



Ascension
LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELCA
April 2015

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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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Rhonda Kwiecien
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JOY IN THE JOURNEY

Dear People of God,

There is joy in the journey of this life. It's all about the journey. We always talk about journeys as if they are something we are trying to complete. We speak of extended vacation, the terminal illness, the marriages on the edge of divorce, the job we wish we could quit, the educational process, the committee meetings that seem to go nowhere, the life we live each day, and the report that needs to be finished yesterday. We live our lives hoping to complete our tasks a little early so that we might have a little free time over the weekend, or when we retire, or when spring break comes. And somehow, we end up behind again. We look for the easy way out and road most traveled. We look to any option that might help us finish a project sooner or relieve the suffering more quickly. Yet when it is all over, most of the time, we find that we had to travel the entire journey to get to where we most needed to go.

Holy Week is one of those journeys. One of those journeys that offers no easy solution and no quick release of the suffering and pain that will come in the days ahead. Jesus walks the road, measures each step on this journey, from the triumphant entry into Jerusalem to the pitiful, humiliating death on the cross. We walk this road too. Jesus helps us to measure our steps as well. We look to the joy of Easter morning as the end of the journey. We know that there will be pain, sadness, betrayal, and guilt along the way, but we have this feeling that somehow it has to be this way in order for us to conclude the journey at Easter, at the empty tomb.

Yet, we have to look past the empty tomb. For Jesus, and for us, the empty tomb of Easter morning is not the end of the journey, it is only a measured step. The empty tomb surprises us with joy on Easter morning. A light in a journey of darkness. Yet it is just a glimpse of the light that will flood all around us when we enter into the Kingdom of God.

The end of the journey is not Easter morning. The end of the journey is eternal life with Jesus in the Kingdom of God. Easter morning and the empty tomb only share with us a glimpse of the end of the journey. Yet, the end will not come until a place has been prepared for each of us.

Holy Week (Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday) helps to push our tired feet farther on the journey. When we enter into the gates of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, we walk with our heads held high as our Savior is hailed as king and palm branches rise and fall in joyful praise of Jesus. Maundy Thursday brings us to an upper room away from the rest of the world, where we will eat with close friends, have our feet washed by our Savior, and go to pray with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Good Friday will take us to the highest levels of government as Pontius Pilate debates with Jesus and finally hands Jesus over to be crucified. We will stand at the cross, in darkness, and feel the tears on our face and hear the hammers as they pound the nails into the flesh of Jesus. We will stand in the shadows and feel helpless. We will wait, with the whole creation, for Jesus to breathe his last so that we can carry him to the tomb and prepare his body for burial ourselves. And we will wait and pray and hope for something miraculous to happen.

So do not look for the end of the journey, rather find joy in the journey. Find your joy in Jesus Christ, and, all of a sudden, the joy of the journey will be complete and the end of the journey will come too soon.

With prayers for your journey.

Pastor Chris Marien





WE ARE RESURRECTION PEOPLE

Pastor Angela Khabeb

JESUS IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! HALLELUJAH!

We are resurrection people. Easter is the highest celebration of the church year. But Easter is more than chocolate bunnies and marshmallow peeps. Easter is an invitation from our Savior to embrace lives of active discipleship marked by spiritual maturity. I am reminded of Paul's words to the church at Rome.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2

Our resurrection hope encourages us to resist conforming to the world around us and to live into our baptismal identity. The Resurrection brings us the power of renewal and transformation. Although I'm usually not a fan of *The Message*, a version of the Bible written in contemporary language, I do like its wording of this passage: *God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for [God].* Jesus died and rose again so that we can be strengthened to live out our faith daily and deliberately.

CATERPILLAR TO BUTTERFLY

Ascension's ministry symbol, the butterfly, is arguably one of the most powerful illustrations of radical transformation. When I consider the metamorphosis, I have images of a furry, little caterpillar emerging from her cocoon as a brightly-colored, magnificent butterfly. As a child, I thought that the chrysalis was basically a scientific dressing room of sorts where the caterpillar slept and then changed her costume. Actually, the caterpillar is not so lucky. She sheds her outer covering repeatedly each time as she enters the next stage of development. She essentially disintegrates. She dies and then is resurrected. I stumbled upon this quote the other day, "Why is a caterpillar wrapped in silk while it changes into a butterfly? So the other caterpillars can't hear the screams. Change hurts." ~ Rory Miller from, *Meditations on Violence: A Comparison of Martial Arts Training and Real World Violence*.

There are no quick fixes or shortcuts to radical transformation. It takes time. Within the caterpillar, right from the start, are bundles of specialized cells that have a predetermined purpose. For example, these cell structures will later become part of the butterfly like the wings, legs, or antennae. But there's a hormone present in the caterpillar that prevents these cells from maturing too soon. Likewise, there is a seed planted inside of us at the baptismal waters where we are born anew. The seed rests within us waiting to emerge, waiting to be free of the societal and cultural expectations that hinder the release.

As we continue in the faith, the seed grows and takes root. And through the transformative power of God's Spirit, it blossoms and bears fruit. The journey can be lengthy and even difficult. But God strengthens us so that we resist the urge to shrink from the process. The Holy Spirit empowers us and brings out the best in us to bring forth our resurrection promise.

Continued on the next page.

When we connect our call to transformation with Jesus' resurrection promise, our transformation begins to take shape even when we don't see it, even when we don't feel it, and even when we don't really want it. Transformation does not mean that we become perfect people or that we become religious fanatics. Transformation means that, like the caterpillar, we shed our former way of living so that we can embrace promised renewal. True, godly transformation comes through discipleship and discipleship is costly. So, why does radical transformation matter? It matters because God is in the business of transforming lives and transformed lives have the potential to transform the world.

