



Ascension
LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELCA
December 2014

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THE *Ascension* NEWSLETTER



Ascension
LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELCA



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1415 Dopp Street
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9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

FRIDAY

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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GOD IS CALLING

Pastor Chris Marien

Dear People of God,

We are here once again. Advent is upon us and we are wholly unprepared for its arrival at our gates. Advent has come, and in the midst of the whirlwind we call life, God is calling us.

And the question I want to ask myself and all of you is this, "Are we listening?"

Author and priest Henry Nouwen writes, "The first Sunday of Advent is for me a beautiful day and the worship makes me constantly aware of the great expectation of the Advent season." Perhaps. Nouwen has been practicing his waiting and his awareness of the great expectation his entire life. You and I, on the other hand, are often led in more directions, called to hear many voices, and we are all too well aware of the expectations that we place on ourselves, on others, and, of course, on God. Notice that I lifted up our expectations for God and not God's expectations for us. It is a subtle difference and yet the subtlety is the great distinction. I don't believe that Advent is so much about what we are doing - how we are preparing - as much as Advent is about what God is doing in us and through us to prepare us for the great expectation of God in Jesus Christ arriving in the manger before us. Is it possible that God prepares us and that somehow we are not able to prepare at all by ourselves? Yes, there will be cooking and cleaning and gifts purchased and days of waiting. Yes, there will be hugs and smiles and tears of remembering. Yes, there will be moments of melancholy and anticipation and expectation. Everything we do in these days of Advent will be preparation, and yet, I want to listen for the voice of God calling. I want to hear God's call to my heart and mind and soul to step slowly in these Advent days. I want the Holy Spirit to soften my heart and slow my breathing. I want the peace of God to fill me and all of you in this season of waiting and preparing. I want, I want, I want...good Lord, I sound like the children in the 7th aisle at Toys R Us. Welcome to our world...what I want is not important. Only what God wants for me should be the prayer on my lips. I believe what God wants is the devotion of my heart, my ears to hear, and my life to be focused on the Kingdom of God.

Advent is upon us and we may be more ready than we first thought. Is it possible to believe that God prepares us in the midst of days that seem to end before we are ready to lie down in sleep? Is it possible that God prepares us in the midst of the parking lots, grocery stores, and mall moments? Is it possible that God calls whether we listen or ignore? Oh yes, I do believe that it is possible. I believe God is calling, and whether our ears are able to hear, our hearts and souls hear the voice calling in the night! Advent is upon us and the star of Bethlehem has already begun to shine. God is calling and soon the sounds of angel choirs will be heard, "Glory to God in the highest!" God is calling and the sound of a booming voice from John at the River Jordan will also be upon us, "Repent!"

God is calling - the voice that comes from the mountains. God is calling - the voice that echoes in the canyons. God is calling - the voice that shines the stars. God is calling - the voice that leads the shepherds. God is calling - the voice that will silence heaven as the story of Emmanuel "God with us" is told once again. May you let God bless you this season of Advent.

Peace be with you.





THE LONGEST NIGHT

Pastor Angela Khabeb

*Singing cheerful songs to a person whose heart is heavy
is as bad as stealing someone's jacket in cold weather or rubbing salt in a wound.*

Proverbs 25:20 NLT

The holiday season is quickly approaching and, for many, the holidays are a festive time marked with joy and cheer. It is a time to spend with family and friends – a time to enjoy great food and spirited fellowship. For most people, this is their favorite part of the year and they have anticipated its arrival for months. They are revived by all of the energy that surrounds this season – the baking, caroling, shopping, and visiting. For them, Christmas really will be merry. Unfortunately, this is not the case for everyone.

On the opposite end of the celebration spectrum, there are those who have been dreading the holidays. This time of year, they are confronted with challenging situations, painful memories, or heavy hearts. They may not feel like singing *Joy to the World* or *Deck the Halls*. The reasons abound. Perhaps some have experienced the loss of a loved one and this will be the first holiday season without that person. Or perhaps the loss occurred years ago, yet the holidays still hold a certain sadness – never quite the same since their loved one(s) died. Some families may be enduring the heartache of miscarriage or infertility. Others may be battling an illness or attempting to fathom a recent diagnosis. Some individuals may be dealing with empty nest syndrome or otherwise separated from family and friends by great distance. Some families are weathering a stormy divorce. Others may be overcome with financial worry or dealing with unemployment. Other families may be suffering through foreclosure. Some are lonely or depressed. And still others may simply be overwhelmed by the stress of the season. Although the factors may vary widely, there is one constant. Our burdens can seem magnified during the holidays.

I remember when our daughter, Joy, was still-born on December 2, 2005. We buried her on December 7. Consequently, a merry Christmas was certainly beyond our reach. The thought of

seeing baby Jesus in the manger did not bring comfort. In fact, it was quite the contrary. Going to church during the holidays was more like torture than worship. It was almost as if I felt mocked by the merriment. So I didn't go...for weeks...and weeks. We should have had another option for worship, at least at Christmas. But sadly, there wasn't one.

