



Ascension
LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELCA
February 2015

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What's in the *February* newsletter

The Journey of Lent	3	Prayer Group Ministry	12
Pastoral Acts	3	Special Friends	12
Cracked Pots	4	Healing Hearts	13
Financial Report	5	Alzheimer's Association: Memory Cafe	13
Year-end Financial Report	6	Girlfriends: Women's Conference	13
Advent Concert 2015 photo review	7	Small groups: Lenten Study	14
Soup Suppers in Lent	7	Young at Heart	14
Children's Ministry	8	A Taste of the Daniel Plan	15
Chili Cook-off	8	Mutual Ministry Team	16
Mime 2015	8	Our Partnerships: Cross Church	17
Crash & JOLT: February Schedules	8	In Our Own Backyard	17
A Wish List for Ascension	9	Dollar a Day for Poverty	17
Memorial Gardens Annual Report	10	Honduras Trip 2015	17
Care Ministries	11	SOPHIA	18
Home Visitation Ministry	11	In Gratitude	18
Pastoral Assistants	12		

THE *Ascension* NEWSLETTER



Ascension
LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELCA



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1415 Dopp Street
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MONDAY - THURSDAY

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

FRIDAY

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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Pianist

Ray Kinney Raywk2003@yahoo.com

Organists

Vicki Taylor
Rhonda Kwiecien
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THE JOURNEY OF LENT

Pastor Christian Marien

Dear Friends,

The season of light fast approaches the night. Over these past weeks, we have walked the road of Epiphany fully washed in the light of God. In so many ways, the days of Epiphany are a whirlwind of events in the life of Jesus: a dedication in the temple; a baptism at the river Jordan; the calling of the disciples; miracles of healing; and a mountaintop moment with Peter, James, and John where Jesus glows with the very glory of God. All of that takes place in such a short period of time according to the readings we hear on Sunday mornings. And then, from seemingly out of nowhere, we are called to a Wednesday late in February where the story of God's light changes to one of God's call on our lives.



Ash Wednesday will be celebrated on February 18 at both 12 p.m. and 7 p.m. at Ascension. You are, of course, invited to gather with your brothers and sisters to worship God and be reminded that God cares about your whole life. In Lent, we hear God's promises in new ways...

EVERY end is a beginning.

EVERY night gives way to morning.

EVERY hurt can be healed.

EVERY broken moment can be redeemed.

EVERY life lost can be found.

EVERY cross carried can be given to Jesus.

EVERY prayer spoken is heard

In my life, Lent is the ground on which I walk the journey of my faith. Sometimes the ground is hard and packed down. In other areas, the ground is dry and cracked. Still other roads are muddy and hard to navigate. And then in the season of Lent, I am blessed – as are you blessed – with soft and fertile ground ready and waiting for the new thing God promises to do in each of our lives...should we choose to be open to what God will do in us and through us. Will you choose to walk the road of Lent? Will you let your journey of faith lead you in a new direction at God's invitation? God does not tell us we have to journey alone. God simply makes the invitation. You are invited...will you come and follow the one who has called you? What would you do in these days of God's promise with your one wild and precious and life?

The invitation has been made...God waits for each of us...will you come?

Peace my friends, deep peace to you.

Just a note of thanks for the many expressions of love you have shared with my family in the season of Christmas celebrating the birth of our Savior. My family and I are truly humbled to share in this journey of ministry at Ascension with you.

PASTORAL ACTS

Baptisms

Nov. 30

Harper Kraus

Jan. 4

August Brungraber

Funerals

Dec. 23

Eugene "Gene" Sherry

Jan. 16

Doris Sherry



CRACKED POTS

Pastor Angela Khabeb

We have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. - 2 Corinthians 4:7

An old story retold:

A woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which she carried across her neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. Each day, for two years the woman would return to her home with only one and a half pots full of water.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments because it was able to complete the task for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection and miserable that it was only able to accomplish half of what it had been created to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, the cracked pot spoke to the woman one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself. For these past two years, I have been able to deliver only half of my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house."

The woman said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I planted flower seeds on your side of the path. Every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years, I have been able to enjoy these beautiful flowers on my trips to the well and to decorate my tables. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace my house."

Sisters and brothers, all of us have our own unique flaws as well as our own unique gifts. I guess, at the end of the day, we're all cracked pots. But the Lord can use even our flaws to grace God's table. In the body of Christ, we all belong and we all serve a purpose for the reign of Christ.

So as we seek ways to minister together, and as God calls each of us to the tasks that God has appointed, don't be afraid of your flaws. Acknowledge them, and allow God to work through them, and you too can be the cause of beauty along the road where faith is found. St. Paul reminds us in his letter to the Corinthians, "But God said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for strength is made perfect in weakness.' So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong." As we begin our Lenten journey together – a time for reflection and prayer, living more simply, and sharing with others – let us act boldly, knowing that in our weakness, God is strong!