Let us pray:

Awesome God, thank you for your powerful mercy that transforms us so that we may live in this world as a light to others. Open our eyes to see your transforming grace. Make us bold in our faith and encourage us on our journeys. In Jesus' name, Amen.

YOUR COUNCIL AT WORK

Nada Draeger, Council President

Our March council meeting began with a lively discussion of Chapters 3-5 of *Before Amen* led by Pastor Angela. All of us are enjoying Lucado's style of writing and it will be bittersweet to finish up this fast moving book for next month's meeting.

I was very happy to announce to our group that Doug Bue has accepted the position of Stewardship Leader. Thank you, Doug, for your continued passion and dedication to serving Ascension now in this ministry, and we will be excited to be working with you again.

Another wonderful piece of news was with ARISE 2025: Craig Greenwood has agreed to be the facilitator and leader in moving forward with our church's vision for its future. Craig met with council and gave a very informative presentation on the process used to achieve success. Our vision process

will kick off with a retreat in May that will include council, church staff, and leadership, along with additional representatives of our church family. Craig emphasized that this is a process that will take some time to gain its momentum and we should be in good shape to have our plan ready to present to our congregation at our November congregational meeting. Expect to read more updates in the monthly newsletters.

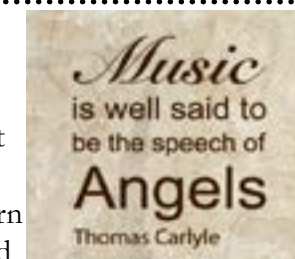
Meetings for the Sunday School program have continued with enthusiasm and much brainstorming by teachers and parents both. There is another meeting planned for Palm Sunday, after the Annual Easter Egg Hunt.

As the vision for Arise 2025 and the Sunday School programs begin to take shape, I would ask each of you to pray for their success and to look at areas that speak to your heart that you might become involved in.



SPECIAL OPEN CHOIR REHEARSAL

The Ascension Choir invites you to an open rehearsal on Wednesday, April 15--come and check us out for one rehearsal or stay and sing for the rest of the season! We will gather that evening at 7 p.m. for refreshments and a brief social time, followed by rehearsal from 7:30-8:30. No previous experience is necessary; singing is something that everyone can easily learn and use to praise God, relieve stress, connect to others, enhance memory, concentration and awareness, and increase one's sense of happiness and well-being. Please consider joining us on April 15 - the Ascension Choir will offer a warm welcome, refreshments and fellowship. RSVP to vicki@ascensionelca.org or just come!



SAVE THE DATE! VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, EVEREST, JULY 27-31

FINANCIAL REPORT

Meg Douglas, Treasurer

	Current Month Actual	Current Month Budget	Current Month Actual Less Current Month Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	YTD Budget Less YTD Actual	Annual Budget	YTD Last Year	YTD Less YTD Last Year
Income									
Contributions Totals:	53,768.92	57,800.00	(3,831.08)	111,114.17	121,250.00	(10,135.83)	670,000.00	103,799.24	7,314.93
Revenue Totals:	5,941.83	5,408.33	533.50	11,810.45	10,841.70	968.75	60,000.00	11,620.66	186.79
Restricted Income Totals:	980.00	5,785.67	(4,796.67)	7,860.43	11,571.30	(3,710.87)	69,428.00	323.63	7,536.80
Income Totals:	60,690.75	68,794.00	(8,094.25)	130,785.05	143,663.00	(12,877.95)	799,428.00	115,743.53	15,041.52
Expense									
Communications Totals:									
Facilities Totals:	2,985.17	2,008.33	(78.84)	4,199.04	4,016.70	(182.34)	24,100.00	4,209.03	(9.99)
Financial Development Totals:	23,148.05	17,110.31	(6,037.74)	50,911.99	48,866.90	(4,045.09)	135,016.00	54,419.51	(3,507.52)
Leadership Development Totals:	8,968.95	8,084.00	884.95	16,310.79	16,328.00	17.21	97,162.00	16,299.40	11.39
Administration Totals:	0.00	33.33	33.33	0.00	66.70	66.70	1,800.00	50.83	(50.83)
Caring Relationships Totals:	21,468.37	21,719.75	251.38	43,596.80	43,439.50	(157.30)	260,637.00	32,752.71	10,844.09
Joyful Worship Totals:	2,348.74	2,174.41	(174.33)	5,314.52	4,348.90	(965.62)	26,093.00	3,242.88	2,071.64
Mission Outreach Totals:	8,302.00	8,082.32	(219.68)	17,616.99	16,164.80	(1,452.19)	97,738.00	10,122.89	7,494.10
Spiritual Growth Totals:	4,327.70	2,663.34	(1,664.36)	6,905.12	5,386.60	(1,558.52)	67,000.00	7,753.79	(628.67)
Expense Totals:	6,638.69	9,398.43	2,759.79	13,217.78	16,997.20	3,779.42	98,382.00	10,364.77	2,853.01
Income - Expense:	76,388.67	71,274.27	(5,114.40)	158,963.03	153,595.30	(4,497.73)	805,728.00	136,215.81	18,877.22
	(15,888.92)	(2,480.27)	(13,268.65)	(27,307.98)	(9,932.30)	(17,375.68)	(6,300.00)	(23,472.28)	(3,836.70)

*Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.
For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.
--Psalm 100:1-2;4-5*

COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

Amy Gilgenbach, Director of Administration

Do you have an activity or information about your small group or ministry you would like to share with the congregation? Announcements, emails, newsletters, website, social media are a few of the ways you can tell the congregation about your work in God's name. Below are some guidelines and deadlines to help you effectively use Ascension's different communication tools. Please note: we edit submissions according to these guidelines due to space, content, and time constraints.