As the body of Christ, it is vital that we provide an alternative for worship during the holidays. Remember Paul's mandate to believers in his letter to the Romans? We are to “rejoice with them that rejoice and to weep with them that weep.” This year we will do just that. In addition to our usual Christmas celebratory services, we will also have a Longest Night Service. The Longest Night Service will take place on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 6 p.m. The service is called The Longest Night because in the Northern Hemisphere, the winter solstice is the longest night of the year and falls on or near December 21. (In some congregations, this type of worship service is also referred to as Blue Christmas. This name comes from the liturgical color blue during the season of Advent. The color blue symbolizes hope).

During this service, worshipers are invited to enter God's presence and feel safe. Their emotions are welcome as well. Anxiety, grief, tears, and even anger are wholly acceptable. This service of prayers, readings, and thoughtful music is not an all-night vigil, but rather, a time to take a moment of holy calm in the midst of our circumstances and reflect. It is a time to pause, breathe, and lament. Oddly enough, in our shared discontent, God will remind us that we are never alone.

Please know that the Longest Night Service is open to the entire community. Therefore, feel free to extend an invitation to someone you know who may be hurting this time of year. This is what it means to be the body of Christ.

Peace be with you.

ADVENT BLESSINGS FROM ASCENSION'S STAFF

The staff at Ascension wishes you a blessed Advent, filled with all the wonders of the season and the peace and hope of the coming Lord.

Pastor Angela

Amy G.

Brenda

Kate

Jennifer

Pastor Chris

Tony

Amy S.

Don

Tim

Vicki

Ben

Rhonda

Ray

Heidi



IN GRATITUDE

Thank you to our Ascension family for all your kind thoughts, your help, and all your prayers (also all the great meals). Praise God for His healing and all His blessings! God bless all of you. -- *Sara and Don Doyle*

A big warm thanks for the concerns for Gene. Thank you for the simply beautiful prayer shawl that is on him daily. Thanks for all the prayers. -- *Doris Sherry*

COMMUNICATIONS REMINDERS

Want to share the Good News and activities your group is doing? Please remember these communication deadlines and email the announcements to the respective staff members.

Calendar or room reservations -- to admin@ascensionelca.org

E-alert -- by noon on Tuesday to kate@ascensionelca.org

Bulletin announcements -- by noon on Wednesday to amys@ascensionelca.org

Newsletter articles by the 15th of the preceding month to kate@ascensionelca.org

(Please, no full-page flyers or simple calendar announcements for the newsletter).

PASTORAL ACTS

Baptisms

Nov. 9, Elsa Romme

Nov. 9, Elsa Schraufnagel




 SPIRITUAL
GROWTH

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

December is such a wonderful month full of love, lights, and excitement, BUT most of all, the joys of preparing for our Savior. The excitement in children is almost contagious! I love watching them as they bask in the glow of Christmas.

A fun and wonderfully easy way to pull it all together is an Advent calendar. Share a verse every day as it leads up to Christmas. You can make construction paper loops, a mini book, little bags....easy and fun ways to countdown as a family.

Jennifer Koutnik, Director of Children's Ministries

Thank you to all the volunteers who spent time with our littlest members for the Road to Bethlehem event! The children had a wonderful time, and we could not do it without the extra hands. Much gratitude to those who helped.

The Children's and Music Ministries are excited to present Ascension's Christmas Pageant, What Can I Give Him?, on Sunday, Dec. 21. Here are the very important dates for the Christmas Pageant:

PRACTICE: Sunday, Dec. 7, 10:45-11:15 a.m., East Hall

PRACTICE: Saturday, Dec. 20; 9-10 a.m., {Pageant Characters} Sanctuary; 10-11 a.m., {ALL Kids} Sanctuary

PERFORMANCE: Sunday, Dec. 21, 9 and 10:45 a.m.

- Children whose last names begin with A-M will present the pageant at 9 a.m.
- Last names beginning with the letters N-Z will present the pageant at 10:45 a.m.
- ALL pageant parts stay for BOTH services!



ASCENSION'S ENDOWMENT FUND

Ev Stone, Endowment Team Leader

The Ascension Endowment Fund just completed the first year of income distributions and funding for missions, ministries, and facilities. Based on the fund balance of \$57,488 at the start of the year, the income distribution amount for 2014 was \$2,850. This amount was divided equally between missions, ministries, and facility improvements. The Mission Outreach donation went to an ELCA appeal to provide financial support for the Lutheran pastors in the Meru Diocese and the Lutheran Church of El Salvador who had not been paid for months due to natural disasters and extreme poverty in the areas. The ministries donation was used to help our students with the registration costs for the CRASH trip to the ELCA National Youth Gathering in Detroit in July 2015. The facilities donation was used to purchase new communion ware for Ascension. We are now taking requests for funding pro-

grams for 2015, which should be turned in by March 31, 2015. A Funding Request form is available on Ascension's website or in the church office. Approximately \$950 of funding is available for each of the three categories in 2015. You can also discuss your request with the pastors or a member of the Endowment Committee: Dave Bischmann, Rick James, or Ev Stone.

