\$32,129.99	\$173,476.16	\$ 175,831.46
Expense:		\$33,806.25	\$193,037.51	\$ 192,872.70
	Raise The Roof			
	Donations - 2019	\$ 4,472.00	\$ 32,319.46	
	2019 - Other		\$ 7,656.30	
	Total 2017-2018		\$ 124,992.00	
	Total		\$ 164,967.76	

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.

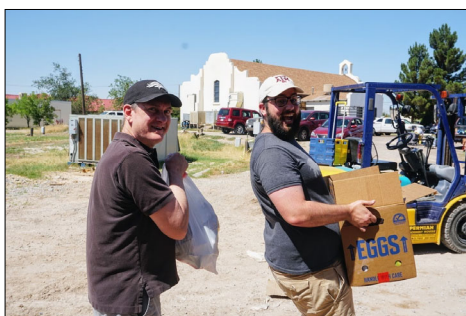
Ascension Members Practice Stewardship of Their Time



It was a small group of six who came from Ascension Lutheran Church, located on the West side of El Paso, to help serve on Friday morning by putting together over 200 food baskets to give out for the weekly food distribution on Saturday morning. After a bit of translation, Marisa De Santiago, one of YLM's long-time volunteers, had them all organized and working hard, everything set out assembly line style for us.

"That's a lot of food they're getting," Barb Spott, a long-time member of Ascension Lutheran and chair of the Board of Stewardship, commented as she set out bags of rice, lentils, beans, and walnuts along the length of the table where food is grouped for over 25 bags at a time. With each food 'basket' containing cereal, rice, beans (three different kinds), lentils, peanut butter, walnuts, and other sundry items meant to last for a week or two, it did indeed seek like a lot of food—and that wasn't counting the extra items stored in the small walk-in refrigerator in the back of the YLM Dining Hall, all of which were to be given out on Saturday!

At the end three hours, the count had been lost and the smiles had grown despite the heat, weariness and dirty hands left behind. "That was a lot of work," Mariann, another long-term member of Ascension, stated as she gave a tired smile, "But it was definitely rewarding."



The rewards of service continued for this group the next morning, when thirteen of them showed up early and eager to get to work in helping with the distribution set to start at 10 in the morning. After a brief tour of the YLM campus, as several of them had never been there before, they were all surprised and full of questions regarding all that is done at YLM and through YLM. Settling in to wait for the warehouse to open, they watched as people started lining up along either side of the closed warehouse door.

The quick distribution of jobs and explanation on how the distribution was to take place, everyone got to work, handing

out food baskets with big smiles, along with eggs, watermelon, corn on the cob and frozen pulled pork. Several of the men made trip after trip to vehicles, carrying boxes heavy with food. Despite the inability to communicate due to language barriers, smiles and head nods were enough to translate into gratitude and compassion.

These volunteers witnessed as person after person—young, elderly, with children and with disabilities—walked away with heavy loads and big smiles. Those who stayed within the warehouse kept the flow of food baskets and extra food items moving at a steady pace for the two-line system set up by Marisa De Santiago.

At the end of it all, everyone was exhausted, not to mention dirty, but each and every one of them had a smile full of joy and accomplishment.

"I've already had people come up to me to let me know they would like to participate the next time we do this. Those who went want to do it again, as well," Spott shared the Sunday after this service-full weekend, "And we definitely want to do this again."



Rev. Bestian, Pastor at Ascension Lutheran, explained why the Board of Stewardship had taken on this endeavor of volunteering time and talent at YLM, "Stewardship is more than responsibly managing money or giving money to those in need. Stewardship is also about managing and giving of our time, our talents and skills. It's about giving all we are, and not just what we have, to our neighbor in need. YLM is a wonderful place to be able to put our faith into action, where we can be missionaries to the people living in our very own backyard!"

At YLM, there's definitely so many opportunities to be missionaries to others through the hard work of our hands, the loving compassion of our hearts seen through our smiles, and the joyful thanks of our service for we've been greatly blessed beyond the material things we own. This wonderful group from Ascension Lutheran Church in West El Paso, Texas are not the first, nor will they be the last, to walk away with dirty hands and happy hearts.