Announcements in multiple locations -- Email Amy Gilgenbach, admin@ascensionelca.org, who will distribute the information accordingly.

Newsletter -- For articles about your group's activities, purpose, and ministry. **Deadline is the 15th of the month prior.** Please focus on activities only in the next month to keep material fresh and interesting for readers. Please consider submitting a photo (not clipart) with your article. Email newsletter items to Kate Mattson, kate@ascensionelca.org.

Weekly e-alert -- For a short news brief (two to three lines) about an upcoming event. Events will be run in the e-alert two weeks prior to the event, unless there is something related to the event that will take place sooner, i.e. event registration. **The deadline for e-alerts is noon on Tuesday.** Email e-alert items to Kate, kate@ascensionelca.org.

Bulletin announcement -- A short news brief (up to one paragraph) about your upcoming event/activity. Events will be run in the bulletin one or two weeks prior, unless there is something related to the event that will take place sooner. **Deadline is noon on Wednesdays.** Please email bulletin announcements to Amy Stryker, amys@ascensionelca.org.

NEWSLETTERS: EMAIL VS. SNAIL MAIL

Ascension's e-alert list reaches just over 400 people/households each week. We use MailChimp, a free, online email service that complies with legal email list privacy and subscription requirements.

Comparatively, our newsletter is mailed to about 360 households and costs our church about \$140 a month to copy and mail, not including staff costs and volunteer time. While some people prefer the printed version, many people receive both versions.

If you'd like to sign up to receive an email from us when the monthly newsletter is ready for viewing (much quicker than bulk mail delivery), please let the church office know or sign up online at <http://tinyurl.com/newsalertALC>. If you'd like to opt-out of the monthly newsletter mailings, please let us know. Money saved on postage and paper is money that could be used on missions and ministries.



Website -- If you have ministry or mission information you would like on our website, please review the material with your wing leader and then submit it to Kate Mattson, kate@ascensionelca.org.

Social media -- Ascension has a Facebook page and we'd love to have a photo of your event and a small brief to announce it. Please email it to admin@ascensionelca.org or post it on our Facebook page for us to share.

Media screens in the narthex -- Announcements for upcoming events with information taken from the newsletter, e-alert, or bulletin as necessary.

Narthex displays/tables -- Please know we are limited in the amount of narthex space we can use. Stand-alone displays (tripods) in the narthex are generally discouraged. With space constraints and potential impediment to traffic flow, there's a chance your display may not be seen. Reservations are required for table use. Please contact Amy Gilgenbach, admin@ascensionelca.org, to schedule or with questions.





HOLY WEEK: GOD'S GIFT TO GOD'S PEOPLE

Pastor Chris Marien

MAUNDY THURSDAY: The day of the commandment, Thursday, April 2, 7 p.m.

Join us for worship in the upper room with Jesus and his disciples. The simplicity of bread and wine are gathered to the blessing of fellowship and the tangible promise of forgiveness. We will share in the telling of the story of the Last Supper and be silent witnesses to the stripping of the altar to signify the betrayal and arrest of our Savior.

GOOD FRIDAY: The day of crucifixion, Friday, April 3, 12 p.m., 5 p.m., and 7 p.m.

This day reminds us of the great suffering of our Savior on our behalf. Ascension offers three opportunities for worship and reflection on Good Friday.

- At 12 p.m., we gather for *Words Around the Cross* – a quiet service of hymns, scriptures, and meditative readings around a candlelit cross on the floor of the sanctuary. The service is scheduled to last 45 minutes but worshippers may stay in the silence to stand in the darkness of the shadow of the cross.
- At 5 and 7 p.m., the high school student ministry, CRASH, will share the powerful drama of the Last Supper, betrayal, and crucifixion of Jesus offered through the artistic expression of mime. There will be congregational singing and prayers as a part of both services.

EASTER SUNDAY: The day of resurrection, Sunday, April 5, 7 a.m., 9 a.m., and 10:45 a.m.

We gather in expectant joy as we hear the resurrection cries of *Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!* In the great celebration of Easter, we find ourselves caught up in the awesome power of our God who overcame death and the grave and promises us the gift of new and eternal life. We offer three times of worship to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and the empty tomb. Communion will be shared at each service.

- At 7 a.m. we will gather to hear the first cries of resurrection. We will find ourselves surrounded in worship by the beauty of the lilies, the sounds of the Nordic Brass ensemble, and our own Handbell Choir.
- At 9 a.m. we will continue the celebration with the sound of trumpets and the gift of musicians including the Ascension Choir and the Handbell Choir.
- At 10:45 a.m. the sounds of praise offered to our God will be led by the energy and passion of our Celebration Band. We will celebrate the promise of new and eternal life through the waters of a baptismal celebration.

Come and worship in these incredible moments of sorrow and joy. Come and see all that God has done and is doing in the world and in your life!

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Pastor Chris Marien

In April, Ascension celebrates the gift of family by inviting families to worship together on Easter Sunday, April 5 and the First Sunday after Easter, April 12. We will then welcome children's programming back on Sunday, April 19. What an exciting time to have children in worship celebrating the season of Easter and also sharing the stories of God's love being shared with the world after the resurrection. Sunday, April 26 also celebrates the gift of children in our midst. Children's ministry at 9 and 10:45 continues the stories of Easter joy. Come and join us!

