

Ascension Lutheran Church is a congregation of Christians whose mission is to:

**“Encourage our Family to Grow in Faith and Lead Others to Christ”**

(We are a congregation of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.)

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**Sunday Worship**  
9:00 a.m.

**Sunday School and Bible Classes**  
10:15 a.m.

## CHURCH OFFICE

N. Martin Mielke, Pastor  
Jill Fields, secretary  
Deb Witte, secretary

**Phone (941) 371-2978**

**Church Website:**  
**www.ascensionwels.org**  
**church@ascensionwels.org**

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Kindergarten  
through 8th Grade

Daniel Brands, Principal  
Brooke Carbon, Teacher  
Sandra O’Laire, Teacher  
Susan Zabel, Teacher

**Phone (941) 371-5909**

**Church Office Volunteers**  
Helene Giebel  
Reta Moehling  
Gail Vidakovic  
LaVerne Voss  
Bernice Zarder

## PRESCHOOL

Sherri Medico, Director  
Kandi Ross, Teacher  
Tina Lange, Teacher  
Raji Madidi, Teacher  
Laura Thorin, Teacher  
Denise Mielke, Secretary

**Phone (941) 377-9670**

## The Ascension Connection

Ascension Lutheran Church & School  
800 McIntosh Road  
Sarasota, FL 34232-2503

*ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED*

### In This Issue

*Pastor’s Message* Page 1

*Prayer List, September Birthdays & Anniversaries* Page 2

*Financial Statistics, Recipe Corner & Confirmands* Page 3

*World Wide Work within WELS, WELS logo* Page 4

*Pastor’s Message Continued, Fall Bible Class and* Page 5

*Sunday School Kickoff* Page 6

*From the Principal, Faith Explorers and Choir Invite* Page 7

*School Fundraiser, All-American Scholar, Teen Group* Page 7

*School Fundraiser, All-American Scholar, Teen Group* Page 7

*School Fundraiser, All-American Scholar, Teen Group* Page 7

*School Fundraiser, All-American Scholar, Teen Group* Page 7

*School Fundraiser, All-American Scholar, Teen Group* Page 7

# ◆ Ascension Connection ◆

September 2009

## ELCA DRIFTS FURTHER FROM TRUTH

### WELS president expresses regret at ELCA decision on gay clergy

**Milwaukee, Wis.**—Rev. Mark Schroeder, president of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), is expressing regret at the vote of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) convention regarding homosexual clergy. Friday, delegates approved a resolution committing the church to find a way for “people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships” to serve as professional leaders of the church.

“To view same-sex relationships as acceptable to God is to place cultural viewpoint and human opinions above the clear Word of God,” says Schroeder. “The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, along with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and other smaller Lutheran synods, maintains and upholds the clear teaching of the Bible that homosexuality is not in keeping with God’s design and is sinful in God’s eyes.”

At the same time, Schroeder says WELS congregations stand ready to support those struggling with same-sex attractions. “As with any sin, it is the church’s responsibility to show love and compassion to sinners, not by condoning or justifying the sin, but by calling the sinner to repent and by assuring the sinner that there is full forgiveness in Jesus Christ,” Schroeder says.

WELS, with about 390,000 members and nearly 1,300 congregations nationwide, is the third largest Lutheran church body in the United States. In Wisconsin alone, there are more than 201,000 members and 417 congregations. “It’s unfortunate that many headlines have referred to the recent decisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as something ‘Lutherans’ have decided,” Schroeder says. “In fact, the ELCA is only one of many Lutheran denominations. We are saddened that a group with the name Lutheran would take another decisive step away from the clear teaching of the Bible, which was the foundation of the Lutheran Reformation.”

Schroeder says that WELS is firmly committed to uphold God’s design for marriage as outlined in Scripture—a

design intended for one man and one woman. “We believe, and the Bible teaches, that God designed this relationship to be a blessing for men and women and for society. Any departure from what God himself has designed does two things: it denies the clear teachings of Scriptures and it undermines God’s desire that the man/woman relationship in marriage be a blessing.”

*Grace and peace to you all, and September greetings in our Lord Jesus:*

By now you’ve probably heard the news about the ELCA’s decision to condone and welcome homosexual clergy among their ranks.