We would like to grow the Ascension Endowment Fund to provide even more funding for missions, ministries, and facility improvements. If you would consider including the following sentence in your will and trust documents, it would make a great difference, "After all bills have been paid, 10% of my assets will be given to the Ascension Endowment Fund." You should consult with your attorney and/or financial adviser before making any revisions to your will or living trust.

A SIMPLE, BEAUTIFUL STORY TOLD MANY WAYS

Vicki Taylor, Director of Music Ministries

The seasons of Advent and Christmas are upon us. The musicians of Ascension invite you to pause during the coming days and refresh yourself with beautiful music and the timeless story of our Savior's birth. Ascension offers several opportunities to do just that, through worship, concert, and pageant, and you are warmly invited to join us.

From Darkness into Light

Our annual Advent/Christmas Concert Worship services will take place Saturday, Dec. 13, 6 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 14, 9 and 10:45 a.m. The House Band, Folk Choir, Handbell Choir, Children's Choirs, Ascension Choir, a string quartet, and the congregation will proclaim the birth of Jesus through music and word. Please plan to attend and invite family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues to join you.

What Can I Give Him?

What can I give Him, poor as I am.

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.

If I were a wise man I would do my part,

Yet what I can I give Him, give my heart.

Ascension's Sunday School children will present the story of Jesus' birth with familiar carols, lessons, and a pageant on Sunday, Dec. 21 during both the 9 and 10:45 a.m. services. The beautiful story, simply told through the precious voices of children, will bring the Good News to your heart.

Advent blessings!

Joyful
Worship

Jubilate Chorale presents

Lessons and Carols for Christmas

How Great Our Joy!

Vicki Taylor, Director

Saturday, December 6, 2014 • 7:30 p.m.
St. Jerome Catholic Parish
993 Silver Lake Street, Oconomowoc

Sunday, December 7, 2014 • 4:00 p.m.
St. John Lutheran Church
20275 Davidson Road, Brookfield

Advance Tickets – \$15 • Seniors – \$12
Tickets at the Door – \$18 • Seniors – \$15
Students Age 10+ – \$7 • Children Under 10 – Free

Special Guests
Nordic Brass

For tickets and group rates, call (262) 560-0616
or visit www.jubilatechorale.org



CARE MINISTRIES

Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries

Amidst this holiday season, it is easy to get caught up in commercialism. As we finish up our Christmas shopping, attend social events, and participate in so many family traditions, it is important to remember those less fortunate. Instead of spending time thinking about how God helps *me* perhaps we can think about how we are able to help others. Care Ministries is the perfect place to do volunteer work and touch the hearts of others in our congregation and community. If you are looking for a way to make a difference for 2015, contact Brenda Lytle, the Director of Care Ministries at Brenda@ascensionelca.org.

DECEMBER CARE MINISTRIES EVENTS

- Blood Pressure Screenings are in the Hearth Room between the 9 and 10:45 services on Sunday, Dec. 7.
- Christmas Caroling for Healing Hearts: Downtown Waukesha needs volunteers to sing Christmas carols. Groups of 4-10 people, with at least one adult, are encouraged. Cash donations will be collected from the public to benefit Healing Hearts, which is a non-profit organization that helps grieving children and their families. Caroling is every Friday beginning Nov. 28, from 5-8 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; and Sundays, 12-4 p.m. until Christmas. If you or your small group would like to volunteer, please contact Kerry at the Steaming Cup, 262-522-3605, for more information or contact Brenda Lytle, Ascension's Director of Care Ministries, Brenda@ascensionelca.org.
More Care Ministries activities and events are starting up in 2015!



HEALING HEARTS ADOPT A CHILD

Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries, Healing Hearts Board Member

In this season of giving, Healing Hearts needs assistance to support children struggling with grief. Over the past four years, we have been able to support over 400 children through Healing Hearts. There is no charge to our families and the cost needed to continue the program is rising, so we are asking for your help. We are asking that you "adopt" a grieving child. The cost is \$100. This will cover all program costs needed to continue making Healing Hearts accessible to one child. We are seeking 100 benefactors willing to support these children. You can help by sending a tax-deductible donation to: Healing Hearts of Waukesha County, Inc., 121 Wisconsin Ave., Waukesha, WI 53186.



SPECIAL FRIENDS: BELL RINGING

This December, Special Friends is doing our annual service project for the Salvation Army. We will ring the kettle bell at Brookfield Square on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 4-6 p.m. We will be in the mall, in front of J.C. Penney's (think inside and warm). Anyone is welcome to join us. We will take turns ringing the bell, so there will be an opportunity for you to shop.

PRAYER GROUP MINISTRY

Jesus is the reason for the season! O come, let us adore Him! Please join the Prayer Team for an hour of prayer the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month in the Prayer Room from 6-7 p.m. as we lift up praise and the concerns of our church family, community, and nation. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!