In peace,

Pastor Angela

Many thanks to our sisters and brothers at Ascension. Please know that our family is overjoyed by the generous outpouring of well wishes, cards, and gifts during the Christmas season. God's light does indeed shine through the darkness.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Doug Bue, Outgoing Treasurer

December 31, 2014 Year to Date

General Fund Activity					
	2014	2014	Variance	2013	Variance
Item	Actual	Plan	to 2014	Actual	to 2013
			Plan		Actual
Income					
Contributions	\$659,622	\$721,250	\$(61,628)	\$720,115	\$(60,493)
Rent, Interest, & Other Income	\$66,908	\$58,750	\$8,158	\$59,061	\$7,847
From Restricted Funds	\$13,551	\$3,000	\$10,551	\$3,600	\$9,951
Total Income	\$740,081	\$783,000	\$(42,919)	\$782,776	\$(42,695)
Expenses					
Communications	\$27,187	\$27,500	\$313	\$28,937	\$1,750
Facilities	\$146,173	\$136,466	\$(9,707)	\$132,712	\$(13,461)
Financial Development	\$97,123	\$97,162	\$39	\$102,134	\$5,011
Leadership Development	\$20,206	\$13,900	\$(6,306)	\$2,972	\$(17,234)
Administration	\$214,606	\$249,571	\$34,965	\$248,584	\$33,978
Caring Relationships	\$27,416	\$27,293	\$(123)	\$16,969	\$(10,447)
Joyful Worship	\$73,576	\$58,072	\$(15,504)	\$50,996	\$(22,580)
Mission Outreach	\$74,252	\$78,000	\$3,748	\$76,334	\$2,082
Spiritual Growth	\$89,783	\$95,036	\$5,253	\$91,196	\$1,413
Total Expenses	\$770,322	\$783,000	\$12,678	\$750,834	\$(19,488)
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$(30,241)	\$-	\$(30,241)	\$31,942	\$(62,183)
Mortgage Balance	\$913,012				
Restricted Funds Balance	\$194,077				
General Fund Balance	\$7,630				

What the numbers mean:

Our general contributions ended 8.5% behind plan for 2014, and they were 8.4% behind 2013 actual. Joyful Worship expenses were offset by \$10,000 from restricted funds for our Director of Music position. Our expenses were under plan due mainly to our pastoral and youth minister transitions. We ended the year with a net loss of \$30,241. Our general fund balance of \$37,871 was reduced by this loss to end at \$7,630.

YEAR-END FINANCIAL REPORT

Doug Bue, Outgoing Treasurer

December 31, 2014 Year to Date

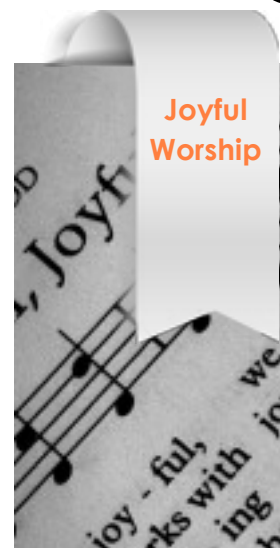
All Activity				
	General	Capital	Restricted	2014
Item	Fund	Campaign	Funds	Total
Income				
Contributions	\$659,622	\$304,157	\$122,730	\$1,086,509
Rent, Interest, & Other Income	\$66,908	\$-	\$9,901	\$76,809
From Restricted Funds	\$13,551	\$(23,456)	\$15,627	\$5,722
Total Income	\$740,081	\$280,701	\$148,258	\$1,169,040
Expenses				
Communications	\$27,187	\$-	\$6,886	\$34,073
Facilities	\$146,173	\$-	\$43,951	\$190,124
Financial Development	\$97,123	\$280,701	\$559	\$378,383
Leadership Development	\$20,206	\$-	\$-	\$20,206
Administration	\$214,606	\$-	\$-	\$214,606
Caring Relationships	\$27,416	\$-	\$6,636	\$34,052
Joyful Worship	\$73,576	\$-	\$39,348	\$112,924
Mission Outreach	\$74,252	\$-	\$39,333	\$113,585
Spiritual Growth	\$89,783	\$-	\$11,545	\$101,328
Total Expenses	\$770,322	\$280,701	\$148,258	\$1,199,281
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$(30,241)	\$0	\$-	\$(30,241)

Here is a listing of the larger expenses paid for by special gifts in the restricted funds column above: major roofing and siding work, painting the sanctuary, sanctuary sound and video upgrades, new altar paraments, a permanent cross, new choir risers, Good Samaritan fund, El Salvador missions, Cross food pantry, mime ministry, CRASH mission trip, BTAB scholarships.

It has been an honor to serve as your treasurer for the past several years. Thank you! Please join me in welcoming Meg Douglas as our new treasurer.

If you have questions or comments on the financials or would like more details, please email me at dwbue@wi.rr.com.

ADVENT CONCERT 2015 PHOTO REVIEW



SOUP SUPPERS IN LENT

During Lent, we will again gather for soup and bread dinners before we enter the sanctuary for worship. We begin with prayer at 6 p.m. and finish in time to worship at 7 p.m.

We will gather for the five Wednesdays after Ash Wednesday for soup and bread. JOLT (Ascension's Confirmation ministry) will host the first Wednesday night soup supper.

If you are a part of one of these ministries, will you contact your leader/director/chair

to offer your soup for the dinner? We need 18-20 soups for each Wednesday night and 8-12 loaves of bread or bags of rolls. All paper products/drinks are provided and set-up is done ahead of time. Last year, we averaged between 120 and 160 people for each Wednesday night.

Come and join us!

SOUP SUPPER SCHEDULE

Feb. 25: JOLT
March 4: Care Ministries & Small Groups
March 11: Mission Outreach & Tuesday Women's Bible Study
March 18: Supermoms & AMEN
April 9: CRASH



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Jennifer Koutnik, Director of Children's Ministries

We have a lot to look forward to this month! Lent begins our journey to the cross, and we will also be preparing our fifth graders for their First Communion. We will be making chalices as a keepsake on Sunday, Feb. 22. If you have not received a letter in the mail and you are a 5th grade parent, please contact me for all the upcoming First Communion dates.