Based on the feedback given at the two Sunday School Vision Meetings, council requested that a steering committee of parents and teachers be formed to evaluate the current program and also make recommendations for changes. This group has been formed and we had our first meeting at which we worked to identify the core characteristics of an ideal Children's Ministry at Ascension. We will also be visiting area churches to learn more about their programs and curriculum. At our next meeting we will discuss our findings, identify some common successful trends, and decide on our next steps in helping to establish an engaging and family centered Children's Ministry here at Ascension. If you have any questions about this work, please feel free to email Katie Voss at katievoss@yahoo.com or Kelly Hoeg at khoeg@wi.rr.com.



CRASH YOUTH SILENT AUCTION FUNDRAISER

Tony Acompanado, Director of Youth Ministries

The Inaugural CRASH Youth Auction Fundraiser is Sunday, May 31, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Proceeds from the auction will go to support Ascension students and leaders attending the ELCA Youth Gathering in Detroit, July 14-19.

Ascension's students will journey alongside 30,000+ other Lutheran youth as they are immersed in the culture, diversity, and rich history of Detroit. While there, they will experience God's presence and learn more about the unique calling that God has for each of us. Each evening, participants will gather in Ford Field to hear the day's scripture text articulated by engaging speakers and Christian musicians, as well as motivating video, interpretive dance, and so much more.

During the day, congregational groups will participate in a three-day activity rotation that includes a day of service in the Detroit metropolitan area (Proclaim Justice Day), a day of exploratory learning with other groups from their synod (Proclaim Story Day), and a day of interactive learning in the Convention Center (Proclaim Community Day). Throughout the Gathering, participants will be involved in opportunities where they will put these faith practices into action.

However, their journey doesn't end when the trip ends. Rather, they will be commissioned to return home and continue the work of practicing and teaching others about these important disciplines of Christian life. Ascension's participants will be expected to live and share these practices not only in their own lives, but throughout the congregation, in our communities, and throughout the larger world. Where social injustice plagues humanity, our students will be called and expected to become the voice and the agents for change wherever they are.

This journey is very expensive, therefore we are asking for your support in assisting these students and leaders reach their fundraising goals to attend and experience the Youth Gathering. Individuals, ministry teams, and community organizations are being given the opportunity to assist by donating items for auction.

Ascension Lutheran Church is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization, so your donation may be tax deductible (please contact your financial advisor for more information). If you would like to donate, please fill out the form on Ascension's website (ascensionelca.org) or take a form from the CRASH bulletin board and turn it in to the church office to be included in the auction advertising.

Thank you in advance for your support of Ascension's youth!



AUCTION DONATION ITEMS CAN BE THE FOLLOWING:

Services: childcare, car repair, landscaping, painting, complete house cleaning, tree cutting, etc.

Vacations/Getaways: Do you have a spare week at a timeshare? How about a lakeside or mountain cottage?

Tickets: Do you have season tickets to baseball, basketball, football, the symphony, ballet, or other theater?

Products: Do you or your employer have a product suitable for auction?

Theme Baskets: Create your own basket using a theme of your choosing. Do you love exotic coffees and teas, cooking, or how about a favorite wine and cheese? Some creative themes are: beach party, games, gift cards, spa, and much more! Consider putting together a basket with some of your favorite things.

Deadline: Items may be donated until 4 p.m., on Friday, May 29.



Caring Relationships

CARE MINISTRIES: NEW AED

Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries

We have updated our AED (Automatic Electronic Defibrillator). It is located in the sanctuary in a cabinet with a new AED sign. Please take note of it the next time you are in the sanctuary. The interval from collapse to defibrillation is one of the most important determinants of survival from sudden cardiac arrest. AEDs are computerized devices that identify cardiac rhythms that need a shock and can then deliver the shock. AEDs are simple to operate, allowing anyone to attempt defibrillation safely. In case of an emergency, if someone collapses, always call 911 first and then grab the AED. Turn it on and follow the verbal prompts. The new defibrillator is completely automatic and very user friendly. Both adult pads and child pads (infant-8 years-old) are available along with CPR barrier and instructions in the cabinet. It is my hope that we never need to use this equipment, but at least we have it available in an emergency.



Let Yoga... Flow

YOGA FLOW CLASSES

Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries

Keeping active and fit is not always an easy thing to do in Wisconsin with our snowy, cold winter. Summer is around the corner, and if you are looking for ways to get your body back in shape, come join our Yoga Flow class beginning Monday nights, April 20-May 18. This class is \$10 for 5 weeks (only \$2/class). Its purpose is to improve your core strength, flexibility, and balance. Sign up on the Care Ministries bulletin board. Bring your registration fee and a mat to the first class.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 19, April 26, May 3: Care Ministries Plant Sale begins.
May 16: Plant Sale Pick-up
April 20-May 18: Yoga Flow Class, West Hall
April 26: Blood Pressure Screenings, between the 9 & 10:45 services
May 2: Waukesha Riverwalk for Breast Cancer. Ascension is hosting a team! Sign up at <http://tinyurl.com/AscensionRiverWalk2015!>
May 30, 8 a.m.-12 p.m.: Blood Drive, West Hall
June 22, 24: Ascension's Red Cross Babysitter Training for youth



PUPPETS OF PRAISE

Cheryl Anspach, Ministry Leader

Welcome 5th grade and JOLT students to Puppets of Praise! Participating in Puppets of Praise gives you the opportunity to interact with Ascension members in several different ways.