While it is a dark day for those holding to the name “Lutheran”, it’s not entirely all that surprising. This has been an ongoing drift for the largest Lutheran church body in America for some time. It’s the natural result of a church body coming unhitched from its moorings. When the Bible is viewed with the eye of historical criticism, the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration is out the window, and truth becomes a pliable putty waiting to be molded by the whims and fancies of the latest group and context.

The Bible is pretty clear about what God’s designs are for marriage and sexuality. Let’s do a whirlwind review...

**Genesis 2:24** tells us what marriage is: one man and one woman, beginning a new relationship which takes priority over the previous parent-child relationship, being united together and becoming one.

**Matthew 19:6** tells us this 1 man/1 woman relationship is to be a lifelong commitment.

**Hebrews 13:4** clearly tells us that marriage (see Gen. 2:24 above!) is the only acceptable avenue for a man and a woman to most intimately express their love through sexuality.

*(See COVER ARTICLE on page 5)*

## PRAYER REQUESTS +

*Your prayers are much appreciated!*

**New School Year...** Give thanks and praise to the Lord for his grace and blessing on our school as we head into our 11th year. Ask the Lord to bring more unchurched families into his kingdom through our school, to be with our teachers and volunteers, and to continue to equip us to prepare students for life and Life eternal.

**Our Synod...** Ask the Lord's blessing and favor on our synod and our district, that we would continue to see and appreciate the blessings of being united together in a body of believers which enables us to do things we could never do as a single congregation.

**LaVerne Voss...** As LaVerne was recently diagnosed with a tumor giving pressure on the left side of her brain, pray that God would fill her with faith in her Savior, and an overflowing sense of peace in the knowledge that her times are His eternal and loving hands. Thank the Lord for using LaVerne in so many ways to advance the work of the gospel here in Sarasota, and around the world through her work and support with LWMS.

**Barb Higginbotham...** As Barb recovers from a serious fall, with a broken pelvis and arm, ask the Lord to grant health and strength, and to ease her pain during these days of recovery. Thank the Lord for the blessing and support of their family and loved ones, and ask Him to grant Lloyd and Barb many more years together to enjoy God's blessings of love and life.

**Pam and Brady Beitlich...** As Pam recovers from surgery on her wrist and hand following a car accident last year, and as son Brady recovers from surgery on his foot and ankle—ask the Lord grant a quick and full recovery for them both, and to keep them safe in the days ahead. Bless their efforts as they return to work / college, that in everything they do they bear witness to their faith and give glory to you.

**Blessings for...** *Our confirmands as they take ownership of their faith, Our college students as they travel and begin classes, the Rosenbaums and Brands as they transition into new ministries.*

**NOTE:** All of these fellow Christians appreciate your prayers, as well as cards, phone calls, gifts, and visits. Thanks & God bless you!

## SEPTEMBER



- 9/2 - Elvis Wieseler-Ingrao
- 9/4 - Dick Meyers
- 9/5 - Katie Graber
- 9/8 - Shana Laughlin
- 9/10 - Mark Becker
- 9/11 - Desiree Batchelder
- 9/13 - Dave Morenz
- 9/15 - Russ Rann  
- Al Hollmann
- 9/16 - Brooke Carbon  
- Nate Zabel
- 9/17 - Lisa Hannon
- 9/19 - Mikaelyn Pavlisin
- 9/20 - Janet Rodgers
- 9/22 - Laura Thorin
- 9/25 - Chris VanDeusen
- 9/27 - Bill Carroll
- 9/30 - Otto Bufe  
- Gail Vidakovic

## SEPTEMBER



- 9/11 - John & Julie Bartley
- 9/13 - Jim & Dolly Carlson
- 9/19 - Dick & Jo Meyers
- 9/23 - David & Jodi Turgeon

# 2010 Entertainment Books

Once again  
at the low, low  
price of

# \$30

Many different venues—from restaurants to automobile services to movie rentals to travel and almost anything in between—are featured and offer substantial savings. Your investment will be paid off in no time. Check it out!

Proceeds Benefit our School!  
On SALE Soon!

## ALL-AMERICAN SCHOLAR

The United States Achievement Academy announced that Susmitha Madidi has been named an All-American At-Large Award Winner. Susmitha will appear in the All-American Scholar Official Yearbook which is published nationally. Susmitha is a student at South East High School.

This award is a prestigious honor very few students can ever hope to attain. In fact, the Academy recognized fewer than 10% of all American high school students.

