



October 2018

Ascension Update

Update from the Pastor's Office

A bouquet of ears

It's the time of harvest, ripe grains, fruit, and vegetables... the season of colours, of gusty winds (even snow), and the smell of fallen leaves on the ground. It is the time of year when my mom would put up a bouquet of ears... ears of wheat, and rye, and oats, and barley. To this day I love the sight of ears - it's such a treat for the eye and the heart.

The ears are bowed from the weight of the ripe grains that they carry. Or maybe as a sign of humble gratitude for the gift of ripeness and abundance. And the bouquet reminds us of things...

The bouquet of ears -

it reminds us of the golden fields that we have passed by when traveling, or worked in at one time in our lives. It reminds of the golden sunshine, the wind that makes the crops move like waves, the rain, and the bright-blue skies under which they ripened.

It reminds us of our daily bread that grows out of it and that sustains us. And of everything that we need to have a fulfilled life.

The bouquet of ears -

it reminds us of the season of fall that we are entering... fall with its bright and vibrant colours, and its variety of ripened fruit. Fall - with its sweetness and abundance, with the clear and crisp air, and the closeness of the starry skies.

It reminds us that fall time is harvest time. The time of joy over a rich harvest. Or is it a time of worry? Or a time of Too-little? Or Too-Much?

The bouquet of ears -

it reminds us that Fall is a season of the year. But it is also a season in life that we all enter. Or that we are in the midst of it. The fall season of life, the season of introspection and reflection makes us ask ourselves what the harvest in our lives looks like? Are we living an abundant life? A life that bears fruit? And joy? Or is it a time of having to let go? Of worry? Of need?

The bouquet of ears -

it reminds us that growth and ripening is gift. Sunbeams, wind, and rain, and blue skies are gift. The fruit, their sweetness and abundance are gift. Our daily bread - a gift. Fulfillment and joy - a gift. Our life with every season - a gift.

A gift from God the Creator of all that is - seen and unseen.

A gift from the One who provides, sustains, nourishes, and cares.

A gift from the One who is with us in the sunshine and the blue skies in life, and also in the rain, the hail, and the worries of life.

A gift from the One who loved the world so much, and who out of great love “gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

God's Peace and abundant blessing,

Pastor Barbara



SEPTEMBER COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- A revised constitution will be presented to the congregation on November 18th. It will be made available to you all 30 days in advance. There are not a lot of changes and Synod was involved in the process.
There will be a second presentation on January 20th to finalize the congregation's suggestions and then it will be sent to Synod Council for approval also. Many thanks to Maureen Chell for taking on this momentous challenge.
- With regard to the Church's financial health, we are 26% under the budgeted funds projected at this time. As a congregation, we are under gifting and not over spending. Many maintenance projects are being postponed in consideration of this shortfall.
- Mark Rintoul has resigned from Church Council. He has been the liaison with the Social Justice Committee. The Council really appreciates Mark's commitment and dedication to Ascension.

On the 2018 Synod Convention by Bonnie Bjornson (continued)

As well, we did Dwelling in Word twice. This was a new thing for me when I joined council four years ago and it has proved to be such a blessing. Listening to a Bible passage twice and sitting in silence to consider what I was hearing and then discussing it with the people at my table was a great experience. I had expected convention to be about issues, finances and voting and was impressed that we took the time to stop and hear God through the videos and Dwelling in the Word.

Rev. Dr. Anna Madsen was our keynote presenter. She spoke on our theme: *Faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love!* She presented on three times on faith, hope and love. She had so many great insights and such an honest down-to-earth way of presenting complex ideas. Her love of etymology and working on the roots of words led to laughter but again, clarification.

Her children, Karl and Elsa, and Karl's caregiver, Kelsie, became part of the conference and her stories about her "twerps" were on point. I wish I could bottle up her ideas and insights and share them with you. For those who know me, you know that I love listening and learning and her presentations were a true gift. All of her presentations are on YouTube so if you're interested you should be able to find them here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Kk1jJhXL-Y> (#1)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gO1h9cVbmcE> (#2)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5euAsmFONAw> (#3)

It was amazing seeing so many Ascensionians in the video clips that were shown, and so involved in the convention. I was especially excited when Suzanna Braden danced Bishop Atahualpa and the other members of the Colombian delegation onto the convention floor and up onto the stage.