You are invited to participate in our last performance for this Sunday School season, which is coming up on April 26. We will perform with black light puppets, and this is a great time to try your hand at puppeteering. Come join us for practice on April 19,

from 10:30-11:45 a.m., and then join Special Friends at Laser Tag Adventure afterwards.

On April 12, we visit members who are homebound and have difficulty coming to church. The people we visit enjoy connecting to young people and seeing faith passed on to a new generation. We meet at 9 a.m. in the kitchen and leave at 10 a.m. We'd love to have you join us! If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl Anspach, puppetsofascension@gmail.com.

PLANT SALE FUNDRAISER

Brenda Lytle, RN, Director of Care Ministries

Ascension Care Ministries needs your support for our Annual Plant Sale!

Care Ministries has new outreach ministries that we are building within Ascension and our community. Grief Share is a successful new program that we started last fall to help people suffering loss. We have had two sessions; the fall session had 10-12 participants, and our winter session has 15 participants. Many have come into our church looking for grief resources and this program has helped them heal. Our next new program is called Divorce Care, which will be implemented in fall 2015 for adults and their children. The Ascension Plant Sale will help fund these supportive Care Ministries.

Please consider purchasing plants this spring to support our new programs! I like to think of it as April showers (grief and sadness), brings May flowers (renewal and life). What a difference you can make, contributing to the lives and well-being of others, while bringing the joy of colorful spring flowers into your life.

The plants come from Shady Lane Nursery. An order form can be downloaded and printed off of our Ascension website, ascensionelca.org, or you can find one on the Care Ministries bulletin board.

Please bring completed order forms and payment to the Plant Sale tables at church between April 19 and May 3, before and after services. At the tables, you can also buy plant coupons for \$10. Please not plant coupons can only be used at Shady Lane Nursery; you cannot use plant coupons at the Ascension Plant Sale. Plant pick-up is Saturday, May 16, in Ascension's parking lot! Please contact Sally Wagner if you have any questions, grandma1895@wi.rr.com.

SPECIAL FRIENDS

Marge Schroeder, Ministry Leader

Special Friends went bowling at Sunset Bowl in March. Brooklife church joined us for the event. There were some amazing bowlers, who scored some serious totals. Don Doyle kept the competition alive. For the rest of us, the bumpers along the lanes helped us better our scores.

In April, we will go to Adventure Laser Tag and Puppets of Praise will be our guests. This is a fun event for ALL ages, as we divide into teams that enjoy working together to *find* friends in the dark. It's especially fun to find the older people (we know who we are) who aren't as adept with the lasers.

Sally Graser and I want to thank all of our fabulous volunteers:

- Allison Ehrlich
- Brooke Studnicki
- Natalie Mustapich
- Sara and Don Doyle
- Mike Scheffler
- Art Thiesenhusen
- Deb Weber
- Peggy White

Our group is always open to new members, so please call Marge Schroeder at 262-695-2384 if you would like to join or volunteer.





SMALL GROUP MINISTRY UPDATE

Jan Zastrow, Small Group Ministry Leader

The Lenten Bible study, with coordinated Wednesday night sermons, was a first time program for Ascension. The Small Group Ministry leaders are so pleased that 12 groups with approximately 100 individuals participated in the program. The Small Group Ministry Team is developing the details for the Ascension-wide fall program and will share information on it soon.

Stop by the bulletin board in the office hallway, which displays pictures of small groups and a listing of the existing year-round groups. If any group leader has pictures to share, pass them along to Jan Zastrow.

Five reasons why you should join a small group:

1. You will understand the Bible better through group discussion, and you will be able to apply it to your own personal life.
2. You will develop close relationships with other believers who will walk beside you in your journey as a follower of Jesus.
3. You will find answers to the situations in your life through group prayer.
4. You will get support in times of crisis or major changes from people who really care for you.
5. You will be supported and motivated to a deeper level of serving others.

For where two or three gathering in my name, there am I with them. ~ Matthew 18:20

What a promise!

If you have an interest in joining a small group, give me a call or email me, Jan Zastrow, at 262-247-0412 or Jan_zastrow@yahoo.com



AMEN: SHARE THE WORD!

Gary Draeger, Ministry Leader

Prepare to make a “visit” and share the Word with those in jail or prison.

Throughout April, AMEN Ministries will be sponsoring a Bible and devotional materials drive for Ascension’s Prison Ministry. Look through your home libraries or the shelves at Goodwill and St. Vincent DePaul for hardcover and paperback Bibles and devotional/spiritual books. These are in short supply in both the Waukesha and Racine correctional systems. Other hardcover books and paperback books are also welcome. We are no longer able to donate magazines.

If you want to support the purchase of Bibles for Prison Ministry, you can make a donation and indicate “Prison Ministry” in the memo section of your check.

Donations will be collected in the AMEN Ministries designated bins at the West Hall donation center. Donations are welcome year around but especially in April.

A special thank you to those who have donated in the past; we have been able to make numerous deliveries during the year.

I was in prison and you visited me.
Matthew 25:36

SUPERMOMS RUMMAGE SALE

Allison Johnson, Ministry Leader



Mark your calendars for the 4th Annual Ascension Kids Toys and Clothing Rummage!

The rummage will open for business Friday, April 17, from 9 a.m.-8 p.m. We will also be open Saturday, April 18, from 8 a.m.-12 p.m., offering select items at half price.

Sellers Wanted!

We are looking for sellers!

If you are interested in selling, use the link to the seller registration page.