The Academy selects All-American Scholar winners based on the Standards of Selection set forth by the Academy. The criteria for selection are a student's grade point average, student achievements and a well-balanced schedule of academics and extracurricular activities.

Congratulations, Susmitha!

## Teen Group News

### TEEN YOUTH GROUP EVENT

Plan to Join Us for the  
Fall Organizational Meeting  
Sunday - September 20th  
Noon to 3:00 p.m.

Pool party (Location to be announced)

Bible Study

Planning for Coming Year

Lunch provided – Sign up to bring a dessert or appetizer to share

# From the Principal

## The End of Vacation – A Time to Celebrate

Where have you been on vacation this summer? I have spoken to a number of people these past few weeks to find out where they have taken vacations recently. There have been many different replies to that question. Some of the places people have gone to include Wisconsin, Busch Gardens, Orlando, The Appalachian Trail, and North Carolina.

Why do people go on vacation? Well, a variety of answers can also be given to that question. Some people go on vacation to get away from the “busyness” of regular life, Others go because it is something they do every summer with their family or friends. Still others go because they want to visit family they do not see all that often, and some may go to learn more about and enjoy the world God has given to us. No matter what the reason is that people go on vacation, I believe everyone is looking to enjoy themselves.

My vacations with my family this summer have consisted of a trip to West Palm Beach for a few days, taking a few extra days to drive from Lannon to Sarasota in order to relax a bit more than our usual quick trips to Florida, and making a trip to northern Wisconsin with some good friends.

Although this summer has not been a time for an extended vacation, I still enjoy seeing and learning about new places. I enjoy sitting and relaxing by a pool or on the beach. And I enjoy seeing family and friends. Believe it or not, I also enjoy returning home from vacation. Vacations are nice; they are good for rejuvenating the body and spirit, but there is also a time to get home and get back to “real-life.”

We have just gotten back to “real-life” at Ascension Lutheran School after our summer vacation. And do you know, it is really a time to celebrate? Parents, it is not a time to celebrate because your children are going to be out of your way at home. Kids, it is not a time to celebrate because you get to buy new clothes and other school items with your parents. But, it is a time to celebrate because education continues. Not just education in math, science, social studies, and the like, but in-depth study of God’s Word and his plan of salvation. We get to study this on a daily basis together. We get to learn what God intends for our daily living. All of this is reason to celebrate the end of summer vacation.

May God bless us during this upcoming school year as we celebrate our life in Christ!

**Thank You:** A special thank you to the many helping hands that participated in our School Work Day on Saturday, August 8, to help us ready the school for the start of the year. We completed quite a list of tasks.

**Contact Information:** If you have need to contact Mr. Brands, please call the school office at 941-371-5909 or on his new home/cell number, 941-961-0837.

*Daniel Brands*

## FAITH EXPLORERS

Fall Kick-off Event  
 Friday, September 18, 2009  
 6:00 p.m. at church

All 3rd to 7th graders are invited.  
 See Faith Explorers’ bulletin board or  
 Miss O’Laire for more information.

**THE CHOIR NEEDS YOU!**

The new choir season begins  
 with a one-hour rehearsal on  
 Wed, Sept 30 at 7 p.m.

*Please join us in making a  
 joyful noise to the Lord!*

### FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS FOR JULY

	CURRENT MONTH	FISCAL Y-T-D	TOTAL BUDGET
<b>Receipts</b>			
Church	\$ 23,709.27	\$ 23,709.27	\$286,100.00
Other	670.00	670.00	2,500.00
School	12,856.10	12,856.10	330,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 37,235.37</b>	<b>\$37,235.37</b>	<b>\$630,000.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Administration	\$ 1129.35	\$ 1129.35	\$ 15,400.00
Religious Edu.	106.55	106.55	1600.00
Evangelism	-	-	1100.00
Fellowship	-	-	1000.00
SOS	60.00	60.00	600.00
Stewardship	5.00	5.00	27,200.00
Elders	-	-	1600.00
Payroll/Benefits	37,753.37	37,753.37	457,200.00
Elem. School	3325.62	3325.62	29,800.00
Preschool	448.15	448.15	7800.00
Property	4830.34	4830.34	86,700.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 47,658.38</b>	<b>\$47,658.38</b>	<b>\$630,000.00</b>
<b>Surplus/ (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$ (10,423.01)</b>	<b>\$ (10,423.01)</b>	

## God Bless Our Confirmands

On August 9, 2008, we received three of our young adults as communicant members through the Rite of Confirmation. Each had a special project they worked on over the summer months. Shasta Laughlin sketched a God So Loved the World poster. Cenya Moreno sketched three bulletin covers for Pentecost, Epiphany and Ascension. Tony Zabel made the Confirmed in Christ confirmation banner for the sanctuary.