Source: ylm.org



Answer Jesus's Call to Serve Him on the Altar Care Committee

Altar Care



Jesus is looking for people to serve on the Altar Care (Guild) Committee. **He needs people to serve for the following months:**

- December 2019 (10:30 a.m. service)
- February 2020 (8:00 a.m. service)
- July 2020 (10:30 a.m. service)
- August 2020 (10:30 a.m. service)
- December 2020 (10:30 a.m. service)

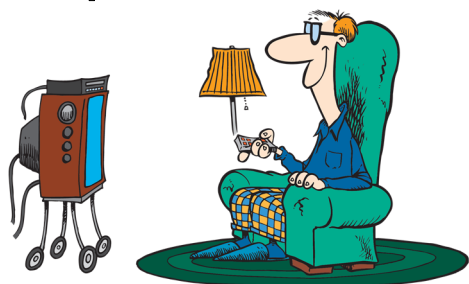
Being a part of this committee is very rewarding. We ensure that the Altar is prepared for all services so that our Lord is glorified by a proper Altar setting. In signing up for Altar Care, you will be given instructions both personally and given a handout. This is a great opportunity for couples to serve together.

To answer Jesus's call to serve Him preparing His Altar, please contact the church office or Mary Rosenbaum at (915) 219-7156 or (920) 904-6279.

FYI & ANNOUNCEMENTS



"Worship Anew"



There is a TV program called "Worship Anew" and it's produced by Lutheran Ministries Media which is based on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary 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.

Men's Resources



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 lhm-men.com. You will need to register and create a password; there are no fees to be a part of this resource.

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.

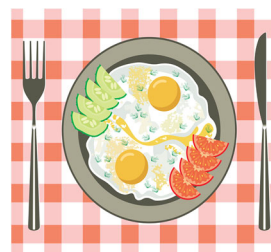


Prayer Chain



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 for August

8:00 a.m.: Wayne & Mariann Porter
10:30 a.m.: Melanie Gallagher/Mary Rosenbaum

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 August 4 & September 1 from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.**



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

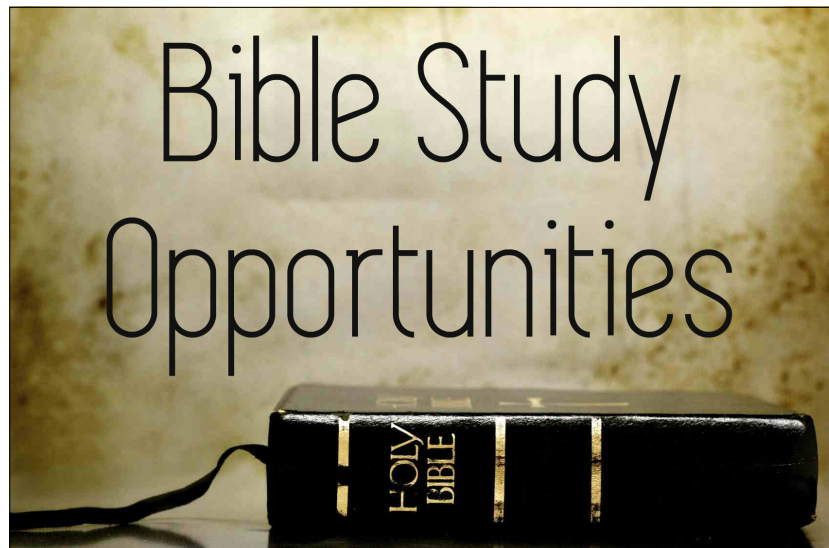
Premier Designs Jewelry
 Marjory Brady, Consultant
 (915) 799-7898
marjybrady.mypremierdesigns.com

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



Sunday Morning Bible Study

Family Bible Hour:

We will continue the "Drive Thru History – The Gospels" video series in the Sanctuary during Family Bible Hour at 9:15 a.m. (*Through August 18*)

Pastor Bestian will continue the study on the Book of Acts beginning on August 25 in the Fellowship Hall. All members & friends of Ascension are encouraged to attend!

Men's Bible Study

Men's Saturday Breakfast and Bible Study: This group will resume meeting in September every Saturday at 8:00 a.m. at the church.

Tuesday Night : This group meets every Tuesday at the church at 6:00 p.m. They will begin the study "Stuff They Didn't Teach Me in Sunday School" on September 3.

Women's Bible Study

Woman-to-Woman: This group will resume meeting in September on Tuesday morning at 10:30 a.m. at the church.

Tuesday Evening: Tuesday evening Ladies Bible Study will begin a video-based study on September 10, "The Faithful: Heroes of the Old Testament" which borrows from five different best-selling studies. Please call or text Anita Werner at (915) 494-2335 to confirm your participation and order your study book.