<http://ascensionelca.org/events/rummage-sale/>

Do not wait! Due to space limitations and our desire to sell as many of your items as possible, we are capping the number of sellers at 50!

Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for volunteers! If you are interested in helping, follow the directions and link below! It is a fun event and we need LOTS of volunteers on the days leading up to the rummage, at the sale, and afterwards to ensure the event is as successful this year as it has been in the past. We will have free-will offering childcare available for all volunteers. To sign up for childcare, please leave a comment while registering to volunteer.

1. Use this link to go to our invitation page on VolunteerSpot: <http://vols.pt/s8wdAH>
2. Enter your email address: (You will NOT need to register an account on VolunteerSpot)
3. Sign up! Choose your spots - VolunteerSpot will send you an automated confirmation and reminders. Easy!

KNIT WITS

Maddie Goetter, Ministry Leader



April activities include:

- Monday, April 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m. - Meeting at Ascension
- Monday, April 13, 12:30-3:30 p.m. - Lunch & Knit, at The Spot Restaurant, 316 W Sunset Dr, Waukesha
- Monday, April 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m. - Meeting at Ascension
- Saturday, April 25, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. - Knit Fest at Ascension

Thanks to everyone for donating yarn to our cause; it's greatly appreciated! Donations of clean, unused yarns are always welcome (even leftover portions of skeins). For more info, contact Maddie Goetter, 262-527-4013.

YOUNG AT HEART

Celeste Defenbaugh, Ministry Leader



We will NOT have a potluck luncheon in April; Ascension’s Supermoms will be using both fellowship halls for the Annual Rummage Sale. Our next luncheon will be in May. Please read the May Newsletter for details. We all enjoyed our February trip to Grafton and Cedarburg to see the Steel Drum Band. I can't wait for our next trip. If you have questions, contact Celeste Defenbaugh, 262-370-4522.



CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH FOOD PANTRY

Shirley Webmeier, Mission Outreach Wing Leader

During April, we will collect main dish items including tuna, mac and cheese, canned pasta products, one-dish meals, etc. Each week, 200 bags are filled and distributed to the people who participate in the Bread of Healing Ministries at Cross Lutheran. Our donations make a critical difference.

EL SALVADOR PARTNERSHIP

Sarah Aparicio, Mission Outreach Committee Member

Ascension has been involved with the Lutheran church in El Salvador for several years through college scholarships, the endowment fund, and especially our partnership with the Agroferreteria project. During Easter week, 11 delegates from Ascension will be traveling to El Salvador to deepen our relationship by formalizing our sister parish partnership with the church in San Jorge. Here is the covenant the two congregations will be signing:

In order to give shape and direction to our journey as brothers and sisters in the mission of God revealed in Jesus Christ, we accept these covenant agreements:

1. *We agree to pray for each other at every opportunity, especially as a part of our regularly scheduled worship services.*
2. *We agree to learn more about the congregation, community, and country in which our companion church lives and serves.*
3. *We will help each other in this endeavor with the exchange of information and suggestions for learning through emails, letters, newspaper clippings, photos or whatever means is available.*

4. *Relationships in community will be the foundation of our mutual learning. We will explore every possibility to form strong relationships of love and friendship. For example: visits and communications between pastors, the leaders of the church, councils and committees, men's and women's groups, or youth.*
5. *In addition to informing each other of the projects which are in process or envisioned, we agree to invite mutual participation in our vision and strategic planning processes in order to realize our mission together.*
6. *We will give completely of ourselves as Christ gave himself for us.*
7. *We agree to the exchange of visits of the members of our congregations as frequently as possible.*

Follow this April's delegation by liking our Facebook page: *Agape Delegation to El Salvador*. We'll post daily updates and photos.



TANZANIA PARTNERSHIP: DAY OF PRAYER

Shirley Webmeier, Mission Outreach Wing Leader

On April 12, Ascension joins other congregations in the Greater Milwaukee Synod for a day of prayer with the Diocese of Meru. Our brothers and sisters in the Meru Diocese of Tanzania will feel the power of prayer and love of Christ as we lift them up in prayers of thanksgiving, prayers for peace, strength, hope, and wisdom.

The Tanzania Lutheran Church has a vision to reach out with the Gospel to 50% of the unreached people of Tanzania. Each Christian in the church is made aware of the involvement in mission activities as they reach out with both sharing the Gospel and living the Gospel through social services. Through this outreach, the Tanzania Lutheran Church has grown to over 6.1 million people in a population of 45 million people. Mission and evangelism is the backbone of the church. Such a focus is a positive response to the Great Commission of our Lord to proclaim the Gospel to all nations.

MT. MERU COFFEE PROJECT

Dave Hammer, Mission Outreach Committee Member

The Mt. Meru Coffee Project (MMCP) is part of the faith-based relationship that began in 1996 between the Diocese of Meru and the Greater Milwaukee Synod. The MMCP's mission is to use fair trade business practices to build economic and social justice relationships between the small coffee growers in the Diocese of Meru and U.S. coffee consumers. Doing justice provides a *hand-up* (empowerment) rather than a *hand-out* (dependency).

In 2001, the MMCP started working with 200 small farmers. Today, the MMCP works with over 2,000 small coffee farmers. The justice-based pricing has changed lives and has empowered the farmers to better support their families, send their children to school, access better healthcare, sustain and improve their farms, and better support their local cooperatives, villages, and churches. The MMCP is the single largest project of the partnership. It involves 75-80 churches within the Greater Milwaukee Synod

and creates awareness and support for other projects within the Diocese of Meru, including a hospital and clinic, schools and scholarship programs, hunger relief and water supply programs, and parish-to-parish partnering.

