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Ascension Day: What's the Big Deal?

- Pastor Sorenson

In recent memory, Ascension Day has become a bit of an afterthought in most churches. Many churches barely even acknowledge the day, let alone celebrate it. Those who do celebrate Christ's Ascension usually do so on a Sunday, 3 days after the actual Ascension.

None of this is wrong, of course. But it does sell the Ascension a bit short. It can make us think that Christ's Ascension isn't that big of a deal. It can make us believe that Christ's Ascension doesn't really mean anything to us. It can make us regard Christ's Ascension as nothing more than a minor festival, if we even regard it that highly.

May it not be! For Christ's Ascension really is a big deal and it's something that should bring us great joy and comfort. That is, if we realize what the Ascension is actually doing for us.

Often times people think of the Ascension simply as Jesus leaving earth. He ascends into heaven, thus leaving us behind until He comes again. He enjoys the bliss of heaven, sitting at the Father's right hand, and being surrounded by the angels and those who have fallen asleep in the faith.

But that is only part of the story. For the Ascension didn't take Jesus away from us. Instead, the Ascension brought heaven near to us. Since Christ has ascended into heaven, He now lives and reigns where time and space don't hem Him in. This is why He says in the last chapter of Matthew, "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20b)

Because of this, because Jesus is no longer bound by time and space, Jesus is with us always. Whenever His Word is spoken, there He is. Whenever someone is baptized, there He is. Whenever you receive the Lord's Supper, there He is. Whenever the Church is gathered together by the work of the Holy Spirit, there Christ is. There heaven and earth meet.

Christ's Ascension guarantees all of this. It guarantees that He will surely be present with us in each of these ways. No matter where we are in this world, no matter when we gather together. For heaven isn't some place up in the sky far away from us. Heaven is wherever God is.

And since Christ has ascended into heaven in His real, human body, we can be sure that we encounter heaven even in and with our real, human bodies. Our ears encounter heaven because they hear Christ's Word. Our mouths encounter heaven because they eat and drink Christ's body and blood. Our whole body encounters heaven because Christ comes to us as we gather together as His body, the Church.

This is why Ascension Day is such a big deal. Because without it, we would have no such guarantees. Without it, we would never encounter heaven on earth. But with it, we are confident that our great High Priest, Christ Jesus, comes to us. With it, we know that heaven and earth meet together as we join together in worship to be served by Christ and to receive all of His gifts.

With all of this mind, I invite all of you to come to church on Thursday, May 13th at 7:00 PM as we celebrate Christ's Ascension. We will be joined that night with our brothers and sisters from St. John, White Creek and St. Paul, Jonesville, as a reminder of our unity in Christ and as an opportunity to be strengthened and encouraged by our fellow saints. And most importantly of all, we will all join together because we know that that night heaven will come to earth and we will be with our Lord Jesus who is indeed with us always, even to the end of the age.

WORSHIP & BIBLE STUDY INFORMATION

Worship Service Update: We are now back to having one service each Sunday at 9:00 AM. As we do so, we will continue to follow the state guidelines regarding social distancing and other safety measures. For each service, the radio transmitter will still be used and the sermon and readings will be posted on the website.

Bible Studies In-Person:

- We have begun meeting again on **Sunday mornings** after worship.
- **Wednesday Night Bible Study** will continue meeting on Wednesdays at 6:30 PM. If you have any topics you are interested in studying, please let Pastor Sorenson know.
- **Book of Concord Study** will meet on the second Sunday of the month, May 9th, beginning at 5:00 PM and continue studying the Smalcald Articles. A pitch-in dinner will follow the study as well. Everyone is welcome to attend!

Online Bible Study: We will continue having a short devotional video on **Tuesdays at 2:00 PM** on the church Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/StPeterEvangelicalLutheranChurch>) and is also available to view in its entirety even after the study concludes.