Mark your calendars! Ascension will be hosting a Vacation Bible School this summer from July 27-31 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. I am looking for volunteers to help pull together this great program. It is called *Everest*. We will explore scripture, fun, games, music and fellowship for a week.

CHILI COOK-OFF

Tony Acompañado, Director of Youth Ministries

Looking for a spicy diversion from the cold winter gloom. . .well look no further! CRASH is hosting our annual Chili Cook-off on Saturday, Feb. 28, from 5–8 p.m. Tickets are \$5/person or \$20/family. Tickets will be on sale in the narthex following worship services on Feb. 15 and 22, and will also be available at the door the night of the event. Come sample a variety of amazing chilis from different contestants and enjoy an evening of fellowship.

Think your chili has what it takes to be the best? If so, then consider entering your chili for only \$25/team.

Come support our CRASH students as they raise money for their summer trip to the Youth Gathering in Detroit.

Questions? Contact Tony at tony@ascensionelca.org or 262-547-8518.



MIME 2015

For the past 20+ years, Ascension's high school students have been excited to share the story of Jesus' passion through the creative and theatrical expression of mime. Their performances portray the story from the Last Supper to His death on the cross.

We're pleased to announce that our students are in full swing preparing for the upcoming Lenten season.

While it's incredibly exciting that Ascension has dozens of teens feeling called by the Holy Spirit to live out their faith through this ministry, it's exponentially more exciting to be reminded that God's story of love in Jesus Christ is for all of

us. Ascension's Mime Ministry isn't really about the performances or the stage props, and it's not even about the students being exceptional actors/actresses; rather, what's amazing about the whole thing is that the Holy Spirit is using the gifts and talents of Ascension's students to tell God's story of love and redemption for all of humanity.

This Lenten season our students and adult leaders will once again travel to congregations throughout the synod to passionately share this story of God's love. On Good Friday, the Mime Ministry will complete their 2015 season by performing during the 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Good Friday worship services here at Ascension.

CRASH & JOLT: FEBRUARY SCHEDULES

FEBRUARY CRASH CALENDAR

1st	12:30-2:30 p.m.	Mime lunch & rehearsal
8th	12:30-2:30 p.m.	Mime lunch & rehearsal
15th	12:30-2:30 p.m.	Mime lunch & rehearsal
22nd		Mime travel
28th	5-8 p.m.	Chili Cook-off

FEBRUARY JOLT CALENDAR

5th	6:30-8 p.m.
12th	6:30-8 p.m.
19th	NO JOLT
26th	6:30-8 p.m.

A WISH LIST FOR ASCENSION

Pastor Chris Marien



My wife continues to tell me that if you do not ask you will not get. I like to believe she borrowed that phrase from our ever-faithful God:

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

Matthew 7:7

With that Scripture in mind, there are items that would bring new life to our community should you have a desire to share a portion of your financial resources above and beyond your general giving to support the ministries of the church.

IN FACILITIES

\$37,000/\$25,000	Estimate towards new flooring for sanctuary depending on product/moisture barrier required
\$25,000	Estimate towards new carpet-tile in narthex/gathering area/hearth room/women's restroom
\$15,000	Estimate towards new flooring in East Hall
\$5,000	Estimate towards new flooring for main office/pastor offices
\$1,200	Air conditioner for the shared office of the Music Ministries Director and Children's Ministries Director
\$500	New microwave for the kitchen

IN JOYFUL WORSHIP

\$4,000	Towards the purchase of Ascension's own set of timpani (a finely refurbished set of three)
\$1,500	Towards the cost of inviting a string quartet and other guest musicians to supplement our special worship events and days
\$750	Towards the completion of funds to purchase ten new communion trays, two bases, and two covers with crosses (Other funds have been gifted by two families in the congregation already).

IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH

\$350	Towards single parenting education/support program
\$1,500	Staff retreat

IN CARING RELATIONSHIPS

\$1,750	Towards the purchase of padded folding chairs for the fellowship halls (They are \$14 each, and we are hoping to purchase 116 to get us to 216 folding chairs total. Then we will retire the old metal chairs that have served far more than any chair should).
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MEMORIAL GARDENS ANNUAL REPORT

Steve Van Voorhis, Retired Committee Chair

CONTINUATION QUANDRY

In 1998, an Ascension leader, Haskell Reichert, established the Loretta Reichert Memorial Garden and Wetland Area Taskforce in his wife's memory. Turf grass, a split-rail fence, and a few shrubs first demonstrated Haskell's vision.

In 2001, Ascension's Memorial Gardens Committee was recognized by Church Council to succeed the taskforce. In its 15 years, the committee has:

- 1) Directed and actively participated in constructing three of four quadrants of berms and plantings defining the boundaries of the Memorial Gardens.
- 2) Constructed the pathway and limestone boulder Ash Garden near the south end of the church property; to date 24 persons's cremains have been distributed there.
- 3) Selected, planted, watered, and maintained new and replacement trees, shrubs, and blooming plants.
- 4) Built a concrete pad with electrical service for summer worship services and weddings and also assisted with the recent pavilion construction.
- 5) Maintained records of memorials and honorarium gifts supporting the long-standing endeavor.

6) Overseen donations and expenditures from the Restricted Fund. (For 2014, donations were \$1260 and expenses \$795).