Ascension's ongoing purchase of Mt. Meru Coffee is the single best way we can grow relationships with and provide sustainability for thousands of small family farmers in Tanzania. Mt. Meru Coffee can be purchased every Sunday between worship services at the coffee cart in the Hearth Room. 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; and a box of 12 single service cups (K-cups) of regular coffee for \$8 (new pricing!).

DOING JUSTICE NEVER TASTED SO GOOD!

ELCA MALARIA CAMPAIGN

Beth Hoffman, Mission Outreach Committee Member

As of June 2014, the ELCA Malaria Campaign had raised more than \$12 million, so it is possible that we will reach our goal of \$15 million before the end of 2015. When we reach \$15 million, Ascension will be invited to celebrate the success. Ascension will continue to collect funds to support malaria programs through the official close of the ELCA Malaria Campaign (January 2016). These funds are used for:

Education

- Training pastors, church volunteers, and health care providers to diagnose and treat malaria
- Teaching people how to protect themselves from the mosquitoes that spread malaria, recognize symptoms, and seek treatment
- Gathering people together to discuss the importance of malaria prevention and control

Prevention

- Distributing insecticide-treated mosquito nets and providing training on proper use
- Providing preventive medication to protect pregnant women and their babies
- Encouraging governments to provide adequate healthcare and engage in malaria-prevention activities
- Supporting community projects to control the environments where mosquitoes breed

Treatment

- Providing life-saving healthcare, including medicine to treat malaria
- Promoting sustainable livelihoods through participation in village savings and loan groups so that community members can afford mosquito nets, transport and healthcare

According to the 2014 malaria report of the World Health Organization, an estimated 4.3 million lives have been saved as a result of the scale-up of malaria interventions, including mosquito nets, since the year 2000. Worldwide, the mortality rate from malaria fell by 47% between 2000-2013 and by 54% in Africa, where about 90% of malaria deaths occur. There was an almost 60% decline in malaria deaths in children under age five during this time, with most of that improvement occurring since 2007.





IN OUR OWN BACKYARD: GOOD FRIDAY WALK

Shirley Wehmeier, Mission Outreach Wing Leader

You are invited to participate in a Good Friday, April 3, Neighborhood Walk sponsored by Reformation Lutheran Church to experience on foot one of the neighborhoods that benefits from Outreach For Hope (OFH). This annual procession, starting from Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 3022 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, at 3 p.m., follows the Cross of Christ through the neighborhood with clergy offering reflections at designated stops.

Here is your chance to meet members of an OFH church as well as like-minded individuals who are supporters of OFH. The walk is about 45 minutes long. There is a parking lot behind Our Savior's and can be accessed from W. Wells St. Please join the walk on April 3rd at 3 p.m. Contact Shirley Wehmeier for more information.

SOPHIA PRAYER BREAKFAST

Iva Richards, SOPHIA Liaison

The 11th annual SOPHIA Prayer Breakfast will be held at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 25. The location is the Carroll University Center for Graduate Studies, 2140 Davidson Rd., Waukesha. Half of the \$30 ticket price is tax deductible. A silent auction and speaker State Representative JoCasta Zamarripa will be part of the program. Contact Iva Richards, 262-542-5840, for tickets.



ONE LONE INDIAN: A POEM FOR ARBOR DAY

By Donna G. Madison; submitted by Iva Richards

One lone Indian crying on a hilltop is hard for us to see, but an entire Indian nation weeping, shame on you and me. These nature loving people have watched with great sorrow as our country is slowly being ruined; is there no tomorrow?

Too much good has now been lost; how do we fill the void? You can't recover a farm filled with condos; aren't you annoyed?

Our forests and woodlands are being destroyed, does anybody care? Marshes that once teemed with life are filled in; it's not fair.

The birds and animals have no place left to safely dwell. Good land is lost forever as we create our own concrete hell.

Oh us poor insensitive humans, I fear we'll regret it one day. Land developers, land destroyers the day of judgment draws near when you will look around and regret your short-sightedness, then sadly retribution will be coming to us all, I fear.

Lord, please give our leaders wisdom to protect this land. Preserve our parks and forests; and everyone please lend a hand. Don't let the land be ruined by a money-grubbing few, let's fight for our natural resources; we're lost unless we do!

ABOUT THE POET

Donna G. Madison and her husband Warren are long-time members of Ascension. Donna is a poet and an artist. Her poetry has been published seven times in *The International Who's Who in Poetry*. Donna writes: *Born in 1935, I was raised on a farm near Soldiers Grove, Wisconsin. I attended a one-room schoolhouse named Davis Dale. My little brother "borrowed" one of my*

poems and won a prize at the county fair. After high school, I didn't write much poetry. I joined the army for two years; then married and raised a family. My cousin Barbara decided to have a poetry contest for our family reunion and I started writing again. Much to my surprise, some of my poems have now been published. I keep myself busy in spite of poor health, left over from a bout with polio at the age of fifteen. Poetry takes my mind off of pain and expresses myself to others.

COAT COLLECTION

Donna Savin, Mission Outreach Committee Member

Mission Outreach is collecting winter items for Pine Ridge Reservation during April. We are collecting coats for men, women and children. These coats/jackets must be clean and in good condition. Please no tears, holes, or broken zippers. We also are collecting boots, hats, scarves, and mittens/gloves. Items will be collected in the West Hall donation center in marked containers. Pine Ridge Reservation is a third world county located in South Dakota. Any questions, please contact Donna Savin at 262-544-5619 or donnasavin@att.net.