REMEMBERING OUR MILITARY AT CHRISTMAS

Diane Maasz, Military Family Ministry Leader

In November, the Military Ministry sent 14 care packages to those serving our country from coast to coast and in four different countries. For each address we were given, we sent two care packages; one to the servicemember whose name we were given and one to a “buddy” in that unit who may not be getting anything from home. Special thanks to Owen’s Little Warriors for making Christmas ornaments, the children from Road to Bethlehem for making Christmas cards, CRASH for baking cookies, Dan Roland for making deer jerky, and to the many members of the congregation for their monetary donations. Your donations will let these soldiers, sailors, and Marines know that their home church sends them love and supports their sacrifice.

Please keep the following deployed servicemembers in your prayers for protection, strength, and a safe return home: Patrick Guthaus, serving on the USS Makin Island; and Eric Mohr, serving in Liberia. Prayers of thanksgiving for the safe return home from deployment of Jacqueline VanderGraff.

As the holidays approach, don’t forget those who are serving so that you have the freedom to celebrate Christmas with your family. All over our country and the world there are men and women who have volunteered to serve to preserve our freedom. Many of them will not be home for Christmas. Consider making a donation to a care package project this year at Christmas and make it part of your annual Christmas tradition. This year the Republican Party of Waukesha in coordination with Hunzinger is collecting items and monetary donations for care packages at the Republican Party office on Pearl Street. Operation USO Care Package and the Marine Family Network are also two organizations that do an excellent job with their care packages.

If you’re traveling over the holidays and happen to see a servicemember at the airport, please don’t hesitate to approach them and thank them for their sacrifice. Perhaps offer to purchase that cup of coffee at Starbucks for them or pick up the tab for their lunch. It’s a small price to pay for your freedom, but will go a long way to show your appreciation for it.

Do you have some veterans in your life that are difficult to buy for at Christmas? The following books may be good choices for them: *Faces of Freedom Profiles of America’s Fallen Heroes: Iraq and Afghanistan* (proceeds go to Fisher House And Wounded Warrior Project), and *Honor Flight: A Visual Journey* (proceeds support Stars and Stripes Honor Flight and Fisher House Wisconsin). The DVDs *Honor Flight* and *Taking Chance* may also be good choices. Or consider making a donation to one of the following charities in your loved one’s name: Fisher House Wisconsin, Stars and Stripes Honor Flight, or Wounded Warrior Project.

Whether or not your budget allows you to make a donation to a military organization this year, I hope that you will find the time to pause during your Christmas celebration and give thanks for those who are serving and pray for their safety.





SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Karen Schmiechen, Small Group Ministry Team Member

THE DANIEL PLAN IS BEING OFFERED AGAIN!

The Daniel Plan is a six-session, video-based, study by Rick Warren and Dr. Mark Hyman. The program was offered this past summer, and participants were so inspired that Ascension is again offering it in the New Year. The Daniel Plan will be offered in early 2015. Watch for details in the January newsletter.

This bible study is very different than other studies by Rick Warren as it focuses on five essentials to health: faith, food, fitness, focus, and friends. The program works on one premise: God designed your body to be healthy and provided everything you need to thrive and live an abundant life. The Daniel Plan small group study teaches simple ways to incorporate healthy choices into your daily lifestyle.

"The foundation of this plan is to gain a more intimate connection with God, and through his power become a healthier person in every aspect of your life. All areas of my life need improvement and are attainable with God's power." Linda Elder, Ascension member and The Daniel Plan participant

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALL GROUPS

Looking for a seasonal study?

The Purpose of Christmas by Rick Warren is in Ascension's library, located in the Prayer Room. This is a three session study on why we celebrate Christmas and how it can change our lives forever.

Looking for some service opportunities? Ascension encourages small groups, adult individuals/couples, and teens to take advantage of the many opportunities that are available to help in our community. Here are some suggestions:

Waukesha County Food Pantry currently serves over 5,700 residents a month, fostering compassion and hope one person at a time. Winter months are their busiest season. If you can spare a couple of hours to help distribute food, contact Judy Cesarec at 262-522-373 or email her at judy@waukeshafoodpantry.org.

Salvation Army bell ringers: Celebrate Christmas cheer and tradition while raising money to help those most in need in your community. Started in 1891, the Red Kettle Christmas Campaign enables the Salvation Army to provide food, toys, and clothing to over 6 million people during the Christmas season and helps more than 34 million Americans recovering from all kinds of personal disasters nationwide (www.waukeshasalvationarmy.org)

Ascension Angel Tree: The Wednesday Afternoon Women's Nurture group is sponsoring the Angel Tree. You can pick an ornament and give Christmas gifts to families who cannot afford gifts this year. Each angel ornament will specify whether the present needs to be wrapped. Gifts

should be brought to church by Dec. 7 at the latest.

Hope Center is a non-profit organization that has been serving the basic needs of financial assistance, food, and clothing in Waukesha County for more than 20 years. It is located at 502 N. East Avenue, Waukesha (549-8726). Volunteers are needed for the clothing shop, kitchen, Project Move, reception area, and building maintenance. If your small group would like to do a donation drive for Hope Center, here are donation suggestions: food, toiletries, clothing, coats, shoes/boots, school supplies, furniture, appliances.

Hebron House consists of two family shelters and one specialized shelter. They need volunteers to provide and serve a meal, share a skill with guests, decorate a shelter for Christmas, and adopt a family for Christmas. Again, if your small group would like to do a donation drive, here are some suggestions: meals, wish list items, maintenance supplies, household needs.