## Recipe Corner

### Mark Homrich’s Baked Beans

This recipe is based upon a large can of Bushes original baked beans. Not the Large #10 can but the next size down. I believe it’s a 64 oz can.

1 large can Bushes Original baked beans with juice drained. I usually drink it out of the can.

1 lb of bacon cut into 2 inch length pieces. (I just cut it while it is still in the pkg)

1 large sweet onion chunked (never use plain yellow onions) I use FL sweet or Vidalia.

2/3 cup dark brown sugar

½ cup ketchup

2 tbsp. yellow mustard

Cut bacon and fry until almost crispy. (The bacon will separate itself as it cooks and is stirred.) Drain most but not all of the fat. Add onions and cook until bacon is done (crispy). Add remaining ingredients and cook until sugar is melted.

Enjoy!

### Calico Bean Casserole

Fry together:  
 1 pound ground beef  
 1/2 pound bacon cut up  
 1 cup chopped onions

Add:  
 1/2 cup ketchup  
 3 tsp. yellow mustard  
 1/2 cup brown sugar  
 1 Tblsp vinegar  
 1 can pork and beans 16 oz, do NOT drain  
 1 can kidney beans, 16 oz, Drain  
 1 can lima beans, any size, Drain

Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes.

## WORLD WIDE WORK WITHIN WELS

Abiding Savior, Killeen, Texas

### Mission by a Military Base

Abiding Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church in Killeen, Texas is a mission congregation of the South Central District of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Killeen is the home of Fort Hood, the largest military installation in the free world. The Fort Hood area has played a large part in our nation's history and is home to the brave men and women of the First Cavalry Division, the Fourth Infantry Division (which captured Saddam Hussein), the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment, and the 13th Sustainment Brigade.

Abiding Savior has been serving Killeen since 1993 when we began meeting on Sunday evenings in a World War II era chapel on Fort Hood. When the old chapel buildings on Fort Hood were torn down, the congregation began worshiping in a local store front. In 2002 we were blessed to be able to purchase 12 acres of land upon which we have now built our new 6,000 square foot sanctuary. With an Open House Community Festival we praised God for our new church building on Palm Sunday, 2009. With the blessings of our land and new facilities, these are exciting times at Abiding Savior, as our dreams, prayers, and possibilities for gospel ministry are developing before our eyes!

### Reaching Out, Nurturing

Our ministry plan is driven by the desire to share the good news of Jesus with everyone—permanent residents as well as those who will transition in and out of Killeen with the military. We want to help everyone grow closer to Jesus.

### Promise Outreach

Every Sunday, worshippers are encouraged to take a Promise Outreach Packet home to give to someone new. The Promise Outreach Packet is a door-hanger bag loaded with an Abiding Savior ministry card, a seasonal promotional letter, and a copy of *The Promise*. We plan

on making outreach a “way of life” for every member. Soon our Evangelism Task Force will be organizing a monthly Outreach Fun Day. We will meet at church for some Word and prayer. Volunteers will go out together to deliver 100 Promise Outreach Packets, then return to church for a picnic. We pray that God will use this simple idea to accomplish some amazing things.

### Family Nourishment Night

Every Wednesday we offer something for men, women, and children. We want everyone to grow closer to Jesus. Family Nourishment Night starts with a meal. Then we break into separate groups for Kids' Power Hour, Men's Bible Study, and Women's Prayer Group. Soon we'll be adding a youth group to the program. We add some summer flavor to Family Nourishment Night in June, July, and August. We pray that God will use these fellowship and education events to provide some serious spiritual growth for us.

