

The Messenger

Ascension Lutheran Church

MISSION: - "As an open and progressive congregation, we boldly make Christ's vision known."

Budget and Election Meeting— December 15, 2024



Our Congregational Budget and Election Meeting will be held on **Sunday, December 15th at 11:30 a.m.** (following our 10:30 a.m. worship service). We will be voting on a budget for 2025 and electing members to fill council vacancies.

Please prayerfully discern the nomination of members to serve on our Congregation Council. The positions available and the nominations are:

Vice President	Lori Schultz
Treasurer	Charleen Boland
Minister of Outreach	Joyce Berg
Minister of Congregational Care	Kristin Kazmierski

Voting Members for Synod Assembly:

2 adults	Stephanie Becker
	Lori Schultz
1 youth/young adult (14-30)	<i>volunteer needed</i>

If you are interested, have questions, or would like to nominate someone please contact a member of the nominating committee, including Gus Hendrickson, Kris Yackel-Friend, and Barb Van Marter.

****Voting Members as defined by the Ascension Lutheran Church Constitution: Confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of this congregation.**

Volume 45, Issue 12

December 2024

Special points of interest:

- *Personal Care items by 12/8*
- *Youth Christmas Party 12/8*
- *Holy Land Christians 12/8*
- *Giving Envelopes pg 8*
- *Band Concert 12/14*
- *Congregational Mtg 12/15*
- *Blood Drive 12/19*
- *Year End Deadline –Deposits & Receipts 12/30*

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Message From Pastor Julie

Living Thankful Lives



She was young, betrothed. They were waiting for the customary time to get married, but they were committed to one another. Then the unthinkable happened. She became pregnant, and he knew he wasn't the father. She would be shunned, he would be embarrassed. Both said they had been visited by angels, but really? Come on. He was a good guy, upstanding. So he didn't leave, both lived with the teasing, the ridicule. It was not easy.

Then, as if things can't get worse the government required them to be counted, and of course, her husband wasn't from the land they lived in. There were no extensions, no extenuating circumstances. The government isn't giving or forgiving. So vastly pregnant, they travel to a small little town. At least they had a donkey, most were walking. No one made arrangements for a place to stay along the way or even when they got there. People saw what she was going through and still nothing, no help, no one cared.

Until one guy said you can stay in the barn, at least you will be out of the elements. What a great place to birth this baby, but what else could happen? Nothing was going right, so what did they expect. Animals, the smell, dirty hay. And when all she wanted to do was rest, a bunch of shepherds showed up-nothing can top that smell. And after a while, they got word again from the government about threats to their child and they had to flee, leave the land they knew. They went to a land where they didn't know if they would be welcome. They longed to live in their own homeland, but it wasn't safe for them, or this child.

Do you recognize the story? Imagine the Christmas story told in this way. May be truth in everything, but it wasn't the overarching point of the story. My favorite line is and Mary pondered all these things in her heart. And in spite of everything going on, I believe she was thankful that God had chosen her.

How we share the stories of our lives are important. We don't need to sugarcoat but are we finding ways to be thankful in all things? Do we gripe about doing laundry, or give thanks that we have clothes to wash? Complain about food we don't like or give thanks we have food? We don't like the paint colors in our room, but we have a room? We don't like a song sung in worship, but we are free to worship? It was a great event, but we tell everyone how it was not.

Living thankful lives reminds us that God is with us. Despite the chaos of living, God is there, God is here. We want to tell the true story so that people will ponder things in their hearts. We so often look at life half full or half empty. But it isn't even about that, for in you our cup runneth over.

As we enter the hectic-ness of the season, I encourage you to intentionally be thankful in the midst of running from family to family, trying to fit in all the things people expect, and experience the joy of Christmas. Joy is selfless, not dependent on the situations around us, it is inward contentment and peace. Jesus is our joy. How will you tell your stories?

Sunday Adult Study

The Adult Sunday School will take a break and resume January 5th.

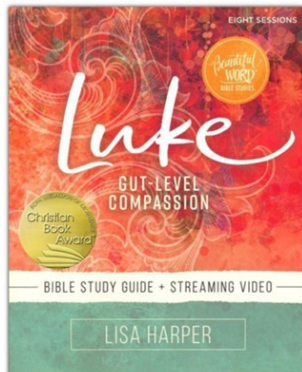
Mary to Martha Women's Bible Study



We are beginning our 2025 bible study on **Monday, February 3, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.** at the Digging Dunes room at Ascension.

Our study will be Luke by Lisa Harper. The great news woven throughout the Gospel according to Luke is that perfection is not a prerequisite for a deep and personal relationship with Jesus. Luke writes to highlight those seen as outliers and outcasts, those deemed misfits and unfit. Then he reveals to us the outrageous mercy of God.

Lisa Harper has 30+ years of church ministry and leadership. She is also the author of multiple books and bible studies. Lisa lives south of Nashville, Tennessee and is the proud mother of daughter, Missy. This is an eight week study and participant books are \$10. This study has a little homework for participants each week.



We have moved our meeting time to 1:00 p.m.—2:30 p.m. (This time was preferred to our group.) We will not meet on February 24th and March 24th due to the meeting of the ELCA Saginaw Women's Group. Our Bible Study will end on April 7, 2025.

Please contact Joyce Richardson at 989-274-6787 (call or text) to reserve your participant book by **Monday, January 20, 2025.**

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

Our Tuesday morning Bible study is reading 1 & 2 Timothy and then are choosing their next book.

All are welcome to join us. Enter the code for the zoom meeting or let Pastor Julie know and she can email or Facebook message you the invite.