Women's Center: To volunteer at the Women's Center requires training or orientation. They need advocates, gentle men, childcare, fundraising help, special event planning, building and grounds maintenance, office duties. The Women's Center also needs donations, including gift cards, Waukesha County bus day passes, movie passes, winter gloves, PJs, robes, and slippers, jewelry and watches, stamps, stationery, blank journals, curling irons/blow dryers, haircare products, manicure sets, bath towels/wash cloths and more. <http://twcwaukesha.org/donate/>

A TASTE OF THE DANIEL PLAN

Steve and Carol Spieker, Daniel Plan Team Members

Last month we shared how The Daniel Plan got its name. Equally interesting is the story of what inspired Rick Warren to develop The Daniel Plan in the first place.

While baptizing over 800 people in one afternoon, Pastor Rick realized that many people were overweight - including himself! That day, based on the average weight of Americans, Pastor Rick lifted more than 145,000 pounds. Realizing that he was not prioritizing his health, and having read many articles on the growing epidemics of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease in America and around the world, Pastor Rick decided to do something about it. He stood before his congregation the next Sunday and confessed he had been a poor steward of his health and asked for forgiveness. He admitted that he had only gained 2-3 pounds a year, but he had been the pastor for 30 years. He asked the congregation if anyone would like to join him and get healthy. Only expecting a couple hundred people would respond and join him on his quest to get healthy, he was overwhelmed when over 12,000 people signed up on that very day.

After preaching about a man named Daniel in the Bible who refused the king's rich food in order to honor God, Rick realized that he needed a practical, scalable plan that people could easily follow. He recruited three nationally-known doctors – Dr. Daniel Amen, Dr. Mark Hyman, and Dr. Mehmet Oz – to coach him in getting healthy and help design The Daniel Plan program for the church to follow. All three doctors generously offered their time and expertise for free because they all are passionate about transforming health in America and around the world.

During the first year of The Daniel Plan, over 15,000 people collectively lost over 250,000 pounds. Beyond the congregation, people from over 190 countries participated online.

We can speak from first-hand experience what a profound impact living this lifestyle can have on your health. For example, Carol suffered from significant headaches EVERY DAY of her adult life. In addition, in spite of following the conventional wisdom for diet and exercise, she also suffered from high blood pressure and high cholesterol. After following the essentials of The Daniel Plan for nearly four years, she has not had a headache since July 2011 and no longer requires prescription medications for high blood pressure and high cholesterol. We no longer have a single pain reliever or over the counter medication in our home. Just think how your life could be changed with the Daniel Plan study.



HERBED TURKEY BURGER

Ingredients

- 1¼ lbs. lean ground turkey
- 2 TBS fresh finely chopped parsley
- 2 TBS fresh finely chopped chives
- 4 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ TBS coarse or whole grain Dijon mustard
- 3 TBS bread crumbs (whole wheat panko or gluten-free)
- 2-3 large cloves garlic, minced
- 4 whole wheat or gluten-free hamburger buns
- 4 large tomato slices
- 4 large leaves dark green lettuce

Preparation:

1. Put turkey through garlic into a medium bowl. Mix gently with your hands until thoroughly combined. (Work with very clean hands or wear disposable food preparation gloves).
2. Divide turkey mixture into 4 equal portions.

Roll into balls, and then flatten into burger patties. Patties can be refrigerated at this point for a few hours or grilled right away.

3. Cook burgers in a nonstick grill or fry pan or on an outdoor grill. Place patties on the grill, and cook until one side has golden grill marks and feels firm, about 7-9 minutes. Flip burgers and cover with a lid or a small aluminum pan, and cook until burgers are firm and reach an internal temperature of 160°-165°. Do not overcook or press on burgers while they are cooking; you want juicy burgers.

4. Spread the buns with a little horseradish sauce and/or Dijon mustard, top with lettuce and tomatoes. Add burgers. For a change, try tucking burgers into whole wheat pita bread.

Tip: Homemade bread crumbs taste the best and are easy to make.



SUPERMOMS COOKIE SWAP

With the hustle and bustle that is the Christmas season, what mom has enough time to bake all the cookies she would really like to? Do not fret! The Supermoms will again be hosting the Annual Supermoms Cookie Swap. 'Tis the season to indulge in the finest cookies this side of Waukesha!

The general concept: Bake three to five dozen of one kind of cookie. Come to the party, have a cup of coffee/beverage, enjoy good company, complete some shopping, and leave with an assortment of three to five dozen cookies!

If you are interested in participating, we ask that you kindly notify Jessica Jahner at jessicajahner@gmail.com or 414-213-3679 by Dec. 5 with the type of cookie you will be bringing. We're hoping everyone can bring a different kind of cookie to keep the swap exciting. Once we know the number of people attending, we will notify those that RSVP'd with the confirmed quantity of cookies each person needs to bring. (If you would like to be entered into the Best Tasting Cookie Contest, please plan on supplying an extra dozen cookies for sampling).