Please note the picture in the sidebar. Notice how happy the little girl is with not only the one coat she picked and is wearing but the second coat she got to choose for when it is a little warmer. She was dancing and hugging people because she was so happy with her new coats.



IN GRATITUDE

FOOD PANTRY OF WAUKESHA COUNTY

Thank you for your generous donation to the Food Pantry of Waukesha County as special Mission support. Your gift of \$250 [in December] helped with the increased need.

Thank you - your donation to the Food Pantry of Waukesha County has made a tremendous difference. For decades, we have provided service to our neighbors in need throughout Waukesha county. We have heard stories of hardship and heartache and storie of strength and courage. The storie shave been shared by young and old alike. The constant throughout the years has been the support of the commuity.

It is remarkable what can happen when people come together for a cause. Because of your generosity and willingness to help, we have been able to provide free food and groceries seven times per week for 26 years to the registered clients of the Food Pantry of Waukesha County. Each time we are open, clients select from a variety of fresh and non-perishable foods to feed their families. Your donations have ensured that Waukesha County families in need are able to sit down and share a family meal, just like other families across the country.

The staff and board of the Food Pantry of Waukesha County join our clients in saying *thank you* for helping us to provide more than \$2,200,000 worth of food this past year to more than 10,000 unduplicated clients.

And, thank you for helping us to strive to make our vision a reality: End Hunger. Start Here.

Karen L. Treadwell, Exectutive Director

LUTHERAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CHICAGO

As we celebrate the birth and life of our Savior, we reflect on LSTC's many blessings and are reminded of the generosity of our alumni, friends, congregations, and synods. We give thanks for your support and steadfast commitment to our mission of preparing women and men for ministry.

We continue to be blessed with wonderful students from all over the country and throughout the world. Your gifts nurture them as they prepare themselves to minister to all God's people. Thank you for supporting Steve Bogie with a student scholarship.

Jessica Houston - Assistant Vice President for Advancement



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1 6:30am AMEN EH 9am Young at Heart, Denny's 9:30am Cross Meal 9:30am Staff Mtg 12:30pm Women's Nurture Grp PR 6pm Handbells S 7pm AA Wisdom WH	2 MAUNDY THURSDAY 6:30am AMEN EH 10am AI Anon WH 10am TGBG PR 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 7pm Worship	3 GOOD FRIDAY 12pm Worship 5pm Worship (Mime) 7pm Worship (Mime & Choir)	4
5 EASTER SUNDAY Blood Pressure Screening 7am Worship 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 10:45am Worship 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	6 9:45am AI Anon WH 2pm Prayer Group PR 6:30pm AMEN 107 6:30pm Knit Wits WH	7 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6:30pm Mission Outreach 107 7pm Mutual Ministry PR	8 11:45am Men's Nurture Grp 106 6pm Handbells S 6:30pm AMEN 107 7pm Wisdom Grp WH	9 10am AI Anon WH 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 7pm Ballantyne 107	10	11
El Salvador Mission Trip						
12 FIRST COMMUNION Supermoms Rummage Set-up 7:30am Worship 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 9am Puppets Home Visits 10:45am Worship 12pm Youth Gathering Mtg. YR 6pm CRASH YR 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	13 Rummage Set-up 9:45am AI Anon WH 12:30pm Knit Wits Lunch off-site 1pm Living Letters 106 6:30pm AMEN 107	14 Rummage Set-up 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 6pm Wing Leaders 106 7pm Holloway Group 107	15 Rummage Set-up 12:30pm Women's Nurture Grp PR 5:45pm Handbells S 7pm Wisdom Grp WH 7:30pm Choir S	16 Rummage Set-up 10am AI Anon 10am TGBG PR 5pm Angel Choir S 5:45pm Joyful Sounds S 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 6:30pm JOLT YR, S 7pm Ballantyne 107 7pm Care Ministries 106	17 Rummage EH, WH, HR, N	18 Rummage EH, WH, HR, N 10:30am Folk Choir S
19 7:30am Worship 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 9am Children's Church EH 10:30am Puppets EH 10:45am Worship 10:45 Sunday School 3:30pm New Member Class 6pm CRASH EH, YR 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	20 9:45am AI Anon WH 2pm Prayer Group PR 6pm Yoga Flow EH 6:30pm AMEN 107 6:30pm Knit Wits WH	21 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am TGIT 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 7pm Church Council 107	22 6pm Handbells S 7pm Wisdom Grp WH 7:30pm Choir S	23 10am AI Anon WH 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 6:30pm JOLT EH, YR, S, HR 7pm Ballantyne 107	24	25 9am Knit Fest WH
26 Blood Pressure Screenings HR 7:30am Worship 9am Worship 9am Spanish Worship PR 9am Children's Church EH 10:45am Worship 10:45 Sunday School 12pm Celebration Band S 12pm Youth Gathering Mtg YR 6pm AA mtg WH 7pm AA closed mtg WH	27 9:45am AI Anon WH 6pm Yoga Flow EH 6:30pm AMEN 107	28 6:30am AMEN 107 9:30am Women's Bible Study HR 7pm Holloway 107	29 6pm Handbells S 7pm Wisdom Grp WH 7:30pm Choir S	30 10am AI Anon WH 10am TGBG PR 6pm Quilting, Bissetts 6:30pm JOLT YR, S 7pm Ballantyne 107		Room Key EH = East Hall HR = Hearth Room K = Kitchen N = Narthex PL = Parking Lot PR = Prayer Room S = Sanctuary WH = West Hall YR = Youth Room