No class: December 24th & 31st

www.zoom.com
Meeting ID: 871 0929 4561
Passcode: 099583

Holiday Worship Schedules



ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICES

We will be hosting three Advent services on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m.

- ◆ **December 4th:** Trusting God’s Plan
- ◆ **December 11th:** Christ Brings Joy
- ◆ **December 18th:** Blue Christmas

Please note we will not hold Wednesday services on December 25th or January 1st.



CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES

- ◆ Christmas Eve worship on **Tuesday December 24th** at **4:30 p.m.** and **7:30 p.m.**
- ◆ Lessons and Carols Service **12/29 at 9:30 a.m.** (*one service only*)



My Dear Ascension Family, There are no words to express my appreciation for the many prayers, expressions of concern and the many hands that took on my responsibilities while I was in Florida taking care of my daughter and grandsons. I could feel the support across the miles. Kelley and the boys are doing well, healing and adjusting to their new normal. In Community In Christ, Charleen Boland

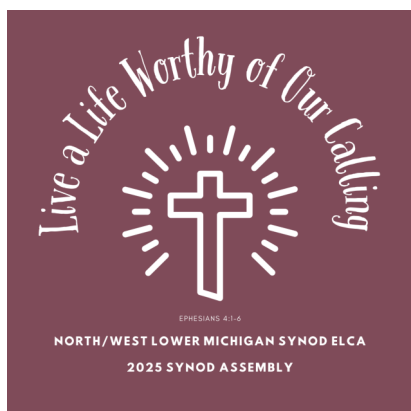


North/West Lower Michigan Synod Assembly “Living a Life Worthy of Our Calling”

**May
18th-20th
2025**

The 2025 Synod Assembly will be held in person at the Comfort Inn and Suites in Mt. Pleasant, MI, **May 18th-20th. Each congregation is to send at least two adult voting members to participate, as well as one voting member who is a youth or young adult (confirmed, 14-30 y/o).**

In 2025, our synod will be calling or renewing the call of a bishop. This is a time when as a community of faith, we discern what direction God is calling us as a synod, and what leader is needed in order to living out our life worthy of this calling.



Voting members will be expected to be present at the assembly from Sunday evening through Tuesday at the close of the assembly. The congregation commits to financing this important part of our ministry together.

If you have questions or are interested, see Pastor Julie or a member of the nominating committee, Kris Yackel-Friend, Gus Hendrickson, Barb Van Marter.

STAFF

Julie Bailey, Pastor
 Lisa Whelton, Parish Administrator
 Jeff Whelton, Custodian
 Rita Hendrickson, Parish Nurse

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Kris Yackel-Friend, President
 Lori Schultz, Vice President
 Connie Dutcher, Treasurer
 Stephanie Becker, Secretary
 Susan Kelley, Financial Secretary

MINISTRIES

Glen Mack, Congregational Care
 Gus Hendrickson, Finance/Resources
 Joyce Berg, Outreach
 Celina Gottlieb, Spiritual Health

CONTACT INFORMATION

8695 Gratiot Road, Saginaw, MI 48609
Phone: (989) 781-2170
 Pastoral Emergency: (989) 574-5663
Email: ascensionlc@sbcglobal.net
Pastor Email: pr_julie@sbcglobal.net
Website: www.ascensionlc.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/ascensionsaginaw (Group Name: Ascension Lutheran Church of Saginaw (ELCA) Group)
YouTube: Ascension Lutheran Church
 ELCA Saginaw Website: elcasaginawcounty.weebly.com
 ELCA Saginaw Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/elcasaginawcounty

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday's: 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
 Wednesday's: 7:00 p.m.

OFFICE HOURS

Church office hours are Monday thru Thursday
 9a.m.-2p.m.
OFFICE CLOSED: Dec 20th—29th



2nd Josh Crump
 Sarah Wagner
 Ginny Whelton
 3rd Melissa Albosta
 4th Bari Clauss
 Emmett Dalton
 Jacob Dawson
 Adam Robishaw
 Stephanie Wizner
 5th Charleen Boland
 Chris Crump
 Carol Lange
 Brooklyn McKenzie
 6th Brayten Mack
 7th Bruce Collier
 Steve Elvin
 Donna Hayes
 Jon Leffler
 8th Don Arndt
 Nancy Bacon
 10th Elaine Clifford
 12th Sarah Carroll

13th Scott Blehm
 Wayne Mayou
 Dan Roth
 Brynn Wakeman
 Michelle Wardlow
 14th Lynn Schomaker
 15th Barry Wiggins
 16th Braxten Mack
 Genevieve Potter
 Penelope Potter
 18th Sue Denman
 Bryce Druelle
 Jacob Moore
 19th Hannah Webb
 Joscelyn Whelton
 20th Megan Wakeman
 22nd Judi Minster
 23rd Melissa Briggs
 Amora Dreyfus
 Nicholas Hoffmann
 24th Pastor Julie Bailey
 25th Alexandria Randall
 26th Jacob Hostetler
 27th Rita Bolger
 Melanie Dancer

Colton Kittle
 Lisa Randall
 28th Robert Beyerlein
 Joan Ford
 Lori Page
 Bobbi Tilley
 30th Madilyn Dalton
 Patty Hamilton
 31st Jack Richardson
 Louise Roby
 Melissa Turner



9th Bob & Cathy Watz
 12th Tom & Mary Erskine
 13th William & Emily Edsall
 Dave & Pat Marceills
 21st Mitchell & Amber Andrus
 28th Paul & Susie Nielsen
 Jack & Joyce Richardson

Please Remember Those on Ascension's Care List

Mail a card, plan a visit, or say a prayer for these members of our church family