Back by popular demand! Norm Bruce, the owner of Martha Merrell's, will be giving his book talk on great new books for kids and adults. This was a favorite of past years' swaps. See you there!

**COOKIE SWAP
WEDNESDAY, DEC.
10, 2014 7-8:30PM**
**Martha Merrell's
Books, 231 West
Main Street,
Waukesha**



QUILTERS AND CRAFTERS

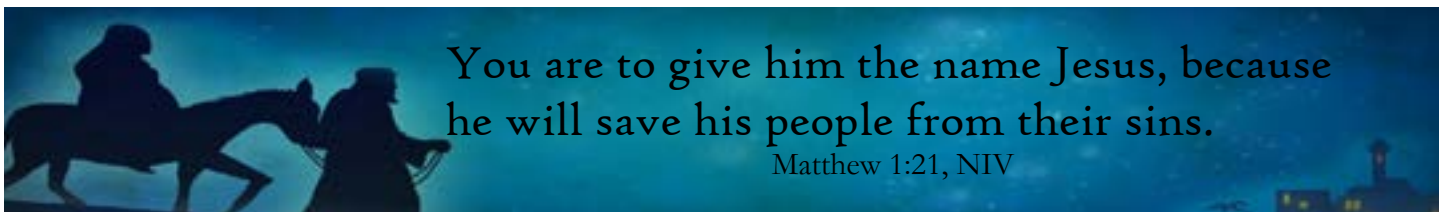
On Saturday, Dec. 13, before and after the 6 p.m. service, and Sunday, Dec. 14, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., we will have a candy and bake sale with the proceeds used to purchase supplies for the shelter quilts we make. Anyone interested in donating bars, cookies, or candies should have their goods packaged to sell at church Saturday night by 5 p.m. or Sunday morning by 9 a.m.

Anyone interested in joining the Quilters and Crafters should contact Alice Bissett at (262) 547-6265.



YOUNG AT HEART

We are planning another outing on February 21, 2015. Join us and enjoy steel drum music and eat at the Milwaukee Ale House in Grafton. We will leave church at 3:30 p.m. and arrive back at 10 p.m. The cost per person is \$52. Sign-up will be at church the first two Sundays in December. Payment is due by Wednesday, Dec. 17, at the Young at Heart meeting. On December 17, we will enjoy Christmas music by Alice Bissett, share a potluck luncheon, and socialize.



You are to give him the name Jesus, because
he will save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21, NIV

OUR PARTNERSHIPS: CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Shirley Wehmeier, Mission Outreach Wing Leader

CROSS FOOD PANTRY

During December, we will be collecting peanut butter and jelly for the Cross Food Pantry. Please remember those less fortunate as you do your grocery shopping. Please put your donations in the respective bins in the West Hall donation center.

CROSS MINISTRY FAIR

Cross has invited Ascension, as well as their other partner churches, to attend the Cross Ministry Fair on Sunday morning, Dec. 7. The time begins with a brief worship and then a chance to visit the various ministry displays to learn more about Cross ministries and to deepen our relationship with the members of Cross. The morning will conclude with communion and a devotion. If you are involved in a ministry at Ascension that would benefit from learning more about how Cross does ministry, please join a group of Ascension members who will be attending. Some of the ministries featured that may be of special interest to Ascension are:

Adult Center (Care Ministries)	Youth Programs (CRASH)
Bread of Healing Ministries (Mission Outreach)	Neighborhood Ministry (Mission Outreach)
Gospel and Praise Choirs (Worship and Music Ministry)	Vacation Bible School (Children's Ministry)
Mental Health Advocacy (Care Ministries)	Tutoring (Mission Outreach and Caring Relationships)
Quilting (Quilters and Crafters)	

Contact Dave Hammer or Shirley Wehmeier if you are interested in attending to arrange carpooling.



NOLA ANNIVERSARY TRIP

On August 29, 2005 Hurricane Katrina ripped through the Gulf Coast causing death and destruction from Pascagoula, MS to Morgan City, LA, a distance of almost 200 miles. In the middle stood New Orleans, where 53 different levee breaches caused extensive flooding, which submerged 80% of the city. The water stood in the city for up to six weeks leaving devastation beyond comprehension that still exists today. On Monday, Feb. 6, 2006, members of Ascension joined a group from St. Luke's Lutheran Church on a mission trip and arrived at Camp Atonement for a week of work, support, and help to the victims of Katrina. That was the beginning of eight consecutive years of mission trips to New Orleans allowing 150 different people to serve, experience the destruction, listen to stories, and provide help and assistance to many wonderful people. We also developed a fantastic friendship with Pastor Pat Keen and the entire congregation of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Several churches have again partnered to sponsor a ten year anniversary mission trip to New Orleans. On Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015 a team of volunteers will leave Wisconsin to arrive at Camp Restore on Sunday, Feb. 8 and begin a week of work and reflection in New Orleans. The team will be back in Waukesha on Saturday, Feb. 14. The estimated cost is \$200 for room and board and \$200-\$250 for transportation, plus \$50-\$75 for other meals. Check out this video to put you in the mood for service: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ua9P5Ej8uoI. Contact Don French, d-french@sbcglobal.net, if you would like more information or are interested in joining the team.