Many thanks to all the volunteer workers and donors of plants and memorials this year and to those who offered prayers for the Memorial Gardens! In 2014, numerous volunteers answered the call to donate needed plants, distribute 20 cubic yards of oak mulch, spray or pull weeds, prune and trim growth, and plant new greenery. Willing church volunteers help make Ascension's Memorial Gardens a beautiful, peaceful place for gatherings. It is also a venue for prayerful and quiet reflection amid God's beautiful creation. We are all blessed through its presence. (Please, see the list of contributors below).

The Continuation Quandry is present and real. The committee members cannot actively continue due to their physical limitations. As committee chair since 2001, I submitted my resignation in 2014. Our committee has been blessed and honored to pursue Haskell's vision. It is my prayer that Ascension will continue to share the Reichert legacy for many more years. Might this be your calling?

Steve Van Voorhis, retired committee chair, Sarah Anderson, John Kontowicz, and Lylal Lauersdorf

2014 MEMORIAL GARDENS DONATIONS

Donor

ELCA Mission Investment Fund
 Gil & Sally Wagner
 Carol Kempke
 Steve & Barb Van Voorhis
 Jean Kobs
 Karen Schmidt
 Jean Marth
 Kathleen Fischer
 Renee Klotz
 Steve & Barb Van Voorhis
 Steve & Barb Van Voorhis
 John & Kathy Lord
 Steve & Barb Van Voorhis

Memorializing

Loretta Reichert
 Donald Jones
 Donald Krueger
 Donald Krueger
 August Kobs
 Robert & Audrey Buege
 Gerald Marth
 Jerry Fischer
 Clayton Klotz
 Ed Sadowski
 Lorraine Simon
 Unknown
 Mr. Schumann

OTHER 2014 DONATIONS

Thrivent Financial \$150	Towards <i>Spring Clean-up</i> project
Mark Otto Family	Hostas
Bob & Karen Schmiechen	Hostas and Black-eyed Susans
Barb Van Voorhis	Hostas
Iva Richards	Variety perennials
Eugene Blodgett	Lillies



CARE MINISTRIES

GRIEF SHARE PROGRAM

Tuesdays, Jan. 6-March 31, from 6-8 p.m., for 12 weeks. This program is for those that have suffered significant loss and features biblical concepts for healing from your grief through a DVD series, workbook, and a support group. The cost of this program is \$15. Please feel free to join us or invite a loved one. Please contact Brenda Lytle, at Brenda@ascensionelca.org if you are interested or have questions.

YOGA/TAI CHI

Begins Monday nights, Jan. 26-March 9, from 6-7 p.m., in East Hall. Please sign up on the bulletin board outside of Brenda's office. The instructor is Ann Hurley from the YMCA. The cost is \$12 for six weeks. One week is free! Come and enjoy some flexibility and relaxation.

CARE NOTES

Are you or your family in need of support for divorce, addiction, anxiety, grief, depression, or everyday life pressures? Please check out our new *Care Notes* in a rack outside of our Director of Care Ministries office. They may provide comfort to you and are a great resource!

Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries

RESPIRE MINISTRY

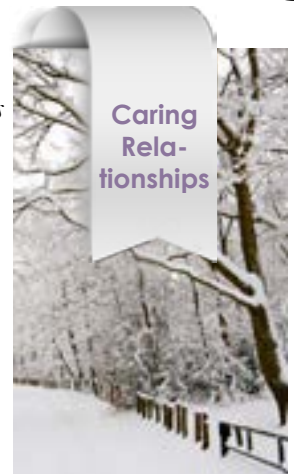
The Respite Ministry is always looking for people to join our group. If you are interested in learning more about this year-old ministry, have a desire and some free time to give a break to one of our brothers or sisters here at Ascension, who are the primary caregivers of a family member, please contact Nada Draeger at nidraeger@msn.com or 262 548 0351.

SPIRITUAL CARE MINISTRY

Care Ministries at Ascension is offering a new way to provide spiritual care to our hospitalized, rehabilitating, and homebound members. Spiritual Care bags will be provided by our Pastoral Assistants to provide spiritual enrichment.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Would you like to volunteer to drive people to and from church or an appointment during the week? Contact Judy at 547-3921. Are you interested in visiting a lonely homebound member in their home? Contact Beth at 542-7447. Do you have a pet certified in pet therapy? We will soon be integrating some pet therapy for interested homebound members.



HOME VISITATION MINISTRY

Beth Hoffmann, Ministry Leader

Home Visitation Ministry, a part of Touch a Heart Ministry, provides fellowship to our homebound members who may experience loneliness and would appreciate a social visit from a church friend. Goals for the Home Visitation Ministry are to:

- Be an extension of the church to those in need of social contact
- Provide social visitation (devotion and prayers are welcome)
- Provide information about other Touch a Heart Ministries and Care Ministries of Ascension to members, as needed
- Be good listeners
- Serve the Lord by serving others

Monthly visits and confidentiality are part of this ministry. If you desire to help to build this ministry of caring relationships, please contact Beth Hoffmann, 542-7447.



*Be joyful, encourage each other, live in harmony and peace then the
God of love and peace will be with you.*

2 Corinthians 13:11



PASTORAL ASSISTANTS

Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries

This Ministry exists to spread Christ's love and word by extending significant pastoral care throughout the congregation and the community. Pastoral Assistants provide the sacraments and ministry through scripture and prayer. If you are admitted to Waukesha Memorial Hospital and wish to have a pastoral visit, please indicate on admission that you belong to Ascension and would be interested in spiritual visits. If you are admitted to other hospitals in our area, and you would like a pastoral visit, please contact our Ascension office. Because of HIPPA policies, we do not get automatically contacted by the hospitals. Our Pastoral Assistant staff will be blessed on Sunday, March 22, at our Ascension Church services.