Rita Bolger—Edgewood Assisted Living, 4850 Gratiot Rd. #D7 Saginaw, MI 48638

Dick Chilton—17935 Roosevelt Rd, Rm #5, Hemlock, MI 48626

Pat Joyce—8044 Winchester Ct. Saginaw, MI 48609

Esther Mack—285 S. Miller Rd., Saginaw, MI 48609

Marie Myers—11145 Morningstar Dr., Saginaw, MI 48609

Arlene Neuenfeldt—11819 Dice Rd., Freeland, MI 48623

Jackie O'Dell—108 Fulton Street, Apt 405, St. Charles, MI 48655

Lee Turner—6371 Birchview Dr., Saginaw, MI 48609

Dan Wenzel—9065 Bray Rd., Saginaw, MI 48609

Barry Wiggins—1202 Weiss St, Room 507, Saginaw, MI 48602

Ruth Williams—Brookdale Saginaw, 2485 McCarty Rd., Saginaw, MI 48603

Barb Yancer—8936 N. Brookshire Drive, Saginaw, MI 48609

PRAYING
FOR YOU



Prayers of the Week

Our partner prayers are included in The Messenger each month.

As Jesus calls us to be one even as he and the Father are one, please remember these congregations, leaders, and families in your prayers.

December 1st

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Alpena, MI and Rev. Tom Orth, UCC
Ascension Families: Ira, Charlene, Genevieve, Penelope, Felicity Potter; David & Jackie Prange; Larry, Maija, Alec, Garrett, Lija, Preston.

December 8th

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Alpena, MI and Rev. John Shipman
Ascension Families: Debi, Zoey Pretzer; Michael, Lisa, Alexandria, Olivia Randall; Jack, Joyce, Joel Richardson.

December 15th

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Au Gres, MI and Rev. Max Miller
Ascension Families: Micaela Richardson; John, Barbara, John, Adam Robishaw; Louise Roby

December 22nd

St. John's Lutheran Church, Baroda, MI and their supply pastor, Rev. Vicky Slough
Ascension Families: Dan Roth; Trudy, Nathan, Noah Ryder; Steve, Jennifer, Ben, Will, Harrison, Henry Salowitz.

December 29th

St. Peter Lutheran Church, Battle Creek, MI and Rev. Edward Ruble
Ascension Families: Ken & Laura Schian; Dick & Ruth Schomaker; Lynn Schomaker.

Altar Flowers

Thank you to everyone who has sponsored flowers in 2024. The 2025 Flower Chart will be posted on the Acolyte Door soon. They can be given "To the Glory of God", in memory of someone, or in honor of an event, such as birthday or anniversary. **The cost is \$30.00. Payment envelopes are available on the Acolyte Room Door**, you can mail a check, or drop off payment when you are at church or during office hours (Monday-Thursdays 9am-2pm).



December 1st

December 8th

December 15th

December 22nd

December 29th

Available to Sponsor

Available to Sponsor

In memory of John Cavendish, by Bonnie Cavendish

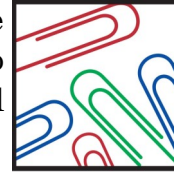
In honor of Joscelyn's birthday, by The Whelton Family

Available to Sponsor

In honor of their 50th wedding anniversary, by Jack and Joyce Richardson

Office Door Closed During Office Hours

Please note that during the colder months of the year, the office door may be closed when Lisa is in the office. Please feel free to enter the office, knocking is not necessary. The door is closed simply to retain warmth, **so Come On In!!**



**Office
Open**

Ascension's Women's Support Group

Ascension is participating with the ELCA Women of Saginaw County group. To effectively share information with our congregation and participate in their goals and programs, Ascension has established a women's support group. This group is not the Women's Group of Ascension's past, however a group of women who would like to grow in faith, support one another in endeavors, engage in ministering to those in need, and to promote fellowship within our group, our churches, and our community. The contacts for Ascension's Women's Support Group are Gina Dillenbeck (chair), Wanda Dankert, Edna Bell, and Ginny Whelton. Ascension is hosting the ELCA Women of Saginaw County meeting on **January 27th at 1:00 p.m.** If you are interested in assisting with decorations, snacks, or just coming to see what this is all about, please contact one of the women noted above. You may call the office for contact information, if you do not have it.



**WOMEN
IN MINISTRY**

Their first ministry project was collecting Christmas Cards, they took them to the November ELCA Women of Saginaw County meeting and addressed the cards to those in local nursing homes, which were then distributed.

Homebound Outreach

Are you available and willing to visit someone in our congregation who is no longer able to attend? If you might be willing to share some time with one of our homebound members, please see Pastor Julie.



Bishop's Newsletter

The bishop's latest newsletter can be found here:
<https://www.mittensynod.org/resources/publications/>



Don't Miss the

DEADLINE!

Year-End Deadlines

December 30th will be the last deposit of 2024, please make sure your giving is in the office by 9:00 a.m. this day if you would like it to be recorded for 2024.

December 30th is also the last day to submit expense receipts that need reimbursement. After this date, receipts for 2024 will not be reimbursed.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Connie Dutcher.

2025 Giving Envelopes

2025 giving envelopes can be picked in the Gathering Area. They can also be picked up at the church during office hours; Monday-Thursday 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Please contact the office to make other arrangements, if needed.

**Offering
Envelopes**



Elementary Youth Giving Envelopes

We thank you greatly for teaching your children about giving and using their giving envelopes. Envelopes can be picked up in the Children's Church classroom. Each youth has their own giving number. It is VERY helpful to ensure that their giving is recorded properly to put their **name and their giving #** on the envelope each week. There is a sign posted just inside the door of the classroom with all the giving envelopes numbers listed. You may also use any envelope you have at home, as long as their name and number is on it. You may also contact the church office for your child's giving number.