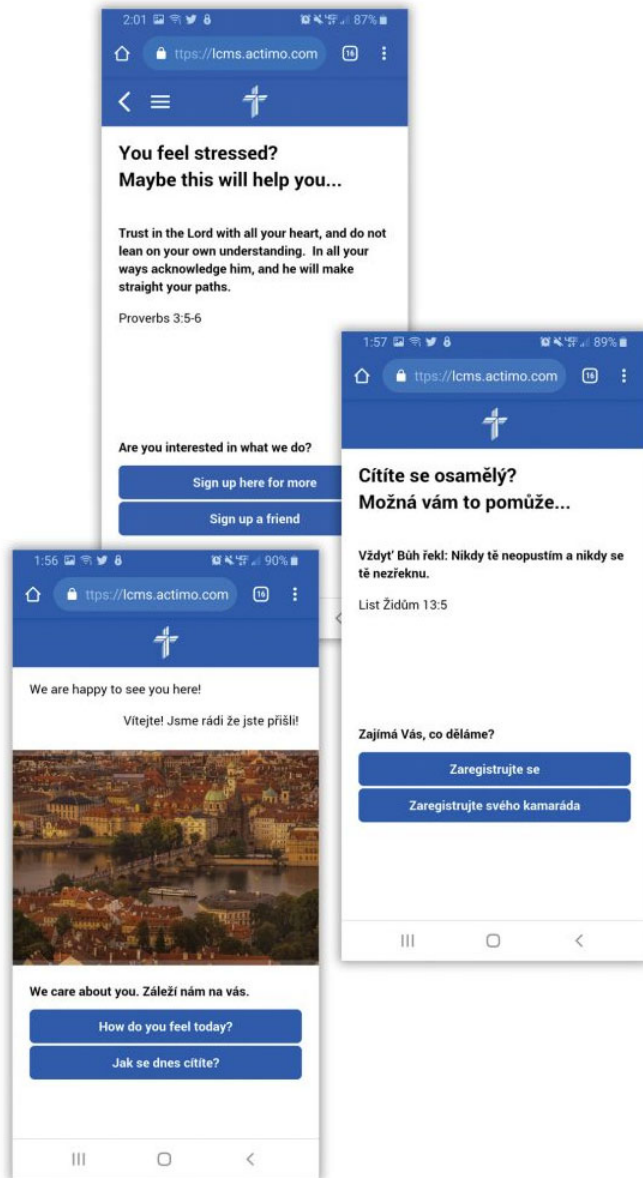
Thursday Morning: The Thursday a.m. Bible study will begin a study of James on Thursday, September 12, 9:45 a.m. at the Schlak home.

Please call the office if you need information or an address for a Bible study.

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



There's an App for That: Sharing the Gospel in the Czech Republic



The command sounds simple. The task is hard.

In Prague, Czech Republic, most Czechs avoid eye contact and conversation, especially with people who don't speak their difficult language. On buses, trams and metros, people plug into their mobile devices with earbuds and headphones.

Furthermore, nearly 80% of Czechs identify as atheists. Even the pastors of the Evangelical Church of the

Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic (ECAVvCR) describe Czechs as suspicious and un-

trusting.

How do you share the Gospel with people who are so disconnected? How do you build relationships or even start conversations when people are tuned out?

While looking for ways to connect with their neighbors, ECAVvCR pastors and an LCMS missionary came up with the idea of using technology to share the Gospel. The resultant Czech Prayer App, currently being pilot-tested, asks the user how they feel today, and then connects them to Scripture passages that address those emotions.

local Lutheran church, or email a pastor with any questions.

The app was designed to reach Czech people, although users can choose English or Czech—the two languages used in the Lutheran church in Prague. Since most Czechs have never attended a church service before, the app's church information section explains the basics—what to wear, the parts of the service and so on—so that there are no surprises.

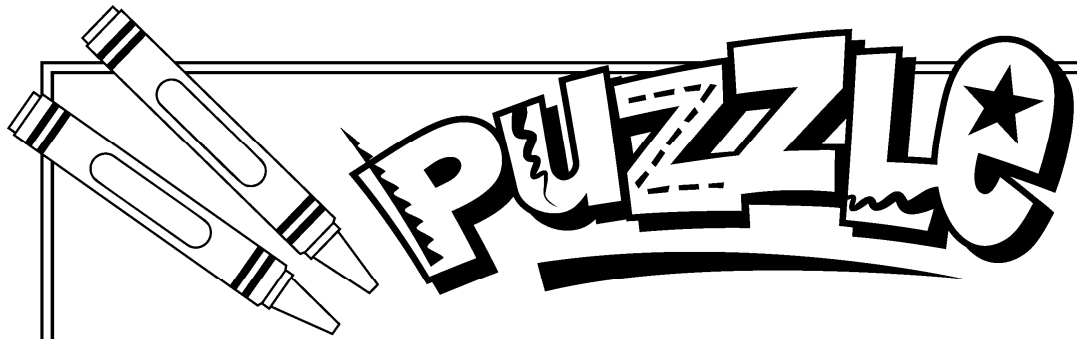
Congregation members are distributing cards with QR codes to access the app in various locations around Prague, including at coffee shops and cafes. Users can also share the app with friends and family. Free Bibles are available for pickup at the church each week, with a bilingual Czech pastor or deacon on hand to welcome newcomers and answer questions.