### Military Family Support

Everything we do is for the benefit of everyone, military or civilian. However, we feel that as the congregation serving the largest military base in the world it would be wise to add military family support as an intentional, specific focus and area of ministry at Abiding Savior. Just as we include outreach as an objective for all ministry programs, in everything we do we also ask “How can we better serve military families?” The needs of deployed soldiers are great, and so are the needs of their spouses and children who send them off to war. Providing these families with loving support, Christian counseling, and spiritual guidance is one of Abiding Savior's chief priorities. God has blessed Abiding Savior with the privilege to serve the families of many retired and active military service men and women, and we eagerly look forward to meeting and serving many more in the months and years to come. I pray that we will “run with perseverance the race marked out for us,” for Jesus' sake.

Submitted by Mark Becker

## Did You Know?

The WELS has a new logo as seen here (but in color). Together, this new tagline and logo will help focus attention on who we are— God's people through Christ's love— and our mission, or calling.



(COVER ARTICLE Continued from page 1)

**Leviticus 18:22ff** is blunt and to the point about homosexual behavior: “*that is detestable.*” It goes on to say, “*Everyone who does any of these detestable things—such persons must be cut off from their people*” (v.29). If you think God was joking, see how seriously He took the matter in Lev. 20:13.

But in case one would argue that was a narrow minded view from the Old Testament, let's listen to the inspired word from the New Testament in **1 Corinthians 6:9,10**: “*Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders [...] will inherit the kingdom of God.*”

**Romans 1:26,27** clearly condemns the out-of-control behavior that homosexuality is, and notes God's judgment of it.

Look those passages up, study them, let the Spirit work in your heart and mind and you will see that no, it's not an outdated, unloving, homophobic response. It's holding to the truth as our Savior commends in John 8:31, “*If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.*” The most loving thing a Christian can do is warn his neighbor away from sin and help keep him from eternal destruction in hell. Conversely, to condone, accept and promote a lifestyle that leads to destruction is the most unloving and cruel thing one could do.

So what do we do? We don't shun or close our doors and ears. We don't refuse to speak with them or hold them in vile contempt and hate them. We love. We reach out. We get out of our comfort zones for the sake of the gospel, and we preach Jesus. After all, Jesus spent an awful lot of time with those who were outcasts of society. There are innumerable things that make us all different, but the one thing we all need is the gospel - the good news of Christ crucified, Christ risen.

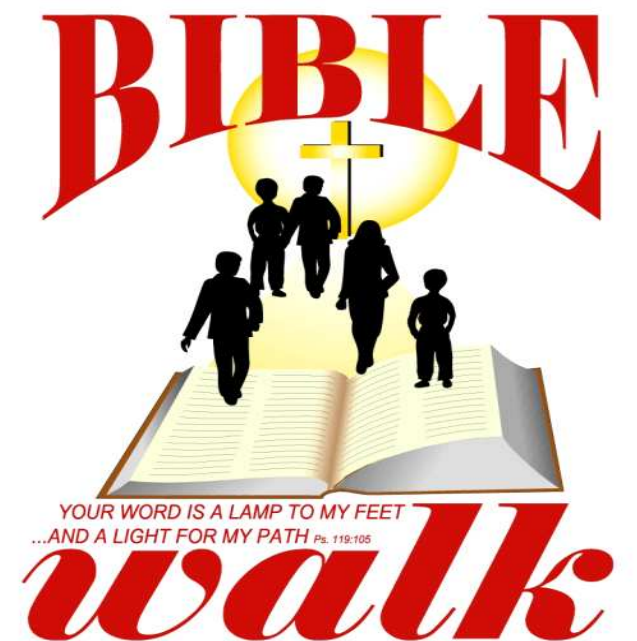
Yet, to love, and to reach out with the gospel means we will have to also use the law, and hold to the truth. In other words, the gospel won't mean a thing and there will be no hunger for forgiveness and no desire for real change, unless we

first speak the truth and show sin to be sin. Without first pointing out the illness, a patient will see no need for the medicine.

So talk. Interact with your neighbors and coworkers. Love them in Jesus, and love them enough to tell them the truth. Sometimes loving someone means we have to say difficult things. Say it. Speak the truth and stand up against the moral drift going on around us. But always do it in love. Say it with gentleness and respect. Study the word of God so you know what it does and does not say on the matter. Be confident in the Lord and the Holy Spirit's use of you in the hearts and lives of people around you. But then say what needs to be said and take a stand for those things worth getting knocked down for. This is one of them.

God bless your month,  
Pastor Mielke

## Fall Bible Class & SS Kickoff



**Time: 10:15 AM**

**Date: 09/13/09**