Living Lutheran Returns To Print!!

Last year, it was announced that Living Lutheran, the ELCA's magazine, would end its print run. Since then, the ELCA has been working to create a new experience at LivingLutheran.org, which it hopes to unveil in 2025. During this process, the ELCA reached out to former magazine readers and current website users to better understand what people want to see and read. One thing that stood out was that they missed the stories in a print magazine and wanted to feel connected to the church through a regular publication that focused on stories about what it means to be a Lutheran in today's world.

Beginning in 2025, Living Lutheran will again appear as a print magazine, published quarterly. This frequency will allow people to reconnect in a way that makes them feel part of the ELCA while keeping costs efficient and effective to produce the magazine.

We will let you know when we know more information!

Grief Support Group—3rd Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The Grief Support Group will continue meeting informally on the 3rd Monday of the month at 10:30 a.m. There are no requirements to share, no pressure, and everyone is welcome! This is not just a group of people from Ascension, it is open to the community, so feel free to share with anyone you know struggling with grief and may want to talk or just listen. If you have any questions about the Grief Support Group, do not hesitate to contact Linda Lentner at 989-274-7418 or linda.lentner@gmail.com.

Wellness Warriors—Tuesdays 6:15 p.m.

We will continue to meet every **Tuesday at 6:15 p.m.** We are flexible with the exercise based on the abilities of those who attend each week. The goal is to move, and support each other! Questions? Contact Kris Friend (989) 245-6446 or Rita Hendrickson (989) 482-0271.



Ascension Breakfast Club (ABC)—December 9th



All who are available for breakfast are invited to join others from Ascension for a time of fellowship and food on the second Monday of each month. We will meet at **9 a.m. at Sullivan's at 5235 Gratiot Rd., in Saginaw.** Each person is responsible for the cost of their own breakfast. You don't need to prepare anything or clean up, just show up.

Sewing Group

Do you like to sew or quilt? Ascension's Sewing Group meets in the Fellowship Hall from 9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. on the dates below. Bring your sewing supplies and machine (not required) and join us for fun and fellowship. Contact Sandy Graham with any questions at 989-781-1619.



December 4th & 18th • January 15th • February 5th & 19th

Household/Personal Care Items For Christmas



Once again, we are participating with Swan Valley High School to collect household and personal care products for Christmas packages for families in need. Items needed are shampoo, conditioner, soap, laundry soap, dish soap, dryer sheets, fabric softener, tissues, toilet paper, paper towels, cleaning supplies, lotion, body wash, shaving cream, razors, feminine products, deodorant, etc. You may also prefer to give items like a gift card for gas or food. Items may be placed in the Gathering Area **no later than Sunday, December 8th**. Thank you for your support!!

Getting Ready for Christmas Shopping? It's about that time! — RaiseRight Orders 12/8

Consider using RaiseRight gift cards for your shopping this year. RaiseRight is a fundraising program that Ascension participates with. All you do is purchase the gifts cards through Ascension (order form on the Kiosk) and we will order the cards for you—at no extra cost. You can use these cards to give as gifts or use them to purchase whatever it is you wish to buy. December orders must be received by **Sunday, December 8th**.

For instance—if you order a \$50 gift card from one of the stores you pay \$50, and the church receives \$1.25—at 2.5% interest. Some have much higher return. That may not seem like much, but every little bit helps. If you have questions see Pastor Julie or Lisa in the office.

CHARGE—Middle & High School Youth Event

During the weekend of November 8-10, 2024, about 270 Middle and High School Youth gathered at Great Wolf Lodge in Traverse City to participate in Charge, a youth event put on by Living Water Ministries. Our theme this year was all about shepherds. Our speaker was Daniel Kirschbaum, who serves as Senior Director for Young Adult Communities within the ELCA. We had the opportunity to get to know Daniel better as we shared our meal on Saturday night. In addition to the worship services, the youth participated in small groups, skill shops, and spending time with their congregation. We met new people, and renewed friendships that were made at previous events and camp. Thank you to Amy Fahrenbruch, Stephanie and Dave Becker for serving as adult leaders and preparing the food for the event. Thank you to Marissa Fahrenbruch and Brooklyn Becker who helped lead worship on Saturday morning. Thank you to Ascension and all who support our work with youth. We are the church together and we cannot do this ministry without you.



THE MID MICHIGAN BRASS BAND
PROUDLY PRESENTS THEIR...
2024
CHRISTMAS CONCERT
QUINTON LARION, DIRECTOR



BRASS
Mid
Michigan
BAND



14 DEC
2024 | **7:00**
PM | **FREE**
ENTRY

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
8695 GRATIOT RD, SAGINAW, MI 48609

Mid Michigan Brass Band

Ascension will be hosting the Mid Michigan Brass Band on **Saturday, December 14th at 7:00 p.m.**

Add an evening of Christmas music to your calendar to keep your holiday spirit alive!

There is no cost for the concert.



Blood Pressure Screening

Mark your calendar for blood pressure screenings by the Parish Health Committee on the 3rd Sunday each month. The next one will be held on **Sunday, December 15th.**

Blood Drive



Our final drive of the year is scheduled for **December 19th, 2:30pm—7:00 p.m.** If you haven't signed up, and are interested, please sign up [online](#) or contact the church office for available donation times.