Hurricane Katrina Memorial
St. Bernard Parish



OUR PARTNERSHIPS: EL SALVADOR

Did you know that in 2014, Ascension sponsored the four university students that make up the freshman class in the Community of Rutilio Grande?

November marks the end of the school year, and the students will enjoy their summer break over the month of December. They will be back to school in January. We recently received letters from three of the students. We will have the opportunity to visit Rutilio Grande in April. We have a nice delegation forming, but it's not too late to join the April trip to El Salvador!

Contact Sarah Aparicio for more information, web22@hotmail.com. Please enjoy the aforementioned letters.

Hello friends,

My name is Kevin Eduardo López Perdomo. I am 17 years old and this year I started my university studies. I am studying for a Bachelor of Computing at the University of Monseñor Oscar Arnulfo Romero. A couple of weeks ago, I finished my first semester of college. I am very happy that God has given me the opportunity to start my studies and begin another phase in my life. I am getting closer to my dream of graduating with a license in computer sciences.

I am completely grateful to you all for helping us achieve our goals. You are an example to follow and I hope you will always continue to support the young and disadvantaged overcome and have a better quality of life. God bless you all and shed many blessings. Thank you very much for your support.

Sarah Aparicio, Mission Outreach Committee Member

Dear Friends of Ascension,

Please receive cordial and warm greetings from me. I wish you many blessings and success in your work each day.

I deeply appreciate the support that I and others have received from you. Because of your great help, I am studying English in San Salvador at Pro-Lingua, a technical school that specializes in language. In my free-time, I like to play soccer, hang out with my friends, and watch movies. As a young scholarship recipient, I am working to clean up the main street.

I wish you all well and may God fill your life with many blessings and protect you today and always.

Sincerely,

Heydi Xiomara Rivera Bonilla

To My Friends at Ascension,

I send your members warm greetings. I hope you are doing very well in your daily work.

I want to thank you for the help you are giving me, because if it were not for your help, I would not be able continue my studies. Now I'm in my first year of college and I'm studying nursing. I especially want to help my family and also the people who need medical care. I'm very happy with my studies.

May God bless you and shower you with many blessings in your daily work.

Sincerely,

Humberto Alexander Garcia Chicas

SOPHIA

Another big event is planned for Wednesday, Dec. 10 to focus on the blueprint for the 11X15 Campaign to end mass incarceration in Wisconsin. There will be an emphasis on treatment alternatives, moving 17-year olds back to juvenile court, and release for those who are parole eligible prisoners. There is a plan to make it easier for people to succeed after their time in jail or prison comes to an end. For more information, contact Iva Richards.



OUR PARTNERSHIPS: MERU DIOCESE, TANZANIA

Dave Hammer, Mt. Meru Coffee Project Team Leader

Mt. Meru Coffee Project: Giving (and Drinking and Serving) Mt. Meru Coffee

Looking for a gift for a coffee-loving friend? Looking for a way to say thank you for an invitation to a holiday party? Consider giving some Mt. Meru Coffee to that special friend. Mt. Meru Coffee is available for purchase every Sunday between worship services. It is available in

- 12 oz. bags of Regular or Decaf, in whole bean, drip grind, or perk grind for \$10.
- 10 oz. bags of flavored coffee, Regular or Decaf drip grind, for \$10, in flavors of French vanilla, hazelnut, butter pecan, and chocolate raspberry.
- A box of 12 single service cups (K-cups) of Regular coffee for \$9.

Stop by the coffee cart in the Hearth Room to make your selection and purchase.

While you are contemplating giving Mt. Meru Coffee as a gift, here is something you should know about the Mt. Meru Coffee and the Coffee Project. It is a direct, partnership relationship between small coffee farmers in the Diocese of

Meru (within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania) and coffee consumers within the congregations of the Greater Milwaukee Synod (ELCA) and beyond.

The Project focuses on doing both economic and social justice within the Diocese of Meru, building on fair trade prices and practices to help the farmers improve their lives. Doing justice provides a hand up - to empower the farmers - rather than a hand out - which creates dependency for the farmers.

Lives are being changed by the Mt. Meru Project. Farmers are being empowered to support their families, send their children to school, access healthcare, improve their farms, support their local churches and communities.

What Can You Do? Drink Mt. Meru Coffee, at church and at home, and buy Mt. Meru Coffee - for yourselves and your friends.

Sustainability can only be achieved by making a change in our decision making and behavior - to make consumer choices that better reflect our faith and values.



ASCENSION'S REFUGEE MEMBERS BECOME CITIZENS

This summer, Beauty Htoo and her husband and brother became citizens in the atrium of the federal courthouse. Beauty and Poo voted for the first time in the fall election. They are so proud to be able to be voters and be active citizens.



Voting for the first time!



Proud new U.S. citizens!