Sermons and Devotional Resources:

- Weekly sermons will be posted on our church website (<http://www.stpeterwaymansville.com>) on the sermon page under the "At St. Peter" tab. (Direct link to that page - http://www.stpeterwaymansville.org/?page_id=417)
- You can also find helpful resources for your home devotions on the "Devotional Resources" page under the "Resources" tab (http://www.stpeterwaymansville.org/?page_id=489). Now is a great time to begin, continue, and strengthen a home devotional pattern by yourself and with your family.
- Portals of Prayer are available in the Narthex. You can drop by and pick one up or contact Pastor or the church office to have one delivered.

Lord's Supper: If you would like to receive the Lord's Supper during this time, please contact Pastor Sorenson via call, text, or email. His phone number is 812-371-1151 and his email is pastoresorenson@gmail.com. He would be happy to meet you at the church for this purpose or to bring it to your home, making sure at all times to take the necessary safety precautions.

May these resources assist you as you continue to hear the Word of God and cry out to Him in prayer.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Southern Indiana Pastors Conference Worship: The congregation is invited to join the pastors attending the Southern Indiana Pastors Conference in worship on Monday, May 3rd at 7:00 PM. We will be having the Lord's Supper that evening and the Indiana District President, Rev. Daniel Brege, will be the guest preacher.

Ascension Day Service: Join us on Thursday, May 13th at 7:00 PM for a joint Ascension Day Divine Service. The service will be held here and we will be joined by the saints from St. John, White Creek and St. Paul, Jonesville to celebrate our Lord's Ascension. This is a wonderful opportunity to join in worship with fellow Lutherans in the area on a very special day in the Church Year.

150th ANNIVERSARY UPDATES

150th Anniversary: This year is the 150th anniversary of St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church! We will have a special service on Sunday, July 11th, 2021 to give thanks to God for 150 years of our life together here in His Church. The Indiana District President, Rev. Daniel Brege will be our guest preacher that day. As part of our celebration, we will be putting together a new directory, a new cookbook, making a banner, making Christmas ornaments, and many other things. If you would like to volunteer to help in any capacity or if you have any ideas for how we can celebrate this special occasion, please speak to Pastor Sorenson.

Anniversary Service Invitations: We are developing our mailing list of members, past and present. If you have a family member or friend that you want to receive an invitation to our church anniversary, please let Debbie know at debraflohr5@gmail.com or text to (812) 341-4724.

CHURCH HISTORY

In preparation for our 150th anniversary celebration, some church members are looking through historical church documents. Barb Minor has compiled a list of interesting excerpts from old board meeting minutes. Some of these excerpts will be included each week in our bulletins and compiled in our monthly newsletters leading up to the celebration in July. These excerpts are from Board Minutes from April 2, 1871 to October 6, 1912 and were written in German and translated by Rev. A. A. Mueller. It is worth noting how important church attendance and voter meeting attendance was and that being in church and living a life according to God's Word was extremely important. Christian life was to be lived every day.

April 7, 1872: Resolved that each congregation member who does not work on the congregation's land pay 70¢ per day.
July 5, 1874: There was a discussion of the fact that several members do not all fulfill their congregational duties, also do not attend the meetings and explain themselves in these meetings. It was resolved to summon the respective members in writing to justify themselves in the congregational meeting of October 5.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Library: The Book of the Month will be available in the Parish Hall library for you to look through and read. You may take the book home to read as well, but we ask that you please do not hold onto it for too long so other people can enjoy it as well. The May Book of the Month is *Built on the Rock: The Healthy Congregation* by Ted Kober. Here is an excerpt from the book: "In order to sustain good health, churches need to be focused on God's Word and Sacraments. The emphasis will be on commitment to being in God's Word, which is the first focal point of the book. Church members and leaders mature in their faith as they practice confession and forgiveness."

Usher & Communion Sign-Up Sheets: The 2021 sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall. We are always looking for additional people interested in filling these roles. Please feel free to sign up even if you have never before helped in these ways. Someone will be happy to show you the ropes. (At this time, communion assistance will be clean up only. Pastor will continue to set up communion so that there is only one contact prior to communion distribution.)