Winter Adult Education Opportunity

Join The Rev. Dr. Amy Lindeman Allen, Indiana Christian Church Associate Professor of New Testament at Christian Theological Seminary (Disciples of Christ) in Indianapolis, Indiana, for a six-week course titled, "Jesus and the Little Children"! Based on Dr. Allen's book, *The Gifts They Bring: How Children in the Gospels Can Shape Inclusive Ministry* (WJK, 2023), sessions will include presentations on the following topics:

1. The Gift of Participation: Little Children as Proprietors of the Realm of God
2. The Gift of Proclamation: The Bethlehem Shepherds
3. The Gift of Advocacy: James and John, Fisherfolk
4. The Gift of Listening: Mary at the Feet of Jesus
5. The Gift of Sharing: The Child with the Fish and Loaves
6. The Gift of Partnership: A Son and His Mother at Nain

The class will meet on six consecutive Tuesday evenings: **January 14th, 21st, 28th; February 4th, 11th, 18th, 2025 from 7:00 – 8:15pm via Zoom.** This course is open to all adults, both laypeople, and rostered ministers, and is free of charge. Registration is required and will close on January 6, 2025. Sessions will be recorded and available to those registered for one week. **[Register Now!](#)**

If the link doesn't work go to **<https://www.mittensynod.org/events/adult-theological-education/>** scroll down to the class, and click Register Now!

The Holy Land Christians are Going to be Our Guests

HEAR THEIR STORY AND SEE THEIR BEAUTIFUL OLIVEWOOD CRAFTS

On **Dec 8, 2024 and during both services**, we will be hearing about the Christians of the Holy Land, and after each service we will be hosting at the church gathering area display of handmade olive wood religious articles from Bethlehem available for purchase. These carvings include olive wood Nativity sets, crosses, Christmas ornaments, candle holders, angels and many other religious crafts that could make a nice wedding, baptism, confirmation, Easter and Christmas gifts. The carvings are handmade by Christian families from Bethlehem who rely on it for their daily bread.

More than 70% of the Christian Community in the Holy Land depend upon tourism as their only source of income. For decades those Christians have been enduring many hardships as tourism in Bethlehem has plummeted and access to other sources of income has been sharply restricted due to the ongoing conflict, the wars, the 12-yard wall built around Bethlehem, the COVID-19 pandemic, and nowadays the catastrophic ongoing war, due to this, tourists are afraid and unable to visit the Holy Land. This made it very difficult for the Christian families to find their daily bread and forced them to immigrate and flee their homeland since they lost their source of income. The Christian population of the Holy Land was 30% in the last century, today it is less than 1%. If it continues like this, in few years we will find no Christians in the land of Christ, which could cause tragic consequences to our faith and holy sites.

We invite your help in supporting our Christian brothers and sisters in the town of Bethlehem where Christ was born by purchasing their carvings.

A Christian family from Bethlehem will be telling us the story of the Christians of the Holy Land and they will be presenting these carvings after the services.

All proceeds go to support Christian families from Bethlehem.

Let us welcome the Holy Land Christian Solidarity Cooperative in worship and in our hearts.

Food Pantry

There is a Truck Unload and Shelf Stocking the first Wednesday of each month. Volunteers are always welcome, the next date is **December 4th at 8:30 a.m.** at 723 Emerson, Saginaw, MI 48607.

Ascension is providing



workers for the Center of HOPE Food Pantry on **December 11th.** Volunteers should arrive by **8:30 a.m.** at the pantry at 723 Emerson, Saginaw, MI 48607.

If you have questions about volunteering, Amanda Doerr, is our "in church" contact person. Please give her a call at 989-798-3241.

The Food Pantry continues to collect clean plastic & cloth grocery bags & manual can openers.

If you would like to donate to the Food Pantry to purchase food through the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, donations can be sent directly to: FBEM, 2300 Lapeer Rd, Flint, MI 48503. Checks must include in the memo line: Center of Hope Food Pantry/Saginaw P-981.

ELCA Saginaw County

ALL ARE WELCOME AND INVITED to join the ELCA Saginaw County group. They will meet on **Monday, January 13th at 6:30 p.m.** at Faith Lutheran Church, 4432 Mackinaw Rd, Saginaw, MI 48603. Come join us to be connected and a part of leading the ELCA churches of Saginaw County.



Open Mind, Open Heart, Open Table

ELCA Women of Saginaw County

The ELCA Women of Saginaw County are welcome and invited to gather monthly on the 4th Monday at 1pm between September and May (*except December*) for about an hour meeting and for fellowship afterward. Hosting locations will rotate.

Next Meeting, **Monday, January 27th, 1:00 pm** at Ascension Lutheran Church, 8695 Gratiot Rd., Saginaw, MI 48609. Saginaw Community Food Club and Kitchen representative, Tina Swanton, will present details of their programming. You can also find out more at their website saginawfoodclub.org.

Please make sure to Like or Join both the [ELCA Women of Saginaw County](#) and the [ELCA Saginaw County](#) Facebook pages for updates.

Children's Christmas Program—The Joy of Christmas

December 22nd at the 10:30 worship service

Our young people will share the story of Christmas on Sunday, December 22nd. All elementary youth are invited to participate. Thumbdrives of music are available, as well as the script with the words to the songs. These will be distributed in Children's Church. Practice will be held between services (~9:15 a.m.) on **December 1st, 8th, and 15th, 2024, as well as during Children's Church** on those days. Dress Rehearsal is at **9:15am on December 21st.**



Youth Christmas Party—December 8th @ 4:30-7p.m.

On Sunday, December 8th, we will be holding a Youth Christmas party for young people in **Elementary, Middle School and High School**. Friends are welcome, but we need to know how many are coming to determine availability of food. There will be games, Christmas Karaoke, dinner, and a gift exchange.