PRAYER GROUP MINISTRY

Bonnie Thiesenbuse, Ministry Leader

Isn't it wondrous and also wonderful to know that you are loved beyond anything you can imagine by your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

You are invited and welcome to join the prayer team on the first and third Mondays of the month at 6 p.m. in the Prayer Room for an hour of praise and prayers.

Be glad for all God is planning for you. Be patient in trouble, and always be prayerful.

Romans 12:12

SPECIAL FRIENDS

Marge Schroeder, Ministry Leader

Our December service project was very successful. We rang the Salvation Army red kettle bell for two hours at Brookfield Square. We enjoyed seeing all the shoppers who stopped by us and were very generous in their donations.

Special Friends (16 years and older) have been invited to a prom "Night to Shine" sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation and hosted by Brooklife Church. The Tim Tebow Foundation's vision is to provide an extraordinary prom night experience centered on God's love for people with special needs, ages 16 and older. The prom is Feb. 13, simultaneously at participating churches across the country. Their invitation reads, "Join us for a prom night that you will never forget! Walk the red carpet, enjoy the royal treatment and dance the night away." The sponsors are also providing formal wear to those who need something special to wear. Everyone is very excited to be attending this special event! Thanks for all Ascension does for us!



THE FOUR CHAPLAINS MEMORIAL SERVICE

Beth Hoffmann, Home Visitation Ministry Leader

At 2 p.m., on Sunday, Feb. 3, at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center main chapel, a non-denominational service will be held in honor of four military chaplains who gave their lives in World War II after giving their life vests to other soldiers. The memorial service is open to the entire community. The service features posting of the colors from the American Legion, 5th District; patriotic and choral music; as well as *Taps* and an honor guard from the Milwaukee Firefighters Post 426. Food brought by attendees will be shared at a reception following the service, and what's left will be shared with patients of the Medical Center. Tom and Beth Hoffmann will be going and will be happy to provide more details. Please call 542-7447 if you would like to go along.

HEALING HEARTS

Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. ~ Anthropologist Margaret Mead



BECOME A FACILITATOR

For the past five years, members at Ascension Lutheran Church have been those “thoughtful, committed citizens” who have “changed the world” for grieving children and their families in our community. Many of you have donated your time, expertise, and money to Healing Hearts of Waukesha County. Please, consider becoming a facilitator, guiding children on their journey toward coping with their loss and finding hope. Our next training session is Saturday, Jan. 24, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., at First United Methodist Church, 121 Wisconsin Ave., Waukesha. Contact Chris Beck at cbeck.hhwc@gmail.com or call 262-786-2632 for registration or more information.

CELEBRATION OF HOPE PROGRAM

Healing Hearts of Waukesha County invites you to the Celebration of Hope Program, Saturday, March 28, at Country Springs Hotel. There is a cash bar from 6-8:30 p.m. The dinner and program are from 6:30-8 p.m. Donations are welcome to cover the cost of the meal. Please support Healing Hearts community program! RSVP to brenda@ascensionelca.org by February 23.

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION: MEMORY CAFÉ

Share your stories and socialize with others who have worries about their memory on the fourth Wednesday of every month, from 10-11:30 a.m. RSVP to Wendy Betley, at 800-272-3900. The location for the meetings is Denny's restaurant, 2801 N. Grandview Blvd., Pewaukee.

This is for individuals with MCI, early to moderate Alzheimer's or other types of dementia, and their care partners, as well as those who worry about memory problems. Please note, this is not a support group.

Join us because being active physically, socially, and mentally is good for the brain! And we all understand: “We're all in the same boat!”

Girlfriends: WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Ascension Girlfriends will attend the Inspire U Women's Conference March 7 at Elmbrook Church. This one-day conference will have powerful worship, nationally-known authors and speakers, and dozens of break-outs to choose from. It will offer something for everyone, including the next generation of women. Inspire U will feature a track custom-tailored for teens.

Please register for the conference individually with Elmbrook, www.elmbrook.org. Tickets are \$35 (\$20 for teens!) and will be available for purchase soon on Elmbrook's website.

This cost includes a full day of events and a box lunch.

If you're interested in carpooling or joining us, sign up on the Girlfriends bulletin board or contact Kathy Bue, kbue@wi.rr.com, to let us know you're coming. All women of Ascension and their BFFs are invited to attend with us.

Please consider coming with us on this inspirational fieldtrip. We look forward to sharing the experience with you: Cheri Ehrlich, Kathy Bue, Robin Gallo, Amy Gilgenbach, Becky Murray, Kris Wiese (Girlfriends Board of Directors).



SMALL GROUPS: LENTEN STUDY

Pastor Angela Khabeib



We all pray, right? We pray to stay sober, centered, or solvent. When the lump is deemed malignant. When the money runs out before the month does. When the marriage is falling apart. We pray.

But wouldn't we like to pray more? Better? Stronger? With more fire, faith, and fervency? Yet we have kids to feed, bills to pay, deadlines to meet. The calendar pounces on our good intentions like a tiger on a rabbit. And what about our checkered history with prayer? Uncertain words. Unmet expectations. Unanswered requests.

We aren't the first to struggle with prayer. The first followers of Jesus needed prayer guidance too. In fact, prayer is the only tutorial they ever requested. Jesus gave them a prayer, not a lecture on prayer, not the doctrine of prayer. He gave them a quotable, repeatable, portable prayer. Couldn't we use the same?

