



# *THE HEART OF ASCENSION*

*January  
2021*

Welcome to Pastor Adam Thompson, who was installed as Ascension's pastor on Sunday, December 6, 2020! Below is a picture from the installation of Pastor Thompson with his father, Pastor Mart Thompson, area LCMS pastors, and Vicar Brian Bocian who were in attendance.



First row, left to right: Vicar Brian Bocian, Rev. Adam Thompson, Rev. Ben Berteau  
Middle row, left to right: Rev. Mart Thompson, Rev. Brian Westgate, Rev. Dr. Daniel Hahn  
Back row, left to right: Rev. Sean Walters, Rev. Jared Townley, Rev. Barry Keurulainen

*Photo courtesy Russ Lucas*



I am looking forward to serving as your pastor, here is some background information about me I hope is helpful. I was born into a Lutheran pastor's family in Mankato, Minnesota. My dad served three churches during my childhood and adolescent years. Besides Minnesota, we lived in Monett and Imperial (St. Louis area), Missouri. I have an older sister and a younger brother. God has been very good to me and blessed me with a wonderful and godly family.

I attended Lutheran schools up through high school. I earned a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Religion from Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri and a Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Among the various jobs I held while a student, one was being on staff as a Lutheran chaplain at a Boy Scout summer camp. I served my vicarage internship in



Blacksburg, VA where I was the leader of a Lutheran campus ministry for a year at Virginia Tech. I was also blessed to spend one year abroad, studying at a sister Lutheran seminary in Oberursel, Germany. Since graduating from Concordia Seminary, I have served as a pastor for almost 5 years. My initial call has been to serve as associate pastor at Fairlawn Lutheran Church. My area of focus was family and youth ministry, along with attending to other tasks of pastoral ministry. I now look forward to continuing ministry as pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church.



I enjoy coffee shop conversations and meeting people for lunch. I like to spend my time reading, playing video and board games, hiking, watching sports, and playing tennis. As your pastor one of my passions is helping Christians and their families have a thriving faith life in their homes and encouraging healthy spiritual habits beyond Sunday morning.



Dear Saints of Ascension,

A blessed New Year to all of you. It is a joy to be among you and I look forward to the work we are going to do for the Lord this coming year. I want to encourage you with the abiding reality of our Lord's presence. Christmas Day may be past, but the reality it brings is ever present. That reality that God loved us and proved His love by sending His Son to die on the cross and rise victorious over sin and death is yours today. Remain steadfast in God's word as you begin this new calendar year; only in Him can you find peace and joy no matter what this year holds.

“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” – Romans 15:4

In Christ,  
Pastor Thompson

### Live-Streamed Worship Services Available On YouTube

Sunday worship services are live-streamed, hosted on Ascension's YouTube Channel. Go directly to our [YouTube Channel](#) and click on the VIDEOS tab. Or for directions on how to view the live-stream, click [HERE](#). If you are unable to watch during the 9:30 AM worship service, you can view the video later.



The Men's Study Group is scheduled to meet on **Saturday, January 9, 2021 at 8:30 AM** and continue on the second Saturday of each month in the Fellowship Hall. If anyone is interested in participating from home via Zoom, please call or send Barb an email ([bemarcellus1@gmail.com](mailto:bemarcellus1@gmail.com)) expressing interest and we will set up a Zoom link.

Why not start the year off reading the Bible? There are many Bible reading plans available online or from the church office. Did you have a “Chance\*” to read your Bible today?



\*Chance Marcellus

# january celebrations

## January Anniversaries:

- 13 Michael & Leah Agostino  
19 Gene & Megan Williams, Jr.

## January Birthdays:

- |    |                        |    |                           |
|----|------------------------|----|---------------------------|
| 1  | Jillian Jarboe         | 11 | Nadine Weber              |
| 2  | Natalie Gaertner       | 13 | Joe Jarboe                |
| 3  | Diane McClellan        | 17 | Karen Meinert             |
| 3  | Violet Pfeifer         | 20 | Georgianna Tinneney       |
| 3  | Paul Redondo           | 22 | Anna Fiffik               |
| 4  | Nick Koorsen           | 25 | Ken Pizzica               |
| 5  | Martha Dodson          | 27 | Rebekah (von Stein) Walsh |
| 5  | Jim Obringer           | 27 | Rob Williams              |
| 7  | Tom Farris             | 28 | Roy Wiegand               |
| 7  | Grady Foust            | 29 | Parker Skrastins          |
| 10 | Hannah Steines-Wolfson | 31 | Cooper Blake              |
| 11 | Ron Davis, Jr.         |    |                           |

**IF WE MISSED YOUR BIRTHDAY OR ANNIVERSARY, PLEASE CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE AT 412-364-4463.**



**THANK YOU** – We would like to thank those who purchased poinsettias to beautify the Sanctuary for Christmas: Patricia Young, in memory of her husband, Paul and her son, Craig; Ron Curcio, in memory of his wife, Lois; the Fiffik family in memory of their aunt, Miriam Martens; Maggie Larrow, Bob and Karen Booth, Cherie Shaginaw, Dave and Mary Anne Dille, Jennifer Ciccone, Sally Long, Patti Lopresto, Vanessa and Pete Candreva, and Janet and Bill Seitz.