Each youth are asked to bring a pair of fun socks (not a stocking). You are asked to fill one of those socks with treats or whatever else totaling about \$10. Bring both socks. At the end of the evening, you will have a new pair of socks AND goodies. (Please fill socks with items appropriate for your age group.)

Parents who wish to stay are welcome. We just need a count. Sign up sheet is on the kiosk.

Children's Church/Sunday School

What is Children's Church?

With our commitment to assist parents in their baptismal covenant to teach their children, the "Children's Church" model will continue this year. The **youth, 4 years old through 5th grade,** will begin the 10:30 a.m. worship service with their families, and after the Children's Message, be dismissed with their teachers to experience the Word, or message of worship in a more age appropriate way. We will then return to worship as an entire congregation during the peace, so that our youth will still receive Communion/Prayers. If you are interested in teaching, please note that there is a rotating schedule, so this does provide the opportunity to worship most Sundays with the congregation in the Sanctuary.



Please complete the **Registration Form** on the kiosk or at ascensionlc.org and return to the church office. If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Earnesty or Pastor Julie.

THE CHILDREN ARE PREPARING FOR THEIR CHRISTMAS PROGRAM, REGULAR CLASSES RESUME JANUARY 5TH.

Peer Ministry-Leadership Training—February 7-8, 2025

Join other high school youth from the North/West Lower Michigan Synod and the Southeast Michigan Synod to learn about Peer Ministry.

- It's about friends helping friends!
- Not just for the church, but every day of your life, everywhere and any time.
- It's not a job to do, it's an attitude.

You will learn skills not only by listening, but using these skills in experiential learning—you will practice. It is fun! And you become a better friend, better equipped to be that friend when someone is in need.

Where: Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Lansing, MI

When: Friday, February 7th at 7 p.m. to Saturday, February 8th at 3:30 p.m.

Cost: \$20 (to cover meal costs)

Bring: Bedding/sleeping bag, toiletries, open mind, Bible, pen, pencil, notebook

Sponsored with the cooperation of Ascension Lutheran Church/Saginaw, Bethlehem Lutheran Church/Lansing, Messiah Lutheran Church/Bay City, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church/Ida, and Marmelund Evangelical Lutheran Church/Kent City.

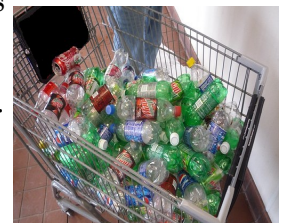
Please complete a registration form (on kiosk and ascensionlc.org) and email to Pastor Julie Bailey at pr_julie@sbcglobal.net

Youth Fundraising—Pop Can Returns

Thank you for bringing cans and bottles in to help support Youth Ministry in our congregation.

Individual youth (elementary, middle, and high school) are encouraged to sign up to return cans each week. The next week, youth return the MONEY from that return to the church office or Pastor Julie. One-half of the money returned goes into that youth's individual account to help pay for camp, retreats, or other events that require a financial fee. The other 50% supports the youth ministry as a whole. We use this money to help offset costs of events and provide events at a lower cost.

Sign up sheet and instructions are located on the kiosk at church. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.



Confirmation Classes

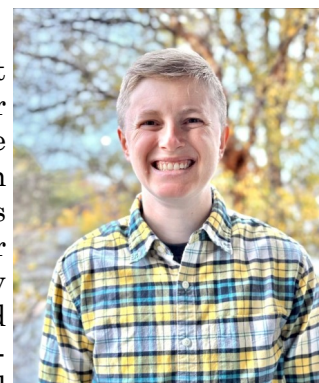
Class Schedule—all classes are 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

- Jan 5th & 20th
- Feb 2nd & 16th
- Mar 2nd & 16th
- Apr 6th



Living Water Ministries New Executive Director

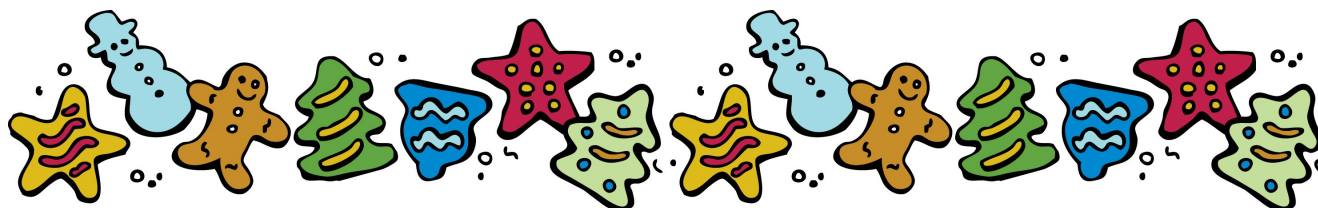
The Living Water Ministries Board of Directors is proud to announce that Nicole McCarthy has been selected as our new Executive Director. Earlier this year, former executive director C.J. Clark accepted a leadership role with the Southeast Michigan Synod, prompting the Board to initiate an extensive nationwide search for a successor. In partnership with various synods, the American Camping Association, and the Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Network, the Board received applications from across the country and the wider church community. After carefully reviewing resumes and references, the search committee conducted interviews with the top candidates, ultimately recommending Nicole for her strong background and expertise in outdoor ministry. The Living Water Ministries Board unanimously approved her appointment and she is now transitioning into the role.