Max Lucado invites us on a journey to the very heart of biblical prayer in *Before Amen: The Power of a Simple Prayer*. Lucado offers this simple, powerful prayer as a guide:

*Father, you are good.
I need help. They need help.
Thank you.
In Jesus' name, amen.*

Come join Ascension's Small Group Lenten Journey video series, *Before Amen: The Power of a Simple Prayer*. As we continue our faith journeys, we will connect our Fall Small Group Bible study, *The Power of a Whisper*, with the Lenten discipline of prayer. Come and...

- Experience a heart connection with God instead of settling for a prayer wish list for God.
- Release your prayer wimp self-image and discover confidence in your God-given prayer strength.
- Overcome disappointment from unanswered prayers and trust that God hears you.
- Calm the chaos of your world by embracing a prayer life that brings peace and rest.
- Gain assurance by trading prayer uncertainties for the power of a plan built on Biblical prayers.

Our five week journey will begin with the Power of Prayer Retreat on Saturday, Feb. 21. Then we will continue our focus on prayer throughout our Lenten journey, Feb. 22–March 28. The 40 days of Lent will begin with a video from the NOOMA series called "Breathe." The following four weeks, we will engage the *Before Amen* prayer series.

Current small group leaders and those interested in leading a new group should contact Jan Zastrow at Jan_Zastrow@yahoo.com ASAP so materials can be ordered.



YOUNG AT HEART

We will have a potluck luncheon on Wednesday, Feb. 18, from 12-3 p.m. Please bring a dish to pass if possible. We will be entertained by Vern Tretlow with his concertina, and games will follow.

Our trip to Cedarburg to eat at the Milwaukee Ale House restaurant and to see the Steel Drum Band perform is Saturday, Feb. 21. We will meet at Ascension to board the bus at 3:15 p.m. We will return at approximately 10 p.m. If you have questions, contact Celeste Defenbauch at 262-370-4522.

A TASTE OF THE DANIEL PLAN

Steve and Carol Spieker, Daniel Plan Team Members

Well folks - it's February! Did y'all make resolutions? How are they going? Are you sticking to them? Chances are, probably not! Unfortunately, making changes - lasting changes - in our lives is not an easy thing to do. At this time of year, people often make resolutions to eat better, lose weight, exercise more, and generally get healthier. Often these resolutions for change are based on guilt. The desire to make these changes lasts only as long as someone is motivated by their guilt.

The Daniel Plan is built on love rather than guilt. The Bible says, "Love never gives up, loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance." (1 Cor. 13:7). It is love - not fear, not guilt, and not peer pressure - that causes us to keep going when we feel like giving up. The Bible also tells us that lasting change begins with committing your body to God. Romans 12:1-2 says, "Give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice - the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think."

We, personally, draw strength each day from these words as we strive to lead a healthy lifestyle. It is not always easy to find the time or energy to fit fitness into our schedule. Knowing that we feel energized each time we take the time to move our bodies in an intentional way motivates us when we want to do something else. Driving past Kopp's when our favorite flavor is displayed on the marquee is made easier knowing we will feel better if we DON'T eat the treat. The mantra we go by is "nothing tastes as good as feeling good feels." It is true. It's just a matter of changing habits.

The Daniel Plan teaches these strategies to make lasting change possible: (1) Lasting change requires building your life on truth. (2) Lasting change requires making wise choices. (3) Lasting change requires new ways of thinking. (4) Lasting change requires God's Spirit in your life. (5) Lasting change requires honest community. While these strategies are expanded upon in The Daniel Plan, the bottom line is that if you turn the health part of your life over to God and surround yourselves with the support of like-minded people, you run a much greater chance of success in making sustained changes in your life. I know in my (Steve's) case, the decision to welcome God into my "health life" was an act of surrender in the same way it is for people that come to Christ for the first time. Remember, with God's help, you CAN change. Philippians 4:13 reminds us, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Along with all The Daniel Plan members, it is our prayer for you to make the decision to have a healthier 2015!

THE DANIEL PLAN SCHEDULE

Wednesday, 7:15-8:45 p.m., until Wednesday, Feb. 18

TOPICS

Feb. 4 - Focus
Feb. 11 - Friends

SUPER BOWL SUNDAY DIP

(Gluten-free/Dairy-free)

Ingredients

- 1 C vegetarian refried beans
- 1 medium avocado, chopped (about 3/4 C)
- 3 TBS minced red onion
- 2 tsp fresh lime juice
- 1 tsp finely chopped oregano
- 1 tsp minced jalapeño pepper
- 1/4 C minced cilantro
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 C diced roasted red bell pepper
- 1/2 C chopped tomatoes

Preparation:

1. Spread the refried beans in a shallow bowl or platter.
2. In a small bowl, stir together the avocado, red onion, lime juice, oregano, jalapeño, 2 TBS of the cilantro, and the salt. Spread the mixture on the refried beans.
3. Sprinkle the roasted red pepper over the avocado mixture and top with the tomatoes and remaining cilantro.
4. Serve with fresh sliced vegetables.



MUTUAL MINISTRY TEAM

Mary Ellen Comp, Mutual Ministry Team Leader

Are you familiar with Ascension's Mutual Ministry? Since 1991, when the Ascension Council voted to establish a Mutual Ministry Committee, a need was recognized to support and care for Ascension's pastors and staff. Since many new members, and probably many long-time members, are not familiar with the role of this group, we decided to provide a brief overview of Mutual Ministry Team's responsibilities.