Altar Flowers: If you would like to sponsor altar flowers, there is a sign-up sheet in the hallway between Pastor's office and the church office. The cost to sponsor the flowers is \$20, and the payment can be put in the offering plate or in the mail rack outside the church office door. The flowers are yours for the taking after the worship service. Please contact Sue Anne Lee at (812) 717-0167 if you have any questions.

YOUTH GROUP

Golf Scramble: The youth group will be holding our Golf Scramble this Saturday, May 1st. If you would like to be a sponsor or would like to play, please let Pastor know as soon as possible. Also, if you would like to donate food items for lunch that day, please see the sign-up sheet on the conference room door. Thank you for your support towards our youth!

Youth Group: The youth group will meet on Sunday, May 16, for our youth night. We will have a meal, time to study God's Word, and a fun activity.

EVENTS

Game Night Returns!: Game Night will be returning in the month of June! We will host a night of games and fun on Friday, June 4th beginning at 6:00 PM. Mark your calendars and invite your friends and family!

FROM THE OFFICE

Contact Information:

As the situation around us continues to change daily, we would like to be able to contact everyone in a quick and timely manner. If you could please contact Amy or Pastor to update your contact information, especially phone number and email, that would help us tremendously and be greatly appreciated. Keep an eye on the church Facebook page for the most up-to-date information. Thank you!

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Amy Sciano • (812) 342-4921, office • (812) 390-2318, cell • amy@stpeterwaymansville.com

On the web: www.stpeterwaymansville.com • Facebook: www.facebook.com/StPeterEvangelicalLutheranChurch

Annual Waymansville Open Golf Scramble



Prizes for:

Closest to the Pin

Longest Drive

Winning Team Members

Yardsticks will also be available!

Saturday, May 1st, 2021

Hickory Hills Golf Course
1509 SR 135
Brownstown, IN 47220
(812) 358-4529

8:00 AM - Registration
9:00 AM - Shotgun Start

\$50/player
4 players per team
Includes: 18 holes, cart,
food, drinks, prizes

Proceeds benefit the
missions of St. Peter
Evangelical Lutheran
Church, Waymansville
Youth Group

To register your team, sponsor a hole for \$50, or
for more information, contact Pastor Erik Sorenson
at (812) 371-1151 or pastoresorenson@gmail.com

St. Peter Lutheran Church Calendar

May 2021

Ushers: No sign-ups

Communion Clean-up: Lynnette May

Acolytes:

May 2 – Trevor Acree

May 16 – Jonah Sciano

May 9 – Rayleigh Acton

May 23 – Joe Acree

May 13– Laurie Schultz

May 30- – Trevor Acree

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Upcoming Dates: 6/4: Game Night @ 6:00 PM						1 8:00 AM – Youth Group Golf Scramble
2 9:00 AM – Divine Service (Communion) 10:15 AM – Adult Bible Study & Sunday School	3 7:00 PM – Southern IN Pastors Conference Divine Service	4 2:00 PM – Online Devotion	5 Pastor at Southern Indiana Pastors Conference	6 10:00 AM – Elders’ Mtg.	7	8
9 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 AM – Adult Bible Study & Sunday School 5:00 PM – Book of Concord Study	10	11 2:00 PM – Online Devotion	12 6:30 PM – Bible Study	13 7:00 PM – Joint Ascension Service	14	15
16 9:00 AM – Divine Service (Communion) 10:15 AM – Adult Bible Study & Sunday School 5:00-7:00 PM – Youth Group Night	17	18 2:00 PM – Online Devotion	19 6:30 PM – Bible Study	20	21	22
23 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 AM – Adult Bible Study & Sunday School	24	25 2:00 PM – Online Devotion	26 6:30 PM – Bible Study	27	28	29
30 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 AM – Adult Bible Study & Sunday School	31					