Bishop Atahualpa brought greetings and brought the Word at one of our worship services as well. Bishop Larry and Bishop Atahualpa signed a Declaration of Covenant between the Evangelical Church of Colombia and our Synod.

Over the three days, I met a few of our members who were visiting the convention, including Maureen Chell who was scooping gelato during the *Chillin' with the Chaplains* event!

The voting for synod council members, and for delegates to the National Conference next year happened seamlessly and were well led by Synod Chairperson, Wayne Street. I was told by one of the pastors at my table that I was a real rookie when I admitted I read all the biographies of the candidates.

When he found out I actually read the bylaws and constitutional changes - which were mostly editorial and many were on their second reading from 2016 convention, he just shook his head and said I could run for rookie of the year! But, I can assure you, there were people there who love working with constitutions and bylaws, and for them, we must give thanks! We are truly many parts of one body, and thank goodness for all the different people and talents and abilities - so evident at convention.

I began this report with sharing my experience of giving crosses to my fellow worshippers at the opening service. Thursday evening we ended the day with a Jazz Vespers service, including a healing rite and a service of remembrance of clergy, clergy spouses and other people dear to our synod, including our own Stephen.

Friday and Saturday both began with worship with communion in the Convention Hall, what a wonderful way to begin each day! The convention ended with a sending worship service with communion in the Augustana Chapel.

At the banquet, Pastor Barbara and I were guests with Pastor Ingrid as she was recognized for her 25th year of ordination anniversary. We sat with people from four different churches and had a lot of laughs and conversation.

As I drove home after the sending service I reflected on the events of the convention. I met many new people and was happy to renew friendships with others I'd met before. I am so thankful for the welcoming feel and openness of people at the convention, it truly felt like one big family - sisters and brothers - all belonging to church.



Dwelling in the Word

One of the things we have been doing this year is taking the time and rooting ourselves in **the Word** by reading scripture, and reflecting together on that reading. It opens us up to one another and even more so to God's presence among us!

Please, come and join us for another **Dwelling in the Word** session on **October 14 after worship**. And if you can't make it, please, uphold the group in prayer.

OFFERINGS	CURRENT	BENEV.	DESIG. MIN.
August 26	795.00	30.00	35.00
September 2	3410.00	605.00	130.00
September 9	2181.00	153.00	113.00
September 16	570.00	80.00	50.00
September 23	2608.00	374.00	213.00
PAR	1070.00	277.00	172.00

ATTENDANCE

August 26:	43	September 2:	49
September 9:	59	September 16:	53
September 23:	67		



“Uncovering Grief”

This workshop will be held at **Holy Spirit** from **October 12th - 14th**.

Uncovering Grief is a three-day workshop experience, designed to create a space of reflection and meditation on grieving, death, and faith. Highlighting the role of women of faith in these important life moments, participants will be led through participatory art projects, contemplative worship practice, guided sessions by faith leaders, lectures by academics, discussion groups, and more. Here is the link to the website:

uncoveringgrief.wordpress.com

Registration is free, however please contact Holy Spirit Lutheran Church at 780-434-4012 to let them know you are attending.



OCTOBERFEST CELEBRATION

The Parish Life Committee is planning an **Octoberfest** for **Saturday, October 27th**, starting with Mocktails at **5:30 pm** and dinner at **6:00 pm**. We will be serving sauerkraut, bratwurst, dessert and alcohol-free beer. There will also be German music.

Tickets will go on sale **Thanksgiving Sunday, October 7th**.

Adults \$15.00

Children 6-12 - \$5.00

Children under 6 years - Free.

Bring along your family and friends as all are welcome!

Bishop's Message - October 2018

Cathy and I were privileged to travel with our Synod youth and home team leaders on the ABT Synod bus trip to and from the CLAY (Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth gathering) 2018 in Thunder Bay. Soon you will read some of my thoughts regarding the CLAY gatherings in the October-November edition of the *Canada Lutheran*. Here is the full article:

I'm already counting the days to CLAY 2020, the joint youth gathering between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church in Canada, which will take place in Calgary, AB., on the traditional territories of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and the people of the Treaty 7 region at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT).

I'm already counting the days to CLAY 2020 because I'm a youth gathering fanatic. I've been to several, well thirteen gatherings, and only missed two since being ordained a Pastor because I was facilitating a youth journey to the Lutheran Centre in Mexico City, and because I had just received a call to serve as Assistant to the Bishop.