The pilot test runs through October 2019 and will continue if there is enough interest and available funding. The technology for the mobile app is simple. The power of God's Word completes the task.

Source: by Cindy Zirbel Wrucke; Lutherans Engage magazine

But technology is not a substitute for the church. If an app only allows people to access Scripture and prayer, how do they connect with a Lutheran church, where they can be baptized and instructed in the faith?

That's why the new app offers a variety of ways to take the next step. After reading the supplied Scripture passages, users can request a free Bible, sign up to have a daily Scripture verse or prayer sent to their mobile device, find information about the



GOD'S MORNING ROUTINE

Every new day, we wake up to blessings from God.

Directions: Use the clues to fill in the words. Then write the boxed letters in order below to complete Lamentations 3:22-23, NIV.

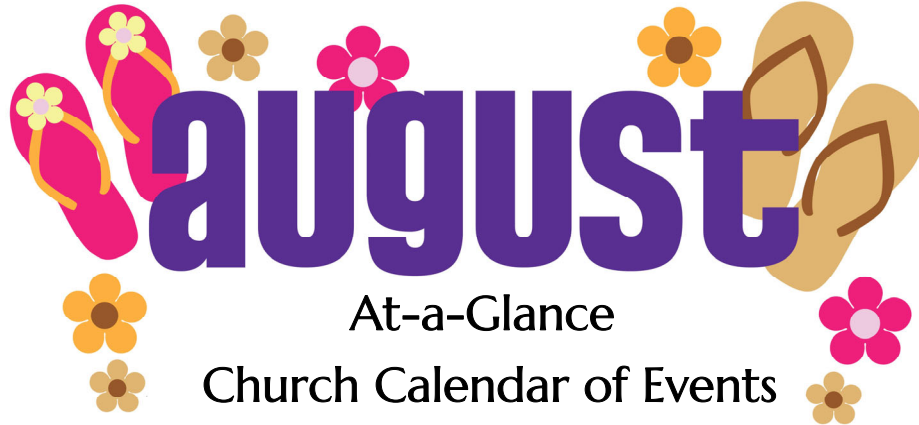
- Brush these daily _ _ _ _ _
- Do this to your shoes _ _
- This rises in the east _ _
- Cold breakfast food _ _ _ _ _
- Hot breakfast food _ _ _ _ _
- Talk to God _ _ _
- Morning meal _ _ _ _ _ _ _
- Extend your limbs _ _ _ _ _
- Fruit drink _ _ _ _
- Waffle machine _ _
- Eat these scrambled or fried _ _ _



Because of the LORD's great love...
 never fail. They are
 new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23, NIV

Answer: teeth, tie, sun, cereal, oatmeal, pray, breakfast, stretch, juice, iron, eggs; his compassions



August 3

9:00 am Board of Christian Education
10:00 am Board of Children's Ministry

August 4

Reception of New Members
12:00 pm Congregation Meeting
5:00 pm PrayerTime

August 8

7:00 pm Board of Elders

August 11

9:00 am Board of Christian Service
9:15 am Youth Mission Presentation
11:30 am Board of Evangelism

August 14

9:00 am Board of Preschool

August 15

3:00 pm September calendar updates & newsletter articles due in office
6:30 pm Ladies Night Out (Great American—701 S. Mesa Hills Dr.)

August 17

9:00 am Board of Stewardship
10:00 am Sunday School Teachers Meeting

August 20

7:00 Church Council Meeting

August 25 (Rally Day)

8:30 am Fellowship Time
8:45 am Family Bible Hour
10:00 am Worship (ONE SERVICE ONLY)
11:00 am Rally Day Picnic & Activities

August 26

First Day of Preschool

August Weekly Events

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

Tue: 6:45 pm Boy Scouts

Wed: 10:00 am Weight Watchers Meeting

**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 event is being held that week.*

CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY TO
CHRIST!

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



Our Sunday Schedule

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

Coffee Fellowship: 9:00 a.m.

Family Bible Hour: 9:15 a.m.