The role of Executive Director of Living Water Ministries is more than a job, it is a calling within the Church. For the past eight months, Nicole has done an outstanding job serving as interim director, bringing her lifelong Lutheran faith, a genuine commitment to the ministry and a deep understanding of the important role camp plays in the faith formation of all of God's children. A former Living Water Ministries camper herself, Nicole has been part of the full-time, year-round staff since 2015, where she has played a key role in program development, staff training, and camper engagement.

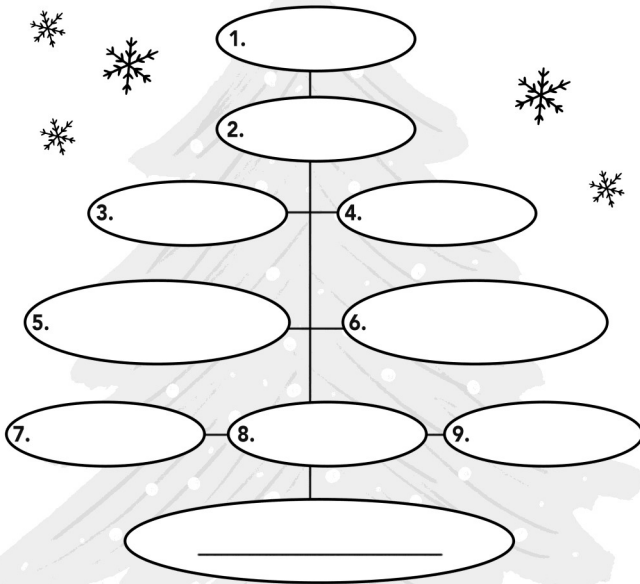
Living Water Ministries provides outdoor ministry programs for the North/West Lower and Southeast Michigan Synods of the ELCA, drawing participants from various backgrounds, including youth and adults from the Episcopal Dioceses of Michigan, adults with developmental disabilities, children in foster care, and those without a church affiliation. To learn more visit elcalivingwater.com

Peace,
Adam Michoski
Living Water Ministries
Board President



Puzzle!

Write the answer to each clue in the correct circle. Then jot down the first letter of each answer and unscramble those letters to form a word about this season. Write that answer at the bottom of the tree.



CLUES

1. You trim this at Christmas.
2. One who governs
3. The first word of a popular carol, it means "Listen!"
4. You burn this to make the air sweet.
5. "For unto us is born this day a _____ ..."
6. She was betrothed to Joseph.
7. Shepherds heard them sing.
8. A Christmas song
9. 'Tis the _____ to be jolly!"

Answers: 1. tree; 2. ruler; 3. hark; 4. incense; 5. Savior; 6. Mary; 7. angels; 8. carol; 9. season; Christmas

Pull Out Your Bibles for this Quiz and Go To: Luke 2:1-7

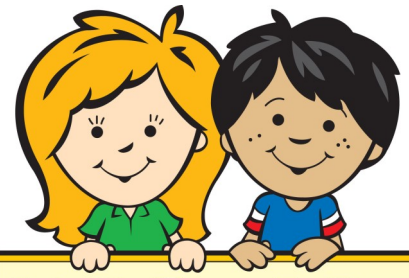
Bible Quiz

Who was governor of Syria when Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem for a mandated registration, or census?

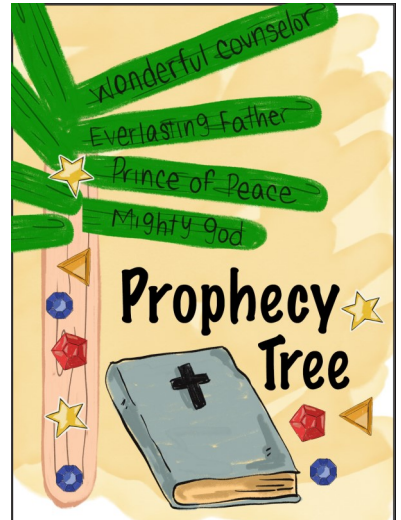
- A. Theophilus
- B. Herod Antipas
- C. Pontius Pilate
- D. Quirinius



Answer: D (See Luke 2:1-7)



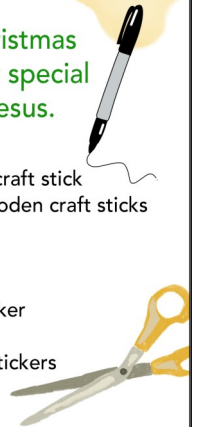
KIDS PAGE



Make this Christmas craft to display special names for Jesus.

What you need:

- Large wooden craft stick
- Small green wooden craft sticks
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Bible
- Permanent marker
- Craft glue
- Optional: star stickers or craft jewels



What you do:

1. Place the large stick on a table vertically, like a tree trunk.
2. Cut the green sticks into pieces that measure 4", 3½", 3" and 2½".
3. On each green stick, write a name for Jesus from Isaiah 9:6 — Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Write small or ask an adult for help.)
4. Use a dot of glue to attach each green stick to the large stick, like tree branches.
5. Decorate your Christmas tree with stickers or jewels.