Advocate for Pastors and Staff

Mutual Ministry's main role is to advocate to the council for the pastors and paid staff. This involves being a confidential sounding board, helping them to be successful in their ministries, addressing their personal and professional needs, and helping them to optimize their ministry effectiveness within the congregation. Our specific responsibilities are, but are not limited to:

- Listen to and regularly interact with pastors and staff members relative to their ministries and welfare
- Make recommendation to council for staff compensation, personal and professional needs
- Conduct annual reviews
- Recommend and maintain HR policies
- Maintain personnel files
- Conduct staff and volunteer background checks
- Review synod policies for pastors and lay staff and work with council to align with synod guidelines
- Assist pastors, council and the Finance Team with job descriptions, pay guidelines, interviews and job offers
- Interact with council and Finance Team relative to health insurance and other employment benefits
- Arrange for recognition celebrations for staff service milestones and accomplishments
- Work with council to monitor and plan for pastors's seventh year sabbatical

Advocate to Staff and Church Leaders

A secondary role of Mutual Ministry is to advocate to Ascension's pastors, staff, council and leaders for needs and issues communicated by the congregation. Mutual Ministry is one of the resources available for the congregation to provide input relative to Ascension staff and their ministries.

Current Mutual Ministry Focus

In January 2015, Mutual Ministry kicked off the annual review process. Each Mutual Ministry member is assigned to one or more staff members to meet with, review the accomplishments and challenges of the previous year, and clarify goals for the current year. If there are issues affecting their ministry, we discuss possible courses of action and available resources to help them move forward in their role. This could include regular or periodic meetings during the year to support the staff member and help them stay on track.

In February, Mutual Ministry will be looking at policies and processes involving Ascension staff that may need to be created or updated to benefit the staff and the congregation.

Mutual Ministry Team Members

For 2015, the members of the Mutual Ministry Team are Phyllis Lane, Bonnie Thiesenhusen, Kathy Williams, and Paul James. We also welcomed our newest member, Mike Jahner. Diane Pavletich serves as the Human Resources advisor to the committee and I serve as the group leader. Please feel free to talk with any member of the committee if you would like more information or contact me at tellmaryellen@gmail.com or 262-894-3334.

In prayerful service.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS: CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

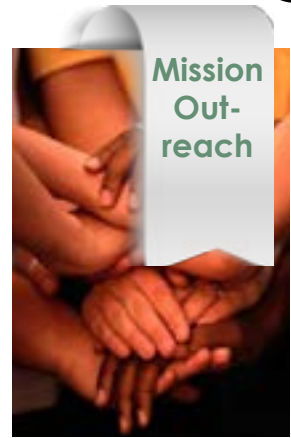
Shirley Wehmeier, Mission Outreach Wing Leader

CROSS FOOD PANTRY: SOUPER BOWL

Super Bowl Sunday is in February so what better month to collect canned soups than in February (Get it? Souper Bowl Sunday). We will continue our challenge of collecting 200 items this month. This enables Cross to meet the needs of the 200 plus people who come to the Food Pantry each week. Each week, we will do a mid-week check on our progress. Small groups, what about taking on a challenge with another small group in the spirit of the Souper Bowl? Whichever small group collects the most cans of soup during February, will be recognized as Ascension's Souper Bowl champs!

MARDI GRAS

Cross's 6th Annual Mardi Gras Dinner/Dance Fundraising Celebration will be held Feb. 13 at the Hilton Garden Hotel in Milwaukee. Please consider joining others in celebration of our partnership at Cross while supporting their ministries. You won't be disappointed! Tickets are \$75 per person. Contact Dave Hammer or Shirley Whemeier if you are interested.



IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

HOPE CENTER: VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Hope Center is in need of volunteers to donate, prepare, and serve breakfasts and lunch on the weekends. They will be open on weekends through April 30. For more information contact Laurie, at 262-549-8726, or ljendusa@hopecenterwi.org.



DOLLAR A DAY FOR POVERTY

Journey with Bishop Jeff Barrow as he shares personal stories of the unlikely people in his ministry and life that have inspired his faith and drawn him toward the cross. This is the fifth year that a Lenten devotional resource is being made available in conjunction with Outreach for Hope's "Dollar a Day for Poverty" Lenten offering. The offerings received will support the 19 congregations and ministries of the Greater Milwaukee Synod which are working to be the presence of Christ in the poorest communities of our synod. Contact Shirley Wehmeier at pwehmeier@wi.rr.com if you would like to participate.

HONDURAS TRIP 2015

Bonnie Thiesenhusen, Trip Leader

Is this the year that you decide to take a step in faith and go on a mission trip? It is not too early to think about it. There is still an opportunity to go to El Salvador in April, and if there are enough people interested, Ascension Lutheran Church will host another mission trip to Honduras during the week of Thanksgiving to work at a home for homeless children.

To secure the best airline prices we usually have to start our planning early in the year. So please think about it and, most importantly, pray about it. Going on a mission trip is a life-changing experience that you will never regret!





SOPHIA

Iva Richards, SOPHIA Liaison

Our friend Tim Coursen has released another excellent video of our work. You can view it at <http://vimeo.com/112913100>. Here's what he says about it:

On Oct. 1, 2014, members of WISDOM, Wisconsin's statewide network of faith-based social justice organizations, gathered on the Capitol steps in Madison for an extraordinary event calling attention to the abusive overuse of solitary confinement in Wisconsin's prisons. The event included a life-size replica of a solitary confinement cell, complete with an actual soundtrack of the din of screams and banging that occur constantly in solitary confinement units, where people must endure weeks, months, years, and even decades in isolation - a practice that most of the world considers torture. Those who gathered at the event heard moving testimonies from parents whose sons developed severe mental illness after extended periods of confinement in isolation. The event included powerful statements by faith leaders, civil rights leaders and others. All call on people of good will to stand up against this hidden and brutally inhumane treatment of incarcerated men and women by the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, paid for by the taxpayers of Wisconsin.