I'm counting the days. Let me tell you why:

The bus trip. There is nothing better than travelling for several days on a packed bus handing out snacks, teasing, laughing, watching movies, singing, worshipping together, sharing the Eucharist, packing and unpacking. Some of my fondest and most vivid memories of Gatherings are of the bus trip. It is true, that it is all about the journey not the destination.

Forming community. There is nothing better than conversation, opportunity for prayer, listening, learning, building relationships with youth and leaders... and knowing that we are not alone.

Leadership development. There is nothing better than encouraging and affirming gifts for leadership in youth. Gathering after gathering, whether national or synodical, youth are given opportunities to share in and develop their leadership skills. Reading scripture at worship, being in charge of loading a bus, leading in prayer each morning as the bus doors close and the journey continues, gathering in small groups. Walking with a youth who begins as a gathering participant, becomes a home team leader and then storyteller at CLAY 2018.

Hearing stories from and learning from the youth. There is nothing better than hearing and learning from the youth. Gathering at CLAY 2018 under the theme, "Threads," there was much time spent on story-telling, story-tending, and what it truly means to listen. Five Large Group Gatherings (LGG) tended to the following themes/questions, including: How to listen to the stories of others, How to trust God in our unravelling, Where God fits within our stories,

Good news stories from God, and Where do we go from here as unfinished but beloved children of God? Throughout CLAY 2018, there were opportunities for all to share our own stories and practice tending to the stories of others, with Home Team members, strangers, and new friends, and even Bishops!

Working together. There is nothing better than working together toward a common goal. At CLAY 2018, for example, with different home teams and CLAY volunteers, the youth continued to fulfil their commitment to address issues such as homelessness and unaffordable housing through the National Youth Project. By first learning of the issues contributing to poverty and homelessness, and then acting and advocating in supporting the local networks and agencies through partner programs, the youth visited a mock homeless shelter, gathered/donated socks, and sent postcards to the Federal Government and local Members of Parliament, in hopes of raising awareness and advocating for a greater responsibility and accountability in addressing the underlying causes of homelessness.

Learning together. There is nothing better than a common learning experience. While at CLAY 2018, for example, participants took part in the second-largest KAIROS blanket exercise in the world, and the largest ever by youth. This learning experience helped participants gain a better understanding of colonization and the process of displacement endured by Indigenous Peoples here in Canada. De-briefing in home teams which followed, was facilitated by Indigenous Elders and Leaders who were also present to provide support during the exercise.

Worshipping together. There is nothing better than singing, praying, laughing, crying, dancing, receiving, giving, Eucharist together.

I'm already counting the days to CLAY 2020.

I'm already counting the days to CLAY 2020 because I'm a youth gathering fanatic. I'm looking forward to my fourteenth gathering.

Oh, and I'm counting the days to the Synod of Alberta and the Territories 2019 Youth Gathering, June 3-5! Watch for further information coming soon.

In Christ Jesus -
Shalom,

+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

Willi Lingle Endowment Fund

In 1997, Joyce Hendrickson requested of Ascension Church Council that an endowment fund in memory of her husband, Willi Lingle, be created from the funds that were donated to the Ascension Memorial Fund in his memory. This was done, and the fund continued to grow.

In 2007, the fund was moved to the Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF) through the efforts of Stephen Wildfang.

An endowment fund means the original donation was permanently invested for long-term growth—it continues to grow through investment to provide ongoing support, forever. The ECF disperses a small yearly percentage (currently above 4%) from the income of the fund to Ascension which can go toward the cost of anything **related to Christian education**, including courses, travel, workshops, seminars, conferences, retreats, camp and library material.

If you would like assistance to cover the cost of an education-related activity, please contact the office for an application form. The deadline is **October 31st**. Please submit your completed application to Pastor Barbara, or any council member.



Canada Lutheran renewals are due

If you would like to continue, or begin, receiving this publication, **please let the office know by November 1st**. It is **\$19.11** (GST included) for one year's subscription; *please make out cheques to Ascension Lutheran Church*. Thank you.



Old Strathcona Community Meals

Ascension is again participating in the Old Strathcona Community meals held at Trinity Lutheran Church, serving a monthly meal to the elderly and low income people in the Old Strathcona area.

On Tuesday, Nov. 6th Ascension will be the host and food provider for the meal. Watch for signups for the volunteers and food for the November meal which will be in the Place of Welcome in October.