Serving in December

Thank you to everyone who participates in these important ministries. If you are unable to serve on your assigned day, please let the Church Office know who will be filling in for you. † indicates a volunteer is needed

Readers	8am	10:30am
1	Dick Schomaker	Amy Fahrenbruch
8	Marty Debozy	Linda Lentner
15	Edna Bell	Donna Frollo
22	Charleen Boland	<i>No Readers Needed</i>
29 9:30am	Amy F, Lori S, Dave B, Stephanie B, Brooklyn B, John W, Joscelyn W	

Prayers	8am	10:30am
1	Tom Page	Amy Fahrenbruch
8	Ruth Schomaker	Lisa Espinoza
15	Lynn Schomaker	Lisa Whelton
22	Susan Kelley	Chris Crump
29 9:30am	†	

Sound Board Operators

1	†	Makena Whelton
8	†	Makena Whelton
15	†	Makena Whelton
22	†	Makena Whelton
29 9:30am	Makena Whelton	

Video Screen Operators

1	Charleen Boland	Ginny Whelton
8	†	Marissa Fahrenbruch
15	†	Ginny Whelton
22	†	Marissa Fahrenbruch
29 9:30am	Ginny Whelton	

Head Ushers

1	Kelley	Friend/Beyerlein
8	Schomaker	Dalton/Whelton
15	Roth	Earnesty/Wizner
22	Wilson	Dawson/Mossner
29 9:30am	Kelley/Friend/Beyerlein	

Acolyte 10:30 a.m.

1	Eliza Trepkowski
8	Brooklyn Becker
15	Ethan Earnesty
22	Brooklyn Becker
29 9:30am	Greyston Hendrickson



Altar Guild

1	All
8	Susan Kelley
15	Susan Kelley
22	Kris Friend
29 9:30am	Kris Friend



Children's Church

No "regular" classes, kids are practicing for their Christmas program during December.

Classes resume January 5th

December Librarian: All

Tuesday, December 24th, Christmas Eve

	Ushers	Readers	Sound Board	Video Screen	Prayers	Acolyte
4:30 pm	<i>Volunteers should sign up on kiosk</i>	Linda Luplow	Makena Whelton	Bob Aldrich	Tom Page	E & N Earnesty
7:30 pm		Heidi Trepkowski	†	†	Heidi Trepkowski	†

WEDNESDAYS 7pm

	Head Usher	Readers	Sound Board	Video Screen	Prayers
4	Glen Mack	Melissa Pretzer	†	Connie Dutcher	<i>No prayers today</i>
11	John Schroeder	Joyce Richardson	†	Kelly Phillion	<i>No prayers today</i>
18	Mike Clifford	John Schroeder	†	Glen Mack	<i>No prayers today</i>

Ascension Lutheran Church - December 2024
 8695 Gratiot Road, Saginaw, MI 48609 (989) 781-2170
 Email: ascensionlc@sbcglobal.net Website: ascensionlc.org
 Church Office hours: Mondays—Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

If you plan to meet for one of our **Ministries in the church**, please let the church office know.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1 8am-Worship/Communion 9:15am-Christmas Program Practice 10:30am-Worship/Communion/Christmas Program Practice</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 11am-Bible Study-Zoom 6:15pm-Wellness Warriors</p>	<p>4 8:30am-Food Pantry Truck Unload 9am-Sewing Group 11am-Weekend Food Bags 6:30pm-Scouts 7pm-Advent Worship/Communion</p>	<p>5 6:30pm-Trustee Mtg</p>	<p>6 <i>Office Closed</i></p>	<p>7 Pr @ Synod Council Mtg</p>
<p>8 <i>RaiseRight Due</i> 8am-Worship/Communion 9:15am-Christmas Program Practice 10:30am-Worship/Communion/Christmas Program Practice 4:30pm-Youth Christmas Party</p>	<p>9 9am-ABC Breakfast @ Sullivan's 12pm-Messenger Deadline</p>	<p>10 11am-Bible Study-Zoom 6:15pm-Wellness Warriors</p>	<p>11 8:30am-Serve @ Food Pantry 11am-Weekend Food Bags 6:30pm-Scouts 7pm-Advent Worship/Communion</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 <i>Office Closed</i></p>	<p>14 7pm-Mid Michigan Brass Band Concert</p>
<p>15 <i>BP Screening</i> 8am-Worship/Communion 9:15am-Christmas Program Practice 10:30am-Worship/Communion/Christmas Program Practice 11:30am-Congregational Mtg</p>	<p>16 10:30am-Grief Group</p>	<p>17 11am-Bible Study-Zoom 6:15pm-Wellness Warriors 6:30pm-Council Mtg</p>	<p>18 9am-Sewing Group 11am-Weekend Food Bags 6:30pm-Scouts 7pm-Blue Christmas Worship/Communion</p>	<p>19 2:30pm-7pm Blood Drive (FH)</p>	<p>20 <i>Office Closed</i></p>	<p>21 Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal</p>
<p>22 8am-Worship/Communion 9:15am-Christmas Program Practice 10:30am-Worship/Communion/Christmas Program</p>	<p>23 <i>Office Closed</i></p>	<p>24 <i>Office Closed</i> 4:30pm-Worship/Communion 7:30pm-Worship/Communion Happy Birthday Pastor Julie</p>	<p>25 <i>Office Closed</i> NO WORSHIP</p>	<p>26 <i>Office Closed</i></p>	<p>27 <i>Office Closed</i></p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 9:30am-Worship/Communion Lessons & Carols</p>	<p>30 9am-2024 Offering Due 9am-2024 Reimbursements Due Messenger Mailed</p>	<p>31 6:15pm-Wellness Warriors</p>	<p>Pick up your 2025 Giving Envelopes in the Gathering Area! NO WORSHIP January 1st</p>			

Prayer Chain requests should be called to Barb Van Marter at 989-525-4603 *NEW NUMBER*****

Ascension Lutheran Church

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Saginaw, MI 48609

Phone: 989-781-2170
www.ascensionlc.org

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**DEADLINE FOR
NEWSLETTER ARTICLES**

The MESSENGER is published monthly by Ascension Lutheran Church.
Deadline for the January 2025 issue is: **Monday, December 9th at 12:00 (noon)**. Articles may be emailed to: ascensionlc@sbcglobal.net