FINANCIAL REPORT

Doug Bue, Treasurer

October 31, 2014 Year to Date

Item	2014 Actual	2014 Plan	Variance to 2014 Plan	2013 Actual	Variance to 2013 Actual
Income					
Contributions	\$532,858	\$576,450	\$(43,592)	\$568,066	\$(35,208)
Rent, Interest, & Other Income	\$54,276	\$47,925	\$6,351	\$43,488	\$10,788
From Restricted Funds	\$8,173	\$2,500	\$5,673	\$3,600	\$4,573
Total Income	\$595,307	\$626,875	\$(31,568)	\$615,154	\$(19,847)
Expenses					
Communications	\$23,508	\$23,600	\$92	\$25,216	\$1,708
Facilities	\$131,577	\$122,883	\$(8,694)	\$118,864	\$(12,713)
Financial Development	\$80,965	\$80,996	\$31	\$86,014	\$5,049
Leadership Development	\$20,206	\$13,500	\$(6,706)	\$1,980	\$(18,226)
Administration	\$173,339	\$207,976	\$34,637	\$217,472	\$44,133
Caring Relationships	\$22,228	\$22,744	\$516	\$14,368	\$(7,860)
Joyful Worship	\$56,717	\$48,339	\$(8,378)	\$38,681	\$(18,036)
Mission Outreach	\$59,440	\$62,175	\$2,735	\$60,367	\$927
Spiritual Growth	\$73,336	\$77,019	\$3,683	\$75,727	\$2,391
Total Expenses	\$641,316	\$659,232	\$17,916	\$638,689	\$(2,627)
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$(46,009)	\$(32,357)	\$(13,652)	\$(23,535)	\$(22,474)
Mortgage Balance	\$963,219				
Restricted Contributions	\$94,415				
Restricted Funds Balance	\$189,316				
General Fund Balance	\$(8,137)				

Capital Campaign Summary

Item	Vision Ascension	Ascension Arise
Contributions	999,942	192,061
Campaign Costs	(50,971)	(44,730)
Principal Payments	(948,971)	(147,000)
Balance	-	331
Pledged	1,140,708	573,332

What the numbers mean:

Our general contributions are 7.6% behind plan for 2014, and they are 6.2% behind 2013 actual.

Our expenses are under plan due mainly to our pastoral and youth minister transitions.

Based on our bottom line, we are behind plan by \$13,652.

Our general fund balance is currently at a loss.

If you have any questions, please contact Doug Bue at dwbue@wi.rr.com.

December 2014

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1 9:45am AI Anon WH 6pm Prayer group PR 6:30pm AMEN 107 6:30pm Knit Wits WH 7pm Living Letters 106	2 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6pm Grief Share YR 7pm Mutual Ministry PR 7:15pm TGIT 107	3 9am Young at Heart Breakfast, Denny's 9:30am Cross Meal 9:30 Staff Mtg 6pm Handbells S 7pm Wisdom Grp WH, HR 7:30pm Choir S	4 10am AI Anon WH 10am TGBG PR 5pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 7pm Ballantyne 107	5	6 10am College Care package assembly YR
7 7:30am Worship 9am Worship 9:15am Children's Church EH 9am Spanish Worship PR 10am Blood pressure checks 10:30am Puppets EH 10:45am Pageant rehearse EH 10:45am Worship 10:45 Sunday School 4:30pm Mime orientation 5pm CRASH progressive dinner 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	8 9:45am AI Anon WH 6pm Knit Wits @ Goettters 7pm AMEN 107	9 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 7pm Holloway 107	10 11:45am Men's Nurture Luncheon 6pm Handbells S 7pm AA Wisdom Grp WH, HR 7:30pm Choir S	11 10am AI Anon WH 5pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 7pm Ballantyne 107 7pm Care Ministry mtg 106 7pm Mission Outreach HR	12	13 6pm Advent concert worship
14 9am Advent Concert Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 9:15am Children's Church EH 10:45am Advent Concert Worship 10:45am Sunday School 10:45am Pageant rehearsal EH 6pm AA mtg WH 6pm CRASH @ Riverglen 7pm AA closed mtg WH	15 9:45am AI Anon WH 6pm Prayer Group PR 6:30pm AMEN 107	16 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 7:15pm TGIT 106-07	17 9:30am Staff Mtg. 12pm Young at Heart EH, K 6pm Handbells S 7pm Wisdom Grp WH 7:30pm Choir S	18 10am AI Anon WH 10am TGBG PR 5pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 7pm Ballantyne 107	19 7pm Council EH	20 9am Pageant Rehearsal EH S
21 7:30am Worship 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 10:45am Worship 10:45 Children's Pageant (No Sunday School) 6pm Longest Night Worship S 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	22 9:45am AI Anon WH 7pm AMEN 107	23 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 7pm Holloway 107	24 Christmas Eve 12pm Office closed 2:30pm Worship 4pm Worship 5:30pm Worship 7pm Wisdom Grp WH 11pm Worship	25 Christmas Day Office closed 10:30am Worship 10am AI Anon WH	26 Office closed	27
28 7:30am Worship 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 10:45am Worship 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	29	30	31 New Year's Eve 12pm Office closed			Room Key EH = East Hall HR = Hearth Room K = Kitchen PL = Parking Lot PR = Prayer Room S = Sanctuary WH = West Hall YR = Youth Room