**THE PRAYER AND PRAISE GROUP** meets via Zoom on **Wednesdays** at 10 AM until we are able to meet in person. If you have any questions or need prayer, please call me at 808-295-1835. In the Love of Jesus,  
Bob Booth



# Online Giving

is simple and easy!

## **10 reasons to Switch to Online Giving**

This is a reprint of an article I wrote last winter. With this pandemic still raging, I thought it would be appropriate to reprint it in order to highlight the advantages of online giving and emphasize the importance of the need for Ascension to continue to receive donations, regardless of whether you're attending in-person services or not.

10. It's fast. The church gets your donation faster. They don't have to wait until Sunday, wait for it to be deposited, and wait for everything to clear.
9. It's Easy. Once you set up an account, all it takes is a few clicks. Or set up recurring donations and you won't have to do anything else. Just set it and forget it!
8. It's convenient. No filling out checks, finding your envelopes, etc. Just take out your phone (which is always with you!) or get online (which you usually are already).
7. It's flexible. Give by credit card or withdrawal from your checking/savings account. Use the internet or an app. Give one-time donations or set up recurring donations.
6. If you miss a Sunday (and who doesn't), you don't have to worry about making up your donation. The church will still get your donation if you set up recurring donations. Or if you're sick in bed, you can still give even if you're not at church!
5. There's an option that allows you to help offset transaction costs, which will save the church from having to pay this fee.
4. It's more secure. Vanco has never had a security breach. Plus, online giving helps eliminate the middleman.
3. You most likely pay some or most of your bills online already. Why not give to church the same way?
2. Online giving is the future. Fewer and fewer checks are being used every year.
1. All the cool kids are doing it!!

If you have any questions, you can email Bob Marcellus at [finance@ascensionpgh.com](mailto:finance@ascensionpgh.com) or call him at 412-635-8458.



**The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod**  
LCMS Stewardship Ministry

It's a new year. It's a time when we take stock of the year past in order to improve the year to come. It's a time when we sit down to plan and implement what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our stewardship for the coming year.

Often, we find this difficult and daunting and even joyless, but it doesn't have to be. In fact, it is really quite simple and full of joy. So, here are some tips to make that planning less stressful. You begin by answering these three questions:

- Who are you?
- To whom do I give?
- And how much?

So, who are you? The Table of Duties in the *Luther's Small Catechism* informs us. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society, and family. We don't particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties, and our questions arise in giving to the Church.

So, what is our duty as members of the Church with regard to giving? Again, the Table of Duties, gives us a guide. If you are a hearer – a member of the Church who receives instruction – St. Paul taught: "Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches" (Gal. 6:6). This means the local congregation is primary.

Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord's blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things happen. Thus, when God calls us to give to the Church, He has the local congregation in mind. For "the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14).

(Continued on next page)

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are to give:

- Regularly (1 Cor. 6:1–2);
- Proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12);
- Generously (2 Cor. 8:20);
- Of our first fruits (Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30); and
- With a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23).

In other words, giving to the Church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give regularly – weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly – keeping in mind our own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set it aside beforehand – before anything else is spent.

From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for the ancient Israelites. We can give as much as we want, but ask yourself: Do we really want to be less generous than was commanded of the Israelites? Is the job of the New Testament Church bigger or smaller than the job given to Israel?

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy, as Jesus said, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

It’s that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the Gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that makes all our work holy – work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.



**stewardship**



If the carol “The 12 Days of Christmas” is still running through your head, here is some history to its meaning. The 12 days of Christmas are celebrated from the birth of Christ until the coming of the wisemen (December 25-January 6) which is Epiphany.

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of their church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember.

- The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.
- Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.
- Three French hens stood for faith, hope, and love.
- The four calling birds were the four gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke & John.
- The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.
- The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
- Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit—prophesy, serving, teaching, exhortation, contribution, leadership, and mercy.
- The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.
- Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.
- The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.
- The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles’ Creed.