IN GRATITUDE

THE APARICIO-WEHMEIER FAMILY

Dear Ascension Family,

We want to thank you for the tremendous support you have shown our family during this time of surgery, treatment, and healing for our daughters Marta and Luisa. For the financial donations to the Friends of Marta account, the meals delivered to our house, and the countless words of support and prayers, we are truly and deeply grateful. Thank you again.

The Aparicio-Wehmeier Family

STEVE BOGIE

I would like to thank Ascension for the everlasting support, guidance, and love that have provided resources towards the continuation of my seminary education. Furthermore, I feel touched by the care and blessings that Ascension Lutheran Church has provided through my experience at graduate school. I appreciate your continual support and guidance with my studies at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. Sincerely,

Steven J. Bogie

HEBRON HOUSE

Your gift of \$3,000 will help us make all the difference in the world to a homeless man, woman, or child. Your donation tells us, and those we serve, that you care.

Often the men, women, and children who fill our shelters are just going through a difficult time and your support and care is very important. People become homeless for many reasons, and the distance between having a home and not having a home can be very short indeed. Because of your support, we are proud that we can assist over 80% of the people that come into our shelters to find permanent housing. You can be proud of that too!

For more information on how your donation is helping make a difference in the lives of so many in our community, we invite you to visit one of our houses at any time for a tour! Contact Samantha Bely, at 262-522-1403, to make an appointment. You can also visit our website, www.hebronhouse.org. Thank you for your years of ongoing support,
Bernie Juno, Lifetime Advocate for the Homeless

February 2015

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 7:30am Worship 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 9am Children's Church EH 10:45am Worship 10:45am Sunday School 12pm Mime WH, S 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	2 9:45am Al Anon WH 6pm Prayer Grp PR 6pm Yoga/Tai Chi EH 6:30pm AMEN 107 6:30pm Knit Wits WH	3 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6pm Grief Share EH 6:30pm Altar Guild S 7pm Mutual Ministry PR	4 9am Young at Heart, Denny's 9:30am Cross Meal 9:30am Staff Mtg 12:30pm Women's Nurture Grp PR 5:30pm Private Grp 106 6pm Handbells S 7pm AA Wisdom Grp WH, HR 7:30pm Choir S 7:30pm Daniel Plan 107	5 10am Al Anon WH 10am TGBG PR 5pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 6:30pm JOLT EH, YR, S, HR 7pm Ballantyne 107 7pm Care Ministries 106	6	7 12pm Private Event EH, K
8 Blood Pressure Screening 7:30am Worship 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 9am Children's Church EH 10:30am Puppets EH 10:45am Worship 10:45am Sunday School 12pm Mime WH, S 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	9 9:45am Al Anon WH 12:30pm Knit Wits Lunch 1pm Living Letters 106 6pm Yoga/Tai Chi EH 6:30pm AMEN 107	10 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 1pm Pastoral Assistants 6pm Grief Share EH 7pm Holloway 107	11 11:45am Men's Nurture Grp 106 5:30pm Private Grp 106 6pm Handbells S 6:30pm SOPHIA EH 7pm Wisdom Grp WH 7:30pm Choir S 7:30pm Daniel Plan 107	12 10am Al Anon WH 5pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 6:30pm Girlfriends 106 6:30pm JOLT EH, YR, S, HR 7pm Ballantyne 107 7pm Mission Outreach PR	13	14 10:30am Folk Choir S
15 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 7:30am Worship 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 9am Children's Church EH 10:30 Puppets EH 10:45am Worship 10:45 Sunday School 12pm Mime WH, S 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	16 9:45am Al Anon WH 6pm Prayer Grp PR 6pm Yoga/Tai Chi EH 6:30pm AMEN 107 6:30pm Knit Wits WH	17 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6pm Grief Share EH 7pm Council EH	18 ASH WEDNESDAY 9:30am Staff Mtg. 12pm Ash Wed. Worship 12pm Young at Heart EH, K 12:30pm Women's Nurture Grp PR 5:30pm Private Grp 106 6pm Handbells S 7pm Ash Wed. Worship 7pm Wisdom Grp WH 8pm Choir S	19 10am Al Anon WH 10am TGBG PR 5pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 7pm Ballantyne 107	20	21 9am Knit Fest WH 9am Prayer Retreat EH, S
22 6am Mime Travel 7:30am Worship 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 9am Children's Church EH 10am 5th Grade, A Touch of Glaze 10:30am Puppets EH 10:45am Worship 10:45 Sunday School 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	23 9:45am Al Anon WH 6pm Yoga/Tai Chi EH 6:30pm AMEN 107	24 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6pm Grief Share EH 7pm Holloway 107	25 5:30pm Private Grp 106 6pm Soup Supper EH WH 6pm Handbells S 7pm Lenten Worship 7pm Wisdom Grp WH 7:30pm Choir S	26 10am Al Anon WH 5pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 6:30pm JOLT EH, YR, S, HR 7pm Ballantyne 107	27	28 5pm Chili Cook-Off EH, WH, K
Room Key EH = East Hall HR = Hearth Room K = Kitchen PL = Parking Lot PR = Prayer Room S = Sanctuary WH = West Hall YR = Youth Room						