Author unknown, from the internet



In our  
thoughts  
& prayers

### **FOR HEALTH & HEALING**

Susan Stewart and Barbara Howe (cancer – sisters of Carolyn Walker); Tim Koontz (depression); Ruth Miller; Elva Fields; Sandi Weber; for all those ill with coronavirus; Joe (mass on heart – Cheryl Sedar's son); Gene Williams (mesothelioma); Helen Goettmann, Clay McClellan, Nadine Weber

### **FOR STRENGTH & COMFORT**

For all those who lost loved ones, especially Ruth Holmes, Mark Kitzki and the Kitzki family on the death of Phyllis Kitzki; Pastor Lee and his family on the death of his sister; Don Sohngen's family; for the citizens, survivors, relief workers, missionaries, and families affected by hurricanes, earthquakes, terrorist attacks and disasters worldwide

### **FOR THANKSGIVING**

For the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the gifts of love and God's Word; family and friends; our country

### **FOR SAFETY/PROTECTION**

For all affected by the coronavirus pandemic; healthcare workers; college students; school students, teachers, staff and bus drivers; missionaries; our armed forces; unborn children

### **FOR DIRECTION AND FAITH**

For those who are experiencing a crisis of faith; women with unplanned pregnancies

### **GENERAL PRAYER, GUIDANCE, AND PROVISION**

For Pastor Adam Thompson and Fairlawn Lutheran Church during ministry transitions; our country and leaders; Pastor Lee and his family; the Gaertner family; SOAR Respite Nights families; Megan and Gene Williams, Jr. and DiscipleMakers; Pastor Eric Andrae and Campus Ministry in Oakland; seminary students; the residents and staff of Concordia Lutheran Ministries; Shepherd's Heart Fellowship; Food For The Poor; Christian Counseling Associates counselors and their clients; those with special needs (physical, mental, or emotional)

**Please note that prayer requests will remain on the prayer list for 60 days and then be removed unless an extension is requested by notifying the church secretary.**



## Upcoming Lutheran Hour Broadcasts

**January 3, 2020: “Too Much”** The Gospel according to St. Mark shows us the Savior Who is always on the move. (Mark 1:1-2:12) Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

**January 10, 2020: “The Backstory Behind a Bible ‘Contradiction’”** (Mark 2:13-28) Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

**January 17, 2020: “Lost in Wonder, Love, and Praise!”** (Mark 3) Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer

**January 24, 2020: “TBD”** Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

**January 31, 2020: “TBD”** Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler

Lutheran Hour broadcasts can be heard on WWNL/1080 AM on Saturdays at 3:30 PM and on Tuesdays at 12:30 PM. You may also read the sermon or listen to it at <https://www.lutheranhour.org/sermon.asp>.



Watch Pastor Seltz in this video: <https://youtu.be/MqI38H4m7Gw> describe how the Petal Pusher® Lutheran Hour Ministries' Float Project proclaims the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade:

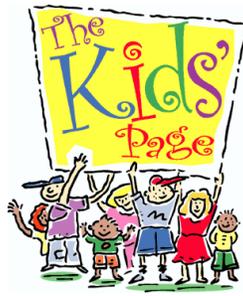
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## Books of the New Testament

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R E W U B B W B B G N J C L H  
K O V E D C T Z X O A Y E P T  
I R M E H E R V Q M I P V U O  
W P A A L T S V E V H T M S M  
D F T M N A T S E E T M N K I  
W G W G S S T A S M N A E S T  
A A C T S X O I M H I S K T J  
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N T B H S J H I X U C E F U C  
M I J Y H U L R E T E P X S F  
Z A R W V I H E B R E W S G A  
S N W F H C O L O S S I A N S  
V S L P N O M E L I H P M I Z

ACTS

COLOSSIANS

CORINTHIANS

EPHESIANS

GALATIANS

HEBREWS

JAMES

JOHN

JUDE

LUKE

MARK

MATTHEW

PETER

PHILEMON

PHILIPPIANS

REVELATION

ROMANS

TIMOTHY

TITUS

**ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH  
8225 PEBBLES ROAD  
PITTSBURGH, PA 15237**

**Address Correction Requested**

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE:**

9:30 AM Worship Service

10:30 AM Adult Bible Study (in person & Zoom)

**Office Hours:**

Monday – Friday **9:00 AM-Noon; 1:00-4:00 PM**

**OUR MISSION AND VISION  
STATEMENT:**

Acknowledging the great gift of God the Father in sending His Son, Jesus Christ, as our Savior, we the people of Ascension Lutheran Church, as guided by the Holy Spirit, are committed to the furtherance of God's Kingdom. We will share and live the Gospel in our homes, our church, our community, and the world. Motivated by Christ's love for us, we are dedicated to spiritual growth and unity, worship and fellowship, and compassionate service. We recognize this as our common purpose and pray that God will enable us by His strength and wisdom to seek His will.

**THE HEART OF ASCENSION**

A monthly publication of  
Ascension Lutheran Church.  
Barbara Marcellus is the Editor.

**PASTOR:**

**Rev. Adam Thompson**

PHONE: 314-691-0625

EMAIL: [pastor@ascensionpgh.com](mailto:pastor@ascensionpgh.com)

**CHURCH OFFICE:**

**412-364-4463 / 412-364-5636**

**FAX NUMBER:**

**412-369-0599**

**SECRETARY'S E-MAIL:**

[secretary@ascensionpgh.com](mailto:secretary@ascensionpgh.com)

**MUSIC DIRECTOR'S E-MAIL:**

[vcandрева@ascensionpgh.com](mailto:vcandрева@ascensionpgh.com)

[www.ascensionpgh.com](http://www.ascensionpgh.com)

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